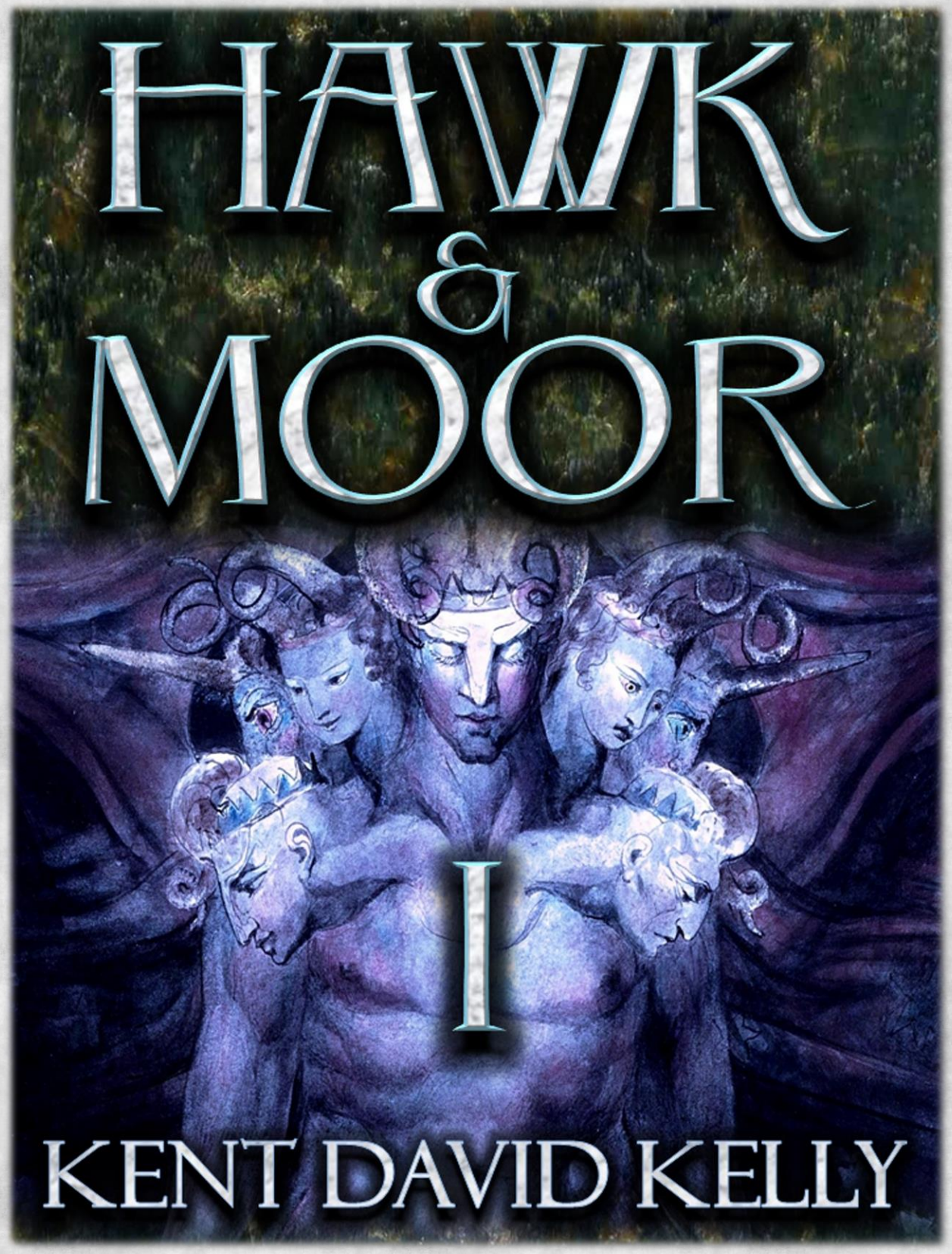
HAWK
&
MOOR
I
KENT DAVID KELLY


WHAT IT WAS LIKE TO BE THERE ...
The HAWK & MOOR series chronicles the history of E. Gary Gygax, David Lance Arneson, and the creation of the first legendary game to arise in the Golden Age of role - playing. In Book One, you will find the secret tales of the Twin Cities and Lake Geneva campaigns, the Oak Hill Sanitarium, the Black Moors, Loch Gloomen and the Great Kingdom. Prepare yourself, take up torch and sword. Come along and experience an unprecedented journey into the Golden Age!
WONDERLAND IMPRINTS

HAWK & MOOR

THE UNOFFICIAL HISTORY OF DUNGEONS & DRAGONS ®

BY

KENT DAVID KELLY

(DARKSERAPHIM)

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DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORIES OF

DAVID LANCE ARNESON

&

ERNEST GARY GYGAX

WONDERLAND IMPRINTS

2014 – 2017

O S R

ILLUSTRATED BY

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ET ALII

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***HAWK & MOOR** is an historical research project developed with the primary intent of broadening the popular awareness of, and appreciation for, Fantasy Role-Playing Games (FRPGs).*

Quotes attributed to various individuals are derived from a wide array of filmed interviews, online forum posts, magazines, books, newsletters, and various game-oriented materials. Please refer to the Footnotes and Annotations section for detailed citations. Individuals who wish to have their own quoted words alluded to, rather than quoted directly, are welcome to contact the author with requests for modification, emendation or deletion of specific comments.

The cover of this volume features a detail from The Great Red Dragon and the Beast from the Sea, *by William Blake, painted c. 1805-1810.*

(Document Version 3.1)

For corrective and revision purposes, please note that this is document version 3.1 of this manuscript, completed in September of 2017. Versions prior to this, while useful are outdated, and this most recent version of the book has been amended as more interviews, documents, corrections and feedback have come to light.

In the age of the Internet, a printed book can never contain the final word. Therefore, the eBook version of this volume is intended as a living document, so that interested readers can enjoy a resource which is constantly revised, one which does not merely sit upon the shelf going slowly and forever out of date. The print version of this volume may well be slightly out of date, as in-depth research into the ever-shifting field of Role-Playing Game history continues to grow, diversify and change.

Please feel welcome to contact the author at shadowed_sky@hotmail.com with comments, questions, requests, recommendations and greetings. And thank you for reading!

DESCRIPTION

THE CREATION of the world's preeminent Fantasy Role-Playing Game (FRPG), *Dungeons & Dragons®*, is one of the most fascinating tales to be told in all the shared histories of entertainment, play and game design. Two very different men, David Lance Arneson and Ernest Gary Gygax, undertook an unprecedented collaboration which gifted us — as their shared legacy — with one of the most intriguing games the world has yet experienced. Their game did not just simulate one isolate corner of reality; it dared to encompass the entirety of all realms of adventure, the consensual playground of the human imagination.

HAWK & MOOR tells the story of Dave and Gary, and the many other people whose efforts gave first life to the game we know and love today. Arneson had spectacular ideas, but Gygax knew how to refine them. Collaboration soon turned to conflict as Arneson believed his game was being taken from him, and Gygax crystallized systems where incomprehensible riddles had stood before. Both men were creative geniuses, but the game they created from Gygax's *Chainmail* (1971) was the end result not only of their teamwork, but also of their clashes and disagreements.

HAWK & MOOR chronicles that first legendary game to arise from the Golden Age of Fantasy Role-Playing. Herein you will find Gary's life story, the history of Gen Con and the Castle & Crusade Society, and details concerning the conception of Castle Greyhawk. This first book also includes new revelations pertaining to Arneson's Blackmoor and its influences; tales from the Blackmoor Dungeons and Loch Gloomen; details on Gary's first dungeon adventure; an exploration of the links between H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard, and the earliest underworld adventures; the secrets of the asylum which inspired Castle Greyhawk; and much more.

HAWK & MOOR, *The Unofficial History of Dungeons & Dragons®*, includes 117,100 words on over 410 pages, supported by a detailed chronology, extensive research into the inspirational origins of D&D, and over 560 footnotes and annotations.

The adventure begins here. Prepare yourself, take up torch and sword. Come along and experience an unprecedented journey into the Golden Age!

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the memory of the two fathers of fantasy role-playing games, David Lance Arneson and Ernest Gary Gygax. Many hundreds of individuals worked to create this wonderful hobby, but none gave more than you both, gentlemen. For the shared dreams, and for a lifetime of enjoyment and inspiration, I humbly and sincerely thank you.



In memoriam.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A BOOK like this is never written by a single person without significant contributions from many other kind, insightful and respect-worthy people. Some of these esteemed individuals contributed through their own diligent volunteerism, while others aided my efforts indirectly with their generous public engagement of the D&D and FRPG fan communities. This book is the culmination not only of hundreds of books, magazines, and interviews; it also comprises a living and ever-growing record of the thousands of scattered Internet blog entries, sub-pages and forum postings which have hidden away much of the true history of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

Special thanks are due to my beta readers, including Andrew ("aeakett"), Axel ("aia"), Carl ("cdenham"), Carl ("gyg"), David ("faro"), David ("Thunderdave"), John ("Gnat the Beggar"), Mark ("Mars"), Matt ("nesbit37"), and Ron ("rredmond"), for their comments, support and recommendations. Constructive criticisms provided by Dan Boggs, Robert S. Conley, Jon Peterson, "Sauromatian," "Stratochamp" (Bill Meinhardt) and others have also been very helpful as well.

I am grateful and happy to thank Jeff Berry, Mike Carr, Ernie Gygax Jr., Luke Gygax, Tim Kask, Rob Kuntz, Len Lakofka, Steve Marsh, Frank Mentzer, Mike Mornard, Greg Svenson and James M. Ward for their extremely helpful blog and forum posts which have helped to illuminate many of the darker corners of D&D's early days. Their generously shared experiences, revealing much about the earliest games in those years which I now term the Golden Age, were the primary inspirations for this book.

The following individuals conducted interviews with Dave Arneson, Gary Gygax, Tim Kask, and/or Rob Kuntz, which were also very helpful in creating the foundation for this work: Barbara A. Blackburn, Martin Brown, Andrew S. Bub, Alex Handy, Anne F. Jaffe, Jeremy L. C. Jones, David Kushner, Robin D. Laws, Scott Lynch, Frank Mentzer, Allen Rausch, Ciro Alessandro Sacco, Sam Sloan, Harvey Smith, Ben Sones, Michael O. Varhola and Allen Varney. Please note that this is an incomplete list due to some partial attributions within the available materials, and I hope to add to it further in the future.

Further, many bloggers provided excellent resource materials through their ongoing sites which were extremely helpful to me, including Joseph Bloch (of the Greyhawk Grognard blog), Dan Boggs (Aldarron) (of the Hidden in Shadows blog), Allan Grohe (Grodog of Greyhawk) (of the From Quroth's Quill blog), Chris Kutalik (of the Hill Cantons blog), Jon Peterson (via his Playing at the World blog), Sham

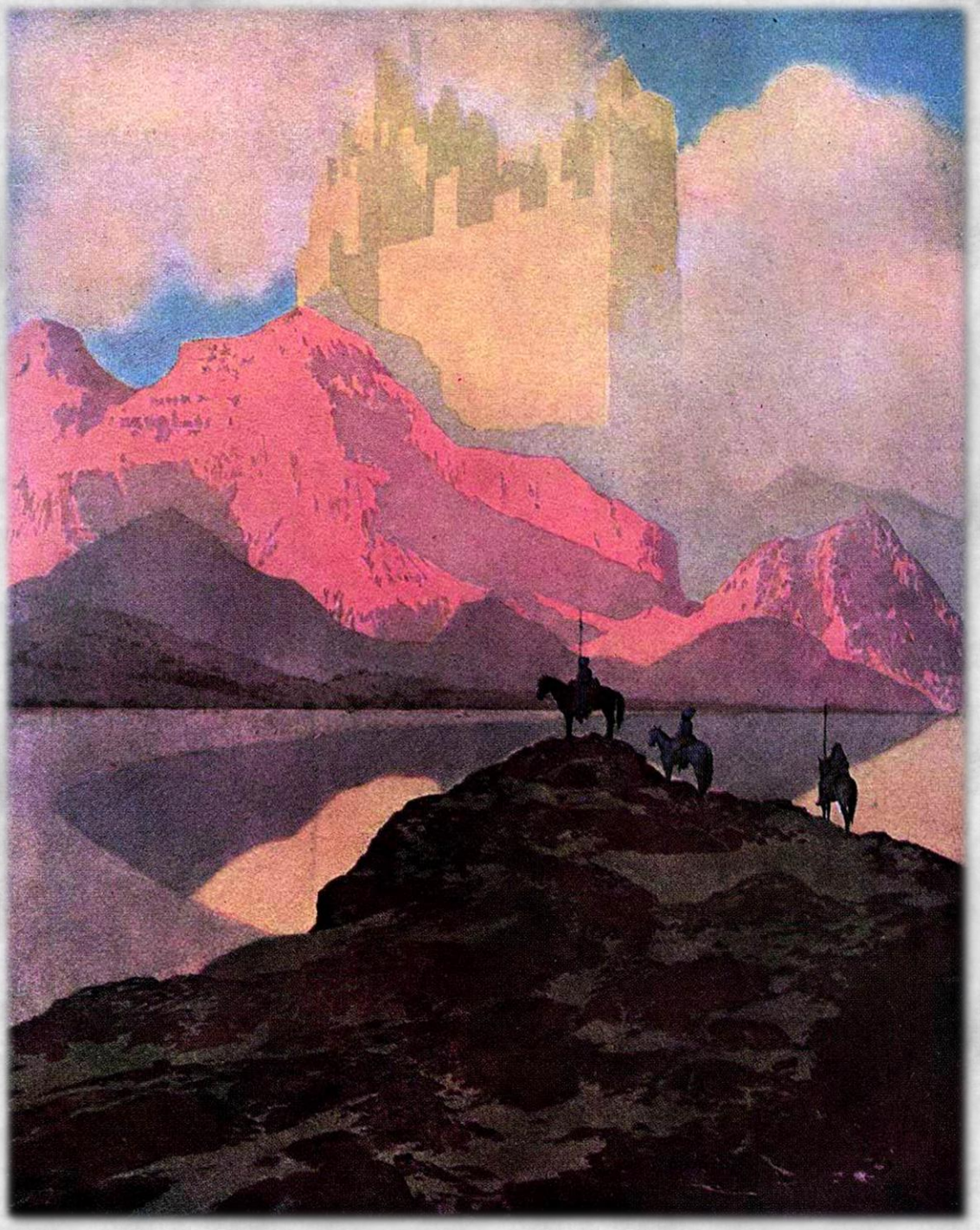
aka Dave (of Sham's Grog & Blog), Zach "Zenopus" H. (of the Zenopus Archives), and Jason Zavoda (of the Hall of the Mountain King Blog).

The Secrets of Blackmoor crew, as well, are to be lauded for exhibiting a truly excellent spirit of sharing. To date, they have demonstrated a praiseworthy example of ideal, intent, and spirit … particularly in contrast to several adversarial private collectors, who — through their obstruction of research, dissemination, and public understanding — are frequently the unintentional enemies of *Dungeons & Dragons* history.

Bill Owen's history of the Judge's Guild, and associated forum posts, were very helpful to this series as well. A special shout out goes to Michael Popham of the *Horror Incorporated* Project as well for his outstanding summaries of Twin Cities "Creature Feature" movie showings in the early 1970s. The Tome of Treasures website, in addition, displays significant resources which allowed me to fill many of the proverbial "blank spaces in the map" concerning the early years of pre-*Dungeons & Dragons* history.

Scott "Foulfoot" of the Acaeum.com is also to be thanked for allowing my ongoing coordination of beta readers and commentators for this manuscript via his website forums. Please feel free to join our discussion in the Acaeum General Forum. Further, I am grateful to: the administrators of the Blackmoor Comeback Inn; Paul Stormberg's esteemed Collector's Trove; the endlessly-valuable Dragonsfoot and ENWorld forums, which archive much of the fan correspondence shared by Gary Gygax; the Knights & Knaves Alehouse; and the ODD74 Proboards. These valuable resources possess, via their forums, excellent archives of crucial anecdotes and historical posts pertaining to the early Greyhawk and Blackmoor campaigns.

Without all of you and the generous availability of your works and research, this book could not exist. I sincerely thank you all for your generous sharing, memories, and contributions to the cause!



As the enchanted castle crystallizes in the wind,
you spy the silhouette of a dragon in the distance …

BOOK I

THE DRAGON RISES

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What's the real story? Is the saga prettier than some dry retelling of mere names and numbers? Not to worry. History is a story, inherently. A bardic saga. And whenever in doubt and gravitas, if there's any confusion as to what really happened anod how entertaining it really was, you can always blame the bard.

BY WAY OF INTRODUCTION:
CHAOTIC BARDS, LAWFUL SAGES

Chaos often breeds life,
When order breeds habit.

— Henry Brooks Adams

THE LEGENDS and history surrounding the creation of the very first and preeminent Fantasy Role-Playing Game (FRPG), *Dungeons & Dragons* (D&D), together comprise a fascinating and labyrinthine epic tale filled with surprising tricks, deceptive traps, and monstrous setbacks … much like the imagined dungeon environs of the adventure game itself.

As dreamers, fantasists, storytellers and gamers, many of us love to relive these glimpses of a time I term the Golden Age: discussing misinterpreted events, or sharing stories with the people who were fortunate enough to actually be there. There is nothing quite like hearing the tales of momentous occasions such as the creation of the Arch-Barony of Blackmoor, the first explorations of the netherworld sprawling beneath Castle Greyhawk, the derring do of crafty and infamous Sir Robilar, or the many wilder misadventures from the people who first played "the ultimate game" before it was ever published as *Dungeons & Dragons*.

While many of the most engaging and entertaining persons who were involved with Blackmoor, Greyhawk and/or Tactical Studies Rules (TSR) during the seventies and eighties (such as Jeff Berry, Mike Carr, Ernie Gygax Jr., Luke Gygax, Tim Kask, Rob Kuntz, David Megarry, Frank Mentzer, Mike Mornard, Erol Otus, Greg Svenson, James M. Ward and David Wesely) are still with us and sharing stories, the game's forefathers — Ernest Gary Gygax and David Lance Arneson — are sadly no longer with us, having passed in 2008 and 2009. Many of us who still play and enjoy our "outmoded" pen-and-paper game in this age of the Internet miss these men, not only as inspiring mentors, but as our lost friends from afar. For diehard fans of the game, our losses of Gary and Dave have serendipitously led us into a time when developments in RPG research are bringing forth a myriad of unprecedented rediscoveries.

Until recently, the most commonly accepted accounts of *Dungeons & Dragons* history were largely anecdotal. Throughout their later lives, Gary and Dave and

others were frequently asked to recall exacting specifics about their many products, game sessions, legal matters and publishing deals — the crucial elements which fundamentally created the RPG (along with the MMORPG) industry as we enjoy and know it today. Many of these recollections, however, were made by people concerning events which they had participated in some twenty, thirty or even forty years prior to being asked for their remembrances.

The haze of memory and the attrition of time have caused some dates in the understood chronology of D&D's history to remain in question. Many "commonly known" and "uncontested" dates — including those found in the official histories published by D&D's current publishing body, Wizards of the Coast — are actually untrue. As a result, our understanding of the entire history of D&D is now in a state of flux. These matters of confusion, while slowly clearing over time, created ripples which inevitably have made their way into this current work. We will never know the entire story — the pool of history is now too deep — but nevertheless, many details beneath the surface are becoming clearer all the time.

This is a daunting, unavoidable, and yet enticing new reality. In creating **HAWK & MOOR**, I simply wrote the best chronicle that I could over the years, given the diverse and fragmentary sources at hand. Please note that there are many hundreds of tenuous accounts recorded herein, stories which were shared and refuted many times. Sometimes, deceptively reasonable details were provided only a few years after an event, but then a more detailed account would appear some fifteen or twenty years later. All told, these myriad accounts are understandably imperfect, and are now impossible to fit together into a mosaic without some damaging friction arising between the pieces.

Although it is certain that the people involved in the game's creation commonly *believed* they were always telling the truth, the *actual* truth of momentary details is now forever lost. What I *can* do with this dangerous trove of conflicting data, however, is to stitch all of these accounts together, and to smooth things over (wherever possible) by using proven documentation. This "Frankenstein" approach to the history of *Dungeons & Dragons* — building the monster, one stitched-together scrap of flesh at a time — allows for the development of a fascinating and living (undead?) history, which is the closest we can now approach to the lost reality. The preliminary and ongoing results of those years of work are now held in your hands.

This book was not created within a void. Major historical research efforts in this field have already been conducted by fan-collectors on the Acaeum website (Acaeum.com, 2000-present); in the Old School Renaissance (OSR) movement (a loose conglomeration of many independent resources, circa 2001-present); and by FRPG researchers and contributors who have developed their own popular and

academic studies, such as Shannon Appelcline (primary work of interest — *Designers & Dragons: A History of the Roleplaying Game Industry: The 70s*), Matt Barton (*Dungeons & Desktops*), David M. Ewalt (*Of Dice and Men*), Brad King and John Borland (*Dungeons & Dreamers*), Robert J. Kuntz (one of D&D's earliest contributors, now developing his *El Raja Key Archives* and other works in progress), Robin D. Laws (*40 Years of Gen Con*), Jon Peterson (*Playing at the World*), Lawrence Schick (*Heroic Worlds*), Michael J. Tresca (*The Evolution of Fantasy Role-Playing Games*), and — following my own publication — Michael Witwer (*Empire of Imagination*).

Adding to this already-excellent collection of works, I am hoping to share my own research and discoveries (to be represented throughout the HAWK & MOOR series) in an affordable, accessible, and potentially collaborative ongoing endeavor, so that the history of FRPGs can remain growing, communal, and open to all.

Tragically, despite all of these advances in our understanding of the poorly-documented history of the game, we have mourned the loss of other beloved D&D luminaries such as Bob Bledsaw (founder of Judges Guild, d. 2008), Dr. John Eric Holmes (editor of the "blue book" D&D Basic Set, d. 2010), Tom Moldvay (co-creator of *The Isle of Dread*, "red book" Basic and many other D&D products, d. 2007), and David C. Sutherland III (illustrator of the *Monster Manual*, *Dungeon Masters Guide* and other classic works, d. 2005). Recently, renowned D&D artist David A. Trampier has passed away as well. In the face of these irreplaceable losses, we find that more and more of the great stories, jokes, recollections, and untold adventures are being taken away from us by the day. I hope that by making this book a gatherum of first-hand tales, I can encourage readers to embrace the living history of the game, and to reach out to those good men and women who were there. Those who inspire us should always be honored and remembered, *before* their own time is past.

And so, in reflection, I now realize that the purpose of this book is twofold: first, I have written this meager summary to reaffirm many of the error-filled accounts in a hopefully-corrected historical context, so that these irreplaceable stories are placed within an appropriate and human landscape with as much accuracy as is currently possible. If we were to focus our efforts solely upon documents, the human soul of the living history would be lost. Secondly, I am a decent writer and storyteller, but an unorthodox historian. I am a gamer most of all. And that is why this book is written *not* as a history text, but rather as an enjoyable saga filled with personal moments, so that readers can be regaled by these storied men in their own voices, even though many are no longer with us. These books are, in a way, a secret-filled Campaign Journal chronicling the very first *Dungeons & Dragons* campaigns to a depth never publicly revealed before. (And

this is by far the most personal aspect of this work, as I am far more interested in telling the tale of *gamers* and *game designers*, as opposed to the scientific study of gaming *systems*.)

With those oft-conflicting goals in mind, I have written this book to reveal the human history of early *Dungeons & Dragons* — not as a dry scholarly dissertation, but as an adventure in the shared imagination. This is the story of gamers creating an entirely new and entrancing kind of game, the exploration of a brave new world within the consensual mind. This book is intended for everyone who ever wanted to know what it was like to *be* there, in the classic days when the ruins of (Grey) Hawk and (Black) Moor were still unfolding their dark blooms from out of the dreams of their creators.

This is a book of gamer chat, the masters' own insights, and the spirit of adventure. If you as a reader are *less* interested in the rules minutiae explaining how 19th-century *Kriegspiel* distantly affected the underpinnings of games like *Fletcher Pratt's Naval War Game* — and are *more* interested in hearing precisely what happened when the mad and cackling dwarf Obmi turned the beam of his infernal gravity-ray contraption on unsuspecting adventurers — then this is the book series for you.

HAWK & MOOR is primarily a *folkloric* history, and only secondarily an analytical one. If we can regard the ongoing historical research effort to discern the factual past of RPGs as a "Lawful" endeavor conducted by "Sages," then **HAWK & MOOR** represents a counterbalancing "Chaotic" labor of love. Its mission is to preserve facts, ruminations, speculation, the game's ever-conflicting folklore, *and* the hazily-recollected game sessions of the past in a single source which will change, grow, and become more epic over time — a chronicle of the "Bards," if you will.

As frequently as possible, I have therefore used the words of the people who were actually there. However, wherever colorful recollections conflict with the actual evidence, the evidence necessarily takes its precedence.

As a result of this precarious balancing act, some of the material in this book is going to be proven wrong. Whenever it does, I as the author will strive to offer updates and corrections to this living history, so that it will always be up to date with the latest research. This book will never have the treasures of the *entire* truth locked between its covers, because that is not within the realm of human possibility. And yet, in admiration I have preserved here the words and heartfelt memories of many amazing people, and their story is a remarkable one which I think you will enjoy.

But enough of justification and preamble. Let us return to the Golden Age. Let us begin to relive the adventure! The imperious world of the Great Kingdom, the

lavish spectacle of Greyhawk and the frigid mystery of Blackmoor all await us beyond the gate.

Let us now take that very first step ...



The White Rabbit put on his spectacles. "Where shall I begin, please your Majesty?" he asked. "Begin at the beginning," the King said gravely, "and go on till you come to the end; then stop."

— Lewis Carroll

CHAPTER 1
BEFORE THE DAWN OF THE GOLDEN AGE
(1937 – 1969)



An idyllic glimpse of a steam landing
in early Lake Geneva, 1909. Public domain.

THE STORY of fantasy role-playing, and of *Dungeons & Dragons*, begins with one E. Gary Gygax, an eccentric and affable gentleman who always preferred to be known simply as Gary.[1]

Gary's parents were married on a Sunday, August 15th, in 1937. Gary's mother was Almina (always affectionately known as "Posey") Emelie Burdick, a lovely

[1] According to family lore it seems that Gary's middle name was a nod to the actor Gary Cooper, of whom Gary's mother was a huge fan. Refer to *Empire of the Imagination*, by Michael Witwer, pg. 16.

woman born into a longstanding and highly regarded family in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.[2]



Postcard image of the Lake Geneva region, 1914. Public domain.

The Burdick family's presence in North America predates the United States, with the first Burdicks arriving in colonial Rhode Island in about the year 1642.[3] The Burdicks later settled in the frontier lands of Wisconsin, in 1836.[4] At that time, much of Wisconsin was still a wilderness; Michigan was not formally separated from the Wisconsin Territory until July 3rd of that year, and Wisconsin did not officially

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[2] For many more interesting notes on Gary's childhood and Burdick family heritage, please refer to his online article "Around Grandfather Burdick's Dining Table," which he wrote in 2006.

[3] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted October 20th, 2005.

[4] Online interview: The d-infinity.net interview with Gary Gygax. By Michael O. Varhola. Posted on July 27th, 2013.

become a state until May of 1848.

Gary's father, Ernst, had been born in Seeberg, in the canton of Bern in Switzerland.[5] He was born on January 19th, 1884. After coming to the United States as a youth in the 1880s,[6] Ernst would later choose to Anglicize his name to the more American "Ernest," a name he was destined to later share with his son. Ernest Sr. was a man of many gifts, possessed of an imaginative and winsome spirit. He was an accomplished violinist as well, and — according to Gary's familial recollection — his father may have played professionally with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. (More recent research has put this particular point into contention, however, as the Symphony archives appear to insinuate that Ernst Gygax Sr. did not actually play for the Orchestra proper. He may have been a substitute, or he might have been a member of one of the ensembles that played in the Orchestra Hall.)[7]



A rare glimpse of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra (at that time, simply the Chicago Orchestra) in 1897, just 7 years after its founding. Public domain.

[5] The family name Gygax, as well as the related name Ghikas, are derived via Switzerland from the Greek Gigas, meaning "Giant" (as in "gigantic"). Family in this bloodline apparently also settled in Bleienbach and Thunstetten in the same canton; some say this was in the 1700s, some earlier.

[6] Online interview: The d-infinity.net interview with Gary Gygax. By Michael O. Varhola. Posted on July 27th, 2013.

[7] Refer to "Did Gary Gygax's Father Play for Chicago Symphony Orchestra?" as featured on the Save Versus All Wands blog, posted February 8th, 2014.

Gary, then, was born to Almina on the morning of July 27th, 1938 at St. Joseph's Hospital in Chicago, Illinois. He would live in a little house with a big yard, situated on Kenmore Avenue just a few blocks north of Wrigley Field.[8] By that time, Ernest Sr. (who was well into his fifties when Gary was born)[9] was working as a suit salesman in the premiere Chicago department store which was owned by the extravagant multimillionaire, Maurice L. Rothschild.[10] Gary was born after his father had set his Jacob Steiner violin forever to rest, and so he never had the chance to see or hear his father play.

By a curious twist of fate, the years 1937 and 1938 also saw the birth of a revolutionary phenomenon in children's and fantasy fiction: *The Hobbit*, by English author John Ronald Reuel (J. R. R.) Tolkien. This now-classic tale of thrilling adventure, lurking goblins, hulking trolls, dwarven treasure and a merciless dragon was published in the United Kingdom on September 21st, 1937. The very first American edition of *The Hobbit* followed via Houghton Mifflin Co. in the spring of 1938. The harrowing misadventures of the titular Hobbit, Bilbo Baggins, as he arose from the humblest creature of comfort to a dragon-defying hero, would later inspire (and become irrevocably intertwined with) Gary's own signature masterpiece, the game of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

When he was still a young child, Gary's mother would read to him to ease his restlessness.[11] One of the most compelling tales to young Gary's mind involved the tale of the Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga, which strode along through haunted Russian forests upon its giant magical chicken legs.

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[8] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 9th, 2005.

[9] Online interview: The d-infinity.net interview with Gary Gygax. By Michael O. Varhola. Posted on July 27th, 2013.

[10] As a point of trivia, Rothschild's store was especially famed for its beautiful hats. One of the more notorious customers who purchased a fine hat there, specifically one straw boater *borsalino*, was none other than Al Capone. As a 1931 ad would proudly proclaim, "Our hat department is actually the largest in the world, largest in space, in stock, in variety."

[11] *Dragon* magazine, issue #95, pg. 12.



An intrepid maiden preparing to explore the Dancing Hut of Baba Yaga. One of the Hut's chicken legs can be seen behind her outspread arm.

Jack and Jill magazine, produced for the first time in November of Gary's birth year (and still going strong to this day), later featured this tale and many others,[12] and was soon Gary's favorite source of tales. *Jack and Jill* may also have, interestingly, also marked the naissance of Gary's own affection for alliterative titles for creative endeavors (Swords & Sorcery, Castle & Crusade, *Dungeons & Dragons*, *Dangerous Dimensions*, *Dance of Demons*, and so forth).



Brownies infiltrate many a moonlit castle built from the imagination …

[12] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted June 16th, 2005. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VIII, posted March 1st, 2005.

Gary's mother would also read the Sunday funnies for him while he marveled over the pictures. His favorite piece every week was the *Teenie Weenies*, a famous strip concerning elfin and pixie-like folk dwelling secretly in a strange world filled with bumbling giants (*aka* human beings).[13] After a long hiatus, this classic strip was reinstated on Sundays in the *Chicago Tribune* in May of 1941.

We can therefore presume that by the age of three, Gary was fully immersed in the worlds of storytelling, capricious adventure, and illustrated fantasy. A little later in life, collected fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and Andrew Lang would heighten Gary's interest in faerie folk, which began with the *Teenie Weenies*.[14]

While he was still three years old, Gary also made the first crayon drawing that his mother would decide to keep for posterity. This was a sketch of "a great ugly troll, because I loved the stories of the Billy Goats Gruff. It was a vaguely cubical thing with a great many legs and eyes."[15]

Gary later commented that "Most of the influences on my creative work were acquired from childhood on."[16] Many of these highly imaginative elements would later appear in *Dungeons & Dragons*, and the troll bridge from the Grimm tale in particular would apparently make an appearance in Gary's first *Chainmail Fantasy* game in early 1971.[17]

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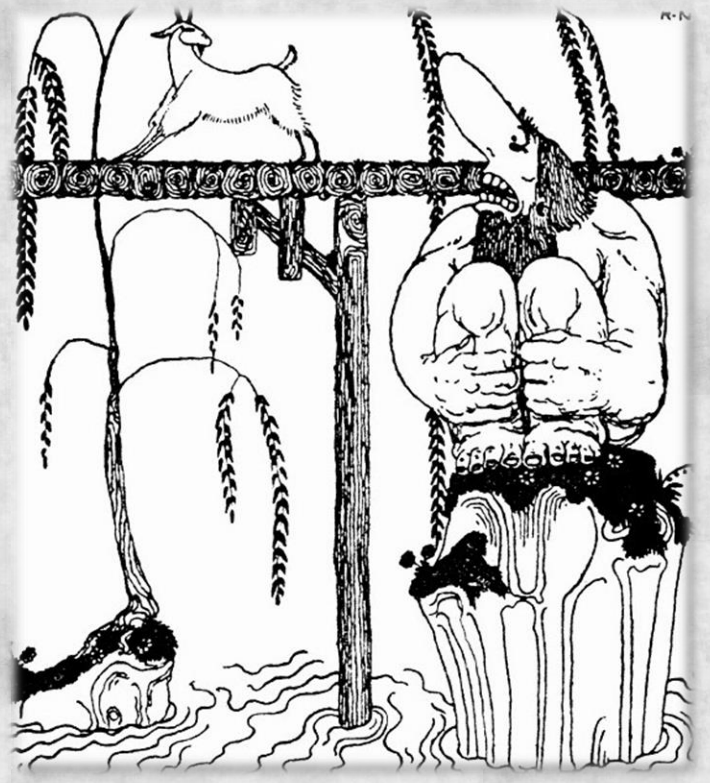
[13] Gary's lifelong fascination with the "little people" would percolate throughout *Dungeons & Dragons*, with particular notices prominently featured in the *Monster Manual* (leprechaun, nixie, pixie, sprite), *Descent into the Depths of the Earth* (jermlaine), *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa* (svirfneblin), and the derivative *Fiend Folio* (booka, killmoulis).

[14] In *Dragon* magazine #95, on pg. 12, Gary explains that after being exposed to fairy tale reading by his mother (who read him stories from *Jack and Jill* magazine), he then went on to read the Brothers Grimm collection on his own.

[15] This quote was found on an obscure temporary Tripod web page, preserving an interesting interview with Gygax. See also Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV, posted September 29th, 2005: "My mother actually saved my first crayon 'art,' depictions of square things with big eyes and mouths, squiggly legs that were 'great ugly trolls.' I believe they are now lost, but I recall them well, even drawing them."

[16] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 5th, 2002.

[17] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted September 22nd, 2005.



"Who's that tripping over my bridge?" roared the Troll.

His burgeoning interest in fantasy was gently encouraged by his father as well. As he once recollected, "My father was a marvelous storyteller. What a treat it was for me at age three and later to have him tell me a bedtime story. Those tales were usually of giants and dragons, wise old wizards with magic rings, cloaks of invisibility, and always a little boy involved in the adventure and derring do."[18]

(It thus seems possible that Ernest Sr. may have regaled Gary with the tale of *The Hobbit* or at least scenes inspired by that book, but this is speculation on my part.)

With his parents' encouragement, Gary began reading fairy tales on his own around 1943, and then moved on to books filled with fables, legends and mythology a few years later on.[19] He would enact some of these tales in play with his own small collection of metal dime store soldiers, a collection cultivated and

[18] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #2, July 2005. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2. See also the online post in the Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V, posted June 1st, 2006.

[19] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VI. Posted February 29th, 2004.

encouraged by his father. Every Saturday night Gary would earn a present, and more often than not these were Barclay-brand toy soldiers. The figures were about 65 millimeters tall, cast in metal and finely detailed.[20]

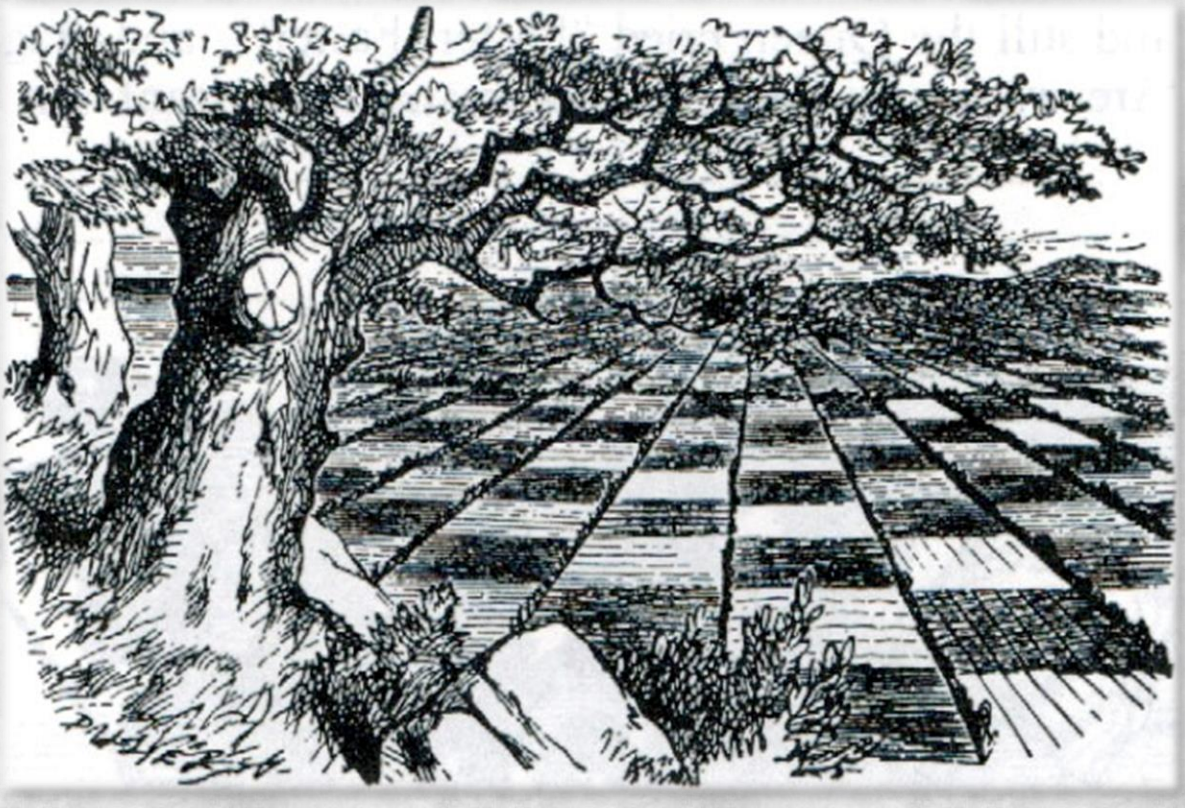


A glorious time for wild tales of adventure.

[20] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII, posted November 5th, 2007.

These engagingly painted $0.10 figures were no mere trifles, considering that a dime could be more responsibly used to purchase a loaf of bread. Gary's ever-growing armies would be arrayed "with blocks and Tinker Toys adorning the battlefield,"[21] an early instance of his interest in the nuances of terrain and cover which would later inform his own particular modes of play.

As we shall see, Gary would never quite outgrow his love of toy soldiers; he would in fact make a living sharing his enthusiasm for them with the world through his own amateur and professional game designs.



The chessboard imagined as a world of idle war, gaming, adventure, and exploration … from Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There, *by Lewis Carroll, and as illustrated by Sir John Tenniel.*

But that was yet to come. In that grim and escapist era of the American home front during late World War II (when Gary himself was yet to experience television

[21] Online interview: *The Ultimate Interview with Gary Gygax*, with Ciro Alessandro Sacco of dungeons.it; hosted at thekyngdoms.com.

on a frequent basis),[22] he relied on storytelling, reading, imagination and radio to fill his days with dreamt-of adventure. The greatest game of all proved to be that ageless standby of children the world over, "Let's Pretend." Gary occasionally managed to share and even control this social activity with other Chicago children. "I had a full back yard," he once mused, "so I generally got to call what make-believe game we would play … my first experience as Game Master."[23]

At the tender age of six (1944), Gary learned how to play the game of chess under the mentorship of his grandfather, Hugh.[24] Chess would teach Gary the importance of balance, predictability, and regimentation in strategic gaming … lessons he would carry forward into his wargames designs, and lessons which he would act *against* in the development of more unorthodox role-playing games.

And also at around this time, Gary was able to visit the Chicago Field Museum with his father on many a Sunday, a jaunt which occurred about once a month. He fell in love with Egyptology due to the museum's impressive mummy and artifact displays.[25] These memories would later inspire his conception of the arch-villain Acererak (as featured in Dungeon Module S1, *Tomb of Horrors*), as well as parts of his *Necropolis* game setting and a novel, *The Anubis Murders*. Gary also enjoyed the taxidermy displays and the enormous loxodonts, and was the lucky recipient of some great tyrannosaurus and triceratops toys from the museum gift shop[26] (which might have inspired his inclusion of many prehistoric beasts in the 1977 *Monster Manual*). In many ways, through such adventures of the imagination he could claim a happy and imaginative early life.[27]

Not all was peaceful in Gary's Chicago childhood, however. There were fierce rivalries between neighboring children that often erupted in competitions which became far more dangerous than mere games and roughhousing. (Gary's mates, by

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[22] For some of Gary's interesting memories of the World War II era, refer to ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII, posted November 5th, 2007.

[23] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 1, Number 2 (Issue #2), July 2005. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2.

[24] *Dragon* magazine, issue #103, pg. 56.

[25] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted March 14th, 2003.

[26] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted February 6th, 2008.

[27] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted March 14th, 2003.

the way, christened themselves the "Kenmore Pirates.")[28]

Gary once explained: "Back in Chicago in the early 1940's we used wooden swords and garbage-can or peach-crate lids, reinforced with cardboard shields, to have 'wars' against the 'enemy gang' that were at the North End."[29] The battle became quite intense, with a BB gun being used to hold back the "invaders" and Gary's friend Jerry Paul knocking out one of the more aggressive kids (the leader, Rex) with a well-thrown piece of brick. That worst fight had apparently started when Rex broke a basement window in Gary's father's building, and Gary demanded that Rex pay up for the damage. In response, Rex stomped off and came back with about twenty of his "flunkies" and things escalated from there.[30]

The explanation for all of this fracas was simple, a sign of the times: "The neighborhood in 4100 North Kenmore Avenue was declining rapidly throughout the war."[31] The increasing violence of these North Side encounters would soon cause Ernest Sr. to move his family from Chicago to Burdick land — within the quiet Wisconsin resort town of Lake Geneva — in July of 1946.[32]

This was at first considered a temporary move of one year's duration, a pause in life to "regroup" with the extended family. Gary's parents at that time planned to make a permanent move to family property in La Jolla, California.[33] However, another house would need to be built first, and Ernest Sr. was having difficulty finding lucrative employment prospects out in California. During the delay, Gary and his parents fell in love with Lake Geneva. It was a far better place than Chicago, at that time, to raise a child. And Gary's mother's family hailed from there, and urged Ernest Sr. to consider a move there. Gary's father sagely agreed that this was indeed the right thing to do.

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[28] *Empire of Imagination: Gary Gygax and the Birth of Dungeons & Dragons*, by Michael Witwer, pg. 13.

[29] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 5th, 2005.

[30] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted March 27th, 2007.

[31] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted November 6th, 2007.

[32] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 5th, 2005. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part XIII, posted November 6th, 2007.

[33] This information appears in several places on the web, in various levels of detail. See for example Gary's online article "Around Grandfather Burdick's Dining Table," at burdickfamily.org, which he wrote in 2006.



A bird's-eye view of Lake Geneva, 1882. Public domain.

Gary made many deep and lasting friendships in Lake Geneva, the most important being a reunion with his buddy Donald Raymond Kaye. Gary and Don had met earlier (c. 1944)[34] when the Gygax family would spend their Augusts in Lake Geneva,[35] and they became best friends when Gary moved up for good in 1946. Gary and Don trusted one another implicitly, and the closeness of this relationship would one day result in their becoming partners in business as they founded Tactical Studies Rules in October of 1973.

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Despite such strong and lasting friendships, Gary was a private person in many ways. He was extremely sensitive in nature, claiming that he recalled memories of sunlight experienced when he was only six months old. While Gary's sensitivities

[34] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted June 23rd, 2005.

[35] Refer to the online article "Around Grandfather Burdick's Dining Table," which Gary wrote in 2006.

grew with age and the simple "Cowboys and Indians," "Private Detective" and "Recon Patrol" games began to flourish into more convoluted realms of role-play, the superstitious borderline between reality and fantasy became more permeable. Gary had a vivid imagination; he was always receptive to the possibilities inherent in the unlikely. He frequently, even sixty years later, insisted that as a child he had experienced the supernatural. "Of course there is the paranormal," he once insisted. "To deny it is to flout reason. There are things that happen that cannot be explained by any scientific means."[36]

The first grim instance of this experience occurred in the early summer of 1946 or 1947, when he was eight. His mother and father had gone to San Diego (intending to better secure their plans involving the land in La Jolla), leaving Gary at home with some house-sitting family friends, the Dimerys. This was no occasion for sadness; in fact, Gary had instigated the matter and convinced his parents to leave him behind because he wanted to have some unsupervised fun with one of his buddies. Joe and Jean Dimerys' son, David, was another of Gary's good companions, having met and befriended Gary in Chicago.[37] (David had in fact been one of the Kenmore Pirates in Gary's neighborhood "gang.")[38]

One evening, having been put to bed early and then joking with David until almost midnight, Gary got himself in a bit of trouble. He had the ill-fated lower bunk, while David enjoyed the upper. David and Gary were shouting and playing and having a great time, forgetting the late hour. David's parents heard the boys' horseplay when they approached from down the hall, and summarily separated the two by dragging David into another bedroom across the hall. Gary took the hint and went to sleep.

Not long after dozing off, he was wakened by a thundering crash overhead, as something massive shook the entire attic. Whatever it was, it stomped over Gary's ceiling, as if seeking something. There were seven long strides in all, taking the unknown figure from one end of the attic to the other. Someone was up there. Whoever it was, he was heavy and huge.

Was there an intruder? Was Mr. Dimery, perhaps, doing something up there in

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[36] Online interview: *The Ultimate Interview with Gary Gygax*, with Ciro Alessandro Sacco of dungeons.it; hosted at thekyngdoms.com. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part VIII, posted March 4th, 2005.

[37] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 21st, 2002.

