

CROSSROADS OF THE GOTHIC EARTH

SECOND EDITION

A Netbook for the *Masque of the
Red Death* setting

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All submissions have been edited to use Americanized spelling. This was done simply to give *Crossroads of the Gothic Earth* a more coherent appearance, and should not be meant as a slight against our Anglicized authors. Some articles have been edited for clarity.
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Crossroads of the Gothic Earth

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3.	England	
A PENNY DREADFUL: Episode I	4.	Glastonbury Abbey	28.
by Joe Bardales		by Charles Phipps	
NORTH AMERICA		France	
The United States		Le Louvre	30.
Illinois	7.	by Jarrod R. Lowe	
by Timothy S. Brannan		Poland	
Massachusetts		Bialystok	33.
Salem	10.	by Marcin Perkowski	
by Joe Bardales		Russia	
New York		Odessa	34.
Albany	13.	by Daniel J. Bandera	
by John W. Mangrum		WESTERN ASIA	
New York City	16.	Palestine	
by Joe Bardales		Akko (Acre)	36.
South Dakota		by David Alexander	
Sica Hollow	18.	Ammon	37.
by John P. Stacey		by David Alexander	
Texas		Jaffa	38.
Houston and Southern Texas	20.	by David Alexander	
by Daniel J. Bandera		Jericho	39.
Canada		by David Alexander	
Newfoundland		Jerusalem	40.
St. John's	22.	by David Alexander	
by Matthew Ball		Shechem (Nablus)	42.
Nova Scotia		by David Alexander	
Wolfville	23.	Zefat (Saffed)	43.
by Matthew Ball		by David Alexander	
CENTRAL AMERICA		WORLD CORRESPONDENTS	45.
Mexico		INDEX TO EXISTING SITES	47.
San Miguel de Cozumel	24.	POSTSCRIPT	48.
by Daniel J. Bandera			
Vera Cruz	25.		
by Daniel J. Bandera			
SOUTH AMERICA			
Chile			
Temuco	27.		
by Eduardo Pando			
EUROPE			

Crossroads: Introduction

IN THE 1890 S, NO CORNER OF GOTHIC EARTH REMAINS UNTOUCHED BY THE RED DEATH. EVER SINCE THE EGYPTIAN PRIEST IMHOTEP UNWITTINGLY ALLOWED THE RED DEATH ACCESS TO THE WORLD, IT HAS INSIDIOUSLY SPREAD ACROSS GOTHIC EARTH TO CORRUPT AND PERVERT EVERY LAND AND EVERY CULTURE LIKE A MALIGNANT CANCER. IT HAS RADIATED FROM ITS POINT OF ENTRY ON THE COAT TAILS OF HUMAN HISTORY AND DISCOVERY, NEVER FAR BEHIND WHEREVER AND WHENEVER MANKIND STEPS FOR THE FIRST TIME. IT INVARIABLY LEAVES ITS MARK ON EVERYTHING PURE AND INNOCENT IT COMES ACROSS, AND LEAVES IN ITS WAKE A FOUL TRAIL OF CORRUPTION.

CROSSROADS OF THE GOTHIC EARTH IS AN ATLAS OF SOME OF THE LESSER KNOWN CORNERS AND CREVICES OF GOTHIC EARTH THAT THE RED DEATH HAS MANAGED TO FIND AND CORRUPT. IT CONTAINS SOME OF THE SMALLER HUMAN SETTLEMENTS THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN OVERLOOKED BY THE ADEPTS AND SCHOLARS IN THEIR WORKS OF FORBIDDEN LORE, BUT NONETHELESS HAVE COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THE RED DEATH AND ITS MINIONS. IN ADDITION TO SETTLED HABITATIONS, IT CONTAINS GEOGRAPHICAL FEATURES AND LANDMARKS THAT HAVE ALSO IN SOME WAY BEEN TOUCHED BY THE MALIGNANT HAND OF THE RED DEATH.

THE GREATEST WEAPON FOR FIGHTING THE RED DEATH AND ITS MINIONS IS KNOWLEDGE. THIS ATLAS ATTEMPTS TO FILL IN SOME OF THE GAPS TO MAKE THE FIGHT A LITTLE EASIER FOR THE CHAMPIONS OF ALL THAT IS GOOD.

JOE BARDALES, *Kargatane*

NOTE: *Crossroads of the Gothic Earth* is intended for the Dungeon Master's eyes only. Individual DMs should determine when and if a player's character has access to this atlas, particularly the Forbidden Lore sections. Dungeon Masters should see the Forbidden Lore proficiency in *A Guide to Gothic Earth* (from the *Masque of the Red Death* Boxed Set) for more information on making this determination and on using the Forbidden Lore nonweapon proficiency to maximum campaign benefit.

Crossroads: A Penny Dreadful, Episode One

CHAPTER ONE

The Vatican

Friday, July 14, 1893

At the stroke of midnight, the warm, still air carried the faint sounds of church bells heralding the hour all across Rome. The full moon illuminated the Holy See with an eerie beauty, its blue-white light reflected from the great dome of St. Peter's Basilica. The otherwise silent night was disturbed by a single set of footsteps that echoed throughout an empty St. Peter's Square. They belonged to a foreign gentleman who moved as if with great purpose across the massive piazza, confident of his destination along a path he had obviously traveled before. At the periphery of the square, he suddenly stopped, startled by a young Monsignor and two members of the papal Swiss Guards.

"Good evening, Dr. Van Helsing," said the priest. "I am Monsignor Calabrisi. The Holy Father has asked that I escort you to him immediately upon your arrival."

"Forgive me Monsignor, but I have never required an escort to the Papal Apartments before," replied Van Helsing in a thick Dutch accent.

"I understand that you share an intimate friendship with the Pope. His Holiness has requested that you join him immediately in the Secret Archives," explained Calabrisi. "Few know of their location."

"Understood," said Van Helsing as a sudden graveness overtook his face. "Lead on."

Van Helsing and his escort shortly arrived in a dimly lit chamber whose walls seemed to be composed entirely of books. A single large table covered with several ancient tomes and manuscripts commanded the center of the room. At the far end of the table, dressed in white robes and a white skullcap sat an elderly man who smiled widely at Van Helsing's arrival despite the obvious anxiety that had lined his otherwise gentle face.

"Abraham, old friend!" exclaimed the man. "Benvenuto! It is very good to see you again."

"It is always a pleasure, Your Holiness," replied Van Helsing, taking the man's smooth, aged hand and kissing his ring.

"Such formality between old friends," said the Pope.

"You look well, Gio," said Van Helsing as a smile came to his lips.

"And such lies!" laughed the Pope. "I am an old man Abraham. Time is not kind to old men."

"Perhaps, but history will be kind to the papacy of Leo the Thirteenth. Your encyclicals on the plight of the working man in the modern age are compassionate and insightful."

"Only time will tell," replied the Pope as he rose from his chair and cleared his throat. "Monsignor Calabrisi, will you and these gentlemen please excuse us now, as I have much to discuss with Professor Van Helsing."

Calabrisi nodded to the Pope and Van Helsing as he and the papal guards left the room. The stillness of the chamber resounded with the closing of the massive ornate wooden door. The Pope took his seat again, and gestured for Van Helsing to do the same.

"I came to Rome as soon as I received your letter," said Van Helsing. "I fear that you have news for me that is not good."

"You are most perceptive, Abraham. Recently, some startling revelations have come to my attention that I felt I must share with The Watchers. That is why I had you meet me here immediately upon your arrival," said the pope. "As you know, I am well aware of your success involving Count Dracula, as well as the perverted nature of that fiend."

"Nosferatu," replied Van Helsing solemnly.

"Si. And I have read your letter concerning your encounter with those otherworldly monsters that have the power to control and corrupt men's thoughts - illithids, I believe you called them. Now I am afraid that another great danger may now threaten all that we hold to be pure and good in our world, even as we speak," the Pope said. "You are probably the most knowledgeable person I know in matters of the supernatural and the ways of the undead. You are a good man, Abraham Van Helsing, and I know that I can trust you to look into this occurrence and rid our world of the great evil it represents."

"As the leader of Die Wächtern, I can assure you that we will give this our foremost attention," replied Van Helsing. "Since time is of the essence, please Gio, share with me all you have learned."

Pope Leo XIII rose from his chair and collected several of the manuscripts that were on the table. He walked over to where Van Helsing was sitting and carefully placed the writings in front of the doctor.

"Molto bene. Let us begin."

CHAPTER TWO

The Steamboat Horace Greeley, somewhere on the Mississippi River

Saturday, July 15, 1893

The gypsy fortuneteller placed a worn deck of cards on the table between herself and her customer, an older gentleman in a wrinkled white

Crossroads: A Penny Dreadful, Episode One

linen suit and frayed black string tie. The man roughly brushed his unruly white hair out of his eyes, silently cursing the muggy summer weather. Had he been any other man, the passengers within the steamboat's casino that night might have laughed at the foolishness of this odd character who chose to wear his hair in such an antiquated style, especially considering the notorious and omnipresent Southern humidity. But this was no ordinary character in their presence. This was Samuel Clemens, better known by his world-renowned nom de plume, Mark Twain.

"What is that, a Tarot deck?" asked Clemens.

"It is something far more ancient, and far more powerful. It is called the Tarokka," replied the gypsy.

"Tarokka, eh?" said Clemens, looking up at the woman and raising a skeptical eyebrow. He hadn't noticed before how sunken her eyes were, or how her skin appeared to be so terribly gaunt. It was so disturbingly *unnatural*, like looking upon a living corpse. She couldn't be more than thirty years old, could she? Not meeting his gaze, the woman flipped over a single card.

"The Artifact," she said without emotion. Placing the card back on top, she handed the deck to Samuel Clemens. "Take it and shuffle the cards."

As he took the cards from her leathery, cold hands, he felt a surge of energy throughout his body as the Tarokka deck made contact with his flesh. Barely resisting the urge to drop them outright on the table, he began to shuffle the deck, his hands visibly shaking.

"Madame, I don't know whether you strike me more as a fortuneteller or a riverboat cardsharp," quipped Clemens, trying to distract her from his obvious discomfort. "Either way, I sense I won't cotton to the cards I'm dealt."

"Now place the cards back on the table," instructed the gypsy woman, and he gratefully complied. "Turn over the first card."

Reluctantly, Samuel Clemens picked up the top card and turned it over on to the table. While the energy surge was no less intense, he was prepared this time for the unsettling effect.

"The Artifact," she said again, this time looking up from the cards and directly at her customer. "It represents an ancient relic, one with mysterious powers. It could be anything, a chalice, a ring, perhaps even a *weapon*. Does this have any meaning for you?"

"You tell me, Madame Fortuneteller," replied Clemens with a hint of contempt. He returned the woman's gaze with his best poker face, even though the deck of cards in front of him now was not a regulation poker deck. The truth of the matter was he was scared, but at the same time thankful the smoldering summer heat was masking his accompanying perspiration. When

she emphasized the word "weapon", it took a strong force of will not to instinctively grasp the ancient dagger sheathed in his left coat pocket. He had found it almost ten years ago while traveling in the Holy Land, and ever since the time he first picked it up and held it in his hand, it has been his greatest obsession.

Perhaps it was this very obsession, this uncontrollable need to find out just exactly what this dagger was, that had put him in his current circumstance. Nearly bankrupt, he was now engaged in a lecture tour along the Mississippi, the *Horace Greeley* serving as his colorful backdrop. Several attempts on his life had been made as well over the last few years, and Clemens could never quite shake the feeling that somehow the dagger was the driving force behind them. And Lord knows how hard it had become to try and write anything since this cursed thing appeared in his life. Still, the thought of parting with the object, of not having it near him at all times, filled him with a far greater dread.

When the gypsy woman finally spoke again, her eyes appeared as if they could shoot daggers of their own. "It is your draw of the cards, Mr. Clemens," she said in an icy voice. "And now it is my turn."

The fortuneteller picked up the next card on the top of the deck and dramatically laid it across the Artifact card that Samuel Clemens had drawn earlier. "The Hangman," she said with a wicked smile.

"Enough of this foolishness," replied Clemens defensively, less adept this time at hiding his startled reaction. "It's dang near the twentieth century, for Christmas sake, and you are nothing but an old fashioned snake oil salesman."

"And you are an arrogant fool, Mr. Clemens. Believe it or not, there are things in this world that even the great Mark Twain doesn't understand. Your modernity will be your downfall," she shouted, and suddenly a hush fell over the casino and all eyes turned to their table. The captain of the *Horace Greeley* saw the commotion, and hurried over to the table.

"Madame Bronwyn, Mr. Clemens, is everything all right here?" asked Captain Fowler, anxious to restore the festive mood in the room.

"Everything's just fine, Captain. Our business here is through. I think I'll take a walk on the deck and hopefully cool off a bit, in all senses of the word. It's a lovely night save for this sweltering heat," Clemens replied, realizing he didn't even know the gypsy woman's name until Captain Fowler mentioned it. He through several silver coins on the table and started to walk away. Satisfied, Fowler returned to the group of passengers he had just abruptly left in mid conversation.

Alone, Madame Bronwyn glanced down at the silver coins on the table. "Keep your money, Twain," she said in a barely audible voice. "You have something far more

Crossroads: A Penny Dreadful, Episode One

valuable that I intend to possess before this night is through.”

CHAPTER THREE

The Vatican

Saturday, July 15, 1893

The bells of the morning Angelus echoed throughout the Eternal City as it rose from its peaceful night’s slumber. The great dome of St. Peter’s Basilica rivaled even the Seven Hills of Rome as the first rays of the morning sunshine struck its golden surface, bringing it brilliantly to life. Two uniform columns of nuns dressed in matching habits of wool far too heavy for the summer season reverently crossed St. Peter’s Square in contrast to a group of far less organized pilgrims wandered somewhat aimlessly, enthusiastically taking in the sites and splendor of the Holy See. It was shaping up to be a beautiful day in Rome, the kind of day where young couples fell in love to the sounds of a wandering violin, small children played as if their games would last an eternity, and elderly men and women began to feel that they too had another eternity before them as well.

Within a windowless chamber deep within the Papal Palace, the beauty of the dawn and the promise of the day were lost to two weary gentlemen. So often it was the case that these two men missed out on the simple pleasures of life in order to preserve and protect them for everyone else. Considering that they often worked behind the scenes in their efforts to preserve and protect all that was good in the world, the irony of their situation was magnified by the fact that no one was ever made aware of the vigilant efforts of their benefactors. But such anonymity was always necessary to remain effective when opposing the Red Death and its evil minions.

“These daggers, how many of them are there?” asked Van Helsing as he rubbed the sleepiness from his bloodshot eyes.

“Exactly three were crafted. One I fear has already been reclaimed by a servant of the Great Evil. A second one I know to be in the possession of an American novelist. As far as I know, he has not yet succumbed to its dark influence,” replied the Pope.

“And the third?”

Pope Leo XIII walked over to a desk in the far corner of the room and removed a leather bundle from the top drawer. He returned to the central table and placed the package in front of the professor. As he carefully unwrapped the worn, cracked leather, Van Helsing noticed that the outer surface was etched with Arabic lettering that had most likely faded over the ages.

As fascinating as this observation was, he was soon distracted when the Pope finished his methodical task and revealed a magnificently crafted silver dagger that sparkled like new despite its great age. The blade was inscribed with ancient runes that Van Helsing, despite his vast knowledge, could not recognize. But it was the hilt that was most impressive, embedded with a polished stone that looked exactly like a human eye, complete with a blue iris and a pupil that seemed to react with the light. Instinctively he reached for the object, when the Pope suddenly knocked his hand out of the way with a force that would rival that of a man a quarter of his age.

“You must never, under any circumstance, make physical contact with this profane object!” the Pope warned in the loudest voice Van Helsing had ever heard him use. “Once you touch it, you will become enslaved by its dark powers.”

Abraham Van Helsing went into deep thought for a moment, unaware that he was gently rubbing his stinging hand. “When did you come into possession of this?”

“It was found in the catacombs beneath the Basilica. Recovered, actually, in a robbery attempt several months ago that was thwarted by Monsignor Calabrisi. He presented it to me and I immediately began researching the artifact. When I positively identified it, I immediately summoned you,” answered the Pope.

“Who attempted to steal the dagger from the catacombs?”

“Let’s just say that I am glad I have shared many of your letters and notes with Monsignor Calabrisi as of late.”

“I must journey to America immediately and recover the second dagger before that too is lost to the Great Evil,” said the professor, energized with a sudden sense of urgency.

“No. I need for you to journey to Constantinople to pick up the trail of the first. In addition to the dagger we currently possess, I wish for you to take several of these texts with you to read along the way. Perhaps you can find a way to permanently destroy these foul objects that I could not.”

“And what of the dagger in America?”

“I have taken the liberty of sending our new associate to recover it,” replied the Pope, a devious but warm smile coming to his face.

“Sherlock Holmes,” Van Helsing said with a similar smile now on his own.

To Be Continued...

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Illinois

HAUNTED ILLINOIS: A GUIDE TO STRANGE HAPPENINGS IN THE HEART OF THE GOTHIC MIDWEST

Local Correspondent:

Timothy S. Brannan

When people say “heartland of America” often one thinks of Illinois. Founded as a state in 1818, but inhabited long before that, Illinois is rich in history and in ghosts. Former presidents walk the halls of their home or tombs. It has been rumored that Lincoln haunts the his tomb in Springfield, the capital building in Springfield, and the old State Capital in Vandalia, a place where he had worked as a young lawmaker. All of this has led to a popular, but grim saying among Illinoisans, “Abraham Lincoln walks at Midnight.”

Iroquois, Fox and Sioux Indians walk ancient plains, and dead confederate soldiers march to an uncertain doom. Illinois is a starting point for many in their westward expansion, and a final resting place for others.

ILLINOIS

Illinois is located in the heart of the “Heartland,” bordered by the mighty Mississippi River on the west and the Ohio on the south. This, combined with rich, flat land and warm, humid summers, produces some the nation’s best farmland. Since the 1850s no other state has grown as quickly and as prosperously as Illinois. Currently (1890) the population is over 4,500,000.

HISTORY

The area was first seen by Europeans in 1673, by two Frenchmen: Louis Joliet, a fur trader, and Jacques Marquette, a Catholic missionary. Marquette later set up a mission along the Mississippi river (present day Kaskaskia) for the native peoples. The first permanent settlement built by Europeans was a mission on the Mississippi river in the town of Cahokia in 1699.

Up to 1763 the area had been controlled by the French. After the French-Indian wars, France gave this part of North America to the British, who soon made it part of Quebec. This action was one of the causes of the American Revolutionary War. During the war both Cahokia and Kaskaskia were sites of pivotal battles. In

1783, Britain surrendered the Northwest Territory, which included Illinois. In 1809 Illinois became a separate territory. About this time the settlement of northern Illinois began, centered around Ft. Dearborn on Lake Michigan.

In 1818 Illinois was admitted as the 21st state of the Union. Kaskaskia was named as its first state capital. This later moved to Vandalia in 1820 to encourage growth in Illinois’ interior. The capital was later (1837) moved to its present day location of Springfield. The city of Chicago was incorporated in March, 1837 on the site of Ft. Dearborn. By 1850 it was Illinois’ largest city with a population above 5,000. Chicago became the leading industrial center of the former Northwest Territories.

The Civil War began in 1861 with most of the state supporting the Union. Illinois sent more than a quarter of a million young men to serve with the Union army. Among those were General Ulysses S. Grant. In 1865, after the war’s end, Illinois became the first state to ratify the 13th Amendment to outlaw slavery.

In the years of the Reclamation, Illinois has seen many immigrants from other countries. Most notable are the Irish, Italians and Poles. Many ethnic neighborhoods have sprouted up all over Chicago and in some of the down-state areas as well.

