

LOOK WHAT I MADE!

TEN MAD SCIENTISTS AND THEIR FAVORITE
PET PROJECTS FOR



Many of our readers are familiar with the work of roving reporter Ed Johnson, who has contributed some of the *Tombstone Epitaph's* best-received articles. On assignment in Denver, Johnson missed his regular article deadline for our last issue, and private investigation has to date uncovered only his notebook, found in his hotel room wedged beneath the mattress. The notebook, however, contains enough newsworthy items that the *Epitaph* has decided to publish them uncensored. Entries date back nearly two years and include the raw material for some now-famous articles. We hope our readers enjoy the strange tales related here and that anyone having news of Johnson will send it to us c/o your local *Epitaph* supplier.

— Ed.

IDAHO FORT INSTALLS NEW-FANGLED LIGHTS TO STYMIE DEMONS - BUT DEMONS GET TO LIGHTS FIRST!

18 July 1874

Fort Hall, ID — The Fort Hall U.S. Army outpost has installed a brilliant new system (remove pun) to assist their night watchmen. A series of carbon arc lamps have been mounted at each watch tower, pointed out onto the plains surrounding the fort; when lit, they flood the area with near-blinding light. The key feature is the peculiar mechanism causing them to light: small devices which receive and amplify sound, going by the name of "microphone" (name inventor used, according to soldiers; they haven't seen the amplification feature in action). Each microphone is connected electrically to a central control system via

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copper wire. When a microphone detects a certain level of noise (get a good example — mouse scurrying by, or screaming cougar?), The control system Triggers The appropriate arc lamp To light.

So far, Test runs have been less Than spectacular. One night a guard falling asleep Triggered The system when his relaxing arm allowed The barrel of his rifle To rap softly against The outpost wall. Another night, a cattle stampede That woke The entire fort failed To Trigger The lights.

Sensitivity issues aside, The device has some promise; The entire bank of lights has been left on between dusk and dawn for The past Twelve days, and night attacks have dropped off accordingly.

Soldiers: "Some dandy from Salt Lake came and Talked To The Captain last June, and in August They got This Thing set up."

"He comes up every couple of months To fool with it."

"Strange, Though, never have gotten a good look at him, and The Captain won't Talk about it."

"Don't even know The dandy's name. Guess it really isn't any of our business anyway."

MILKENSTEIN MONSTERS? MONTANA MADMAN MAKES MONEY MILKING MORTUARY

22 August 1874

Somewhere near Billings, Montana — Oswald Pembrose, a grocery wholesaler from Lost Angels who made his quick fortune with everyone else in The ghost rock rush of '69 has moved To Montana To realize his life-long goal of breeding The perfect cow. The catch is, his cows are dead. (Too quick To The punch line — move That sentence further down The article) Pembrose got as far as setting up The barns, acquiring The livestock, and hiring hands when his entire ranch was overrun by an angry band of Indians. He himself was in Billings on business when The Tragedy occurred; when he returned home To find his life's dream in ruins, he was beside himself.

BUT Pembrose didn't go out of business; in fact business is booming Today. (PUT "catch is, cows dead" here.) As he stared at The shambles That was his once-budding ranch, a strange and terrible Thing happened; some of his cattle got back up and started grazing again. (any details? gaping holes That The masticated grass fell back out of? other unbelievable injuries?) Right Then and There, he decided it was Time To go back To work. Ignoring The fact That all he had was a ranch full of walking jerky, Pembrose built sturdier fences To keep his omery stock in, and started breeding dairy cattle. (I'll bet They Taste Terrible.)

These days, Pembrose lives by himself on his ranch, breeding his livestock and killing The best ones. More often Than not, his prize pets will get back up within The hour and head back To The milking machines. Pembrose's hellish heifers (damn; if They're giving milk, They're not heifers, are They... find

another colorful phrase) give plenty of milk, too, though it's not recommended for straight consumption; The earthy overtones are a bit strong. The butter that Pembrose churns from the stucco, on the other hand, has exceptional resale value to wagon trains and prospectors — it needs no refrigeration to stay firm and sweet for months. All of his customers seem thrilled with their new luxury. Pembrose isn't sure exactly what causes his slaughtered stock to rise from the grave, but as long as the money keep coming, he says he doesn't care. (By the by, this feller's nuttier than a fruitcake — work that into the headline somehow?)

Pembrose: "It's hard to keep the new ranch hands more than a couple weeks. If they last a month with the dead ones I know they'll stick around."