[38] *Empire of Imagination: Gary Gygax and the Birth of Dungeons & Dragons*, by Michael Witwer, pg. 17.

the middle of the night? As Gary hid beneath his covers, Mrs. Dimery surged in and demanded to know what Gary was up to. Gary could not see her; he was curled up under his sheet. It was only then that they both realized that no one in the house had made the sounds. Alarmed, Mr. Dimery waked and checked on his son, but David had managed to sleep through the entire visitation.

Mr. and Mrs. Dimery, with a hastily awakened David and a nearly petrified Gary reluctantly in tow, crept down the long shadowy hall which ran the entire length of the house. Mr. Dimery went ahead, carrying a baseball bat, and opened the door which led up into the attic.

He crept up the stairs. This was followed by long silence, and then finally his return. But there was nothing up there to be found. Regardless, the Dimerys made certain to lock the attic door before they all went back to sleep. The only person permanently affected by it all, it seems, was Gary.[39]

And that was not the only instance. In November of 1948, Gary suffered an even more striking encounter with the supernatural. It was a dark and frigid school day and an unusual one, at that. While Gary was just making his way home, his mother was enjoying an outing with family in the Chicago suburbs, leaving her ten-year-old son all alone. Feeling the press of isolation upon arriving home, Gary sought out his beloved tomcat, Cueball. He decided the weather was perfect for some reading — something Gothic — and so he selected his grandfather's copy of *Tales of Terror* by Edgar Allan Poe. He turned on a lamp, curled up in Grandpapa Burdick's chair, and Cueball jumped up beside him.

While immersed in "The Fall of the House of Usher" and reaching the point where the Lady Madeline is pounding away in her escape from the crypt, Gary was startled by a jolt of pain. Cueball rose, arched and hissing while raptly staring at the half-open door which led into an old maid's chamber. Floorboards creaked, first from behind the door, then nearer in and *around* the door. The untouched door creaked visibly open, and *inward*. The cat hissed louder. Gary could see nothing but the moving door, and yet the sounds were moving toward him. The creaking presses swept straight toward his chair. And then? Only a trembling cat slowly returning to his ease, and silence.

There was nothing there. But if there were no more noises, no more footsteps, was the unseen presence standing right over the back of Gary's chair?

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[39] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 9 (Issue #9), May 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2.



What's wrong with a little midnight fun?

After long heartbeat-driven seconds of being frozen in fear, Gary leapt up out from the chair (poor Cueball went flying), and went on a frantic crusade. He turned on every light that he could reach, and gathered up a few of his trusty friends: a bow, some arrows, a baseball bat, his hunting knife, and even a machete. Then

Gary sat back down again, and watched.[40] It must have been a very long vigil. His mother did not return until seven that evening.

Despite these disturbing experiences, Gary enjoyed reading of (but not experiencing!) the supernatural. His love of fantasy fiction took firmer root within his heart and mind. He would be forever changed when he read his first story by Robert E. Howard, in *Conan the Conqueror*. Today, this story is more commonly entitled *The Hour of the Dragon*. The tale was "an early taste of the elixir of fantasy," Gary wrote, "to which I rapidly became addicted. … After I finished reading that piece of Sword & Sorcery literature [*Conan the Conqueror*] for the first time, my concepts of adventure were never quite the same again."[41]

Howard's passionate, vigorous and dynamic prose would have a lifelong influence on Gary's imagination. Quite simply, drawn in through the gateway of Howard's tales, Gary fell irrevocably in love with the pulp fantasy fiction genre now known as Swords & Sorcery.[42]

In Howard's tale, the formerly barbaric Conan has become a dark and jaded older man of earthly power and earthly apprehensions. Having slain King Numedides of Aquilonia, he has taken the throne as his blood prize and veritably trapped himself in a life of eternal suspicion. His enemies, in the name of Numedides' rightful heir Valerius, use black and forbidden magic to raise the corpse of an Acheronian sorcerer, the dreaded Xaltotun. Conan is seized by treacherous men, but is later saved by the lovely slave maiden Zenobia. In the end, Conan is forced to risk his life so that he can annihilate Xaltotun, and then finally claim the bold Zenobia as his queen.[43]

Gary was hooked, and for him the saga of Conan was only the beginning. He would later (in *Wargamer's Digest* #7) describe his enthusiasm for Swords & Sorcery:

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[40] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 9 (Issue #9), May 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2. Gary by the way had a lifelong love of, and respect for, weaponry of all kinds. He owned various knives and sabers. Growing up in rural Wisconsin, he also became acquainted with firearms early on. He had a BB pistol by 1948, a Daisy lever-action BB gun by 1949, and a .22 Winchester rifle (a gift from his grandfather) by 1952.

[41] *Dragon* magazine, issue #95, pg. 12.

[42] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 3, Number 5 (Issue #5), Winter 2007. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 1.

[43] This tale cast a long shadow in Gary's imagination. Although the lich monster in *Dungeons & Dragons* would be inspired by Ambrose Bierce's "The Death of Halpin Frayser" and Koschei the Deathless in Slavic folklore, it is virtually certain that the original inspiration was this deathly, deathless wizard Xaltotun, High Priest of Set.

"Somewhere in between the children's works and the (often dry and slow) so-called adult works there lies the world of "Swords & Sorcery" — fast-paced, heroic yarns which are filled with brawny swordsmen, magic swords, wicked magicians, monstrous beasts, and beautiful women who must be rescued from them."

He soon discovered that he loved the imaginative concepts underlying not only the Swords & Sorcery yarns, but those of science fiction tales as well. The first sci fi story he ever encountered was "The World the Children Made," later entitled "The Veldt." The author was Ray Bradbury.

In this story, the concept of virtual reality is explored. Two young children live in a nursery with holographic screens, quite similar to the later Holodeck featured in *Star Trek: The Next Generation*. The screens respond to the children's telepathic wishes, endlessly entertaining them with vistas of the primitive and savage Earth of long ago.

The nursery is *enthralling*, however. It is intelligent and self-protective. The children grow spellbound by visions of African predators, and even though they scream at the sight of bloody beasts feasting upon prey, they cannot look away.

Eventually, the imprudent parents become concerned by this obsession, and turn the nursery off. The deprived children beg for one last moment to share in secret with their nursery, so that they can say goodbye to their virtual friend. The parents reluctantly agree, and leave the room. Forming an unspeakable primal link with the nursery AI, the children do something … *wrong*. Then, they encourage their parents to enter the room.

When the parents come in again, the children lock them in and leave. Bradbury's story ends with the parents screaming, as the holo-screens project deathly lions crawling through a veldt. Licking their fangs in anticipation, the lions crawl straight off the screens (much like the horrific Samara in *The Ring*). And once again, they feast … but this time, the blood they taste is real.

What a story to usher in a love of science fiction! Gary, who had never read anything like this before in his life, was enthralled. "I loved it," he once wrote, "[*and*] was horrified by the action of the children, and gave it to my mother to read. She too was taken aback, for she wondered if I wanted to feed her and my father to lions. I assured her that was not the case."[44]

While Gary estimated that he had read the story in 1948, it appears to me that the tale was not published until September 23rd, 1950 in the *Saturday Evening*

[44] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted May 6th, 2006.

Post.[45]

Gary related that he found the story in *Blue Book* magazine, a publication known for selected reprints of pulp adventure and science fiction. So it is likely that Howard came first, and Bradbury thereafter. Gary may have been remembering the later version entitled "The Veldt," which appeared in a collection called *The Illustrated Man* in February 1951.[46] But whenever "The World the Children Made" was actually read, it is intriguing to note this ghostly theme resonating once again in Gary's life: the bridging of the real and the unreal, a crossing of fantasy and reality where the imagined becomes more tangible and malleable than reality itself.

While signature works by these dark masters — Bradbury, Howard, Poe — definitively formed Gary's nascent tastes in speculative fiction (tastes which would later encompass L. Sprague de Camp, Fritz Leiber, H. P. Lovecraft, A. Merritt, Michael Moorcock and especially Jack Vance), a few tales were never enough. "From 1950 on I was a devoted science fiction and fantasy fan," he explained. "I read a book or pulp 'zine or two a day."[47]

Gary read whatever else he could find that spoke to his curious inclinations, regardless of the genre: "The books at my house were most influential in forming my mindset, one of non-conformity and love of adventure."[48] Books were not always enough, however. Sometimes Gary felt compelled to bring the literary adventures to life. Gary once joked, "My mother said her worst mistake in raising me was reading Tom Sawyer to me. I loved reading myself, but being read to allowed more visualization of the story. Indeed, a friend of mine helped me to build a raft to float around on the lake [*Geneva*] when I was around age 12."[49]

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In the 1950s, fantasy literature did not yet formally exist as a respectable genre (at least from the majority viewpoint of adults in America). Pioneers such as Lord Dunsany, Arthur Machen, Edgar Rice Burroughs and Algernon Blackwood made considerable inroads into dark pockets of the imagination, which were later tapped

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[45] Internet Speculative Fiction Database, "The Veldt."

[46] Internet Speculative Fiction Database, "The Illustrated Man."

[47] "Jack Vance & the D&D Game," an article by Gary Gygax which originally appeared in *The Excellent Prismatic Spray*, Volume 1, Issue #2, 2001. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part VI, posted February 18th, 2004.

[48] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 3, Number 7 (Issue #7), August 2007. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 1.

[49] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX, posted April 10th, 2007.

more deeply by H. P. Lovecraft, Robert E. Howard and Clark Ashton Smith. But without genre solidification and the resultant ease of access to fantasy fiction, Gary sometimes had to make do with whatever he could find.

Therefore, throughout the 1950s he read a seemingly random assortment of readily available works which would include Thorne Smith's racy *Topper* supernatural pulps, older works such as Victor Appleton's *Tom Swift and His Giant Cannon* (1913), and the vibrant, unfettered fiction of Edgar Rice Burroughs. Favored tales by Burroughs ranged from the quite worthy *Tarzan and the Jewels of Opar* (1916-1918), to the rather more brusque and shameless *Cave Man* and *Cave Girl* (1913-1917). *Cave Girl* by the way was Gary's first Burroughs novel, and so would lead to Gary picking up *A Princess of Mars* later in life.[50]

He read many stories by Robert A. Heinlein, John Wyndham's *The Day of the Triffids* (c. 1953),[51] and Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* saga as well (c. 1951).[52] Beyond science fiction, one remarkable Burdick family favorite was William Clarke's *The Boy's Own Book: A Complete Encyclopedia of all the Diversions — Athletic, Scientific, and Recreative — of Boyhood and Youth* (London, 1828; Boston, 1829). This crafty tome is basically a 19th century survival manual, its ideals perhaps best represented today by spiritual successors such as *The Boy's Book of Adventure* and *The Dangerous Book for Boys*.

This voracious reading of speculative fiction and other "adventure" works would continue unabated through 1956, when Gary felt that he had finally "caught up" with most of the published classics written up to that point. He read "literally thousands of S[*ci*] F[*i*], fantasy, folklore, and mythology books" during those formative years.[53]

He once also mentioned that he read "about every book of Fantasy and Science Fiction published in the US."[54] And "by the tender age of twelve," he wrote separately, "I was an avid fan of the pulps … and I ranged afield to assimilate

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[50] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted March 13th, 2003.

[51] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VII. Posted February 14th, 2005.

[52] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XI. Posted July 21st, 2006.

[53] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part XI, posted July 19th, 2006.

[54] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted February 17th, 2003.

whatever I could find which even vaguely related to these exciting yarns. Meanwhile, I was devouring ancient and medieval history, tales of the American frontier, historical novels of all sorts, and the [*Horatio*] *Hornblower* stories in the old *Saturday Evening Post*."[55]

(The *Horatio Hornblower* tales, by the way, ran prominently in the *Post* in 1951, '52 and '53, with a smattering of dates before and after.)

He even went back in time, as it were: "I bought used pulps so as to read back through the entire 1940-on era," he wrote. "That's why I included so extensive a reading list in the [*Dungeon Masters Guide*] … I read and enjoyed, was inspired by, a large number of authors."[56]

The finest of these books, and his strongest recommendations, would be culled into a list which he would publish in his *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979) as "Appendix N" (with several later additions).[57] *Dungeons & Dragons*, in itself, can in some ways be considered a highly complex synthesis of Appendix N and many earlier historical games, as we shall see.

There were other inspirations as well. While these enticing books were boundless and radio was virtually omnipresent, for Gary the movies of Hollywood were a rarer and more impressive treat. One of the most captivating films he saw in his teens was *Ivanhoe* (released in July 1952), an award-nominated Robert and Elizabeth Taylor epic set in the age of Richard the Lionheart. The movie's fight scenes featured knights in shining armor (including a great skull-and-raven crested helm), caparisoned horses, jousting, archers repelling a shield wall formation of harried men-at-arms, sword fights in castle stairwells, and a very dangerous-looking axe-vs.-flail battle fought both on and off horseback. (Spoiler: the axeman wins in a frenetic dismounted melee, but only barely.)

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[55] *Dragon* magazine, issue #95, pg. 12.

[56] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted February 17th, 2003.

[57] Gary's list of authors which he would add to Appendix N, if he had the chance, was surprisingly small. It included Glenn Cook (specifically the saga of *The Black Company*) and Terry Pratchett (specifically the *Ringworld* saga).



"Quickly, before our parents see us!"

And here again, boring reality would be dashed with fantasy: the *Ivanhoe* joust and tourney scenes inspired Gary to engage in one of his many bouts of rowdiness:

"The movie inspired me to make a flail. … [*Boyhood friend*] John Rasch and I actually were able to smite each other's garbage-can lid shield several mighty blows, before we were spotted by anxious parents and the tournament brought to an untimely end."[58]

This surging interest in medieval battles was heightened when the famed German toy company of O(tto) & M(ax) Hausser began releasing their composite plastic "Elastolin" historical figures in 1955. A series featuring Prince Valiant and cohorts seemed to have been the most popular line. These immaculately painted masterpieces would eventually include the knights of King Arthur, Huns, Vikings, Romans, Templars, Lansquenets, American Indians and frontiersmen, all intricately sculpted. These coveted "Haussers" were little works of art, which put Barclays and lesser toy soldiers to shame. Animal, army and domestic figures were crafted by the company as well. As an example of range and production quality, the company's 1958 *Lineoplastik Dresden* catalog (for example) features draft horses in full harness, realistic farm animals, wildlife with accurate fur markings, and a variety of jungle primates.

It seems that Gary tried to create an early wargame using his own figures during the early 1950s. As he once said in an interview, "I got into military miniatures when I was in my teens, just trying to make up a game with all of the neat toy soldiers I had."[59] He and Don Kaye tried to devise rules for Gary's collection of World War II figures and tanks, as well as for his 54 mm Britons soldiers. The fact that they could only think to use coin flips instead of dice for combat resolution slowed the game down drastically, and the use of ladyfinger firecrackers ensured that the collection would not have survived too much play testing.[60]

Gary and Don therefore abandoned the idea of codified wargaming until little later in life (when they would discover it another in an entirely different published form).

Games were not the only events in Gary's life at this time, however. Escapism brought him comfort, and it also protected him from sorrow. He suffered a great loss on January 1st, 1956, when his father died. Ernest Sr. had been suffering from

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[58] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 2, Number 4 (Issue #4), Spring 2006. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 1. See also Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part VII, posted August 15th, 2006.

[59] Masters of Fantasy: TSR, the Fantasy Factory. A documentary which aired on the Sci-Fi Channel in 1997. The comment appears at approximately 7:05.

[60] Refer to the Foreword to H. G. Wells's *Little Wars*, the 2004 Skirmisher Publishing LLC edition, written by Gary Gygax.

cancer, and lingered over the Christmas holidays. "It is all too recent in memory," Gary wrote in 2002, "despite the many years that have passed."[61] This event and others would hurt him deeply. Later in life, he would sometimes feel that he had lost his way during his final teen years. Gary never did graduate from high school, but he did attend junior college while he was living in Chicago (likely in the late 1950s and early 1960s). He resided in the city near Bryn Mawr and Broadway, where he would live for about eight years.[62]

School was not everything, of course. Gary's competitive gaming habits took further hold around 1958, when he attended the Chicago Chess & Checker Club. However, the veteran players there wanted to play for money, and so he spent his time at the Rogers Park Chess Club instead.[63]

While working on his education he enjoyed anthropology, sociology, and English classes. His professors knew he was intelligent, and he managed to make it onto the Dean's list and to be admitted to the University of Chicago. Regardless of his further educational potential, when all was said and done he decided to take a job in insurance instead.[64]

That was a few years in the future, however. Throughout his teen years, Gary was still obsessed with stories. In the early to mid-1950s, he was "fascinated by castles, medieval history, and secret passages and hidden treasure rooms."[65] He spent his free time creating rudimentary floor plans to supplement the many adventures he read about in his books. "Most [*of these maps*] were of castles," he once related, "or castle-like mansions with secret stairs and rooms."[66]

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[61] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted December 17th, 2002.

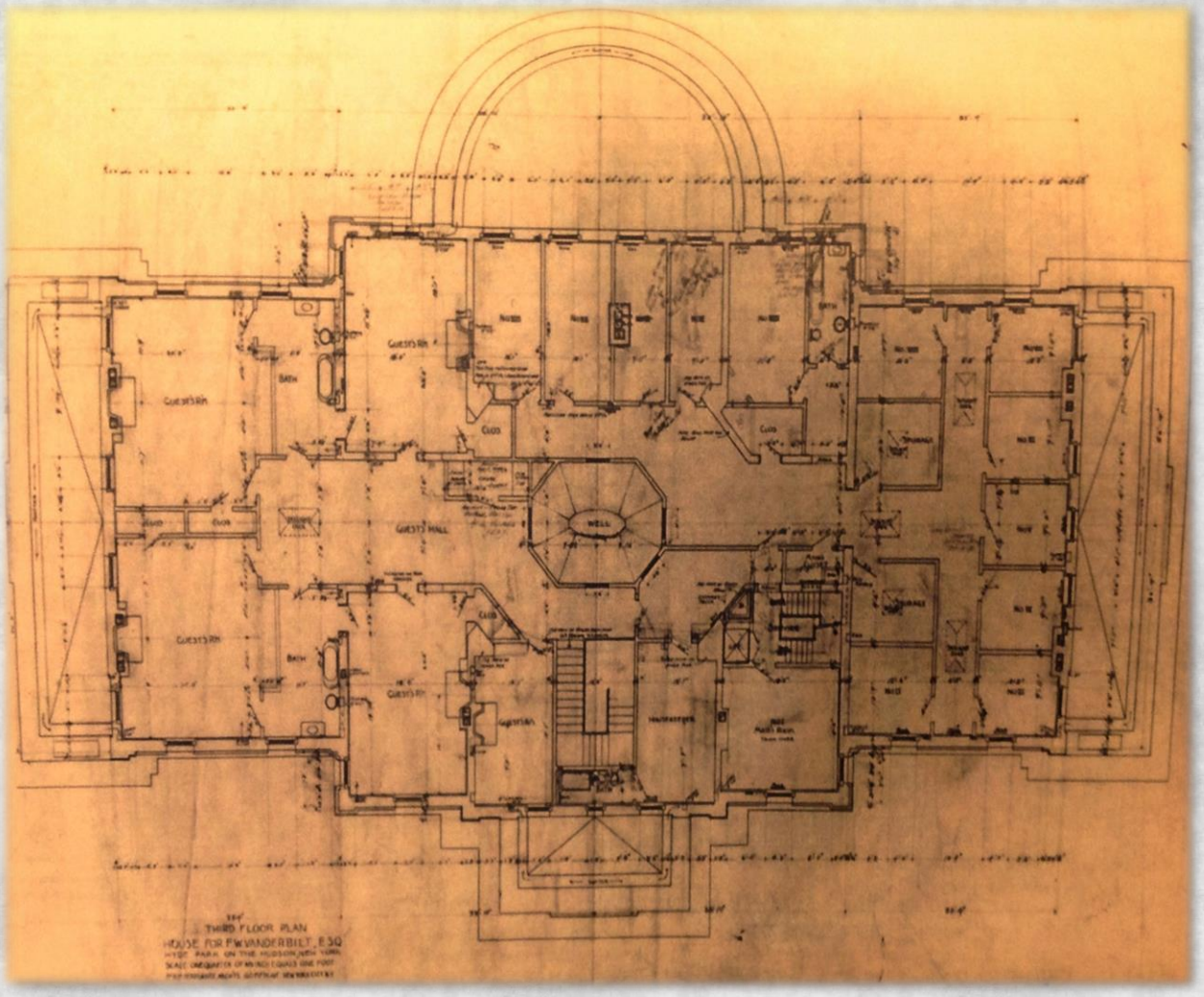
[62] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted October 17th, 2005.

[63] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VI. Posted June 19th, 2006.

[64] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VI. Posted February 16th, 2004.

[65] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted June 1st, 2006.

[66] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 10 (Issue #10), October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2.



Old floor plans for refurbished castles, manor houses, and Victorian mansions and sanitariums tend to offer interesting opportunities for creative embellishment …

Such vivid imaginary exploration of fearful secret passageways, however, was never sufficient to satisfy Gary's ever-increasing appetite for adventure. He was in later life rather cagey about the details, but it is known that he loved to explore the dangerous multi-level ruins of the "Crazy House," more colloquially known as the Oakwood(s) (or "Oak Leigh," per medical journals, or as Gary called it, "Oak Hill") Educational Sanitarium on Catholic Hill.



An early Sanitarium view in Lake Geneva, c. 1905-1910. Contrast added to show the figures at ground level for scale.

(A warning: There are apparently two separate historical Sanitarium institutions — one at the lakeside, and one on the hill; one torn down, one not; one having been opened in 1884/1885, and the other in 1903 — so some of the tales and directions between the two become conflated in the telling. The record is not entirely clear, and I am hoping to make this distinction clearer in the future. Herein, I will simply call Gary's remembered edifice "the Sanitarium" to avoid further confusion.)

It seems that one of the Sanitariums was run by one Dr. Mary E. Pogue as of 1903, Medical Superintendent, for the purpose of aiding troubled youths who were suffering from various physical and mental illnesses. Both institutions was highly regarded, and some of the wealthier families of Chicago kept their afflicted children in the Sanitarium's secrecy and care. Dr. Pogue's theory was that mental illness was

a hereditary condition, and that it could be prevented (at least for the benefit of future generations) through civil learning and careful attention to the youthful developing mind. This misguided but well-meaning belief gave the "Educational" Sanitarium its name, and soon enough its prestigious reputation.

Some of the more dire afflictions attended to at the Sanitarium are mentioned as having included cerebral palsy, epilepsy, meningitis, sensory deprivation, trauma, and "dementia praecox" — now more commonly known as youthful-onset schizophrenia. The *Chicago Medical Directory* of 1905 lists the Sanitarium as benefitting "feeble-minded children,"[67] and Dr. Pogue herself was noted for specializing in "sterilization, segregation or custodial care of mental defectives."[68]

Gary also provided some more historical information (from local recollection, spiced with a bit of folklore) in his own personal account of the Sanitarium.[69] Gary explained that around 1880, a mill was built upon the White River which exits Lake Geneva. The Sanitariums arose thereafter, one in 1884-1885 and another in 1903. The earlier facility "kept a large … boat on [*the mill pond's*] shore so as to be able to recapture escaped patients swimming in it."[70] According to Gary's folkloric account, a little after 1910 the managing doctor of the Sanitarium went insane.[71] The tale is a bit of a lurid haunted house aside, of course.

I have yet to determine whether Mary Pogue was ever indeed stricken with mental illness during her career. However, this was almost certainly a sensationalized urban legend, because the 1916 *Program of the Annual Meeting* (for the American Association for the Study and Prevention of Infant Mortality) lists Dr. Pogue as serving on the Committee of Membership in that year.[72] Nevertheless, it makes for a good story and I have no doubt that the lurid tale was shared with absolute sincerity by the brave Lake Genevan boys who sought to explore the

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[67] Specifically, refer to pg. 231, second column. The *Directory* can (at the time of this writing) be accessed via archive.org and other online sources.

[68] *The Illinois Medical Journal: The Official Organ of the Illinois State Medical Society*, Volume 26 (July to December, 1914).

[69] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[70] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[71] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[72] This book, among several other sources relevant to the Sanitarium, can be accessed via books.google.com.

"haunted" Sanitarium on many a cold October night.

Gary had several adventures in the five abandoned stories of that ominous Sanitarium, as well as in the pitch-black subterranean steam and laundry tunnels underneath.

A beautiful tree-lined drive led up to the five-storied primary building, and one period mention in the *Chicago Medical Recorder* noted that the facilities were "situated on high ground, in a park of seventy-three acres of exceptional beauty, overlooking the lake and city of Lake Geneva."[73] But Gary insisted that the forested location was eerily desolate at night, with a full orange moon rising behind the ruins of its silhouetted towers![74]

Around the autumn of 1949, Gary and two friends entered the Sanitarium on a dare. The other boys wanted to catch pigeons for sport, while Gary — eager to prove that he was not afraid, although he was and very much so — tagged along. Inside, the beautiful building had once been replete with paneled walls, marble floors and gold and silver fixtures. Most of the more portable prizes had been vandalized and stolen long before Gary's time. The jaunt that night went off without a hitch, and Gary's craving for more venturesome sallies in the future grew omnipresent.[75]

Several of the building's features would later inspire Gary's rendition of traps, tricks and secret rooms in the Castle Greyhawk dungeons. The Sanitarium had a mechanical elevator for the transfer of patients from floor to floor. The nearby laundry facility was connected to the Sanitarium by an underground tunnel which was difficult to find. The central bell tower may have inspired the "Endless Stair," which spiraled from the heart of Gary's imaginary castle. The Sanitarium building was also said to have featured several sealed treatment rooms which could be flooded with smoke to knock a "rampaging inmate" unconscious.[76] Another makeshift locale the daring boys called "Big Mike's secret room" would later inspire Gary to fill more fantasy maps of his own devising with sliding walls and secret doors.

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[73] This fascinatingly evocative advertisement, along with many others, can be found in the back of Volume 31 of the *Recorder*.

[74] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[75] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[76] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

Clearly, it would have been very easy to imagine the ruin as being filled with "monsters" too. On one occasion, along on yet another dare-jaunt with some friends, Gary was prowling about the ruins in the middle of the night. Suddenly, there was a huge crash (a wild animal shifting the debris, perhaps?) and everyone but Gary leapt out of the shattered windows, leaping from some 8' to 12' off the ground. Fortunately, no one was badly hurt.

In another Sanitarium adventure, Gary and company finally discovered the blind and nightmarish "maze of tunnels" awaiting beneath the ruin.[77] And so, his first-ever "dungeon crawl" began. Using penlights to pierce the shadows, holding their collective breath and pushing spider-infested cobwebs aside, the boys explored much of the claustrophobic labyrinth which — as they soon learned — really did stretch beneath and beyond the main building's massive structure. Feeling reckless, Gary also climbed all the way up to the roof, where he almost got arrested by an exasperated patrolman (who was likely reduced to shouting threats at Gary from ground level, some sixty feet below). Another time, he nearly saw friends fall to their death; and once, when he was trying to impress a girl, it was almost Gary himself.

He never forgot the place, nor the delicious fear born of these dangerous adventures. Gary once wrote that the asylum ruins "were [*very*] influential in inspiring the D&D game … the place had the tunnels under it, and 'secret rooms' created by the boys who haunted [*explored*] the place. Such places were needed, for the police took a dim view of us being in the building."[78] "If anyone has any doubts," Gary wrote, "about where much of the inspiration for castle ruins and dungeon adventures came from after reading about the Oak Hill Sanitarium, I have failed in communicating."[79]

There were other clear influences for Castle Greyhawk as well. When Gary and his friend Tom Keogh (or "Keoghtom," as he is known to Greyhawk gamers) were teenagers, they created a secret imaginary "torture chamber" in Gary's basement.[80]

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[77] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[78] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted October 14th, 2005.

[79] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX, posted October 14th, 2005.

[80] Tom Keogh Sr. would be the inspiration for a magic item in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*, Keoghtom's Ointment. The father of Gary's friend was a freelance artist who worked for

They painted the door to the root cellar gray, so that it would blend in with the dimly-lit wall … a perfect "concealed door" in later *Dungeons & Dragons* terminology. This newly-concealed door was locked, and a second more secret entrance was created by removing a block from the farther concrete wall.[81] This setup was probably inspired by "Big Mike's" improvised secret room in the Sanitarium, which had in turn been devised to frighten friends as well as to offer emergency sanctuary from the annoyed policemen who were sent in to hunt the death-defying boys down (for their own good, of course).[82]

Tom and Gary also created rope manacles for their own "torture chamber," and fastened them to the wall. Soon thereafter however it seems that there was almost a nasty incident involving two other boys and a young girl who had been taken into the secret chamber. But fortunately, Gary caught the miscreants in time and threw them out. In doing so he learned not to hold underage parties when his parents were away.[83]

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Such risky youthful adventures had finally been reigned in by the time Gary discovered board-based wargames during the Christmas season of 1958, when he purchased the Avalon Hill game *Gettysburg* at the Chicago bookstore Kroch's & Brentano's. This game's price was $4.98, a princely sum when we consider that the c. 2017 equivalent would be over $40. The game was in fact so expensive that Gary and Don had to save their money before they could afford to jointly purchase it.[84] Gary played the game endlessly with his good friend Don Kaye. As Gary would later comment, "[*Gettysburg*] sufficed to make me a convert to board wargaming."[85]

Entranced by this new (and safer!) diversionary venture, Gary and Don kept

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Walt Disney, and a great lover of speculative fiction himself. Imagination certainly ran in the family.

[81] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 11 (Issue #11), August 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[82] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 12 (Issue #12), September 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[83] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 11 (Issue #11), August 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[84] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted January 31st, 2003.

[85] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted March 1st, 2005.

playing the Civil War game and exploring its full potential. *A lot.* In fact, the game would waken Gary's interest in serious game design, and the lessons he learned modifying the board and rules for various other battles would influence many design decisions made later in his career. It seems that by the spring of 1959, Gary had written four lined-paper pages of "house rule" additions for the *Gettysburg* game.[86] However, he noted that these rules were "tossed aside," because they added complexity to the game but not enjoyment. This first attempt at game design, although regarded as a failure, would inform his later rules decisions made in writing *Chainmail* and many other games.[87]

Gettysburg with its original release had made the Avalon Hill company an "overnight success."[88] As such, multiple new editions would be forthcoming throughout the 1960s. The game was re-released with hexagon ("hex") grid maps, which replaced the original square-grid maps, in 1961.[89] As Gary's wargaming hobby became an obsession, he tried his own hand at map and game design with some more serious *Gettysburg* scenario revisions. It should be well-noted that Gary created many *professional* games throughout his career before and after *Dungeons & Dragons*, including *Alexander the Great*, *Arsouf*, *Don't Give Up the Ship!* (an important game designed in collaboration with Dave Arneson), *Dragon Chess*, and *Lejendary Adventure*. Many of the earlier games are now relatively obscure, but in their day virtually all were highly regarded.

Becoming intrigued by the limitless potential of the hexagon game boards, Gary was apparently the first person to inquire with Avalon Hill concerning the availability of blank hex sheets for new map designs. He wanted five sheets for the creation of custom gaming maps, presumably so that he and Don would be able to play test the other battles of the Civil War. It is not known if these early maps still exist, but a lifelong precedent was certainly set by Gary's plans. The path was clear: "The desire to create games for a living struck me in the early 60s," he once wrote.[90] Gary would continue to create hundreds if not thousands of similar game maps over the next 40-plus years. Incidentally, the person he wrote to in 1963 to acquire these hex sheets was one Tom Shaw. Much later (in 1973), Gary would invite Mr. Shaw

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[86] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted March 7th, 2005.

[87] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted August 17th, 2003.

[88] *The General*, Volume 1, Number 1, pg. 1.

[89] Refer to the Boardgamegeek page for *Gettysburg*.

[90] Random Events, the TSR Newsletter, June 1983, pg. 1.

to consider his own game *Dungeons & Dragons* for publication by the Avalon Hill company. Shaw's lack of a concrete answer may have convinced Gary that he needed to found his own game design company, so that he could fulfill his dreams.

Following *Gettysburg*, Gary discovered H. G. Wells' *Little Wars* and *Fletcher Pratt's Naval War Game* in the 1960s. His copy of *Little Wars* was loaned to him by a friend,[91] and in 1976 he would devise a magazine of the same name devoted to the subject of historical miniatures gaming.



Mr. Wells, measure in hand, prepares to give the forces of his miscalculating gentleman friends a belligerent pounding.

Also in the 1960s (perhaps in the second half of 1968), Gary became involved with a fascinating and groundbreaking play-by-mail (PBM) science fiction wargame, entitled *War of the Empires*. The original game was invented by Tullio Proni, and it involved (as Gary defined it) "a universe-wide power struggle between two socially hostile groups. On the one hand was the Greatest Empire, a

[91] Refer to the Foreword to H. G. Wells's *Little Wars*, the 2004 Skirmisher Publishing LLC edition, written by Gary Gygax.

monarchy/aristocracy with dreams of binding every habitable planet to the throne. Opposed to this colonialist empire was the League of All Worlds, basically a confederation of all planets, systems, and multi-system governmental forms wishing to resist the expansion of 'The Empire.'"[92]

Mr. Proni served as the "Master Computer," parsing the many move requests received from the players by mail, and then dictating the outcome of the many disparate results. The game was played "in the blind," meaning that players were at the mercy of calculated guesswork due to limited reconnaissance and the PBM-engendered "fog of war." Moves and their residual aftermath were all reported by Proni in a short-lived fanzine entitled "The War Report," beginning in February of 1967.[93]

The game was a deliberate exercise in confusion. Conflicting attempts at colonization upon the most desirable and resource-rich planets would inevitably lead to conflict, and the pulses of simultaneous movement — combined with haphazard reconnaissance in the form of reports from inferior scout ships — would quickly devolve into entertaining chaos. The best players, it seems likely, would be the ones who could patiently wait for two or more rivals to nearly wipe each other out over a particularly desirable world. A savvy lurker fleet's crews could then swoop in as "saviors" and claim the ill-won prize. The game would probably also have encouraged a certain degree of metagame communication between players (in terms of treaty declarations, or proposed trade agreements, or even pronouncements of intended territory), if the community had ever grown sufficiently to support such derivative communiqués.

But despite the game's many promising innovations, the time-consuming referee role was dropped by Mr. Proni for unknown reasons during the spring of 1967. The dozens of players were left in the hopeless dark of "the void" as soon as the decisive proclamations from the omniscient Master Computer lapsed into static and silence.

A while later, Gary became interested in the game's mysterious legacy. He tried for many weeks (in early 1969) to get a written response from Mr. Proni, to determine if the interstellar campaign would ever continue; but there was no answer forthcoming at all. Around the spring of 1969, Gary "took the bull by the proverbial horns and went to work on the project," which seems to indicate that

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[92] *The Dragon*, Volume 1, Number 3 (Issue #3), October 1976. "Does Anyone Remember? War of the Empires?" pg. 4.

[93] *The Dragon*, Volume 1, Number 3 (Issue #3), October 1976. "Does Anyone Remember? War of the Empires?" pg. 4.

he started running *War of the Empires* as the Master Computer himself, with or without Mr. Proni's regards.[94]

Gary expanded the game "into a larger and more complex system" and then encouraged people to send in moves via mail once again. This time, mail was to be directed to Lake Geneva.[95]

He even published a successor fanzine, "The New War Reports," in April and May of '69 so that the game might take hold and potentially spread afar by way of positive word of mouth or gaming fanzines.[96]

A small ad appeared in *The General* magazine as well: "If you're interested in space warfare," it read, "certain issue [*heirs*] of *The Galaxian* [*a zine*] have printed rules to a game designed by Tullio Proni pitting members of 'The Greatest Empire' and 'League of All Worlds' against each other in one tremendous holocaust. To find out how you can join either of these two factions, contact Gary Gygax, 330 Center Street, Lake Geneva, Wisconsin 53147. A form will be sent that will be the basis for your 'Potential Rating' as determined by the 'Master Computer.'"[97]

A third issue of "The New War Reports" appeared in early September, when the campaign had blossomed to included forces controlled by over 60 players … the most ever in the game's existence! Gary's eager successor in the project, Bill McDuffie, kept this new fanzine going for another year. But the game again fizzled out, likely due to the colossal amount of time-consuming calculations and minutiae which required constant tracking. Without such work on the part of the DM-like Master Computer, it would be impossible for anyone to keep the starfarers' battles ongoing, accurate, timely and fair.

Mr. McDuffie may have succumbed to fatigue as well. Another hardworking and creative gentleman named Alan Lucien (later of *Tomb of Horrors* fame, as we shall see) tried to summon the game's third phoenix-like incarnation in late 1971, but alas, all that remained were ashes. The players were weary of the on-again, off-again nature of turn parsing and ever-sporadic battle reports. "By then," Gary

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[94] *The Dragon*, Volume 1, Number 3 (Issue #3), October 1976. "Does Anyone Remember? War of the Empires?" pg. 4.

[95] Online interview: The RPGnet interview with Gary Gygax, part 2 of 3. Conducted by Scott Lynch, May 17th, 2001.

[96] *The Dragon*, Volume 1, Number 3 (Issue #3), October 1976. "Does Anyone Remember? War of the Empires?" pg. 5.

[97] Please refer to the May-June 1969 issue of *The General*, pg. 15.

reported, "participants had undoubtedly lost both interest and faith."[98]

Nevertheless, in daring this endeavor Gary had learned a lot not only about speculative fiction game design, but also about campaign logistics, referee-driven mass combat, and creative tactics to assist in handling collaborative parties comprised of many allied players. These lessons, supplementing his numerous prior experiences in wargame design, would serve him well in future years when he would be running dozens of eager players through his own campaign … a speculative fiction setting which would soon become known as the World of Greyhawk.

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Many other games appealed to Gary as well, but perhaps the most significant game which had a profound influence on the future creation of *Dungeons & Dragons* was a medieval battle scenario created by a hobby shop owner named Henry Bodenstedt, entitled *The Siege of Bodenburg*. This game was published as a serialization in issues of *Strategy & Tactics* (S&T) magazine, beginning in July of 1967 and completed by that December.

The Siege of Bodenburg was meant to be played with toy medieval soldiers. Henry, as designer, had a vested interest in encouraging his readers to buy the model Elastolin plastic castle and soldier figures required to play his game. And why, precisely? Because Henry could provide the full needed sets to interested buyers! He worked hard to import the figures from Germany and to make them all available to North American customers.

The *Bodenburg* game itself features archers, knights, arquebusiers (gunners) and catapults. Interestingly, each unit has a Combat Value, indicating how many "hits" that unit can take before being killed — an early example of the concept of hit points.

[98] *The Dragon*, Volume 1, Number 3 (Issue #3), October 1976. "Does Anyone Remember? War of the Empires?" pg. 5.



Siege calamitous, the walls are breached!

The huge castle required to play *Bodenburg* was part of the Hausser Elastolin *Forten en Kastelen* series. To this day, the castle is still an impressive piece of work. The "miniature" is about 2' x 2', featuring the castle's entire bulk embedded high upon a craggy hill. A drawbridge crosses over a partially-encircling moat, leading into a gatehouse barbican and thereon into a small rising courtyard. A great tower and a few colorfully-roofed fortifications complete the elaborate piece. This is, once again, a specter of the future silhouette of Castle Greyhawk.

The *Bodenburg* scenario surrounding this castle, as outlined in the S&T articles, involves the besieged forces of one Count von Boden, waiting for winter supplies. The Count's forces, weakening with hunger, are suddenly assaulted by a horde of Turks and Huns. In the skirmish and siege game which follows, each figure represents a single man. In other early wargames, a single unit would often

represent 20, 50, or even 100 men or more, which tended to make the determination of casualties a rather abstract affair. *The Siege of Bodenburg*, however, employed a 1:1 representation (one figure representing a single fighting man). This intimate scale — especially when coupled with the detailed Hausser soldier figures — creates a tense air of personal investment and loss as each casualty takes place. Each imaginary soldier, however anonymous at the beginning of the game, is soon given his own dire tale to tell. Every wound would be an event, an almost cinematic occurrence. This unusual game mechanic, while now commonplace, would have a profound effect on Gary Gygax (and a fellow medieval wargamer, Jeff Perren) some years later on, influencing profound choices in game design.

Outside of this key innovation of scale, a full game of *The Siege of Bodenburg* can be a rather dragging and dull affair. The rules are effective and detailed, yet rather blasé (admittedly, from my own biased and 21st-century perspective). There are some intriguing asides hidden away beneath the doldrums, however. Interesting details include a sally gate, from which castle defenders can rush out to attack the besiegers at their peril; the morale and scatter rules, simulating wounded men in panic; and the rather grisly option of allowing starving knights to sacrifice their horses to add to the castle's rations. Gary read these rules with interest, and later (in the summer of 1968, as we shall see), he got to play the game with Elastolin miniature figures for the first time.

In later years, Gary would pay respectful tribute to *The Siege of Bodenburg* by modeling the ruined Moathouse in his own work (Dungeon Module T1, *The Village of Hommlet*, 1979) directly upon Castle Bodenburg's scenario and floor plan. The *Forten en Kastelen* model is almost exactly represented by the module's map of the Moathouse Ruin, and the history of Greyhawk itself pays homage to the battle. For in T1, we can read:

"Only after the battle which destroyed the main armies of the Temple of Elemental Evil had ended was attention turned to this place [*the Moathouse itself, situated to the east of Hommlet*]. … A detachment of horse and foot with a small siege train came to the marshlands to lay the castle low. The common folk for miles came to help, and the Moathouse was surrounded, cut off, and battered into extinction."[99]

This game would later inspire Jeff Perren to make his own medieval miniatures rules, and a passing mention of soldiers running through "underground passages" to reinforce parts of the castle may have been the kernel which would later get

[99] *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, Dungeon Module T1, *The Village of Hommlet*, by Gary Gygax. TSR, 1979.

Dave Arneson's and David Megarry's minds running about the potential for medieval dungeon adventures.



We're going to need a bigger castle.

Many other games would follow after *Bodenburg*, several of Gary's own devising. His interest in creating and play testing rules for medieval miniatures and siege warfare — already a strong inclination — would be greatly intensified by his next wargaming experiences during a gaming convention of his own creation, the now-legendary Gen(eva) Con(vention). Gary's founding of Gen Con would involve not only a business venture; it became his personal playground.

To the good man's credit, he would always be happy to share that playground with anyone else who shared his sense of fun, and his thirst for untold adventures.

CHAPTER 2
AND SO, COMPANIONS GATHER
(1967 – 1970)

FROM THIS point forward, it would be well to note that there are many wargaming-specific activities and organizations, not directly related to *Dungeons & Dragons*, which Gary was involved in at this time. As a result of these social connections, Gary had a deep awareness of the wants and game preferences of his many wargaming colleagues. He knew that his love of wargaming was shared by many, but most of his fellow gamers were most interested in strategic board games (such as chess, Shogi and *Diplomacy*), or historical military simulations (particularly those involving Napoleonic warfare and World War II). The eccentric people who were interested in miniature figures of the *medieval* period were still few and far between.

Nevertheless — even in the common genres — the historical wargaming community was being challenged by simple realities of distance between individual wargame aficionados. When two or more players of the same game managed to find one another (either locally, or through magazines and letters), they would often find that their games were enhanced by a widening of play circles. The more the merrier, quite simply. There never seemed to be enough players for reliable and frequent play. Recognizing these stubbornly omnipresent barriers of geography and obscurity which were stifling their fun, many wargaming groups reached out to one another to form devoted societies of mutual interest. Other gamers who were simply too far apart experimented (often successfully) with play-by-mail scenarios or solitaire variants. Not bad for legions of gamers dwelling in a lonesome world before our ubiquitous Internet!

Despite these innovations, the Holy Grail for gamers seeking peers, then as now, was a gaming convention. Such get-togethers were still rare in the 1960s, due to logistics, money, risk, and the unpredictable numbers of attendees. A poorly-attended convention, held in the wrong venue, the wrong city, or even the wrong weather, could spell disaster for a tiny hobby society dependent upon the members' volunteerism and donations. I am greatly simplifying the history of wargaming in this regard, but from Gary's perspective the trouble was very clear: there were not enough players for *medieval miniature* wargamers in specific, and not nearly enough gaming conventions for *all* wargamers in general. Gary was very interested in running his own convention, but he was wisely trepidacious about the entire

endeavor.[100]

Eventually, his interest in a Wisconsin gaming con's potential won out over his caution. In the summer of 1967 (very likely in August, about a month after the publication of the first serial section of *The Siege of Bodenburg*), Gary arranged an experimental weekend get-together at his house by inviting his friends and fellow gamers. He invited about twenty people, and all of them were interested and leapt at the opportunity.[101] To the disorganized gamers of Lake Geneva, Gary's call was very simple: "Come play." And play they did.

Gary prepared a map of the city of Stalingrad (converting his dining table, for the delight of the players, into a World War II-inspired urban wasteland), while Fletcher Pratt's famous *Naval War Game* was played in the living room. Gary particularly enjoyed this latter game; it did not feature toy soldiers, but it did involve miniature 1/1200 scale warships crafted by Superior Miniatures.[102] Card tables, for more gaming, were set up on the front porch as well.

This event at Gary's house, while chaotic, was a complete success. He variably recalled that between twelve and twenty people showed up to enjoy the festivities.[103] As he wryly commented much later, "Everybody but my then-wife loved it."[104] And as Scott Duncan recalls hearing from Gary later on: "[*Gen Con Zero was held*] … much to his wife's merry chagrin probably, because I think there were like 20 people that crashed at their house, and it wasn't a very big house, and he already had 4 or 5 kids by then so there were like 7 people in this house in, I think, 3 bedrooms. So there were people all over the floor in his living room, as I

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[100] In the informed opinion of IFW member Scott Duncan, Gary was probably inspired to establish and run Gen Con Zero because he had wanted to go to a July 1967 wargaming convention in Malvern, Pennsylvania, and had been unable to go. That in turn inspired him to run a similar event at his house.

[101] See for example the memory of participant Bill Hoyer, as noted at the Collector's Trove web page summarizing the history behind his gaming auctions.

[102] For more details, please refer to *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007. See particularly pg. 10.

[103] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 13 (Issue #13), pg. 4. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax. See also *RPGA News* (aka *Polyhedron*), Volume 1, Number 1 (Issue #1), Summer 1981, pp. 6-7. See also *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 9.

[104] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 13 (Issue #13). "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

recall him telling me."[105]

The games probably began on Saturday and went well into the weekend,[106] because Gary once noted that half of the invited players "spent the night there in their sleeping bags."[107] Word of mouth spread in the months to come, and Gary was provided with a vital proof of concept: wargamers near and far would indeed gather in considerable numbers in Lake Geneva, eager to meet, socialize and play their favorite games. Fewer than two dozen people came over to Gary's house for that very first experimental "con," but they *did* come. And that was the important thing. And what if (Gary later wondered) the only limitation to having twice, or even three times as many wargamers show up to play, was simply the question of meeting space?