The effects of the Great Chicago Fire of 1871 can still be seen to this day, more that twenty years later. The fire killed 250 people and left nearly 90,000 homeless. The city was quick to rebuild and surpass its previous size.

Illinois is set, here at the turn of the 19th Century, to become one of the leading industrial and agricultural areas of the United States.

Forbidden Lore

As America of the 1890s expands ever westward, the forces of the Red Death follow. Minions that are common in Illinois are most types of non-corporeal undead (Ghosts, Spectres, Haunts). It is known that there is at least one Banshee on Chicago’s south side and two more down-state. Many graveyards are prone to have ghouls and ghaunts lurking around. Zombies and skeletons, created by powerful necromantic magic, are usually rare. No vampires or Liches have been recorded.

Lycanthropes, in particular werewolves and foxwomen, are more common down-state. Other common minions are Will o’ wisps.

Ghost March of Southern Illinois

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Illinois

The Civil War pitted brother against brother. Nowhere was that more strongly felt than in Southern Illinois. While Illinois was technically a “free” state, many farmers south of Springfield sided more with the sensibilities of the Confederate states. These farmers’ fields became the sites of some of the bloodiest skirmishes of the war.

At certain times, sometime after midnight, a ghostly army arises from the mists hugging the ground. This ragged army of undead are all that remains of a Confederate Army troop sent into Illinois at the height of the war. The ghostly horde appears exactly as can be imagined; skeletal remains, with tatters of rotting flesh and gray uniforms. Their weapons, long since spent of ammunition, hang in their hands useless, but serve as constant reminders of what has led them to this fate. Occasionally one can find a soldier that fared better than his brothers in arms. He is not as damaged or decayed, but his young innocent face is no less of a horror than the phantasms that surround him.

It is unknown what prompts this ghostly march or what motivates it.

Haunted Cemeteries

Illinois seems to have more than its fair share of haunted cemeteries. Often these cemeteries are the source of faint apparitions or ghost lights, as in Barrington Cemetery in Barrington, home of the white ghost lights. Sometimes the activity is more sinister. Pagan rituals have been seen in cemeteries along the Des Plaines river, northwest of Chicago. Similar events have happened in cemeteries in Jacksonville, 300 miles to the south.

Hickory Grove in Wrights, south of Springfield, is the final resting place for one unsavory character. Lying in a small unmarked grave southeast of the cemetery proper lies the body of a man who was a doctor and a murderer, hung for the shooting death of a love rival. It is said that if you stand on his grave you can hear the sounds of a hanging rope swinging in the wind.

In 1841 an unknown man was found hanging in Clement’s Cemetery east of Champaign. Whether he was the victim of a lynching or a suicide is unknown. The people removed his body and gave him a proper burial. Soon after reports came back of the “Blue Man,” a thin wispy ghost of blue that can only be seen in the light of the full moon.

Old Union Cemetery in Dewitt county is considered to be one of the more haunted cemeteries in Illinois. Its first burial was in 1831. Located on the stagecoach route between Bloomington and Springfield, Union has become a “favorite” stopping place for the dead. Like many cemeteries in Illinois reports of ghostly lights

abound. This place also has areas of extreme cold, even in Illinois’ normally humid summers. Others have reported feeling sick at certain points.

Also located on a former stagecoach route is Williamsburg Hill, or “Cold Hill,” Cemetery. When the railroad came, Williamsburg became a ghost town; or rather a town of ghosts. The cemetery itself is placed on a large, uncharacteristic hill among completely flat farmland. Among the hundreds of mostly unmarked graves it is said a being wanders. This spectre is vaguely human in appearance. It seems to be an electrical field of some sort. Electricity can be heard crackling in the air around it. Whether it is a proper ghost or even if it was at one time human is unknown.

Haunted Schoolhouse

Bloody Island School in Lime-Kill Hollow was a small one-room school house. Like hundreds of other schools that dotted the countryside children young and old were sent with pail and slate in hand to learn the “three R’s” from a school marm, but what the children learned here was a lesson in horror. Two teenage boys, long rivals, stabbed each other to death in front of a dozen screaming children. Town officials and the kindly young teacher, Miss Daniels, did what they could to clean up the blood of the two dead boys, but try as they might the blood continues to seep up through the floorboards and into the classroom. The floorboards have been cleaned over and over, and finally replaced, but the blood continues to flow. Plans are now to close down the school and build a new one.

The Watseka Wonder

Just south of Chicago and west of Indiana lies the sleepy town of Watseka. Unremarkable, save for what happened one summer of 1877. Lurancy Vennum fell into a deep coma-like sleep. When she awoke the thirteen-year-old claimed she could speak with the spirits of the dead. These episodes began to happen with more frequency and lasted many hours. During these times Lurancy would speak in different voices and say things that she otherwise would not know of. When she would awaken she would have no memory of the events. Her family took Lurancy to best doctors in the state; finally they decided that she was insane and were going to have her committed.

In January of 1878 a man named Asa Roff approached the Vennum family. He had a story of his daughter, Mary, who had suffered a similar affliction, but had died in Peoria’s State Insane Asylum. However, Asa believed in his daughter and wanted to save Lurancy from the same fate. During mesmerism, Lurancy spoke in the voice of Asa’s daughter Mary.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Illinois

Lurancy then proceeded to speak to Asa about details that only the Roff family would know. Lurancy (as Mary) lived with the Roffs, with the Vennum's permission, for three months. She was able to identify family members and favorite things that only would have been known to the family.

In May, Mary left Lurancy and she asked to be returned home. She left, bidding everyone in the family goodbye. She never again experienced any contacts with the spirits, but she would return to see the Roff family on occasion and allow Mary to speak through her.

Haunted Theaters

Murphysboro in Southern Illinois is a quiet town located just a few miles east of the mighty Mississippi River. This town, known more for its apples and its close proximity to the Shawnee Forest, also has a darker secret: The Ghost of the Liberty Theater. The Liberty was built at the turn of the century and Emil McCarthy was there. He started working there as a young boy; cleaning, running the spotlights and other odd jobs. Sixty years later, Emil was still working odd jobs at the Liberty. He had developed a drinking problem and a poor attitude over the years, but since he lived in the theater and had such an attachment to the place none of his supervisors had ever fired him. Any that tried usually met with fatal accidents. Emil was never suspected; he was usually in a bar or passed out in the city square when the deaths occurred.

When the town decided to tear down the Liberty to put a new theater across town, Emil panicked and seemed to die of a broken heart. Plans are still underway for the new theater, but people now claim the new site is cursed. Tools disappear. Workmen get into accidents. None have been fatal, but they are increasing in number and magnitude. All is not quiet at the Liberty either. Patrons complain of noises, and cold areas. Management has reported that the curtains will open and close silently on their own. As the day of the Liberty's demolition approaches, more incidents are reported.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Massachusetts

SALEM

Local Correspondent:
Joe Bardales

Strategically located on Salem Bay, an arm of the larger Massachusetts Bay, Salem is one of the oldest communities in North America. First settled in 1626, Salem was second in importance only to Boston in colonial New England, and later became one of the major communities of the newly formed United States of America. Although Salem has always been important economically and politically, it is perhaps best known for the Salem witch trials of 1692.

HISTORY

Salem was first settled in 1626 by a small group of European colonists who originally called their new home Naumkeag. When Puritan John Endecott (1588?-1665) came with a group of settlers to govern the Massachusetts Bay Colony from his home in Devon, England in 1628, he quickly established himself as a strict leader and enforced the Puritan way of life. In 1630 he was replaced as governor by John Winthrop (1588-1649), and stepped down to the position of deputy governor. During Endecott's long tenure as a colonial leader, his intolerance of non-Puritans led him to wipe out the Native American Pequot tribe of the region in 1637, and later persecute, expel, and execute local Quakers during the 1650's. Winthrop, a native of Edwardstone, England, as well as a Puritan, was not much better than Endecott, and helped to suppress religious dissent throughout the colony. Despite its heavy-handed leadership, the Massachusetts Bay Colony prospered, and Salem rose to prominence.

By the end of the 17th century, Salem was divided into two parts: Salem Town and Salem Village. Salem Town was the site of an excellent seaport, and boasted successful shipping and fishing trades. Salem Village, however, was a prosperous farming community. An intense rivalry developed between Salem Town and Salem Village along religious and economic lines, and the Village eventually became divided along the same fronts as well. The Reverend George Burroughs, minister of Salem Village from 1680 to 1683, left the area when he found himself powerless to alleviate the tensions and growing state of fear in the community. This factionalism set the stage for the famous Salem witch trials of 1692.

The Salem witch trials lasted for most of 1692, and in their wake they left twenty-five people dead, families, fortunes and reputations destroyed, and the peace and tranquillity of the community shattered forever. During this period, neighbor turned against neighbor, and husband against wife, and accusations of the practice of witchcraft were commonplace. The entire community became embroiled in the hysteria, with no one was safe from being brought up on charges of "commerce with the devil." Over 300 people were charged with witchcraft, twenty of whom were hanged on Gallows Hill, and five died in jail awaiting their fates (including one infant!). Eventually sense and reason was restored to Salem and the Massachusetts Bay Colony, and Governor William Phips intervened to put an end to the madness when his own wife was accused of witchcraft. Along with Harvard College president Increase Mather, Phips condemned the use of "spectral evidence" in witchcraft cases, and dismissed the special Court of Oyer and Terminer that had been assembled to hear all these cases. All of Salem breathed a heavy sigh of relief.

Gradually, Salem returned again to its prosperous path of economic growth. Already a major seaport, Salem became an important hub of world trade, and remained so until the 1850s. At the end of the 18th century, the Industrial Revolution took Salem into the modern age with the establishment of a footwear industry that remained profitable throughout the 19th century. Salem Village incorporated as the town of Danvers in 1757, but many still refer to Salem Town and Danvers collectively as Salem. Salem at the end of the 1700s became home to the Federal style of architecture with the design of many private homes and public buildings by the architect and woodcutter Samuel McIntire (1757-1811). Many of these buildings still stand at the end of the 19th century, and their interiors boast elaborately carved doors, furniture, mantle places, and other wood fixtures. Other landmarks of note still standing at the end of the 19th century include the Witch House (built in 1642 and site of the witch trials), the Derby Wharf, the house of Elias Hasket Derby (1762), Hawkes House (1790s), the West India Good Store (built in 1810 by Captain Henry Pierce), the Custom House (1819), the Peabody Museum (1868), and the Nabonne-Hale House, a 17th century home and studio for tradesmen and craftsmen.

Salem is also the birthplace of American author Nathaniel Hawthorne (1804-1864), whose ancestors participated in the accusations of witchcraft and the persecution of neighboring Quakers. Hawthorne is best known for his novels *The Scarlet Letter*, *The Marble Faun*, and *The House of the Seven Gables*, the latter of which is set in his ancestral home of the same name.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Massachusetts

Built in 1668, the House of Seven Gables is still a prominent landmark in Salem.

At the close of the 19th century, Salem has lost its world importance, but prosperous livings can still be made, and the region is ripe with potential for industrial growth. While all may seem peaceful in Salem, a cloud of guilt for the crimes of their ancestors still hangs over this area of Essex County, Massachusetts, even if it is not always immediately evident to outsiders.

Forbidden Lore

When European settlers first arrived in the area that would become Salem, their motivations of freedom and religious tolerance were genuine. These original colonists represented various religious and political beliefs, and worked side by side in their new home, living in peace and cooperation with the local Pequot tribe. Some of these first colonists were secretly members of the Circle, a qabal descended from the Stone and attempting to escape persecution for witchcraft in the Old World. The hard but peaceful existence of early Salem, however, did not last long, and their world was turned upside down upon the arrival of John Endecott.

In England, Endecott was a scholar and a member of the Circle qabal. His studies of the magical arts, however, eventually led him down a path of ruin and darkness. Endecott discovered an ancient spell book penned in the Dark Ages, and soon found himself irresistibly lured into the foul practice of necromancy and summoning by the corrupting influence of the Red Death. The secrets and spells he shared with his followers also corrupted many of them as well, and they served their teacher faithfully through his evil transformation. Eventually, he attempted a spell from this nefarious tome that he did not fully understand, and unwittingly drew the attention of an evil, chaotic fiend from an incomprehensible plane of existence. This abominable creature's name was Zmlak the Destroyer, and he entered Gothic Earth in much the same way that the Red Death had centuries earlier. In a short matter of time, John Endecott was no more, and Zmlak assumed his identity.

When Zmlak arrived in New England in the guise of Endecott, the new colonists accompanying him were actually the former followers of the ill-starred adept who now formed a cult-like qabal known as Zmlak's Children. Zmlak retained Endecott's memories and was aware that some of the members of the Circle whom had escaped to New England were aware of their former member's fall from grace. Zmlak's chaotic nature and charismatic influence over his followers allowed him to divide the colonists down religious and racial lines,

resulting in the brutal oppression of the Quakers and Pequot Indians, and a lot of bloodshed.

This first attempt to wipe out the secret members of the Circle failed, however, although its members were forced to go deeper into hiding.

Fearing that the colonists would get suspicious of Endecott if he were to have an unnatural life span, Zmlak shed the earthly remains of the fallen adept and went on to possess the bodies of other colonists, killing his unwilling hosts in the process. Eventually, Zmlak took possession of the Reverend Samuel Parris, a Puritan minister of Salem Village. Masquerading as Parris, the chaotic fiend first seduced Parris' servant Tituba, a slave from Barbados, into the ranks of Zmlak's Children. Using Tituba's influence over Parris' daughter Betty, his niece Abigail Williams, and their young friend, Ann Putman, Zmlak was able to ignite the entire populace of Salem into believing that there was an epidemic of witchcraft in their community. The *charmed* girls claimed they were being tormented by witches, and began to point fingers at many of Salem's citizens, both prominent and ordinary, whom Zmlak believed to be members of the Circle.

The resulting witch trials and executions by hanging on Gallows Hill resulted in the deaths of at least four members of the Circle: the elderly Sarah Osburn, the beggar Sarah Good (long rumored to be a witch and a hedge wizard due to her peculiar personality), Martha Cory (devoutly religious and one of the few mystics amongst the adepts of the Circle), and Rebecca Nurse (a pillar of the community who secretly used her magic for good causes). Zmlak reveled in the chaos as the witch-hunt spread like wildfire, with neighbor vengefully accusing neighbor of witchcraft in order to settle old scores and capitalize on their misfortune. Zmlak even succeeded in having the Reverend George Burroughs, leader of the cell of the Circle active in New England, expedited back to Salem to face charges of witchcraft. Burroughs was eventually convicted of being the head warlock and executed by hanging in 1692.

Not all the members of the Circle fell victim to the hangman during the witch trials. Several of the younger members of the qabal became suspicious of Parris, and eventually deduced his true nature. Using their deceased leaders' spell books, the surviving young adepts of the Circle managed to confront Zmlak and imprison him beneath the Witch House, which they ensorcelled with powerful wards to prevent him from escaping. With the removal of Zmlak, the Massachusetts Bay Colony authorities from outside of Salem were able to put an end to the madness and chaos of the witch-hunts. Members of the Circle withdrew into deeper hiding, realizing that their forerunners' dream of living free from persecution was not meant to be in the New World.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Massachusetts

Zemlak was not responsible for all the allegations of witchcraft in Salem. An ancestor of Nathaniel Hawthorne, Judge John Hathorne (the original spelling of the name) was one of three magistrates who sat in judgment of the witch trials in 1692. In the 1660s, the Hathorne family swindled the English family out of some very valuable land in Salem. The Hathorne's built the majestic House of Seven Gables on the site and their power and prominence grew at the expense of the English family. Ownership of the land continued to be hotly disputed, however, and the Hathorne's were never truly free to enjoy their estate while fighting lengthy and frequent court battles. Around the time of the witch trials, it appeared that the Hathorne family might finally lose the stolen land and the house in a suit brought by Philip English in a Boston court. Judge Hathorne used his influence as a Salem judge to have English summoned to appear before the magistrate on trumped up charges of witchcraft. At Hathorne's bequest, the other two members of the magistrate joined him in finding English guilty and sentenced him to be executed on Gallows Hill.

From the scaffold, Philip English used his last breath to curse Judge Hathorne and his descendants, and anyone else who would dare enter the House of Seven Gables. The Red Death was listening that day and decided to respond to English's last invocation. From that day forward, the entire Hathorne family was cursed: members of the clan would never be able to hold on to any success they might achieve in life. Nathaniel Hawthorne suffered from the affects of this curse almost two centuries later when he died in poverty despite his earlier literary and financial successes. A malignant change overtook the House of Seven Gables as well—the Red Death transformed the structure into a Greater Animator (see *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium III*).

In the 1890s, Salem by day appears as a typical American town of the Gilded Age. When night falls and the full moon rises, it is a different story however. A few of the antiquated homes of Salem now lie abandoned and in ruins, and comprise some of the haunted houses for which New England is famous. Inside their walls, members of the noncorporeal undead wander the halls, and a Hearth Fiend or two has been known to take up residence in their fireplaces. Outside, the walls may be covered in evil plant life, such as Crawling Ivy (see *Ravenloft Compendium III*). The qabal of Zemlak's Children continues to dwell in Salem, holding bizarre midnight rituals in hidden groves in the woods of Essex County, and the qabal is actively trying to find a way to free Zemlak from his confinement. The Circle still operates within the region as well and Salem serves as their base. These current qabal members, descendants of families like the Nurses and the Corys,

still continue to keep the fiend Zemlak imprisoned beneath the Witch House, but the magical bonds of restraint have nonetheless weakened over the years and their hold on him is tenuous at best.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: New York

ALBANY

Local Correspondent:

John W. Mangrum

Life is good in Albany, the second-oldest charted town in the United States. Nestled in the Hudson River valley some 150 miles north of New York City, and just south of the eastern end of the Erie Canal, Albany remains a hub for trade as it has been since its founding, and as the capital of New York State since 1797, its wealth is more than matched by its political might. Albany is a city rich in history and political intrigue, and is now boldly venturing forth into the next century on the shoulders of Progress!

HISTORY

As far as most locals are concerned, Albany's history began in 1609 when Henry Hudson sailed up the river that would later bear his name in search of a Northwest Passage to the Orient. Sadly, the following year he returned to Holland with the disappointing news that the river he had searched did not lead to his desired goal. However, he did report that fine furs could be found in the region, perking up his employers' ears.

Wearing fine fur was all the rage in Europe of the day, and several explorers set out to lay claim to this veritable treasure-trove. Around 1612, the Dutch Captain Hendrick Christaensen was the first explorer to relocate New York Harbor. During a series of voyages, Christaensen more sailed up the Hudson River (or the River Mauritius, as the Dutch called it) and either captured or recruited two young Native Americans, convincing the pair to return with him to Holland. Said to be the sons of tribal chiefs, the Dutch named the pair Valentine and Orson, after a popular medieval romance.

In 1613, Captain Christaensen returned to the region, the Indian guides accompanying him, and set anchor near where the Mohawk River joined the Hudson. By the next year the Dutch had established Fort Nassau, a fortified trading post on Castle Island, to cash in on the fur trade. Valentine and Orson were also persuaded to remain at the post, acting as guides and translators.

Around 1619, Captain Christaensen returned once more to Fort Nassau. In the Captain's absence, Orson had become bad-tempered, described by one European as "an exceedingly malignant wretch." During an argument, Orson murdered Captain Christaensen, but was "repaid with a bullet as his reward."

By 1624, a new, larger, and more permanent colony was built to the north of Fort Nassau, and the settlement as a whole become known as Fort Orange. In 1652, Peter Stuyvesant, the Poltroon or "patron" of the colony named the settlement growing up around Fort Orange "Beverwyck." The trading post had become a town.