"The dead ones can be pretty ornery when you're milkin' 'em. Saw Bluebell over there bite a couple fingers clean off a man one time. Quicker 'n a snake. That's why I had to build better fences — keep people safe from the cows. Wote got into the corral one time — weren't nothin' but a grease spot with a tail when I got out here the next morning. They never bother me, though — even the ones I killed myself. We all get along just fine. They get meaner when they're hungry. Bein' dead don't seem to change their appetite none. 'Cept live cows don't eat meat and sometimes these ones do. Don't print that in yer story! Wouldn't want people to worry 'bout my herd. Then I'd never be able to find any help." (more evidence that a simple question never gets a simple answer from this one; he's plain crackers!)

— Editor's Note: "Milkenstein Monsters" ran in the September 19, 1874 issue of The Tombstone Epitaph.





OPTIC ENTREPRENEUR SEES FUTURE BRIGHT AS DAY

20 February 1875

Sioux Falls, SD — You don't expect to find unmarried women living by themselves in this part of the world, but that's what you'll find outside of Sioux Falls, where

Anastasia Von Bingen is developing her own glassworks. When her "dissipated, lazy older brother" Ludwig inherited the family business, Von Bingen quickly took matters into her own hands. She noted the slogan "Go West, young man!", changed the gender, and acted on it.

Since then, she has made quite a name for herself in the area, founding and running the Von Bingen Optics glassworks factory. No one really knows what she's done to her glass recipe, but the resulting optics have amazing qualities. Von Bingen Optics Telescopes give a brighter image than any other comparable 'scope. Sole owner and proprietor of the company, she explains, "This optical system partially negates the effects of distance on the intensity of light so that the drop off is only proportional to the inverse of the distance instead of to the inverse of the square of the distance." (decipher what the Sam Hill she's talking about and paraphrase) Whatever the trick, it

works; no one can beat The detail Von Bingen Optics give.

There's another optical specialty That Von Bingen has only recently begun To sell To her numerous customers; filtered intensifiers. These amazing lenses apply The properties of The company's "standard" lenses To a single color of light, making objects of That color stand out more when viewed Through a filter lens. Both Union and Confederate Armies have already purchased binoculars fitted with Union-blue- or Confederate-gray-specific lenses; Von Bingen, as an opportunist, doesn't play political favorites with her customers.

Now That she's developed her special glass recipes, Von Bingen is looking for new ways To apply Them. Ideally, she'd like To mount Them in a camera To give a brighter sky or lusher grass, and is merely waiting for Those whose specialties lie in creating film To find a way To capture color. In The meantime, There's The filter lens That works in infrared light, intensifying heat. The lenses in The lab now are being ground To focus light a long distance from The lens so That They could potentially be used as weapons. Von Bingen is also working on developing a glass formula which would allow someone looking Through a properly constructed lens To see in pitch darkness almost as if it were daylight. Assuming no one derails This ambitious woman and her company, Von Bingen Optics should be a name To be reckoned with in The near future.

NEW FRONTIER SOLDIERS USE LIGHT TO FIGHT

4 July 1875

Fort Snelling, MN — Ninety-nine years after The founding of our country, one military man is fighting against a new force intent on Taking The people's freedom from Them. His fort beset by demons on a nearly nightly basis, Colonel Spencer Wesley had a brainstorm. He cut a few deals ("Cut a few deals?!" Is This guy for real?) with various craft workers he knew in Chicago, and with The help of his men, cobbled Together a device That They mounted on The fort's wagon right next To The Gatling

gun. Now when The Snelling soldiers have To make The treacherous supply run between Chicago and The Minnesota frontier, They have The most accurate gun sight on The continent for Their Gatling. (Good God — if These folks Teamed up with Von Bingen...) Linking an incredibly tight and accurate spot light To The machine gun's movements, The sight has been far more reliable Than The older one built into The gun.

Since Then, Wesley's Boys (as They frequently call Themselves) say They've made significant inroads against The hellspawn They run across. Even cloudy days are dark enough To give Them The advantage, and They can use Their "spot sight" from sunset To well after sunrise even on The clear ones. The bright daylight That used To be Their best protection is now Their worst liability.

A few of The boys back at The fort grumble That Their grub's been pretty slim while paying for The optics, but every soldier who's been sent out To fight for God and country using The spot sight has been converted To The cause. We wish Them all The best in Their continuing fight for freedom! soldiers: The colonel knows everybody. He never pays for dinners or hotels

when he's in Chicago. He's always got a place to stay."

"Yeah, whenever we need something, or the guys at the Fort need something, the colonel can get his hands on it. He's a good man."

He wanted to get a steam wagon, but they don't do so well in hill country. This rig's better anyway. Some 'a them things explode like dynamite when you fill 'em fulla lead."