This self-inquiry demanded exploration. And so, with the backing of his gaming organization (the International Federation of Wargaming, or IFW) and several friends, Gary decided that he would plan his own big gaming convention for the following summer of 1968. This time, however, the games would not be held at Gary's house. This would be a real convention, perhaps even an *event* which might receive some national attention.

The *Lake Geneva Wargames Convention*, incarnation number one, came into being. To this day and by another name, it is one of the most famous gaming cons in the world.

Gen Con, thus, was well and truly born.

For some attendees of Gen Con Zero, Gen Con I began in much the same manner. As Gary's wife Mary Jo once recalled, "All the attendees [*that year, who*] slept on our living room floor — those that didn't game all night in our house — [*woke*] up our baby, Cindy, several times."[108]

Beyond this veteran group crashing over at Gary's, one of the neophyte attendees of this "Gen Con I" — a name the convention only received in retrospect — was the game designer and future TSR employee named Mike Carr, who today shares the honorable distinction of being the only person in the world who has

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[105] Refer to Best 50 Years in Gaming: The Events of the Gen Con Gaming Convention web page, featuring an interview with Scott Duncan.

[106] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 13 (Issue #13). "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[107] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 13 (Issue #13). "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[108] This information comes from a Facebook post made on March 25th, 2015.

attended every single Gen Con over the last 40-plus years. Carr had seen an ad for the con in the IFW magazine, and had talked to Gary by letter as well, and so he convinced his family to take a brief vacation in Lake Geneva so that he could attend.[109]

As Mike once explained in an interview, "My original [*first time*] attending the [*Gen Con*] convention was on a family vacation. I was in high school, and I said to my parents, 'You know, they're having this gaming thing in Lake Geneva. It's only 300 miles from the Twin Cities. Can we maybe go down there? I'd like to go to this thing, it's on a Saturday. And by the way, Lake Geneva's got a great setting with boat cruises! … Fortunately, bless their hearts, my parents agreed and … off we went."[110]

Attending the event was great fun. Running it, however, simply involved an extraordinary amount of work. Gary in turn once wrote, rather formally in recollection, that he ran the event "on behalf of the International Federation of Wargaming, of which I was an officer."[111]

For this first and now-legendary convention hall gathering, he managed to rent out the Horticultural Hall, a beautiful site very close to his home. The Hall had been built by the esteemed architectural firm Spencer & Powers for the Lake Geneva Horticultural Society in 1911, for social events in which gardeners would showcase their talents. Gygax and co. rented the 50'-long Hall for one day, August 24th, for the princely sum of $50 — as much as he and the IFW could afford at the time.[112] (Incidentally, in 2014 the same space was running for about $825-$1,700 for one weekend day, depending on the wedding season!)

At the time, Gary was working as a supervising underwriter and risk assessor for the Fireman Fund's America Insurance Company of Chicago, and this was *not* a small measure of his personal funds. He therefore chose to plan the convention for

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[109] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 11.

[110] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 1:03:25. See also genconwisconsin.com, Mike Carr interview section.

[111] *Dragon* magazine, issue #65, pg. 4.

[112] IFW member Scott Duncan provides some more details on precisely where the money came from: "I had managed to convince a bunch of IFW people to cough up another 5 bucks to kind of keep the club [*IFW*] going. I sent Gary money, $35, and Gary came up with 15 and it cost $50 to rent the Horticultural Hall. That's where the money came from to make the first Gen Con happen. Partly from IFW and then Gary coughed up about 15 bucks for it."

that single day, and Saturday, August 24th, seemed the most likely to attract a large crowd. Hoping to get at least fifty attendees, he set the entrance fee at one dollar. Perhaps, he hoped, he might come close to breaking even. No refreshments were provided, simply because there were not enough people to do the work.[113] He set up the tables and chairs that Friday night (apparently with the assistance of then-IFW President, the adroit Lenard "Len" Lakofka), went to bed, and hoped for the best.

Interested gamers started showing up on the premises later that Friday night. Due to being a well-loved resort town frequented by tourists, summer prices for food and lodging in Lake Geneva were (then as now) quite high. People who could not afford to stay in a hotel camped nearby, while waiting for the games to begin on Saturday morning.

That following fateful day, people flooded into the cramped Horticultural Hall to play their miniatures games of choice. There were dozens of attendees, ranging from hardcore wargamers to bored curiosity seekers. The event "attracted about 100 people," Gary would later fondly remember, "only half of whom were gamers."[114]

Fletcher Pratt's game was again popular, as were games for Napoleonics and the battles of World War I. Mike Carr's classic game *Fight for the Skies*, also known now as *Dawn Patrol*, featured exciting dogfights with Fokkers and Sopwith Camel biplanes.[115] Observer and journalist Ray Py, writing for the *Beloit Daily News*, regarded the attendees as "a group of well-mannered, well-dressed and well-behaved intellects who find the reenactment of all the world's battles [*a*] fascinating pastime."[116]

This is also when and where Gary taught Len Lakofka how to play everyone's favorite proto-RPG strategy game, *Diplomacy*. Len was deeply impressed, and would buy his own game set in Chicago that Christmas season. He would also

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[113] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 11.

[114] *Dragon* magazine, issue #65, pg. 4.

[115] Gary and Don Kay had played *Fight in the Skies* earlier that year, and enjoyed it. Gary and Mike corresponded over FitS rules questions, and Gary invited Mike to come down to the summer con: "We corresponded," Mike remembered, "and he encouraged me to come to Gen Con for the first time when it was conceived for Lake Geneva in 1968, which I did."

[116] As rediscovered by Jon Peterson as reported in his *Playing at the World* blog post for August 11th, 2014.

found the long-running *Diplomacy* fanzine *Liaisons Dangereuses* ("Dangerous Liaisons") to record his play group's machinations.[117] Gary would later wryly admit that he was indeed "at least partially responsible for foisting Len Lakofka upon an unsuspecting wargame hobby some years back."[118] Len would return the favor in later decades, appearing many times in the pages of *Dragon* magazine as the masterful mage-and-sage "Leomund," and his Lendore Isles campaign would provide material for several dungeon modules and many gods of Greyhawk.

People were having fun, making lasting friendships … and stranger things were occurring along the sidelines. One small group who labeled themselves "The Neo-Numenorians" was even devoted to Tolkien gaming. But the most entrancing game of all during that first con would be none other than *The Siege of Bodenburg*.

Saturday was a grand success, and the con broke even from a monetary perspective. Many of the gamers scattered, bearing priceless positive word of mouth away to their homes, families and friends. Most of these gamers were perfectly content with the way the day had gone. Gary, however — either by savvy design or simple accident — had picked the perfect day to rent the Horticultural Hall. He was responsible for his own clean up, and would likely be charged extra if he did not do a good job. So he told many of the gamers to come back on Sunday for some "cleaning" (by which he *really* meant, more surreptitious fun). One intrepid volunteer was stationed at the front door with a broom, looking workmanlike. Everyone else, with admission for the unofficial bonus day completely waived, snuck inside to play some more games. Two glorious spans of gaming for the price of one!

One particularly devout wargamer by the name of Jerry White had driven all the way from Oregon to show off his favorite game to this Wisconsin gathering. *The Siege of Bodenburg* was set up, and Gary had a chance to see the skirmish rules in actual play with Haussers. He was spellbound by the model castle and Jerry's small collection of the expensive Elastolin figures. "I became enamored with them," he would fondly recall.[119]

Seeing the one-to-one scale skirmishes enacted in miniature, with each figure representing a single man fighting for his life — hacking with a broad sword, firing arrows over the battlements, suffering grievous wounds and fighting on — the light

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[117] *Liaisons Dangereuses* #44, May 18th, 1973: "A Short History of *Liasons Dangereuses*."

[118] *Liaisons Dangereuses* #70, May 18th, 1976: "Dunned for a Dragon Article"

[119] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, Volume 4, Number 13 (Issue #13). "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX, posted May 23rd, 2005.

bulb went off in Gary's head. The imagined game had been quite something when he was *reading* the rules, but the actual game seen firsthand was simply amazing. This, to his mind, represented the future of wargames.

Back home exhausted after his experience with "bonus Sunday," Gary had time to reflect on the event and the many games that he had seen. *The Siege of Bodenburg*, especially, with its painted miniatures and simulated melees, very likely made his early *Gettysburg* games seem like a poor imitation of the real thing. Therefore, he began seeking the ever-elusive Elastolin miniatures which he had gotten to touch and play with in Jerry's game. He even ran a few ads seeking to purchase such figures (later in 1968), and it seems that he would *still* be seeking a Hausser collector by the spring of 1969.

While he was waiting to purchase such a collection, Gary was busy expanding his wargaming hobby in other ways. During the autumn of 1968 (or, according to some sources, in 1969), Gary and Don Kaye pooled together their meager moneys to buy some raw materials: 6' x 10' plywood sheets, nails, green paint, wood glue, and bulky bags of sand. They dragged this sundry heap of goods down into Gary's basement, and (much to the chagrin of Gary's beleaguered wife, Mary) built a huge sand table for their own upcoming wargames. Behold: Gen Con Eternal, Basement Edition. All wargames, all the time!

Some assembly required.

The table was a hardcore carpentry project, but Don and Gary managed to see this task through to the end. When it was done, the boxed-in piles of sand could be sculpted to form vague terrain, and an extra plywood sheet served as a tabletop "cover" so that the sand surface could be hidden whenever a more staid and level surface was required.

When the table was fully tested (and his good wife either dodged or appeased), Gary and Don invited a mutual acquaintance by the name of Jeff Perren up from Rockford, Illinois. Jeff was not only a medieval wargamer and an all-around good guy; he possessed an epic Elastolin figure army. Mr. Perren was kind enough to drive the 50 miles up to Lake Geneva, bringing his precious figures and a few pages of custom (*Siege of Bodenburg*- and Tony Bath-inspired) medieval wargaming rules in tow. Rob Kuntz was there, and has said that Perren's rules comprised merely "four mimeographed pages that had blank backs."[120] These meager yet seminal notes would soon by many steps become the core of Gary's and Jeff's later collaborative medieval game, *Chainmail*, and so they are the grandfatherly seeds to

[120] Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 13:10.

Dungeons & Dragons as well.



Chevaliers on the move. Murderous fun is serious business.

The medieval games played down on Gary's and Don's sand table — which had formerly been used for *Tractics*-style armor gaming[121] — were intense and amusing, and the skirmish rules got better with every session as various tactics and formations were tried. Playing with Perren showed Gary and Don that "1 figure:1 fighting man" rules were not only engaging, they were highly malleable. The removal of all large-scale military unit preconceptions, in favor of knightly figures, did not just eliminate the visually uninspiring cardboard counters. It removed a layer of abstraction from the action of the game. These Perren and Gygax "toy soldier" games might soon be frowned upon by hardcore simulationists, but they would appeal to the more imaginative and creative players of all ages.

The timing of these basement games was opportune, because Gary would experience another fateful meeting toward the end of 1968. He made the friendly acquaintance of a troubled young man living in his neighborhood, a boy named Robert J. Kuntz. It is likely that Gary saw some of himself in Rob's unorthodox and imaginative nature, and early on he seems to have realized that he had discovered a kindred soul. Rob shared some interesting details concerning his past (and Gary's), which I have taken the liberty of summarizing here.

Rob, who would soon prove to be an intelligent and creative free spirit and Gary's good friend, was only thirteen at the time. He lived just three blocks away from the Gygax family home.[122]

His father had died in a car accident when he was only two years old, and Rob had no memories of the man. His hard-pressed mother experienced many hardships that winter (1968-1969), and so Rob was being cared for (or at least watched out for) by his neighbors.[123]

Rob's interest in a game advertisement, found in a magazine, led him to the local Shultz Brothers' Five and Ten Cent Store, where a few Avalon Hill board games were being sold. The store's assistant manager, Larry Zirk, let Rob know that these games could be played over at Mister Gygax's house.[124] His interest raised, Rob

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[121] Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 13:10.

[122] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org, "Q&A with Rob Kuntz." Posted August 19th, 2015.

[123] Some of the details of this meeting are derived from the thought-provoking Rob Kuntz interview featured on the Hill Cantons blog, "No Borders: A Conversation with Rob Kuntz" (August 15th, 2011).

[124] "My Life in Wargaming," by Rob Kuntz, as featured at the diffworlds.com website. November 2004.

introduced himself to Gary a week later and accepted an invitation to play some games.[125] As Rob once fondly remembered in an interview: "I was kind of taken in by the family. I was thirteen years old … I went through all the pains and pleasures of the family. Gary took me under his wing … and kind of pushed me to read things and to experience things."[126]

This was the beginning of a friendship that would endure for forty years, until Gary passed away in 2008. Rob, as we shall see, would prove to be instrumental in the play testing and refinement of both *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*.

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Months passed, many more games were played, and "the basement" quickly became known as Lake Geneva gamer central. The time flew by and soon, it was time for Gary to start planning for Gen Con II. Everyone was expecting it, although Gary himself was not so enthusiastic as of yet. After all, somebody had to take the financial risk and do all of the work!

The work was not trivial, either. When Gary had first been setting up the Horticultural Hall in preparation for Gen Con I, and then especially in that event's aftermath, he had vowed he would never run a gaming convention again. But much like having children (or a beloved hobby requiring any serious toil), in time the tiring memories become nostalgic, while the negative realities fade away. It *is* worth it, after all. It is good to have something difficult to enjoy.

By the early summer of 1969, Gen Con II seemed like a great idea. And besides, many of the gamers who attended Gen Con I had told their friends just how amazing it was to meet fellow enthusiasts arriving from scores, hundreds, or even over a thousand miles away. How could there *not* be another Gen Con? The wargamers *needed* it, and they loved it. A tradition had been born.

Having witnessed the successes and failures of that first gaming convention held over a sweltering summer weekend, Gary and his companions knew exactly which improvements were required for the second incarnation. As a result, Gen Con II (August 23rd-24th, 1969) featured more goodies in the form of hot dogs and Coca Cola, cheerfully vended out by Gary's daughters. Elise would remember, "I was the original hot dog and soda girl. When I started, I could barely see over the

[125] "My Life in Wargaming," by Rob Kuntz, as featured at the diffworlds.com website. November 2004.

[126] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip, 'Rob Kuntz Conversations' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The comment appears at approximately 4:00.

counter."[127] Despite all of the quizzical "big people gaming" going on, the girls had an avid personal interest in these strange festivities, because they got to keep all of the dimes and quarters they received as pay. Score!

Returning attendee Mike Carr would later note that the non-stop volunteerism exhibited at Gen Con II was really a major aspect of the event's developing spirit … something that would keep it going for many years to come. "It was really the volunteers," he noted. "Not just the people that offered to run game events, which are extremely important — because that's what really makes the convention great, is offering a variety of activities. … But also, the people behind the scenes, who are manning the door and doing the preregistration and just kind of all of the … back of the house sort of stuff that makes these things a success."[128]

Rob Kuntz was there as well, ready and eager to enjoy his first-ever gaming con.[129] There were far more friends this time around, and fewer strangers. Gen Con II also appears to have been the first time that Gary Gygax and Minnesota wargamer David Lance Arneson met face to face. Dave was happy to have a gaming con to go to, as opportunities to find new potential wargame club members in Minnesota were somewhat lacking at that time. Therefore, Dave had journeyed down to Lake Geneva and had brought several of his friends along, driving them all the way from the Twin Cities, some six hours and 330 miles away.

When Dave and Gary met (Gary was enticed by Dave's collection of miniature sailing ships),[130] they realized that they shared many interests and similar ideas about how rigid rules systems might be further (and sometimes wildly) improved with a little creative thinking. These two men would rarely see eye to eye on the exact tweaks they believed needed to be made to any game, but all in all they got along famously … for a time.

A designer-to-designer rapport developed between the two men which would result in a naval combat game called *Don't Give Up the Ship!*, and later would find them working as co-authors on the material which eventually became *Dungeons & Dragons*. This Gen Con meeting would also serve to create stronger ties between the small yet robust wargaming societies which were active at that time both in Lake Geneva, and in the Twin Cities.

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[127] http://www.genconwisconsin.com/elisegygax.html, Elise Gygax interview section.

[128] See Best 50 Years in Gaming: The Events of the Gen Con Gaming Convention web page, interview with Mike Carr.

[129] Many of these details come from *40 Years of Gen Con*, as well as *The Crusader Journal* #13 and other sources.

[130] *Don't Give Up the Ship!: Rules for the Great Age of Sail*. TSR Rules, Foreword.

Events included an auction, Napoleonic wargaming, the *Fight in the Skies* tournament, *Diplomacy*, and World War II scenarios (particularly the siege of Stalingrad). Worthy persons such as the returning Mike Carr (running *Fight in the Skies*, and soon to help Gygax and Arneson with edits to their naval rules), Bill Hoyer, Washington Perry, David Wesely (originator of the influential "Braunstein" wargame and role-playing scenarios), and many other gamers would play and converse at Gen Con II as well. Mr. Perry played in an intriguing cerebral and social role-playing game (of sorts) called *Inter-Nation Simulation*, which required diplomacy, eloquence, quick thinking and well-reasoned appeals to game referees.

In all, an incredible number of paid attendances were counted for the con … nearly 200 in all! Even better, the event was held over a span of two days (officially, this time). Gen Con II was a complete success, and the demands for a regular annual event were all but inevitable. In the future, Gary would certainly have his work cut out for him.

Following Gen Con II, Gary's gaming continued throughout the fall and winter of 1969. The "sand table play group" grew, and ever more creative scenarios were improvised. Eventually, perhaps at the end of 1969 (and certainly before April of the following year), Gary — along with Rob Kuntz and the rest of the Lake Geneva regulars — finally managed a long-awaited coup, procuring a collection of the prized Hausser Elastolin figures. According to Gary,[131] these treasures were from the already-appreciated collection of Jeff Perren. (Mr. Perren once noted, by the way, that he didn't ever play *Chainmail* after it was published, because Gary had all of his figures.)[132] Gary would later supplement this rare Hausser collection by buying directly from Henry Bodenstedt.

Perren was solely interested in historical wargames, but having Perren's figures without his physical presence would now give Gary an opportunity to push his creative gaming a little farther. Crucially, this is the moment at which Gary says he first got the idea to begin experimenting with fantasy games: "[*The Elastolin figures*] were so heroic looking that it seemed a good idea to play some games which would reflect the action of the great Swords & Sorcery yarns."[133]

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[131] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax. See also Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part V, posted May 31st, 2006.

[132] Youtube video, "Jeff Perren Interview Gary Con VIII 2016." The quote appears at the beginning of the video.

[133] *The Dragon*, issue #7, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

As noted earlier, Jeff Perren had written a few pages of medieval miniatures rules to go along with the figures. Gary had enjoyed the rules, but he now felt that he could expand upon them in an unexpected way. He asked Jeff for permission to build upon these proven medieval rules, and Jeff kindly acquiesced. (As Jeff was one of the strongest proponents of the historical simulation movement, he would have had little interest in further developing these rules in Gary's direction of Conan- and Elric-inspired Swords & Sorcery.) "I loved those figurines, enjoyed those rules," Gary once said, "and so I expanded them into around 16 pages."[134]

Great things were about to happen.



Domine dirige nos. Lord(s) of the C&CS, in play direct us.

That March, Rob Kuntz, Gary and others founded a medieval gaming interest

[134] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted March 13th, 2006.

group, which would become known as the the Castle & Crusade Society (C&CS). This was a sub-group of the wargaming organization they were already members of, the International Federation of Wargaming (IFW). On February 27th, 1970, Gary had written a letter announcing the Lake Geneva gaming group's intention to create this specialized gaming group. He wrote, "Rob Kuntz is currently working on the formation of a society for medieval wargames. It would be in cooperation with our local group … no formal name has yet been chosen for the society. A short article requesting response from interested parties has been sent to Mike Carr for inclusion with his material."[135]

The C&CS's new fanzine was entitled the *Domesday Book*, inspired by William the Conqueror's land survey of the same name, which had recorded the lands and livestock owned by the citizens of 11th-century England. The original *Domesday Book* was a king's tome, basically, detailing all that was worth fighting for, and who possessed it. It was a good name for a fanzine revolving around the play of medieval struggles for dominance. This C&CS gaming periodical would soon become the virtual gathering place for medieval wargamers from near and far, ready to war with one another for domination.

The single-sheeted *Domesday* issue #1 was produced in crude and hasty mimeograph by Gary, using "the Xerox at his job in Chicago."[136]

One of the most entertaining aspects of the C&CS group was that each member was afforded a noble title, demonstrating the relative prominence of that person within the Society. People who helped out (such as with helping to publish the *Domesday Book* itself, or at least offering insightful articles) increased in rank, while those who were less active fell into obscurity.

The effect of this clever system of friendly competition was to encourage all of the members to vie creatively with one another in the name of chest-thumping fun, with the hope of deposing the "Great King" (Rob Kuntz) in the name of personal glory.[137]

Fans of the published *World of Greyhawk* setting might be interested to know

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[135] Refer to the Youtube clip "A History of D&D in Twelve Treasures," posted by Jon Peterson. The commentary appears at approximately 2:25.

[136] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Q&A with Rob Kuntz." Posted August 13th, 2015.

[137] Rob would note that as a teenager during the *Domesday Book*'s run, he was actually overthrown as Great King of the C&CS by a real-world circumstance: "I was deposed," he wrote, "due to my mother's pressure on Gary for me skipping too many high school classes."

that the hereditary Great King (later known as the Overking), ruling over the many nobles in the Great Kingdom which dominates the eastern Flanaess, is indeed a distant echo of this original hierarchy within the Castle & Crusade Society. The eventual ranks of the C&CS owe much to medieval peerage, but in their relative strengths and values we can also see the first primitive semblance of an experience level title system (an idea only partially developed for *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1974, which would later become a classic hallmark of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* system as presented in Gary's *Players Handbook* of 1978).

These actual ranks, rewarding a little study, offer us some interesting curiosities. When we take the hindsight-inspired liberty of hypothetically inverting this "king of the mountain" peerage list into something more like a "noble" character class experience progression table, we end up with a new derivative system — strictly for D&D comparison purposes only, mind — that looks something like this:

COMPARATIVE RANKS OF PEERAGE IN THE GREAT KINGDOM		
"Noble Level" *(Compare to class experience levels in D&D)*	**Peerage Rank(s)** *(Compare to experience point thresholds within a level in D&D)*	**Title** *(Compare to level titles for classes in D&D, Veteran, Warrior, etc.)*
1	25 to 41	**Gentleman** (Abbreviated Gent.)
2	20 to 24	**Esquire** (Esq.)
3	14 to 19	**Knight** (Kt.)
4	13	**"OMS"** (Most likely according to precedence indicating "a Knight of the Order of Merit of Savoy"; briefly, "Knight of Merit" (Kt. OMS), above "Knight")
5	10 to 12	**Baron**
6	9	**Baron and High Constable**

7	8	**Baron and Justicar**
8	7	**Baron and Parsuivant** (A heraldic officer of arms; the rank of Dave Arneson in the fall (that means 'autumn,' for you Euros out there!) of 1970)
9	6	**Baron and Chamberlain**
10	5	**Viscount and Chief Scrivener** (Scribe, royal historian)
11	4	**Viscount (OMS) and Mercenary Captain**
12	3	**Viscount and Lord Prince of Arms**
13	2	**Earl Palatine** (The rank of Gary Gygax in the fall of 1970)
14	1	**King** (The rank of Rob Kuntz in the fall of 1970)[138]

This modified list as noted above is particularly interesting to compare to the "level title" systems which Gary would later develop for the AD&D paladin (1975-1978), cavalier (1982-1985), and the many nobles listed for the *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979) and the *World of Greyhawk Gazetteer* (1980, 1983). Each hierarchical list has shades of (pure Gygaxian, most likely) repetition while remaining its own creative entity.

Consider the bolded entries in the table hereafter, and my apologies that this gets a bit technical as we reveal the parallels:

[138] The originally-formatted 1970 list is available for further online study at the *Domesday Book* research page, at the Acaeum.com.

COMPARATIVE RANKS OF PEERAGE IN THE FRPG WORKS OF GARY GYGAX			
Great Kingdom Rank Title (1970)	Paladin Level Title (1978)	Cavalier Level Title (1983-1985)[139]	DMG / Greyhawk Noble Title (1979-1983)
GENTLEMAN / GALLANT			
GK1 – Gentleman ~	P1 – Gallant P2 – Keeper	C1 – Armiger C2 – Scutifer	GH1 – Gentleman ~
ESQUIRE			
GK2 – Esquire	P3 – Protector	C3 – Esquire	GH2 – Esquire
LOW-LEVEL KNIGHT			
~ ~	P4 – Defender P5 – Warder	C4 – Knight Errant C5 – Knight Bachelor	GH3 – Knight Companion GH4 – Knight Bachelor
KNIGHT			
GK3 – Knight	P6 – Guardian	C6 – Knight	DMG1, GH5 – Knight
HIGH-LEVEL KNIGHT OF RENOWN			
GK4 – Knight OMS	P7 – Chevalier	C7 – Grand Knight	DMG2 – Baronet
BARONIAL RANKS			

[139] The cavalier class premiered in the pages of *Dragon* magazine in 1983, and then was somewhat revised for its more informal inclusion in the AD&D game in *Unearthed Arcana*, 1985.

GK5 – Baron	~	~	DMG3, GH6 – Baron / Baroness
GK6 – Baron and High Constable ~	~ ~	~ ~	GH7 – Lord Baron GH8 – Archbaron
~	~	C8 – Banneret	GH9 – Knight Banneret
GK7 – Baron and Justicar	P8 – Justiciar	~	~
GK8 – Baron and Parsuivant	P9+ – Paladin ("name level")	C9 – Chevalier	~
GK9 – Baron and Chamberlain	P9+ – Paladin ("name level")	C10+ – Cavalier ("name level")	GH10 – Knight Commander
VISCOUNT			
GK10 – Viscount and Chief Scrivener	DMG4 – Viscount / Viscountess		GH11 – Viscount
GK11 – Viscount OMS and Mercenary Captain GK12 – Viscount and Lord Prince of Arms	~ ~		~ ~
COUNT / EARL			
GK13 – Earl Palatine	DMG5 – Count (Earl) / Countess		GH12 – Count / Earl / Graf
~	~		GH13 – Count Palatine
MARQUIS			

~	DMG6 – Marquis / Marquise	GH14 – Marquis / Margrave
PRINCE		
~	DMG7 – Prince / Princess	GH15 – Prince
DUKE		
~	DMG8 – Duke / Duchess	GH16 – Duke / Herzog
~ ~	~ ~	GH17 – Grand Duke GH18 –Archduke
KING		
GK14 – King	DMG9 – King / Queen	GH19 – King
~	~	GH20 – Overking

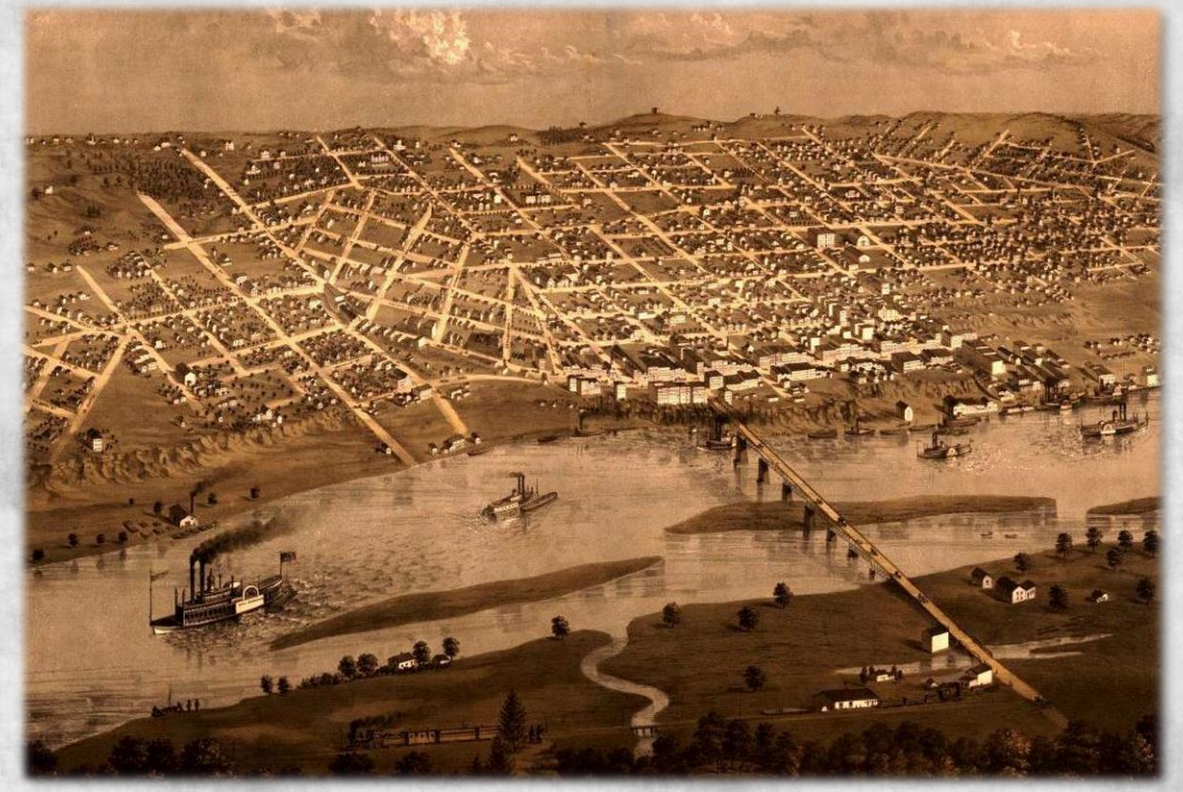
Presumably, wargamer-members of the C&CS could go up (and down!) in "experience level" along the entire early Great Kingdom peerage scale, dependent upon the worth of their contributions to the overall Society. *Dungeons & Dragons* was still far in the future, but it is likely that this system is one of the things that later inspired Dave Arneson to concoct some creative reinterpretations of Rob and Gary's C&CS ranking system when he worked on rudimentary experience level systems in 1971.

In the early days (to be succinct, things got ugly later on), the Castle & Crusade Society served as a near-ideal venue allowing gamers with similar interests to gather remotely, and to share their collective research and preferred modes for medieval gaming. Dave Arneson joined the C&CS about a month after it was created, a short while after the printing of *Domesday Book* issue #3. (Gary mailed that issue to Dave on April 14th, a day before the 'zine's cover date.)[140] Issue #3 was formally dated April 15th, 1970. The members of the Castle & Crusade Society listed at that

[140] Online web forum post: The Comeback Inn forums, "Did Dave Arneson's Blackmoor campaign actually start in 1970?"

time were Rob Kuntz, Gary Gygax, Jeff Perren, Tom Webster, Read Boles, Paul Cote, Chris Schleicher and H. Axel Krigsman.[141]

When Dave was exposed to the aforementioned kingdom map and peerage system — "He began playing in our loosely organized campaign game," Gary would later write[142] — he liked them and wanted to stamp his own Minnesota-inspired fantasy borderlands upon the Society's map. As Frank Mentzer noted in 2007: "The early maps of the first ongoing *Chainmail* campaign (before it was even called *Chainmail*) portray an alternate-reality version of the upper Midwestern US, with realms portioned out to (and named by) various Society members. 'Black Moor' was roughly in the location of Minneapolis, and Greyhawk similarly at Lake Geneva."[143]



An illustrative map of Saint Paul, 1867. Public domain.

Therefore, in the words of Gary, Dave "established his barony, Blackmoor, to

[141] Refer to the Youtube clip "A History of D&D in Twelve Treasures," posted by Jon Peterson. The commentary appears at approximately 4:20.

[142] *The Dragon*, issue #26, pg. 28.

[143] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Frank Mentzer, commenting in the Dragonsfoot thread "Q&A with Tim Kask." Posted May 13th, 2007.

the northeast [*sic*] of the [*Castle & Crusade Society's*] map, just above the Great Kingdom. He began a local medieval campaign for the Twin Cities gamers and used this area."[144] Please note that "north*west*" was intended where "north*east*" was given; perhaps Gary had misplaced the Great Kingdom map by the time he made this comment, and was unable to make an accurate review of it at that time. The Barony of Blackmoor (originally "Black Moors," and later "Black Moor," and never really consistently named until much later on) was located beyond the Great Kingdom's frontier, across a river and upon the western shore of the Great Bay.

Blackmoor would soon become the birthplace of fantasy role-playing games. We will explore this revolutionary development in great detail in the chapters yet to come.

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Throughout the remainder of 1970, Gary worked on and occasionally published pieces of his ever-evolving miniatures rules. The *Domesday Book* and other fanzines featured bits and pieces of this work. These advanced and modified "Gygax-Perren rules" would become Gary's obsession over the months to come. And soon, the codified rule set would — before the end of 1970 — become the rough draft of Gygax's and Perren's now-famous *Chainmail: Rules for Medieval Miniatures*. If *The Siege of Bodenburg* is the great-grandfather game from which *Dungeons & Dragons* ultimately descended, and Perren's system is the grandfather, then the Swords & Sorcery "Fantasy Supplement" of *Chainmail* can be considered the father.

As the medieval wargame play tests continued on Gary's sand table, these "Lake Geneva system" rules would go through many permutations. By the early summer, the rules were already sophisticated enough to merit notice for potential (and professional!) publication beyond the fanzines. By the time of Gen Con III (August 22nd-23rd),[145] fellow wargamer and retired Air Force captain Donald S. Lowry met with Gary and expressed an interest in publishing these rules, along with other worthy wargames, through his own new mail order company.[146]

This company was first known as Lowry's Hobbies, and later as Guidon Games.

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[144] As related by Gary Gygax in *The Dragon*, issue #7, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

[145] Gen Con III was basically "the calm before the storm" from a *Chainmail* and D&D history perspective, but it was an interesting fest in its own right. Events included the *Fight in the Skies* tournament, auction of wargaming items, Napoleonic miniatures battles, naval miniatures, the Diplomacy tournament, and World War II scenario gaming.

[146] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted May 31st, 2006.

A "guidon" by the way is a heraldic pennant carried by a commander at the forefront of a cavalry charge ... a fitting name for a bold upstart company rising against Avalon Hill and into the larger field of World War-dominated historical wargaming.

With Don's admiration and encouragement, Gary then began to develop and codify his medieval rules more seriously. The most significant additions he first made in response to Lowry's interest were improved "man-to-man" scale rules (meaning again that one figure represented a single warrior, as opposed to twenty or a hundred), and a set of jousting rules for mounted and dueling knights.[147]

When it became clear that these updated rules were soon going to be perfected enough for marketable publication, Don offered Gary a tentative business partnership. At that time, Don's offers were tempting, because Gary was wearying of his unimaginative (and unfulfilling) work as an insurance underwriter. Gary was deeply interested in becoming a full-time author and game designer, but he was a family man and the financial realities dissuaded him. As he once recalled, "I had wanted to quit my job and strike out as an author, but my then-wife discouraged that. Although she hated gaming and gamers, she was right, as I had four children by then. Nonetheless, I spent much of my free time working on games and game rules."[148]

This situation was made more complex by late October, when the insurance company Gary worked for made a strategic headquarters move from Chicago to San Francisco. The mandate was simple: Gary needed to move to California, or lose his job. Having grown up in Chicago and Lake Geneva, and with strong family ties to the region he loved, moving seemed unthinkable. One of Gary's co-workers was raised to the department head position which Gary was competing for, and so he lost his job. At one point Gary told his wife very clearly that he was going to pursue his dream: "Now I'm going to do it," he said to her according to one interview,[149] "I don't care what you say to me, I'm going to be a writer, I'm going to be a game designer." Gary explained his mentality at the time in another interview as follows: "I just finally said, 'No, I'm tired of this. I'm going to write

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[147] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted March 13th, 2006. See also post entered on May 31st, 2006 in the same thread.

[148] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[149] As featured on d-Infinity.net.

games, I'm going to try to write stories. I want to be a kid again and have fun.'"[150]

We have no record of what his wife thought about this decision, although Gary himself would later write that he was "absolutely delighted" to be out of the underwriting business for good. "There were too many boundaries in insurance," he explained. "All I really wanted to do was write and design fantasy games."[151]

From that day forward, Gary was determined to see just where his dream of being a more widely published game designer might take him. He was determined to change direction. He apparently turned down offers from several other large Chicago agencies that would have been happy to have him. By being forced to make such stark decisions about his future employment, Gary was also made to question his own dreams and the lengths he would go to fulfill them. Thankfully for gaming and the legacy we now enjoy, he made the frightening choice of letting all of these employment opportunities slip away. He sought employment in other fields as well, but floundered for a while. He wrote about thirty hours a week on writing and game design and would proceed to — as he later remembered it — "starve for about four years."[152]

At some point, Gary asked if the standing offer to partner with Don Lowry was still on the table, and Don replied that it most certainly was. Gary accepted immediately and would later become (the largely unpaid) Editor-in-Chief of Lowry's Guidon Games. He would later note — cheerfully and sarcastically — "My association with Guidon Games cemented my downfall, for I learned much about the business of wargaming during that time."[153]

Having secured his dream job, Gary would later (in August of 1971) be forced to attend to the more practical matter of cash flow by purchasing machinery for shoe repair. This apparatus was moved down into his basement, so that he could learn to work as a cobbler while writing and editing games for Don. The financial necessity was clear: "To support the family while earning very little in gaming I learned to be a cobbler," he wrote, "and did that for four years until becoming a

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[150] Masters of Fantasy: TSR, the Fantasy Factory. A documentary which aired on the Sci-Fi Channel in 1997. The comment appears at approximately 1:45.

[151] Inc. magazine, February 1982. "TSR Hobbies Mixes Fact and Fantasy," by Stewart Alsop II.

[152] Refer to the Gary Gygax chat preserved in the user comments at Slashdot.org for February 22nd, 2003 entry entitled "A 1974 Review of D&D."

[153] *The Strategic Review*, issue #5, December 1975, pg. 2.

full-time employee of TSR."[154]

Gary spent three weeks learning shoe repair from the man who had sold him the repair equipment. And then he was on his own. It would take a fair amount of practice before Gary would gain proficiency in his new Useful Secondary Skill: "One of the reasons my wife makes great fun of me," he once joked, "is that my mind tends to go off; I ... get my fingers caught in the shoe-repair machinery."[155]

This makeshift home business would demand a fair amount of space, and so Gary would enlist his good friend Don Kaye to help with breaking down the wargaming sand table. The table found a new home in Don's garage, where Gary and his friends would still frequently play their wargames.

A lesser man might well be terrified by these uncertain times and prospects, but Gary was actually excited. "I was set to seek my fortune doing what I loved."[156] In the meantime, however, he would be enrolled on unemployment.

His play group did some more serious play testing of the imminent *Chainmail* rules as 1970 began to wind down. But the fantasy elements were still missing from Gary's game. The rules were enjoyable, but not yet *magical*. They were not inspiring. The Elastolin toy soldiers certainly added a visceral appeal to the *Chainmail* play tests; but so far, only the "soldier" aspect of the figures was being exploited to full potential. The "toy" aspect, and the simple heartfelt demands of gaming for *fun* (as opposed to mere historical military simulation), were not yet being served. And so the man who had once, as a boy, hammered on his friend's garbage-can lid shield with a makeshift flail prepared to add something crazy to his serious little game.

And where would the dragons come from? Well, that's where the tale becomes a little odd. An unsung hero had already developed a fantasy wargame, and it had been demonstrated in public and won an award. Gary would soon be drawing his fantastical inspirations from this mysterious predecessor and calling the work his own.

It was perhaps over the Christmas season of 1970, or in early in 1971, that he incorporated that other person's work into his own game design. What he did, and

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[154] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 16th, 2002.

[155] Inc. magazine, February 1982. "TSR Hobbies Mixes Fact and Fantasy," by Stewart Alsop II.

[156] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

the resultant wild scenarios that were played as a result, will be the intriguing subject of our next chapter.



Two beasts, two legacies, one glory.

What good is a fantasy kingdom without conflict?

CHAPTER 3
THE GREAT KINGDOM RISES
(LATE 1970 – MARCH 1971)

AN UNEXPECTED journey, and a curious sideshow too: here is where the tale begins to get a bit complicated. The overall story of *Dungeons & Dragons* has been confusing and misleading for many decades, and it seems that Gary neglected to ever mention where the fantasy part of his *Chainmail* rules set *really* originated. Basically, from what we can now tell, it seems that the dragon-and-wizard rules and guidelines which would be featured in Gary's upcoming *Chainmail* game (in early 1971) were originally dreamt up by a guy you've probably never heard of.



Never forget to honor and name your dragons …
especially if you're going to pinch a few coins
from their troves in the name of inspiration.

Gary had lots of inspiration on his own, of course. And creative talent to spare. In drafting *Chainmail* from Jeff Perren's notes he would draw from his own life's worth of experiences with military toys, fantasy fiction, monster movies, *Diplomacy* variants, tales of magic told by his mother and father, and the nebulous yet ubiquitous golden age of "Let's Pretend." There was another secret ingredient, however. That recently rediscovered spice involves one Professor J. R. R. Tolkien, and an obscure (and of course unlicensed) fantasy wargame inspired by his writings.

RPG history researcher Jon Peterson can be credited with the rediscovery of this direct and crucial link between Tolkien's world of Middle Earth and the creation of Gary's fantasy wargaming rules, which would soon be published in *Chainmail*. Peterson found through his independent research that a forgotten-yet-important wargamer named Leonard Patt — then a young man, studying at Boston's Northeastern University[157] — had written a simple two-page rules set entitled "Rules for Middle Earth." This experimental system was published in the New England Wargamers Association's (NEWA's) journal *The Courier*, Volume 2 issue #7, in late 1970.[158] (*The Courier* was published eight times a year, or about once every six-and-a-half weeks, so we can estimate that this issue came out in early November or thereabouts.)

Further, it seems that these rules were tested and demonstrated earlier by Mr. Patt's gaming associates. The rules appeared in *The Courier* thereafter. The first public demo of Patt's Middle Earth rules took place at the Philadelphia miniatures wargaming convention, on October 10th, 1970. This demonstration was fully played out with figures, terrain, and even a well-built stronghold. Close eyes[159] have noted that the photographed stronghold used in this session was actually customized from two Airfix-brand Roman Forts. (The set used was almost certainly #1706, which was first issued as a small set piece in 1969 and then popularized with a larger fort-and-figure release in 1970.)[160]

The demonstrated scenario involved a reimagining of the Battle of the Pelennor Fields, as featured in Tolkien's *The Return of the King*. An enthusiastic mishmash of elements — inaccurate, but likely included in the game for extra flair — involved Smaug the dragon, the wizard Gandalf, some Orcs of the Red Eye, the Entwood, and the ever-worthy Riders of Rohan.

The fantasy wargame was a hit with the convention crowd of 300-odd souls. This novel demonstration turned many heads, and indeed it ultimately won Best of Show: "Complete with fire-breathing dragons and walking trees," reads the succinct

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[157] Refer to the Playing at the World blog, "A Conversation with Len Patt," posted February 5th, 2016.

[158] For those who are interested in owning a copy (for only 99 cents!), you can purchase a PDF copy of this issue via WargameVault.com. The full title of the currently-offered edition is "The Courier: Bulletin of the New England Wargamers Association V2 #7 1970," from Don Perrin.

[159] The credit for this observation goes to Mr. Phil Dutré, posting in the comments section of Peterson's Playing at the World blog entry, on January 21st, 2016.

[160] Refer for example to Vintage-Airfix.com, HO-00 Forts, http://www.vintage-airfix.com/airfix/ho-oo-forts/roman-fort-p-741.html.

after-report, "it was a game based on J. R. R. Tolkien's trilogy of fantasy, *The Lord of the Rings*."

A lot of that juicy fantasy gaming detail would soon appear in Gary's *Chainmail*, too. We know now that the initial evolution of these key concepts preceded Mr. Gygax and originated with Mr. Patt. The crucial elements which Gary borrowed and did not attribute would include: guidelines for dragon flight and movement rates; rules for breath weapons; the concept of wizards hurling "fire balls" (much like Gandalf with the pinecones, or Oz's Wicked Witch of the West, when she torches the Scarecrow in the 1939 movie, taunting: "Wanna play *ball*?"); archetypal heroes and antiheroes, the Ents, orc armies, humanoid tribal rivalries, and clean, clear melee combat results which predate the saved-or-slain effects of D&D saving throws. It's all there in just a couple of pages. But still, despite these elements being critical to our history, they represent only the merest beginning of the fantasy gaming genre. Gary would carry these ideas much further in the months and years to come.

We know that Gary was a fan of *The Hobbit*, yet that he found *The Lord of the Rings* tiresome and frequently felt that Tolkien was a bit overrated (or perhaps over-credited). No such reservations come from Len Patt, however, as evident in his preceding game. Mr. Patt made his own modest intention to tentatively emulate Tolkien's work explicitly clear: "The rules and uniform information presented below are by no means complete," we read in his rules, "and are only a guide to start a Middle Earth wargame."

"A Middle Earth wargame" and Middle Earth-themed *Diplomacy* sessions would eventually lead to *Chainmail*, *Dungeons & Dragons*, and the entire MMORPG industry as it stands today. Len Patt left that door to the realms of fantasy wide open for future expansion by other people, and basically walked away from wargaming altogether. This new genre thrived without his future contributions, of course. After all, what end could there be to the realm of fantasy wargaming, once the initial concepts had been celebrated and ordained? Gary was inspired by his example, but many other people we've never heard of probably were as well. This was not a big deal at the time. Refining other amateur developers' wargaming concepts in unexpected ways was just an integral part of the hobby in those days. Borrow, refine, and move on. Who could ever have guessed that such a random idea could indirectly lead to a future entertainment industry?

The road from Patt's game, to Gygax's and Perren's game of *Chainmail*, is a rough one that is still incompletely mapped from our current perspective. How *exactly* these elements from Patt first informed the Fantasy Supplement in *Chainmail* is not yet fully clear. There does not appear to have been any correspondence or

collaboration between Patt and Gygax. We can figure out some of the details, however: Toward the end of 1970 (mid-November?), Jeff Perren would have received his copy of *The Courier* V2N7 in the mailbox.[161] It seems very likely that he would have shared this information with Gary (or, Gary received a copy of *The Courier* on his own). And it is very obvious to us now — the coincidences in concept, detail, and language are far too exact to leave us with any doubt — that Gary lifted quite a few of Mr. Patt's best ideas, and drafted the Fantasy Supplement as his own major expansion of that inspirational-and-inspired game material. Patt's ideas were thus added to an ambitious brew already being formulated by Perren and Gygax and crew.