In 1664, the British bloodlessly captured the Hudson River region. Once in control, the British renamed Beverwyck "Albany" for James, Duke of York and Albany. Albany would keep the name forevermore. Although the Europeans were largely on good terms with the native Mohawk and Iroquois tribes, by 1676 King Philip's Indian attacks had become serious enough to provoke the British into building Fort Albany to protect the town. In less than two decades this would have a monumental effect on the town's survival.

In January of 1690, a war party of 210 men (comprised of 114 Frenchman, with the rest Indians) marched down from Montreal, planning to attack Albany. When they finally reached the area, the Indians (knowing Albany was defended by a fort with cannon) outright refused to attack the town. As a last-minute decision, the war party decided to attack Schenectady instead, a stockade about 20 miles to the west. This stockade was fortified, but the defenders were lax and weren't at all prepared for the attack. On Feb. 8th, the war party attacked; the people of Schenectady were massacred, while only two of the invaders were killed. A sole rider escaped the raid, rushing to Albany for help. Although both he and his horse were shot, they made the night-long ride and arrived in Albany before the next dawn. Sadly, before the Albany forces reached the area, the war party was long gone, having killed sixty people (men, women, and children) and razed all but a few houses.

The war party trudged back towards Montreal, dragging twenty-seven prisoners and stolen fifty horses with them. In the harsh weather, the invaders ate nearly two-thirds of those horses. Two days later, the Mohawk Indians came to the survivors' aid, and along with fifty Albany men, hunted down the raiders, killing fourteen stragglers. This event sparked what became known on this side of the Atlantic as the French-and-Indian Wars.

Albany survived, but by 1754 the Colonies were still caught in the ongoing conflict between France and England. The Albany Congress was called to try to keep the Iroquois from going over to the French, as some of their tribes had already done. Representatives from seven colonies came, hoping to appease the increasingly disgruntled Six Nations of the Iroquois. The Mohawks were over a week late, but the Europeans counted it lucky that they'd decided to come at all; the Mohawks were (quite rightly) distressed over the White Man stealing their lands. The Congress made enough concessions to soothe the tribe (enough so that they

Crossroads: North America: The USA: New York

fought on the side of the Colonies when war eventually broke out), but even while the Mohawks were being pacified inside the Congress, outside they were being defrauded of even more land. The Albany Congress also debated the Plan of Union, the first attempt to unify the Colonies under a single government (albeit under the English crown). The plan never went very far, but the spirit of Union remained, and when the Revolutionary War eventually broke out, Albany survived several battles and served as a center for troops and supplies.

In the beginning of the next century the city started to expand in earnest. Since Albany was settled on gently sloping hills as the Adirondack Mountains came down to meet the Hudson, “downtown” had a literal meaning in Albany, and ever since the first settlement on Castle Island, each spring had brought with it troublesome floods. As the city grew in power, the growing population of upper class decided they’d had enough of the Hudson’s annual overflow. The affluent started moving to higher ground, creating the neighborhoods of Capitol Hill and Arbor Hill. In 1806, the cornerstone was laid for Albany’s first Capitol building on Capitol Hill, also known as Gallows Hill from being the city’s place of public execution.

Over the next few decades, Albany continued to grow in leaps and bounds, annexing several of its satellite communities and becoming a center of industry. All this prosperity no doubt came hand in hand with the construction of the Erie Canal, which opened in 1825, and in 1831 Mohawk & Hudson ran the nation’s first passenger train (the DeWitt Clinton) from Albany to Schenectady. As the iron industry built up steam, so did the logging industry, which peaked in the 1850s-70s; many of Albany’s loggers were Irish immigrants who came to build the Canal, and stayed to raise families. In 1861, as the issue of slavery tore the nation apart, Albany hosted the State Anti-Slavery Convention. Although there was threat of a riot, the mayor was able to toss the rowdies out of the convention, defending the free speech of the dignitaries within.

Of course, not everything in Albany’s history during this period was quite so commendable; some of its darker moments are still notorious to this day. 1827 marked the last public hanging on Gallows Hill, and in 1832 Albany was hit by a cholera epidemic. To ask some, worse than either of these were the hogs. For as long as anyone could remember, the accepted method of garbage disposal had been to simply toss it out the front window, where it would lie in the street until such time as Albany’s healthy population of wild hogs would devour it. By the middle of the 19th century, downtown Albany was a literal pig sty. Thankfully, this was remedied in 1854, when the Albany Common Council cracked down

on the hog epidemic, rounding up some 15,000 wandering pigs.

However, the event which set the most tongues wagging took place in 1861. In that year, newly-elected Abraham Lincoln took a pre-inaugural train tour across the Northeast, bolstering Northern spirits and gathering political support. As Lincoln was paraded through the streets of Albany, a young and popular actor got his first glimpse of the new President. To this day, thirty years later, people still wonder if President Lincoln and John Wilkes Booth caught each other’s eye, if only for an instant.

During the Civil War, Albany produced war supplies for the Union; in fact, the ironclad Monitor was built in area ironworks in 1862. Three years later, shortly after the end of the war, Booth assassinated Lincoln, while two accomplices unsuccessfully attempted to assassinate the Secretary of State and Vice-President Johnson. Lincoln’s body was sent through the northern states in a funereal tour, and as Albany crowds filed by Lincoln’s coffin, John Wilkes Booth was meeting his end far to the south, surrounded in a Virginia barn. Sergeant “Boston” Corbett, a native of neighboring Troy who had worked in Albany, disobeyed orders and fatally shot Booth. Although Corbett was arrested, the nation made such a hero of him he was released and even granted a portion of the reward money.

With the war over, the nation tried to heal, and Albany continued to grow. In 1870, ground was broken on Washington Park, Albany’s answer to NYC’s Central Park. On a less grandiose scale, in 1874 the Sacred Heart Church was established by Father Francis Maguire, a powerful man as comfortable on horseback as on foot, and a priest not afraid to use a whip and a fist to protect his flock. In 1880, City Hall was ravaged in one of Albany’s all too frequent fires, but it was soon replaced.

In the last decade, Progress has taken a firm hold of the Capital Region. Primitive electric streetlights replaced the current kerosene lamps throughout the city in 1881, and 1889 saw Albany’s first station of public pay telephones. In 1883, the original Capitol Building was demolished, with a grand new Capitol building being quickly built to take its place. In fact, it sometimes seems like entire neighborhoods are being demolished in the name of Progress; out with the Old to make room for the New, as it were. Just in 1890 electric trolleys have started to replace horse-cars in most parts of town.

Modern Albany is truly a cosmopolitan city, boasting a wide mix of cultures. While still primarily Dutch and English, the last century has seen an influx of Irish and German immigrants, who have formed their own communities. There is also a smaller Jewish community, but as yet only a handful of Italians or

Crossroads: North America: The USA: New York

Spaniards. Yes, there are still reasons for complaints; the downtown area still suffers from flooding every spring, and is considered by many a disreputable eyesore. But the locals seem to like their city warts and all, despite their grumbling. True, the city is very cramped—alleyways are uncommon—but developers currently building affluent homes in the Pine Hills neighborhood are finding resistance to the idea of putting homes in spacious lots! And Albany does truly have its bright spots. The recently opened Washington Park has become the center for a new fad: bicycling. In fact, in fair weather, so many young people turn out in the park on their bicycles that some people are starting to see them as a menace to the pedestrians!

Forbidden Lore

The Red Death first sailed up the Hudson River on the decks of Captain Christaensen's ship, but it wasn't a European who carried its foul taint. The Red Death gained its first foothold in the region through the Indian guide Orson, who unwittingly began his descent into corruption during his time in Holland. Upon his return, the shamans of the Mohawk tribes detected that some sort of spiritual poison had entered the area, but it was so far outside their realm of experience that they had difficulty understanding it. Orson, like the shamans, slowly came to believe that the Europeans were directly responsible for the evil seeping into their land. Orson blamed Christaensen personally, never aware that he carried the Red Death within himself. Some say that after Orson murdered the Dutch captain and was executed in turn, the Red Death brought Orson back from the dead in a new form, to continue to vent his wrath against the White Man...

Two hundred years ago, Mohawk warriors helped hunt down fourteen stragglers from the war party responsible for the Schenectady Massacre. Those stragglers, already firmly in the grip of the Red Death by the time they attacked the settlement, had also started to succumb to starvation by the time they met their end, devouring many of the horses stolen from the slain settlers. After their demise, the Red Death simply nudged them along the last step of their journey, and the Stragglers returned as a pack of ghouls. Some believe they may still roam the sparsely-populated north country, preying on travelers and lone woodsmen...

Hermann van der Ploeg can still remember the "good old days," back before 1854. But then the humans rounded up the wild pigs and cleaned up the rancid garbage, and most of his kind left the city that had been their home for generations for greener pastures. Now, aging and aching, Hermann is fairly certain he's the last wereboar left in Albany. He's too old to hunt

(too old to wander far from his downtown apartment, in fact), but from his youth he can still remember the succulent taste of the flesh of a human-child. Lately, Hermann has been looking for a way to get a taste of that delicacy again...

Between fire, floods, and Progress, there isn't a great deal of Albany's history still standing. Apparently, with the buildings go the ghosts; Albany boasts few hauntings. There is one haunting causing some stir, however. Parts of the grand new Capitol building are in use throughout the 1890s, but the building will still be under construction for most of the decade. Recently, there have been problems on the Capitol Hill construction site; sightings of four dark spirits with twisted necks who apparently don't want the new Capitol built. Some people dismiss the notion of a "house haunted before it's been built," but some people with longer memories think back to when more people knew Capitol Hill's other name. They point out how, decades ago, four freed slaves were scapegoated for a particularly destructive Albany fire, how they were hung on Gallows Hill, and how the four valpurgeists haunting the unfinished Capitol seem to have a low opinion of the law...

Although the annual floods are more than a nuisance, most people have learned to live with them (or to move uptown). Sometimes, the floods even bring a little entertainment! Last year, a downtown store-owner found a strange creature, somewhat like a cross between an eel and a slug, flopping around in his store's cellar after the floodwaters had been pumped out. He put the strange little creature on display in his store for a while, but eventually its water-filled pickle jar was taken down, and most people just assumed it had died. In fact, it had grown. The store-owner's little "eel-slug" developed into a master sea spawn (see *Ravenloft Monstrous Compendium III*). One day, the store-owner was thinking about selling the small monstrosity to a circus. The next day, he was under the control of the creature's brood of young. The sea spawn is currently trapped in a flooded section of the store's basement, just waiting for the next spring flood so it can return to the river. In the meanwhile, its minions are spreading out around town, bringing it food...

Finally, John Wilkes Booth found his link to the Red Death in the years before Lincoln's assassination. There are a very few (the Watchers among them) who fear that Albany may be the recruiting center for a group of covert anarchists, a small qabal dedicated to what appears to be a purely political end: the collapse of the Union. Most believe that when the government brought down Booth's circle of conspirators (as well as a few unlucky bystanders, for that matter), they crippled this band of assassins, perhaps permanently. Others fear it

Crossroads: North America: The USA: New York

more likely that Booth was just a stooge, who (along with the others caught) never even understood the true nature of the cause they served. These conspiracy theorists also ask if the supposed hero “Boston” Corbett might not also have been involved with this shadowy organization. The very, very few who know enough to speculate further wonder whether or not Booth’s conspirators were just the very tip of a tentacle leading back to the Six-Fingered Hand, or whether that tentacle might lead straight to Orson, still at war with the White Man.

NEW YORK CITY

Local Correspondent:
Joe Bardales

Located on the island of Manhattan in the mouth of the Hudson River, the city of New York is the most important seaport in America. From the start, New York has been a cosmopolitan melting pot of people from different cultures, religions and ethnic backgrounds. A steady stream of immigrants continues to arrive in America through New York at the end of the nineteenth century, contributing to the prosperity of the United States. It seems inevitable that New York will one day replace London as the capital of the world.

HISTORY

The first inhabitants of the land that would one day become New York were the Native American Algonquin tribe. The Old World’s discovery of the island of Manhattan was made by Italian Giovanni da Verrazano in 1524, but it was Englishman Henry Hudson who first thoroughly explored the area in 1609 for the Dutch East India Company. It was the Dutch West India Company that founded the settlement of New Amsterdam in 1625, and in 1626 the entire island of Manhattan was purchased from the Native American inhabitants for the equivalent of \$24 in trinkets. The settlement was a financial success, which attracted the attention of the British who seized the area in 1664, renaming the colony New York. During the Revolutionary War, British troops controlled New York for most of the conflict.

From its onset as a Dutch colony, New York has seen a continuous stream of immigration. Conditions in Europe during most of the nineteenth century lead to mass migrations. In 1890, Ellis Island off of Manhattan opened as a federal immigration-processing center.

Immigrants were greeted on their arrival by the Statue of Liberty, a gift to the United States by the French government and erected in New York Harbor in 1886. Unfortunately, the next sight these new arrivals most often see is their new life in the slums.

The nineteenth century was also a time for mass fortunes to be made in New York. Men like John Astor, Andrew Carnegie, J. P. Morgan, and Cornelius Vanderbilt became millionaires many times over. The acquisition of great wealth, however, did not guarantee social standing in New York. The “old money” families, lead by the legendary Mrs. Astor, turned their aristocratic noses down on everyone else: those with “new money” (most notably the Robber Barons who made their fortunes from railroad empires), the working class, and the poor.

The influx of people and wealth into New York lead to constant expansion of the metropolis. New York was first settled at the southern end of Manhattan, and continued to grow upwards. The “grid pattern” of numbered streets and avenues was established in 1811. Broadway, however, follows the path of what was originally an Algonquin trail. The lower tip of Manhattan maintains the maze-like pattern of the streets of the original colony. Wall Street, for example, lies where a Dutch fortification defended the settlement’s northern front. The buildings of New York, like its people, are also a melting pot. Examples include Federal style, Greek Revival, Italianate, Renaissance, and most recently, Gothic Revival. In 1868 the first elevated trains went into service, and in 1870 the first subway was constructed. Electricity became available from Edison Electric as early as 1882. In 1898, the City of New York will become known as Greater New York, incorporating the surrounding boroughs of Brooklyn, the Bronx, Queens, and Staten Island with Manhattan to form one municipality.

While New York is a booming metropolis at the close of the nineteenth century, it is still rife with social problems. Poverty, corruption of police and government, and criminal elements run rampant in the city. While there is definitely a pronounced gap between the haves and have nots, New York is still the place to be to have any chance of improving one’s station in life.

Forbidden Lore

New York is home to the ghosts of those who came before. The spirits of early Dutch settlers and their African slaves, slaughtered by the invading British, haunt the lower end of Manhattan. The restless spirits of the original Algonquin inhabitants also walk the island,

Crossroads: North America: The USA: New York

seeking vengeance for the desecration of their once woodland paradise. Spiritualism is quite the fad in the parlors of the wealthy, who remain ignorant of how dangerous their occult parlor games truly are.

Like most of the eastern North American coast, New York Harbor is also the home to numerous wereseals (sea wolves) who hide amongst the native harbor seals. New York has always been a seaport, and tales of Jolly Rogers and sea zombies are common in the sailors taverns along South Street. These same seafarers also speak of a race of fish men called sahuagin who live in a city at the bottom of Long Island Sound. Ancient Algonquin legends seem to support this.

The twisting and turning dark lit streets of Manhattan's lower end can play tricks on the mind. Individuals have been known to get lost for hours, days, or perhaps forever. While in most cases those that disappear are most likely the victims of a brutal crime, rumors persist of a powerful undead lich using illusion magic and living somewhere in the area. This lich is believed to have once been the mortal adept named Axel Van Der Maark, an original settler of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam who fled Europe to avoid charges of witchcraft and heresy.

Other monsters and supernatural creatures can be found in and on the many buildings of New York. Gargoyles are believed to hide amongst their non-living counterparts on the faces of elaborate Neo-Gothic buildings throughout the city, and lesser known varieties of gargoyle (archers, spouters, stone lions, and grandfather plaques — see *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume III*) are also found. A former night watchman at the American Museum of Natural History (who went mad with fright and is now confined to Bellevue Mental Hospital) swears he saw the skeleton of a Tyrannosaurus Rex dinosaur walk across the exhibit hall of its own accord, but this has not been confirmed.

Since New York is an amalgam of cultures where thousands of immigrants arrive each day, it is no surprise that any type of minion of the Red Death not mentioned here might be found within the city. Even though the presence of the Red Death in the New World has been relatively brief, New York City serves as proof that it has nevertheless managed to gain a strong foothold in short order.

SICA HOLLOW

Local Correspondent:

Jon P. Stacey

Sica Hollow is located in the northeast corner of South Dakota, about fourteen miles straight south of the North Dakota border and twenty-six miles west of the Minnesota border. Sica Hollow is also in the northern part of the triangular Lake Traverse Reservation. The thickly wooded Hollow was carved by Roy Creek as it flows down the side of the Coteau des Prairies (a land feature similar to a plateau and formed by glaciers during the ice age). The ravines and paha tanka (“great hills”) seem out of place on the broad, open expanse of the Great Plains. Sica Hollow is not big, being only a little larger than five square miles.

HISTORY

When the Sioux first encountered the Hollow, they called it “Sica,” (pronounced “she-che”), meaning “evil.” Sioux legends speak of strange happenings in the Hollow. Within the Hollow, bogs gurgle with reddish water that the Sioux saw as the flesh and blood of their ancestors and small waterfalls echo beneath the thick canopy. The stream within the Hollow occasionally turns red, giving the appearance of flowing blood. At night, glowing swamp gas dance on the surface of bogs and decaying stumps glow from phosphorescent mold. A deep moaning can often be heard throughout the Hollow and other sounds seem strangely muted.

One legend in particular told of a corrupt stranger who came to a Sioux settlement in Sica Hollow and spread his evil to the people. The Great Spirit sent his messenger, Thunderer, to cleanse the Hollow in a deluge and to punish the stranger, Hand.

In the early 1840s, the first white settlers, the Roy family, came to Sica Hollow. They homesteaded nearby and their cemetery lies at the top of the southern slope. Joseph R. Brown established a trading post near the Hollow in 1845 and resided there for many years.

The Treaty of 1867 formed the Lake Traverse Reservation for two Dakota Sioux bands: the Sissetons and the Wahpetons. Sica Hollow became part of the reservation. The triangle-shaped reservation has its base near the borders of South Dakota and its point just north of Lake Kampeska, near the settlement of Watertown. From top to bottom, the reservation is roughly seventy miles.

Just outside the western edge of the Reservation stands Fort Sisseton. Established in 1864 as Fort Wadsworth after the Minnesota Indian Uprising of 1862, Fort Sisseton served twenty-five uneventful years. In 1889, the Fort was abandoned and the land given to the new state of South Dakota. The Fort’s forty-five buildings of wood, stone and brick within an earthen perimeter wall lie unused throughout the 1890s.

Forbidden Lore

The legend of Sica Hollow has its basis in truth. Centuries ago, a stranger traveled to the Sioux tribes camped in the Hollow during the dead of winter. Hand, as he called himself, sought to cause dissension and war among the people. Wiscasa Wakan, the Medicine Man, prayed to the Great Spirit for deliverance, and the Great Spirit sent the powerful nature spirit Thunderer (otherwise known as Thunderbird) to punish Hand. Thunderer tore out Hand’s eyes to deny him the Happy Hunting Grounds and cleansed the Hollow in a deluge which killed everyone in the Hollow except one.

Hand’s spirit, however, remained in Sica Hollow, refusing to leave the world because he could not see the Happy Hunting Grounds. His evil slowly spread through the Hollow, corrupting it. What he could not do quickly in life, he did gradually in death. The taint in the Hollow caused the vegetation to grow twisted and dark, and tales of mysterious happenings within the Hollow were commonplace among the Sioux.