Ed.'s Note: This piece was deemed too politically charged to run when it was first submitted. We print it here as an entry in Johnson's notebook with the disclaimer that the views herein are not necessarily those of the Tombstone Epitaph.

ARTIST GETS TOP DOLLAR FOR BURNING HIS PAINTINGS

12 September 1875

Chicago, IL — Cosmopolitan Chicago is home to a new fad on the art scene. (So what's new?) Ghost rock fever has reached even this far east of the Maze, but it's not fuel for which the local nutcases (kind nice term for artsy types) are using the hand-blackening stuff. A few adventurous souls have ground up ghost rock and added to their paints.

The effect of this new additive was not entirely apparent, for ghost rock doesn't change the color of their paint. Its benefit was discovered by accident when, in a "fit of pique" apparently common to local artists, one David Ashman torched his freshly mixed paint and was nearly blinded by the resultant blaze. (How'd this freak ever live through that fire?) Ghost rock seems to have a spectacular effect in this situation: dust-laced paints set a fire burn with intense color for a few minutes to a few hours (depending on concentration in the mix), to give an unforgettable show. Unfortunately, all that remains on a canvas thus treated is black char.

Since his initial discovery, Ashman has passed on his findings to his colleagues. Now, there's a whole new art movement on the loose (perhaps a less biased phrase there would be prudent), and its generators are calling it "Western Impressionism." (Seems more like "ephemerism" to me — nothing left to make an impression after a few hours, anyway!)

Ashman has been looking for a pyrotechnician to teach him how to manipulate his colors chemically for greater effect. Once he has "mastered the medium," he intends to tour Europe and make a name for himself in the art history books, claiming, "It's time folks on the Continent started noticing what's happening on this continent!"

— Ed.'s Note: "Artist Gets Top Dollar..." ran in the October 9, 1875 issue of the Tombstone Epitaph.

FROM GREEN TO GROG IN MINUTES - DENVER ESTABLISHMENT BREWS MORE COFFEE THAN ANY PLACE ON THE CONTINENT!

12 April 1776

Denver, CO — The ornate brass and teakwood machine dominates the bar of The Denver Imperial Grand Hotel with its 3-foot-by-7-foot bulk. As part of The Grand's attempt to enhance its image as a classy Chicago or New York style establishment, this automatic coffee-brewing apparatus was purchased last summer. Green coffee beans raw from the plantation are loaded into the top of The "Brass Butler," and within a few minutes of the water being added, freshly brewed coffee trickles into the waiting cup. Although the device reportedly cost a phenomenal amount of cash, hotel officials say that cutting out the roaster's profit by buying directly from the plantations has already made up some of the difference. Local curiosity is certainly furthering their financial cause as well; folks will come to The Imperial Grand and buy the most expensive coffee in Denver just so they can watch the machine work. Bartender Malcolm Valdez claims to serve five times as many cups of coffee as he did six months ago and predicts, "at this rate, people might even start drinking coffee as often as every two or three days!" (Yeah, right — like anyone would ever make a habit of that swill!)

RAILROAD IN THE SKY - IS AIR TRAVEL AROUND THE CORNER?

20 April 1776

Denver, CO — Evinrude Johanssen sits behind a desk in an office so new it still smells of the pine boards and talks about the future. "It's a wonderful age we live in, but it's going to get better." Johanssen's vision about a better age involves travel. "What I've got is an engine that makes airships practical." Basically, he's working with the ballooning principle that hot air rises. If you fill a large enough, light fabric bag with hot air, you can get enough lift to carry passengers. The trick is in keeping the air hot. Fuel is heavy, so long trips that would require plenty of it were impractical

— until now. "By using ghost rock," Johanssen explained, "you can heat up a lot of air and keep it that way. If you build a frame inside the balloon, you can resist wind pressure from outside. That's called a dirigible."

With the same ghost rock that will keep his dirigible afloat, Johanssen plans to power directional engines that can propel the airship upwind, or in any desired direction. He has high hopes that his "dirigible trains" can surpass the railroads as the most frequently used transportation in the West, especially as a luxury voyage. "Imagine flying in safety and security from Chicago to Denver — high above the dangers of the ground, free from concern of native attacks or bandit raids!"

Johanssen makes a good case for air travel. Now he's just looking for a few investors to "get the project off the ground." With luck and funding, soon we could all be off the ground on our way to Denver.

NEED A HELPING HAND? HERE'S WHERE YOU CAN GET ONE!

13 January 1876

St. Paul, MN — The macabre conglomeration of body parts scattered about his workplace doesn't seem to bother Throckmorton Lewis. The local outlet for The New York importing company Lewis, Winchester, and Doyle is filled with Swiss Clockwork brand prosthetic limbs. Some models are realistic enough to cause one to blanch at first glance, but on closer examination these gadgets are simply amazing.

