

Perilous parcels! A delivery to Preston, Idaho takes the posse into contested territory.

THE STORY SO FAR

Doctor Edmund Rickabaugh was a scientist in Smith & Robards's Research & Development division from 1871-1877 (precisely six years, six months, and six days). He was responsible for several enduring designs. Over his term of service, however, Dr. Rickabaugh's brilliance caught up with him in the form of several persistent dementias. When his designs began to turn continuously to the spirits of the dead, despite reprimands by his managers, Rickabaugh was deemed "insubordinate" and dismissed. He was also blacklisted; he could never again work for Smith & Robards or order merchandise from the catalog.

Disgraced and exiled from the City o' Gloom, Dr. Rickabaugh traveled across the border into Idaho and set up shop near the tiny Mormon settlement of Preston. He became interested in the site where the Bear River Massacre took place in January, 1863. Over time, he became convinced that altering gravitic conditions in the area would allow him to view and communicate with the restless dead. Without access to necessary parts or ghost rock, he was forced to turn to Smith & Robards—using a pseudonym, of course.

Meanwhile, Preston's Mormon residents are just now undertaking an orderly survey of the town in order to lay out lots and streets. And wouldn't you just know it? That process has drawn *other* interested parties to the scene: Iron Dragon and Wasatch survey teams looking to lock up any railroad right-of-way that might become available. It should come as no surprise that they've already started fightin' like catamounts and devil dogs.

THE SETUP

The posse gets involved in this convoluted tale while performing their typical duties as Smith & Robards express delivery agents. Their latest assignment seems straightforward: Deliver an *Epitaph* camera, a Gravitic Intensification Field Generator, and 10 lbs of ghost rock to Preston, Idaho (about 100 miles from the City o' Gloom, and 80 miles from Fort Bridger, Wyoming) to a recipient named Pleasant Colligan.

See the *Deadlands Player's Guide* for details on the *Epitaph* camera. The gravitic generator is described below. The shipment is heavy and expensive, worth \$5,850 total.

Gravitic Intensification Field Generator: This device is about the size of a small safe (3'x3'x3') and weighs roughly 350 lbs. When activated with a Weird Science roll, it intensifies gravity in an Large Burst Template centered on itself. Within the area, all Trait rolls suffer a -4 penalty, Pace is halved, and everyone makes a Vigor roll each round to avoid a level of Fatigue. Exhausted characters fall prone and stay that way for the duration of 10 minutes, or until the gizmo is shut off. If a Malfunction takes place, the effects are the same except a Strength roll is required to move any Pace at all, Vigor rolls are at -2, and the gizmo can only be shut off with a Repair roll (-2). Flimsy objects and structures may collapse at the Marshal's discretion.

PRESTON, IDAHO

Fear Level: 3

Preston was known as "Worm Creek" until 1881, for the rattler the first Mormon settlers killed just after they arrived. Then Brother Brigham found out about the less-than-flattering name and asked them kindly to



change it. And when Brother Brigham asks nicely, you best do what he says, amigo!

The town consists of only a few buildings and homes near Cub River in the Cache Valley, with a population of 47 Mormon settlers and local trappers. Surveying stakes are laid out in orderly patterns all around the flyspeck burg, promising new development.

- **Brazzleton Shebang:** The town has no saloon (due to the Mormon inhabitants' beliefs), so Peep Brazzleton's general store serves as meeting place, post office, town hall, jail, telegraph office, and most other civic functions. It stocks a wide array of gear and goods suited to frontier life. Peep is a garrulous sort, friendly and bright-eyed with a big beard.
- **Farmhouses:** Eight homes and farmsteads are located near the shebang in no discernible pattern.

DELIVERY COMPLICATIONS

Brazzleton Shebang is the shipment's destination, and Peep is happy to see newcomers. A few nondescript locals are gathered around the cracker barrel gossiping and sipping tea. Peep offers free refreshments and food, but when he inspects the bill of lading he says,

"You folks got the right place, that's for sure, but this recipient – Pleasant Colligan? – there ain't nobody in Preston goes by that name. Not that I heard of."

