



Suppressed Timeline: Alternate Falkenstein

by Kenneth Hite

*"History never embraces more than a small part of reality."
- - Francois, Duc de la Rochefoucauld, Paul Sabatier*

This is something of an experimental Transmission. It's not just an Alternate History, it's an Alternate Alternate History for the [R. Talsorian](#) RPG *Castle Falkenstein*, a game (if you're not familiar with it) which can best be summed up as a Victorian Adventure Steampunk Fantasy; sort of *Shadowrun: 1870*. This specific timeline addresses one or two flaws I perceived in the conventional *Falkenstein* history (you can't have California if the Indians never let anyone go west) and expands others in more detail, such as the specific nature of the Dragon Kingdoms of the East. Where a given event isn't listed, assume it happened either roughly as per conventional history, or as per the orthodox *Falkenstein* history on p. 35 of the rulebook. If you enjoy it, there may be more Suppressed Timelines in the future; if not, we shall never speak of it again, and it shall be as though it never happened. As indeed, technically, it didn't.

3246 B.C.

The Great Deluge of Noah, according to the Septuagint; the Destruction of Atlantis.

2953 B.C.

The Dragon Emperor Tai-Yueh founds the Celestial Empire of China, making Fu-Hsi the first Human Emperor (or Viceroy) of the Celestial Empire, bestowing the Mandate of Heaven upon his Hsia Dynasty. A trickle of Dragons dissatisfied with the Celestial rule journey to the West.

1591 B.C.

Hermes Trismegistus writes the *Book of Thoth*, codifying the Laws of Magick.

1322 B.C.

Second Battle of Moytura ends the War between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts; the Seelie are victorious, but both sides begin intermarriage with Humanity to build up their strength.

1289 B.C.

Discovery of iron smelting by the Hittites several years earlier leads to Unseelie plans to exterminate Humanity; Auberon of the Seelie tricks Balar of the Unseelie into signing the First Compact, preventing Faerie-Human warfare.

1122 B.C.

Dissident Dragon Lord sets up his own Kingdom in Corea; later dissidents establish Dragon Kingdoms in Japan (660 B.C.), AnNam (207 B.C.), and Birmah (628 A.D.).

884 B.C.

Asshur-izir-pal begins Assyrian wars of conquest with iron weapons used in large amounts; Faerie begin to withdraw from Human civilisations.

770 B.C.

Death of the Dragon Emperor Tai-Yueh leads to divisions in the Dragon Court as various Dragon factions support divergent claimants to the Throne of Jade. This division is reflected in the revolt of the Warring States against the Chou Viceroy. The Tong Societies also originate in these divisions, as various Dragon factions create Human secret societies to advance their agendas.

344 B.C.

Aristotle writes *On Thaumaturgy*, systematising magickal thought for the next 2,000 years. His pupil Alexander the Great founds the Library of Alexandria (331 B.C.), which becomes the centre for magickal research, blending Aristotelian thaumaturgical logic with Egyptian and Persian magickal technique.

212 B.C.

Archimedes invents a number of Infernal Devices to resist Roman conquest, but upon his death ten years later, Syracuse falls to the Romans anyway. His notebooks are lost.

51 B.C.

Julius Caesar completes his conquest of Gaul to the Rhine, extending Roman control into Faerie territories. He is resisted by the Druids, but aided by the Alexandrine sorcerers provided to Rome by Cleopatra.

61 A.D.

In the aftermath of Boadicea's Rebellion against Roman rule in Britain, Roman Legions disperse the Druid College on Mona in Wales. Some Druids and Faerie travel to North America in the Flying Wheel of Simon Magus. Many Faerie make North America their new home, due to the press of Humanity in the Old World, although many others remain in Ireland and in other fringe areas.

303 A.D.

St. George of Cappadocia martyred, after killing numerous Dragons in the Roman West by various techniques, which are passed down to his followers.

389 A.D.

A mob burns the Library of Alexandria, irreparably damaging the Roman magickal infrastructure. The Unseelie seize this opportunity to begin actively aiding the barbarian tribes.

