

# GURPS® Horror

# THE OLD STONE FORT

*A 1920s Adventure for the Generic Universal Roleplaying System*

By Don Rapp  
Developed and Edited by Mike Moe

*Beverly Hale, Managing Editor; Ken Trobaugh, Art Director*  
*Cover Art by Jean Martin; Interior Art by David Kimmel and Don Rapp;*

*Additional Interiors by Carl Manz and Czeslaw Sornat.*

*Map graphics by Don Rapp, Carl Manz and Czeslaw Sornat.*

*Production by Carl Manz, Czeslaw Sornat and Melinda Spray.*

*GURPS System Design by Steve Jackson; System Development by David Ladyman.*

Playtesters: Jim Bjork, Shaun Breadner, Nick Christenson, Richard Dewsnap, Richard Edwards, Chris Elliott, Melony Fender, Martin Hives, David Ladyman, Matthew Marks, Mike Marks, Phillip McGregor, Steven McGuigan, John S. Olson, Dan Ormiston, T. Michael Pederson, Maria Spartz, Chris Swanson, The Wrecking Crew (Ray Carter, Eric Jerome, Dean Kenady, Larry Stohr, Mike Vragel, Bill Williams, Cindy Yarbrough, Todd Yarbrough), Charles Wright.  
Respectfully dedicated to Pig Eyes, Patti and Ward Weems. — Don Rapp

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<b>INTRODUCTION</b> . . . . .	<b>2</b>	Indian Witches and Evil Beings . . . . .	13
Players' Introduction . . . . .	2	<i>The Night Goers</i> . . . . .	14
GM's Introduction . . . . .	2	<i>The Raven Mocker</i> . . . . .	15
<i>About the Adventure</i> . . . . .	2	<i>When the Raven Mocker Appears</i> . . . . .	15
Abbreviations . . . . .	2	<i>The Water Cannibals</i> . . . . .	16
About GURPS . . . . .	3	<i>The Moon-Eyed People</i> . . . . .	17
Professor Moorehead . . . . .	3	<i>The Windigo</i> . . . . .	18
Character Creation . . . . .	4	<i>The Windigo From History</i> . . . . .	18
New Skills . . . . .	4	<i>Going Windigo</i> . . . . .	19
Replacement Characters . . . . .	4	<i>Curing One Who Has Gone Windigo</i> . . . . .	19
Author's Note . . . . .	4	<i>When the Windigo Appears</i> . . . . .	19
<b>BACKGROUND</b> . . . . .	<b>5</b>	Magic . . . . .	20
Tennessee in 1925 . . . . .	5	<i>Magic Items</i> . . . . .	20
<i>Tennessee Today</i> . . . . .	5	<i>Spell Components</i> . . . . .	21
Nashville in 1925 . . . . .	5	Medicine Men . . . . .	21
<i>Nashville Today</i> . . . . .	6	<i>Shamanism and the Shaman</i> . . . . .	21
Manchester in 1925 . . . . .	6	New Spells . . . . .	21
<i>Manchester Today</i> . . . . .	8	<b>WHERE IS MOOREHEAD?</b> . . . . .	<b>23</b>
Manchester Locations . . . . .	8	<b>COMPLETING THE SURVEY</b> . . . . .	<b>42</b>
<i>The Manchester Police</i> . . . . .	10	<b>SAVING MANCHESTER</b> . . . . .	<b>47</b>
The Old Stone Fort . . . . .	11	<b>APPENDIX</b> . . . . .	<b>60</b>
<i>The Old Stone Fort Today</i> . . . . .	11	Glossary . . . . .	60
Equipment and Services . . . . .	12	Bibliography . . . . .	60
<i>Available Equipment</i> . . . . .	12	<i>The Cherokee Alphabet</i> . . . . .	60
<b>MYTHOLOGY AND MAGIC</b> . . . . .	<b>13</b>		
Mythology . . . . .	13		

# STEVE JACKSON GAMES

## INTRODUCTION

### Players' Introduction

The adventure begins on a brisk day in late August of 1925, when one of the PCs (a colleague of Professor Moorehead and preferably an academic, student, explorer or occultist) receives a letter in the mail. The return address on the envelope is George Peabody College, Nashville, Tennessee. There is nothing else to distinguish it as being of any particular importance.