As the white settlers moved west, the Red Death’s influence followed them, penetrating the wilderness of the frontier. Hand’s spirit fed off of the increasing presence of the Red Death, absorbing its power and evil. Within the last fifty years, Hand’s spirit was able to draw off enough energy to regain form and consciousness. Hand has risen as a 4th magnitude ghost with powers over the plants and animals found in Sica Hollow. At night, his ghostly form appears as a Sioux warrior, bare-chested and long-haired. His cloak and hair billow out behind him and he is surrounded in a blinding blue corona. His eyes have been torn out and all that remains are black pools of darkness in his sockets and bloody talon wounds across his face. Hand can also assume the form of a will o’wisp and a large shambling mound during the night. In the day, Hand is forced into the form of a black, lightning-split tree stump which stands 10 feet high at its splintered crown. The wood of the stump is damp and rotting, and is impossible to ignite even with magical fire. Even if this stump is destroyed, Hand reforms when the sun sets. Hand is now a lord in service of the Red Death, and his presence has transformed Sica Hollow into a lair of evil.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: South Dakota

A number of creatures have been attracted to Sica Hollow by Hand's evil, which has been magnified by the Red Death. Hand commands all the evil creatures within the Hollow. Will o' wisps are among the most plentiful creatures in the Hollow. They are known to lure trespassers off cliffs and into bogs at night and will disguise themselves by imitating the glow from swamp gas or decaying stumps. Shambling mounds can be found in some of the larger bogs throughout the Hollow. They often goad the will o' wisps into attacking with its electrical charge, which causes the mounds to gain an additional Hit Die. The shambling mounds commonly do this when preparing to attack a powerful invader. (The shambling mounds of Sica Hollow are neutral evil, not true neutral.) Two or three evil treants are active in the Hollow. They will attack any intelligent creature entering the Hollow, even other minions of the Red Death. One of the treants is rumored to be dying, so there may be an undead treant lurking within the Hollow soon. Other denizens include a small choke creeper (20-foot and 25 hit points) which lurks along the slopes and a hangman's tree which stands watch where the stream flows into the Hollow, preying on anything that comes near.

As Hand's evil tainted the Hollow, the spirits of those Sioux who had died within became restless, and some rose again. These ancestral spirits of the Sioux are typically 1st or 2nd magnitude ghosts, though a couple may be of 3rd magnitude. They do what they can to battle Hand and his minions, but they have little success. Despite fighting a hopeless fight, most of these spirits still do not welcome outsiders, even if the outsiders offer assistance. Whites and non-Sioux are nearly always attacked on sight; only Sioux have a remote possibility of being welcomed as long as they find some way of appeasing the spirits. Descendants of Fawn, however, are never harmed by the ancestral spirits, though Hand can and will attack them at night.

The Roy cemetery and Joseph Brown's trading post have remain largely untouched by Hand's evil as well as the ancestral spirits; the two sites either reside outside of the Hollow, or at least outside Hand's range of influence. It appears both Hand and the ancestral spirits are confined to Sica Hollow and their power does not extend beyond the borders of the Hollow.

Some of the Children of the Raven, a group within the Nation of Nine, believe that Thunderer (Thunderbird) still resides within Sica Hollow, sleeping until called again. They want to awaken the phoenix-like Thunderer and enlist his aid in halting the settling of the West by the whites. Even if Thunderer was in Sica Hollow and escaped corruption by Hand, he is likely to destroy the natives along with the settlers.

LEGEND OF SICA HOLLOW

Sica Hollow once protected many peaceful Native American camps. Its trees blocked the North Wind. But then a stranger came. The young girls grew afraid. The women wished to send him away. The old men said, "When it is warm again outside the Hollow, he will go."

The sly stranger, Hand, did not leave when the Sun returned to the north. Instead he taught the young boys to strike and kill. Blood flowed. The old men sought help from Wiscasa Wakan, Medicine man. "What shall we sacrifice to make our Hollow as it was long ago?" they asked.

Wiscasa Wakan returned to his lodge and waited for Wakantanka, the Great Spirit, to reply. Soon Wakantanka sent his messenger, Thunderer. Thunderer's eyes flashed. His dark wings beat the air, and he brought a cloud that rained over the Hollow. Madness seized Hand. He tried to run, but vines encircled his ankles. The water filled his screaming mouth. Thunderer's talons ripped out his eyes so he could never see the Happy Hunting Ground.

Of all the people in the Hollow, only a raven-haired maiden called Fawn was saved from the rising water. She fled to the top of the highest hill and sang her grief and remorse to the Great Spirit. Then she slept many days. When she awoke, the Hollow was clean and bright. Yet the memory and the evil name—Sica Hollow, Bad Hollow—linger.

HOUSTON AND SOUTHERN TEXAS

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

Located in a subtropical climate, a few miles inland from the Gulf of Mexico, in southern Texas, the city of Houston is a gateway to the rest of Texas. Travelers arrive at the port of Galveston to the south and use the railroad hub at Houston to gain access to the interior of the largest state in the union.

HISTORY

Founded in 1836, the city of Houston was built on the site of an old logging community, at the junction of the San Jacinto River and the Buffalo Bayou. The city was named for Sam Houston, who led the Texan troops at the battle of San Jacinto. Here the Texan irregulars charged the Mexican position, shouting "Remember the Alamo," and "Remember Goliad," on the afternoon of April 21, 1836, and drove the Mexican soldiers back into the San Jacinto River. With this battle Texas proclaimed its independence from Mexico.

A planned city, its streets were set out in a grid pattern, and was the new republic's first capital. A few years later the capital was moved to the more centrally located city of Austin. Ten years after the republic declared its independence from Mexico, Texas joined the United States.

As a U.S. city, Houston grew slowly to become a major railroad junction. Before the Civil War the slave trade was its major industry. Left unscathed by the war, the city emerged from Reconstruction in 1870, prospering.

Houston in 1890 is still a small city, as compared with the cities of the east coast and the large port city of New Orleans, its neighbor on the Gulf of Mexico. By 1890, the city's population has only reach 25,000. During the 1890s, plans are finalized to build a shipping channel, a long held desire of many Houstonians, to allow large ocean going vessels to dock at Houston, instead of in Galveston, its rival to the south.

Visitors from the East will feel as if they have entered the untamed west. Electric power was introduced as late as 1884, by the Houston Electric Light and Power Co.. In 1891, the streetcar systems were gradually changed from mule-pulled to electric-powered. Few of the city streets are paved and those that are are

usually buried under a layer of mud. The many unpaved streets are often turned to mud by the frequent rain storms. However, the city is not lawless. The local police force is supported by a branch of the Texas Rangers, who maintain a station in the city.

Forbidden Lore

Many historians wonder about Sam Houston's retreat across Texas during the revolution and his decision to attack the superior Mexican forces on the site of modern day Houston. Many believed he was forced into the battle by his troops, but the true reason has remained a secret. Santa Anna, the Mexican president and leader of its armies, had earned a reputation as a ruthless general of great skill, unsurpassed by any other in the Americas at that time. His numerous victories and his harsh treatment of prisoners, especially during the Texan revolution, lead to many rumors that Santa Anna was receiving advice from a ghostly councilor. Rumors say the ghostly strategist was a great general from European history, some claiming it was Napoleon Bonaparte, leading to Santa Anna's nickname as the Napoleon of the Americas. This, however, is false. Santa Anna's actions were driven by a fiend from the netherworld that had taken possession of him.

The fiend had crossed the Atlantic from Europe during the Spanish colonization of South and Central America. The fiend fled Europe because a qabal, The Pilgrims of the Radiant Dawn, had uncovered its existence and its true name. Members of this qabal approached Sam Houston and disclosed to him the nature of his enemy. Taking their advice, he retreated east to the San Jacinto river. There the qabalists had prepared a trap for the fiend. Using there combined mystical powers the qabalists of the Radiant Dawn were able to expel the fiend from Santa Anna and imprison it in a mystic cage.

The creature is currently imprisoned beneath the ground of the battlefield. However, the strength of the beast's prison has ebbed over the past fifty years and the fiend is able to psychically communicate with those traveling nearby. It attempts to seduce anyone it is able to contact with the lure of immense power if they agree to work to free him. In this manner the creature has created a small cult of followers working to free the it from its imprisonment. It is only a matter of time before the fiend is loosed again on the world.

In the country surrounding Houston, other mystical creatures dwell. There is the ghostly army reported around the village of Goliad, and the strange occurrences in the Valley of St. Xavier.

Crossroads: North America: The USA: Texas

GOLIAD

After the fall of the Alamo, Mexican troops moved east, terrorizing all Anglo-Saxon settlements in their path. In their path was the town of Goliad, where Colonel James Fannin had gathered a large number of troops. When faced with superior forces of the Mexican army, he surrendered to Colonel Urrea, asking the colonel for terms. The colonel promised that the Texans they would be free to return to their homes after relinquishing their arms. At that time all Mexican troops were under orders to execute anyone caught in the act of rebellion. The President of Mexico refused to honor the terms of clemency offered by Colonel Urrea and ordered Colonel Fannin and his men executed for treason. On Palm Sunday, March 27, 1836, the Colonel and his troops were marched out of Goliad, believing they were to be sent home. Instead they were executed a couple of miles outside of town.

Forbidden Lore

After this betrayal, the spirits of Colonel Fannin and many of his men refused to rest in peace. A year later, the spirit of Colonel Fannin and threescore of his men returned to haunt Goliad and the surrounding area. Till this day, the army of Goliad believes Texas is still fighting for its independence. Before they were killed the Colonel and his troops had witnessed many of the atrocities committed by the Mexican troops on loyal Texan civilians. Now they have adopted these tactics themselves, terrorizing any one of Mexican descent in order to drive all Mexicans south of the Rio Grande. Colonel Fannin and his men will continue their bloody attacks on Mexican immigrants until they are granted the pardon promised them by the President of Mexico.

VALLEY OF SAN XAVIER

In the 1700s, as the Spanish began to move northward into the central United States, a band of Franciscan friars attempted to build a mission in the Valley of San Xavier. This land was inhabited by the Tonkawa natives, so a company of soldiers, lead by Captain Felipe Rabago, was sent along to protect the new settlement. These soldiers sent to protect the people of San Xavier, soon became the terror of the settlement. Stealing and beating the settlers, until Lieutenant Juan Caballos complained to his captain. Captain Rabago was furious that his actions were brought into question by a subordinate and had Caballos arrested for insubordination. Caballos was whipped and then forced to watch as Captain Rabago killed the lieutenant's wife. Caballos managed to escape and sought shelter in the mission. Captain Rabago, furious as ever, road his horse into the church and attempted to drag Caballos out by his hair. The friars protested and condemned Captain Rabago for desecrating the church, and he relented. Caballos received asylum from the friars and remained at the mission. Three days later, while Caballos was dining with the friars, masked men armed with rifles knocked in the door and opened fire. Caballos and one of friar, Gazabal, were killed, and the masked men fled into the night.

Whether it was Caballos' ghost or a curse from God that struck next is unclear, but disaster struck the struggling settlement. A famine destroyed the crops. In the middle of the summer the river dried up. Finally, in the early fall a large fireball appeared in the sky at night and circled above the village. Over the next few days the settlers quickly fled and the soldiers deserted. Before Captain Rabago could leave, the fireball struck his barracks, and he died in the resulting fire. After this, even the friars decided to abandon the settlement.

Forbidden Lore

Today, none of the buildings of the settlement of San Xavier valley are still standing, and the valley continues to remain uninhabited. Settlers living on the edge of the valley still report sightings of the fireball that circles the valley at night.

Crossroads: North America: Canada: Newfoundland

ST. JOHN'S

Local Correspondent:

Matthew Dead Man Ball

The oldest and most easterly city in North America, St. John's is situated on the Avalon Peninsula of the island colony of Newfoundland. Facing Europe, St. John's is swept by the cold Arctic conditions brought south by the Labrador Current.

HISTORY

Situated near the abundant fish stocks of the Grand Banks, the deep-water harbor of St. John's was a highly prized port for the fishing fleets and explorers of Europe. As early as 1527 the ships of France, England, Portugal and Spain were all finding purchase from the Atlantic in the sheltered harbor. Year-round settlements soon came into being and in 1583 Sir Humphrey Gilbert claimed the harbor and all its properties for the English Crown. Continued turmoil amongst the European states led to friction in the New World with St. John's becoming a site of major skirmishes, particularly between the French and English. Eventually, English might prevailed and St. John's harbor was fortified and guarded with several gun batteries, block houses, and the forts William, Amherst, and Frederick.

Stability brought a period of prosperity to St. John's and the city quickly became a source of raw resources—timber, fish, and furs—which left the docks bound for port cities in both the Americas and the Old World countries. The Water Street merchant families of Hickeys, Sullivans, Galways, O'Briens, and MacDonalds soon became a controlling factor in city politics, as well as the prosperous elite. Established religion led by the Church of England, the Roman Catholic Church, and the Methodists led the cultural development in the city establishing numerous places of worship, charitable organizations, colleges, and public buildings.

St. John's quickly became the seat of government for the colony of Newfoundland as it began the experiment of self-government—the first colony in the British Empire to do so. Unfortunately, tragedy struck the city on July 8, 1892 when fire raged through St. John's destroying practically the entire eastern-third of the city. As the smoke settled, the city has been ravaged to the tune of over twenty million dollars of property damages, and over 12,000 people were left homeless. The people of St. John's faced the daunting prospect of rebuilding with a determination to once-again return to

the thriving lifestyle the community had once known. Although never completely reaching the same degree of self-sufficiency, St. John's would return to the center of the world stage as Guglielmo Marconi came to the city and carried out his experiments on Signal Hill overlooking the harbor. At the turn of the century, Marconi received the first trans-Atlantic wireless signals in St. John's, in effect shrinking the globe.

Forbidden Lore

The close proximity of St. John's to Europe, as well as the long history of settlement, has made St. John's an oft-used starting point for forays and expansion into the New World by both foes and minions of the Red Death.

At least one qabal is suspected to be based, or at least have a prominent cell operating, in St. John's. The Brotherhood of St. Phocas is a highly secretive organization that seems to be focusing their attentions on building or maintaining some control over the world's oceans. Popular gossip amongst the people of St. John's tells of a mysterious technology that has been discovered embedded in Arctic ice flows and brought back to the city by the merchant sponsored seal hunts. In certain circles, it is no great secret that the Brotherhood would dearly long to possess such items, and it has been suggested that they will go to any lengths to obtain such artifacts.

Another concern of late as been the disappearance of several of the local fishing boats and their crews. Although no trace of the vessels or any bodies have been found, other fishermen tell of having seen a giant octopoid tentacle or beak breaking the surface of the gray Atlantic. The only explanation for such a sighting can be found in the old maps and stories of mariners recounting the tale of the kraken—a gigantic squid-like monster responsible for devouring whole fleets.

The island of Newfoundland is also subject to some profound disturbances in the spiritual realm. Most of this is a lingering resonance towards the European civilization as European settlers actively hunted the indigenous people of the island, the Beothuk Indians, for a government-sponsored bounty that effectively amounted to genocide. Those Beothuks not slaughtered quickly fell victim to European diseases such as tuberculosis. The last Beothuk died in St. John's in 1829.

Crossroads: North America: Canada: Nova Scotia

WOLFVILLE

Local Correspondent:

Matthew Dead Man Ball

Located at the eastern end of the Annapolis Valley, Wolfville is situated upon the shores of the Minas Basin in the Bay of Fundy—the source of the world’s highest tides. The Annapolis Valley is also the agricultural center of the Nova Scotia economy with numerous produce and livestock farms as well as hundreds of acres of apple orchards.

HISTORY

In the seventeenth century farmers from the Bordeaux region of France colonized the Annapolis Valley. Calling the region L’Acadie, the farmers set about claiming the land from the tidal basins through the construction of a series of dykes which kept the sea waters from flooding the low-lying lands which became rich agricultural soils. In 1755, the English tried to force the Acadians into signing a treaty that in effect would ally the Acadians with the British in their conflict against France. Preferring to remain neutral, the Acadians declined to sign the treaty. In return, the British gathered all the Acadians in the Valley, separated the men from the women and children, and expelled the Acadian people from Nova Scotia. The Expulsion scattered the Acadians throughout the world. Some ended up in other parts of Canada—Quebec, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland. Some traveled south to become the Cajuns of Louisiana, and some returned to France. After ten years, the British government of Nova Scotia declared the Acadians could return to the province if they wished. The Acadian people returned to the Annapolis Valley only to find that their property and lands had been appropriated by English and Dutch settlers and the government refused to allow any claim towards their former homes. The American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow in his classic poem “Evangeline” (1847) celebrated the tragedy of the Acadian people.

The large expanses of mud revealed during the daily low tides caused the town to be known as Mud Creek until it was re-christened Wolfville after the prominent DeWolfe family in 1821. Shortly thereafter in 1838, the Baptist Church chose the town as the site for their new university and seminary which they named Acadia University. The University became one of the leading educational institutes in the province with many noted alumni such as Sir Charles Tupper who went on to

become Prime Minister of Canada in 1896. Although the University burned completely to the ground in 1884, it was quickly rebuilt and flourishes today.

Forbidden Lore

The tidal bore of the Bay of Fundy has recently become the focus for the experiments of a group of professors from the University. Led by Dr. Magnus Moeller, a German professor of Physics and Mathematics, these individuals are believed to be constructing some sort of turbine-based generator that creates enormous quantities of electrical energy twice daily with the tides. The underlying purpose of their endeavor remains unclear, as does just who is footing the cost of the experiments.

A lingering resentment is also present in the Wolfville area in the Acadian people who still feel they have never been shown any justice after their expulsion from their traditional lands. Besides a simmering tension, perhaps the most tangible evidence of this latent hostility is expressed in the stories of the Acadian people concerning the DeWolfe clan. At the time of the expulsion, the DeWolfes sided with the British, selling out their fellow Acadians and revealing to the British troops the names of French sympathizers and the locations of stockpiled supplies and arms. Accordingly, one old Acadian cursed the head of the DeWolfe family as he was loaded on the ship that carried him away. Although no civilized person puts much stock into the ravings of a simplistic, backwoods farmer, the Acadian people still tell the tale of how one member of each generation of DeWolfes falls under the power of the moon and tides as the “loup-garou” or were-wolf. Current suspicion tends to point the finger at the local judge, Gerald DeWolfe.

Crossroads: Central America: Mexico

SAN MIGUEL DE COZUMEL

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

Cozumel is Mexico's largest island. Located twelve miles off the eastern coast of the Yucatan Peninsula, the isle is twenty-eight miles from north to south and ten miles from east to west. San Miguel is a small fishing village located on the western coast of the island. Situated in a tropical climate, the temperature ranges between 70 and 90 degrees.

HISTORY

The island of Cozumel was first settled by the Mayans in the third century AD. The Mayan civilization fell mysteriously in the 13th century. By the time of the Spanish arrival in the New World, the island was inhabited by descendants of the Mayans. Cozumel in the Mayan language means "Land of the Swallows," and the name was kept by the Spanish conquistadors. Years later, as gold was taken by the Spanish from the mines of Central America, pirates used the coves of the island to launch attacks on the treasure laden ships heading for Europe. Many of these gold filled ships lie below the waves around the island.

In the 1890s, the island's one community, a small fishing village located on the west side of the island, is called San Miguel. The port is being developed, due to the increase in trade passing through the island from Central America to the United States. The gum craze began near the end of the 19th century, leading to the mass importation of gum from Central America. Cozumel is becoming a favored stop over port for ships making this run.

The isle contains beautiful sand beaches on the west coast with sparkling clear water off shore. The northern and southern parts of the island contain mangrove swamps. These swamps are very inhospitable, infested with mosquitoes and alligators. The interior of the island is covered with thick vegetation. While making travel difficult, the jungle of the island is not as thickly forested as that found on the mainland. The east side, the wind ward side, of the island is barren sandy beach. The strong winds from the Caribbean Sea keep it free from vegetation. The constant wind also makes the region inhospitable to the island's natives, and there are no settlements on this side of the island. This makes it a

perfect breeding group for sea turtles, who come each summer to lay their eggs on the eastern beaches.

