

WEST

SINCLAIR QL

Programmed by

ALLAN BLACK and JON MALONE

Title Page Graphics by

MIKE MASTERS

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The story so far

It is the year 1885, somewhere in the Wild West. You are on the track of a notorious gang of robbers who have gone to ground near an abandoned mining town, deep in Indian territory. They have hidden their loot — the proceeds of a bank hold-up — somewhere in the town. Your objective is to gain promotion to the rank of Marshal. To do so you must outwit and outgun the robbers and other antagonists, collect as much loot as possible and piece together clues on how to escape.

How to load the game

Ensure that the QL, the TV and the power supply are correctly connected to each other and to the mains.

Press the reset button on the right-hand side of the QL. Place the backup cartridge into drive 1 and the master into drive 2. Select F1 or F2. The program will load and display the title page. **Don't remove either cartridge at this point.** Hit any key to proceed — this initiates a security check on drive 2. Once the drives have stopped spinning, you may remove both cartridges.

Refer to the back cover for instructions on how to make a backup copy.

To play the game

Seasoned adventurers can read on. Those less experienced should first of all read the introductory booklet, 'A Blueprint for Adventurers', supplied with this game.

You explore the town and surrounding area by typing the appropriate instructions followed by ENTER. For example, 'GO EAST', 'EAST', and 'E' will all send you in that direction. The computer understands between 200 and 300 words and about as many phrases.

As with all good adventures, there is a strict set of rules by which you can discover the words and phrases the computer understands. This means that you can experiment with vocabulary before starting on your adventure.

If you type a word that the computer does not recognise it will respond with "I don't know that word".

If you type a phrase and all the words are unrecognised the computer will respond with "I don't understand."

If you use a verb, but omit the object you want to apply it to, the computer responds with a specific message. For example, SHOOT SNEAK (a mistype), will generate "I don't know what you want to shoot."

If you type in a noun, for example BOTTLE, but leave out the verb, the computer responds with "I don't know what you want to do with the bottle."

To get you started, the following words and phrases may be of use:

inventory	the computer tells you all the objects you are currently carrying (or wearing)
look	describe the current location
examine X	ask the machine for help about X
climb, push, shoot,	some useful verbs
mount, load.	

TRAVEL AND DESCRIPTIONS

In the world you are exploring, things happen continuously outside your control; rattlesnakes slither past, Indians charge and robbers appear and shoot at you.

Events also happen in real time. If your trigger finger hesitates when a robber appears, you may not live to regret it! You begin your quest at dawn and progress through the day; high noon is followed by evening and then night.

All moves made outside the town are of random length. If you put something down, go away and then immediately retrace your steps, you may not find the object ever again.

You start the game with only your six gun. As you progress, you will find various items in different parts of the town which will help you survive and further your quest. Not all the objects are immediately visible — in some cases, you'll need considerable ingenuity to find them. In each game, some items are placed in random locations while others are fixed. This means that no two games are ever the same. . . .

Remember that the computer does not always tell you all possible exits from a location. It may be worth trying all sensible moves until you are really sure nothing has been concealed from you.

PONTOON (or Blackjack)

The robbers are hardened gamblers. If you meet a robber while carrying a pack of cards, you may be challenged to a game of Pontoon. You probably already know the rules of the game, but here is a brief resumé.

The robber shuffles the pack of cards at the start of each game. He deals himself two cards, one face up and one face down, and then deals you two cards face up.

The values of the cards:

An ace is worth 1 or 11.

The court cards (King, Queen, Jack) are worth 10 points each.

All other cards are worth their face value.

The object of the game is to hold two or more cards that are worth twenty one or as near twenty one as possible without going above this value. For example, a six, a four and an ace count as twenty one, but a seven, a four and an ace count as twelve — to value the ace as 11 would put you above twenty one.

A 'natural' twenty one is an ace and a card worth 10 — a court card or a ten — which are dealt as the first two cards. This wins outright unless the robber also draws a natural, in which case you draw.

After the initial deal is made, the robber asks you whether you want another card. You can refuse (Stick) or accept (Twist) — in Blackjack, you would say 'Hit me'. You are then dealt another card face up. You continue until

- a) you decide to stick
- b) the value of your cards is over 21 — in which case you lose.

It's now the robber's turn. He turns up his face down card and proceeds to take additional cards in the same way as you did. In some gambling dens, the dealer has to stop at 17 or less but these robbers are no sticklers for the rules — they may twist even if the value of their cards is more than 17!

SAVE and RESTORE

The SAVE command records your current game on to a microdrive. The RESTORE command enables you to continue a game from the place you left off.

The SAVE command has a novel 'notepad' feature. This enables you to leave some notes — about one screen of text — with the game. When you RESTORE a game, the note is given back to you. You can use the notepad to keep memory jogs such as the places you want to examine next.

Before issuing the SAVE command, place a microdrive cartridge with at least 14 free blocks in the left-hand drive. Type SAVE and ENTER. You will be prompted for your note which you terminate with an exclamation mark (!). The game and the note will be saved — this will take about 30 seconds. Once the SAVE is under way, the system will respond with its usual prompt. The microdrive will continue running for another 10 seconds or so. Until the drive stops running you must not switch off your computer, or you may lose your SAVE file.

To return to a previously saved game, first load the adventure as normal. Place the cartridge with the saved game in drive one and type RESTORE and ENTER. The computer will print out any message you have left and respond with the usual prompt. You can continue your adventure from where you left off.

Occasionally the SAVE or RESTORE operation may fail. This can happen, for example, if there is insufficient free space on the cartridge or if the cartridge is write-protected. If an error does occur the bland message ERROR will be printed. Correct the source of the error and repeat the operation.

Scoring

You score points by:

- a) collecting objects — but beware, some are worthless!
- b) reaching inaccessible locations.

You lose points by getting killed.

At any point in the game, you can find out your rating by typing SCORE. When you finally solve the adventure and escape from the town you type QUIT or STOP. You will then be awarded a 'rank' — the best possible rank is Marshal.

You have 3 lives. To restart the game, you must reload it from scratch or RESTORE a version from a saved cartridge.

It is not possible to score maximum points if you have been killed but it is still worth continuing to gain experience.

WEST is a difficult adventure and you should expect it to take some time to solve. If you get seriously stuck you can always write to Allan Black or Jon Malone at:

TALENT COMPUTER SYSTEMS
CURRAN BUILDING
101 ST. JAMES ROAD
GLASGOW G4 0NS.

explaining as carefully as possible what your problem is and enclosing a stamped addressed envelope. They will do their best to assist you.

TO MAKE A BACKUP COPY

Switch on the machine and select F1 or F2. The screen will change colour. Then insert the original cartridge into drive 1 and a blank cartridge into drive 2. Type the command:

LRUN MDV1_BACKUP

(Make sure that you type 1 and underscore, not the letter l and hyphen). This program will format the cartridge in drive 2 and copy all necessary files on to it. You will get the message 'Backup complete' when the operation has finished. This takes about 6 minutes. You may make as many backup copies as you like, but note that the backups will not run unless the master cartridge is present.

A microdrive needs 214 sectors to hold ZKUL and 200 to hold WEST. Some microdrive cartridges contain insufficient sectors to hold these programs. Should you be unfortunate enough to have one of them, the backup program will fail with the message 'Drive full'. We have arranged the backup sequence in such a way that, in the event of such an error, only the last few lines of the title page picture will be lost.

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