Even with Patt's strong influence though, Gary's Fantasy Supplement was certainly its own unique thing. Gary's rules were carefully written "to add magic armor and swords, wizards casting spells, and a large number of fantastic creatures — fire-breathing dragons, elementals, giants, trolls, [*and*] ogres" to the game.[162] And there was much more. The goals of this Fantasy Supplement were truly ambitious: they would allow venturesome gamers to "refight the epic struggles related by J. R. R. Tolkien, Robert E. Howard, and other fantasy writers," and would even empower the most creative gamers to "devise [*their*] own 'world,' and conduct fantastic campaigns and conflicts based upon it."[163]

Gary — through his reading of Len Patt's published demo report, his own observations, and other sources — knew full well that *The Lord of the Rings* was already popular with the gaming crowd. The (frequently illegal) paperbacks of LOTR which were appearing everywhere in America were awakening the imaginations of college students, hippies, wargamers, soldiers, and dreamers alike.

Against Tolkien's own snooty wishes — as if he could ever control such a thing — wide-eyed American readers were already equating Sauron with the President, the War of the Ring with the Vietnam War, Riders of Rohan with American draftees, Gondorians with vets, the Shire with idealized-and-idyllic San Francisco nigh the West, hobbits with war-resisting hippies, pipeweed with enlightening hallucinogenics, Gollum with the war buddy who got corrupted and sold out to "The Man," and all manner of other crazy allegories.

For those reasons and more, collegiate America was falling in love with Middle

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[161] Refer to the discussion at RPG.net, "Unearthed: Chainmail rules borrow heavily from earlier fantasy wargame system by Leonard Patt," January-February 2016.

[162] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[163] *Chainmail: Rules for Medieval Miniatures*, 3rd Edition, pg. 28.

Earth. The enthusiasm inherent in such an imaginative embrace of Tolkien's fiction was misguided, amusing, and highly contagious. None of this made much sense in many cases, but those random and wild stirrings were actually mere symptoms of a far greater and truly wonderful disease: a new generation of young Americans were suddenly craving heaping helpings of fantasy, elves, wizards, halflings, magic rings, swords of destiny, evil overlords, and dragons.[164]

Therefore, in Gary's own Fantasy Supplement the works of Tolkien were borrowed from quite heavily, because he suspected that in doing so he would increase *Chainmail*'s future sales. As he once wrote, "When I saw so many people taken [*in*] by the Rings Trilogy, I added as much as possible of it into *Chainmail*."[165]

Gary, for decades before the dawn of the Castle & Crusade Society, had of course been a devotee of fantasy fiction, and the *Lord of the Rings* novels had been republished in very affordable paperback editions (at 75 cents a pop) by Ace Books in the mid-1960s. By 1970 this popular fantasy feeding frenzy had been going on for several years. The publication of Frodo's legendary journeys had awakened an interest in the fantastic for hundreds of thousands of Americans, most especially among the nation's impressionable and disillusioned college students.

As one parallel to this surge of interest, the Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) was founded on May 1st, 1966, bringing together medieval history buffs with fantasy fans, people eager to play out mock battles and to engage in improvisatory role-playing. At around this time, there were also several different attempts at "Tolkien wargaming," including a Middle Earth variant for the ever-popular *Diplomacy* game.[166] Len Patt's game did not pop up in a featureless vacuum; his

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[164] The nearest reference I can find to the Tolkien phenomenon hitting Gary's region is that the Tolkien Society at the University of Wisconsin-Madison was founded in September of 1966. There's nothing proving that Gary had any contact with those folks, to the best of my current knowledge; but the existence of the Society at that time and in that place gives us an idea of just when "Tolkien fever" might well have been taking hold in even rural Wisconsin. If it was hitting college students there in September 1966, it was probably filtering down to lots of friends, family, and younger siblings by the summer of 1967.

[165] Refer to the Gary Gygax chat preserved in the user comments at Slashdot.org for February 22nd, 2003, entry entitled "A 1974 Review of D&D."

[166] There were actually *lots* of ME Diplo games, each with different scenario details. The design notes for the Middle Earth IX variant — yes, *Diplomacy* saw that many Tolkien gaming adaptations and many more — indicate that the initial Middle Earth *Diplomacy* variant, by James Wright, was created in 1965. (The Ace paperbacks were raging across American in the summer of '65, and the *Diplomacy* variant followed thereaftafter.) The popular Middle Earth II variant, by Don Miller, which followed and deviated from it was initially published in February 1966, and updated later that year.

attempt at Middle Earth simulation was only one of many. There were probably dozens if not *hundreds* of amateur Middle Earth games circulating in private circles by this time. We tend only to cite the ones which can be proven in retrospect to have influenced crucial concepts in D&D.

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Tolkien was not the only driving force in USA's fantasy fiction scene at this time, although he was certainly the most influential one. I note also, however, that some of the interesting new paperbacks which appeared on the bookstore shelves between December 1970 and February 1971 — when Gary was likely finishing up the Fantasy Supplement for *Chainmail*'s upcoming publication — included the following: *The Gods of Mars* and *The Warlords of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs; *Kothar and the Wizard Slayer*, by Gardner F. Fox; and yes, the popular Ballantine reprints of *The Hobbit* and *The Return of the King*, by J. R. R. Tolkien.

There were also numerous H. P. Lovecraft collections reprinted during those months, including *At the Mountains of Madness and Other Tales of Terror*, *The Doom That Came to Sarnath*, *The Lurking Fear and Other Stores*, and *The Tomb and Other Tales*. Also noteworthy was the anthology *Warlocks and Warriors*, edited by L. Sprague de Camp, which featured *The Gods of Niom Parma* (by Lin Carter), *The Hills of the Dead* (by Robert E. Howard), *Thieves' House* (by Fritz Leiber), *Chu-Bu and Sheemish* (by Lord Dunsany), and other tales of fantasy.

When we consider Gary's earlier-mentioned claim that he read "about every book of Fantasy and Science Fiction published in the US,"[167] such releases are certainly of passing interest to our history. He probably either picked a lot of these tales up now and prior to *Chainmail*'s publication, or he had already them!

The following passage from the introduction to *Warlocks and Warriors* (written by L. Sprague de Camp) is especially interesting, when we consider that the hardcover came out in 1970 and the paperback (a Berkeley Medallion Book) came out in January 1971:

* * * * *

"This is a collection of stories of heroic fantasy — or, as the genre is also called, swordplay-and-sorcery stories. This is pure escape literature and makes no bones about it. Reading for serious purposes is fine, but even the most serious reader is better off if he sometimes reads something for the hell of it. In these stories one escapes clear out of the real world. One enters an imaginary world, more or less

[167] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted February 17th, 2003.

ancient or medieval in aspect, where magic works and where modern science and technology have not yet been discovered. This is a world where gleaming cities raise shining spires against the stars, sorcerers cast sinister spells from subterranean lairs, baleful spirits stalk through crumbling ruins, primeval monsters crash through jungle thickets, and the fate of kingdoms is balanced on the blades of bloody broadswords."

Now isn't that an interesting coincidence that this book, from an author and editor that Gary was reading heavily at the time, came out precisely when he was devising his seminal *Chainmail Fantasy* appendix despite the preferred habits of his oh-so-serious wargaming friends?

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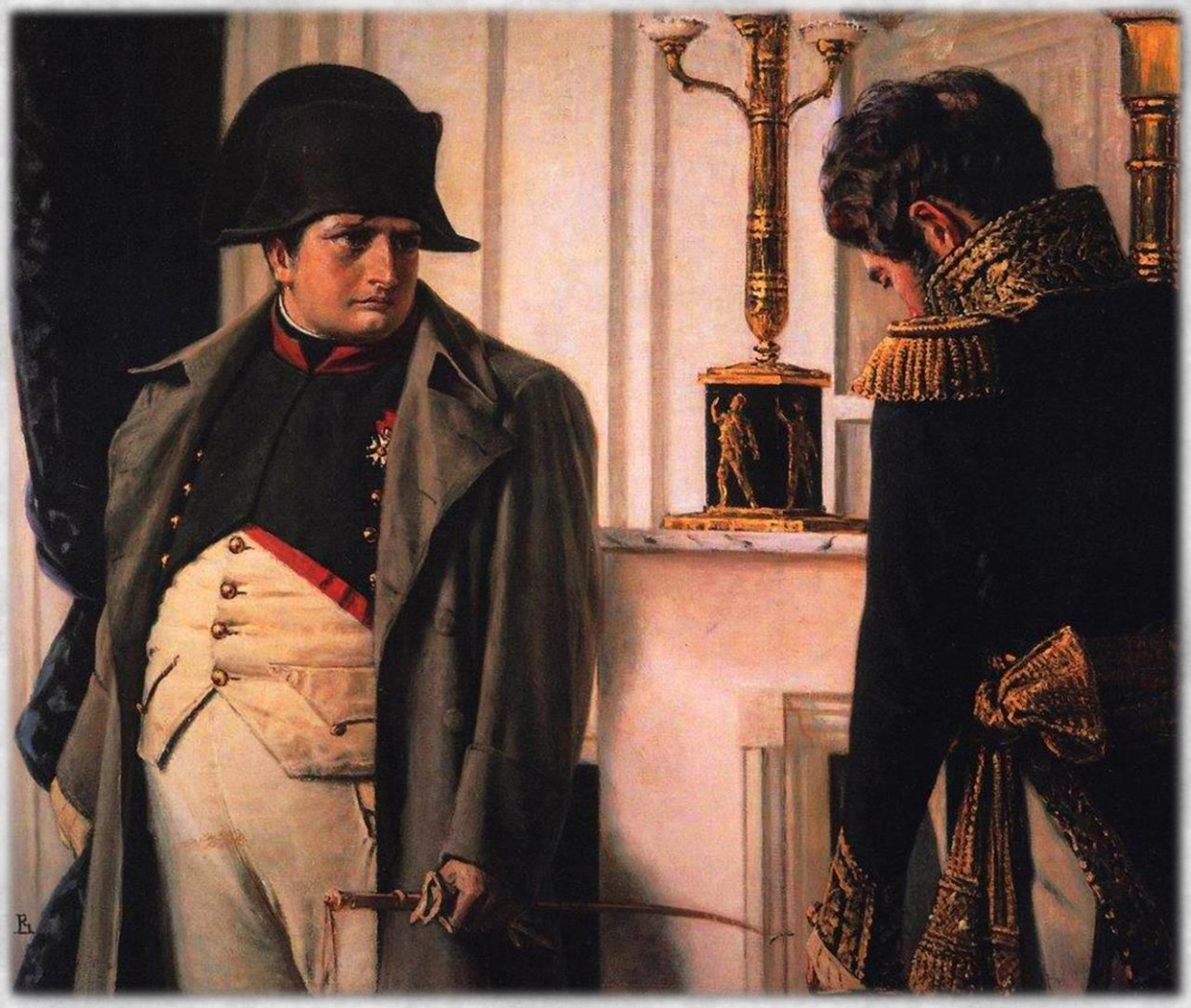
Also, the SCA was thriving by this time. This growing audience for fantasy craved more material, simulation, a connected fandom, and "let's pretend" gatherings and play. There was not much organization yet, but the shared and avid interest was surely there. Gary had noticed already that many (but by no means all!) of his compatriots in the Castle & Crusade Society were sharing such interests beyond medieval wargaming, and perhaps intuited that these interests could be pointed toward fantasy gaming experiments with a shared and guided leap of faith. If that was indeed the case, then why not include his optional fantasy rules in *Chainmail* to gauge the effective market for such things? The game manuscript was already complete, and by putting the Fantasy Supplement in the back of the book, Gary thought that anyone not interested in such frivolities could simply ignore that unneeded chapter.

There was dissent, however, too. Gary knew from earlier inquiries that there was already a marked resistance against fantasy innovations in wargaming from the "grognard" (grumbling) contingent of hardcore and historical military simulationists. To many war hawks and veterans, wargaming was about honoring the past, or celebrating the armed forces, and it was a serious pursuit. Fantasy had no place beside the dignified gravitas of such solemn and bellicose simulations. To put it more lightly, the deadly serious WWII and Napoleonic gamers didn't want any Tolkien chocolate slopping its way into their tasty Patton 'n' Bonaparte peanut butter.



"Do you not understand? This is a very deadly serious history of fun and games. VERY DEADLY! And if you are having any fun at all, any bitsy smile or ha-ha, you should feel very bad. VERY BAD!"

Outside of wargaming, far less structured fantasy "Tolkien" play was casually being embraced to varying extents. The SCA crowd, naturally, tended to be the most receptive toward such things, but the *degree* to which they would embrace the strictures and formality of wargaming remained to be seen. This unspoken audience for fantasy-themed simulations — scattered and nameless as it still remained — would be difficult for any gaming company to reach.

There was no harm in trying, however. Gary decided that *Chainmail* represented his best chance to bridge these groups together, because Tolkien-inspired wargaming was far more similar to medieval wargaming than it was to

anything else: "Most of the fantastic battles related in novels," he explained in his *Chainmail* manuscript, "more closely resemble medieval warfare than they do earlier or later forms of combat. Because of this, we are including a brief set of rules which will allow the medieval miniatures wargamer to add a new facet to his hobby."[168]



Dwarves or goblins? Gnomes or kobolds?

The finest fairy tales are always open to shadowy interpretation.

[168] *Chainmail: Rules for Medieval Miniatures*, 3rd Edition, pg. 28.

The novels Gary was alluding to here were primarily the early pulps, those classic Swords & Sorcery yarns featuring Conan, Fafhrd, and similar burly swordsmen. He liked Jack Vance's decadent characters Liane and Mazirian and all the others, too. To Gary's mind, *these* were the heroes in a genre which Professor Tolkien had only poorly dabbled in. As he once explained: "When I began to add elements of fantasy to medieval miniatures wargames … of course the work of Jack Vance influenced what I did. Along with Robert E. Howard, de Camp & Pratt, A. Merritt, Michael Moorcock, Roger Zelazny, Poul Anderson, J. R. R. Tolkien, P. J. Farmer, Bram Stoker — and not a few others, including the fairy tales of the Brothers Grimm and Andrew Lang, and conventional mythologies."[169]

Gary knew however that despite his own preferences, and the many fantasy reprints of the day, many of these authors were not being read widely with wild enthusiasm any longer. New readers who were discovering these older works were frequently doing so through the distorting lens of first experiencing *The Lord of the Rings*. Young readers simply hadn't been there for Lovecraft, Howard, *Weird Tales* and all the rest. The grandiose Middle Earth tales of Tolkien — being not only popular, but also highly available — were ruling the imaginations of the young.

And so, in silent acknowledgement of this predicament, Gary made a calculatedly casual announcement in the next issue of *Wargamer's Newsletter*: he, as a matter for open curiosity, was developing rules for "Tolkien fantasy games." Len Patt had already set down some similar rules and was fairly well-received in doing so, so why not? What could it hurt to try?

The hardcore and grognard wargamers, predictably, were less than thrilled by this unexpected proclamation. Gary was one of *them*, the respectable grognards, not a fantasy freak. It was as if one of their favorite game researchers and organizers had suddenly veered wildly toward, and then gone merrily plummeting off, the deep end.

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Gary didn't care if anyone thought he was going crazy, however. He was gaming, creating, pretending and playing. He was having fun.

Of course, all of these crazy new concepts represented in his newfangled Fantasy Supplement would need to be tested and balanced in regards to the existing medieval warfare structure of "core" *Chainmail* prior to publication, and that meant that some fantasy-themed play tests would need to be conducted on Gary's sand

[169] "Jack Vance & the D&D Game," an article by Gary Gygax which originally appeared in *The Excellent Prismatic Spray* #2, 2001.

table. And soon!

Don and Rob and others were happy to help, although the more serious devotees of historical simulation — Jeff Perren, apparently, among them — would exit the *Chainmail* game tests at this time.[170] The new flavor of gaming was not for everyone. Gary would later write that Jeff was simply "not captivated by giants hurling boulders and dragons breathing fire and lightning bolts; nor did wizards with spells, heroes and superheroes with magic armor and swords prove compelling to [*him*]."[171] This meant that Gary and his core group of players would be responsible for the play testing of the Fantasy Supplement on their own.

The monsters, from an historical gamer's perspective, were — along with spells — one of the strangest and most unpredictable aspects of the new game. Each would require testing. The first few monsters that Gary devised for those earliest *"Chainmail Fantasy"* sessions included (to his much later recollection) a red dragon, a giant, a troll, ogres, orcs and elementals.[172]

The enthusiastic players (disregarding the serious historical wargamers who wholly abandoned the play test before it began) had a great deal of fun, assembling armies led by heroes and wizards, slinging spells at enemy infantry, slaying dragons and summoning elementals to do the bidding of their sorcerous magi. It seems that the very first *Chainmail Fantasy* scenario — in intriguing parallel to Dave Arneson's own early Blackmoor scenario, which would later be conducted in April of 1971 — apparently included a scene from one of Gary's favorite fairy tales, "Three Billy Goats Gruff." As Gary explained, "a great ugly troll rushed out from under the bridge one side's forces had to cross. Fortunately, one of their leaders was a Hero and defeated it."[173]

Chainmail Fantasy would permanently change Gary's gaming group. He once wrote that "The reception of fantasy elements in the medieval tabletop wargame

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[170] Gygax and Perren did, however, enjoy other games together outside of fantasy wargaming. For example, in the Skirmisher Publishing LLC edition of H. G. Wells's Little Wars, Gary indicates that he and Jeff used to play historical Little Wars scenarios together. It seems that Jeff was a crack shot with toy cannon-launched toothpick rounds.

[171] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part III. Posted April 6th, 2003.

[172] Refer to the Gary Gygax chat preserved in the user comments at Slashdot.org for February 22nd, 2003 entry entitled "A 1974 Review of D&D."

[173] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted September 22nd, 2005.

was incredibly enthusiastic by about 90% of the old group."[174] The players helped to develop the rules, and a rudimentary mythology began to take place as the tabletop games were played. As Gary once described the process, "Magic-users defended their strongholds from invading armies, heroes met trolls, and magic items of great power were sought for on the same sand table which had formerly hosted Normans, Britain English and tanks in Normandy."[175]

The group was having a grand time, but no one could possibly guess that in a few years' time a new game called *Dungeons & Dragons* — based directly on *Chainmail Fantasy* with further inspirations from David Lance Arneson— would change everything. "Little did I — or the other members of the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association — realize as we fought out fantasy miniatures battles on my sand table," Gary later wrote, "that the publication of the rules we used to do so … would pioneer a whole new form of game."[176]

Interestingly, although the idea of a single fantasy character being played by a single player is frequently attributed to Dave Arneson or to David Wesely's *Braunstein* experiments, Gary once wrote that he experimented with the concept (seemingly by accident) during the *Chainmail Fantasy* play tests of 1970-1971 too, prior to the full development of Blackmoor. "When heroes, superheroes, and wizards were considered in the Fantasy Supplement," he wrote, "the concept of a player with but a single figure on the table born. I would use my point buys to take a superhero in magic armor, with a magic sword, backed up by a wizard with fireball spells. The superhero would assail the mass of enemy troops, and when they gathered round to attack him the wizard would drop a fireball on the lot. The superhero was very likely to come out unscathed, much to the fury of my opponents."[177]

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[174] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part III. Posted April 6th, 2003.

[175] *The Dragon*, issue #26. "D&D, AD&D and Gaming," by Gary Gygax, pg. 28.

[176] *The Dragon*, issue #16, pg. 15.

[177] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 3rd, 2005.



"Blast it, if you're going to cast it, cast it now, ye grizzled gray-maned grimalkin!"

This experimental testing process involved more than just playing the fantasy game and arguing over the rules, however. A large part of the fun was in converting the miniature figures for play, because in that day and age, serious figures intended for fantasy wargaming simply did not exist. Gary provided some details on these intrepid figure conversion efforts in later forum posts and conversations: "Many dime store figurines were made to do for fantasy monsters when we played *Chainmail Fantasy* miniatures … as no one made metal ones based on games then." And further: "When we played *Chainmail Fantasy* on the sand table in my basement … we used 40 mm Hausser Elastolin figurines as man-sized [*fighting men*], Jack Scruby's 30 mm troops for orcs, and an assortment of things for monsters — 90 mm Hausser figurines for giants, plastic dime store Indians of around 60 mm scale for ogres, [*and*] a plastic stegosaurus I converted to a dragon."[178]

There were many of these unique and handmade customization projects that were later remembered with particular fondness. The stegosaurus was clearly intended to metamorphose beyond its saurian roots and to represent Smaug from *The Hobbit*, because his belly was covered with glitter to represent a protective embedded layer of sparkling gemstones.[179] A club-wielding blue giant was made from a 90 mm Elastolin Viking, and Gary noted that he got in trouble with his daughter a short while after he made that particular figure: "Hair snipped from one of my daughters' old dolls gave him a real 'fright wig' too," he wrote. "Yes, my rude theft of hair was discovered, and I was in deep *kimche* with my youngest daughter for a long time because of it."[180]

Not to be outdone, his friend Don made another kind of "dragon" out of a toy brontosaurus. This large beastie may have actually been a representation of the Japanese movie monster King Ghidorah, complete with wings and three different heads. "Giant" ants for the sand table came straight out of plastic toy bags.[181] One particular bag of now-coveted Hong Kong monster toys would eventually

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[178] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted July 2nd, 2005. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX, posted December 22nd, 2005. For readers who are interested in the particulars of these unique customized figures, Rob Kuntz gives some very detailed descriptions in the Pied Piper Publishing thread "Appearance of Monsters." Gary also provided some further details about the stegosaurus figure in particular in *The Slayer's Guide to Dragons* (2002).

[179] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted December 22nd, 2005.

[180] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 19th, 2002.

[181] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld forum thread, "Gygaxian Monsters." Posted October 8th, 2007.

(throughout the years c. 1971-76) give rise to such classic D&D beasties as the bulette, owlbear, rust monster, umber hulk and troglodyte. Gary created stats for these new horrors based on the appearances of the available figures, fitting his imagination to the materials at hand.

Realizing that other players attempting to use the Fantasy Supplement would soon be facing this same lack of monster figures in the market, Gary wrote an article detailing his group's ongoing customization efforts which would later appear in *Wargamer's Newsletter*, issue #127. The article's preamble is intriguing because it both confirms the influence of Tolkien over the Fantasy Supplement, while also highlighting Gary's belief that there were other approaches just as worthy of being taken: "Tolkien purists will not find these rules entirely satisfactory, I believe, for many of the fantastic creatures do not follow his 'specifications,' mainly because I believe that other writers were as 'authoritative' as he."

That being said, Gary provided recommendations for the customization of the expensive Hausser Elastolin figures, as well as oblique references to Marx and Airfix figures in various scales. The trusty 1964 Robin Hood miniatures — from Airfix HO/OO boxed set 01720, for those keeping score[182] — were noted in particular for their nice selection of weapons and armor (including axes, bows, staves and swords). And the Elastolin line of figures were also very helpful. They did not just feature soldiers and frontiersmen; dogs, foxes, and even moose were represented in this toy line as well. And if these farm and forest animal toys were available to *Chainmail*'s future readers, then why not also mix up the play tests with other creatures? Above all, in these improvisational efforts Gary stressed to his readers the importance of resourcefulness, ingenuity and imagination. After all, isn't creative reinvention one of the greatest arts a Dungeon Master can hope to perfect?

Beyond the issue of the lack of fantasy figures, there were far more rulings to be extemporized as well. (Len Patt's original rules served as a guide, but Gary still had to make things work well for his players, testing his own rulings and specifications.) Spells could be roughly simulated with the catapult and artillery rules in *Chainmail* proper,[183] while power scales and stats for magical creatures might be crudely extrapolated from already-existing rules for knights, horses and Mongol raiders.

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[182] For reference, see for example the information which you can find at http://www.plasticsoldierreview.com/review.aspx?id=35.

[183] In the Foreword to the Skirmisher Publishing LLC edition of H. G. Wells's *Little Wars*, Gary notes that the catapult and fireball area of effect rules were inspired by the Little Wars artillery rules. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part XIII, posted June 27th, 2007.

While all of this rudimentary guesswork (and borrowing!) was going on, Gary was also working to strengthen and stimulate the social network for serious medieval wargaming, as exemplified by the Castle & Crusade Society. A fateful issue of the group's *Domesday Book* fanzine (issue #9, probably written around the beginning of 1971 and published soon thereafter) included the earlier-created map of the group's collective fiefdoms and holdings, featuring the imaginary Great Kingdom. Presumably (in addition to vividly illustrating the previously-discussed peerage system), this map was made by Gary[184] so that gamers who would agree to play a certain type of medieval scenario might document their play and then provide a "battle report" to the Society, as if an actual battle had taken place. The borders of the Great Kingdom's fiefs could wax and wane as heroic victories shaped the imaginary world. As Gary explained, "Members of the Society could then establish their holdings on the map, and we planned to sponsor campaign-type gaming at some point."[185]

This concept had developed over a period of time. Issue #6 of the *Domesday Book*, for example, reads in part, "All members should be aware of efforts to create a mythical world for our Society. To date we have a map showing our 'Great Kingdom,' as well as our neighbors — several sovereign principalities, kingdoms, nations, the 'Dry Steppes' of the nomads, and the 'Paynim Kingdom.' (Paynims are pagans, or more specifically non-Christians.) Great nobles (earl and above) of the Great Kingdom, as well as members who attain independence with fiefs of full kingdoms or nations, will take part in service to the King in his wars, fight each other, of [*sic*] rebel against their liege, and that includes any sovereign. Exact method of play is yet to be determined, but before any final decision is reached we

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[184] There is quite a bit of confusion over who made the Great Kingdom map that we can see online, which is simply a matter of copying, misunderstanding, limited information, and "who had what when." If it matters, the score so far: David Megarry has an annotated copy of the map, apart from the original. It has more details because it was used in play in later years. Jon Peterson has noted that the original is in color: "Gygax drew the original map in colored markers, and some colors came out better in the black-and-white photocopies than others did." The "original" (not really) that we most commonly see copies of was designed by Gary, but apparently Dave had taken a crack at it first and we're really seeing Dave's version (I think?). From a June 17th, 2017 post by the Secrets of Blackmoor group: "Rob Kuntz says that an interesting thing about the published *Domesday* maps, is that Gary asked Dave to draw one up and then did not like it. So Gary drew one up of his own to use in *Domesday*. Somehow the printing company *[?]* misplaced the Gary map and the Arneson map is the one that gets used in the first article on the medieval campaigns." Make of that what you will.

[185] *The Dragon*, issue #7, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

will publish the map and general rules for vote by the full peerage."[186]

This was probably not the play map's *fulfilled* purpose, however. The map was perhaps more inspirational than practical … depending on who you talk to. As Rob Kuntz once noted, from his perspective the Great Kingdom "was not considered a setting, but a realm that was expanding for societal purposes and thereby had no strict gaming potential."[187] Dave Arneson went even more directly to the point: "The Society set up a mythical map where 'kingdoms' were assigned to the 'lords' of the Society; and a Society-wide campaign, using medieval [*miniatures*] was proposed, which never got anywhere."[188]

From our 21st-century perspective, the Great Kingdom map is most interesting not because of its implications for the Society's own wargames, but instead for the first glimpses it offers us of both the World of Greyhawk and the Arch-Barony of Blackmoor. Many of the features on the 1970 map will be familiar to fantasy role-players who enjoyed gaming in the Flanaess in the 1980s and beyond.

For example, the original Great Kingdom map shows features and faction names such as the Far Ocean, Northern Barbarians, a Summer Passage to Far Ocean, Great Bay, Dry Steppes, the Sea of Dust, Nir Dyv ("near dive" is the pun here according to Gary) and the Western Ocean. In the published *World of Greyhawk* setting (1980-1983), these features would later correspond to the more widely recognizable Dramidj / Drawmij (*aka* Jim Ward) Ocean, the Lands of the Frost and Snow Barbarians, the Solnor (perhaps meaning "north sun"?) Ocean, Grendep Bay, the Dry Steppes (basically unchanged), the Sea of Dust (unchanged), the newly-spelled "Nyr Dyv" and the Oljatt Sea.

There are some more interesting clues hidden in all of this quizzical mire. Knowing what we do about this direct transition between the C&CS's 1970 Great Kingdom concept and TSR's later published game world of the Flanaess, it appears to me that the map (when viewed as a rough conglomeration of Minnesota, Wisconsin and Michigan) indicates Lake Superior (the Nyr Dyv, with the same characteristic shape), Ontario and Thunder Bay (making Canadians, amusingly, the "Northern Barbarians"), Lake Huron (the edge of the Western Ocean), Isle Royale and Passage Island (within the Great Bay), Big Sandy Lake (the Sea of Dust), and so forth. Surely, some of the coastal land shapes between these real world locales and

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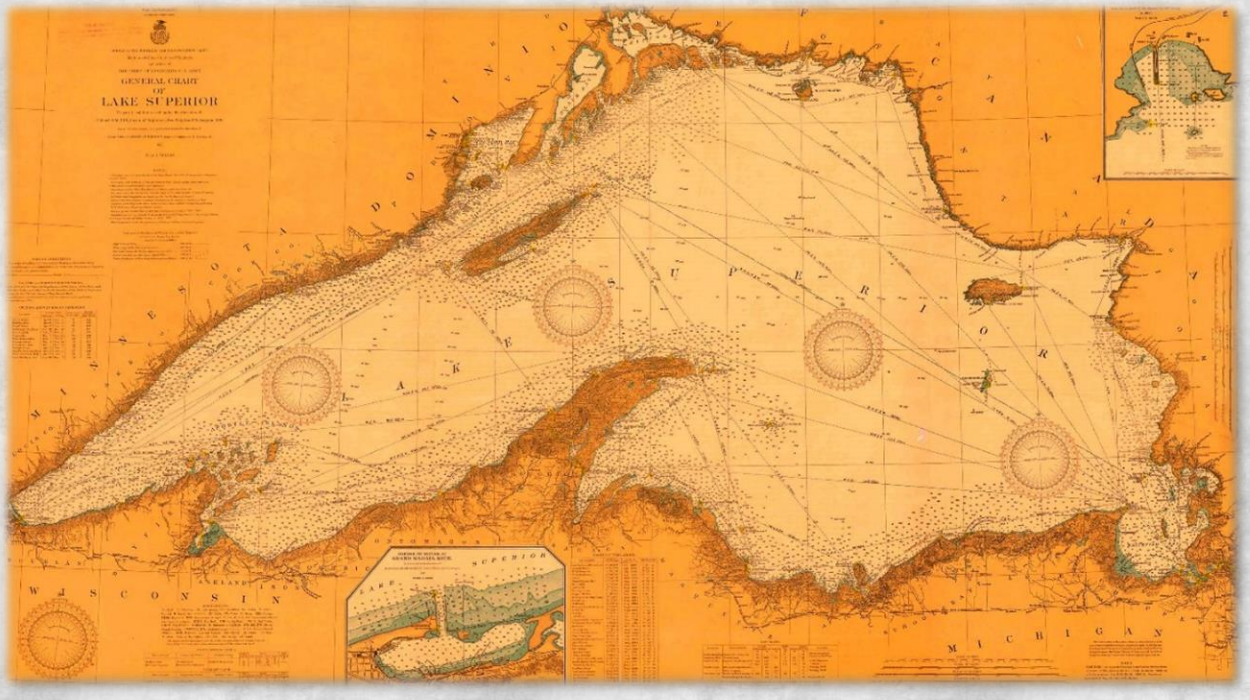
[186] Refer to the Youtube clip "A History of D&D in Twelve Treasures," posted by Jon Peterson. The commentary appears at approximately 4:45.

[187] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Rob Kuntz Q&A. Posted January 5th, 2010.

[188] *The Space Gamer*, issue #21. "An Interview with Dave Arneson."

the Great Kingdom — such as Sibley Peninsula (where the Northern Barbarians dwell) and Saginaw Bay (the unnamed bay on the Western Ocean) — are far too similar to be entirely coincidental. The core of the Flanaess prominently features fantasy versions of Wisconsin and Minnesota without a doubt.



A 1917 map of Lake Superior, whose shape would be emulated as Nyr Dyv in the published World of Greyhawk map drawn by Darlene Pekul in 1980.

Indeed, within the Society Gary himself was known as the Earl of Walworth, which is another in-joke pointing to Walworth County, where the town of Lake Geneva lies.[189] Walworth County, on the Society realm map, is situated immediately to the north of the Nir Div and near to the Great Kingdom. This makes it abundantly clear that the map is indeed a fantastical reflection of Wisconsin and the immediately surrounding area. When we consider further that Dave Arneson discerned this "Walworth" distinction Gary had made, and then placed his Arch-Barony of Blackmoor in the northward borderlands, we can see that one of the northern edges of the Great Kingdom would verge on fantastical Minnesota too. The paired Castle and Village of Blackmoor, more simply, comprise a satirical

[189] As pointed out by Rob Kuntz in the Dragonsfoot forums. Refer to Rob Kuntz Q&A, posted January 26th, 2010.

fantasy equivalent to Arneson's own Twin Cities (with a little Duluth mixed in for coastal purposes, apparently).

Curiouser and curiouser, eh?

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(A 2017 update on the matter of Great Kingdom follows for the curious; you can skip this bit if you're more interested in to learning much more about Dave Arneson.)

Further information has been unveiled about the connections between Blackmoore and the Great Kingdom, which make it very clear that Blackmoor was an integral part of the larger Great Kingdom and never really removed from its environs. The Great Kingdom map (as exhibited by the copy we now know has been held by David Megarry)[190] served as something of a "map of the known world" in the Blackmoor campaign, so I would like to talk about that a bit further before we move on. Some of the further developments and annotations we see in Megarry's copy of the map date (in his opinion) to c. 1974, but there is still confusion over the dating. The map is not from Megarry's own play, but rather from Arneson's gaming while Megarry was away. (Sorry for the use of last names here; there's a lot of Daves in the tales we have to tell.) Megarry says of the use of this map at that time, c. 1974, "I think Arneson was trying to do a combination of *Diplomacy*, Braunstein and fantasy gaming, having [*the participants*] take roles. But I think it was too ambitious and I was not part of it." We don't know too much about Arneson's Great Kingdom games at that time, but the map is enlightening nonetheless.

The Megarry-owned map is mostly useful (in my opinion) because it clears up some of the geography of Blackmoor and the surrounding regions in Arneson's games, and its relation to the Great Kingdom setting as a whole. Blackmoor is 100% confirmed to be the territory to the southwest of the Great Bay, just north of the river (which divides it from the southern Duchy of Ten). The Egg of Coot is a comparatively huge territory to the north, surrounded by hills and with its capital in the center. The Great Kingdom proper is a huge realm to the southeast, with a central "Royal Demesne"[191] surrounded by 18 provinces (David Megarry thinks they might be duchies and such) and outer regions. Region #11 is Walworth,[192] which is

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[190] See the Hidden in Shadows blog, "Arneson's Great Kingdom Map," February 3rd, 2017.

[191] We find this very same Royal Demesne listed in the Greyhawk Gazetteer, pg. 10, in discussion of the Great Kingdom of the Flanaess.

[192] A "small Earldom of Walworth" is later mentioned by Gygax in the Greyhawk Gazetteer, pg. 15.

on the northern shore of the Nir Div. The Free City of Greyhawk is not shown on this map, but it would be south of the Nir Div, roughly between the County of Yerocundy and the Contested Area. (Dan Boggs is of the opinion that the Contested Area is equivalent to the Wild Coast in the published World of Greyhawk setting, and this is a reasonable speculation, considering that the twisted geography actually somewhat fits with that interpretation.)

To the west of Yerocundy we find other territorial names which will be familiar to devotees of the published Greyhawk setting, including Keoland, the Sea of Dust, the Dry Steppes, and the Duchy of Geoff. On the Zenopus Archives[193], we find a nice insight from Zach that the Yerocundy-bordering "Kingdom of Faraz" might well be one half of the realm that Gary would name Furyondy as a whole. When we consider that "Fara[*z*]-Yerocundy" can be combined as "Faracundy," this certainly seems to be rather likely.

The Contested Area can also be arguably mapped not just to the Wild Coast, but also (and alternately) to the later published "County of Urnst," (and adjacent Urnst-lands) which we can of course interpret as "The County of Ernest" … that is, the domain held by fellow gamer Ernest Gary Gygax. Sadly Gary doesn't seem to have been involved in this mapped Great Kingdom game hosted by Arneson; or at least, I've seen nothing to date proving such a connection. However, this entry much later by Gygax might of passing interest:[194] "When the Nyrondel won their independence, they took the County of Urnst, and were massing troops to cross the Nesser." Similarly, we find an entry in the Nyrond section of that Greyhawk Gazetteer booklet: "Nyrond also went through a phase of near-imperialism, making both the County of Urnst and the Theocracy of the Pale tributary states for a time. This course was altered, however, when the wise King Dustan I, called Crafty, saw his realm threatened by internal strife and exterior enemies and called up the Great Council of Rel Mord."

It would certainly be tempting (sadly, it's probably wishful thinking on my part) to think that Gary might have written a few entries in the World of Greyhawk Gazetteer while recollecting Great Kingdom wargames of times past; but there is no proof of such a thing. We don't even know if Gary was keeping tabs on (or even aware of) Arneson's Great Kingdom map updates of c. 1974. Nevertheless, if the notes or draft of the Gazetteer ever come to light, it would be interesting to read them with that wild hypothesis in mind!

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[193] See "Megarry's Copy of the Great Kingdom Map," February 2nd, 2017.

[194] See the World of Greyhawk Folio booklet, pg. 18.

There is much more to learn about the Great Kingdom map and its associations to the pre-history of both Blackmoor and Greyhawk, but that's as far as I can take things at the moment without further evidence, and without going completely off the rails of our current tale.

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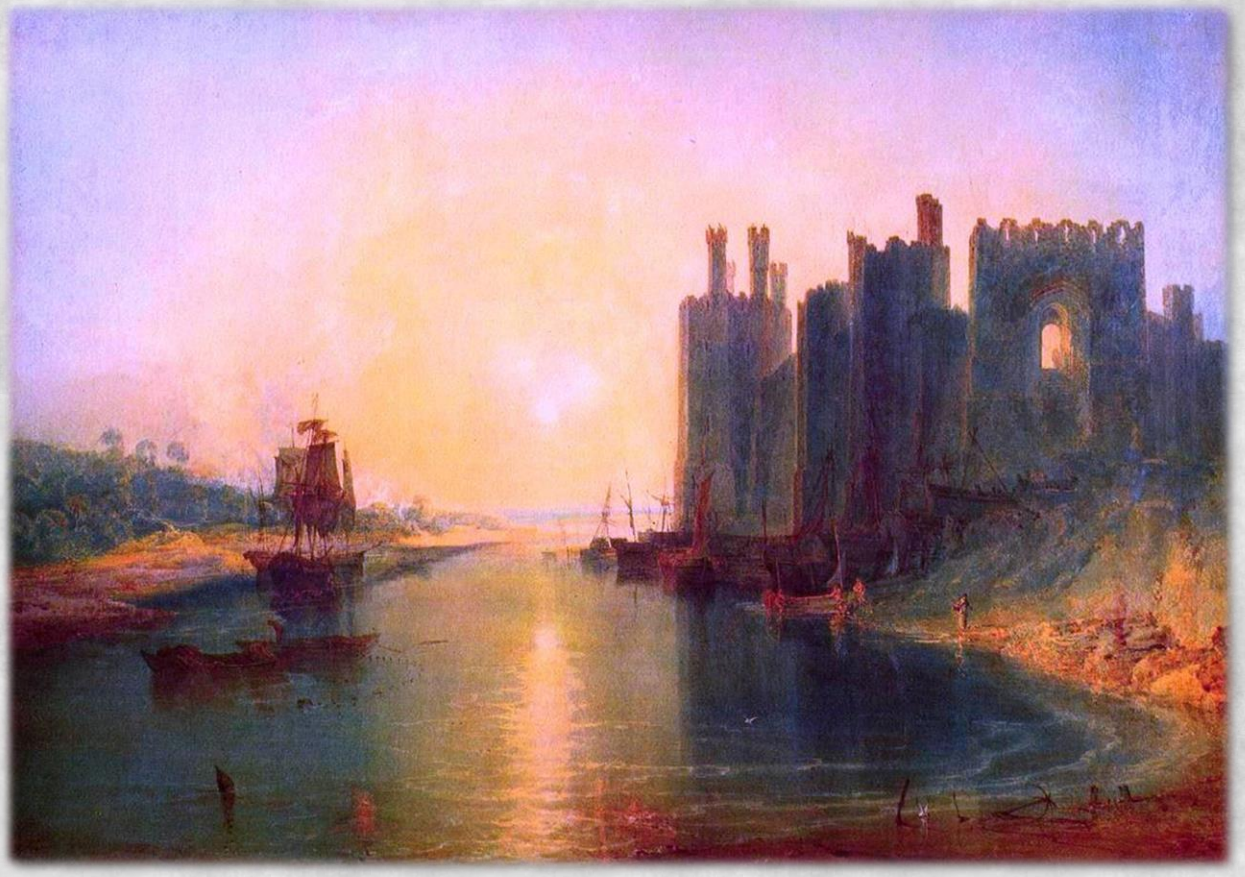
And now that we are beginning to tease apart the secrets of the Great Kingdom, the "true" location of Blackmoor, and also the wild direction Gary would soon be taking his *Chainmail Fantasy* game, it is time for us to get to know Dave Arneson a little better. The man's importance to the development of Dungeons & Dragons cannot be overstated. For you see, Dave — inspired by the Great Kingdom and his own little makeshift barony in the frigid north — was about to go on a tangent of his own that would change the world of gaming forever.



Every kingdom, no matter how great, has a challenged frontier.

CHAPTER 4
IN HONOR OF ARNESON
(C. 1970 – 1971)

Above the rolling horizon of moor …
rises the great snowy dome of Erick's-jokull …
with precipitous sides of black lava
towering up like an immense giant's castle …

— *Grettir the Outlaw* (one of the great Icelandic sagas), as translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

BEFORE WE begin to consider the contributions of Mr. Arneson, I feel that I must repent to some degree.

To this point, my narrative has been unashamedly "Gygaxian." In other words, my historical anecdotes have been primarily, and even in some cases solely, dependent upon Gary's own exclusive version of events. Many people today are surprised to learn that Dave Arneson co-authored *Dungeons & Dragons*, especially when it is considered that by the time of the FRPG "Silver Age" exemplified by early *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* (1977-1979), the business relationship between Gygax and Arneson had grown so sour that Arneson was granted absolutely *zero* official credit on the covers of the *Advanced* rules volumes. By that time Gary had redesigned the entire original game, and he felt entitled to take the lion's share of credit as his own.

The end result of this disappointing circumstance is that for any player or Dungeon Master who came into the game after 1977, they may have never seen Arneson's name in print associated with *Dungeons & Dragons*. Or, he may have only been mentioned in passing on a title page, with no details elucidating his considerable contributions to the game.

The reasons for this sad turn of events are many and convoluted, but the heart of the matter is this: Gary was the better rules writer, the far more *frequent* writer, and the man who was much more interested in risk-taking and the business side of things. Arguably, Gary was also more social at cons, more forthright, more organized, more of an intensive planner, and he had a better memory. And most

assuredly, he published more than Arneson could ever hope or care to. Arneson ran his games out of his binder and his head. Gary cleaned up all of the unpresentable materials, took the financial risks, and made certain that the game products could reach the public.

Gary was the *doer*, in a commercial way; Arneson was the campaign guy who kept his best gaming moments in the basement. But Gary was never solely responsible for the creation of the game.

Arneson's contributions are vitally important to the legacy of the game, but in a purely historical context we have much less information about where he was and what he was doing. We hardly ever know what he was *thinking*, either. The confusion caused by this absence of available evidence has convoluted things to the point where frequently, in those arcane matters of game design where Arneson was directly involved but Gygax was never present, we have almost *no* chronological information from Arneson's perspective at all. We are left with scraps and guesswork to tell the tale.

Indeed, many of the crucial and key historical texts recording Dave's accounts are extremely rare, and a significant number of them only came to 21st-century light through Jon Peterson's research, as detailed in his blog and associated book, *Playing at the World*. Dan Boggs is also to be acknowledged in this endeavor as well, for his remarkable early work on the key *Dungeons & Dragons* historical text which is sometimes misleadingly named as the "Dalluhn Manuscript." (To be clearer and to cast a bit of Dispel Confusion on that key document: this nonesuch text — an early version of the D&D rules — was actually found among the papers of M. A. R. Barker, designer of *Empire of the Petal Throne*; Keith Dalluhn was a later owner of that text.)

The "Dalluhn," unfortunately, is one of the only surviving examples of a 1973 D&D rules text which remains in the present day. There is not much else that is publicly available for us to look at, and many of the crucial documents we need to create a fair and balanced history of the collaborative design approach are missing. The result of this lamentable scarcity of materials is that we almost always have a wealth of information from Gary's side of the story, but only fleeting glimpses of the mysterious Arneson.

Given the tragic fact that these two men greatly disliked each other for a long while, this imbalance in the widely-available record creates a dangerous potential for pro-Gygaxian bias as we strive to re-gather the scattered tale of *Dungeons & Dragons*. I myself am far from innocent in this matter. Growing up (and beginning my play of D&D in 1981), I always knew who Gary was and loved to read his articles in *Dragon* magazine, but I never knew much about Arneson until I asked older

players about their out-of-print editions of the game.

Given this bleak state of gaming history, I feel it is important that I provide a finely-colored, if incomplete, profile of Dave before I continue. Without such a profile, Arneson's contributions to *Dungeons & Dragons* may seem minor and intangible, which is absolutely not the reality. The game never would have existed without his brilliant innovations. Dave was sometimes unlikable, just as Gary sometimes was, but they were both good men who shared their dreams and thereby, through a leap-of-faith collaboration, managed to bequeath to us what is — in my own opinion — the greatest game ever made.

Dave, like Gary, passed away only a few years ago. But where Gary's death was widely reported (and even resulted in a resurgence of popular interest in *Dungeons & Dragons* itself), Dave was rarely mentioned in the news outside of the Twin Cities, and almost no one outside of the gaming community was made aware of the impact of his passing. Mr. Arneson's legacy may well be in eventual danger of being forgotten by the younger generations. Regrettably, instead of having a well-guarded estate of memory like Gary's (which is according to rumor being leveraged into a potential movie deal and other ambitious endeavors),[195] Dave's vast collection of gaming treasures was moved into a storage locker after his death and almost lost to history. Fortunately, several intrepid collectors managed to save this collection, and significant historical revelations relating to Arneson's trove are still being unearthed and awaiting full disclosure. Hopefully, before these treasures are scattered into private collections and their entwined historical associations forever lost, we will be gifted with a research project which will augment our understanding of Arneson and his games by way of this otherwise-unattainable information. And the upcoming documentaries will help us a great deal as well!

… Maybe.

(I have been badly burned by D&D-themed documentary promises in the past, so you will hopefully forgive me for the painful guardedness of my optimism.)

But for now … awaiting the generous efforts of wiser and silent men … we wait.

* * * * *

I will share what I know.

Dave was born in Hennepin County, Minnesota on October 1st, 1947. From childhood, he loved history, games, books, movies and television. Early on he

[195] Fortunately, a David Arneson documentary is in the making at this time (2017). When I am able to report on the content of this work in progress, and thereby to enhance our knowledge of Arneson the man, I will happily do so in these pages.

latched onto the very same game as Gary — Avalon Hill's *Gettysburg*, receiving a copy from his parents as a gift in the early 1960s — and took a serious interest in wargaming as both a hobby, and as a means for historical research.