In Cozumel's interior there are many ruins still standing from the time of the Mayans. The largest such ruins, lying in the center of the island, is called San Gervacio. The site was held by the Mayans to be sacred to their goddess of fertility, Ixchel. Only Mayan women who wished to conceive a child were allowed to enter the site, where they underwent rituals that were to bless their womb and grant them healthy children. Another ruined monument sits on the southern tip of the island, near where a lighthouse is being constructed. This monument, a tall slender column, was used by Mayan sailors to navigate their boats by.

The village of San Miguel takes its name from the discovery of an ivory statue of the Archangel Michael wearing a golden crown and wielding a golden sword. The statue was uncovered in 1895, and was sent to the capital for restoration. How the statue came to the island is unclear, but study of its design reveals it to be of Spanish construction. Scholars studying the statue believe it to have been a gift from a rich Spanish noble to the island's natives when they were converted to Catholicism. When it was returned to the city, many of the residence believed that the real statue was not returned and that a replica was sent in its place. They believe that the real statue was taken by a corrupt minister in the Mexican government. The statue now resides in the church of Corpus Christi, the village's Catholic church just off the main square, Plaza de Sol. Inside, Archangel Michael stands over the altar of the church.

Forbidden Lore

The suspicion of the local inhabitants about the statue of San Miguel is partially true. During the statue's restoration, one of the professors studying the statue was a colleague of Edward Thompson, an amateur archaeologist and secretly an adept. When contacted by his colleague, Thompson traveled to the capital to view the statue. His studies uncovered the magical nature of the statue. The golden sword is unbreakable and considered a +2 *long sword*. The golden crown is a *crown of defense* that grants the wearer an AC of 5. Both the sword and the crown bear a curse. The wielder of either experience painful headaches that make concentration difficult. In game terms, the wielder has a -4 penalty to all Intelligence checks, including Spellcraft checks. The curse is lessened by possession but the sword and the crown, in which case the penalty is only -2. If the wielder is standing within thirty feet of the statue the curse is lessened to -1. Thompson secretly replaced the sword and crown with replicas and

Crossroads: Central America: Mexico

returned to his hacienda in the interior of the Yucatan Peninsula near the ruins of the large Mayan city of Chichén Itza with the originals to continue his studies.

Thompson did not uncover the magic locked in the statue itself or the origin of the statue. The statue projects a double strength *protection from evil* in a thirty foot radius at all times. No evil aligned magical creature can enter this area, and all good aligned individuals receive a bonus of +4 to their AC against attacks from evil beings. The statue was crafted in Spain by adepts and mystics working to help drive the Moors from Spain. However, the statue was not finished until after the taking of Granada by the Spanish in January of 1492. So the statue remained unused until Cortés left Spain to conquer the Aztecs. When Cortés arrived in Mexico he carried the statue, a gift from the monarchs of Spain to help in his conquest. During his conquest, a Dominican friar, Juan Guteirez, became appalled by Cortés' brutality and stole the statue and fled. Guteirez traveled south into the Yucatan. Eventually he reached the island of Cozumel where the natives welcomed him and were open to his teachings. He set the statue up in the village center and converted many of the natives to his faith.

The Mayan ruins of San Gervacio are used by the were-jaguars tribes from the central Yucatan for mating rituals as they have for centuries past. Different were-jaguar tribes travel to the island each month during the three days of the new moon and gather to choose mates for the year, while trying to keep secret their presence. In the past they rarely attacked the villagers of San Miguel; however, with the increase of gum ships using the port attacks by the were-jaguars on lone sailors have increased. It was ancestors of these were-jaguars who removed the statue of Saint Michael from the village center and hid it in the jungle. The resent recovery of the statue has angered the were-jaguars, who are plotting to steal the statue again.

Not all of the island's terrors remain on land. Beneath the sea floor, water-filled caves and large caverns exist. The water passing through the caves maintains a strong current. Many variety of sharks use these caves for "sleeping;" a strange behavior not observed by human scientists before. The sharks are also drawn to the caves by their master, Pírate Salinas, a were-shark. Salinas maintains a lair in the caves underneath the island, while he searches the depths for sunken Spanish treasure ships. Pírate's true form is that of a twelve foot long tiger shark. Tiger sharks while not rare near the island are uncommon, and due to a reddish coloration on the tip of his dorsal fin, Pírate (pronounced Pee-rot-ta) has been recognized by many of the native fishermen, who fearfully call him "Diablo del Mar," *Devil of the Sea*, after his many attacks on local fisherman and swimmers.

VERA CRUZ

Local Correspondent:
Daniel J. Bandera

Vera Cruz was the site of Cortés' landing in the new world on his way to conquer the mighty Aztec Empire. Since his time a number of other conquerors have used the city to invade Mexico.

In 1890, the city is the largest port city in Mexico and an important part of the nation's economy. Like many cities throughout Mexico, it represents a diverse mix of Native American and Spanish cultures.

HISTORY

A Native American civilization arose on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico near Vera Cruz in ancient times. Their civilization had waned by the 16th Century, and in 1519, when Hernán Cortés landed nearby, he met the Totonacs, descendants from the original settlers. Upon his landing Cortés founded the city of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, some seventy miles north of the modern day city of Vera Cruz. Showing little respect for the natives' religious beliefs, Cortés built Villa Rica at the foot of their sacred mountain, Quiahuiztlán.

Before leaving the city to conquer the interior of Mexico, Cortés established a city council to rule the new city. As Cortés conquests increased Spain's holdings in the area, the area around Villa Rica was designated a state, and a royal governor was set to rule the area from Villa Rica. In 1525, the city was moved to a new location forty miles to the south. The new city was renamed Vera Cruz. Though it grew quickly, the city's initial glory was soon eclipsed as the Spanish moved the colonial government to the interior of the continent with the fall of the Aztec Empire. Vera Cruz was placed under the viceroyalty of New Spain (later changed to Viceroyalty of Mexico), and fell under the rulership of the viceroy in Mexico City.

The city was moved once again in 1599-1600 to its present location. Vera Cruz Nueva (New Vera Cruz) was built on the coast some thirty miles southeast of the old settlement, Vera Cruz Vieja (Old Vera Cruz). Vera Cruz became the only recognized port of New Spain through which the riches of the New World could pass on the way to Europe. To protect this important port city, a massive fortress was constructed on the island of San Juan de Uleía, just offshore.

Crossroads: Central America: Mexico

The area around Vera Cruz was unhealthy long before the Spanish arrived. The land is very fertile, but there were many low-lying areas that are easily flooded. This led to many epidemics among the settlers. Because of this, many settlers arrived in New Spain at Vera Cruz but few stayed. Still, those settlers that did stay formed a diverse cultural mix that included Native Americans, Spanish, and Africans, brought over by the Spanish as slaves. Despite the inhospitable environment, the city grew large from the great wealth discovered in the country's interior.

Cortés would not be the only invader to land at Vera Cruz, which would prove to be the launching point and final rallying point of many of Mexico's invaders. During the Mexican revolution of 1821, Vera Cruz was one of the last cities to remain loyal to the Spanish crown. The Spanish army's garrison in the city refused to surrender to the rebels. When faced with overwhelming odds and cut off from supplies from Europe, they relinquished control of the city and retreated to the fortress of San Juan, where they held out until Spain recognized Mexican independence.

Twenty years later in 1847, the *norteamericanos* seized the port city of Vera Cruz and used it as a base to strike into the heart of the country, during the Mexican-American War. They did not stay long. The Americans quickly conquered the Mexican capital and annexed much of northern Mexico.

It was not long thereafter that the French, under Napoleon III, invaded Mexico by way of Vera Cruz. In 1862, though initially repelled, the French conquered much of central Mexico. The French established as ruler the much-hated puppet emperor, Maximilian. The French remained in Mexico until the year 1866. During their retreat, Vera Cruz was one of the last cities they relinquished their rule over.

Now as the city faces the 1890s, its future is still unsure. The country is still weak from the numerous invasions of the past century as well as the civil wars that have rocked the country over the past several decades. As Mexico recovers, Vera Cruz's position as the largest port in Mexico, providing links to the international trade community, will insure its importance the nation's future.

doctors and executed them, the spells remain in affect, even 350 years later.

Local folklore is populated with tales of witches which are rumored to plague the countryside. The witches are said to enchant married men, causing them to leave their wives and to commit acts of evil. Travelers to the area will meet many citizens of Vera Cruz who have a story to tell about a friend or acquaintance that has faced a witch, but a rare few claim to have actually personally met a witch. This belief in the presence of witches has some basis in fact. A loose organization of evil female adepts has lived in the area since the 16th Century, when their ancestors fled from the Inquisition in Spain. Local legends state that a witch's hair turns gray when she becomes a witch, forcing her to cover her hair with a scarf, hat, wig, or magical enchantment. Other legends say that a witch's spells are more powerful at night, and that they will flee at the sight of a rose, for the prick from a rose thorn will not heal.

The most feared witch of the area is called *La Bruja Blanca*, "the White Witch." Said to lair in the swampy low-lying area south of the city, this pale-white witch is blamed for stealing firstborn female children. *La Bruja Blanca* is actually a spirit hag unrelated to the local cabal of witches. She often does steal little girls for use in her bizarre rituals.

The waterways that surround Vera Cruz are haunted by *la mujer que llora*, "the crying lady." In life, this spirit was a prostitute who became pregnant. She was unwilling to keep the child, and when it was born, threw the baby into a river. For this heinous act she was cursed to rise as a ghost. She haunts the nearby rivers searching for the child she killed, unable to receive eternal peace until she has found it.

Forbidden Lore

The abandoning of the original site of Villa Rica de la Vera Cruz, six years after it was founded, was due to the unusual abundance of poisonous snakes that infested the area. These snakes were attracted to the area by sympathy spells cast as part of a curse by native witch doctors. In anger over the Spanish desecration of their sacred mountain, the adepts cursed the settlement. Though the Spanish conquistadors uncovered the witch

Crossroads: South America: Chile

TEMUCO

Local Correspondent:
Coan-Jeen

The city of Temuco is located in southern Chile near the fortified city-port of Valdivia. Originally a military outpost built by the Spanish in the sixteenth century, Temuco became the nexus between the sea and the continent. It was used as a stop for travelers and later a starting point for the new railroad in the south of Chile. Temuco became the center of this newly opened region known as the Austral Extreme.

HISTORY

Chile's human history began about 10,000 years ago when migrating Indians followed the line of the Andes and settled in fertile valleys and along the coast. The Incas briefly extended their empire into the north, but the area's remoteness prevented significant impact. In 1541, the Spanish, under Pedro de Valdivia, encountered about one million Indians from various cultures who supported themselves principally through slash-and-burn agriculture and hunting. Although the Spanish did not find the gold and silver they sought there, they recognized the agricultural potential of Chile's Central Valley, and Chile became part of the Viceroyalty of Peru.

Chilean colonial society was heavily influenced by the latifundio system of large landholdings, kinship politics, the Roman Catholic Church, and an aggressive frontier attitude stemming from Indian wars. The drive for independence from Spain was precipitated by usurpation of the Spanish throne by Napoleon's brother Joseph. A national junta in the name of Ferdinand, heir to the deposed king, was formed on September 18, 1810. Spanish attempts to reinstate arbitrary rule during the Reconquista led to a prolonged struggle under Bernardo O'Higgins, Chile's most renowned patriot. Chilean independence was formally proclaimed on February 12, 1818.

The political revolution brought little social change, however, and nineteenth century Chilean society preserved the essence of the stratified colonial social structure. The system of presidential absolutism eventually predominated, but the wealthy landowners continued to control Chile.

As a result of the War of the Pacific against Peru and Bolivia (1879-83), Chile expanded its territory northward by almost one-third and acquired valuable nitrate deposits, the exploitation of which led to an era of

national affluence. Toward the end of the nineteenth century, Chile consolidated its position in the south by suppressing the Mapuche Indians. In 1881, the country signed a treaty with Argentina confirming Chilean sovereignty over the Strait of Magellan. In this same year, Temuco was founded on the shores of the river Cautin in the southernmost part of Chile. Originally a military point, Temuco was first established to pacify the region dominated by the indigenous Araucanians. The Araucanians (or Araucanos) were a group of Native Americans comprised of four different tribes: the Mapuche (the largest tribe whose name translates "Man from the Earth"), the Huilliche, the Tehuelche, and the Picunche.

Forbidden Lore

In Chile as in most of South America, the European settlers have left an indelible mark of blood that time has been unable to erase. Temuco and the surrounding region are no exception. The nearby city of Valdivia, founded in 1552, was destroyed and rebuilt many times, always in a river of blood and destruction. The many forts of the zone were a provocation for the indigenous Indian tribes, and war quickly broke out. The entire place was fertile territory for the malignant seed of the Red Death. Arriving with the Spanish conquerors, the Red Death was able to get a foothold on the region and corrupt some of the previously innocent native inhabitants. The murder of five Jesuit missionaries by this newly corrupted group, and the cannibalistic feast on the corpses that followed, was the final pact between the natives and the powers of the Red Death.

The religion of the natives of the region was based on the cult of their ancestors, and on the condition of the "canelo" or sacred tree. The establishment of the "huincas" (a name given by the natives to the European invaders) in Chile was seen by the tribes to be a cruel and reckless cut to this sacred tree. In desperation, a "machi" or shaman-woman from one of the tribes managed to successfully invoke the spirits of their dead ancestors to help the tribes win the war against the "huinca." These "dead of their ancestors" were the origin of the troubles to follow.

The unexplored territory of the region, including forests, canyons, lakes and mountains, quickly became overrun by a horde of ghosts answering the machi's call. A new cult of spirits was born: spirits that were hungry for heat, human heat—huinca heat. But something went terribly wrong: the Red Death also heard the pleas of the shaman-woman to her people's ancestor spirits and intervened. The natives were afterwards forced to serve these summoned spirits, and the tribes now faced a new era of slavery and fear: the Era of Ghosts.

Crossroads: Europe: England

GLASTONBURY ABBEY

Local Correspondent:
Charles Phipps

Glastonbury Abbey currently lies in ruins within the Somerset town of that bears its name in the southwest of England. Although a good portion now lies buried beneath the earth over the course of ages, the Abbey and its surrounding countryside are still ripe with Christian myths and heroes. These tales include the legend of Joseph of Arimathea, and the fabled Knights of King Arthur. The place remains a rather pleasant spot for vacationing tourists and is awash with local color. Interest in the area has been revived by current popular fiction, which has generated a new interest in the old legends. Few, however, know the true importance of the land.

The town is roughly square in shape and home to about six thousand people. The natives view the Abbey as an extremely sacred spot and take great pride in its history.

HISTORY

According to tradition, Joseph of Arimathea (who according to the Bible donated his own tomb for Christ's interment after the Crucifixion) founded England's first Christian church in Glastonbury in 37 AD. The legend also holds that Joseph brought with him the Holy Grail, the cup used by Christ at the Last Supper and later by Joseph to catch his blood at the crucifixion. Druids who knew and respected him apparently gave the lands held by this church (known as the Twelve Hinds) to Joseph. The Hinds dwindled during the next few centuries, until visited by St. Patrick in 450 AD, after which they grew larger and more prominent. By the tenth century, Glastonbury's flock was one of the largest in England. One of its most famous Abbots was the great St. Dunstan.

In the twelfth century the Abbey was popularized as the resting-place of the "mythical" King Arthur, when the resident monks claimed to have found his remains on the site. This was later revealed to have been a fabrication by the monks of the Abbey who wished to gain money for the church's coffers by increasing the number of pilgrimages to the site.

Glastonbury was closed in 1539 by the Anglican reformation, the last abbey to be shut down by King

Henry VIII. Placed in the hands of the Anglican Church, it was put under the control of abbey trustees and its influence eventually dwindled until it was reduced to the ruin that it is today.

Forbidden Lore

The many legends concerning Glastonbury Abbey are for the most part true. The Abbey indeed once held the Holy Grail after Joseph of Arimathea brought it to England. The Abbey later lost the Grail some time during the eighth century, but eventually Sir Galahad of the Knights of the Round Table returned the Holy Grail to the Abbey, and with Sir Bedivere founded a hermitage on the site after King Arthur's "death." Unfortunately the Grail was somehow lost from the site yet again under mysterious circumstances. It is not known whether or not it was secreted away by a monk hoping to shield it from minions of the Red Death, or if the forces of evil stole it from the Abbey's possession. Still, the Abbey (and the Society of the Sword described below) may yet have valuable clues to the whereabouts of the fabled chalice.

Although legends of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table have been considerably embellished over time, they are based on truth. The historical Arthur was the leader of a group of Welsh paladins who sought to drive the Red Death from their homeland, but eventually succumbed when the Red Death decayed the ranks of the Knights of the Round Table from within. King Arthur himself was struck down in battle nearby, and spent his last days on the site before he was carried off by mysterious forces, presumably to his death (unless the legends of a portal to timeless Arcadia are true).

Before the end, the mortally wounded Arthur entrusted the legendary sword Excalibur to Bedivere and several monks of the Abbey were witnesses to the sword's final fate. These monks eventually formed a small qabal located entirely in Glastonbury, called the Society of the Sword. This qabal is entrusted with numerous valuable records about Arthur and his knights, uncorrupted by centuries of legend. Although the Abbey itself is now in ruin, the Society remains in the town. They are fearful of the Red Death and maintain the utmost secrecy about their allegiance.

Finally, the area is not free of the Red Death's machinations. A powerful spirit haunts the ruins of the Abbey, appearing as a black-armored knight with glowing red eyes and a burning desire to eradicate all record of the ancient Arthurian legends. His powers seem to include the ability to drain specific memories from his foes, and the power to know instantly if anyone of pure and noble heart (Good alignment) has entered the ruins. More than anything else, it has been the

Crossroads: Europe: England

ceaseless efforts of this unearthly figure that has caused the true history of King Arthur to become increasingly obscured. Due to the proximity of this spectral knight, many of the good townsfolk of Glastonbury struggle just to remember the increasingly romanticized legends

The true identity of this black knight, or who or what he may have been in life, remains anyone's guess.

Crossroads: Europe: France

LE LOUVRE

Local Correspondent:
Jarrod R. Lowe

The most impressive display of fine art, sculpture, antiquity and historical relics in Europe, if not the world, is the Louvre in Paris. Though built over 700 years ago as a fortress by Philippe August, the structure has changed gradually over the years reflecting the changes of French life throughout the centuries. In 1890 the Louvre houses works by Titan, Raphael, and Leonardo da Vinci, as well as ancient relics from the Egyptian dynasties and Roman Empire.

HISTORY

The buildings constructed on the grounds that would eventually encompass the museum known as the Louvre were first built about 1190. Originally a fortress, the Louvre not only guarded the city of Paris from western invaders, but also protected the king from his own subjects in the east. The fortress served many varied purposes; not only did it hold an arsenal of weapons, it also contained a network of dungeons that housed prisoners from all walks of life, not to mention the vaults protecting the royal treasures: icons, manuscripts, armor and jewelry.

By the year 1400, the Louvre had become no more than a retreat for the royals, where great banquets, tournaments, and important meetings concerning the state were held. During this time vast gardens were added as well as an aviary for exotic birds and wild animals. All of the fortress' military importance was lost when a group of enraged merchants seized Paris, then moved the city walls beyond the Louvre. Soon, the Louvre was seen only as a part-time residence for the kings but it still served as a house for the military arsenal as well as a prison.

