CATTLE RUSTLERS!

THE TRIPLE S RANCH GOT HIT BY CATTLE RUSTLERS
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO FORM A POSSE

Things Was Pretty Calm At The
Lucky Ace Saloon....
Then The Deputy Marshal Came Crashing Through The Swinging
Doors Screaming Something About Cattle Rustlers....
Do You Dare To Volunteer For The Posse?

A Wild West Adventure Module For Use With

MARK HUNT'S

TALL TALES B/X RPG

CATTLE RUSTLERS!!

The town deputy marshal rushes into the Lucky Ace Saloon yelling "CATTLE RUSTLERS HAVE HIT THE TRIPLE S RANCH – I NEED VOLUNTEERS NOW! THEY MURDERED THE 3 BROTHERS AND ARE HOLD UP ON THE RANCH! THE MARSHAL AND A FEW RANCH HANDS ARE OUT THERE NOW, BUT THEY NEED HELP BAD!"

The owners of the the Triple S Ranch (Sam, Sid, and Steve Cutler) are well known and well liked all through the territory so 10 of the cowhands (see New Classes Appendix) in the saloon immediately volunteer. The deputy marshal then looks at you with a frantic look in hopes you will volunteer as well. Once all the volunteers are assembled out side the deputy marshal swears everybody in to "make it all legal like".

You can hear the local gunsmith tell the deputy marshal *"I'll go 'n git sum pistils, rifles, 'n bullets inna waggin anna have my boy fetch'em right out ta ya reel quik like"*. You then see the gunsmith run off towards his shop yelling at a teen boy to do exactly what he tells him to do.

"LET'S GO GET'EM BOYS!" the deputy marshal yells.....

The Triple S Ranch is about a 10 miles outside of town. The ranch is small compared to many in the area and consists of the Main House and Outhouse, Horse Barn and Corral, Storage Barn, Small Bunkhouse and Outhouse, Blacksmith Lean-to, and Smokehouse.

When the deputy marshal and his posse arrives all is silent and all of the ranch's horses and cattle is gone. It should not take long to discover things went bad for the marshal and the ranch hands since their bodies are easily found lying in the dirt dead.... Only 3 dead bodies of the rustlers are found. Obvious tracks of the cattle and horses are also found heading south towards the border.

The silence is broken when the deputy marshal yells .. "COME ON BOYS, THE TRAIL IS FRESH AND SHOULDN'T TAKE US LONG TO CATCH UP TO THEM!"

IF YOU PLAN ON BEING A PLAYER IN THIS MODULE... STOP READING HERE. ALL THAT FOLLOWS IS FOR THE GM EYES ONLY......

THE CHASE...

Tracking the cattle rustlers should not be a hard task to do for obvious reasons. The GM can add checks for things like river crossings, rocky terrain, etc... Also how long it takes for the deputy marshal and the posse to catch up to the cattle rustlers depends on how many random encounters the GM wishes to throw at the players. I do encourage the GM to throw some random encounters into the mix like wild animals attacking at night or the cattle rustlers or wild animals spooking the horses and the horses need to be gathered up in the morning (if the GM requires the chase to go beyond a day or more), The cattle rustlers might set up a couple of ambushes along the way to give them "time to get away". If any ambushes are used to slow them down, the number of rustlers left behind for the ambush should not be any more than 4 per ambush. The GM should play the ambushes up by either wounding, killing, or scaring off some of the posse but should also direct a few of the shots at the player characters as well... The GM can use the bandit and soldier stats found on pages 79-80 of the Tall Tales Rulebook for the ambushers. The GM can also use the new class Cowhand as well found in the "New Classes Appendix"

Once the posse catches up to the cattle rustlers there should be only the deputy marshal, 2 -3 members of the posse, and the player characters left.

If the players show signs of immediately attacking the cattle rustlers have the deputy marshal suggest that it might be easier to "Take Them" at night while the cattle is resting and part of their group is sleeping. If they choose this method the following will be encountered....

1) 4 cattle rustlers will be "minding the herd" If each one is surprised there is no chance for a stampede or waking the others in the camp. Otherwise they will try to alert the camp by shooting their gun which will automatically alert the camp and give a 75% chance of a stampede (see Optional Rules Appendix).

2) 2 cattle rustlers on night watch over the camp. If these 2 are surprised those sleeping and those watching the herb will not be alerted. Otherwise those watching the camp will yell out and this will alert those who are sleeping but the ones watching the herd will not be alerted for 1-4 rounds. If those watching the herd leave the herd, check for a stampede (5% plus 5% per round added for each round the herd is left unattended) every round.

3) 6 sleeping cattle rustlers can be surprised but if any of them wake up use the same method given for the the 2 watching the camp. If the posse decides

to try to "Take Them" while they are "Driving The Herd", The herd will stampede. The GM needs to check the morale of each cattle rustler and all who fail will attempt to escape. See "Optional Rules Appendix" for combat during a stampede.