He was a brilliant, quick-witted and innovative gamer, at turns trustworthy and wryly backstabbing in his play. He could be boisterous and cantankerous as the mood suited him, but he always loved good friends, good times and quality works of the imagination. He especially loved the works of J. R. R. Tolkien and classic horror movies, such as *King Kong*, *Godzilla* and *The Blob*. And he liked *terrible* movies too!

He enjoyed Kung Fu flicks and cheesy and fantastical television shows, which would inspire his design of the monk character class in the later Blackmoor era. His brilliance was mercurial, however, and he was much more interested in creating a rough draft of an idea than in going through the technical bore of refining the idea into a workable universal format explainable to others. A lot of his rules were developed not before play, but rather during play when a judgement of some kind was required to officiate over the unexpected events and creative actions engendered by his clever players.

In *Dungeons & Dragons* terms, these two good men — Dave and Gary — were very different. Gary could at times be considered Lawful (the organizer), while Dave was more Chaotic (the innovator). A fateful quote from Arneson's last known interview reads as follows: "I dislike 'Rules Lawyers' intensely. I regard *them* as the enemy."[196] Codification over gaming was simply not his thing.

This capricious, dualistic and free-flowing nature would serve Arneson well in game design, but not so well when it came to publishing works of a formal and professional nature. That, as we will see, was more Gary's forte.

* * * * *

Arneson did have one exemplary gift which is often overlooked today, however: he had an uncanny knack for finding like-minded wargamers in the Twin Cities area who would be receptive to bold new ideas. He was great at choosing intelligent and promising people. As one example, he met a young man named Mike Carr who would become a player in the fateful wargames, the Braunstein-era role-playing games, and the Blackmoor campaign, which were all accidental footsteps on the path which led into *Dungeons & Dragons*. Mr. Carr's recollections in particular are important and fascinating, because they give us a rare and insightful

[196] The Kobold Press interview with Dave Arneson.

glimpse of just what Arneson was like as a Game Master, designer, and player in the 1960s and early 1970s.

And so, where Arneson's historical record is lacking, I will supplement the spotty existing evidence with Mike's own memories as best I can.

As Mike recalled a scene for a later interview, he related:

"I grew up in St. Paul. … In the eighth grade [*c. 1963-1964?*] I was at a stationery store, and saw an Avalon Hill wargame and made my first purchase … so I got into that. In those days, Avalon was making one game a year which was coming out every spring, so those of us in that rather niche hobby were always looking forward to what was going to come out next."[197]

(The first AH game that Mike bought there by the way was *U-Boat*, a classic which had been released in 1959.)[198]

Mike also noted: "Through this interest in historical games I happened to meet Dave Arneson — who was several years older than I was — and he was very involved in the miniatures [*wargames*] and so on."[199] It seems that this fateful meeting with Arneson occurred in early 1967, and as a result of Arneson's choosing, as Mike explained: "We [*Dave and I*] met … I was starting to get involved with a club called Aggressor Homeland, which was one of the larger national clubs for people who enjoyed wargames … I think [*Dave*] heard about me through that. Not long after that [*1967*], the International Federation of Wargaming sprung up."[200]

We will explore this crucial gaming connection between Dave and Mike, and what it means in regards to the sparse historical record, a little further on in this chapter.

* * * * *

There is more, of course.

We should remember always that Dave was *not* just a gamer. And to his friends

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[197] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 1:25.

[198] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 2:55.

[199] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 1:30.

[200] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 4:00.

and close gaming circle, frequently he was not mysterious to all. His fun-loving spirit, creative impulses, and secretive thought processes were simply facets of his own peculiar nature.



Youth is eternal. Old age is not a disease;
it is a symptom, of a lack of the fantastical.

He was well-loved by his family, and his own love of both history and fantasy meant that his house was always filled with games involving sailing ships,

Napoleonic soldiers, and of course fantasy campaigns where gamers could wage battles in glorious worlds that never were. When speaking to the press after her father had passed away, Dave's daughter offered us a rare glimpse of the happy household: "No matter what house we lived in, our entire basement was always devoted to gaming. I thought everybody believed in fairies and elves and dragons. I was a little surprised in elementary school when I found out that wasn't the norm."[201]

Dave was always a creatively scattered, multi-branched and fairly messy person (much like this author), with all of the best and worst implications those quirks entail. Where Gary was a refiner, Arneson was more of a generative "idea guy." Gary was making a name for himself as the supreme organizer of others' half-formed creations, while Arneson's more impressionistic designs tended to be poorly-documented and fascinating. And as Dave once told the world, with abject sincerity and wisdom, "Imaginations do tend to be unruly."[202]

But paradoxically, he was only disorganized to an exterior observer. He was a master game organizer, and a master wargaming campaign director, to the point that Gygax himself — via the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and *Don't Give Up the Ship!*[203] — would learn a *lot* from his innovative approaches to campaign design and implementation. And everything made perfect sense within his mind … he simply couldn't always convey the manner of his thinking to other people. Consider too that in many ways, Arneson was the first person that we — from our history-garnering and backward-gazing standpoint — would regard as a true RPG "Game Master" (a role developed via *Diplomacy* and later the Braunsteins). David Wesely had been running free-form role-playing events before Arneson, and indeed later inspired him to run his own, but Arneson would take the core role-playing concept and apply its potential to his own ambitious wargaming campaigns in a creative, expansive, collaborative, and nearly unprecedented manner.

Arneson's own fantasy world of play actually started with an ambitious RPG-wargame hybrid which is little known today. As Mike Carr would recall: "One of the games we played in those days was with World War II … soldier miniatures.

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[201] See "Dungeons and Dragons Co-Creator Dies in St. Paul," Arts & Culture, Amy Forliti, Associated Press, Minneapolis (AP), April 10th, 2009.

[202] *The Space Gamer*, issue #21. "An Interview with Dave Arneson."

[203] For his own part, Dave Arneson would be drawing on his own experiences with naval warfare rules from the Twin Cities play group to broaden the game's rules systems. For example, it appears that Arneson drew in the existing morale system from *Strategos-N* for use in DGUTS!. See also the Hidden in Shadows blog, "Blackmoor as a *Chainmail* Campaign," July 20th, 2017.

There was a rules set called *Modern War in Miniature*, by Michael Korns. That was a tabletop game, and we were buying model railroad buildings made by Kibri in Germany … [*there were*] a lot of European town buildings and factories … we'd play the man-to-man combat with a referee. … That was one of several precursors of role-playing."[204]

The Korns war scenario simulation rules are fascinating, but difficult to decipher. There are a few tantalizing glimpses of innovations we now take for granted, such as fictitious individual soldiers (roughly analogous to men-at-arms), descriptions of actions using maps but no miniatures (which could well also be a backward glimpse of European wargames played in earlier centuries), and rapid descriptions of choice-based combat action creating an interplay between players and the referee. But as a wargame with only a few proto-RPG elements, Korns's *Modern War in Miniature* requires the judges, or referees, to describe and adjudicate the action for the players. "The judges are very important," we read in Korns's seminal treatise. "They are the only ones who need be familiar with the rules. The players … are not allowed to see what is going on … They know only what the judge tells them that their troops can see or hear."[205]

This "fog of war" approach, with a master judge and limited perspective-based information for the players, is crucial in our consideration. And this exact approach would be used later on by Arneson in his very first Castle Blackmoor battle scenarios and dungeon romps, as we shall see.

Mike also noted the important innovation to wargaming which Arneson created on his own: the implementation of a massive strategic-level European conflict which featured multiple players, free-form orders, and adjudicated interpretations (by Arneson as the Game Master) of all of the unpredictable situations that could arise. In other words, this was a convoluted exercise in world building. Carr explained it this way: "Dave created and ran a massive Napoleonic campaign that featured *Diplomacy*, the creation of armies and navies, strategic movements and tactical battles that were resolved using tabletop miniatures. It was a richly detailed game that kept 15 to 20 players busy, and he did a superb job of running it over a period of several years."[206]

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[204] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 1:30.

[205] *Modern War in Miniature*, by Michael F. Korns, pg. 6.

[206] Q&A with Mike Carr by Geoffrey McKinney, as featured in the *In Search of the Unknown Campaign Sourcebook* (compiled and edited by Demos Sachlas), pg. 6.

And Carr's further reminiscences in his Save Or Die interview are worth quoting at length, because they explain precisely how Arneson's Napoleonics sessions cemented an essential gaming relationship between Arneson and Gygax. Carr explained:

"[*Dave ran the Napoleonic campaign*] twice over a number of years. … It was *Diplomacy*-based … where you'd start out by making fleets and armies, and then he'd drop down into tremendous detail … you'd have national budgets depending on how much territory you had, and you'd apply those budgets to expend for troops, [*and the*] training of troops. … There was a naval element, with ships and so on. He ran this thing … keep in mind this was before the age of computers, where you can tally up things electronically. … He had lots of notes and was rolling dice, running this whole thing, and it was quite remarkable. … What was *most* remarkable was the scope of it. … He was dicing to see what encounters those [*solo privateering*] ships would have, and where, and we could fight those out."[207]



Easy. How complex can this be to simulate?

[207] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 6:30.

This key innovation — allowing venturesome players, role-playing various naval captains, to plot their own unpredictable courses *away* from the main action, journeying through a larger imaginary world of conflict where random encounters would be devised — gives us a tantalizing glimpse of how Arneson's even more ambitious Blackmoor game would soon be played as well.

And it is intriguing (and telling) that Gary himself became involved in the Napoleonic campaign as well, as a player who too would marvel at Arneson's game mastering and meticulous level of detail. Carr explained, "Interestingly … I think it was in the second campaign … to simulate the role of America [*in the European theater of war and politics c. 1800*], Dave had Gary Gygax in far-off Lake Geneva — 300 miles from the Twin Cities — play the Americans. Of course, they had a small but very stout navy in those days, and they would occasionally … be like a wild card showing up in European waters. … [*It was*] kind of a fascinating milieu."[208]

I must stress for clarity that Gary was the *learning* player there, and Arneson the veteran referee. In some ways, therefore — despite Gary's already significant experience in wargame play and game design — it can arguably be said that beyond *Diplomacy*, Gary got his first significant glimpse of improvisational role-playing refereeing, and its true potential, when he was playing in Dave's pre-Blackmoor Napoleonic campaign. We are also now interested in the rediscovered "Spanish Royals" character sheet from this campaign, which shows us that individual characters in the campaign had names, ages, and ability scores which may have influenced the success or failure of various character actions under game master Arneson's ever-watchful eye.

There are some more fairly significant details about this campaign, which I can derive from Mike Carr's early 1974 article, entitled "The Twin Cities Napoleonic Simulation Campaign."[209] The games apparently began in the spring of 1969, and eventually encompassed over 25 players with roles as commanders and sub-commanders. The game's imaginary timeframe began in Spring 1800, and the most recent campaign had only reached Fall 1802 by late 1973. The game as mentioned involved both troop movements and resource management (money, manpower, cannons, dry goods, etc.), and this process would later be carried over into the more experimental Blackmoor fantasy campaign with some details on troops and ships arriving pretty much intact. Combat in the campaign was resolved using Arneson's rules, which drew not only from *Diplomacy*, but also from various

[208] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 10:35.

[209] *El Conquistador* fanzine, Volume 1, Issue 5, January 1974.

miniature wargames, and board wargames too. These rules systems and their various interactions were sometimes reported in Arneson's sporadic *Corner of the Table* fanzine.[210] Maneuvers where armies and/or ships were about to meet up would be tracked on hex maps, or real topographic maps for the appropriate places in Europe and beyond (whenever possible).

It is all very fascinating. However, the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign's origin story is exceedingly convoluted. If you crave the full tale, you can further study the account in Peterson's *Playing at the World*. But if you would rather fancy a tour of just the highlights and milestones without the requisite homework, I can provide that for you here …

Dave Arneson started playing *Diplomacy* in the (mid?) 1960s, perhaps with David Wesely. There were variants to *Diplomacy* in existence which involved setting the game in different times, modifying player nations, and so forth. There were "*Napoleonic Diplomacy*" variants in existence no later than spring 1968, and probably earlier. One fanzine[211] tells us that a "new McDuffie game will be called '*Napoleonic Diplomacy*.'" Another earlier zine[212] states *Napoleonic Diplomacy* was considered a basic variant, with 5 players instead of 7, omitting the nations of Germany and Italy.

In December 1968, Arneson and his play group were interested in this Napoleonic approach, but wanted *Diplomacy*-type rules to form the strategic background for a far more detailed wargame involving interlocked battle scenarios. They started looking for rules, systems, and ideas to fuel this ambitious idea, and probably began their attempted campaign in spring 1969 (as mentioned by Mike Carr).

At some point in 1969, Gary Gygax developed another variant termed *Napoleonic Diplomacy II*. This was published in the *Thangorodrim* fanzine (c. September), and Arneson's group seized on Gary's template with enthusiasm. They added rules for miniatures battles, more nations, more economic factors (such as wealth and manpower per country), troop experience based on victories, and naval rules. The naval rules were partly inspired by Fletcher Pratt's established ship battles game, and the rules would gradually evolve over time to become *Don't Give Up the Ship!* (by Arneson and Gygax, edited by Carr). Arneson's campaign thus got up to speed and into 1970, but it slowed down under its own weight despite this

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[210] To maximize confusion, issues of this fanzine are almost impossible to come by. Also, they are sometimes alternately titled *Corner of the Table Top*, or merely COT or COTT.

[211] *Diplomania* #26, August 1969, pg. 17.

[212] *Valhalla* #1, April 1968, pg. 10.

momentum because the *Diplomacy* strategic turns were stalled while the play group was waiting for detailed battle actions (based on the prior turn's events) to be resolved.

The game lurched along mightily. Arneson and others were getting increasingly frustrated, because overall play was getting bogged down by too many of these delayed action resolutions. A wargamer named Randy Hoffa proposed joining an upcoming and competing campaign in spring 1971, which got Arneson — who had enough headaches already — thinking about a more enjoyable medieval-themed game instead of his current Napoleonic quagmire. That new game would become Blackmoor.

The quasi-roleplaying aspects of the campaign grew out of *Diplomacy*, letters and missives written in character (a few by Gygax and others survive), and the players' conversations. As Carr noted at the time, "Such things as personalities, research and development, and espionage provide the ongoing campaign with color, diversity, and intrigue."

As of late 1973, the campaign's participants and roles were as follows. I've included the entire roster with some D&D-related notes, because you are going to see some familiar names that pop up later in our RPG historical chronicle from time to time!

PLAYER ROLES IN THE 1973 NAPOLEONIC SIMULATION CAMPAIGN			
Player	**Campaign Country / Power**	**Player Title** *(And my personal observations)*	**Additional Notes Relevant to RPGs and *Dungeons & Dragons***
Ab(e)ler, Jim	Lombardy	King Abeler (perhaps a prediction of the real-world Kingdom of Lombardy-Venetia, established in northernmost Italy in 1815)	Played an evil mage in the Blackmoor campaign, companion to the Balrog
Arneson, Dave	N/A	"Campaign founder and director" (what	Co-creator of *Dungeons & Dragons*,

		we would call the Game Master)	creator of Blackmoor
Barber, Jim	The Papal States	Pope Barber (likely in recognition of Pope Pius VII)	Played an elf in the Blackmoor campaign; one of the men-at-arms in the first dungeon adventure
Belfry, Scott	Denmark	Chancellor Belfry (probably in recognition of the Grand Chancellorship, although King Christian VII might have been more appropriate to the real-world period)	Played in the Blackmoor campaign, explored the Temple of the Frog
Belleflower, Bob	Brazil	Cafetero Belleflower (a term meaning "the coffee grower"; Brazil's monarchy arose again in 1815)	(Unknown; may not have been involve in pre-D&D sessions)
Carr, Mike	Barbary States	Pasha Carr (probably a reference to the various ruling pirate captains of the Barbary Corsairs)	Creator of *Fight in the Skies*, editor of *Don't Give Up the Ship!*, future TSR employee, creator of Dungeon Module B1 *In Search of the Unknown*, played as a cleric in Blackmoor
Fant, Dave	Austria	Emperor Fant (perhaps a nod to Francis I, who ruled Austria 1804-1835 as the son of the Holy Roman Emperor)	Played the Baron of Blackmoor

Gaylord, Pete	Sicily	King Gaylord (a nod to Ferdinand III)	Played the Wizard of the Woods (the first significant mage character), explored the Temple of the Frog
Grant, Phil	Greece	Rebel Leader Grant (presaging the Greek War of Independence, against the Ottoman Empire, which began in the 1820s in the real world)	Played an elf in the Blackmoor campaign
Gygax, Gary	(United States)	Secretary of the Navy Gygax (as of 1971; Gary was not noted in the 1973 roster for the game, likely because he had moved on to his own Greyhawk campaign mastery by then)[213]	Co-creator of *Dungeons & Dragons*, founder of Tactical Studies Rules (TSR)
Heaton, Bill	Russian Empire	First Minister Heaton (akin to the historical Ivan Andreyevich Veydemeyer in his second term)	Played the Blue Rider in the Blackmoor campaign, William of the Heath

[213] We have a pair of entertaining letters, courtesy of the Secrets of Blackmoor blog, which show Gary (in character as Secretary of the U.S. Navy) in rare form writing communiques to other players, seeking to enhance the position of the United States in the campaign. A letter from November 1971 shows Gary acting on behalf of Don Kaye ("President") asking Don Nicholson (the King of Spain) about the potential sale of Spanish territories of the U.S. The second letter, from January 1972, shows that Dan didn't bite … so Gary informed the King that the U.S. armed forces were occupying Puerto Rico, with the cover of combatting piracy in the Caribbean. The letters show the extents of the players' clever wheeling and dealing, and the eloquence put into the letters is a clear indicator of Gary's enthusiasm for the role-playing element (clearly borrowed from *Diplomacy*). Refer to the Secrets of Blackmoor notes, Facebook, June 1st, 2017.

Jenkins, Duane	Great Britain	King (Prime Minister?) Jenkins (perhaps modeling the position of the historical King James III)	Played Sir Jenkins in Blackmoor, who wanted to be a vampire[214]
Johnson, Rick ("Mel")	Russian Empire	Tsar Johnson (akin to the historical Nicholas I)	Played Mello the halfling in Blackmoor; one of the men-at-arms in the first dungeon adventure
Kirkpatrick, Tom	French Empire	Emperor Kirkpatrick (roughly approximating the role of Napoleon I)	Played a halfling in Blackmoor
Krey, Kurt	Spanish Empire	Prince Krey (perhaps partly a nod to Charles IV)	Played an evil wizard in Blackmoor; one of the men-at-arms in the first dungeon adventure
Kuntz, Rob	United States	President Kuntz (in a role formerly played by Don Kaye; perhaps akin to John Adams)	Second Dungeon Master of the Greyhawk campaign, and played Sir Robilar
Maker, Ross	Sweden	Regent Maker (probably a nod to Charles, Duke of Södermanland, who served as regent for Gustav IV Adolph in 1792-1796)	Played a dwarf in Blackmoor; may have been partly responsible for the development of slime monsters in the campaign

[214] Duane Jenkins was important to this history in other ways as well, as we shall see in the "Sir Jenkins" adventures. David Megarry also had this to say: "Duane Jenkins is best known as 'The Third Man.' [*That is, likely after Arneson and Gygax in terms of game mastering.*] … He may possibly be the first person to play in Dave Arneson's Blackmoor."

Megarry, Dave	Prussia	King Megarry (akin to the historical Frederick William III)	Played in the Blackmoor campaign, creator of the influential game *Dungeon!*
Nelson, Dale	Ottoman Empire	Sultan Nelson (akin to the historical Selim III)	Played in the Blackmoor campaign; may have played Gin of Salik
Nelson, Jim	Caribbean Pirates	"Black Siegfried" (regional piracy was mostly stamped out by this time, but this is probably a special position to throw a further wrench into the various nations' naval plans)	(Unknown; may not have been involved in pre-D&D sessions)
Nicholson, Dan	Spanish Empire	Regent Nicholson (probably a reflection of the tumultuous royal politics in early 19th-century Spain)	Played a merchant boss in the Blackmoor campaign and is noted in the *First Fantasy Campaign*
Rocheford, Steve	Great Britain	Prime Minister Rocheford (akin to the historical Right Honourable Henry Addington)	One of the men-at-arms in the first dungeon adventure; ran a human empire in the *Star Empires* campaign
Shepro, Ken	Marata (India)	Maharaja Shepro (perhaps indicating Raghoji II Bhonsle)	(Unknown, but may have been a Blackmoor player)
Soukup, John	Tuscany	King Soukup (perhaps modeled toward Grand Duke	Played the Balrog in the Blackmoor

		Ferdinando III)	campaign
Webster, Tom	American Indians	Chief Webster (this could be a general allusion to chiefs of the eastern Native Americans, for example Little Turkey (1794-1801) of the Cherokee Nation East)	(Ancients gamer, ran the Atlantis wargame setting;[215] other participation in pre-D&D unknown)
Wesely, Dave	Holland	King Wesely (perhaps a nod to Louis I / Lodewijk I, who ruled the Netherlands 1806-1810)	Creator of the Braunstein proto-RPG sessions, *Strategos N*, and played a half-elf in Blackmoor, explored the Temple of the Frog

Pretty fascinating, eh? Arneson, Carr, Gygax, Kuntz, Megarry, Wesely, and all the rest. So many of the epic movers and shakers were role-playing, competing and negotiating in this massive campaign game. It almost sounds like *Dungeons & Dragons* in Napoleonic historical mode, with Arneson as GM, before D&D even existed …

[215] The Atlantis campaign is tangential to D&D history, but it is interesting because it is a game with a few fantasy elements that featured Gary Gygax's play, and later Dave Arneson's as well. (Gary invited medieval wargamers to join the Ancients Society too, but not much came of it, which would arguably lead him to seek to expand the medieval wargaming theme on his own.) The Atlantis game — concerning Carthaginian raids on a fading Atlantis of dying glory, as imagined in c. 400 BC — was probably established by Tom in 1969. Gary, having designed Roman and barbarian factions, got more involved around early 1970, with Arneson there perhaps in April (and no later than November). Gary (over the months of 1970) would get weary of waiting for the details from Tom's rules, so he would go his own way … leading by many steps, of course, to the publication of *Chainmail* and Gary's interest in Arneson's fantasy campaign. (Also, perhaps these bits of fantasy would give Dave some future inspiration for his own experimental Blackmoor games next year, in the spring of 1971.) Tom Webster, for his part, would still be playing with this Atlantis theme for quite some time and we find mentions of him still doing so in 1974.



Imperial Europe … perhaps the greatest game of all.

That incredible campaign would also directly inform the wild, extra-detailed, yet tumultuous approach that Dave would soon take with the even more ambitious fantasy game of Blackmoor. And it is Blackmoor, in turn, which is Arneson's legacy and memorial triumph (and it is certainly a significant predecessor to every MMORPG, MUD, and computer RPG in existence to this day). Carr's assessment of Arneson's true gaming gift in this regard is very apt: Dave "was quite remarkable, very imaginative," he said. "He not only was very well-versed in Napoleonic history, but of course he knew fantasy and science fiction to a strong degree. [*He*

and Gary Gygax] were very well-read in that background, and their creativity as Game Masters was quite extraordinary."[216] [*4-14*]

Indeed, it is widely known — but rarely related in any detail — that Dave shared with Gary a heartfelt love of fantasy adventure fiction. Learning exactly what Dave liked in the fantasy genre requires a little digging, however. His favorites included the expanded Conan saga (by Robert E. Howard and successors), the *Gor* novels of John Norman (which would influence elements of Blackmoor, such as tarns and "silk" slave maidens),[217] and of course *The Lord of the Rings*. Arneson also once stated: "As far as books go — fantasy books, science fiction / fantasy books that inspired me — we're talking about Poul Anderson, Robert Heinlein, and a lot of the other authors, like the author [*Robert Adams*] of the Horseclans. Gary Seems to have listed every book he's ever read in his bibliography, and I'll be blunt, I don't think I've read a lot of those books. Although, after having read a few thousand books, I really can't remember which ones I've read anymore. So a lot of it is, 'Yes, I was inspired by …' But where does the inspiration stop and the game design begin? I mean, you've got to make changes. You've got to do variations. You can be influenced by something you read and don't even remember reading … [*and*] incorporate into [*the game*] world."[218]

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You can see how, in such statements, Dave lists a few meager inspirations while more strongly underscoring the fact that he marched to his own drummer whenever it came to game design.

Extrapolating and considering the early play reports, it is therefore likely that literary scenes involving (a) dungeon survival (such as Conan's travails in *The Scarlet Citadel*), (b) the explorations of Goblin Town and Erebor (in *The Hobbit*), and (c) the epic confrontation with the Balrog in Moria (famously told of in *The Fellowship of the Ring*) would all play their parts in inspiring Dave to conceive of *dungeons and dystopian netherworlds* as potential settings for gaming scenarios. This is one of the crucial innovations which Gary Gygax, despite creating a Fantasy Supplement for the overland battles featured in *Chainmail*, had simply overlooked. *Chainmail* was an overland game … despite some references to mines and sappers and siege

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[216] *The Save or Die Podcast: Interview with Mike Carr*, posted December 4th, 2010. The conversation begins at approximately 6:30.

[217] These influences show that the Blackmoor play group were at least familiar with, and drawing from, Book 5 of the Gor series, *Assassin of Gor* … which is where the concept of "silk" slaves was originally introduced.

[218] Refer to the Comeback Inn forums, "Blackmoor reading list."

tunnels, the netherworld really had nothing to do with the way that Gary's game was played.

Dave adored silly fun just as much, and perhaps more than, he appreciated studying the machinations of historical armies and political détente. He was a devout fan of *Dark Shadows* (which was enjoyed even more by his vampire-obsessed player Duane Jenkins),[219] martial arts pulps, Japanese monster movies, Hollywood and Universal monsters, and especially the eternally popcorn-worthy "Creature Feature" ensembles: those marathon celebrations of pulpy horror movies shown on late-night television, which were otherwise (by the end of the 1960s) uncommonly seen.



"Carrion crawler? Never heard of it, this is 1902."

[219] Comeback Inn forums, threads "Dark Shadows and Blackmoor?" and "Sir Fang / Baron Fant." See also the Dragonsfoot forums, "Early Blackmoor Questions," posted June 11th, 2004.

The importance of those monster movies cannot be overstated. The Creature Feature ensembles enjoyed a massive resurgence in the early 1970s, with staple movies drawing in younger fans, for whom the lurid worlds of black-and-white horror were often entirely new. Gary Gygax, while older, loved many of these movies as well. Films which would significantly impact the monsters and design of *Dungeons & Dragons* would include: *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), *Werewolf in London* (1935), *Phantom of the Opera* (1943), *The Thing from Another World* (1951), *The War of the Worlds* (1953), *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* (1954), *Them!* (1954), *Creature from the Black Lagoon* (1954), *Forbidden Planet* (1956), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *The Blob* (1958), *The Mummy* (1959), *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), *The Raven* (1963) and *The Green Slime* (1968).

These monster movies, combined with images from early childhood tales, would permanently sear themselves into Dave and Gary's brains. And we should be very thankful for that, to be sure!

The movies most especially left their mark. Gary also once wrote that the films which scared him the most as a youth included *She* (likely the 1935 version), the "return of Frankenstein" movies, the "ghost of Dracula" movies, and *The Thing*.[220] Gary loved *King Kong*, too … even before he got to see it. It seems that his older brother saw the film and told Gary all about it around 1942, but Gary would not get to see it for himself until the late 1950s.[221]

Dave (and Gary) would also be deeply influenced by the peerless stop-motion masterpieces touched by the hand of Ray Harryhausen, such as *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* (1958), *Jason and the Argonauts* (1963) and *One Million Years B.C.* (1966). In addition to Dave's appreciation of these classic monster movies, the low-budget and cheesy *Kaiju* spectacles were especially beloved. As Rob Kuntz once recalled, "Invariably if I didn't find Dave reading or writing, I'd find him watching his favorite Japanese monster movies. He usually had a big bowl of popcorn and was just laughing like a kid at these things."[222]

Any Dungeon Master who now wishes to recreate the keep and dungeons of Castle Blackmoor can simply watch all of the above, and get a tentative sense for where many of Arneson's inspirations came from. The dungeons over the many

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[220] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 9th, 2005. See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part XIII, posted April 12th, 2007.

[221] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted July 23rd, 2007.

[222] Lord of the Green Dragons blog, © Robert J. Kuntz, posted November 15th, 2010.

years would eventually feature animated skeletons (perhaps inspired by *Jason and the Argonauts*), evil plants and mind-controlled minions (likely informed by films such as *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*), flesh golems (*Frankenstein*), frogmen (*The Creature from the Black Lagoon*), ghosts (from too many movies to mention), giant ants (*Them!*), iron golems (*Jason and the Argonauts*, *Forbidden Planet*), mad scientists, masked fugitives, mummies, shape-shifters, slimes (*The Blob*, *The Green Slime*), spell-slinging warlocks (*The Raven*), vampires (*Dracula*), werewolves, and ludicrous giant beasties of every kind.

Most of the fond glosses outlining Arneson's inspirations that you will find in other places tend to list a few of these cinematic influences, but I felt that it was important to do some additional research, and to try to figure out exactly what Dave was watching and when. (An impossible task, but I do try.) In doing so, and in considering the Minneapolis / Saint Paul television broadcasting records of the time, we can come up with a collection of "Creature Feature" showings which will allow us to make some educated guesses toward the months and days in which Dave might have come up with some of his ideas.

Most importantly, there is the matter of dungeons and Castle Blackmoor. Dave himself could never quite remember which movie he had been watching when that genre-mixing inspiration struck him, but a little of this research can bring us close to figuring out the likely influences. In the Twin Cities, the Creature Feature marathons were bundled by Hubbard Broadcasting Inc. under the title *Horror Incorporated*. These shock-flicks ran on Saturdays at midnight (and also during the weekend afternoons), each presaged by the classic voice-over: "Lurking among the corpses are the body-snatchers, plotting their next venture into the graveyard ... the blood in your veins will run cold, your spine will tingle when you join us for an excursion through *Horror Incorporated*!"

This "creep show" was broadcast on KSTP-TV Channel 5 in Saint Paul. We can verify this connection to Blackmoor because Dave offered up a few tantalizing clues in various interviews, such as: "I had spent the previous two days watching about five monster movies on Channel 5's Creature Feature weekend ..."[223] The following quote is also of interest: "One Saturday after reading several S&S [*Swords & Sorcery*] novels, eating popcorn, and watching horror/monster movies all day, I designed a maze-like dungeon and populated it with orcs and similar beasties."[224]

Armed with such glancing information, we can delve a little further into the genesis of the dungeons under Castle Blackmoor.

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[223] *Dragon*, issue #249. "Profiles: Dave Arneson," by Allen Varney, pg. 120.

[224] *The Space Gamer*, issue #21. "An Interview with Dave Arneson."

Horror Incorporated premiered on November 8th, 1969[225], with a special showing of 1931's version of the original *Dracula*, starring Bela Lugosi. (The Blackmoor dungeons would by the way feature at least one vampire crypt, undead minions, and several generational curses too. Bram Stoker can be considered a grandfather to Blackmoor, in a way, if only via films and the *Dark Shadows* television series.) From a *Dungeons & Dragons* inspirational perspective, we are also interested in those movies which were being shown via *Horror Incorporated* in late 1971 when the Arnesonian dungeon games in the established Blackmoor campaign were getting into gear.

There may therefore be some "dungeon mysteries" hiding in these movies. For the avidly curious scholar who is eager to seek out more of the nefarious mysteries of Blackmoor, some of these lurid movies — and their late 1971 air dates in the Twin Cities, alphabetical by title — include: *The Ape* (November 20th), *The Beast with Five Fingers* (November 27th), *Behind the Mask* (December 17th), *The Black Room* (October 16th), *The Black Sleep* (October 30th), *The Brighton Strangler* (November 20th), *The Brute Man* (November 6th), *Chamber of Horrors* (October 30th), *Cry of the Werewolf* (December 4th), *The Devil Bat's Daughter* (November 13th), *Doctor X* (October 30th), *The Face Behind the Mask* (October 23rd), *The Face of Marble* (December 17th), *Gog* (November 13th), *Isle of the Dead* (December 4th), *Kronos* (October 16th), *The Man Who Lived Twice* (October 23rd), *The Mask of Dijon* (October 23rd), *The Phantom of Crestwood* (November 6th), *Return of the Ape Man* (October 23rd), *The Return of Doctor X* (November 27th), *Soul of a Monster* (December 11th), *The Strange Mr. Gregory* (December 17th), *Svengali* (November 13th), *Three Strangers* (December 17th), and *The Walking Dead* (December 11th).

Also, one of the movies played on April 10th, 1971 — around the time when Dave might have been devising his very first Blackmoor scenario — was the 1943 classic *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*. The Gothic plot of this classic film features treasure-hunting grave robbers, crypts, a werewolf, wolfsbane, resurrection, a family curse, a flesh golem (Frankenstein's Monster itself, of course), a quest to retrieve forbidden necromantic knowledge ("the secrets of life and death"), and an underground monster vault which lies near to a ruined castle.

Does any of this sound familiar?

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[225] I am indebted to the excellent not-for-profit *Horror Incorporated* Project blog, created and maintained by the worthy Michael Popham, for much of this information pertaining to Arneson's favored movies. I strongly encourage interested readers to stop by Michael's blogging site, which features many amusing essays and a fantastic collection of screenshots along with the relevant movie clips.

The intrepid reader and B-movie lover who is willing to sit through *all* of the above will probably wonder even more about Arneson's creative process than I already have. To my mind, one of the other interesting movies which presaged Blackmoor's underground dungeon settings was shown on Christmas Day, on Saturday, December 25th, 1971. On that day, *Horror Incorporated* featured *Night of Terror* (1933) and perhaps more importantly, *The Lady and the Monster* (1944). In the latter movie are featured a scientist of questionable sanity, a transplanted brain, the undead, telepathic control, necromantic possession, and a fateful wasteland fortress, "The Castle." This Castle may thus be one of the many cinematic influences for Castle Blackmoor proper.

There are a few other interesting (but sadly more indirect) clues which we can consider. To this initial imaginary structure may have been added Dave's recollections of another forgotten movie, *The Strangler of Blackmoor Castle* (1963). This odd film was directed by D. Harald Reinl (a disciple of Fritz Lang), and based upon a novel by Edgar Wallace. Wallace is now legendary for having assisted in scripting the initial draft for *King Kong* (in 1931 and 1932). If Dave was not familiar with this movie well within his favorite genre, its existence (and its name) is certainly an interesting coincidence!

The movie was released in Germany in 1963, and France and Finland in 1965. It was released as *Stryparen från Blackmoor* in Sweden (a country that Arneson would later visit) in 1969. The website dvddrive-in notes that the movie was "dubbed into English and shown repeatedly on late-night T.V. in the U.S.," but unfortunately I do not know the dates for the movie's American distribution. The "Krimi" web page at Latarnia.com indicates however that "Almost all of the German [*Edgar*] Wallace films were made available in English-dubbed versions for American audiences. Though a few saw theatrical exhibition, most were first seen on American television in the late 1960s and early 1970s, pruned of any nudity and a few distinctive elements, such as the typical introductory credit sequence of gunshots …" Further, the *Horror Incorporated* Project website notes that the Twin Cities were shown several Edgar Wallace / Krimi midnight movies, with one example being *Chamber of Horrors aka Die Tur Mit Den 7 Schlossern*, shown on October 30th, 1971.

From these mentions and others, I consider it a possibility that Dave Arneson may have viewed the *Blackmoor Castle* movie on television at some point between 1969 and 1971. Michael Popham of the *Horror Incorporated* Project has indicated to me in personal correspondence[226] that *The Strangler of Blackmoor Castle* does not appear in the *Horror Incorporated* program schedule between 1969 and 1972,

[226] This refers to e-mails exchanged between Mr. Popham and the author in July of 2014.

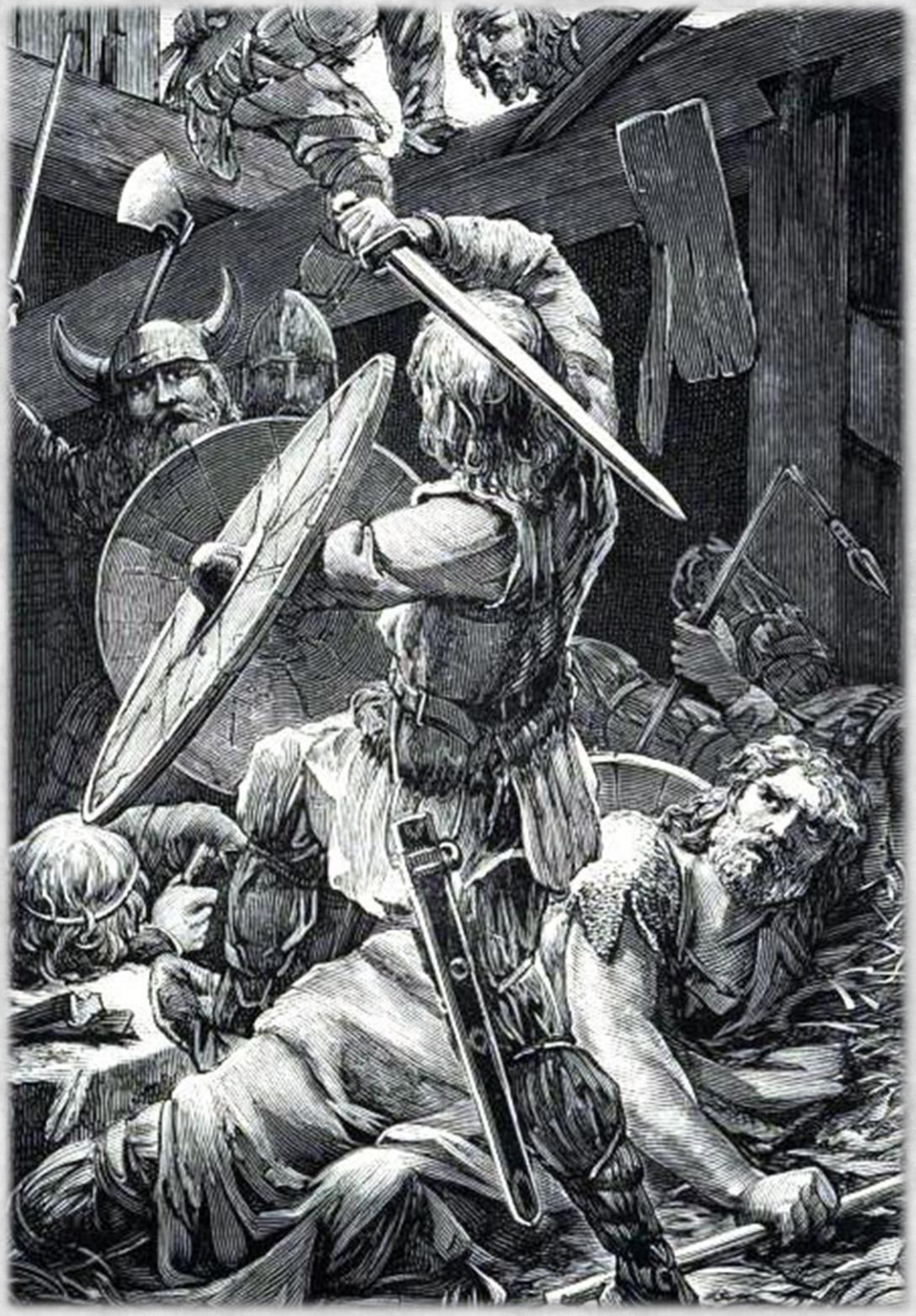
but he has also indicated that it is possible that Arneson caught the movie on either Channel 4 or Channel 11 — both of which were known for running late-night movies in the Twin Cities region. The records in that regard are very spotty at best and sadly I cannot verify if the movie was ever positioned to be captured by Arneson's roving eye. (And as I mentioned earlier it was released in Sweden, too, but I have absolutely no way of knowing if Arneson could have possibly caught it there.)

It is fun to speculate, however. The plot of this now obscure noir-slasher film revolves around a gentleman, Lucius Clark, who is celebrating his imminent knighthood with a lavish feast. While he and his admirers are enjoying themselves inside, a masked madman strangles the poor groundskeeper out in the castle's courtyard. The killer then steals his way into the castle in search of a known cache of diamonds. Unable to find the jewels, the strangler threatens Lucius: "I shall make your life a Hell on Earth, until you give me what is rightfully mine." Lucius refuses to disclose the secret room which holds the treasure, and so the strangler goes on a rampage, killing people left and right in various nasty ways (including strangle-wire decapitations).

The crucial aspect of *The Strangler of Blackmoor Castle*, beyond this promising plot, is that the eerie castle is a character in itself. The castle features the hidden treasure, secret passages, Gothic trappings, antique decorations, decaying walls and endless corridors. The surrounding countryside encompasses a black swamp, creepy graveyards, and subterranean catacombs. For a Dungeon Master who is seeking to re-envision the interiors of Castle Blackmoor, movies such as *Strangler* and *The Lady and the Monster* might well serve to show the way.

As a further note, it is interesting that many of the more supernatural details about Castle Blackmoor and its curses now read (to my eye) as if they were borrowed from the quintessential Gothic novel, *The Castle of Otranto*, by Horace Walpole (1764). Considering Arneson's temperament and preferences, however, it seems doubtful that he ever read *Otranto* as a source for Blackmoor. More likely, he probably observed the Gothic elements which were borrowed from *Otranto* and other romances via Hollywood and shown in Universal and Hammer Horror movies. Perhaps then Arneson incorporated these cinematic elements into his own design, without being aware of the older literary source. But *Otranto* is undoubtedly exhibited throughout *Dungeons & Dragons*, however indirect that tale's influence may be.

So there are lots of tantalizing glimpses of the unknown here at this time in the Twin Cities, bubbling to the surface. As I said, clues and ponderings in regard to Arneson's imagination are frequently all we ever have.



Hero down already? That was a bit hasty, blast.
We may need to rework Gary's melee lethality rules …

We will return to Dave and his imaginings a little later, to explore how his love of Swords & Sorcery and monster movies would soon inspire his most famous fantasy creation, Blackmoor Barony. This established setting would include the wonderful dungeon settings later (probably beginning in early January of 1972), but Blackmoor was already a living and breathing world of fantasy adventure before Dave conceived its underworld over the Christmas holiday.

We need to backtrack a bit however before we can go there. About a year. For in early 1971, it was almost time for the campaign in the lands surrounding Castle Blackmoor to begin. Very soon — not long after Gary and his friends were play testing *Chainmail Fantasy*, in fact — Gygax's and Arneson's destinies would become irrevocably intertwined.

CHAPTER 5
BLACKMOOR, THE FIRST CRUSADE (APRIL 1971)

… [The] moors of Iceland are … regions with only here and there a scanty growth of vegetation, a little whortleberry, no heath at all, but vast tracts of broken stone and mud and black sand, with perhaps here and there an occasional hill of yellow sandstone. Most of the rock is perfectly black, and breaks into pieces with sharp angles. What is called Icelandic moss is a black lichen that grows on the stones …

— *Grettir the Outlaw* (one of the great Icelandic sagas), as translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

AND NOW that we hopefully possess a clearer idea of where the masterful and imaginative Arneson would soon be coming from, we need to consider the initial publication of *Chainmail* itself. That event was the catalyst which gave Arneson the framework he would need to build his own fantasy world and dungeons upon.

There are repeated assertions that Arneson was deeply involved in medieval wargaming prior to his being exposed to *Chainmail*, and his earlier involvement in the Castle & Crusade Society (having joined in April 1970) and the Braunsteins makes these assertions perfectly reasonable. We do know a bit about an early medieval Viking raid scenario, and Dave might also have been inspired by the mythic elements in the Atlantis games he had been playing with Gary and Tom Webster (such as "the Pygmalion" tale in its earliest forms).

Unfortunately, we are (or at least *I* am) bereft of provable information which would lend evidentiary support to a date for the creation of *Blackmoor* proper, in particular, any earlier than April of 1971. References to Arneson playing his own medieval scenarios in 1970 probably refer more clearly to the "Braunstein" games, which had originally been created by David Wesely c. 1969. Arneson's Blackmoor would be a very separate thing from Wesely's early experimental historical games.[227]

[227] Amusingly, David Wesely was one of the most ardent simulationist grognards in Arneson's play circle, and it seems that when he returned to St. Paul from the military he was not exactly enthused by the new fantasy craze that Gygax and Arneson had started.

Please note also that there was a very long confusion in the RPG research community, in which the Blackmoor players recollected that they had begun the campaign in *1970* (a date repeated by Arneson himself); but this was corrected when Greg Svenson reported that Arneson had rediscovered his personal collection of old *Corner of the Table* newsletters, which confirmed that the Blackmoor adventures indeed started in the spring of *1971*.[228]

Importantly, it also seems that Dave Arneson himself once wrote, "I simply used *Chainmail* for the early magic section in the first month we played Blackmoor."[229] In other words, *Chainmail* preceded Blackmoor and was used as a basis for some of the rules; the precedent of *Chainmail* here is very clear. Therefore, In **HAWK & MOOR**, I maintain a conviction that the fantasy pieces of the Blackmoor game were created as a result of Arneson's exposure to *Chainmail* and its Fantasy Supplement. There may have indeed been earlier play sessions in Arneson's basement which led to the Blackmoor games, but those sessions do not seem to have included the key fantasy gaming ideas which *Chainmail* manifested. If anyone can step forward and prove an earlier verifiable date — thus establishing that Arneson created the *fantasy* aspects of Blackmoor *before* seeing *Chainmail* — I would happily be proven wrong. Given Arneson's quote and some further *Chainmail*-derived asides in the *First Fantasy Campaign*, however, proving such a supposition would seem to be a remote possibility.

Please note and be reminded that *Chainmail* was not the only game that was informing Blackmoor, of course. There were also the Braunsteins, *Strategos-N*, *Strategos-A*, the Napoleonics campaign, and much more besides.[230] All of these bits of meat were hacked up and thrown in Arneson's creative stew. Arneson had been a campaign game master more frequently, and for longer, than Gary at that time.

"I'm an army lieutenant and a leader of men, and not a college student [*at that time*] and I'm trying to take myself seriously," Wesely recalled. "Here they're playing with elves and dwarves and such. I'm thinking, I'm never going to tell anybody I was in this game [*Blackmoor*]." Refer to twincities.com, the Dave Arneson obituary, April 9th, 2009.

[228] Sham's Grog 'n' Blog blogspot, Q&A with Greg Svenson. Posted May 30th, 2009.