The English conquered the French in 1415. The English, in turn, plundered the Louvre for its varied treasures. Soon thereafter, marauders came to Paris and took all that the English had left behind. Now, simply an arsenal and prison, the structure fell into ruin as it was neglected for the next 150 years. In 1527, Francis I had the remains demolished, believing that the residence of royalty should reflect not the might of its ruler but the wealth and culture he possessed. Thus artisans were put to work erecting a palace; the Louvre as we now know it was formed. Though Francis I passed away eight months

after construction began, his son, Henry II, continued the building.

For the next 300 years the Louvre was a "work in progress," and each king that came after Henry II attempted to complete his plans. Though the construction was occasionally delayed by civil strife, these interruptions were only brief.

The Louvre became the world's artistic capitol during Henry IV's reign. Hundreds of craftsmen and artists lived in the structure as valued guests of the king. This became a royal tradition up until the reign of Napoleon I. In the early 1700s the French government made promoting art its primary business. By the reign of Louis XIV the royal collection had grown to more than 2,400 objects of art. Soon new wings were added and the ultimate construction was coming to an end. However, following Louis XIV's move to Versailles, the Louvre once again fell into disrepair. Large piles of trash filled the courtyards while shops were set up in its entrance. Paris tried to save the structure by transforming it into a city hall, but the king quickly rejected that idea.

After 1794, many works of art came to the Louvre via the victorious revolutionary armies. Masterpieces from Italy arrived in Paris in July 1798. The sheer number of these treasures caused the government to completely reorganize the museum, which was also redecorated and inaugurated to the public in 1800.

After the French revolution, the Louvre became a museum open to the public. No longer was art open exclusively to the upper class; it became accessible to all. Napoleon increased the collections greatly by exacting tribute from the many countries he conquered. Most of these relics were returned to their home countries in 1815 after his defeat at Waterloo. Under Louis XVIII the Venus de Milo was acquired (for 6,000F) soon after it was rediscovered in 1820 on the Island of Melos. In 1848 the museum became property of the state, with an annual budget devoted to the acquisition of new art. The collection continued its growth; many charitable donations of art also increased the holdings of the museum.

In the 1890s the Louvre is the center for greatness in the community of the arts. It houses thousands of masterpieces, many of which are not displayed at all times. Every year people from all around the world travel to Paris to view these treasures, and though construction and redecoration continues, it is believed that this museum will continue to flourish well into the 20th century.

Forbidden Lore

Crossroads: Europe: France

The Red Death's influence upon the museum known as the Louvre began when Philippe August first broke ground on the site over 700 years ago. In 1213 when the Louvre was new, an eight-year old boy was wrongly accused of stealing bread from the king's table.

Unwilling to confess to a crime he did not commit, the boy was thrown into the dungeon of the Louvre. Though beaten and half-starved, the child would not confess. For nearly five years he would stay locked away in the bowels of the future museum before the opportunity to escape would ever come.

One day in 1218, the young man managed to wrest a sword from a guard as he was being transferred to another cell. The lad murdered the guardsman and took his keys, freeing several dozen other prisoners. Though the ill-fated revolt resulted in the deaths of some of their more horrifying captors, the group was eventually cornered and taken back to their prison. The young leader of the prisoners was taken to the Louvre's main hall and executed by decapitation before the king. Years later the Headless Child, as he is now called, has been seen in the Louvre searching for a way out of his eternal prison. The Child is considered a ghost of the 2nd magnitude, whose movements are limited to the confines of the Louvre's walls. It is said that the Headless Child can be sent to his final resting place by locating his body and properly burying it within hollowed ground. But the current location of the Headless Child's body, though somewhere within the Louvre, remains unknown.

In the year 1685 a painting was delivered to the museum that came to be the most dangerous piece of art ever to be shown in Paris. Discovered in a private collection, the painting entitled "The Swordsman" was crafted by an unknown artist. Brilliant in its design and color, the piece became a favorite of museum curator Jean Pierre Demaret. Demaret spent hours viewing the piece in one of the Louvre's main galleries, where the public adored the painting as well. One night, several weeks after the Louvre had begun showcasing the piece, Demaret turned up missing. Days went by, and still there was no sign of Demaret. At the time no one seemed to notice a new figure, strikingly similar in appearance to Demaret, had appeared in the painting with the swordsman. Over the years the occasional admirer would turn up missing, and a new victim would emerge bloodied at the swordsman's feet.

Fine European works of art are not all that is shown within the Louvre. In the year 1881, the Oriental Antiquities department of the Louvre was established. Many works were put on display, including sculpture and frescoes. One of the many displays was a collection of seven ancient daggers, once belonging to a Shogun over two thousand years ago. The weapons were lavish in design, and the Parisians were awed by these additions to

the museum. For weeks they were viewed daily by the public, and closely guarded at night. One April morning something very unusual happened. When the Louvre was opened for the day the third dagger in the set, arguably the least attractive, had simply vanished. The police were immediately contacted, though their investigation turned up no leads whatsoever. For three days and three nights the dagger was missing, but on the morning of the fourth day the dagger was discovered back upon its original wall hanging, though now coated in dried blood. This story quickly circulated throughout Paris, and many people were afraid to return to the Louvre out of fear of the "Living Dagger." After many complaints the curators placed the set of ancient daggers into storage. If they had not done this they could very well have witnessed the third dagger of the set repeat its disappearing act three years later in 1884, then in 1887...

When the Louvre began showcasing artwork and relics from various Egyptian dynasties, the curators had no idea what they had unleashed upon Paris. The ancient mummy and son of a Pharaoh, Thutepot, now rests within the Louvre. Upon its arrival into the museum's possession fifty years ago, Thutepot was disturbed by being transported such a great distance. Over the course of several months Thutepot stalked the streets of Paris by night, killing all those who came into his path. Though Thutepot's rage finally subsided when he murdered the archeologist responsible for his disturbance, one might continue to wonder if he should ever truly rest again.

Founded within the walls of the Louvre in the 18th Century was the secret qabal known as La Lumiere, or the Enlightened. This band of heroes have dedicated themselves to the ultimate destruction of the Red Death. Today this secret society continues to meet upon occasion within a long forgotten hall within the Louvre. One of their current members is also one of the present curators of the museum, Professor Henri Lemoux.

Rumors have persisted throughout the years that the spirits of some of the world's great artists reside along with their works within the Louvre. While the ghosts of Michelangelo and Titan do not prowl the museum, the great master Leonardo da Vinci (detailed in the *Forgotten Children* netbook) continues to frequent the home to some of his more famous works. Today, existing as a vampire, the artisan and inventor continues his collection of arcane lore (hidden within a forgotten chamber) that he hopes will someday bring about an end to the Red Death. Calling it the "Second Alexandria," Leonardo has recently discovered a use for a relic recovered by Napoleon's forces in the later part of the 18th century. A silver and gold skull, which originally whistled, popped and spouted off some form of alien

Crossroads: Europe: France

language, now contains a great deal of information pertaining to the spread of the Red Death. Leonardo hopes to fill this magical device, which he theorizes is from another plane of existence, with all his collected knowledge. Unbeknown to Leonardo, the skull (known as a “Mimir” on other planes) has already been touched by the evil of the Red Death. When the device is activated by anyone other than da Vinci, there is a 25% chance that the information relayed will be false. Any PC acting on this misinformation may find themselves unwittingly led astray, or down the path to their own destruction.

Crossroads: Europe: Poland

BIALYSTOK

Local Correspondent:
Marcin Perkowski

Lost in the wilderness of the mighty woods of eastern Podlasie (Poland), halfway between Warsaw and Lwow, lies the city of Bialystok. By the virtue of its location on the railroad line connecting Moscow with the rest of the civilized world, Bialystok earns its place on the map as a minor center of trade. To its credit, it is strange and eclectic mix of cultures and races.

HISTORY

Bialystok was founded as the private settlement of the knight Branicki in the 15th century and by 1749 had become a town.

But the true roots of city are lost in pre-Christian history. The earliest known written document from the region simply says, "There is a hamlet in the woods of Podlasie." A legend says that Gyedimin, one of the half-legendary tans (chieftains) of the pagan Lithuanian tribes, got lost while hunting in the endless woodlands, and tried going to sleep in the spot that would eventually be Bialystok. He received a vision of snowy white peaks in the heart of a mighty forest, and a great white wolf who ordered the tan to build a settlement here. So it was done.

When the tribes united and become a nation, the prince gave Bialystok to one of his most noble knight families: the Branicki. They built their homestead here, and quickly Bialystok become a center of trade and light industry.

In the middle of the 17th century the ruling Branicki started construction of his palace complex. When finished in the next century, it become one of most beautiful and majestic palaces in the Kingdom of Poland, and in all of central Europe. Quickly it was nicknamed "Versal (Feast-hall) of the North."

In 1749 king August III gave Bialystok the town rights. It was a glorious moment for the Branicki line, but their future was not so bright. In the struggle with Russia at the end of the 18th century, the Branicki family pledged their allegiance to the empress Katerina of Russia (Catherine the Great) so they were counted as traitors. When in 1797 three empires (Austro-Hungary, Germany, and Russia) divided the lands of Poland, Bialystok came under the control of Russia (1807). This situation had its good and bad sides.

First, Bialystok fall into the hands of the dark and wild Russian Empire, so its citizens had to handle the ruthless rule of the czars. On the other hand, the city become more important as a center of trade, science, and industry. Especially rapid growth was observed between 1830 (16,000 citizens) and 1890 (62,000 citizens plus 4 000 Russian soldiers). Many factories were built and many people (especially Jews) immigrated from the east to Bialystok.

This situation makes Bialystok a real melting pot of cultures and races. Only just over 18% of the citizens are Poles. Germans make up about 6%, and Russians 9%. Two-thirds of the population are Jews. This makes Bialystok one of the greatest Jewish communities in Middle-Eastern Europe. The remainder of the population consists of gypsies and other minorities, such as Mahometans (Muslims).

These mingling cultures make the city look rather eclectic. Near Catholic churches stands mechet (mosques), Jewish synagogues and temples of the Eastern Orthodox Church.

Forbidden Lore

Bialystok is a civilized place, but just beyond the borders of the city grows ancient and unexplored forest with just a few little hamlets, all scattered far from another. It is a poorly-kept secret that traveling across these woods alone or in small company is not very wise. Here live a great number of wild animals, especially warthogs, wolves and bison. But nobody knows that the woodland gives shelter for many werecreatures as well. For instance, more than half of the villagers in the nearby hamlet of Bilowieza are werebears.

Near Bialystok hunts a small but vicious pack of werewolves led by onetime nobleman Jan Kryniwicki. They mix the natural bestiality of their kind with a pathological hate for Jews, a prejudice sadly spreading among the region's inhabitants, human or not. As time passed, the Jewish community in Bialystok started to suspect the werewolf presence, and decided to defend themselves. Thus in 1870 the great Kabbalist master, rabbi Joshua Fiedorow, awoke some unnamed powers to protect his people from the were-kind. His well-intentioned attempt to guard the region was only partially successful, for now, no werecreature can safely enter the borders of the town. However, the rite summoned unnamed horrors from some hellish *otherwhere* into the city, which broke their bonds of control and incinerated Fiedorow (and a part of Bialystok in the process). To this day, the unseen horrors call Bialystok their home, and in the nearby village of Choroszcz (also home to an asylum) the gate into the other plane is still open.

Crossroads: Europe: Russia

ODESSA

Local Correspondent:
Daniel J. Bandera

Overlooking Khadzibey bay on the Black Sea, the city of Odessa is the second largest port in the Russian Empire. Some say this city of 320,000 people is as or more important to the Russians than St. Petersburg, for through Odessa they have access to the Mediterranean. This has led some to call the city Southern Petersburg. Established by Catherine the Great, the city will celebrate its centennial in the year 1894.

HISTORY

The ancient Greeks built a settlement on the shores of the Black Sea near present day Odessa. Their settlement, named Odessos, was abandoned in the face of barbarian raiders from the north. Centuries later, the city-states of Italy established a merchant colony to trade with the nomadic tribes of the steppes. In the 14th century, the Italian colony was conquered by the expanding Ottoman Empire. The Turks, recognizing the strategic importance of the site, built a fort on Khadzibey bay and named it Yeni-Dunai, "New World."

In the second half of the 1700s, the Czarina Catherine II conquered the lands around the northern shore of the Black Sea. The newly conquered lands were made a new province in the Russian empire, called Novorossieia. For the capital of this new province, Catherine ordered the building of a port city overlooking Khadzibey bay. She gave the city the name of Odessa after the ancient Greek settlement nearby.

The city's location was selected because of the high cliffs, that reach up to 200 feet in some areas. This allowed the city to command both the approach from the sea, and that across the flat steppe. Due to the lack of nearby forests for lumber, the early architecture of the city was mainly Greek with limestone used for many of the buildings.

One of the earliest mayors of Odessa was Duke Emmanuel de Richelieu, great-nephew of the French Cardinal Richelieu. Being close to the French royal family, he was forced to flee France during the revolution. Being well acquainted with the royal family of Russia, Richelieu traveled to St. Petersburg seeking refuge and was given employment by the Czarina.

The French nobleman brought a new style to the city's architecture, neo-classical. Under Richelieu, numerous grand buildings were constructed, including

the city's center. The center is formed by two semi-circular buildings. Years later a monument was constructed between the two semi-circular buildings in Richelieu's honor.

Determined to utilize the steppe as farmland, the czar instituted a policy forcing serfs to relocate to the steppe around Odessa to farm the land. Richelieu was against this policy, for he believed forced farmers would not work as hard as those who desired to be there. Through his influence at the Russian court, he had the forced immigration stopped.

Richelieu returned to France in 1814, following Napoleon's defeat and the restoration of the French Monarchy. His successors continued the building process he started. In 1830, the city palace, "primorski dvorets" was built overlooking the sea. The palace's front facade with its ionic columns looks like a Greek temple, and its two-story ballroom is used to entertain the city's nobility twice a week. A Grand Opera House was constructed, but was destroyed in a fire in 1873. A newer, more glamorous one has been built in its place.

In 1890, Odessa is a very modern city, with a large train station connecting the city with Moscow, Kiev, and other parts of the Empire. Gas street lighting has been installed and all of the streets are paved in granite.

The many opportunities the new city offered drew people from far and wide, giving the population a cultural mix. Ukrainians, Russian, Greeks, Jews, Western Europeans, and Asians all make up the population of Odessa. In the later part of the 19th Century, this mix has led to growing tension as shown by the events of Easter, 1871.

During an Easter Eve celebration that year at the Great Greek Orthodox church violence erupted. A rock was thrown from a neighboring Jewish neighborhood into the group of rowdy celebrators. In retaliation a riot began that swept the city, lasting three days. When it was over, six people were killed and twenty-one wounded. Most of them were Jewish, and many Jewish-owned homes and shops were destroyed.

In 1881, Czar Alexander II was assassinated. When a Jewish nihilist was identified as the assassin, the nation was outraged. Attacks on Jewish citizens became common, even after the czar's son made a public proclamation that he did not hold the Jewish people responsible for his father's death. As a result, anti-Semitic groups are on the rise in Odessa and elsewhere in the nation. The Black Hundreds are particularly growing in the Odessa area.

During the later half of the century, the city has taken on a seedy reputation as many revolutionary groups have used Odessa as a base. The city's sea port offers the quickest way out of the country. Also, the city's merchant friendly, lax control over incoming vessels

Crossroads: Europe: Russia

makes the city ideal for sneaking into Russia. A Polish revolutionary committee established itself in the city in 1850. Later they were joined by Ukrainian separatists, anarchists, communists, nihilists, and others. Despite the fact that the city has a station of the czar's *sekret palitsiya*, "secret police," the revolutionaries have been very successful in avoiding capture. The threat of a terrorist incident, and the government's response of increased military strength, has given the city a darker tone in the last decade of the 19th Century.

Forbidden Lore

The Red Death revels in the chaos of the Russian Revolution. Thus, its minions have infiltrated many of the revolutionary groups in Odessa. These minions increase the ruthlessness of the terrorists and build up their determination to continue the struggle. In this battle, the Red Death is playing both sides and has its minions among the city's ruthless secret police force as well.

The neighborhood around the city's Great Greek Orthodox Church is considered haunted by the locals. They have avoid the churchyard at night, as many people have been attacked by dark spirits since 1876. The neighborhood around the church is haunted by the wraiths of four Jewish citizens killed during the riot of 1871. The wraiths are only active for part of the year. During most of the year they lie restlessly in their graves, but during the forty days of Lent, the wraiths return to plague the area around the church. The attacks always cease on Easter morning as the wraiths return to their graves until next year.

Another terror of the Russian night has recently moved to Odessa: the child vampire, Sofia. She is the illegitimate child of Czar Alexander I and his mistress. When her mother became pregnant, Alexander threw her out, in fear of causing a scandal. Living in squalor in the slums of St. Petersburg was not healthy for the child, and when Sofia was nine years old she became very ill. Fearing for her daughter's life, Sofia's mother returned to the palace and begged for the czar's help. The czar gave her money to travel and find a specialist to care for the child. Sofia's mother took her across much of Western Russia looking for a cure, but she did not have the chance to find it. While traveling in the Ukraine, Sofia was attacked and killed by a vampire in the night. When she arose three days later as a vampire, her new vampire master presented her with her first victim, Sofia's mother. Now almost eighty years later, Sofia is free from her vampire master, and has moved to Odessa, making it her new hunting ground. Sofia is unaware that her father was the czar, and would be furious if she discovered the czar's treatment of her and her mother.

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

AKKO (ACRE)

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

On a peninsula composing the northern part of the largest gulf in Palestine, the gulf of Haifa, lies the ancient city-port of Akko. One of the world's most ancient cities, where settlement has not stopped even today, Akko has been the center of many events throughout history. The Majority of Akko's population is made up of Muslim Arabs, along with a minority communities of Christian Arabs and Jews.

With the growing city of Haifa in the bay just south of Akko, it is foreseen that Akko's importance as a port will decline.

HISTORY

Akko is stationed on a peninsula on the northern end of the bay of Haifa, an arm of the Mediterranean Sea. Also called Acre, it is one of the oldest continuously inhabited cities in the world. Founded before 1500 BC, it first appears in recorded history during the reign of the pharaoh Thutmose III, which lasted from 1504 to 1450 BC. The town was captured by the Assyrians around 700 BC and virtually depopulated under Ashurbanipal. In 332 BC it was incorporated into the empire of Alexander the Great. Ptolemy II Philadelphus, king of Egypt, seized the city in the 3rd century BC and from that time until the Middle Ages it was known as Ptolemais. During the pre-Christian era, Akko was an important seaport and trading center and was successively a part of Syria and a colony of Rome.

After the permanent division of the Roman Empire in AD 395, Akko belonged to the Eastern (later Byzantine) Empire. The Arabs seized it in 638 and held it until its capture by King Baldwin I of Jerusalem in 1104. Salakh a-Din (Saladin), sultan of Egypt and Syria, recaptured Akko in 1187, but the town was subsequently recovered by the Europeans during the Third Crusade. In 1291, after a long siege, Akko fell to the Saracens. The Ottomans took possession of it in 1517. Napoleon Bonaparte's effort to advance up the Mediterranean coast from his base in Egypt was halted by the British at Akko in 1799.

In 1831, Ibrahim Ibn Muhammad Ali Pasha led his armies from Egypt into Palestine, conquering the land from the Ottoman Turks, and made Akko his center of power. A combined fleet of British, Austrian and

Turkish forces drove him out in 1840, destroying much of the city.

The city and the region returned to the control of the Turks, and Akko became once again the sitting place of the Turkish governors and the capital of Northern Palestine.

Through the port of Akko, vast amounts of wheat, brought to the city in camel caravans from Transjordan, were exported to Europe. In 1887 up to 300 ships were porting in the Akko Harbor, mainly cargo ships bringing wheat to Europe.