Powered by ghost rock, Swiss Clockwork prosthetics are self-propelling steam engine systems. (Why would anyone want a moaning leg?) Originally designed to help frontiersmen who would otherwise not be able to survive on the land with their infirmity, "The first units were quite heavy and fatiguing," explained Lewis. "Now they're fairly comfortable for long periods. We even have one light enough for the ladies, although it's mostly a show piece. Don't see too many women-folk who've lost an arm."

Don't see many men out here wearing Swiss Clockwork prosthetics these days, either. After the test models overheated with constant use and caught some customers' clothes on fire, the company built a new prototype. Unfortunately for Swiss Clockwork's original clientele, the relevant improvements drove up the price along with the quality. Now it's a rich man's luxury item, especially with some of the optional features recently made available. Built-in timepieces (even better — a ticking, moaning leg), calendars, or jewelry are available for the genteel lifestyle, a concealed knife or pistol for the more "active" one. Swiss Clockwork is doing well by its new customers and is looking forward to continuing to improve people's quality of life well into the next century.

WHERE THERE'S SMOKE, THERE'S — DARKNESS?

12 May 1776

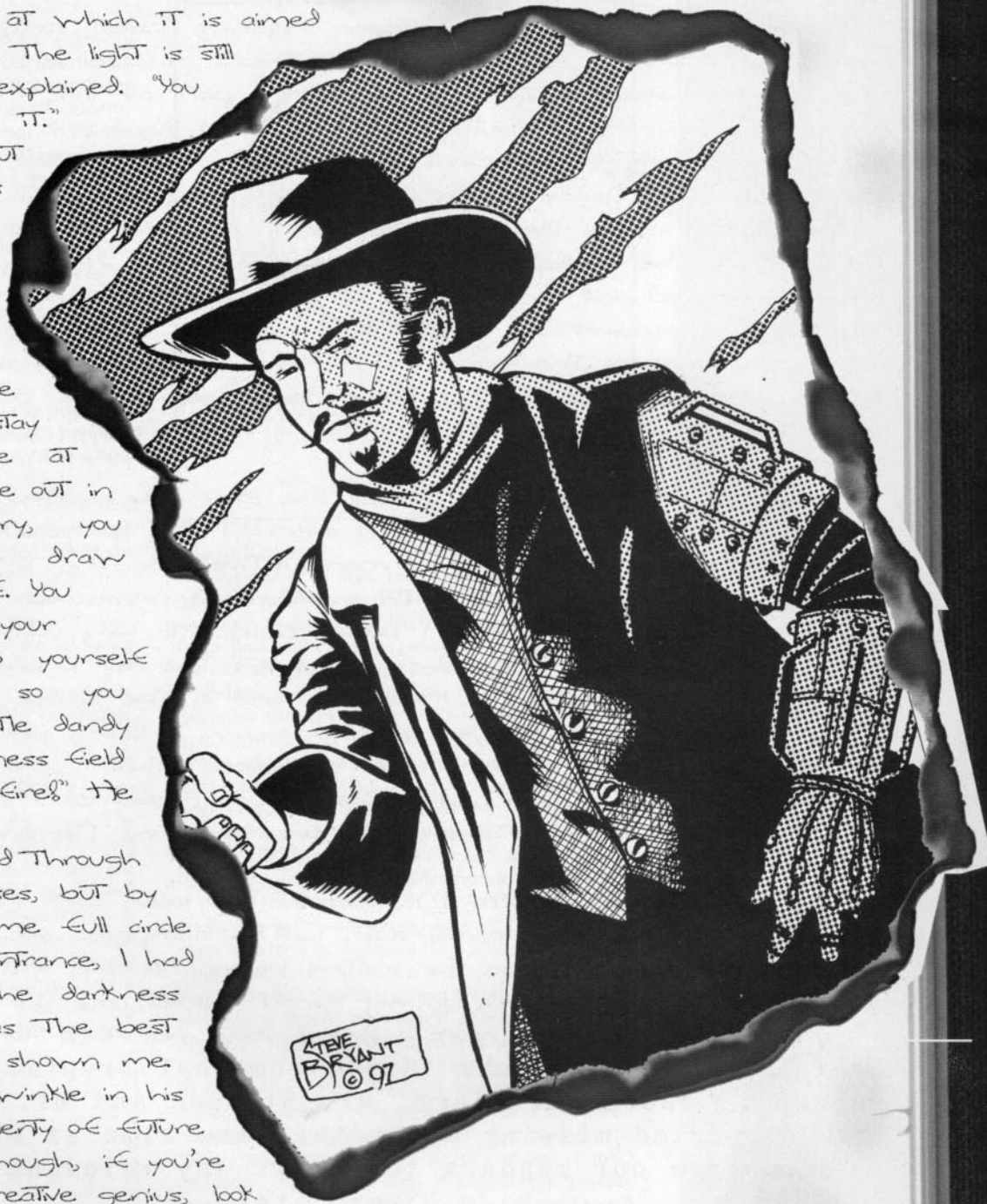
near Denver, CO — Deep in the Rockies, on a treacherous slope, a remote laboratory is home to Dr. Erick Zarkov. His assistants, rather reticent folks (they're singularly unhelpful), divide their time between the lab and their barracks. What's so important that six people would lock themselves away from the world to work on it? (People? I still don't know — what the hell are those things, anyway?) Zarkov was happy to show me. Pointing with a blackened finger, the doctor explained the meaning of various blinking lights, bubbling pots and random electrical discharges. Considering the severity of the latter, Zarkov's warning (more like a necessary condition before he'd show me around) not to touch anything was quite unnecessary. Amidst the howl of burning ghost rock, Zarkov's discourse was further punctuated by apparent flashes of insight which caused him to pause mid-sentence and grab his notepad and pencil to record some new inspiration.