[229] Refer to the Comeback Inn forum thread "Dave Arneson post: what's this?" and the h2g2 website, The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy: Earth Edition. On h2g2, the relevant entry is A683949/ conversation/ view/ F82749/ T190258, "A Conversation for Dave Arneson," dated June 18th, 2002. My apologies for this citation being difficult to find … it is obscure.

[230] The game was also influenced by player suggestions. As Pete Gaylord once noted, "David was open to suggestions, and if you came out with a suggestion and he liked it, he would implement it." (This is seen in the Youtube video The World's First Wizard, at approximately 3:55.)

One might be tempted to say that Blackmoor was decisively Dave's own game, without any outside influence beyond his own control. And certainly, from the perspective of many Twin Cities gamers, the Blackmoor games were just a continuation of their *Strategos*-based gaming style (since Arneson kept his books and ideas close at hand without oversharing).

Some of Dave's gamers never even "saw" *Chainmail* in their games, it seems. But nevertheless there is a provable connection between *Chainmail* and Blackmoor, and the two games are bound together — to what degree, it depends on whom you decide to ask and what mood they're currently in — by some significant Gygaxian game design DNA. The two men's early games — *Don't Give Up the Ship!*, *Chainmail*, Blackmoor, the Great Kingdom map-inspired games, and *Dungeons & Dragons* in particular — really are incontrovertibly intertwined.

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This all brings us back to the first publication of *Chainmail*.

It appears that Gary finished the typeset *Chainmail* manuscript — Patt-inspired Fantasy Supplement and all — in early 1971. He managed to convince Don Lowry to publish his game without cutting any of the strange rules featuring heroes and dragons from the back. "You definitely want to do *Chainmail*, the fantasy," Gary later remembered telling Mr. Lowry, "because this is hot. It would definitely sell a couple of hundred copies at a show."[231]

Gary was eager and proud to work with Lowry's Guidon Games, and was also laboring over many other game projects besides *Chainmail* itself. But due to his family's needs and lean financial straits, Gary had a very practical interest in the success of his own publications above all else. And although he was a game designer, he was still struggling badly. As he would later wryly note, "The fruits of those early labors [*game designs*] provided beer money and little else, but I wasn't discouraged."[232] Guidon would give him a chance to break out and become successful and famous, however slightly.

As he later explained of Guidon, "They were small but certainly a legitimate company (I dislike using 'professional,' as they professed nothing: they were a commercial enterprise). I was paid for the work I did for them, yes. Unfortunately, sales volume did not make the income received thus sufficient to do more than

[231] Online interview: The d-infinity.net interview with Gary Gygax. By Michael O. Varhola. Posted on July 27th, 2013.

[232] From Gygax commentary in the rare TSR newsletter *Random Events*, June 1983, pg. 1.

supplement income from other work."[233]

Regardless, *Chainmail*'s first edition was finally published by Lowry in March. It is, in my (perhaps unfairly modern) estimation, a very entertaining but rather flawed simulation of medieval warfare in miniature. The research for the time is excellent, and the rules are inspiring, but many of the game's systems are opaque and difficult to synthesize for modification or expansion. It's simply a hard system to decipher.

Further, the writing of the booklet clearly assumes a reader already well-versed in the major wargames of the 1960s. *Chainmail*, considered by itself, is a relatively easy wargame … but it is not an *introductory* game intended for abject newcomers. This fact would normally not be a problem, but very soon the game's Fantasy Supplement would be embraced by novice players seeking a mode for the "Tolkien wargames" (as promoted by Gary and Len Patt and others), and these poor players — in attempting to employ *Chainmail* on its own — would frequently have no idea what they were doing. The rules, especially the fantasy rules, are too vague to ever be complete. In a way, this is a blessing; we as players and next-generation game designers have now been writing "more rules" for *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons* for over forty years, with no end in sight.

Chainmail alone is not in my opinion a comprehensive *fantasy* game, but it is an internally complex one. And as I earlier explained in my introduction about "Chaotic Bards and Lawful Sages," I myself have very little interest in the nuts and bolts of *Chainmail*, *except* as they directly pertain to the later creation of *Blackmoor*, *The Fantasy Game* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. The battle reports intrigue me, but the rules are far too dry to excite my studious devotion. Readers who *are* interested in understanding the nuances of Gygax's medieval systems therein are strongly encouraged to study *Playing at the World*, where *Chainmail* and other wargames of its ilk are analyzed in great detail.

For those readers who would like a quick-yet-detailed summary of the contents of Gygax's first fantasy system, I offer that in an easily readable alphabetical table format here. Below you will find a general overview of the 72 important fantasy elements which appear in the various editions of *Chainmail Fantasy*, aka the Fantasy Supplement (1971, 1972). These fundamental ideas and rules would later (late 1972-1973) form the core basis for the first edition of *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974). Please note that this conceptual analysis pertains to elements unique to *Chainmail Fantasy* only; the mundane medieval wargame rules white comprise the first part of *Chainmail* are not considered here.

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[233] Online interview: *The Ultimate Interview with Gary Gygax*, with Ciro Alessandro Sacco of dungeons.it; hosted at thekyngdoms.com.

A SUMMARY OF FANTASY ELEMENTS AS FEATURED IN *CHAINMAIL FANTASY*

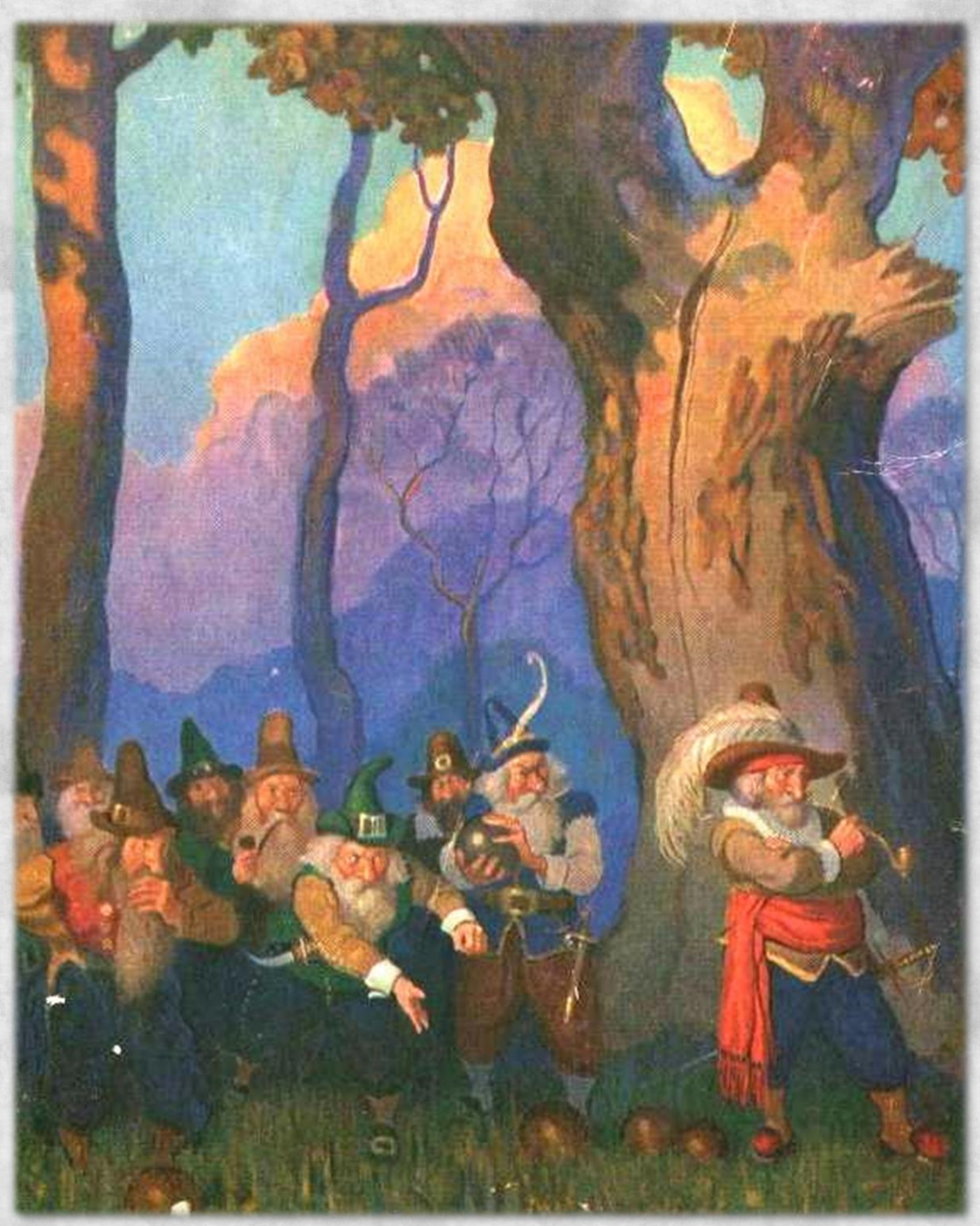
Element	Type	Likely Influences
A		
Antihero	Character Type	The writings of Jack Vance (*The Dying Earth*) and Michael Moorcock (Elric is specifically mentioned), as well as the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt
Anti-Magic Shell	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps inspired by the general concept of counter spells and wizard duels, and influenced by *Strange Tales* / *Doctor Strange*)
Armor, Magical	Treasure	Mythology and European folklore; examples — impervious armor of Achilles forged by Hephaestus, mail tunic of Beowulf forged by Wayland, helm of darkness of Hades, Tarnhelm of Alberich, etc.
Arrow, Enchanted	Treasure	Greek mythology (Apollo, Eros, etc.) and European folklore (elf shot etc.)
B		
Balrog	Monster	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Basilisk	Monster	Greek mythology and European folklore, as well as *The Book of Imaginary Beings* by Jorges Luis Borges



Death comes from below.

C		
Chaos	Concept	From the writings of Poul Anderson and Michael Moorcock; in my estimation despite Greek mythology, chaos as an ethos goes back chiefly to Milton's *Paradise Lost* and the poetic conception of infernally-bent divine law ("when everlasting fate shall yield to fickle chance, and chaos judge the strife"), but that's an entirely different book …
Chimera	Monster	Greek mythology (and Asia Minor)
Cloudkill	Spell	(Unknown; but likely from the movie version of *The Ten Commandments* by Cecil B. DeMille, with the crawling green fog representing the Angel of Death. Perhaps also inspired by Howard's tale *People of the Black Circle*, or the Murrain of Beasts in the Doré-illustrated *Bible*)
Cockatrice	Monster	European, heraldic and alchemical folklore, and possibly also the Harold Shea stories
Concealment	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps a reference to the obfuscation techniques of stage magicians, or simply designed as a counter spell to Detection)
Confusion	Spell	Perhaps the gray lotus dust scene in *Rogues in the House*, by Robert E. Howard
Conjuration of an Elemental	Spell	Alchemical writings, and the Elric tales of Michael Moorcock (such as *The Stealer of Souls*); perhaps also Poul Anderson, *Operation Chaos*
D		

Darkness	Spell	Perhaps the darkness magic at the end of *Thieves' House*, by Fritz Leiber, in addition to folklore and magical eclipses
Detection	Spell	Perhaps tales of scrying and enhanced senses in folklore and mythology
Djinn	Monster	The *Arabian Nights* (the Jann) and the tales of Harold Shea
Dragon (in general)	Monster	European folklore, and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt
Dragon, Black	Monster	European folklore and Gary's own writings, and perhaps the Blatant Beast in the tales of Harold Shea
Dragon, Blue	Monster	From Gary's own writings
Dragon, Green	Monster	From European folklore, Gary's own writings, and perhaps *The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad*; chlorine breath weapons are briefly mentioned in the Harold Shea tales
Dragon, Purple	Monster	European folklore and Gary's own writings
Dragon, Red	Monster	European folklore, and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien (Smaug is specifically noted)
Dragon, White	Monster	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien (Frost Drake), Gary's own writings, and perhaps a mention in *The Snow Women* by Fritz Leiber
Dwarf	Character Type	Norse mythology and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as *Three Hearts and Three Lions* by Poul Anderson



"Who created us, eh? Who created you? None of your damn business, laddie!"

E		
Efreet	Monster	The *Arabian Nights* (the Ifrit) and the tales of the City of Brass
Elemental (in general)	Monster	Paracelsus and alchemical lore, and the Elric tales of Michael Moorcock
Elemental, Air	Monster	Greek mythology (wind spirits, Boreas, etc.) and the Elric stories of Michael Moorcock
Elemental, Earth	Monster	The writings of Paracelsus, and *While the Gods Laugh* by Michael Moorcock
Elemental, Fire	Monster	Perhaps from *The Rape of the Lock* by Alexander Pope, and the Elric stories of Michael Moorcock
Elemental, Water	Monster	Greek mythology and the Elric stories of Michael Moorcock
Elf	Character Type	Norse mythology, English folklore, *The Broken Sword* by Poul Anderson, and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Ent	Monster	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt
F		
Fairy	Character Type	English and French Folklore, *A Midsummer Night's Dream* by Shakespeare (chiefly Oberon and Titania), and *The Faerie Queen* by Edmund Spenser



"… Madmen have such seething brains,
Such shaping fantasies, that apprehend
More than cool reason ever comprehends."

Fire Ball	Spell	From European folklore, *The Wonderful Wizard of Oz*, and the Middle Earth wargame rules of Leonard Patt
	G	
Ghoul	Monster	From the writings of H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard (*The Hour of the Dragon*) and perhaps Michael Moorcock (*Kings in Darkness*)
Giant	Monster	From Greek mythology, Norse mythology, and European folklore

Gnome	Character Type	From the earth elemental lore of Paracelsus, Alexander Pope's *The Rape of the Lock*, English and French folklore, and perhaps *Three Hearts and Three Lions* by Poul Anderson
Goblin	Monster	From French folklore, perhaps George MacDonald (*The Princess and the Goblin*), and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Griffon	Monster	From Greek mythology and European and heraldic folklore
	H	
Hallucinatory Terrain	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps a reference to Fata Morgana or magical mirages in folklore)
Haste	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps an early interpretation of acceleration magic from folklore, Boreas, Zephyrus, Hermes, etc.)
Hero	Character Type	The writings of Howard, Leiber, and other writers of Swords & Sorcery fiction, as well as the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt
Hero / Wizard	Character Type	From Michael Moorcock's Elric, who "combines the attributes of the Hero-type with wizardry"
Hobbit	Character Type	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
	I	
Insect, Giant	Monster	From horror movies (*The Naked Jungle*, *Them!*, etc.) and perhaps *The Beetle Horde* by Victor Rousseau and/or *Land of Terror* by Edgar Rice Burroughs

K		
Kobold	Monster	Germanic and French folklore
L		
Law	Concept	The writings of Poul Anderson and Michael Moorcock (see Chaos)
Levitate	Spell	The illusions of stage magicians, popular sensationalization (the tale of Samuel Pepys), tales of Saint Joseph, etc.
Lightning Bolt	Spell	Elric casts a lightning spell in Chapter 5 of *The Stealer of Souls*; Zeus, Thor, other instances in comics and folklore
Lycanthrope / Shape-Changer	Monster	European folklore, Asian folklore and horror films; werewolf = *loup garou*, wereboar = berserker, werebear = Beorn, wererat from Lieber, etc.
M		
Moving Terrain	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps inspired by the March of the Ents and their moving trees, the Huorns)
O		
Ogre	Monster	French folklore
Orc	Monster	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien, as well as the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt
P		
Phantasmal Forces	Spell	*Thuvia, Maid of Mars* (Edgar Rice Burroughs); illusionary projection of figures, magic lanterns of Victoriana; perhaps in part the phantasm scene toward the end of *Sign of the Labrys*, by Margaret St. Clair

Pixie	Monster	English and Celtic folklore
Polymorph	Spell	Probably an extension of the folkloric ability of witches to turn people into frogs or toads, as well as from the tales of Harold Shea
Protection from Evil	Spell	Perhaps an interpretation of holy powers of abjuration, and general protection spells in witchcraft
R		
Roc	Monster	*The Arabian Nights* (the Rukh)
S		
Slowness	Spell	(Unknown; perhaps an early interpretation of time deceleration / nightmare effect magic from folklore, sleep paralysis and hexes, etc.)
Spider, Giant	Monster	From horror movies and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Sprite	Monster	English and Celtic folklore
Superhero	Character Type	From Howard and other writers of Swords & Sorcery fiction (Conan is specifically mentioned in this role)
Sword, Magical	Treasure	Norse mythology and European folklore; Balmung, Caladbolg, Claiomh Solais, Durandal, Excalibur, Fragarach, Gram, Hrunting, Joyeuse, Kladenets, Naegling, Nagelring, Nothung, Sumbrandr, Tyrfing, etc.
T		
Troll (ogre-like)	Monster	Scandinavian folklore and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Troll, True	Monster	*Three Hearts and Three Lions* by Poul Anderson

(regenerating)		
W		
Warg / Worg	Monster	Norse mythology and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien



Fenrir, father of vargr, warg, worg … the hungerer.

Wight	Monster	The Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien (Barrow Wight)
Wizard	Character Type	European folklore, Swords & Sorcery fiction, the Middle Earth rules of Leonard Patt, and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien (the Istari)
Wizard Light	Spell	Perhaps either the light globe in Abraham Merritt's *The Face in the Abyss*, or the glowing staff of Gandalf in Moria; or general tales of Saint Elmo's Fire, etc.
Wolf, Giant	Monster	From French folklore (the Beast of Gevaudan) and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien
Wraith	Monster	European folklore and the Middle Earth writings of J. R. R. Tolkien (the Nazgul)
Wyvern	Monster	French and heraldic folklore

Soon after *Chainmail* was published,[234] Arneson (who was probably already anticipating the release, following his interest in the *Domesday* issues and the map for the Great Kingdom) picked up a personal copy. This would have been either in March or early April of 1971. As Dave once related in an interview, "We [*meaning his Twin Cities gaming group*] were doing some medieval battles, so we bought a copy and tried it out."[235] Gygax and Arneson would also be finishing up around this time on the design of their naval wargame *Don't Give Up the Ship!*, so Dave had a specific interest in Gary's further rules and approaches to simulated land battles.

Therefore, Dave probably picked up *Chainmail* with the intent of both tinkering with the rules, and also talking to Gary about what happened during experimental

[234] The game was published in March of 1971. The *copyright* for *Chainmail* (registration number A299078) was registered by Don Lowry on May 15th, 1971. For that same day, Lowry also registered the Gygax games *Alexander the Great* and *Dunkirk*.

[235] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19, 2004.

play. And further as Dave once noted, "We [*the Twin Cities gaming group*] were in correspondence with the group from Lake Geneva through the Napoleonic Campaigns at that time."[236] Refer to the table of Napoleonic Simulation Campaign players I provided earlier to show just how true this assertion was.

Gary therefore would certainly not be *too* surprised to learn that Dave was "looking under the hood" once *Chainmail* hit the shelves. As Gary would later write: "Dave, an expert at running campaign games [*another reference to the Napoleonic campaigns*], began to develop his own 'Fief' as a setting for medieval fantasy campaign gaming, reporting these games to the head of the C&C Society."[237]

Unfortunately, while these crucial preliminaries are easy for us to date and verify, our images of Dave's own modified medieval game become much cloudier at this time. We know that he developed his preliminary Blackmoor maps and system in the spring and into late 1971, but the provable dates of various innovations therein are few and far between.

It can be inferred from the available (yet sometimes conflicting) materials that the Blackmoor campaign was actually implemented in two separate and related major phases of development. There was the initial session in April of 1971, and then Dave left for Sweden in May. Play resumed when he returned, perhaps during mid- or late July. It further appears that the *dungeons* of Castle Blackmoor, as opposed to the surface environs, were created in December 1971 and play tested in January of 1972. Arneson actually once wrote that "The Dungeon was first established in the winter and spring of 1970-71,"[238] but this proclamation is in direct conflict with the fact that *Chainmail* was not published until *March* of 1971, and the fact that Blackmoor's dungeons were inspired by *Chainmail* monsters and other things. Therefore, it is much more likely that Arneson actually meant that the dungeons under Castle Blackmoor were created late (in the winter) in 197**>1<**, implemented at the New Year, and then developed well into the spring of 197**>2<**.) This is by no means definitive, but with the historical pieces that have been unearthed so far, it is the only solution that really makes sense. Arneson was, quite frankly, frequently in error and one year off in his later recollections. He would realize this later, when (as mentioned prior) he located his own personal collection of *Corner of the Table* newsletters.

There were several opportunities for Dave to clarify these matters further over

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[236] "An Interview with Dave Arneson" in *Pegasus* Magazine, issue #1, April / May 1981.

[237] *The Dragon*, issue #26, pg. 28.

[238] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

the years, but unfortunately he was often unable to take them. There were legal complaints (which Arneson had won) over royalties involving *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons*, and confidentiality agreements which hinged upon Arneson not sharing information with the public. Therefore, in later years Dave was understandably cagey whenever he was discussing the formative history of *Dungeons & Dragons*. But since this guarded silence worsens the already scanty evidence of Blackmoor's creation, *any* chronological history of Blackmoor — including my own — is inevitably incorrect. If you were to demand an excruciatingly definitive history of these matters, I am sad to say that (barring miracles, resurrection, or time travel) such a history can never exist. I have recreated plausible schemes of major events, but my account of those lost details can never be ironclad. I simply use logic and deductive reasoning to provide you with the best event-driven chronological summary that I can.

Regardless of these frustrating challenges, we know that Dave and his group read and discussed Gary's *Chainmail* booklet at one of their gaming get-togethers. Dave would later mention (perhaps with a hint of damning faint praise for Gary's historical rules), "We thought the *fantasy* part [*emphasis mine*] was interesting."[239]

Despite the interest of the others, Dave knew that when he started to apply his own imagination to Gary's recommendations for a fantasy wargame, it was going to be a tough sell for those grognard wargaming buddies … no matter how adventuresome they considered themselves to be. "I started out with a bunch of dyed-in-the-wool historical miniatures players and board games," he recalled. "That's a tough audience."[240]

The timing of *Chainmail*'s release was serendipitous. Dave's ongoing "Nappy" Napoleonic Simulation Campaign was becoming a painstaking chore (and I am phrasing the reality here with some diplomacy, as you probably know by now), due to personality conflicts, action resolution lag, and that irrevocable "more of the same" malaise which infects any gaming group that plays in the same way for many years. Participant Greg Svenson[241] once explained that the Napoleonic campaign

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[239] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19, 2004.

[240] *Dragon* magazine, issue #249, pg. 120.

[241] Greg Svenson had met Dave Arneson in the spring of 1970, at the University of Minnesota, during a gaming group meeting. Dave invited Greg to come participate in the Napoleonic campaign on the following Saturday, so we can date Svenson's activity in Dave's group to spring 1970 as well. Greg's involvement expanded thereafter because Dave was very impressed with his play. Refer to the web page for GDR

was also "getting bogged down in long drawn out miniatures battles," as we noted earlier, which slowed all of the gaming down beyond the point of fun.[242] In short, Dave's gaming group was ready for something new.



"Very well, pigheaded American. If you truly have no further interest in the way that I revolutionized the French Artillery Corps with my understanding of the repercussions of changes in the 6-pounder and 12-pounder munition-to-cannon horse-drawn carriage weight ratios, then come next Saturday, we shall test your little 'Troll and Dragon Game.'"

Magazine, "Intervista a Greg Svenson, il primo giocatore di ruolo," November 22nd, 2016. The page is in Italian, but submits well to Google Translate.

[242] "The Great Svenny," a tale related by Greg Svenson, posted on the Blackmoor mailing list by Gregg Scott.

Dave once explained it this way:

"One day … I discovered that I was bored. Faced with a long weekend without gaming, I turned to the television. I tried to occupy my time sitting on a couch watching cheesy 50's monster movies and reading 'fantasy hero' novels until I could find something better to do. … The [*Napoleonic*] campaign that I was running had become a drag. It was consumed with these long tedious battles and constant bickering over historical details. These most recently uncovered details would mess up next week's battle. Curses on all such books! Why not just use one source and be done with it?"[243]

A new and entirely different campaign would be just the thing to bring back some fun to his veteran play group.

Dave created Blackmoor based apparently on bits and pieces of Duluth and the Twin Cities, and set his land within the Castle & Crusade Society's Great Kingdom map. "In starting my campaign," he would later explain, "I reserved a small area out of the center of the Great Kingdom map."[244] Because of his own rank within the C&CS as "Baron and Parsuivant" *("pursuivant"* being an officer with heraldic duties, and thus perhaps several peerage ranks above a mere Baron), he called his new land the Arch-Barony of Blackmoor. We don't know exactly where he got the name, although there is a Blackmore in England, a Black Moor wetland in Germany, a group called the "Druids of Black Moors" in the *Sub-Mariner Comics* of 1941, and so forth. He probably just liked the sound of the name. Who can say where the inspiration really came from?

Gygax, in his Foreword to *Dungeons & Dragons* (written on November 1st, 1973), told the story like so:

"ONCE UPON A TIME, long, long ago there was a little group known as the Castle and Crusade Society. Their fantasy rules were published, and to this writer's knowledge, brought about much of the current interest in fantasy wargaming. For a time the group grew and prospered, and Dave Arneson decided to begin a medieval fantasy campaign game for his active Twin Cities club. From the map of the 'land' of the 'Great Kingdom' and environs — the territory of the C & C Society — Dave located a nice bog wherein to nest the weird enclave of 'Blackmoor,' a spot between the 'Great Kingdom' and the fearsome 'Egg of Coot.'"[245]

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[243] From the book *Dave Arneson's Blackmoor*, published by Zeitgeist Games Inc., 2004.

[244] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 11.

[245] Foreword ("Forward") to *Dungeons & Dragons*, 1974.

Dave situated this new Barony in an area that would later, in Gary's Flanaess setting, become known as the North Province, along the chilly coast of the Solnor Ocean. If you happen to be looking at the published *World of Greyhawk* maps painted by Darlene Pekul, you will note that the "Greyhawk" land of Blackmoor has been moved from its original locale above the eastern Great Kingdom, far into the northwestern frost-regions of the Flanaess near to the Land of Black Ice.

The campaign would feature mundane heroes who would find themselves unceremoniously plopped down into a dangerous and savage world of the fantastical, the technological, and the supernatural.

The initial Blackmoor setup is, in a broad thematic way, somewhat similar to the plot of the original *King Kong* movie which premiered in 1933: A band of unprepared yet well-armed adventurers depart modernity in search of glory, lucre and destiny. Far beyond the imperious domain of the world's great kingdom, these mercenary souls disembark and dare to explore a lost and savage world — the Unknown, the shrouded Wilds filled with death, giant beasts and wondrous monstrosities. Marking the outermost fringe of mortal sanctity, there lies a way-station: a small walled bastion which is occupied by a few hundred hard-pressed and superstitious warriors. These grim natives dwell upon a threatened yet fortified coast surrounded by the monsters, and live in fear of an ominous and godlike presence which lords its tyranny over the utmost Wilderland. The parallels are loose, yet mythic. In Blackmoor, instead of Kong himself, the enigmatic monstrous power would be the terrible alien Egg of Coot.

* * * * *

And in another strange coincidence, I note too that the *Dark Shadows* television show — exceedingly popular with the 18-35 age bracket we are considering in this history — was abruptly cancelled in the middle of a plot line, which led to the ambiguous final episode airing on April 2nd, 1971. This left the show unfulfilled, and many fans at the time wanted to either find a stronger ending to the series, or to make their own.

This television show had featured the enigmatic vampire Barnabas Collins (further glorified via the *Dark Shadows* films), who would later inspire the creation of the Blackmoor vampire known as Sir Fang. I cannot say with certainty that Barnabas and the Gothic tales 100% inspired Arneson's creation of Blackmoor Castle, its lineage or its environs, but I do think that the timing of this show's cancellation and hanging plot threads is quite fascinating, and I leave this lingering mystery here for future pondering. *Dark Shadows* had a lot to offer.

Barnabas was not the only intriguing element of the show, however; this Gothic soap opera used many classical tropes which would later appear in D&D (and some

in the Blackmoor campaign as well). Here are some plot elements in the March-April 1971 *Dark Shadows* episodes which I find particularly interesting from a Blackmoor perspective:

POTENTIAL SYNERGY BETWEEN *DARK SHADOWS* AND BLACKMOOR		
Broadcast Date	**Episode Number**	**Interesting Plot Details**
March 2nd, 1971	1202 / 1222	Morgan Collins (a character inspired by Edgar Linton in *Wuthering Heights*) discovers a secret room in the cursed Collinwood manor house.
March 3rd, 1971	1203 / 1223	Morgan, having infiltrated the secret room, is possessed by a ghost (James Forsythe). (James, in 1680, was the business partner of a Mr. Brutus Collins, who murdered James for having an affair with his wife Amanda, and cursed the Collinwood manor.)
March 4th, 1971	1204 / 1224	Morgan, possessed by James, discovers a skeleton buried in the basement of a cottage. James prepares to take revenge on the Collins family.
March 16th, 1971	1212 / 1232	The ghost of James Forsythe is exorcised from the body of Morgan.
March 18th, 1971	1214 / 1234	Gabriel Collins, a madman, escapes from a locked room in a tower.
March 22nd, 1971	1216 / 1236	Morgan and Julia Collins discover the dead bodies of James Forsythe and Amanda Collins in the secret room.
March 23rd, 1971	1217 / 1237	Morgan hunts down Gabriel through secret passageways. Gabriel dies when he is impaled by a sword that is held by a suit of plate armor.

April 1st, 1971	1224 / 1244	Trapped in the secret room, Catherine Harridge Collins is possessed by the spirit of Amanda Collins.
April 2nd, 1971	1225 / 1245	The family struggles to lift the manor's curse. Melanie Collins is bitten by something in the forest, which leaves strange marks on her neck. A vampire is suspected. However, a voiceover strangely downplays this development and turns the tale in a "happily ever after" to end the series.

In addition to the television series and films, there was also a *Dark Shadows* comic book — a much more lurid and monstrous affair than the soap opera, featuring witchcraft, werewolves, mummies, zombies, a golem, a headless horseman, and of course vampires — which was published by Gold Key, running for 35 issues from March 1969 through February 1976. (One of the writers was coincidentally named Donald J. Arneson, although I doubt this Silver Age comics author was of any relation to Dave!) The comic was quite popular on its own, especially after April 1971 because it continued after the cancellation of the television series.

But again, we only have tantalizing glimpses here. If I learn more of a possible connection between the end of *Dark Shadows*, the films, the comics and the beginning of Blackmoor, you will be among the first to know!

* * * * *

Back to more solid ground:

According to Arneson's account of the fantasy campaign's creation, Blackmoor Castle was created first.[246] The region's imaginary background became more convoluted over time, but in the beginning many of these details were happily glossed over in the name of fun. In preparing his Castle for later publication, Dave simply wrote, "The present work [*the stronghold, a rebuilt incarnation of Blackmoor Castle*] was built during the reign of Robert I," by whom he means Rob Kuntz, King of the Great Kingdom (and of the Castle & Crusade Society).[247]

The dark Castle proper was followed in design by the creation of the Village or "Town" of Blackmoor (a war-torn place cursed with a highly fluctuating

[246] *First Fantasy Campaign*, pg. 4: "Blackmoor grew from a single castle to include …"

[247] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

population), a bit of terrain to fill a sheet of paper, and then larger portions of the surrounding wilderness. The map that Arneson drew and later published in *The First Fantasy Campaign* reveals a large body of water (Blackmoor Bay) edged by swampy lowlands, and a single rocky promontory which is dominated by the stout works of Blackmoor Castle. A river (simply, the "South River") flows into the bay, replete with a Troll Bridge guarding the road which inevitably leads into and through the walled surround of Blackmoor Village. Scattered hills and forest, ripe for exploration, complete the landscape.[248]

In developing this Blackmoor region and further detailing Gary's own Great Kingdom map, we know that Dave was using some old Dutch maps (of shores and wetlands, perhaps?) as inspiration. Considering his home state of Minnesota, it is also very possible that Blackmoor Village represents not only a fantasy shadow of Minneapolis but also of Duluth, with the river being the St. Louis and the shoreline of Blackmoor Bay corresponding to Duluth-Superior Harbor. The "Troll" Bridge outside the Village might even partly represent the rickety and dangerous *toll* bridge of old, Arrowhead.

The dungeons beneath this region, it seems, would be created in the near future toward the end of 1971. The campaign was soon going to go completely out of control in a spectacularly entertaining way, but at this time Dave only knew that he was making a new scenario map for his Napoleonic-gaming friends to play. "Unfortunately," he once said in an interview, "at that time, I visualized that I wouldn't have to keep track of all those records and maps [*as before*]. I really thought that it was going to be easy."[249]

Some say that Arneson *may* have used his Blackmoor map to run a few casual medieval sessions with his group, without incorporating any fantasy elements, prior to the release of *Chainmail* in March 1971. However, while this seems reasonable I do not have enough evidence to assert this personally. What is known is that Dave prepared a fantasy-themed scenario in April, and he announced that it would be ready to play on Saturday, April 17th.

That first game — there were no dungeon levels yet, just Blackmoor Town and Castle — was probably intended to be a simple affair, following the guidelines given in *Chainmail* and enhanced by Arneson's own experience in refereeing the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign and successors to David Wesely's role-playing wargame scenarios, the "Braunsteins." Perhaps, the plural form of "Braunsteins"

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[248] This map is viewable online at several locations, such as the Blackmoor page in the library of The Acaeum.

[249] "An Interview with Dave Arneson" in *Pegasus* Magazine, issue #1, April / May 1981.

anglicized as "Brown Stones" may have even inspired Dave to term his new medieval role-playing sessions the "Black Moors." "Grey Hawk," to be envisioned by Gary and company, was still only a future dream.

We do not know exactly what the first Blackmoor scenario entailed, but given the details of the map, it was some kind of objective-based skirmish in which an invading force (marching from the domain of the Egg of Coot)[250] was repulsed by a smaller force using the Village and Castle of Blackmoor as bases for the defense. The scenario might even have been based on the similar circumstances outlined by the earlier *Siege of Bodenburg* game. The outnumbered heroes would run the defense, and the invading "bad guy" leading the alien Coot's forces would need to be overthrown. This is probably the very beginning of the scenario which Arneson would later glibly term the "First Coot Invasion." It seems that John Snider was the one in control of the Coot faction during those games.[251]

We do know that Dave devised a quick history for the Barony's bad guys: a pompous alien being, the horror who bore the name of the Egg[*head?*] of Coot, had corrupted and beguiled the former Baron of Blackmoor. Arneson described this loathsome extraterrestrial as being "known to hold an unshakeable grudge against anything that has ever in any way caused it difficulty that was not immediately overcome ... This is the result of the Egg's tremendous self-esteem which admits *no* failings."[252] It was also no accident that the Egg of Coot bore a strange resemblance to a certain pompous person who had soured Arneson on his Napoleonics campaign!

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[250] The Egg of Coot is sometimes referred to as a land, and sometimes as the evil alien entity that rules that land. From more information revealed through the Secrets of Blackmoor crew, we know a bit more about it now. As explained by John Snider, "The land [*of the Egg*] is divided into large city states and small ethnic empires, or holdings. All have pledged allegiance to The Egg [*the entity*]. Each [*holding*] has their own armies and/or militias that, in theory, The Egg can call out to bolster its legions in defense of the land, or to punish those nearby that have transgressed against The Egg." Further: "In theory this all looks good, but the leaders have figured out that although The Egg is powerful, it is constrained in the 'where' it can be, since it cannot leave its Island. They [*the rulers of the holdings*] never [*refuse to*] respond to the Egg's demands for tithes, but often what is sent is — shall we say — not what is expected. The other element that is a constant is internal border strife in the land ... [*this is*] one of the other reasons that The Egg never really conquered beyond the holdings that are on the map [*for example, Blackmoor*]."

[251] Refer to the Comeback Inn forums, "John Snider — Egg of Coot Campaign."

[252] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

Meanwhile, the good guys had been deceived before they even knew what hit them. The Baron [*David*] Wesely of Blackmoor, to soon be known as "the Weasel," defected and made his way through the northern swamps to serve the power-offering Egg. Before doing so — in an incident which reminds me of Sauron's seduction of Saruman through the Palantir, and the emergence of the Uruk-hai — the Weasel met with the Egg's minions in the secrecy of the Blackmoor Castle's library. He then invited his loyal associates to meet with him there, and in treachery the Egg's present minions slaughtered the terrified men without mercy.[253]

Interestingly, this may not have been an entirely willful and evil act; Arneson also explains that "All close servants of the Egg undergo rigorous mental conditioning that is aimed at crushing all [*of*] their mental initiative."[254] Whether blameless or not (you'd have to ask David Wesely), the wily Weasel accepted command of the Coot's nefarious legions, and then returned to the Barony to "rightfully" reclaim the Castle and Village he had just betrayed. A ragtag resistance — ironically represented by several of the players loyal to Arneson's play group — would rise in righteous defiance.

With these opening moves played out, the first scenario of Blackmoor was ready to go. It was on that fateful Saturday that the players played out the very first Blackmoor session in Arneson's basement. The players were encouraged to think of themselves as dimensional travelers, finding themselves lost in a fantasy world "Connecticut Yankee" style. Anecdotally, these characters may well have been the same worthy and authoritarian personages — presidents, chamberlains, nobles, pirate captains — who were played in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign, accidentally caught up in a dimensional warp after they crashed a plane in the wilds of Iceland. (Please note that recollections of the Icelandic adventure are fragmentary and very confused; these notes might well date a bit later to late July or even early August of 1971, after Dave Arneson had returned home from Europe.)[255]

According to a few misty recollections — whenever the Iceland play session actually was — the players' characters survived the crash and then they entered a cave, perhaps mirroring the mystic journey that was first experienced by John Carter

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[253] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 23.

[254] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[255] Online web form post: Comeback Inn forums, "Arneson's Troll Bridge Poker Game (1971)."

(of Mars) on his way to otherworldly Barsoom.[256] After they left the cave (where they may have been assaulted by horrid trolls),[257] they camped by a river at night and were assault by a band of giants.

The specific mention of Iceland here is interesting, because it never seems to pop up again in Arneson's campaign. And the island seems to be a magical portal between Earth and the alternate fantasy reality encompassing the northern and Arnesonian reaches of the Great Kingdom. The name *Black Moor* in Icelandic roughly translates as *Svart(ur) Heidi* or *Svart(ur) Myrlendi*; and while there are scattered mysterious places in real-world Iceland such as Hellisheidi (Cave or Nether Moor), Svart (the Black stream), and Myrkvidr (Mirkwood), there does not seem to be any place upon the island which would have given Arneson inspiration for the name.

The "Icelandic origin" idea therefore is tenuous at best. And if Arneson *was* familiar with the Icelandic sagas and mythology, it was likely either through his history degree, or via J. R. R. Tolkien (who borrowed heavily from the Icelandic tales to envision Middle Earth, sometimes by way of William Morris and Richard Wagner).

How promising and/or passive is the conceptual link between Blackmoor and mythic Iceland? Was it meaningful and worthy of further historical digging, or was it fleeting, Tolkienesque and random? That is a mystery which may not be solved for a very long time, if ever. All we can do further in that intriguing regard is to read, research, and ponder. And recall too that Iceland is home to the Huldufólk, the "Secret People" or "Hidden Elves" who veil the entire netherworld away beneath their enigmatic chasms, tumuli, and cairns. Rather fitting, that, considering that much of Blackmoor's secret and icy world eludes us still.

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[256] For this interesting possibility, refer to *Playing at the World* pg. 66.

[257] Refer to twincities.com, the Dave Arneson obituary, April 9th, 2009. Two individuals have given two cryptic asides relating to this Icelandic adventure, and it is not certain if the trolls in the cave and the giants at the river were separate incidents, or hazy recollections of the same encounter.



In glory and enchantment, they tread unseen.

Back to our cryptic tale. Iceland, cave, trolls, river, giants, panic, poof, alter ego characters plopped down into Blackmoor without a clue.

However, these characters journeyed into the realm Blackmoor, journey there they did. The stage was set, and for a time the labyrinthine Napoleonic politics and wargames were forgotten. Roles and new supporting characters were doled out,

and the legions of miniature figures were set up on the Ping-Pong table.[258] As Gary would later explain it, Arneson "gave his fellows [*i.e., the regular members of his gaming group*] more or less individual roles to play."[259] This would be a game of strong personalities, and only the mightiest heroes and villains would survive what was to come.

This personal role endowment — akin to improvisatory actors taking parts in a partially-unwritten play — was a key innovation which would form the future foundation of the *Dungeons & Dragons* game (January 1974), and that of every commercial RPG which enjoyed some measure of D&D's success thereafter.

The "good guy" group, not knowing what to expect, was somewhat surprised to find what Dave had planned for them. At first, the players groaned at the ludicrous ahistorical setup and resisted Dave's outlandish game. But fortunately, they buckled down and gave it a try.

And they loved it. "We thought that Blackmoor was great," Arneson would later write, "and we also thought we were crazy, but it was the fun kind of madness that spreads."[260]

The scenario may have partly involved Jenkins Hill, the strategic rise overlooking the plain outside the walls of Blackmoor near to the river. And we hear in the remembrances and reports that some of the evening's most unusual gaming centered on the (Arrowhead?) "Troll" Bridge which guarded the gated wall and thus the way up to Blackmoor Castle. This Troll Bridge was probably another parody of the one found in the Grimms' fairytale, *The Three Billy Goats Gruff*. In that tale, of course, a fearsome and long-nosed troll threatens to eat anyone who dares to tromp over his bridge. The troll's greed proves to be his downfall, however, and so the largest Billy goat butts him down into the frigid stream. Nature triumphs over monstrosity … provided, that is, you can consider a magical talking goat with passive aggressive murderous tendencies to be natural.

Beneath the Blackmoor Troll Bridge roiled the town cesspool and garbage heap,

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[258] As player Pete Gaylord would note (in David Megarry's associated Youtube video 'The World's First Wizard'), "Arneson had in his basement a Ping-Pong table, and he built Blackmoor on there. … Everybody that was in there … had a character." Such descriptions of the environs, however brief, are rare.

[259] *The Dragon*, issue #26, pp. 28-29.

[260] *Dragon* #320, celebrating the 30th Anniversary of D&D and the 28th Anniversary of *Dragon*.

so perhaps the troll dwelled down there in the refuse.[261] Dave's scenario write-up of the bridge also somehow featured a planned poker game of all things. Perhaps the troll threatened invaders and defenders alike, challenging them to a game of cards? Victory might allow safe passage, defeat could lead to being eaten. (Please note that these last details are mere guesses on my part; no one seems to remember exactly what transpired.) The troll's poker game was scheduled to last "from sunup to sundown," which might be a reference to Tolkien's portrayal of trolls in *The Hobbit* — the dwarf-hungering trio Tom, Bert, and William — who are ultimately turned to stone when tricked and touched by sunlight. Surely a cleverer troll, like Arneson's would hide in the bridge's shadows during those fearful lighted hours!

A later write-up of a very similar set of bridges — one that Dave wrote up for a dungeon in the nearby swamps, the Temple of the Frog — tells us that the nether span hid an entire *den* of trolls, and that these horrors would swarm and rise up from under the arches to attack intruders: "This room [*beneath the Temple of the Frog*] contains a tribe of ten trolls ... laying in wait ... beneath the three bridges north of their room. There is a 1 in 6 chance that when entering passages ... or when crossing one of the bridges that 1-3 trolls will be encountered."[262]

Concerning the original version near the Blackmoor wall, player Greg Svenson has shared a few more remembered details in regards to this instance: "There was a bridge over the river within the town walls and initially there had been a troll living under the bridge. I think [*player-controlled characters*] William of the Heath and Mello killed the troll, but I am not sure."[263]

We hear elsewhere that player Bill Meyer's character (aka Robert the Bald) got "one-shotted" by this terrible troll, getting killed in a single round of combat. This incident would apparently force Arneson to start thinking about more gradient-oriented damage for player character moving forward … an innovation which we would now think of as "hit points."[264] As Bill once explained, "The troll killed me in no time at all, and I was a hero! I refused to have anything to do with Blackmoor

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[261] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 19.

[262] Featured in the text of *Dungeons & Dragons*, Supplement II: *Blackmoor*, 1975.

[263] ODD74 Proboards forum thread, "Blackmoor town and dungeon alignment," reply posted on August 30th, 2010.

[264] See the Hidden in Shadows blog, "Blackmoor as a *Chainmail* Campaign," July 20th, 2017.

for a very long time after that."[265]

Bill Heaton's aforementioned troll-slaying character William of the Heath, by the way, was later known (c. early 1973-onward) as the "Blue Rider" for his sword (named Old Blue)[266] "magical" powered armor, and Mel Johnson's halfling character Mello Feathertoes was ever his faithful sidekick.[267] We will learn some more about the adventures of William and Mello a little further on.

By the end of the frenetic play session, a fair number of Dave's players were already won over by this radical new gaming idea. As Arneson later enthused, "*Most* [*of the players*] thought the whole idea was great!"[268]

It was, indeed, the beginning of a very strange and wonderful thing.

Whatever else may have happened during that first evening, the defenders of Blackmoor claimed a hard-won victory in the end. A new Baron was promoted to replace the treacherous Weasel, and a warrior named Jenkins (played by Duane Jenkins)[269] became *Sir* Jenkins as a result of his bold heroics during battle. (The strategic hill may have been named in his honor at this time; no one can quite remember.) Overall the game was a wild success, although this was more because of the players' growing enthusiasm and less because of any elegance or ingenuity in the rules.

The new game was not only fun, it was deadly to the imaginary characters too. The lethality of the utilized *Chainmail* system — at least when applied to a one player, to one character environment — would force a change in wound tracking early on. The players wanted to protect their surviving characters, and the harsh rules quickly made them realize that a single blow could wipe out a Hero with one unlucky throw of the dice. Some of the players (like poor Bill, smacked by the troll) apparently lost their alter ego characters, while others decided to retire them before any random deathblows might befall them. "We quickly decided that we should retire those characters and start new ones," player Ross Maker once recalled.[270]

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[265] Online web forum post: Comeback Inn forums. "CoT — Dave Arneson's Newsletter," March 7th, 2016.

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[267] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions." See also Dungeon Module DA1, *Adventures in Blackmoor* (pp. 54 and 64).

[268] *Dragon* magazine, issue #249, pg. 120.

[269] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot forums, "Early Blackmoor questions."

[270] Refer to twincities.com, the Dave Arneson obituary, April 9th, 2009.

The later introduction of "Hits to Kill" (HtK) or "hit points," created to represent bleeding and gradually depleted health, would soon replace the binary dead/not dead resolution system. In Miracle Max terms, hit points would allow for a "mostly dead" distinction of mortal discomfort for unlucky heroes as well.