If 7 cattle rustlers are killed, escapes, or taken prisoner the GM should check for morale. Any cattle rustler who fails their morale will 1-3 try to run or 4-6 surrender (using a D6).
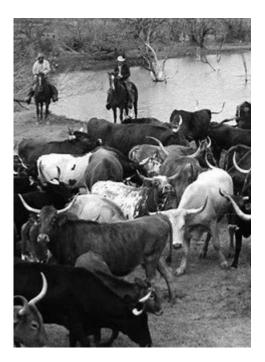
WHAT COMES NEXT....

The deputy marshal asks you to help shackle any remaining cattle rustler that is alive and help bury any of the dead. The deputy marshal could care less if any of the posse loots the dead bodies since he figures this is the payment for volunteering. Once they are done......

"GATHER UP THAT CATTLE AND ANY HORSES YOU CAN FIND. WE WILL BE SPENDING THE NIGHT HERE AND BE HEADING BACK TO TOWN AT FIRST LIGHT! Barks the deputy at any remaining posse members.

The ride back can be as eventful as the GM wishes....

1) The remaining cattle rustlers can make multiple escape attempts

2) The cattle rustlers can try to bribe the deputy marshal or any of the remaining posse
3) The cattle can stampede
4) "Friends" of the cattle rustlers can lodge an attack to free the prisoners
5) Another group of cattle rustlers might try to take the cattle.
6) Wild animals attack the cattle
7) or ???

If the GM wishes the cattle rustlers could have been working for a powerful local ranch owner trying to squeeze out the small ranches in the area. This would make for a possible mystery for the player characters to pursue if evidence "turns up" during questioning of the cattle rustlers, during the trial, or even something at the Triple S ranch that "just doesn't add up"

** New Classes Appendix **

Cowhand

Level	Title	XP	HD
1	Greenhorn	0	D6
2	Hired Hand	3,000	2D6
3	Trail Hand	6,000	3D6
4	Drover	15,000	3D6+2
5	Trail Boss	35,000	3D6+4
6	Foreman	55,000	4D6+2

"Nothing seperates the men from the boys any better than trying to herd cattle... They are the meanest and most unpredictable critters ever created" - Clem Lawson

Prime Ability: Dex/Con - +3 XP Bonus With 13+ Scores In Both Abilities.

Restrictions: None

Special Abilities: Starting at 2nd level the cowhand gets a +2 dexterity bonus when doing tasks that involve cows (like roping and bulldogging). At 4th Level the cowhand gets a +3 bonus to dexterity when doing tasks that involve cattle. At 6th level the cowhand gets a +1 charisma bonus when dealing with other cowhands.

On top of the above the cowhand has to be highly skilled with his horse. Keeping in the spirit of this, all 3rd level cowhands get a +1 bonus when rolling for their riding save. Once the cowhand achieves 6th level this bonus becomes a +2.

Calming Song

Every cowhand knows that when the herd starts getting restless the chances of a stampede is at hand. Once a herd is considered restless, the cowhand can call upon their Calming Song. This can be anything from humming, whistling, to singing (but don't confuse this with the class of the singing cowboy). This song can be called upon once per day and affects up to 250 head of cattle per cowhand using it. This reduces the chances of stampede of the cattle affected by it by 25%. For more information on how to handle stampedes in a game.... see "New Optional Rules Appendix".

** New Optional **
** Rules Appendix **

Stampede

*"Every cowhand's nightmare begins with the word **stampede** when out on a cattle drive"* - Nat Shane

A down and dirty definition of a stampede is simple when it comes to a cowhand.... A frightened herd of cattle running headlong and out of control destroying everything and everybody in their path including themselves.

Many things can cause such a herd to panic including but not limited to the following: bad weather, the smell of water when thirsty, the scent of a preditory wild animal, gunfire, the smell of the smoke from a wildfire, and many many more reasons.

Once a stampede begins there is really only one way to stop it and that is to ride ahead of the herd and using whatever it takes to turn them. This usually means that the cowhand is putting themselves at high risk of injury and death (usually happens by a tramplingby the cattle from being thrown from a spooked horse). Typical methods of turning a herd are yelling and firing your pistol into the air in an attempt to distract them from their panic.

Damage from trampling is typically an automatic hit to the cowhand that is laying on the ground and deals out 1D4hp per round. The cowhand has a chance to escape a stampede on foot using their quickness save (or other method at the GM's choice) Once the cowhand loses half their total HP's, they are considered knocked out and will need to be rescued by another cowhand. Any cowhand trying to rescue another cowhand needs to make a DEX check as well as a quickness save (unlesws the GM has a better way to resolve it)

Base chances of a "Threat Of Stampede" is simple. On a non-threatening rest the GM rolls for a chance of a stampede when the cattle is stopped and resting. The base chance is 1% with an additional +1% per hour of rest. Of course there are modifiers to add to this and some examples are listed below:

1) Gunfire: +75%
2) Wildfire Smoke: +60%
3) Water Scent: +15%
4) Wild Animal Scent: +20%
5) Bad Weather: +10%

The GM is encouraged to modify the examples above due to how severe the thret is, how close the threat is, and other factors not listed. The GM should also expand on the examples above based on the needs and desires of each situation.

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