None of the other locals have heard the name before, either. Peep offers the use of his telegraph if the posse wants to wire headquarters for instructions.

Unknown to the heroes, one of the townsfolk isn't what he claims to be. This is Dr. Edmund Rickabaugh, who's been loitering around Peep's place waiting for his precious shipment to arrive. If the posse opts to wire for instructions, Rickabaugh bides his time; if they make like they're going to depart with the shipment, he speaks up (with a Persuasion roll):

"I say, did you mention Mr. Colligan? He's a drifter who's been doing odd jobs at my cabin. I can ensure the shipment reaches him if it's helpful to you."

If an opposed Notice roll by a posse member surpasses Rickabaugh's Persuasion roll, she suspects this fellow may not be telling the whole truth.

- **Peep Brazzleton & Local Folks (5):** Use Townsfolk profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

🌀 **Dr. Edmund Rickabaugh:** Use the Mad Scientist profile in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*, but he has the *bolt* (death ray) and *boost/lower Trait* powers.

THIEF IN THE NIGHT

If the posse opts to wire Smith & Robards for further direction, Peep says they can bed down in the stable (a return telegraph doesn't come through until the following morning). In that case, Dr. Rickabaugh breaks into the general store after midnight and steals

the shipment – the gravitic intensifier is equipped with a wheelbarrow-like chassis for ease of transport.

Whether Rickabaugh makes off with the shipment under cover of darkness, or convinces the posse to hand it over to him or accompany him, he takes it along a northwest trail to his one-room cabin and workshop. Once he has inspected the gizmos, he takes them a few more miles northwest to the Bear River Massacre site.

If the posse awakens the following morning to find the shipment stolen, a telegraph from Smith & Robards arrives in short order:

FORMER S&R EMPLOYEE EDMUND RICKABAUGH KNOWN TO RESIDE NEAR PRESTON STOP VERY DANGEROUS AND UNPREDICTABLE STOP DO NOT ALLOW HIM TO CLAIM SHIPMENT STOP RETURN GOODS TO HQ ON SIR ROBARDS ORDERS STOP

In this case the sodbusters' course of action is clear.

CASCADING TROUBLES

Here's where things get complex. An Iron Dragon survey team and a Wasatch X-squad are encamped near Preston. Each of them notices the posse's arrival, and they observe anyone leaving town with the goods.

RAIL WAR!

Neither group is willing to let a valuable, useful, or destructive Smith & Robards shipment get away. They begin stalking Rickabaugh and/or the posse in an attempt to take it – by force, if they have to.

- **Iron Dragon Surveyors (2 per hero):** Use Rail Warrior (Faction: Iron Dragon) in the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*. They ride velocipedes.
- **Wasatch X-Squad (2 per hero):** Use Rail Warrior (Faction: Wasatch) in the *Marshal's Handbook*. They have a steam wagon armed with a Gatling gun.

BEAR RIVER MASSACRE

If the gizmos end up at the massacre site (Fear Level 4; almost 250 Indians were killed by Union soldiers there in January 1863), Rickabaugh activates the gravitic intensifier and readies the *Epitaph* camera to photograph the ghosts of murdered Indian men, women, and children. Unfortunately, he only succeeds in waking up a whole mess of walkin' dead. When the rail warriors arrive on the scene a free-for-all ensues!

- **Walkin' Dead (5 per hero):** See the *Deadlands Marshal's Handbook*.

AFTERMATH

There are myriad ways this tale can play out, Marshal, based on chance and your posse's actions. The action might never reach the massacre site, or the heroes may foil Rickabaugh's attempt to steal the shipment. In either case, the rail warriors and Rickabaugh do their level best to ensure the posse doesn't leave Preston with goods intact. And they're all spoilin' for a fight!