As Arneson explained further in an interview, "We started out using the *Chainmail* combat system. ... I think we used that for two games."[271] (Another admission, by the way, that *Chainmail* preceded Blackmoor.) And elsewhere: "We had to change [*the lethality rules*] almost after the first weekend. Combat in *Chainmail* is simply rolling two six-sided dice, and you either defeated the monster and killed it … or it killed you. It didn't take too long for players to get attached to their characters, and they wanted something detailed which *Chainmail* didn't have."[272]

Despite such flaws which required fixing on the fly, the first Blackmoor game was liberating, because — unlike in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign — the players could not argue with the referee (Arneson) about the realism of any of his rulings. "We would get in these arguments," Dave explained, "about historical accuracy ... and what was 'real.' Going into a fantasy world was actually again kind of a copout from my point of view. I didn't want people always coming up with some new book saying we just had to use, because it was 'right' and the old one was 'wrong.' This was a fantasy world, so who could come up with anything to prove that he was lying or that a monster wasn't accurately represented?"[273]

After that first game defending Blackmoor from the Weasel and the vile legions of the Coot, the players demanded more. Many more games would be played, but this early momentum would soon be cut short by Arneson's graduation and family trip to Sweden (beginning in May 1971). But even while Dave was gone, the group was buzzing about the game. "Once play began," according to another interview's introduction, "the players were hooked and the Blackmoor Adventures came to dominate the group's interest with only an occasional break for Napoleonics."[274]

It appears that the redesign of Blackmoor's own evolving rules systems was primarily driven by Arneson, but that the group came up with many ideas for new monsters in the week following that first April 17th play session. They had a lot of

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[271] Online interview: Gamasutra, Dungeons & Dragons' Arneson: The Lost Interview.

[272] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19th, 2004.

[273] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19th, 2004.

[274] "An Interview with Dave Arneson" in *Pegasus* Magazine, issue #1, April / May 1981.

great ideas, and Dave added dozens of their monsters before the next Blackmoor session was played. These monsters were codified based on the *Chainmail* examples and comparative gauging of creature abilities. For all of the new monsters, Dave and the others came up with comparable values based on each monster's perceived power and size. "And we did that for [*all*] the monsters," Dave explained; "we assigned values to them: giants are big, orcs are little. We tried to make the creature's power similar to what its size was."[275]



"How many hit dice does he have again?"

[275] Online interview: Gamasutra, Dungeons & Dragons' Arneson: The Lost Interview.

The weekly Blackmoor games (likely with some of the new monsters) continued until Arneson left for Sweden, with perhaps one other April session, and perhaps one or two more in May. The games then resumed when he returned to Minnesota in July. The games were all played on Saturdays, and the wild free-for-all battles forced many of the other rules to change as well. To avoid slowing down play, Dave was forced to make arbitrary rulings for weird situations on the fly. It is very important that I point out here that these were quickly informed and off-the-cuff decisions, not codified systems. Dave, quite simply, didn't roll that way. He knew from the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign that the game could grind to a halt if there were any disagreements or over-complexity in the rules. And he wanted to have fun, to keep the game moving while the action was hot. Rulings were written down when there was time and perhaps tweaked and modified once again.

This fun-loving attitude, combined with haphazard record keeping, would later give Gary Gygax a huge dose of frustrations which would in turn cause Gary to scrap much of Arneson's rulings and to lock some cleaner and more codified systems into place for what would later become *Dungeons & Dragons* (aka *The Fantasy Game*). Long before Dave even knew he would be working with Gary in designing *The Fantasy Game*, the two men's vastly different play styles were sowing future seeds of discord.

Arneson's rulings were frequently sound, but they were not always made to the detriment of the monsters. Some of the players played evil characters, so the rules needed to be fairly applied to both sides. And the monsters which *no* player was controlling sometimes had significant advantages. Dave's game was fully intended to be extremely challenging to the players on either side of that philosophical equation. As future Blackmoor observer Rob Kuntz would later note (from being able to delve a bit into Arneson's world in 1972 and later), "In Blackmoor … the playing field was not even, especially in the days when Dave's players were establishing what their environment consisted off, how much there was of it and to what degree, and how fast they could run away if need be."[276]

Blackmoor was not just a world of heroes, after all. The foul monsters and otherworldly beasties were often more than a match for mere tasty mortals to contend with!

Balance was attempted overall, however. The players always had a chance. The monsters were play tested to destruction, literally, and their various powers were adjusted as needed. Some of the monsters which made their first appearance in Blackmoor included the now-classic gargoyles, giant beetles, Blob-like slimes, and

[276] Online web forum post: Piedpiperpublishing.yuku.com. Pied Piper Publishing forums, "The Dungeon Layout." Posted January 26th, 2007.

various colors and sizes of dragons.[277] And because so many new monsters had been added to the game so quickly, Dave was (fortunately!) forced to start documenting a little bit of the wild Blackmoor monster "system." As Dave once indicated, "The initial *Chainmail* [*monster and hero power system*] was a matrix. That was okay for a few different kinds of units, but by the second weekend we already had 20 or 30 different monsters, and the matrix was starting to fill up the loft."[278]

Through such innovations, Dave was compelled to begin sorting and compiling all of the varied notes and rulings which hinged on combat and other actions. He was "building up a set of rules as we went along," and so he "kept track of ... rules decisions in a big black notebook ... so I didn't contradict myself too often."[279]

By the time the second game was over, as I have noted, Dave had noticed that the players wanted to keep playing the same advancing characters, even though the rules were being made up from moment to moment. Anyone could die at any time, but the survivors were coveted and celebrated by the players. Therefore, he realized that he also needed to refer to some older guidelines that he and Dave Wesely had used for the earlier "Braunstein" role-playing scenarios, since *Chainmail* was simply too restrictive to allow for much role-playing that could actually influence the course of actions in the game. Dave explained not only that *Chainmail* "did not really work for role-playing," but also that "it was too restrictive for critters and magic. So then, the rudimentary and evolving Blackmoor system was necessarily spawned as a way to get around the limitations in [*Gary's*] rules.[280]

The Blackmoor campaign grew considerably from July 1971 (with Arneson's return to America and gaming) and throughout the summer and autumn, well into December. The sessions became less about individual scenario actions and more about the continuing story of the player-controlled survivors. With players on both the "Hero" (good) and "Baddie" (evil) sides of the board, the campaign would eventually develop over the years to encompass an entire war-driven socioeconomic fantasy fiefdom simulation … far beyond the lands of Blackmoor proper.

This would be quite different from the later adventures featured in *Dungeons &*

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[277] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[278] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19th, 2004.

[279] "An Interview with Dave Arneson" in *Pegasus* Magazine, issue #1, April / May 1981.

[280] ODD74 Proboards forums, Official Dave Arneson Q&A Thread.

Dragons. The published 1974 D&D game, by comparison, would focus more on dungeon exploration by small parties. Arneson's Blackmoor game at its most complex, however, was much more of a freeform role-playing wargame with some dungeon adventure components bolted on, and various factions vying for supremacy.

In Dave's more refined games, the players would be given control of a potentially powerful character who in turn controlled a body of troops and servants. Most characters controlled a territory, and each was given a budget to run the territory, raise armies, purchase siege weapons, establish trade routes, wage wars and so forth.[281] Most, but not all, of the players were allied with one another as the Heroes. Rulings and test systems continued to be written down. Some of this experimental campaign information would find its way into D&D by way of castle descriptions and baronies for "name level" characters, but a full simulation of fiefdoms on Blackmoor's level would be out of the reach of published *Dungeons & Dragons* for quite some time.

The grand Blackmoor experiment proved to be both ugly and magnificent. Dave's game was a veritable Frankenstein of random joy, melee, desperate plans, more desperate rulings, blood and shrapnel, but it *worked*. Despite all of its sloppy "rules," missing records, vague descriptions and frustratingly absent written history, Blackmoor was a flawed and glorious masterpiece far ahead of its time.

[281] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

CHAPTER 6
RAPSCALLIONS AND RUMORMONGERS
(C. APRIL — DECEMBER 1971)

I entered the grave of Karr the Old,
I rived his sword away;
I strove with the troll at Thorod's-stead,
Before the break of day.
With Thorbiorn Oxmain in the marsh
I fought, and his blood I shed;
Against Thorir of Garth have I stood in arms,
Who long would have me dead.

— *Grettir the Outlaw* (one of the great Icelandic sagas), as translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

DUE TO the random gifts of Fate, the tale of Blackmoor's other early games no longer needs to abruptly end after that second monster-filled session, likely played in late April, 1971. We can delve a little further.

Until relatively recently, our understanding of mid-1971 Blackmoor was limited mostly to Arneson's interview asides, scattered accounts, the faded memories of veteran players, and a few meager published pieces of data as I have described above. Fortunately, due to some major research work conducted over the last several years by Jon Peterson — coupled with some great forum posts by past Blackmoor campaign participants — it is now possible for us to reconstruct many of the details of what actually transpired in this next "secret" batch of Blackmoor games, played out in the spring and summer of 1971.[282]

[282] Please note that for my tentative reconstruction of several of these details, I am indebted to Jon Peterson's notes on Arneson's old newsletter, the *Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger*. The history of the Blackmoor campaign is convoluted and heavily obfuscated by time, and specific chronological events may need to be restricted in the future as more privately-held information becomes publicly available … slowly.

The story, many of its details long lost, goes something like this:

At various points, the larger assemblage of players in Dave's campaign created rudimentary characters, termed either as Flunkies (future Heroes) and/or Magician Apprentices (future Wizards), based on their preferred melee-or-magic archetype as presented in *Chainmail*. Some of these characters were created in the early April tests, while more were added later as casualties were suffered and the game expanded. Player Dave Fant's character for example was the *Baron* Fant (new ruler of Blackmoor Castle);[283] Pete Gaylord's was the Wizard of the Wood,[284] who has sometimes been called the first wizard of all.[285] The Wizard of the Wood was a "chubby, slovenly" Radagast-type outsider named both "the Wizard Gaylord" and "Sildonis," who commanded a force of ents and pixies.[286]

Meanwhile, Duane Jenkins played the Sir and Baron Jenkins (the ruler of another nearby Barony on the borders of Blackmoor's holdings, and victor over the Coot Invasion). John Snider played John of Snyder (aka Bozero, the Inspector General and agent from the far-off Great Kingdom of King Robert I, to which the Barony paid either tribute or token fealty).[287]

It is likely by this time that the two Barons, along with John of Snyder, were each veteran "Heroes" in *Chainmail* terms, capable of surviving horrors which many

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[283] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

[284] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

[285] Refer to the David Megarry-hosted Youtube video, "The World's First Wizard."

[286] Refer to Dungeon Module DA1, *Adventures in Blackmoor* (pg. 59) and *The First Fantasy Campaign* (pg. 4). The preserved Wizard Gaylord character sheet (along with some other sources revealed in 2016 and 2017) includes some additional details which are of interest. It seems that the Wizard was an "organic type" spell caster in Arneson's system, meaning that he was a druidic mage. His power was derived from the magical super berries which grew in the Wizard Wood. As Pete once explained (see the Youtube video The World's First Wizard), "As a magic-user, I would take the super berry and we did get a spell going, and the super berry would enhance the spell." Pete explained further: "There was a [*miniature*] tree, it was off a railroad game, and it was supposed to be an orange tree. But the oranges were about the [*scale*] size of basketballs, in proportion to the people. So he [*Arneson*] called them 'super berries.' So I [*playing as the Wizard of the Wood*] was able to take the super berry … and you can throw spells that are for higher [*level*] people." This was apparently part of the beginning of level-oriented magic, and the hierarchy of spell power. And instead of having a THAC0 score, Gaylord's stats on the sheet include combat scores or "weapon classifications" for twenty-one different weapon types, from dagger to bombard.

[287] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

mere warriors, soldiers and other breeds of Flunky could never hope to endure.

We learn from *The First Fantasy Campaign* that "The Baron Fant was placed in command of Blackmoor Castle after his successful operations during the first Coot invasion." Also, Baron Jenkins was the man who ruled "the northernmost march of the Great Kingdom, which rests on the actual frontier with the Egg of Coot."



"The Egg, or Blackmoor …
which ruler and direction ever shall be the more dangerous,
that is the question …"

We also now have some more concrete early play information from player David Megarry as well. David knows he was not at the earliest Blackmoor sessions (April-May), and he currently estimates that he began playing around July of 1971. And blessedly, thanks to Megarry himself, Secrets of Blackmoor, and Dan Boggs, we have knowledge from Megarry's earliest Blackmoor character sheets and some additional (ongoing) analysis to help us fill in a few more of the cryptic puzzle pieces.[288]

David Megarry thinks that he might have rolled up an initial test character to learn the ropes under player Duane Jenkins' tutelage, but he can't 100% remember … and even if he did, the test character certainly didn't last long. Following that came Megarry's recorded character McDuck. McDuck, the bandit chief, died fairly quickly and early on. This in turn led to Megarry's play of the various successor characters listed in columns on Megarry's first character sheets, including the more successful Number One (a second bandit chief), "Hey You" (a galley captain), and the intrepid dungeon delver, H. W. Dumbo.[289]

We'll talk about Mr. Dumbo a little later on, when we're detailing the secrets of the not-yet-created dungeons, to be discovered in the stony depths underneath Castle Blackmoor.

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As these games progressed, each player chose (or was assigned) their own territory in the region of Blackmoor Village as a sole domain, and so the simulation continued while assimilating the deeper details of role-playing and unpredictable player involvement. As I will explain shortly, it appears that Arneson may have designed his early game so that each campaign year passed in monthly turns, with adjudication of expressed player character actions occurring in the later-developed referee reports. Passing time allowed for realm upkeep, resource generation, force

[288] Refer to Secrets of Blackmoor (Facebook), as well as the Hidden in Shadows blog, "Megarry Early Blackmoor Character Matrix," October 9th, 2016.

[289] There were other characters after H. W. Dumbo that we currently know very little about, including David "Diamonds" Balfour, Baron He(r)cebeiner the "Herk," the "Badland Herk," the Scholaress, and so forth. The Scholaress would apparently be alive in the campaign in 1974. Hopefully, in the future we will have enough information to tell some of the adventures of each of these wanderers … but don't hold your breath! We're entirely at the mercy of new discoveries.

recuperation, and Arneson's later "Gypsy Saying"[290] and "Chance Card"[291] systems, which in turn generated omens and random events. Examples of Chance Card events include raids, migrations, uprisings, caravans, droughts, storms, earthquakes, and the ever-dreaded plague.[292]

The *game* year (not real year) was apparently set as 1071 "AC" (perhaps an acronym for "Arneson Campaign," or "Arneson Chronology") which may also be a reference to the *real* year of 1971 AD, as well as a nod to the era of the influential historical "campaign" manuscript known as the *Domesday Book* (compiled in the 11th century, with years similarly numbered 10XX).

That is all well and good, but this background information doesn't tell you the reader how Arneson's campaign systems really *worked*. So before going on and getting too deeply mired in the stories, I should explain a bit about timekeeping and event coordination in the Blackmoor campaign.

You have probably come to the uncomfortable realization — from the way I am writing and describing all of this — that the cryptic historical hints we have now (as outside observers 40+ years later) range from the mildly confusing to the downright baffling, taunting us with uncertainties as we try to interpret what happened. Almost none of the things we know about the campaign are 100% concrete and certain. We do know that "real time" and "game time" in Blackmoor were entirely separate things, because of the precedent set by *Diplomacy* and the long seasonal turns the play group experienced during the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign (NSC). Arneson seemed to prefer that model. Blackmoor, in some ways following the model of the NSC, was set up with Arneson-designed Scenarios which may have lasted approximately 1 Game Year (but not Real Year!) each. Scenario 1 for example was probably the First Coot Invasion. Scenario 3 involved "The Great Invasion," and played out in four seasonal Stages (I - Spring, II - Summer, III - Fall, and IV - Winter).[293]

There may have also been as I mentioned 12 Turns per Game Year, based on the

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[290] The Gypsy Saying cards were first used in the second game year of the Blackmoor campaign; refer to *First Fantasy Campaign*, pg. 47.

[291] Separate from the Gypsy Saying cards, the Chance Cards were first used in the third game year of the campaign for more concrete events beyond mere omens and forewarnings. Again refer to *First Fantasy Campaign*, pg. 47.

[292] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition. See pp. 48-49.

[293] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 4.

Game Months (1 as January, 2 – February, 3 – March, and so forth). As we read at one point in some of Arneson's very partial game instructions: "You will roll at random for the months of April, May, June, July, August, and September to see when these groups of five [*farmers and children*] enter the [*game*] board."[294] These monthly turns may have primarily been used internally, as a GM-only tracking mechanism for predestined campaign events. Players may have received specifically tailored "Game Month" monthly updates on their ongoing actions, and/or they may have been given opportunities to undertake new actions at various times of the year.

And there is more. As we read in Arneson's account concerning event generation, "A set of Chance [*random event*] Cards was set up. Each month, one was drawn from the deck and its effect was worked into the game. As Judge, I drew the cards one game year in advance to allow for a logical progression of events."[295] It appears further that individual player-and-force actions and movements (marches, sieges, quests, etc.) were broken down into months, weeks, or days as necessary for micro-management, while the planned and predestined (GM-generated) campaign events served as the larger overarching experiences which interspersed the random and player-driven activities.

The campaign rules were made even *more* complex as time went by, with Game Year 1 featuring a mix of planned and improvised events only (with most happenings caused or modified by players' emergent play). Then Game Year 2 featured the aforementioned Gypsy Sayings / Legends for random prophetic omens, while Game Year 3 further featured the Chance Cards for influential out-of-the-region events. Meanwhile, income in gold for each realm and power was apparently replenished every 4 Game Months (turns) to allow for player-determined purchases, research, repairs, trade, and the replacement of various losses in the field.[296]

Additionally, every power / force (the Egg of Coot, the Duchy of Ten, Blackmoor Town and Castle, etc.) in the region was given a differing predesignated total number of Army Points which allowed the players — or Arneson the GM, as needed — to assign or raise decent amounts of various unit types such as infantry, ships, and monsters. The powers were designated as either Evil Forces (aka "the

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[294] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 10.

[295] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 47.

[296] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 4.

Baddies"), Good Forces (the "Good Guys") or Neutral Forces (those mercurial and opportunistic factions which were picked on or exploited by both sides, as dictated by the circumstances). Each of these powers was also given a frequently-changing "Alignment Rating" (AR) so that Arneson plan for each power's role in the overall campaign over time. This AR code was not an *ethical* Alignment in the D&D sense as we understand it; rather, it was rather a seasonal military classification which determined a power's general strategic intent, troop movements, and/or political machinations.

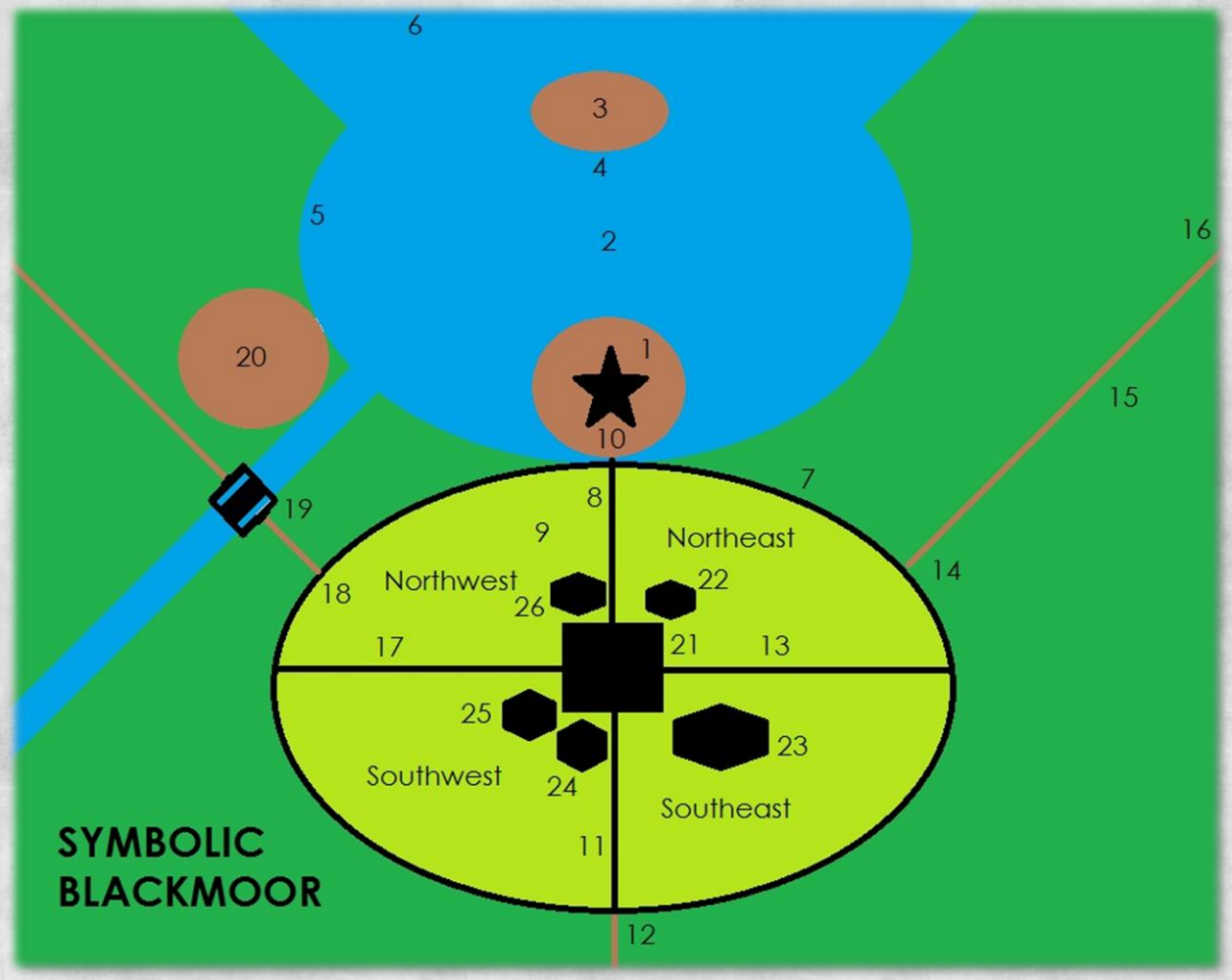
For example, for Scenario 3, the Good Force known as Glendower is coded in Arneson's plan as I – GV, II – GD, III – GV, IV – GA. This means — per Arneson's partial and somewhat cryptic explanatory notes — that in Stage I (the spring), Glendower served as a "Good Diversionary." This likely indicates the Glendower's ruler and troops were involved in confusing the Evil Forces in the spring as to the other Good Forces' tactical movements. In Stage II (the summer), Glendower was changed to a Good Defender, deflecting evil assaults.

Then in Stage III (the fall), Glendower served as a Good Diversionary again (perhaps spreading misinformation about incoming good reinforcements between engagements?), while in Stage IV (the summer) it served as a Good Attacker. For the length of Scenario 3, there were 20 such powers, with 4 seasonally planned Alignment Ratings each, and we can assume that all of those powers which were not player-controlled were instead run and controlled by Arneson according to his calculated Army Points, income notes, seasonal Alignment Rating and notes on special forces (including *Chainmail* creatures and characters such as dwarves, heroes, hobbits, pixies, and so forth).[297]

And to give you an idea of the general vicinity of Blackmoor, I would like to provide a quick detailed description of the area. This summary is based on Arneson's earliest campaign map, with a few additional features that emerged through campaign play and which were mapped and featured in *The First Fantasy Campaign*. Please note that the *First Fantasy* map is misleadingly excellent, because it rotates the entire region, twists features, changes names, and also gives lots of otherwise-mysterious details. This necessitates cautious interpretation of the earliest pre-publication map — carefully offset by the later published version — to make any sense of Arneson's original vision.

[297] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 4.

you can refer to my symbolic map, which is very un-detailed, so that the copyright of Blackmoor is protected while still providing you with a general understanding of the region.[298]



Blackmoor and Environs 101.

The heart of the area is the Blackmoor Castle promontory [1], which juts into the southernmost part of Blackmoor Bay [2]. North of the promontory and within the bay is a small rocky island [3] with a cave entrance upon its south face [4], labeled as Serpent Rock, aka Dragon Rock. The shores of this watery region feature

[298] If you're interested in this topic, be sure to also check out the Secrets of Blackmoor post on Facebook from December 2nd, 2016, which reveals some more mapping and environ details from player David Megarry.

shipwrecks from failed Skandaharian Viking raids [5]. Presumably, the Norse realm of Skandahar lies far to the north over the open waters beyond the Bay [6], perhaps where Gary located "Northern Barbarians" in the world of the Great Kingdom.

If we attempt to coincide these details with the Great Kingdom map that Arneson was inspired by, we see that Blackmoor is situated upon the river which runs from the mountains north of Per(r)unland, flowing northeast into the Great Bay. To make this arrangement work, the mouth of that river — which runs due east in the Great Kingdom portrayal — needs to be interpreted as curving to the *north*east just as it enters the bay. Blackmoor Castle promontory is immediately to the northeast of the river's snaky end.

Just south of the promontory, on the mainland, is Blackmoor Town [light green ellipse with black border, 7]. This is a walled elliptical region with jagged-formation walls (detail not shown), split into rough quarters by a single crossroads. The north branch of the crossroads (Castle Road) [8] leads past the graveyard [9], onto the promontory and up to Blackmoor Castle [star on the map, 10]. The south branch (the South Road) [11] goes through the South Gate [12], toward Tonisburg. The east branch (perhaps the Swamp or Wolf Road) [vicinity of 13] goes through the Swamp Gate [14], with that road turning northeast toward Svenny's Freehold [15] and on through Wolf's Head Pass [16] toward the Wizard Wood. And, the west branch (Troll Bridge Lane) [vicinity of 17] goes directly to the nearby river via the Troll Gate [18], where the now-infamous Troll Bridge [19] runs northwest past [*Duane*] Jenkins Hill (a strategic rise overlooking the Bay)[299] [20] all the way to Glendower.

There appear to be 40 family residences and other minor buildings within the "city" walls, and a few other major buildings which are centered upon the main crossroads. (The center core where this crossroads nexus meets is known as Victory Square [21], and that is where the oft-used hangman's gallows are.) The major buildings there around Victory Square are the Comeback Inn (northeast quarter) [22], the Church of Blackmoor (sometimes wryly called the Church of the Facts of Life, southeast quarter) [23], the Warehouse [24] and Merchant's Store (southwest quarter) [25], and another edifice which might be named the Smoke Dragon Inn [26]. The originally inked name of that place is too cramped and smeared for me to fully decipher, but *The First Fantasy Campaign* map labels it clearly as "Town Inn."

[299] Jenkins Hill would later be known as Vampire Hill, due to the machinations of the vampire Sir Fang. See Secrets of Blackmoor, Facebook, December 2nd, 2016.

Using these many features and a few other proffered names to hazily envision the daily hustle and bustle of Blackmoor Town, the quarters could tentatively be called the Wharf Quarter (northeast),[300] the Horseman's Court Quarter (southeast), the Merchant's Quarter (southwest) and the Cemetery Quarter (northwest). It appears that the northeast is used mainly for shipping in the Castle's shadow, the southeast is used for troop mustering and ritual, the southwest is used for goods storage and sales, and the northwest is primarily historic and defensive, leading out both to the Troll Gate and up to the Castle rise.

The town would later have two major political factions: the thieves and underground criminal faction (portrayed in a map in red), who would be led by a "bandit chief" character (the aforementioned "McDuck") run by David Megarry; and the merchant (and guards and allies), who would be controlled by Dan Nicholson.[301]

Blackmoor was portrayed as a dangerous frontier town, and so the merchant would be the local boss … much like the tough foreman in control of an 1800s lumber camp. He would be running the company store where everyone spent their money, giving him a great of control. Influence would shift between McDuck and the merchant, with heists, thefts, guards protecting shipments, and so forth. McDuck was something of a reckless daredevil (we'll be nice and not say he was incompetent), and he would die in an early adventure. He was then replaced by a lieutenant — also played by Megarry — who would be christened with an enigmatic code phrase, "Number One" (much like a Commander Riker to a Captain Picard.

* * * * *

So there you are, Blackmoor in a nutshell. That's the *simple* version. Clear as mud?

Most excellent.

This, fortuitously, means that you're now ready and eager for the bad news: we only know the Game Time for a few of the reported Blackmoor events, and the Real Time for a few others, and there are conflicting partial accounts which give different crucial details, while we also need to guess at the timeframes for everything not mentioned or improperly recollected, based on these scant and faded mile markers which we find looming forth from the mists of absolute gaming Chaos from time to time.

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[300] This would be the home area for David Megarry's character H. W. Dumbo, which we will have quite a bit more to say about later on.

[301] Refer to Secrets of Blackmoor, Facebook, December 2nd, 2016.

Perfectly comprehensible. And how fun! We've totally got this. Let's figure out as much of this mind-boggling chronicle as we can.

* * * * *

And so, we journey back to our early Blackmoor play reports …

As the games progressed, the Wizard of the Wood was able to secure a pet red (?)[302] she-dragon, whose name was Gertrude. It may even be that "Gerti" was the mate of a he-dragon named "Tiger," or they were one and same, because "Gerti" is simply an anagram of "Tiger"; the details are a bit confused.

Despite an allusion that Gerti was the only dragon extant in early Blackmoor,[303] it appears that Tiger may have been an entirely separate beastie. It is also said that Gerti dwelled inside a cavern situated on Dragon Rock, the stony isle dominating Blackmoor Bay, near to the Castle proper. This strategic position allowed her to control the influx of treasure and merchants coming in from ports afar.[304]

In the autumnal phase (perhaps still in Scenario 1, or maybe Scenario 2), Baron Jenkins was forced out of his Barony by a second wave of evil invaders. These were perhaps the surviving forces of that strange alien entity known as the Egg of Coot. Jenkins therefore fled south into the allied Barony of Blackmoor, bringing several thousand troops along to protect him.

Due to the earlier alliance against the Weasel and the Coot, his sister was the wife of Baron Fant,[305] and so Baron Jenkins had good reason to believe that he could seek sanctuary in Castle Blackmoor once again.

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[302] Gerti's actual color — likely of interest to fans of Gygaxian chromatic dragons, as well as his early Tolkienesque dragon articles — is one of those random pieces of minutiae that is impossible to pin down. Gerti might as well be a rainbow dragon, or an oversized chameleon, because of the conflicting accounts. For example Chirine ba Kal (Comeback Inn forums, "A Post I'm Not Happy About Writing" says in passing that Gerti was a great golden dragon in the game, but that the miniature created to represent her was gray. Others say she was red or green or something else.

[303] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition. See pg. 17.

[304] Online web forum posts: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Q&A with Jeff Berry" and "Gertrude the Dragon."

[305] Online web forum posts: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Jon Peterson's book and scans."



"An unlikely alliance to be sure. No strings attached, aye?"

"But of course."

One of the early random events in the campaign involved a gypsy caravan rolling up to camp outside the village walls. Most of the populace went out to enjoy the rare festivities offered by these wanderers. Baron Fant himself even invested in "private performances by individual female members," as well as some intense sessions of fortune telling for the sake of prophecy.

Given Arneson's play style, it is likely that he was allowing his friend Dave Fant to expend some gold in an attempt to foresee (and perhaps influence) the future happenings of the campaign. As Dave once coyly mentioned, "The infamous Gypsy Sayings merely state what might happen, and allow the players a chance to get out of the steamroller's way."[306]

Another random event in the autumn involved a sudden earthquake,[307] which caused these gypsies to flee. Castle Blackmoor was damaged, and the village slums were leveled. As the seasons progressed into the next game year, "Gerti" the dragon hatched a clutch of eggs (was "Tiger" the father?), and five little dragonets were born. These slithy horrors promptly terrorized the countryside by feasting on livestock, stealing their tasty kill-burgers from nearby farms. The creatures the dragonets preyed upon were not cows, but rather the hardy and cold-loving beasts of Blackmoor: "Oversized member[*s*] of the bison family."

These acts of predation were by no means welcomed by the already hard-pressed denizens of Blackmoor, and so the Wizard — as the dragonets' owner — was forced to provide restitutions in the form of a hefty penalty in gold. Further, the Wizard was at pains to assure the Barons Fant and Jenkins that Gerti's progeny would be leaving the Barony, as soon as they were able to fly dependably on their own.

Gerti herself was tolerated, however, due to the powerful deterring effect she had on foreign invaders. It seems that the locals knew that they needed to pay tribute to Gerti from time to time (the price of doing business and staying alive, one might suppose), but every once in a while a band of daring foreigners would sweep into the Bay and fall prey to this indignant guardian who dominated the icy Baronial shores.[308]

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[306] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[307] Very tentatively, this event probably dates between fall 1971 and the beginning of 1972. We know this because when David Megarry's character H. W. explored the dungeons below the castle, he found tunnels blocked by cave-ins. Now naturally, this is sheer speculation … but I'm not the only person convinced that this might be the case!

[308] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Q&A with Jeff Berry."

With spring turning into summer, the resulting thaw allowed travelers to journey from the southern Great Kingdom up into Blackmoor for various reasons. The most troubling of these delegations was led by John of Snyder, the King's Inspector General himself.

The rampages of Gerti's young, as well as invasions by other evil monsters, had caused the Great King Robert to order a troop of horsemen (led by John) to conduct a "tax receipt review" at Castle Blackmoor. After all, if livestock were being killed, such losses (in another nod to the real life nature of the *Domesday Book*) would directly affect the Great King's income! Completely unacceptable.

John of Snyder was thus able to happily pressure Baron Fant with reports of the Great King's concerns, and in response the good-and-shifty Baron raised taxes on his beleaguered people. But Fant's shrewish wife drove him to drink excessively, which ended up causing a disturbance when he and his men got drunk at the local tavern — an edifice enchanted by wild magic, known as the Comeback Inn[309] — and smashed it to pieces. More gold, naturally, would need to be paid out by Baron Jenkins for repairs.[310]

And as the Blackmoor campaign expanded, it became weirder, more non-traditional, and more amusing. The Tolkien-inspired bounds of orthodox medieval-esque fantasy did not exist. In fact, there were no barriers at all, save for Arneson's imagination and the whims of his unpredictable players. Technology both ancient and new was uncovered by various, and alien worlds were strongly hinted at. The campaign would thus come to feature "steam power, gunpowder, and submarines in limited numbers. There was even a tank running around for a while."[311]

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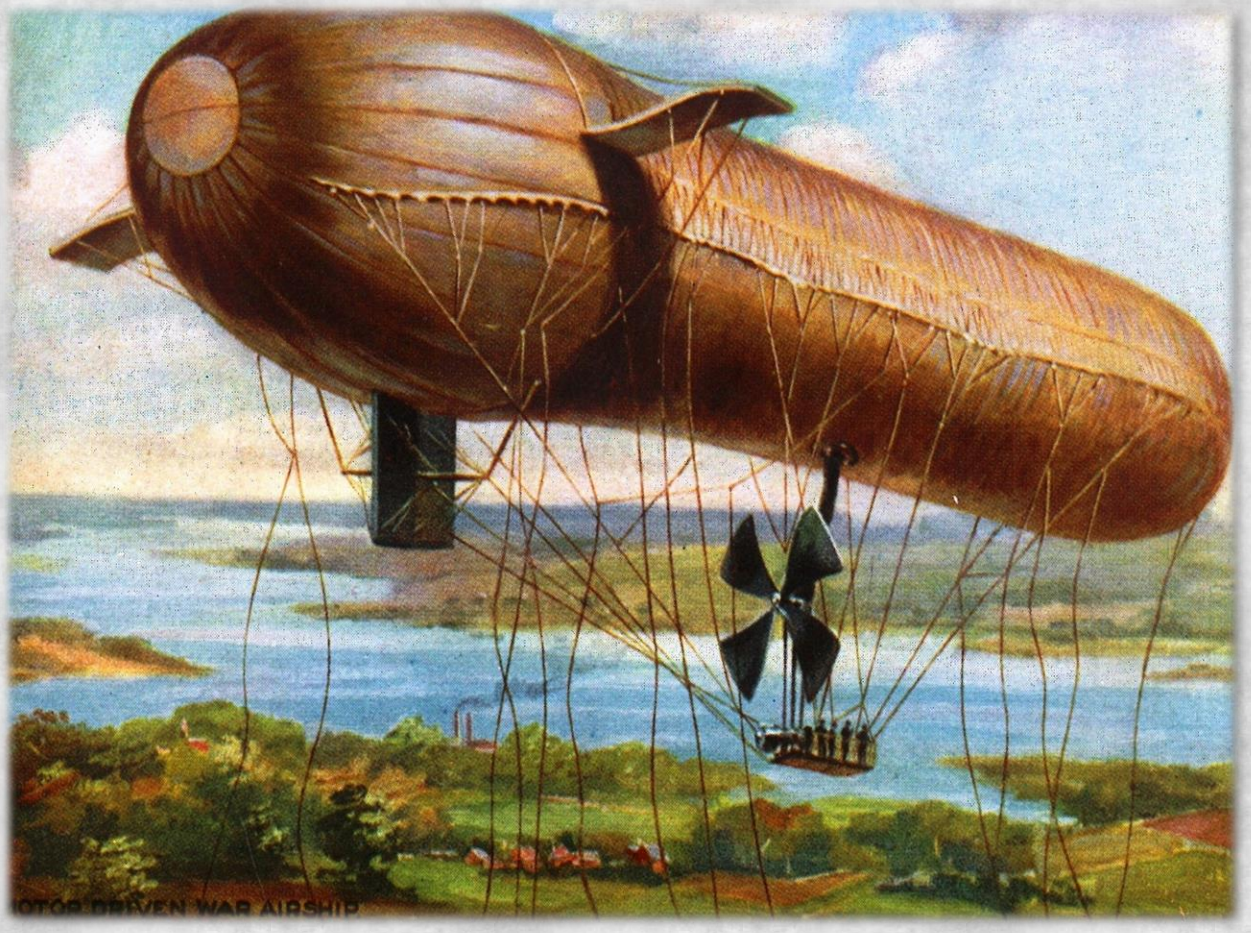
[309] Dungeon Module DA1, *Adventures in Blackmoor*, pg. 5. The Comeback Inn in Blackmoor was inspired by a real-world pub in Melrose Park; refer to Havard's Blackmoor Blog, entry dated November 10th, 2010.

[310] My apologies if I have gotten any of the relationships between characters or other details wrong; the record is very confusing.

[311] *Dragon* magazine, issue #249, pg. 120.



"With the wind and hard to port, Svenson. Do be on the watch for dragons."

One of the truly great things about the open-ended structure (or lack thereof) was that the players needed to explain their curious actions, ask questions, get feedback, and wholly assume the roles of their newfangled characters. "The emphasis [*was*] on the story," Dave explained, "and the role-playing."[312] In many ways, the lack of rules became the game, defining possibilities instead of restrictions imposed upon the unlimited mode of play.

And so it went. The game would continue in this manner with revenue counted, expenses tallied, actions stated, encounters generated, and so on until the players tired or there was a clear "winner" of the campaign. The goal, it seems, was not only to acquire gold and power, but to inconvenience rival players in unexpected and amusing ways.

[312] *Dragon* magazine, issue #249, pg. 120.

As can be seen, after these early sessions Dave's game was already moving well away from *Chainmail* and into the uncharted waters of improvised fantasy role-playing. The more each player conducted surprising actions, the more Dave was forced to make and record new rulings to handle their feats. Gary noted later that Dave had not only "worked up a campaign from the *Chainmail* fantasy rules," but that he had also made "considerable expansion in many areas."[313]

By mixing wargaming and role-playing in such unpredictable ways, Dave and his players were unknowingly shifting the entire paradigm of improvisatory play. The Fantasy Role-Playing Game as we know it had finally been born.

We're getting ahead of ourselves with all of this Blackmoor musing, however! Which is the price we pay, at times, for telling a coherent story without too many interruptions. But we need to backtrack for a while to grant the next big evolutionary steps their true and necessary context, so … let's check back in with the Lake Geneva gamers in Wisconsin.

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At about this same time, Gary's group was beginning to enjoy the widening popularity of their own innovative fantasy wargaming rules. After the publication of *Chainmail* (March 1971), Gary and friends found themselves playing with many more other people who were interested in (and excited by) the new concepts of Swords & Sorcery in wargaming. "The *Chainmail Fantasy* games soon were drawing crowds to the basement sand table," Gary wrote, "where but a handful of wargamers once played. It got so crowded that we had to turn gamers away unless they were regulars — no room around the table."[314]

Later in 1971, Gary would publish a battle report of a very interesting game played with some out-of-towners during this period — a report which may have recorded a pivotal game dated to earlier that year — entitled "The Battle of Brown Hills."[315] When we consider the earlier lag between Gygax's written "Tolkien fantasy game" notice and that blurb's eventual publication, and considering how news of this battle scenario was spread to other gamers, we arrive at a very tentative month for the playing of the Brown Hills scenario: either March or early April, following immediately after the publication of *Chainmail* itself. It is still possible, however, that this scenario dates even earlier, to the first *Chainmail Fantasy* play

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[313] "Swords and Sorcery — in Wargaming," appearing in *Wargamer's Digest*, Volume 1, Number 7, May 1974.

[314] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part III. Posted April 6th, 2003.

[315] *Wargamer's Newsletter* #116.

tests conducted around January and February of 1971.

Gary's play report is quite intriguing, because it offers us one of our most detailed glimpses of the *Chainmail Fantasy* battles in action. As such, I will offer a detailed account here.

First, Gary notes that he was inspired to devise the scenario for his players when he rediscovered "an old map I had drawn of a mythical continent, complete with many fantastic inhabitants." This is almost certainly a reference to the Great Kingdom map featured earlier in the *Domesday Book*. Gary used the map to plan an entertainment for both his regular players, and a friendly rival group from Madison as well.

The Brown Hills scenario appears to be set in a newly-added southern extension of the existing Great Kingdom map. These details may be of interest to some World of Greyhawk devotees, for — despite the inevitable differences between Gygax's personal Oerth and the published version — there are deeper glimpses of a far and unknown corner of the published Flanaess we know. The 1971 names provided in the battle report, and their conjectured (but very rough) 1981 equivalents, include: the Desert of Sorrow (similar to the later Sea of Dust); the Dwarfrealm (perhaps the Lortmils); the Gnyxyg Sea (Azure Sea); the Mountains of Bitter Cold (the Crystalmists); the Giant Mountains (the Jotens); the Home of Dragons (perhaps the Drachensgrab?); Lake Iuz (Whyestil Lake); and the Brown Hills themselves (likely the Kron Hills near the elven kingdom of Celene). The geography is all wrong of course, yet the atmospheric resonances remain.

Gary's battle report tells us that the forces of Chaos (played by the Madison visitors) arose along the Drearshore, and then by way of the Valley of Iuz they surged into the Dwarfrealm. This force, led by the fearsome Warlock Huldor ap Skree and the Giant King Verdurmir,[316] consisted of Drearshore Horsemen, Land's End Infantry, Ogres of Iuz, Orcs of the Vile Rune, and Longspear Orcs of the Mountains.

The hard-pressed dwarves were forced to abandon their homeland, fleeing into the Brown Hills bordering upon the allied Old Kingdom of mankind. The Count of Aerll, controlling his regal County situated within the Kingdom, called upon the paladin lords of the Great Keep. The footmen of the Meadowlands were called into service, as were the elves of the Cairnstones regions and the horseman who dwelt beyond the eastern Silent Forest. These mighty forces of Law assembled in

[316] By the way, Rob Kuntz would later point out one of Gary's clever in-jokes hiding here: "Verdurmir," as written, roughly translates to "The Jolly Green Giant." Ho ho ho! [*Lord of the Green Dragons blog, November 18th, 2010.*]

the hamlet of Lea deep in the shadows of the ominous Brown Hills.



"Hmm, hoom. Are you truly the one they call 'Superhero,' little man?"

Meanwhile, the Horde of Chaos marched through the mountain passes until they emerged along the Darkling River. The Count of Aerll boldly moved his forces to constrict the Brown Hills region the pass flowed down to, despite having only marshaled three quarters of his needed force. There in the Hills, the lords of Law fortified their holdings and stood in defiance. The Count's force, led by himself and the esteemed Magician of the Cairn, consisted of Hero-led legions of human infantry and cavalry, as well as elven archers and human knights.

The Horde of Chaos charged into the right wing of the assembled legions of Law. The Count, as champion, charged and engaged Verdurmir in one-on-one combat. But alas, the rules of chivalric warfare mean nothing to the corrupt! The Count was also beset upon by a craven Anti-Hero, and so he fell. The morale of Law's legions began to crumble, and the formations faltered. The elven archers wiped out the Longspear Orcs, but the mighty Verdurmir led a charge which neutralized Law's catapult artillery. The Magician of the Cairn, instead of being able to rally the legions, was forced to hurl lightning bolts at Verdurmir to send him reeling back.

The Magician's hated rival Huldor ap Skree seized the advantage, and conjured a powerful air elemental. This, coupled with assaults made by the Ogres of Iuz, caused the army of Law to almost be torn asunder. Daring counterattacks by the human horsemen, aided by the hard-pressed Magician, forced Huldor onto the defensive at last. Huldor gave his air elemental free reign, and summoned and bound a fire elemental to defend his immediate surround. The Magician retreated with his remaining horsemen, hoping to save the Count's supply and treasure wagons. But due to horrendous losses, the hosts of Law were by then terribly outnumbered.

Gary improvised a nasty event at this point, so that the game would not immediately end in a crushing victory by Chaos. A hill-dragon had been wakened by all the tumult, and as it observed the fleeing Magician, it saw something very appealing down there where all of those unfortunate mortal insects were busy a-dying. Treasure! The dragon swooped down, just as Verdurmir and Huldor led their charges in ultimate triumph.

The dragon landed amidst the wagons of gold, and killed the nearest guardian — the poor Magician! — with a gout of its fiery breath. Verdurmir and the air elemental destroyed the dragon, but not before it slaughtered the Ogres of Iuz. The Chaos Horde of Madison reigned victorious, and the ravaged Legions of Lawful Lake Geneva were compelled to admit defeat.

There was a glimmer of hope, however. The Count of Aerll's enchanted sword had been lost on the field of battle, and in their frenzy the minions of Chaos did

not think to sweep it up. Perhaps, one day, new heroes of Law would come to seize the sword and to swear their vengeance upon Huldor and the Giant King ...

As you can see, the random actions of battle on the sand table, mixed in with Gary's terrain and improvisations, created an adventure which fires the imagination. This type of gaming was type different from that of Blackmoor, but it created epic events all the same. We do not know if the forces of Law ever recovered from this catastrophic defeat, or if this was a chronicle of the Great Kingdom's fabled fall; but the fact that everyone had a great time with the *Chainmail Fantasy* game is Pyrrhic victory enough.