From the middle of the 19th century, a combination of various elements brought Akko to a slow decline as its trade and economic strength moved south to nearby Haifa, which developed just as Akko declined.

Forbidden Lore

When the Great Library in Alexandria was destroyed, much of the Defiance's knowledge was lost. However, two of the members managed to save a number of books, and sailed from Alexandria up the coast of Palestine. The two landed in Akko, and hid the books there for future generations to find and use the knowledge against the Red Death. These two, after joining with another Defiance survivor, later founded the Watchers of the Sands Brotherhood.

During the Crusades, many servants of the Red Death were among the Christian Knights, and when they took Akko, they sought to find this hidden cache of knowledge. Not much is known, except that all of them disappeared.

The books are hidden among other old books in an ancient Crusader church-library in an underground "Crypta." The Crypta, part of a number of connected underground chambers, is now almost full of rubble, and is partially under the newer Turkish fortress of Akko built in the 1700s. None know of its existence, except for the Qabal of the Watchers of the Sands, who guard the place. The books themselves are magically protected by Tome Guardians (see *Monstrous Compendium Annual Volume Three*, Fire-Elemental Kin —Tome Guardians).

Akko was one of the last of the Crusaders' strongholds to fall to the Saracens, and some of the Crusader knights that died in its defense didn't accept death so easily. Skeleton Warriors and Sword Wraiths have been seen during the twilight hours walking about some distance from the town, near where the old walls of the Ancient Crusader city once stood.

Recently, there have been killings in Akko. All the dead are Turkish soldiers stationed in the town, who are usually killed on patrol. Whilst the Arab and Jewish locals natives have no love for the Turks and thus ignore

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

the killings, the truth is that they are being carried out by a Revenant (see *Monstrous Manual*) avenging his death at the hands of many Turkish soldiers in Syria two months back. Unlike most Revenants who have a unique recognition of their killers, not so here. He only knows that the killer was a Turkish soldier, and that he is in Akko. Thus, the Revenant is set upon killing every Turkish soldier and officer in Akko until he kills the one who murdered him, and finds rest.

AMMAN (RABBAT AMMON)

Local Correspondent:
Daniel J. Bandera

Since it was founded Amman has always been a crossroads of people, religion and culture. On the edge of the desert where the east and west begin to mix stands a center of ethnic and cultural diversity—an ancient city showing promise for the future, in the development of modern Transjordanian.

HISTORY

In biblical times, Amman was named Rabbat Ammon (as it is referred to in the scriptures) and was a large city, capital of the Amonite people. Its origins can be traced back to 1500 BC, and it was primarily Canaanite.

In 280 BC it was captured by King Ptolemy Philadelphus of Egypt (who ruled Hellenistic Egypt) who renamed it as Philadelphia. A large and important city, it was a part of an alliance of ten cities, all in Transjordanian—the Decapolis.

The city was known as Philadelphia throughout the eras of the Roman and Byzantine empires. Many ruins of this period can be seen in Amman today. In the 1st century AD it was a leading city of the Roman province of Arabia. Lost to the Byzantines at the rise of Islam and subsequently conquered by Arabs in the 7th century, the city fell into decline by about 1300, again taking its former name, Rabbat Ammon.

During the middle ages, Rabbat Ammon was called Amman and was a small Arab village which produced fine wheat, sheep and honey. In addition, during the middle ages a small Jewish community existed over a number of sites in the city.

Then, for many generations the city stood abandoned, until in 1892 with the aid of Turkish Sultan Alkhamid II, a large population of Cicassians were brought from Caucasia settling them in Amman. The Cicassians built their houses of the stones they took from ancient Philadelphia's ruins, and in later years a small Arab population was added to the new city.

The population's chief occupations are agriculture, trade (mainly with the nearby Beduin desert tribes) and it serves as a major Turkish military base in the region.

Forbidden Lore

Ancient statuettes of the old gods of Canaanites and Amonites may be found amidst the ruins of Rabat Ammon. Most are quite mundane although rumors persist that some are actually minor forms of Golems or Gargoyles.

During the reign of King Ptolemy Philadelphus, an Egyptian mystic came and settled in Rabat Ammon to further his evil teachings and hide an ancient secret passed down to him. The mystic, heir to an ancient bloodline dating back to the high priests of Set, held a set of three tablets and three clay jars filled with rare spices and oils. These are the instructions and the ingredients in the creation and preservation of Greater Mummies (see Mummies, Greater in the *Monstrous Manual*).

Although none today know of his secrets, all of the mystic's possessions were buried with him in his tomb, and are in danger of being discovered soon, as his tomb lies near the surface.

Living in Amman today is an old man named Samuel Wolf, an Englishman who immigrated to the Middle-East in the mid-eighteen-hundreds. A wandering hermit, Samuel has been fighting a one man's war against the Red Death for the last sixty years. While Samuel knows nothing of Red Death's true nature, or the existence of Qabals, he is knowledgeable in the ways of the desert and the desert's Beduin nomads' Mysticism. Samuel has destroyed numerous minions of evil throughout the deserts of the middle east, banishing ghosts and freeing possessed individuals. His main expertise lies in the ways of killing the dangerous monstrous beasts which sometimes haunt the high deserts of the Middle-East. Well-known and respected among the nomads of the deserts, the Beduin call him *Al-Kabir*—the great one, and send their sons to study with him both the mystic arts, and the arts of the sword.

JAFFA

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

Jaffa is one of the world's oldest cities, predating even biblical times. One legend states it was even built before the Great Flood. Jaffa today has nothing of such ancient times; its earliest remnants date to the Roman era and later times. Jaffa is built of the local yellow limestone, crowded housing with narrow paved alleys sloping down through the city from its walls and gates to its harbor.

Jaffa's population is made up of a mix of Arabs and Jews, Muslims and Christians. The city is littered with numerous mosques and churches, as the population is divided into many religious sects and cults.

Jaffa's importance as an economic port is giving way to uprisings in Haifa, although it still serves as the "gate" to Palestine—most immigrants and travelers still come by ship, landing in the Jaffa harbor.

HISTORY

Jaffa is mentioned in Egyptian writings far back as the 15th century BC, as one of the many Canaanite cities conquered by Pharaoh Thutmose III of Egypt. Egypt maintained control of the region for another couple of centuries, until it was taken by the Philistines, a relatively advanced nation from beyond the sea.

Circa 1200-1020, the Hebrew tribes migrated from Egypt conquering and settling in Canaan, slowly encroaching towards the fortified city.

During the reign of King Solomon of the United Israelite kingdom, Jaffa served as the port to Jerusalem, and through it were imported the pine trees used for building the Solomon Temple.

A prosperous region, it served both as a center for wine making and as a port for the later Judah kingdom, after the separation of the Israelite kingdom.

Jaffa is mentioned later on a clay prism as being conquered by Assyria in 701 BC.

During the 5th century BC, like the rest of the land, Jaffa was ruled by the Persians, and once again pine trees brought in through the Jaffa port to build the Second Temple after King Coresh of Persia had let the Jews exiled by the Babylonians, to return to their ancient land.

During this time, Jaffa was ruled by Sidonite Phoenicians, famous for their maritime exploits, but during the 4th century BC, the city was influenced by the Greek and Hellenistic culture, especially after Alexander

of Macedonia conquered the land when he invaded the Persian empire.

From 167 BC, when the Hashmonite Jews rebelled against Hellenistic rule and established the Hashmonite kingdom, until 63 BC when Pompey of Rome invaded and annexed the land as a Roman Province, once again Jaffa served as a major port for the capital of Jerusalem.

During the first century AD the Christians first began appearing in Jaffa, and in the 2nd and 3rd centuries AD that followed, Jaffa became a full-fledged Roman city, and its name was changed to Flavia-Joppa.

Little is known about Jaffa during the reign of the Byzantine Christians, and it was taken by the Muslims in 638 AD, which ruled until the end of the 11th century AD when Jaffa and all of Palestine was conquered by the Crusaders.

Jaffa changed hands between Christians and Muslims as Saladin conquered it from the Crusaders, and Richard Lion-Heart took it back. Jaffa finally fell to the Muslims in the 13th century AD, and was destroyed in order to prevent any further invasion by Crusaders coming by sea. Ruled by the Mamluks until the 16th century, when the Ottoman Turks took control of the Islamic empire, Jaffa was a minor fishing village and port.

On the 13th of March, 1799, Napoleon laid siege to the town and it fell, but following a massacre by Napoleon's troops, a plague broke out and Napoleon was forced to withdraw his forces.

Only in the 19th century did the Turkish rulers begin to rebuild Jaffa and several important governors built fortresses, gates and provided an ample water supply to the city.

In the 1830s, Jews began settling in Jaffa, mainly renting houses from Arabs, only a few of them buying homes.

In 1831, Ibrahim Pasha, the rebelling governor of Egypt, in order to consolidate his control in Egypt, moved up along the coast of Palestine and Jaffa surrendered to him without a fight. His rule did not last long, and Jaffa returned to Turkish rule ten years later.

More and more Jews and Christians settled in Jaffa throughout the eighteenth-hundreds. The Christians, Europeans and some Americans, settle in their own neighborhoods—the "colonies." While also forming their own neighborhoods, the Jews of Jaffa form a socially and culturally rich community—despite their wide range of ancestry, and a mix of both Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews.

Since 1884 and even today, as a result of the revived Jewish national movement, a steady stream of Jewish immigrants and pioneers is entering Palestine. Jaffa being their main port of entrance, and is duly named, the "Gates of Palestine."

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

Forbidden Lore

Members of the Defiance, survivors of the destruction of the great library in Alexandria who went on to found the different Qabals, at different times throughout history needed a way to communicate at times when more than one Qabal wished to cooperate on some kind of venture against the Red Death and its minions. And so, one family living in Jaffa took on the role of liaison between some of the Qabals. In the 13th century, the family secretly joined the Watchers of the Sand Brotherhood, and while most of the Qabals it was once connected to are now defunct, the family still serves its purpose, even if now in the service of the Watchers of the Sand Brotherhood.

The current member of the family is Salim Abu-Hassan, owner of a small restaurant in an alley near the back entrance to the Harbor.

Stories of sea zombies, ancient ghost ships and unnatural storms are not uncommon among the local fishing populace. However, natives always leave some of their fishing spoils on a number of rocks near the Jaffa harbor. Jaffans are convinced that that is where Andromeda of Greek myths was to be sacrificed to a great sea monster. They believe the creature is still there.

Recently, among the immigrating Jews from Europe and Russia, a necromancer Adept named Nathan Chaimovsky has come. Unlike most necromancers, he is not evil and seeks to put the dead to rest. His main reason to immigrate is to seek out the secrets of Ein-Dor. In biblical times, a powerful necromancer-witch lived there and he believes that she might still be there, living or dead.

The town is small, and it is highly unlikely that the Red Death has managed to sneak one of his servants in. However, with the changes the region is now going through, anything is possible.

JERICHO

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

HISTORY

Jericho is the site of the oldest settlement yet discovered, with significant archaeological remains dating back as far as 8000 BC. Located about 2 km from the modern city's center, the settlement included a walled community and a

high tower. Additional findings from the period indicate that there was irrigated agriculture, revealing the prehistoric shift from nomadic to settled forms of life.

Jericho is well-known in biblical history as the site of a siege by Joshua and the Israelites.

The city functioned as an administrative center for the Persians in the 6th century BC and became a royal resort in the time of Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC. Around 30 BC Jericho was awarded to Herod the Great by the Roman emperor Augustus. Herod laid out new aqueducts and built a theater and winter palace there.

Between the 4th and 7th centuries AD Jericho attracted many pilgrims and the population grew considerably. The city was taken over by Arabs in the 7th century, and during the 12th and 13th centuries Crusaders controlled Jericho and greatly expanded the cultivation of sugarcane in the region.

After the defeat of the Crusaders by the Muslim leader Saladin, Jericho's vitality declined. In 1840 the Egyptian general Ibrahim Pasha razed the city when he withdrew his army to Egypt.

Forbidden Lore

Jericho is a cursed city, even mentioned as so in the Bible. The curse says that the city must never be rebuilt, thus any who rebuild the city after destruction are affected by the curse. The curse causes corruption of magic, brings bad luck and those who are affected become small, petty people, who are overlooked and ignored by other people. Only leaving one's home there, and destroying it—leaving the city and never returning—is the only way to reverse the curse. Furthermore, if anyone who broke the curse on himself ever returns, the curse will affect him again, this time without hope of salvation.

Near Jericho are caves which lead to deep cavernous tunnels and chambers underlying the mountains in the region. Some say there is even a path under these mountains to the city of Jerusalem, but none have proved any such thing. These caves are rumored to be filled with various molds and dangerous plants, and inhabited by Mites (see the *Greyhawk MC Appendix*) who enjoy tormenting people lost in the caverns.

A cursed city draws cursed people. Several of the inhabitants of the city are cursed themselves. A onetime powerful Adept accidentally summoned an Ennui (see *Dream Spawn*, *Greater-Ennui*, *Monstrous Annual Volume III*) from some place, *beyond*. The Adept is now almost insane, and unaware of the creature following and feeding on him. The powerful Ennui, new to this world, meanwhile stalks the madman's dreams and the dreams of others as well, like a parasite. So far

he has only touched the minds and dreams of people who came in contact with his madman, but should the insane Adept die, the Ennui will have to seek out a new creature to attach to and feed on, living in their dreams and nightmares.

Other creatures known to haunt the city are a Hound of Ill-Omen (see *Mounstrous Annual Volume III*), seeking its victim, a number of Living Webs (see *Monstrous Annual Volume III*) and ill-tempered crows who tend to attack travelers.

One may clearly see the hand of the Red Death in this troubled city, and whilst some say the Red Death had cursed it, others claim it was cursed because its people had served the Red Death, much like the people of Sodom and Amora (Gomorra), and who had ultimately paid for their service to evil.

JERUSALEM

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

Situated in right down in the middle of Palestine, Jerusalem has been the center of many kingdoms and religions for over 5,000 years. It has developed from a pagan city to the center of three of the greatest religions the world has ever known: the monotheistic faiths of Judaism, Christianity and Islam. Changing both name and rule uncountable times, Jerusalem is one of the most culturally and historically diverse cities in all of humankind's history. An ancient, majestic city, whose stones will tell the stories of the ages.

HISTORY

Already inhabited during the stone age, its aboriginal inhabitants were driven out between 500 BC and 4000 BC by a people called the Canaanites in the old Testament, who had advanced into the Bronze Age. The invaders were a mixed people among whom the Jebusites were dominant. Named Jebus at the time, Jerusalem came under Egyptian rule in the 15th century BC, during the conquests of king Thutmose III. Then, in about 1250 BC, the Hebrew tribes began their conquest and settling of Canaan initially under the leadership of Joshua. So powerfully fortified was Jerusalem, however, that it did not fall until over 300 years later, when King David captured it and made it his capital.

The new king brought the Ark of Jehovah to his capital from its obscurity at Qiryat Ye'arim (a holy place

of the time, west of Jerusalem) and installed it in a new tabernacle. He also built a royal palace and many other buildings, and strengthened the city's fortifications. David's son and successor, Solomon, continued the development of Jerusalem. He built a city wall and many buildings on a scale of magnificence previously unknown to Israel. Solomon's principal buildings were the Temple and a new royal palace, encircled by a wall. The palace, built on successive terraces, consisted of a house (constructed of cedar beams and pillars brought from the forests of Lebanon, imported through the port of Jaffa) that was about 28 m (92 ft) wide, 55 m (180 ft) long, and 17 m (56 ft) high; the throne hall; the palace proper, or royal apartments; and the prison. The courts and buildings of the Temple were constructed on a level above the palace. The main building of the Temple was considered of great beauty, but was comparatively small, being only 20 cubits wide and 60 cubits long (about 11 m wide and 33 m long), exclusive of the porch and the side chambers. The Temple was built of cedar and stone and was surrounded by a court that contained the altar of burnt offerings and a "molten sea," or bronze water tank.

Jerusalem continued to expand after Solomon's reign until the ten northern tribes of Israel seceded from the rule of the house of David, after which the importance of the city, now the capital of two tribes, Judah and Benjamin (together called "The One Tribe"), diminished greatly. Jerusalem was wracked for the next two centuries by costly sieges, incursions, and unsuccessful military undertakings. Not until the reigns of King Uzziah of Judah (reigned 783-742 BC) and his son Jotham (reigned 742-735 BC) did the city begin to regain its previous status. Between this period and the rise of the powerful Maccabee Hashmonite family about six centuries later, the history of Jerusalem is that of the Jews. Under the Maccabees and the Hashmonite dynasty, Jerusalem entered upon an era of unprecedented prosperity. It became the holy city of Judaism and the great pilgrim shrine of the Jewish world.

Conquest by the Romans under the general and statesman Pompey the Great in 63 BC resulted in no serious material disaster to the city. Its greatest prosperity was attained under King Herod the Great. Besides a complete reconstruction of the Temple on a scale that was truly magnificent, involving the expenditure of vast sums of money, he undertook the building of the Xystus, an open place surrounded by a gallery; his own great palace, on the western side of the city; and a hippodrome, theater, and large reservoir. In addition to these works, minor improvements were made, including the general strengthening of the city's fortifications. Less than a century later, however, during a Jewish rebellion against Roman authority, Titus, son of the Roman emperor Vespasian, captured and razed the

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

city in AD 70; only a few remnants of the western fortifications remained. With this calamity, the history of ancient Jerusalem came to an end.

The Roman emperor Hadrian visited the city, which was largely in ruins, about AD 130, and began its reconstruction. The rebellion of the Jews, led by Simon Bar Kokhba, against the Romans between the years 132 and 135 led the emperor to make the new city a pagan one and to prohibit all Jews from entering it. The new city was called Aelia Capitolina, named for one of the Romans' pagan gods. The wall which encircled it was, in general, on the line of the old wall, except on the south, where it excluded a large portion of the former city.

Little is known of the city from the time of Hadrian to that of the Roman emperor Constantine the Great, when Christianity became the religion of the empire. The population of Jerusalem was gradually supplemented by Christians, and pilgrims flocked to the city. The Church of the Holy Sepulcher was built at the order of Emperor Constantine the Great. Other buildings of like character were subsequently constructed, and Jerusalem became a Christian city. Among the noteworthy buildings belonging to this period are the Church of Saint Stephen, north of the city, built by the Byzantine empress Eudocia, who also rebuilt the ancient southern wall; and the great Church of Saint Mary on the Temple hill, which was built by the Byzantine emperor Justinian I.

The Christian city, after being captured by the Persians under King Khosrau II in 614, but recovered by the Byzantine emperor Heraclius in 628, was taken again in 637 by the Muslims under the caliph Umar I. The Dome of the Rock Mosque, was erected over the rock believed to be the altar place of Solomon's Temple. The Christians were treated leniently by their Muslim conquerors, but when the Egyptian Fatimid caliphs became the rulers of Jerusalem, in 969, the situation became more precarious. The Seljuk Turks conquered the city in 1071, and their maltreatment of Christians and destruction of the Church of the Holy Sepulcher were among the causes of the Crusades. In 1099 the Crusaders, under the French nobleman Godfrey of Bouillon, gained possession of the city and slaughtered many of its inhabitants. Jerusalem again became a Christian city and the capital of the so-called Latin Kingdom, until its capture in 1187 by the Muslim leader Saladin all but ended Christian rule.

From the 13th century, when Jerusalem was captured by the Egyptian Mamelukes, through Ottoman rule, begun in 1517, the city's importance declined. During these centuries, however, many Jews, fleeing persecution in Europe, returned to Jerusalem; by the late 19th century they had become a majority of the population.

In 1855, after the city's growing population had exceeded the city's holding capability, Jews from the city funded by the British Jew Lord Montifury, established the first neighborhood outside the city walls. As the Jewish population increased, being poor and in need of housing, more neighborhoods followed, and the "new" city had been established.