Opening the envelope, its recipient finds a letter printed on the letterhead of the Tennessee Academy of Science. The letter reads as follows:

*"I realize that we met only briefly during the last symposium, but I am at a loss. The disappearance of your old mentor, Professor Moorehead, has troubled me deeply. If there is any way in which I might presume upon that brief meeting and upon your respect for Professor Moorehead, I implore you to come to Nashville at once! Time is of the essence, and I fear the worst!*

*"Speaking for Peabody College and the Academy as well, I can offer you some financial assistance, plus the resources of both institutions, in aid of your investigation. Of course, we will have to keep the exact nature of your (shall I say) "mission" a secret. Perhaps if you were to gather a party and apply in person to complete Moorehead's archaeological survey of the area in and around the Old Stone Fort?*

*"Please reply soonest."*

The letter is signed: "Dr. Drew McGill; Curator, Indian Legends Department; Tennessee Academy of Science."

The PC recalls the many occasions when he had the privilege of working with Moorehead in his investigations of early American antiquities and legends. He also vaguely remembers having met McGill the previous year at the annual symposium chaired by Moorehead, where McGill presented a paper on the legends of the Indians of Tennessee.

*If you intend to be a player in this adventure, read no further. The rest of this book is for the GM's eyes only.*

### GM's Introduction

The Old Stone Fort, near the rural town of Manchester, Tennessee, has been the setting for legends of the Ancient Ones since before the white man came. The Indians who once inhabited the area told tales that were passed down from their fathers, and from their fathers' fathers — tales of witches who gathered at the center of the fort's enclosure, and of the ceremonies performed there.

During the early years of the nineteenth century, the males of the Struver clan fell under the influence of the Ancient Ones. In 1817, Ephraim Struver obtained the only known copy of Thruston's *On the Uses of the Old Stone Fort near Manchester in Certain Unwholesome Ceremonies by the Red Indians*. In this book, he learned that it was possible to open gateways for the Ancient Ones to cross over from the Other Side. The creation of a permanent gateway would require the completion of five ceremonies over four generations. The Ancient Ones, in gratitude for being allowed access to This Side, would grant their summoners immortality, power and wealth. Staggered by these revelations and filled with religious fanaticism, Struver embarked on a plan which would eventually allow him and his descendants to rule as Kings of the Witches.

### About the Adventure

*The Old Stone Fort* is a **GURPS Horror** adventure for three to six 100-point characters. It is suitable for either *full magic* or *secret magic* campaigns. While the adventure is written for 1925, it can be readily adapted for present-day campaigns (see sidebars, pp. 6, 8 and 10). With the exception of prices and an institution or two, it can be run almost "as is," regardless of the date.

The adventure is intended to be played over several sessions. The background information in this book can easily kick off a continuing campaign in the Tennessee area. The dwellers on the Other Side are constantly seeking access to This Side . . .

With some minor changes, the town of Manchester can be moved to any other locale, and thus can serve as a setting for almost any adventure. Such small towns have been the settings for many continuing series of horror stories and novels. Popular examples include: Arkham, in the Cthulhu mythos stories of H. P. Lovecraft; Harrisonburg, in the Jules de Grandin stories of Seabury Quinn; Oxrun Station, in the stories of Charles L. Grant; and Greystone Bay, in the horror anthologies edited by Grant.

In the center of the book is a 4-page pull-out section with maps and clues. The GM may cut these out and give them to his players at appropriate points in the adventure. He may wish to cut up the stone fragments into their individual pieces, requiring the players to assemble them.

The GM should read this book thoroughly before starting play.

### Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used to represent **GURPS** worldbooks:

- A = Autoduel
- B = Basic Set
- BY = Bestiary
- F = Fantasy
- H = Horror
- HC = Horseclans
- HX = Humanx

Thus, p. H23 refers to **GURPS Horror**, p. 23.