451 A.D.

Attila the Hun leads a vast army of Huns and Unseelie "advisors" across the Inner Sea, which is frozen by the Unseelie and anti-Christian sorcerors. He is stopped at Chalons by a force of Seelie, Romans, and Visigoths. Although Good has Triumphed, Civilisation has been destroyed, as the Unseelie and Huns continue to ravage Europe. In the ensuing Dark Ages, the Faerie (especially those of partial Human stock) spread over the European continent, although they find themselves increasingly tied to the Earth by their Human blood.

542 A.D.

King Arthur dies at the hands of Mordred, his son by his Unseelie Nemesis, Morgaine. His Kingdom of Camelot, which had foreshadowed our own time in its just treatment of Faerie and Human alike and its encouragement of both the Magick of Merlin and the Science of Sir Boss of Connecticut, is destroyed by Unseelie treachery and ignorant German barbarism. The Holy Grail is lost shortly before this time.

967 A.D.

A Dragon Lord named Kulkulkan attempts to establish a Dragon Kingdom in the lands of first the Toltecs, and then the Mayans. Driven out by Unseelie and Evil Sorcerors of a human-sacrifice cult, he promises to return in the Year One Reed.

997 A.D.

Pope Sylvester decrees that Magick is not Satanic, although anti-Christian sorcerors remain anathema.

1000

Dwarfs travel to the New World with the Viking colonists.

1215

Genghis Khan leads the Mongols against the Dragon Empire. His use of rockets, man-carrying kites, cannon and clouds of arrows against the Dragons leads to their defeat and the Mongol conquest of Northern China. Dragons defeat Mongol fleet, however, in its attempted invasion of Japan (1282).

1318

The Unseelie Death Cult inspires the Indians to destroy the Irish and Viking colonies in the New World. The Dwarfs retreat into the Appalachian mountains.

1368

The Dragons and their Tong allies evict the Mongols, and institute the Ming Dynasty. To insure that their Human subjects remain weak, the Dragon Emperors turn against rockets and cannon development. China, once the most advanced of civilisations, sinks into sloth and decadence.

1482

Leonardo da Vinci enters the service of the Dukes of Milan as an Engineer and artist. His designs for aircraft and for Martial Engines are centuries ahead of their time, but the lack of a suitable power plant and Leonardo's morbid fear of Dwarfs (he was an unusually tall man himself) prevents the most ambitious of them from being built. Moving between Milan, Florence and Paris, Leonardo at some point produced the *Lost Notebook*, a treatment of Magickal Engines. Suppressed by the Church, no copies are known to exist.

1558

Queen Elizabeth of England, on her crowning, publicly invites the Faerie to return to England.

1588

Sir Francis Drake and Solomon Kane defeat the Spanish Armada, and sorcerer John Dee and King Auberon of Faerie destroy the Armada's survivors in a mighty storm.

1644

As the Ming Dynasty becomes too sclerotic even for the Dragon Emperor, the Mandate of Heaven is passed to the Manchoo Ching Dynasty. As always, there are factions within the Dragon Court who do not accept the decision, and continue to intrigue against the Manchoos with the Tong Societies.

1649

The Puritan Commonwealth under Oliver Cromwell engages in persecutions of sorcerors and Faerie. In 1660, with Faerie aid, the Stuarts are restored to the English Throne.

1793

Execution of the Faerie Count of Broceliande (and many other French nobles with Faerie blood) during the Reign of Terror turns many Faerie against the French Revolution. During the Napoleonic Wars, the British Navy, with a substantial Faerie complement, defeats Napoleon's fleets at Trafalgar (1805). The contest between Britain and France leads to Bonaparte investing heavily in dirigible balloons. The American, Robert Fulton, designs a Steam Torpedo which, although it is too late to help the French at Trafalgar, does enable Bonaparte's Navy to clear the Inner Sea (1806). The following year, the Royal Navy begins using Congreve Rockets against French aerostats, with some success.

1814

Sir George Cayley develops a Congreve Rocket Glider, capable of carrying three men. Glider Corps are used in the remainder of the Peninsular Campaign and in

Waterloo (1815).

1838

Hassan Ali Shah becomes the Aga Khan of Afghanistan after his Assassin Order is ejected from Persia.