Forbidden Lore

In ancient times, the pre-Hebrew Canaanite people of Jerusalem practiced a despicable religion involving the sacrifice of children and infants to a god known as Moloch. These rituals were carried out in a valley just outside of Jerusalem, where the children were burned alive. These rituals brought more than just misery to the families of the sacrificed children. Unknowingly the rituals brought forth a creature of evil that fed of the flames, a Fire Minion (see the *Dragonlance MC appendix*). When the sacrificial practices were abolished by the Hebrews the creature went into hiding, but it is hungry. Every three moons, it will strike at a home in Jerusalem, burning the place unless appeased by the renewal of the rituals.

The city is haunted by others as well. Jerusalem has been destroyed and rebuilt countless of times, and it is built city upon city upon city. Many chambers, passages, crypts and rooms exist under the paved streets of Jerusalem, some reaching into antiquity. The living haunt the upper reaches of the ways, the dead rule the lower.

Some Qabals have discovered these ways, using them to hide their activities, but so do some of the Red Death's minions.

One Adept, a former archeologist, is studying ancient writings and killing any who venture too deep into "his" underground realm. This Adept was once a member of a Qabal before he encountered something down there on one of his ventures. Now he hides from his former brethren and only surfaces to get food and other equipment.

The walls of Jerusalem, said to withstand any assault, are patrolled by more than just the Turkish guards. The spirits of defenders of the city who failed at their duties patrol as well, and each and every one of them, no matter what era they had lived will confront any who dare enter the city unlawfully.

Creatures that haunt ancient places may be found in Jerusalem, just under the surface, and sometimes above. Native residents of the city are usually ignored on the part of these creatures; not so for strangers. Foreign tourists, archeologists and visitors may sometimes disappear without trace. The natives, when asked about such cases, merely shrug "Inshaala"—*so God wishes*.

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

When the great library was destroyed, one of the original members of the Defiance called out a prophesy before he died, telling the survivors to seek out the key to the defeat of the Red Death.

“Look to the east, my brothers, for the key to salvation will come out of where three meet behind golden walls with the closed gate.”

Those who know of the prophesy among the Qabals believe that it speaks of Jerusalem, and so do the Red Death’s minions. Many times was the city destroyed by war started at the whim of the Red Death’s minions. However, time after time the city has been rebuilt despite the wishes of evil.

by the Mongols, many Jews and their holy books fled to Shechem.

Shechem is known for its olives and olive-oil, Carob Jam and soap-making. In 1517 it was conquered by the Ottoman Turks and has somewhat declined under their rule.

Today’s Shechem, called Nablus, is almost entirely made up of Arabs. In addition, 120 Jewish families live in the city, mainly workmen and shopkeepers, and also the unique Samaritan community, remains of an ancient people and religion existing no where else in Palestine, or the world.

SHECHEM (NABLUS)

Local Correspondent:

Daniel J. Bandera

A Pre-biblical city near the Jordan River, Shechem is the trading center for the surrounding region producing grapes, olives, wheat and livestock.

A religious center as well, Shechem holds the supposed sites of the Hebrew Patriarch Joseph’s tomb, and of Patriarch Jacob’s Well. In addition, Shechem and the nearby Mout Grizim are holy sites to the Samaritan sect who exclusively reside in this city.

Nablus, as it is called now, was built over the ruins of Ancient Shechem in the 1st century AD, and is prospering under the Turkish Ottoman rule.

HISTORY

A large city since early times, Shechem is mentioned in the bible as the place where Joshua joined the twelve tribes of Israel and made a pact between them bringing the order of law to the Hebrew tribes. Later, after the Israelite kingdom split, Shechem was made the capital of the ten tribes, whilst Jerusalem remained capital of the two tribes of Judah and Binyamin.

During the era of Roman control of Palestine, the Romans built a new city nearby, named Niapolis (or Niapolin) and the name has since been warped to today’s Arab city name of Nablus.

During the reign of the Arabs Shechem was an important city, so much so that it was named by an Arab Geographer of the 10th century as “little Damascus.”

In the 12th century, Shechem was still an important city. In 1259, when Jerusalem was sacked and destroyed

Forbidden Lore

Near the city are the ruins of an old Khan, an Arab inn, where travelers and caravans used to rest when traveling through Nablus. The Khan is now in ruins, burned down and abandoned. Not much is known as to what had happened there, but if anybody ever mentions the Khan, it is always in whispers and in obvious fear of terrible things that had happened there. Such atrocities were committed in that Khan that all of the city’s inhabitants, Jews, Arabs and Samaritans, who usually don’t get along very well, joined together and burned down the place. Nowadays no one goes near, but innocent travelers who camp outside the city, who see lights and hear voices coming from the abandoned Khan, are cautioned to stay away, for evil may still lurk there.

The city itself lies in a small valley between Mount Grizim and Mount Eival, which have a religious importance to the small Samaritan sect living in Shechem. On Mount Grizim, over the ruins of their ancient temple, the Samaritans conduct their religious rituals. An ancient Jewish belief holds that participation in a Samaritan Passover “Seder,” can protect and drive out evil spirits. Over the centuries, a few have sought out the Samaritans just for this purpose.

In the last year, Turkish officials have been acting aggressively towards the Samaritan community, hindering them and interrupting their religious practices. Rumor has it that this change in attitude come from a European visitor who has befriended the local Turkish Governor. This traveler from Europe, Bian de Torres, is in fact a man possessed by an evil spirit, who is slowly losing control of himself. Formerly a devout man, de Torres has managed to bring himself to Palestine in order to seek a cure to his mysterious “illness,” but he now only has control of his body and mind a couple of hours each day, when the evil spirit inhabiting his body is at rest. The spirit unknowingly serves the Red Death, who seeks to make de Torres one of his minions once he is completely possessed.

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

One of the current high priests of the Samaritans is a member of the Watchers of the Sands Brotherhood, who joined the Qabal as a boy when his grandfather, a longtime member, initiated him to the Brotherhood. The high priest watches over his people, and also over the rest of the town. Instrumental in the destruction of the evil in the Khan, he still watches over the place, wary that the evil may return.

ZEFAT (SAFFED)

Local Correspondent:
Daniel J. Bandera

A mountainous city, high above sea level, Zefat is perhaps the most important city and capital of the Upper Galilee region. One of the four holy cities of Palestine, Zefat is known for its being a center of Jewish learning, and especially Jewish mysticism. Zefat has been a center of Kabbalah teachings, and many great Rabbi's of Judaism have lived and died in the city throughout history.

HISTORY

In both pre-Christian times and for almost a thousand years after, Zefat was an unimportant city, with a small population and very difficult to reach; only once during that time did it have any significance. The occasion was the fortification of Zefat as a stronghold by Yoseph Ben-Matityahu (the ancient historian Josephus Flavius) in 66 BC during the preparations of the Jewish people to rebel against the roman conquest.

In the 10th century Zefat was ruled by Fatimik Khalifs of the Muslim empire, until 1099 when it was taken by the Crusaders, after which it began serving as an important strategic stronghold defending the land from enemies, especially from nearby threatening Syria.

Taken in by force again by Muslim forces led by Saladin in 1188, it was recaptured by Richard the Lion-Hearted, king of England, two years later. It remained under Christian Crusader rule until 1266, during which time a large Crusader citadel was constructed on the highest mountain peak within the city.

The city was taken once again by Muslim forces, and was ruled by the Mameluk Muslims until 1516, after a great victory in Syria of the Ottoman Turks vanquishing the Mameluk regime.

During Arab and Muslim rule, the name of the city was changed to Saffed.

It was then, in the 16th century, that a golden era came upon the city. The city's population had swelled with the coming of many Jewish immigrants, and especially many important religious figures. A new important center of trade on the road to Damascus, Zefat was growing rapidly and its population was almost exclusively Jewish. In addition important industries such as clothing and printing had developed in Zefat.

In 1720, Zefat and the Galilee were conquered by a Beduin Sheik who made Zefat his capital and set his son to rule it as Governor. However, on the 20th of October, 1759, an earthquake struck the city, destroying its houses and burying much of its population in the rubble. The earthquake had reduced the great city to little more than a town and its place as capital of the Galilee was taken by Akko under the Turkish rule.

In 1830 the land was taken by Ibrahim Pasha, and during his reign, the Arab inhabitants of Zefat rebelled; his reaction was swift and deadly, pillaging and killing many in the city, including the Jews, who had not rebelled.

Yet another disaster fell upon ancient Zefat: another earthquake struck in 1837, destroying it again. Once again it was reduced to a mere village.

In 1840, a European Fleet took Akko, and the rule of the north of Palestine, including Zefat, was back in the hands of the Ottoman Turks, who hold it to this day.

Forbidden Lore

Not all of the troubles that befell Zefat have been natural or at least, mundane. The uprising of the Arabs against Ibrahim Pasha during the 19th century was in fact caused by the Watchers of the Sand Brotherhood, in order to be put down by the ruler. The reason for this was that several members of an evil Qabal had come to the city, and settled in it. Their presence being somewhat problematic for the Watchers of the Sand, the Brotherhood caused the Arab rebellion, made sure the reaction would be brutal, and during the pillaging and killing, managed to kill the four members of the evil Qabal in the city. The Brotherhood had to kill the four, but could only do so under the cover of "natural" death, thus they ignited the uprising, despite the fact that it also resulted in the deaths of innocents.

Zefat, as a center of Kabbalah, arcane and mystical teachings amongst Jewish mystics, also holds a number of Secrets. A handful of those Kabbalah mystics have copies of the "*Sefer Yezira*" (Book of Creation) which holds the secret of the creation of Golems (see Golem, Clay in the *Monstrous Manual*). All of these Mystics are benevolent, their teachings far from those of evil, perhaps even an antithesis of evil. The Watchers of the Sands Brotherhood is desperately trying to get hold of a

Crossroads: Western Asia: Palestine

copy of the “*Sefer Yezira*” or recruit a Kabbalah mystic to the Qabal. The Brotherhood believes that such knowledge may be a powerful weapon in the hands of good, and must be protected from discovery by the Red Death.

But the Brotherhood are not the only ones seeking the secret of Golem creation. A German tourist visiting Zefat has also been asking around about Kabbalah teachings, though he has learned nothing so far. It is as yet unknown what his agenda is, or who he really is.

In 1881, in Russia, the czar Alexander II was assassinated, and the government had blamed all Jews in the land for his death. The death of the czar, who was loved by his people together with the governmental claims of Jewish responsibility and religious fanaticism, brought three years of massacres upon the Jewish people in Russia. A survivor of these massacres came to Zefat three years back, a sick and broken man. After he died, people began seeing him walk again in the city’s Graveyard and outlying area. The poor soul, after surviving so many troubles, had become a Bussengeist in death. Unable to fully die, to only mourn the past. So far no one has dared approach the spirit, and it continues to wander in the city’s region, although he never enters the city proper. The Bussengeist is known to appear especially on days when someone dies or a funeral is conducted in the graveyard.

Other spirits, such as those who were killed in the various earthquakes, also haunt the city. However, these do not interfere with the living inhabitants, and some of them, mainly those who were Kabbalists in life, have been known to converse with those who seek them.

Crossroads: World Correspondents

DAVID DRAEGARIUS ALEXANDER

PALESTINE:

AKKO, AMMON, JAFFA, JERICHO,
JERUSALEM, SHECHEM, ZEFAT
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When I discovered the online role-playing community two years back, I was awed by the scope of the information found on all the websites and various netbooks. More info than I could ever use. Today I have my own website, and this is the first netbook I'm contributing to. I dedicate this to the online community of role-players wherever they may be, and especially to Zak, Jon and Mr. Niceguy of the PLANESCAPE mailing list.

MATTHEW DEAD MAN BALL

ST. JOHN S, NEWFOUNDLAND
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Between bartending, my thesis work, and caring for Bean (my hedgehog), I still find some time to devote to roleplaying—RAVENLOFT in particular. Being a Newfoundlander, St. John's practically begged for a spot in a Gothic Earth atlas, as the history of the city itself predates all others in North America (and the fact that the area is shrouded in mists for over 2/3 of the year). The Wolfville entry came about because I have spent the greater portion of my adult life in the town attending Acadia University. I'd like to thank my girlfriend Giselle, a true Acadian, for helping fill me in on the aspects of Acadian history I was unfamiliar with.

Hopefully there is enough here to set some creative juices flowing in a campaign. If more info is desired on any locale, feel free to contact me and I'll help as I can.

Now, back into the Mists to continue discovering the secrets of the Brotherhood of St. Phocas.

DANIEL J. BANDERA

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VERA CRUZ, MEXICO

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Mr. Bandera's last telegram to the editors indicated he would provide his bio after a quick jaunt to Cozumel to study some recently-discovered artifacts. Sadly, we have been unable to contact him since...

JOE BARDALES

Kargatane

FRAMING FICTION

SALEM, MASSACHUSETTS
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The release of Crossroads is for me one of those moments of triumph when you see your seedling of an idea blossom to full maturity. While I may have initially come up with the idea of a Gothic Earth Atlas NetBook, it would never have come to pass without the efforts of those around me. My deepest gratitude goes out to William Connors for creating such a brilliant campaign world, James Wyatt for keeping hope alive, the Kargatane for their advice, kind words, and because they keep me as their faithful servant, the Crossroads authors whose love for MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH truly shows through in their writing (and without whom you wouldn't be reading this!), and to the other members of the Kargatane, whose friendship, ideas, suggestions, creativity, and dedication have made this dream a reality. Cheers!

TIMOTHY S. BRANNAN

ILLINOIS

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Timothy S. Brannan is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Illinois in Chicago, in Educational Psychology. "Haunted Illinois" is based on his belief that there has to be *something* horrific going on in the Midwest. Tim has played D&D since 1979. RAVENLOFT is currently his favorite setting, even if he rarely gets the chance to play. When not working on his dissertation he likes to read, go to movies or otherwise "hang out" with his beautiful wife Natalie. Tim and Natalie live in the Chicago area.

COAN~TEEN

TEMUCO, CHILE

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This article is the product of many failed horror and madness checks. I only hope this proves useful to set your adventures in a place forgotten by the hand of God: Chile. Certainly, this article speaks for itself... enjoy it!!!

Crossroads: World Correspondents

JARROD R. LOWE
LE LOUVRE, FRANCE

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Jarrold Lowe is a co-editor of the *Chilling Tales of Gothic Earth* e-zine. He currently resides in Morehead, Kentucky where he is working (ever diligently) toward an Art degree.

Jarrold has never been to the Louvre, but hopes that when he eventually gets there it's twice as cool as he has dreamed...minus the living paintings, ghosts and vampires, that is!

JOHN W. MANGRUM
Kargatane

ALBANY, NEW YORK
iggyp@kargatane.com

John is actually a native of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but has lived in the New York Capital Region since late 1993. In that time, he's grown so enchanted with Albany that it would take a bribe of at least two figures to get him to move away.

MARCIN HASTUR PERKOWSKI
BIALYSTOK, POLAND
ravenkin@polbox.com

Born in Bialystok, Poland, at the start of the seventies, I finished law at Warsaw University a few years ago and now work as a field inspector for the government insurance system. I've been into games since 1986, first playing and "GMing" my own (and my friends') systems.

Since the beginning of '90 I've played WARHAMMER (a little) and AD&D, especially RAVENLOFT. For about four years (or so) I've also played MASQUE OF THE RED DEATH. I have written some articles for *Miecz i Magia* (*Sword and Sorcery*), the one and only journal about RPGs in Poland. I am married to a wonderful woman who shares my passion for RPGs and horror, and I have a circle of friends (we call ourselves The Circle©) who are also in playing RPGs.

CHARLES PHIPPS
GLASTONBURY ABBEY, ENGLAND
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It took me quite a bit of pondering to figure up my entry but ultimately the idea to do Glastonbury came from an old Gothic Earth campaign. The Arthur legend and its relation to the Red Death were wonderful starting points for many memorable adventures and I think they can be for many other DMs too.

JOHN P. STACEY
SICA HOLLOW, SOUTH DAKOTA
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Sica Hollow is based on a State Park in South Dakota, and on the myths and legends surrounding it. The Hollow is a small gem of natural beauty, and a totally surreal place. One can almost feel the presence of the spirits said to haunt Sica Hollow. The briefly-mentioned Fort Wadsworth is also a State Park in South Dakota, though in the present day it is known as Fort Sisseton.

Crossroads: Index of Existing Sites

This index presents all locations of the Gothic Earth which have been described to date. **AGtGE** refers to *A Guide to Gothic Earth*, found in the *Masque of the Red Death* boxed set. **DR#** refers to *DRAGON* Magazine, including issue number. Locations in **bold print** can be found in this book.

LOCALE

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia
Akko, Palestine
Albany, New York
 Alexandria, Egypt
Amman, Palestine
 Atlanta, Georgia
 Bagdad, Iraq
 Bangkok, Thailand
Bialystok, Poland
 Boston, Massachusetts
 Brisbane, Australia
 Bucharest, Romania
 Buenos Aires, Argentina
 Cape Town, South Africa
 Chicago, Illinois
 Christchurch, New Zealand
 Constantinople, Turkey
 Dublin, Ireland
Glastonbury Abbey, England
Goliad, Texas
 Hong Kong
Houston, Texas
 Illinois, USA
Jaffa, Palestine
Jericho, Palestine
Jerusalem, Palestine
 Lima, Peru
 London, England
Le Louvre, France
 Madras, India
 Mexico City, Mexico
 Montréal, Quebec
Nablus, Palestine
 New Orleans, Louisiana
New York City, New York
 Paris, France
 Port-au-Prince, Haiti
 Rio de Janeiro, Brazil
 Rome, Italy
Saffed, Palestine
St. John's, Newfoundland
 Saint Petersburg, Russia
Salem, Massachusetts
 San Francisco, California
San Miguel de Cozumel, Mexico
San Xavier, Texas

SOURCE

DR#240, pg. 31
pg. 36
pg. 13
 AGtGE, pg. 82
pg. 37
 AGtGE, pg. 76
 DR#240, pg. 33
 AGtGE, pg. 93
pg. 33
 AGtGE, pg. 76
 AGtGE, pg. 84
 AGtGE, pg. 85
 AGtGE, pg. 81
 AGtGE, pg. 83
 DR#240, pg. 28
 AGtGE, pg. 84
 AGtGE, pg. 91
 AGtGE, pg. 85
pg. 28
pg. 21
 DR#240, pg. 34
pg. 20
 pg. 7
pg. 38
pg. 39
pg. 40
 AGtGE, pg. 81
 AGtGE, pg. 86
pg. 30
 DR#240, pg. 34
 AGtGE, pg. 79
 DR#240, pg. 29
see Shechem
 AGtGE, pg. 78
pg. 16
 AGtGE, pg. 87
 AGtGE, pg. 80
 DR#240, pg. 30
 AGtGE, pg. 88
see Zefat
pg. 22
 AGtGE, pg. 92
pg. 10
 AGtGE, pg. 78
pg. 24
pg. 21

LOCALE

Seville, Spain
Shechem, Palestine
Sica Hollow, South Dakota
 Singapore, Malaysia
 Sitka, Alaska
 Stuttgart, Germany
Temuco, Chile
 Tokyo, Japan
 Vancouver, British Columbia
Vera Cruz, Mexico
 Vienna, Austria
Wolfville, Nova Scotia
Zefat, Palestine

SOURCE

DR#240, pg. 32
pg. 42
pg. 18
 AGtGE, pg. 93
 DR#240, pg. 29
 DR#240, pg. 32
pg. 27
 DR#240, pg. 34
 AGtGE, pg. 79
pg. 25
 AGtGE, pg. 90
pg. 23
pg. 43

Crossroads: Postscript

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