The current number one project is the "darkness field projector." (Why can't this guy ever speak English?) About the size of a shotgun, its purpose is

To douse any light at which it is aimed and fired. "Actually, the light is still burning," Zarkov explained. "You just can't see it."

When I asked about the possible uses for such an unusual device, the doctor gave me the look one gives a child who just asked why the chickens had to stay in the henhouse at night. "When you're out in unfriendly territory, you don't want to draw attention to yourself. You still need to cook your vittles and keep yourself warm, though, so you whip out this little dandy and project a darkness field around your campfires!" He smiled.

The tour continued through the lights and noises, but by the time we'd come full circle to the laboratory entrance, I had to agree that the darkness field projector was the best item Zarkov had shown me. Judging by the twinkle in his eye, Zarkov has plenty of future work. For now, though, if you're looking for this creative genius, look to the dark.



MAN FINDS COWS - LOSES WOMAN

2 June 1776

Denver, CO — The American West was not what Madeline Foucault was prepared for. "Beautiful to a fault," she described to a friend back home in Paris. A well-educated woman, Ms. Foucault anticipated nothing but hardship when her family relocated to Denver. Instead, she found the solitude and wide open spaces here inspiring.

She also found one Harold Stassen inspiring. Eldest son of his family and heir to an immense cattle operation southeast of Denver, Stassen is a man who carries himself with confidence. As part of The American breed of man, he caught Ms. Foucault's attention. As a handsome woman, she caught his. (Unsurprising — Fascinating woman) They courted, and gifts were exchanged. Ms. Maddie's gifts, however, were somewhat... unusual.

The Stassen ranch, like most, has had trouble with the occasional stray steer. As a sign of her affection and to demonstrate her intellectual competence, Ms. Foucault designed and constructed a cattle tracking collar for Stassen. A device kept at the ranch house sends out signals the human ear can't hear. The cattle collar receives the signal and sends a different signal back. This return signal, when received by the main device, allows the box to determine in which direction the collar lies. A rotating needle easily read by the operator points the way to the lost animal.

Stassen was delighted. Of course, the collar only worked on one animal at a time, so when he mentioned this oversight to Ms. Foucault, she went back to work. (rude, not to mention manipulative) By the time she was done, there were a dozen collars with individualized signals for each. Elated with her latest breakthrough, Ms. Maddie returned to him with her gift.

Less than a week after they had spent the day together attaching collars to the offending steers, Ms. Foucault arrived at the Stassen residence in time to see another young lady leaving. Borrowing a biting phrase her estranged father had often used, Harold explained that while "Maddie's little experiments" were all well and good, he much preferred a woman who knew her place was in the kitchen, not the laboratory. (tomorrow — go pound Stassen's face)

Since that turn of events, Ms. Foucault has been back in the lab, ignoring calls from her one-time sweetheart. Cattle stampedes are common in these parts, and she has a plan for inciting bovine rebellion from a distance. She claims military strategists will be her target market, but it's a fair guess that Harold Stassen should be more worried about her first target.

Ed.'s Note: Johnson's final, somewhat cryptic remark gives adequate cause for alarm; Mr. Stassen and Ms. Foucault were both reported missing about the same time as Mr. Johnson. We encourage our readers to report any relevant information immediately.