1842

Using ironclad steam warships and Congreve Rockets, the British Navy defeats a force of Dragons attempting to prevent their landing near Canton. The British force the Dragon Emperor to cede Hongkong to Britain, and allow trade into the country. Turmoil and confusion grips the Dragon Court. A number of Dragon Lords sent to Europe as ambassadors. They spread Tong Societies in Europe as well, with some Dragon Lords, according to rumour, becoming Criminal Masterminds in the slums of Limehouse or the Marais.

1849

Brigham Young and his Mormon followers found the State of Deseret in the Ute Territory. William Walker conquers Sonora and Lower California for the California Territorial government. California's petition for statehood (1850) is rejected by the Southern-leaning Fillmore Administration, angering the Californians. Taiping Mystical Society rebels against the Dragon Emperor in China, leading to widespread warfare.

1853

Henri Giffard invents the Steam Dirigible.

1856

William Walker makes himself President of Nicaragua; annexes Costa-Rica the following year. The defeat of westerner John C. Fremont for the American Presidency by the South-leaning James Buchanan sparks further discontent in the lawless California Territory.

1859

DeLesseps Compagnie begins work on Suez and Nicaragua Canals. Lord Palmerston attempts to revoke the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly in western Canada and turn it over to the Steam Lords' conglomerate. The Company's Director, Lord Selkirk, responds by declaring the Company a Sovereign and Independent Power. Backed by the Nez Perce and Tlingit Indians and several Faerie Lords, he is able to achieve de facto sovereignty.

1861

The secession of the South leads to Civil War in the United States. The Cherokee and many other Indian Tribes declare against the Union and begin using Unseelie aid and native sorcerous rites to carry the attack into Union territory. Transatlantic telegraphy cable laid. Following the defeat at Antietam (1862), U.S. Secretary of War Stanton conspires with Palmerston to sell California to the British. The plot revealed, California secedes, although the Oregon Country elects to join the Hudson's Bay Sovereign Company instead. Federal troops attempting to reconquer it are destroyed

by the Indians, who form the Twenty Nations League under Chief Stand Watie and Medicine Man Sitting Bull. Faerie and Dragons aid California in destroying Federal and Russian fleets attempting to take San Francisco. A Californian plebiscite open to Faerie, Dragons, Dwarfs and Humans of all races elects an Electoral Convention which finally decides to make California an Empire under Joshua Norton. Norton accepts the throne, and the Bear Flag Empire is declared. Stanton's firing and the reorganisation of the Union Army under General Grant restores Union fortunes, and when a New Yorker named Anderson invents the Guidable Aereon (1863), the Union is able to recover its lost territory and go on the offensive.

1865

Following the final defeat of the Confederacy, President Lincoln is shot by a deranged actor. Although his life is despaired of, he is healed by a visiting Brother of St. Boniface, and finishes his term by building a genuine Reconstruction and negotiating a modus vivendi with the Twenty Nations.

1866

War between Austria and Prussia. A last-minute reversal at Koenigsseig and the forces of the Second Compact prevent the Prussians from consolidating their victory.

1867

Nicaragua Canal opened by President Walker of Nicaragua. The Khedive Ali of Egypt opens the Suez Canal two years later.

1868

The Shogun of Japan's Ninja Soldiers assassinate the Dragon Emperor of Japan, and the Shogun Satsuma makes himself master of the islands. The Shogunate immediately begins a campaign of modernisation, building railroads, steam manufactories, and warships of the most modern type available.

[Past Columns](#)

Article publication date: December 4, 1998

92 *Pyramid* subscribers rated this article **3.25** on a scale of 1 to 5. Visit the [ratings page](#) for more info.

Copyright © 1998 by [Steve Jackson Games](#). All rights reserved. Pyramid subscribers are permitted to read this article online, or download it and print out a single hardcopy for personal use. Copying this text to any other online system or BBS, or making more than one hardcopy, is *strictly prohibited*. So please don't. And if you encounter copies of this article elsewhere on the web, please report it to webmaster@sjgames.com.



[Home](#) - [Subscribe!](#) - [Current Issue](#) - [Playtesting](#) - [Chat](#) - - - [Feedback](#)