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While busy running these entertaining fantasy battles, Gary was also stuck in the unenviable position of sweating the success of his newly-released *Chainmail* game. Fortunately, *Chainmail* was proving to be a certified "hit" in the small North American wargames market, selling approximately 100 copies a month.[317]

These staid and classic medieval rules were fairly well-received by the wargaming community. Feedback concerning the outré Fantasy Supplement, however, was much more divided. Many wargamers reacted with disdain at this frivolous material. "They wouldn't speak to me," Gary said of his critical friends in a later interview.[318] In fact, Professor Leon Tucker — a friend and fellow wargamer who took simulationism very seriously indeed — refused to talk to Gary at all after the Fantasy Supplement had been published.[319]

To make things even worse, hardcore fantasy readers were taken aback by Gary's synthesizing approach, which merged accounts from various fantasy sources to create approximated rules for spells and monsters in a single cohesive universe. Gary was admirably trying to create a synthetic and unified fantasy world comprised of several authors' sources. In doing so, he was slighting "the master" Tolkien and his famous halfling tales. In other words, people were writing letters reprimanding Gary because his "Tolkien wargame" did not solely adhere to Tolkien to the exclusion of other authors!

One example of this conundrum (and the perceived problems it would cause) can be seen in Gary's definitions and rules for trolls. He provides details for

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[317] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[318] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[319] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot forums, "Castle & Crusade Society Tribute Chainmail Game." See also ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part III, posted April 6th, 2003; and Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX, posted February 28th, 2007.

"normal" trolls, inspired by the Brothers Grimm and the fairy stories translated by Andrew Lang, equating them with ogres. But he also notes a sub-species of "true" trolls, which he interpreted from Poul Anderson's novel *Three Hearts and Three Lions* and the story *The Roaring Trumpet*. The fantasy readers who commented on the Fantasy Supplement, in turn, were mostly devotees of Tolkien's *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*. In those books, an entirely different interpretation of trolls is given. One Tolkien troll sub-species lives in the mountains, while another is nocturnal and can be turned to stone by exposure to sunlight.



Sniff sniff

"And lo, which sub-species of 'Boy' are you?"

A fair number of Tolkien devotees responded to *Fantasy Chainmail* by writing Gary to report such "errors" wherever he had dared to stray too far from Tolkien's lore. It must be said that poor Gary left himself wide open for this predicament by drawing up rules for Nazgul, Balrogs, Hobbits, and other creatures found exclusively in Middle Earth, and in no other literary source. Further, he went so far as to subdivide *Chainmail's* orcs into the following groups: Orcs of the Red Eye, the White Hand, Isengard, and Mordor. Readers noting these direct borrowings from Professor Tolkien would therefore feel quite justified in noting that Gary had made seeming errors wherever he deviated from this vaunted "Tolkien norm."

Gary, however, had included Tolkien monsters in the Fantasy Supplement not because he loved Middle Earth (he enjoyed *The Hobbit*, but found *The Lord of the Rings* to be boring, and never seemed to have made it through the explanatory appendices), but rather because he knew that *The Lord of the Rings* was by far the most read work of fantasy fiction in the United States. He included Tolkienesque monsters to encourage sales, although his own tastes leaned more towards the classic pulp adventures of Swords & Sorcery. From the beginning, a disconnect between Gary's fantasy games and the fans' interpretation of his material was inevitable.

Nevertheless, despite these frustrations Gary was happy and amused to see that the Fantasy Supplement was the one part of *Chainmail* that everyone was talking about. Not everyone loved it, but it was new, innovative and daring. "Because of the concurrent interest in fantasy literature due to J. R. R. Tolkien's works," Gary later explained, "fantasy wargaming was received with considerable enthusiasm."[320]

Gary's friend and gaming colleague Len Lakofka noted, "Soon thereafter [*following the first publication of* Chainmail], Gary began getting more and more response to the supplement than to the manuscript."[321] And in Gary's own words, "That Fantasy Supplement was the tail that wagged the dog."[322] Incredibly, according to his recollection, "About nine out of ten purchasers were attracted by the fantasy element."[323]

In answering readers' questions, Gary came to realize that there was an untapped potential market for fantasy wargaming entirely beyond the historical realm of the

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[320] *Little Wars* #1.

[321] Editorial note in "Dunned for a Dragon Article," by Gary Gygax, in *Liaisons Dangereuses* #70.

[322] Online web forum post: The Quarterofthree/CGM Gygax interview.

[323] *Wargamer's Digest* #7.

grognards.[324] "I had the duty of answering fan mail that the publisher of the work [*Don Lowry*] forwarded to me regularly," he once wrote. "The book was selling well. The mail poured in. Several thousand enthusiasts were immersed in the fantasy aspects of miniature gaming ... surprising news! Although the fact may have been only vaguely perceived as such at the time, this set of rules ... was the breakthrough that led to the creation of the first [*published*] role-playing game."[325]

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While Gary was wrestling with these new and welcome difficulties, trying to discern the nature of fantasy wargaming's newborn fandom, Dave Arneson was learning to more steadily run his unpredictable Blackmoor campaign. Dave had had a lot of time to think about his new game, the things that had gone wrong, the things that had gone overwhelmingly right, and the types of actions the players were implementing to progressively develop their characters. Please note that an exacting chronology of Dave's expanding innovations — point by point — is beyond the realm of possibility, and that some of his new concepts may have been added to his game either in the spring, or later in the winter of 1971-1972, or even later. Regardless, I summarize these matters here to provide a clearer understanding of what the Blackmoor campaign was and where it was going.

Overall, Dave greatly enjoyed the free-wheeling nature of his game. "I had gotten excited about it," he said, "because it was different and I wasn't tied to historical restraints. I could let my imagination run rampant which it wasn't usually allowed to do."[326] Planning for the introduction of more characters to be played through many game sessions, he developed the experience progression rules. These rules would allow the "Flunkies" (the minor warriors and men-at-arms) to become *Chainmail*'s much stronger Heroes, and eventually for the surviving Heroes to become Superheroes.[327] Sometimes the Superheroes would possess wizardly elements as well. Arneson had already roughed out this crude idea of individual progression at some point prior to 1972, likely in regards to the troop experience

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[324] *Polyhedron* #1. Also know as RPGA News, Volume I, Number 1, Summer 1981. "Special: Interview with E. Gary Gygax," perhaps conducted by Frank Mentzer.

[325] *Role-Playing Mastery*, a book by Gary Gygax.

[326] "An Interview with Dave Arneson" in *Pegasus* Magazine, issue #1, April / May 1981.

[327] Player Greg Svenson would note that Dave Arneson's "leveling up" rules were in place early on. As he noted in an interview (rough translation), "For the first adventure the rules that Dave used were based on a pre-print version of *Chainmail*. However, even in that first version of what was then our characters could progress to level, from 'Flunky' to 'Hero.' (Please note that this is a translation from the Italian, and is not a verbatim Svenson quote.)

levels featured in his Napoleonic Simulation Campaign.[328]

The precedent for this potential system is latent within Gary's troop values in the original *Chainmail*, where the footmen are worth 1 or 2 points, horsemen are worth 3 to 5 points, Heroes are worth 20 points, and Superheroes are worth 50. Gradients of individual heroic power, measured by such points, were already suggesting themselves. The blanks in the rules already implied some manner of unspoken progression: each "level" of warrior was more experienced than the previous lower-valued one. There were listed values for men of 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 20 and 50 points ... but what were men called at points 6 through 19, or points 21 through 49?

What was still missing, however, was the actual means of skill- and achievement-based progression through these archetypes. If a dragon-slaying knight became a Hero, then would a man who had slain *two* dragons become a Superhero? The entertaining C&CS peerage system which measured member precedence, it seems, would also influence Dave when he would come up with his own brilliant idea of experience levels. Dave may also have been influenced by his knowledge of U.S. Army rank codifications, where officers can progress from Lieutenant (NATO code OF-1) to Captain (OF-2), Major (OF-3), Lieutenant Colonel (OF-4) and so forth. But where C&CS members gained their real-world "ranks" by writing a certain number of article pages for the *Domesday Book*, the imaginary characters in the Blackmoor game would gain their ranks by killing monsters, acquiring treasures and earning experience points.

By allowing player characters to gain these points through skilled play, and roughly following the concept of military rankings, Dave established the now time-honored RPG ideal of advancement via combat experience. It may seem like a small step in retrospect, but at the time it was revolutionary. As Gary explained it, "Players began [*in Blackmoor*] as Heroes or Wizards. With sufficient success they [*Heroes*] could become Superheroes. In a similar fashion, Wizards could become more powerful."[329] "That was Dave's main thing," Gary stated later, "to start as a zero level Hero and go from there."[330] Clearly, from Gary's perspective this was the key rules component which Arneson provided to advance the Gygax-and-Perren *Chainmail* rules to the next level of adventure.

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[328] "The Great Svenny," a tale related by Greg Svenson, posted on the Blackmoor mailing list by Gregg Scott.

[329] *The Dragon*, issue #7, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

[330] Online web forum post: the Gygax Quarterofthree/CGM interview.

Dave also provided rules for basic equipment to be carried by the characters. As can be seen in the account of the first Blackmoor game "turns" (the months and seasons I described), there were already many circumstances in which a character might want to hold a torch or a pack of food instead of a sword, and the future adventures in dungeons would soon turn this *want* for survival equipment into an absolute necessity. Gary explained, from there "it started to become a matter of whether you had a sword or an axe, and a backpack, and rope and spikes and all of these spelunking tools."[331]

Also, perhaps drawing on Gary's brief mention of Elric of Melniboné being both an Anti-Hero and a Wizard in *Chainmail*, Dave developed rules so that characters could advance through both the rank series of "Flunkies to Superheroes" and "Warlocks to Wizards" simultaneously. This was done to make the player characters stronger in relation to the monsters and the other challenges they faced. As Dave once explained, "Magic-users in the beginning were more of an effort to give the players more firepower."[332]

But while the Blackmoor veterans progressed and were able to handle more dangerous encounters, they also ended up suffering more wounds. This was problematic because heavy wounds could cause a character to "lose a turn," as it were, in the ongoing campaign. Some characters would die through no fault of their own. That was a major dis-incentive to heroic risk taking, and Dave wanted the game to be mostly about adventure and crazy fun. And so, in Dave's words about a month after the mage sub-ranks were worked out, "The clerics were added to heal up players more quickly."[333]

Dave reported on these early games in his own *Blackmoor Gazette and Rumormonger*, and later in the *Domesday Book* journal as well. He published "battle reports" of the Blackmoor campaign which caught Gary's intrigued attention. Further inquiries would soon lead Gary to realize that the Twin Cities games were a strange beast indeed, a mode of play which Gary himself had never envisioned. "Dave Arneson related that his college group were playing the system on a pure player-for-hero (or wizard) basis," Gary once wrote, "with mercenaries

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[331] Online web forum post: the Gygax Quarterofthree/CGM interview.

[332] Online web forum post: Odd74.proboards.com. ODD74 Proboards forums, "Was Arneson's Blackmoor Classless?"

[333] Online web forum post: Odd74.proboards.com. ODD74 Proboards forums, "Was Arneson's Blackmoor Classless?" Posted June 10th, 2008.

for hire to add to the force."[334] This "one character per player" basis, of course, would soon lead to the collaborative efforts which would result in the creation of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

But even before that fateful collaboration, there was much more to come in the mysterious realm of Arnesonian adventure. Dave's next innovation would change everything: over the Christmas holiday, he created the labyrinthine dungeons beneath Castle Blackmoor, and dared his overconfident players to explore them.



"Abandon hope all ye … that is, do come in. And welcome."

[334] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Q&A with Gary Gygax. Posted March 15th, 2005.

CHAPTER 7
THE DUNGEONS OF BLACKEST MORIA
(JANUARY — APRIL 1972)

Thou who dost the wave-shine shorten,
My attempt has been to find
In the barrow what was hidden,
Deep in darkness black and blind.
Nothing of the dragon's treasure
With the dead is left behind.

— *Grettir the Outlaw* (one of the great Icelandic sagas), as translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

*(**Please Note:** Blackmoor's dungeon timelines are especially confusing. In reconstructing a chronicle for Blackmoor's dungeons that actually makes sense and coincides with the known facts, I have regrettably been forced to disregard several conflicting and internally inconsistent accounts from Arneson which confuse the order in which various aspects of the campaign (the Castle, Village, Surround, Castle Interior and Dungeons) were created.*

Despite Arneson's occasional assertions to the contrary, there is as of yet no reliable evidence that he prepared his dungeons before the Christmas holidays of 1971, and there are also several hints that the underground was not developed until well after several earlier-mentioned Blackmoor battles had already been played.

In its current incarnation hereafter, my narrative draws upon my belief that the dungeons were created several months after the original map, which featured only exterior locations. If evidence contrary to this assertion is presented, this chapter will then be amended to reflect a clearer picture of what actually transpired. To this date, however, a plausibly distinct version of that picture does not yet exist. ~KDK)

THE BLOODY and frenetic Blackmoor campaign continued, and so the heroes and baddies wandered and fought their way across Arneson's imaginary world. The original scenarios involving the Coot-legion invasions had been situated in Blackmoor Village proper, sometime bleeding over into the near surrounding countryside.

Interactions with the Egg of Coot to the north, the Great Kingdom to the south, and various pirates and sea monsters arising in Blackmoor Bay led the players to question the exact dimensions of their domain. If this was a game where anything was possible, then what was to stop them from journeying across the world?

Blackmoor proper needed to be bigger.

At first, Dave considered redesigning the interiors of Blackmoor Castle's upper works, or even erasing the castle and creating a larger version. However, he was using a German "Kibri" kit — the Italian "Burg Branzoll" model 7304, to be precise[335] — and the mapped-in walls and towers had been modeled after the kit's actual dimensions.

Pondering this, Dave came up with his clever solution to the problem. He wanted to keep the Castle as the heart of the campaign, the center of the action. But how to put new major locales on the original map, when that map was already full? The answer, in retrospect, was obvious: move the map into three dimensions. It was time for the Blackmoor campaign to go underground. As he explained, the castle model "was a neat kit, and I didn't want to abandon it, so the only way to go was *down*."[336]

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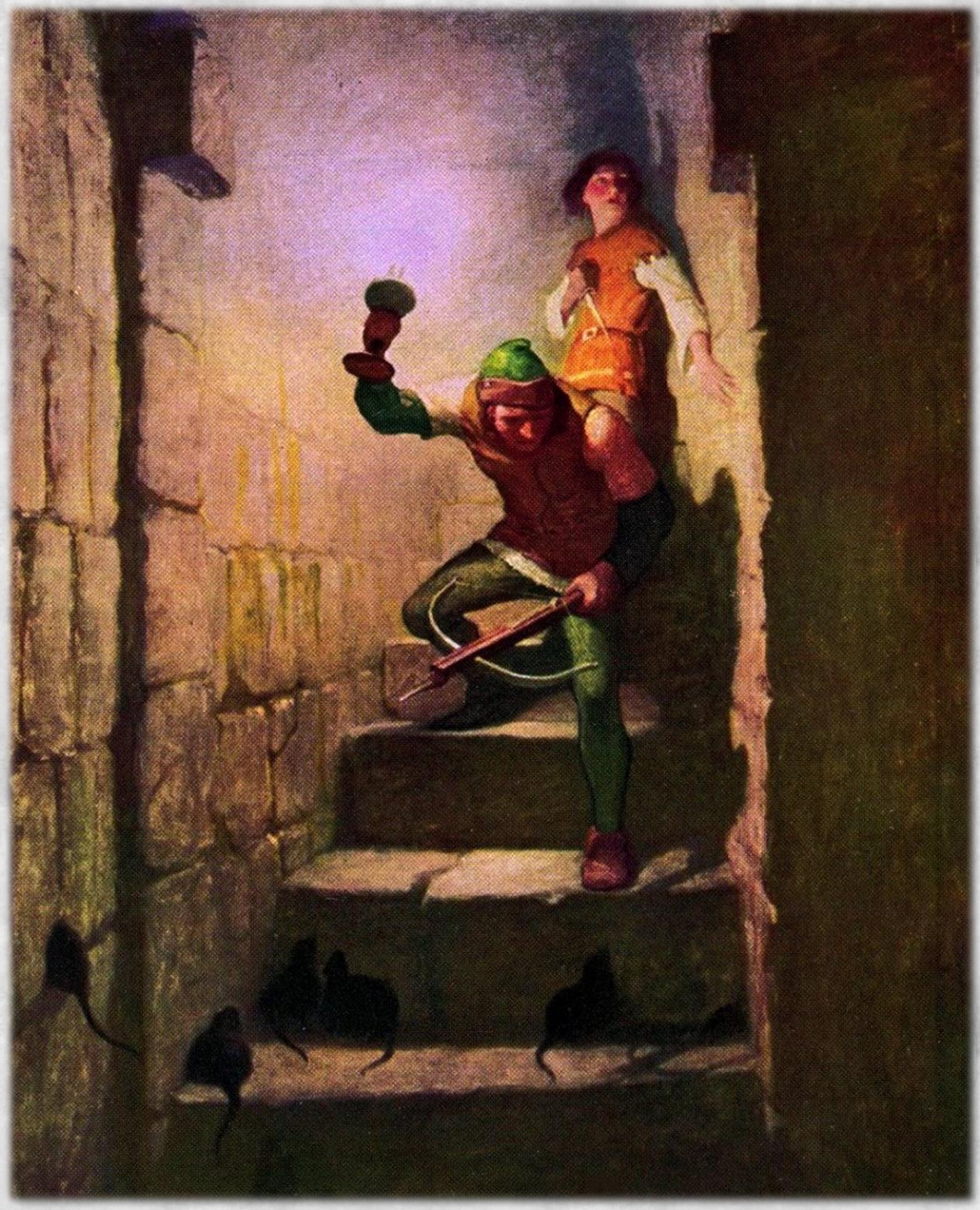
[335] The Comeback Inn forums, "Dave Arneson Memorial Event (St. Paul, Minnesota" and Havard's Blackmoor Blog, "The Original Castle Blackmoor" (March 7th, 2010).

[336] Interview with Dave Arneson, *Kobold Quarterly* #9. See also Gary's assessment in Masters of Fantasy: TSR, the Fantasy Factory, a documentary which aired on the Sci-Fi Channel in 1997. Gary's comment appears at approximately 8:20.



"Why aren't we wearing plate and mail again?"

This was a crucial innovation. Gary Gygax would soon recognize the idea's greatness, and so would many others. Bob Bledsaw of Judges' Guild rightly acknowledged Dave Arneson as "the originator of the Dungeon Adventure concept,"[337] and there is a good reason why *Dungeons & Dragons* is prominently named to feature this thematic improvement. Moving the action underground created an entirely new type of game, completely beyond the "land war" constraints of traditional wargaming.

As I have formerly mentioned, in developing such "roofed" and enclosed spaces for fantasy adventure, Dave was following the tradition of Conan tales such as *The Scarlet Citadel* and *Red Nails* (which Gary declared as his favorite Robert E. Howard tale), in which an entire city is roofed and therefore envisioned as a multi-level "dungeon." Similar influences include Goblin Town and Erebor from *The Hobbit*, and the dwarven underworld of Moria.

David Megarry explained that the Blackmoor group had been very impressed with Tolkien's portrayal of Moria especially. "We all were steeped in the Tolkien trilogy [*The Lord of the Rings*]," he remembered, "and we agreed that Gandalf leading [*the Fellowship*] through the caves of Moria … [*was*] a dungeon crawl of magnificent proportion."[338]

In addition to Tolkien's Moria, I personally believe *The Scarlet Citadel* is particularly important too, because in that tale Howard describes "nameless pits below the hill whereon [*the*] palace sat." The following passage from that tale — where indeed we learn about deadly dungeons, monsters created by an evil wizard, and bardic rumors of horrific encounters, overheard by an adventurer — is particularly interesting:

* * * * *

"He [Conan] *glared fearsomely at the outer gloom, and thought of the grisly tales he had heard of Tsotha's necromantic cruelty, and it was with an icy sensation down his spine that he realized that these must be the very Halls of Horror named in shuddering legendry, the tunnels and dungeons wherein Tsotha performed horrible experiments with beings human, bestial, and, it was whispered, demoniac, tampering blasphemously with the naked basic elements of life itself. Rumors said that the mad poet Rinaldo had visited these pits, and been shown horrors by the wizard, and that the nameless monstrosities of which he hinted in his awful poem,*

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[337] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[338] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!,* produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 1:10.

The Song of the Pit, *were no mere fantasies of a disordered brain."*

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Moria too was a fantastic locale for Dave to emulate, because as described it was virtually endless. And since Gary had already created *Chainmail* statistics for classic Middle Earth monsters such as orcs, goblins, trolls and Balrogs, creating a Moria-like "mega-dungeon" would simply be a process of drafting the labyrinth maps on graph paper and populating the chambers with the *Chainmail* and Blackmoor beasties in every room.

In a curious coincidence, and noting the similarity between "Black Moor" and "Moria," I went back to my Middle Earth research from years ago in search of the *meaning* of Moria in Tolkien's language schema. It turns out that Moria in the Sindarin tongue means "Black Chasm." It seems that Dave was not aware of this synchronicity. Nevertheless, there is a satisfying symmetry in this accidental "hidden interpretation" of the Blackmoor dungeons' origins.

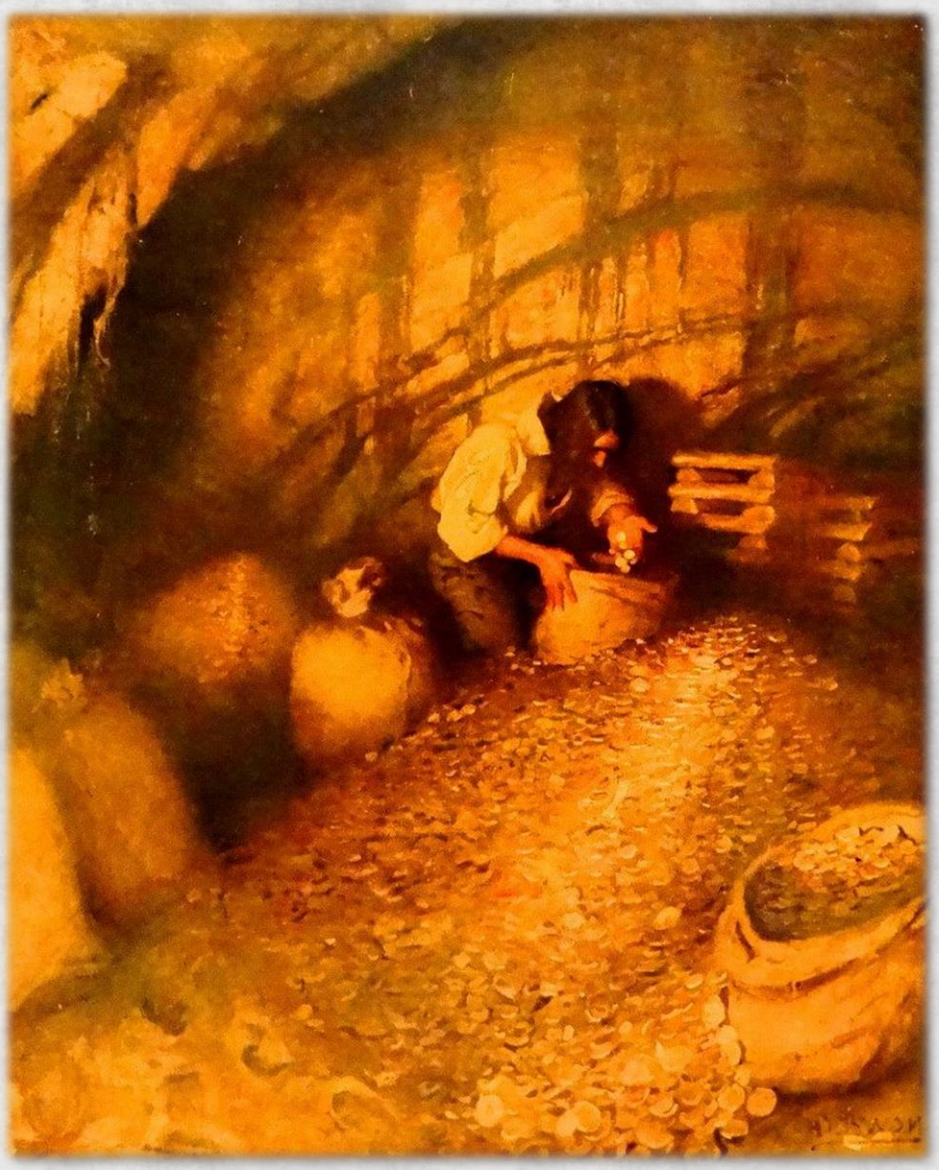
The actual background of the Blackmoor Dungeons remains mysterious, but the following description from *The First Fantasy Campaign* may be of interest: "A sadistic Duke or Baron would make cruel use of the Castle's Dungeons and Torture Chambers for their own amusements and purposes. As a result, the Dungeon area of the Castle is supposedly abound[*ing*] in wandering spirits of the poor wretches that succumbed within those confines." This allusion bears a striking similarity to a 1785 Marquis de Sade novel, *The 120 Days of Sodom*, in which a depraved torturer known as the Duke of Blangis committed unspeakable acts on innocent victims. Much like a similar allusion to *The Castle of Otranto*, it seems likely that Dave was exposed to this idea cinematically, through his B-movies (or *Dark Shadows* episodes) featuring mad scientists lairing in crumbling Gothic castles.

In most Swords & Sorcery tales featuring underground environs — and in similar stories such as Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*, A. Merritt's *The Face in the Abyss*, and H. P. Lovecraft's *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* — the netherworld itself is either the goal of exploration, or the obstacle. Rarely is there any other reason to go somewhere so daunting and terrible than simply to get through it, "in search of the unknown." This is a great device for fiction, but the Blackmoor campaign involved players controlling characters and gathering gold through trade and conquest. Huge expenditures of gold allowed the "Blackmoor Bunch" to build and repair castles, raise armies, and even to learn esoteric skills and thereby to acquire more power. These characters were thus always short on gold, and their efforts were frequently devoted to getting more treasure so that they could control the region and "beat" the other players in the struggle for dominance.

Perhaps by considering Conan's mercenary streak, or Smaug's ill-won treasure

trove in the depths of Erebor, Dave saw through to how he could lure his players into exploring the dungeons: fill them with loads of treasure. If the dungeons were made into the most lucrative (and dangerous) locale in all the realm, then the players' characters would flock back to Blackmoor Castle to get that loot.

This nod to the players' shameless greed, as we shall see, turned out to be *too* successful. But that only makes the stories of the dungeons more entertaining.



"Just think how many brand new Domesdays
and brown boxes I could buy and put away with this …"

Besides the lure of monsters guarding treasure, there was another benefit to the dungeon mode of "inside exploration": it made Dave's job as the referee easier, because the players could not be quite so unpredictable while their characters were underground. As Dave explained, "Dungeon crawls were, I think, the easiest things to set up … [*the players*] couldn't go wandering off where you didn't have a map because it was solid rock."[339] Even better, any time the players did exhaust a map, Dave could simply add a staircase and situate another dungeon level beneath the current one. In theory, of course!

While "digging" beneath the Castle, Dave decided to create a total of six dungeon levels to encompass the totality of Castle Blackmoor's underground. Later additions would eventually expand Arneson's mega-dungeon to feature 25 different levels. The maps we can now find (particularly in *The First Fantasy Campaign*) are mostly from a later incarnation, c. 1975-1977, but they tell us much about Dave's mapping style. They reveal a huge maze of diagonal passageways designed to confuse potential mappers and casual explorers. Each level has a few dungeon chambers and many dead ends, creating a nightmarish labyrinth where anyone not familiar with the place would soon become hopelessly lost. (And in Dave's opinion, it was precisely when the adventurers got lost and the screaming started that the fun could really begin …)

After the subterranean level structures were completed, Dave needed to populate the encounter keys in that fun-yet-laborious process now known as "dungeon stocking." As the world's first Dungeon Master (as opposed to merely a campaign referee), Dave had no pre-existing system to help him with stocking the dungeons. How could the task be done? He could script every room with a new idea from his own imagination, but the ideas would run out before the dungeon was fully stocked and ready for play. Some kind of random system would need to be invented.

Dave first considered what he already had to work with in *Chainmail*'s Fantasy Supplement. Unfortunately, he could never quite recall how he stocked the first Blackmoor dungeon. He did provide us with a clue, however: "Having gone over all my records, the surest indication is that the point values given in the First Edition [*of*] *Chainmail* formed the basis for my system."[340] It is therefore likely that he reviewed the monsters in the Fantasy Supplement and their respective point values, and then devised a list of relative monster power levels. Then he split these

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[339] Online interview: Gamespy: The Dave Arneson Interview, conducted by Allen Rausch, published August 19, 2004.

[340] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

monsters into three different hierarchies, so that he could roll dice according to the dungeon level's depth and difficulty to generate the random lairs.

From this information and other hints provided, we can surmise that the monsters included in the earliest version of the dungeon were perhaps something like this:

* * * * *

Group III, the Low-Level Monsters (the weak ones): (1) Hobbits, (2) Kobolds or Goblins, (3) Orcs, (4) Dwarves or Gnomes, (5) Elves or Fairies (6) Sprites or Pixies.

Group II, the Mid-Level Monsters (the fearsome ones): (1) Ghouls, (2) Werewolves or Werebears, (3) Ogres or Trolls, (4) Heroes, (5) Rocs (precisely how they might *fit* into the dungeon is unknown!), (6) Superheroes.

Group I, the Deep-Level Monsters (the deadly ones): (1) Wraiths, (2) Elementals (Air, Earth, Fire or Water), (3) Ents or Giants, (4) True Trolls, (5) Balrogs, (6) Dragons.

(And the relative difficulty level of individual encounters could be controlled by adjusting the number of monsters appearing in each locale.)

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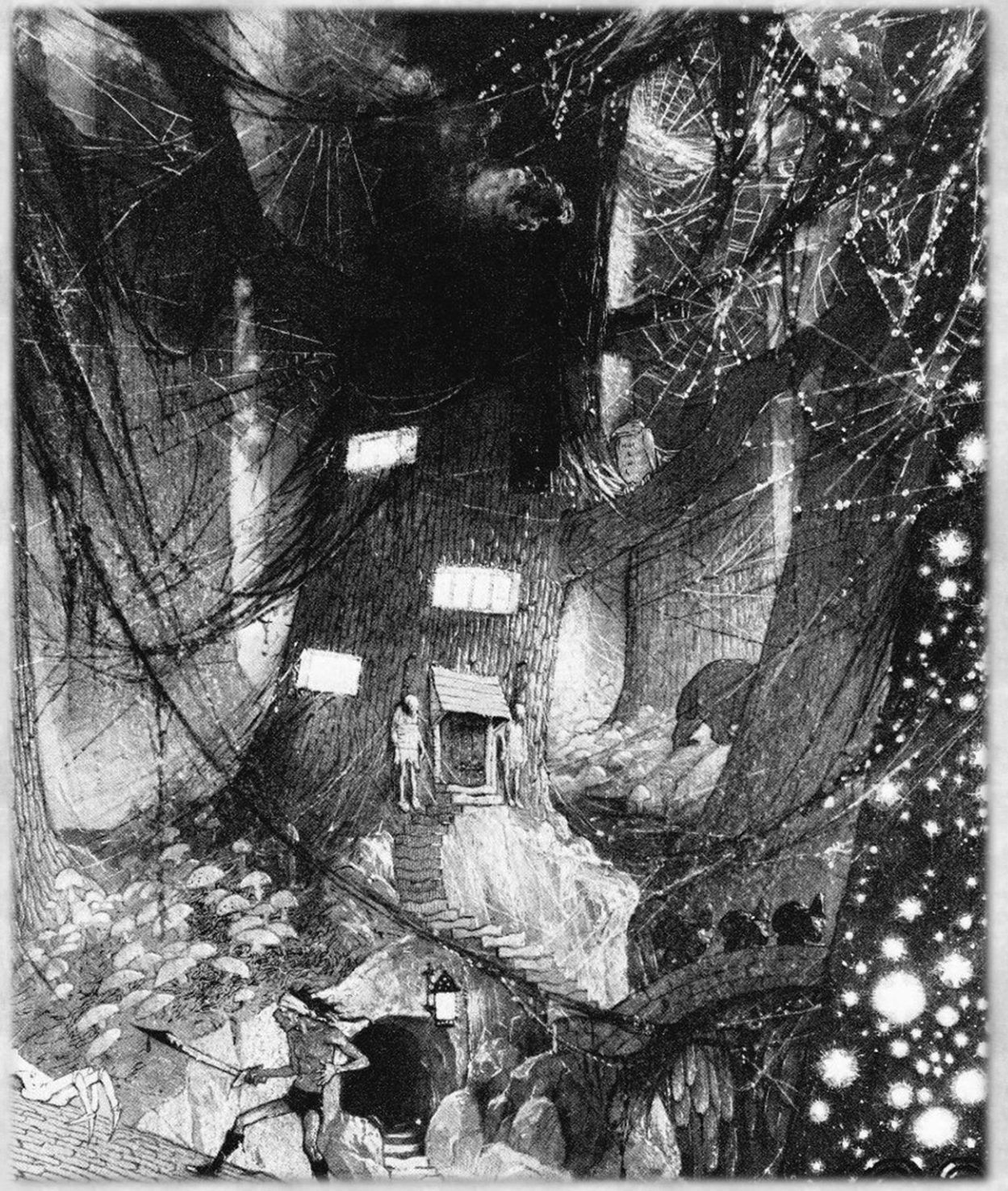
The system was structured so that the Group III monsters would mostly be found on dungeon levels 1 and 2; the Group II monsters on levels 3 and 4; and the Group I monsters on levels 5 and 6. There is not enough data to be certain of every detail of this approach, although a gradual introduction of the more powerful beasties would make the most sense.

To this basic randomly-generated structure, Dave also sprinkled in some additional special encounters of his own design. Some of these "showpieces" featured the new monsters that he and his play group had created by extrapolating from *Chainmail*'s existing guidelines. For example, we know that there was an early encounter with a dangerous slime, as well as another with giant spiders. (The spiders were probably inspired by Shelob's brood in *The Hobbit*, and also the monstrosity which Conan faced in *The Tower of the Elephant*.)



Orb weavers of Nether Leng, ach.
Lack of heroic purging breeds the big ones.

Later versions of these dungeons would also include gnolls, giant toads, giant hogs, giant worms, manticores, "man-eating seaweed" and worse.

In the later-year incarnations,[341] the ability of the Blackmoor dungeons to constantly spawn new evil monsters would be explained away as an effect of the "wild magic" inherent in the black bedrock which lies beneath the accursed land — the same fell and arcane power which created dimensional ruptures, gates to other worlds and the curious ensorcelments which grace the Comeback Inn and the Temple of the Frog. The dungeon below would never run out of monsters, but it would certainly serve as a deadly funhouse and meat grinder to deal with even the most intrepid of adventurers.

This process of monster stocking took a while to work out, and longer to implement. As player Greg Svenson (whose character would soon begin thriving late in the campaign's first year)[342] once recalled, Dave "had been working all week to prepare [*the*] map of tunnels and catacombs under the town and especially under the Castle."[343]

Finally however, the stocking and planning process was complete. Very soon the dungeon prototype (and Dave's experiment) would face its trial by fire as it came into contact with the enemy: imaginative players. Then, Dave's plans would need to change. "I had a few rules and no plans for anything beneath the sixth level in the dungeon," he explained. "With the basic idea laid out, there were still questions to answer."[344] But for now, the dungeons were big enough and complex enough, he decided. It was time to play some games.

These dungeons were the scene of many of Blackmoor's greatest and funniest moments. Again, however, there are frustrating and serious problems with Blackmoor's chronology. Very little was written down that has come to light, and the stories from the players tend to blend into one another as they confuse hundreds of dungeon excursions with earlier or later journeys. This well-intentioned mess of partial remembrances makes it extremely difficult to come up with a coherent story of the dungeon campaign that I could share here in its entirety. There are too many tangled threads in this tapestry for it to ever lie flat again. But I will try my best to give you a picture of some of what happened beneath the Castle!

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[341] Dungeon Module DA1, *Adventures in Blackmoor* (pg. 45).

[342] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition. See pg. 53.

[343] "The First Dungeon Adventure," by Greg Svenson, posted on the Blackmoor mailing list by Gregg Scott.

[344] *Dave Arneson's Blackmoor*, published by Zeitgeist Games Inc., 2004.

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When the "Blackmoor Bunch" of players came down to Dave's basement for their next game — perhaps on Saturday, January 1st, 1972 — they learned that they were once again about to be subjected to "something special." As Greg Svenson (then 17 years old) would later remember, when he went down to Arneson's basement, the Ping-Pong table was not set up for a major miniatures battle. Instead, there was a landscape with a village overlooking a bay, and a large castle on the heights.[345]

There were eight players in all that day. The players had grown clever in navigating Dave's random campaign event systems, and also in gaming the financial models for baronial taxes and expenses. But now, the imaginary world they knew so well was changing once again. It was time for *expert mode*, and Dave was opening a deadly netherworld intended as a Hell-bent, survival-of-the-fittest arena for gold-stealing mayhem.

As player David Megarry would explain, Arneson "drew a big map, which we didn't know anything about, and then we were exposed to it by his storytelling."[346]

These very first underground sessions were wild and amusing. To prepare for one early adventure (perhaps the very first one in January), one of the newer players — Greg Svenson — created a character who would eventually be known as the Great Svenny. (It seems that Dave Arneson had difficulty pronouncing the name "Svenson," and so he would refer to Greg from time to time as "Zvenzen."[347]

Greg provided a fantastic account of this dungeon crawl, which can be read online at *The Blackmoor Archives: The Ultimate Blackmoor Fansite*. The tale of his deadly indoctrination goes something like this:

The treacherous Weasel (Dave Wesely), corrupted minion of the Egg of Coot, had been defeated by the heroes. Castle Blackmoor was reclaimed. Player Dave Fant's character, the Baron Fant, was still the Lord of Blackmoor and resident in the castle. Two other players, Jim Abler and John Soukup, were allowed by Arneson

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[345] Refer to the Italian interview with Greg Svenson for GDR Magazine, "Intervista a Greg Svenson, il primo giocatore di ruolo," from November 22nd, 2016. Several details of this account are from there, but where details seem to be slightly off from earlier accounts, the earlier details have been allowed to stand. I fully sympathize with trying to remember minutiae from a game that took place over 40 years before!

[346] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 5:45.

[347] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

to play an evil Wizard and a summoned Balrog respectively.[348] Everyone else would play the role of a castle guard, just following orders.



"Looks like meat's back on the menu!"

In some way, these two new evil superpowers were rudely introduced to the campaign. We don't know exactly what happened, but when we consider Tolkien's tale of the Balrog known as "Durin's Bane" rising out of netherworld to wipe out the gold- and mithril-tempted dwarves commanded by the mighty Balin, we can get a pretty clear picture of what transpired.

Fans of *Game of Thrones* may find this commentary from the 1977 *First Fantasy Campaign* — featuring (spoiler alert!) a Red Wedding-like description of carnage from a similar earlier event in Blackmoor's history — to be a bit uncomfortable:

[348] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

"The Barbarians sent a delegation of ten to meet with the Fort's Commander ... and they were conducted to the then-main Reception Hall. Having been searched for weapons and since a truce was in effect, most of the local dignitaries and their families assembled in the Hall. At that point, the enemies' deception took its true form when the Wizard ... released his spell through the ten enemy representatives there in the Hall."

At the time of this new Wizard's advent (or was it a return?), poor Greg Svenson's character was a mere Flunky swordsman in the Baron Fant's employ, and he was there when all Hell broke loose. The Wizard attacked the Baron's men in the Castle, frying them with his vile spells.

The guards called for reinforcements. They were told that the Wizard was plundering the Castle. The evil Wizard was forced to retreat into the accursed dungeon, which had until then been locked and sealed and never talked about due to a terrible curse. (Shades of the *Dark Shadows* episodes I mentioned earlier, anyone?) The horrors of the past, festering for years, had been forgotten. And there in the festering deep, the evil had grown.

The relentless Baron Fant was infuriated by this daring incursion. He drew up a company of thirty intrepid Flunkies from his troops, and sent them into the dungeon seeking their lord's vengeance upon the intruder. Greg and five other players played some of these soldiers, of course, with the other two dozen "grunts" presumably played by Arneson as "spear carriers" (or "Red Shirts," to use the Star Trek parlance). They were loyal, daring, and completely outmatched. They were the ultimate expendables.

It was time for a vengeful pursuit of the evil Wizard. The Flunkies armed themselves and prepared for war. Torches and other supplies were procured (using Arneson's equipment rules). The Flunkies went down a great staircase leading from the Great Hall of Castle Blackmoor, down into the cellars. Numerous and mysterious doorways led from there into the dungeon labyrinth. Taking a collective deep breath, the Flunkies lit their torches, chose a door and went on through.

Dave stopped the game. "Follow me," he told his players. He played a variation on one of his favorite tricks, taking his players to the narrow, tunnel-like laundry area of the basement, and positioning each person in the marching order of their characters. Then he turned off the lights, saying that a gust of wind had extinguished the torches. Greg Svenson explained: "When Dave wanted to see how the players would react to a situation, he would set it up so that it would seem like we were in that situation and then see how we react."[349] And so of course it is

[349] The Kobold Quarterly website.

perfectly logical that Dave lined up his players and screamed at them in the dark.

Before the players could figure out what the Hell was going on, Dave flicked the lights back on, observed some new positions taken by his scattered and startled players, and then went back to the gaming table. The baffled players followed, and Dave explained that when the torches had been extinguished by the gust of wind, something horrible had happened. A massive black slimy amoeba (very much like the monstrosity in that classic horror flick, *The Blob*) had poured out and engulfed the legs of one of the Non-Player Character (NPC) Flunkies that Arneson was controlling. The players, back in their roles, pressed the attack and tried to save their dissolving companion.

It was too late. The acidic slime devoured the man, armor and all. Some of the other men tried to relight their torches while others attacked the slime with their steely blades. The engorged slime grew, absorbing the last tasty bits of skeleton and internal organs. The other warriors' swords did very little damage, as their blades dissolved in the slime's acids even as they struck. Other men were attacked, and one had the bright idea of using his relit torch as a weapon of last resort. A pseudopod of the loathsome slime fried off, and the thing recoiled. The men lit more torches, and fighting hard they forced the thing back into a corner of the dungeon chamber. Several more soldiers died horribly, but finally the thing was fried. (We are left to wonder whether this is the exact moment when the freshly-cooked "black slime" became a "black pudding" for posterity!)[350]

When the last of the slime was burned away, the grim survivors crept deeper into the dungeon. Another room was revealed, filled with a gauze of thick and silky whitish ropes. Several of the men entered the room, and torches were set to clear the ropes away. The "ropes" thrummed, scuttling horrors hissed from overhead, and many-legged beasties dropped down from the ceiling to prey on these bold intruders. Giant spiders!

The spiders leapt out of their webs and feasted on screaming swordsmen. More men were killed, slashed by venomous mandibles and left to collapse in twitching heaps. Eventually, the spiders were destroyed. The remaining and now battle-hardened Flunkies discovered some marrow-drained bones, shattered weapons, and a few copper farthings stuck in the webs or between the flagstones. But still, there was no sign of the evil Wizard anywhere. He must have fled deeper into the dungeon, relying on these nightmarish monsters to destroy the Baron's host.

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[350] Gary once noted that in inventing the slime monster, Arneson "evidently disliked English black pudding," but whether "he was thinking of Shoggoths when he envisaged the critter, only [*he*] knows."

But the soldiers may have feared their master's punishments even more than they did the spiders. The Flunkies, undeterred, bravely descended another staircase. In a monster-forsaken chamber, they discovered a fallen statue of Poseidon which glittered there in the torchlight. Beyond this enigmatic scene, archways beckoned the men deeper into the maze. They pressed on. More claustrophobic corridors followed. An encounter with a deadly fire elemental brazier probably resulted in even more deaths, but even against that magical inferno and its fireballs, the diminished troops stood triumphant in the end. A magic sword was discovered! One player-controlled Flunky tried to wield it, but the ensorcelled blade merely dismissed this presumptuous mortal with a surge of imperious lightning.

From Greg's telling of the tale, it seems that this latter treasure was one of Dave's special magical swords which could only be wielded by a man of pure heart. A later incarnation of Dave's rules c. 1977 reads as follows: "Should a player [*i.e., character*] pick up a sword that has origins [*divine alignment with law or chaos, good or evil*] other than the player, that player cannot use the sword. Also, if the player should pick up the sword, then that player will suffer damage at the following rates ..."[351]

In short, the dude got zapped and was nearly killed.[352]

However, this was a treasure beyond compare. It was worth many lifetimes' pay. Several other men tried to wield this angst-ridden cousin of Excalibur, but only one in the end — a character played by Bill (Heaton?) — was able to grasp the sword without receiving an electric shock. Reluctantly, the magic sword accepted its new owner.[353]

The other men were deeply impressed. Clearly, this anonymous young soldier was divinely favored by the Fates! Dave, following his roughed-out character progression notes, decided that the sword-bearer had been instantly elevated to the glorious rank of Hero.

The problem, of course, was that this approach was somewhat arbitrary, and the power jump from Flunky to Hero was abrupt and extreme. If a Hero's progression could be evened out and made more gradual, the players would have many more incremental goals to encourage further play down in the dungeons. When Dave thought some more about this vexing problem, he would develop the

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[351] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[352] Sham's Grog 'n' Blog blogspot, Q&A with Greg Svenson. Posted May 30th, 2009.

[353] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. "Eras of Blackmoor publication."

concepts of earned experience and character levels.

But that innovation was in the future.

Armed with the magic sword, the nameless Hero immediately assumed the command. Not only was he Fate-chosen, he now had some serious firepower for the dungeon's monsters to contend with. Emboldened, the survivors left the elemental's chamber and wended their way even deeper through the maze. The group eventually made it down to dungeon level four, where they set up camp to rest and heal their wounds.

During the "night," the newly-risen Hero endured his first trial while he stood the watch. A beautiful maiden approached the circle of sleeping men, and enthralled the Hero with her dark magic.



Partake. Trust in me.

Greg's Flunky character, Svenny, woke just in time to see the "maiden" shape-shifter revealing its true form as a giant snake. She unwound her slithering coils, and drew the enraptured Hero into her deadly embrace.

A battle cry was raised, and the other men jolted awake. The serpent-thing was slain by the horrified Flunkies, but their Hero fell as well. The process of determining who could wield the magic sword was repeated. The men would not survive without the sword, that much was clear. But who else was worthy to wield it?

The sword was taken up again, although it seems that the new owner was reluctant to press forward. With their total troop reduced to about twenty men, the players decided that their characters needed to return to the surface for reinforcements. They packed up their camp, honored their dead, and followed their old dusty footsteps back toward the ascending staircase.

But none of them were pathfinders, and the dust was not thick enough to reveal the entire path. At some point along the way back they became hopelessly lost. After many misadventures, they managed to return to a recognizable portion of dungeon level two, where they were forced to camp again and rest.

While all of this was going on, the patient "baddie" players Jim and John — playing the evil Wizard and his Balrog — were receiving reports from their thwarted monster minions. Some of the monsters had survived their encounters, and had slithered down to relate their battle reports to their evil masters. The tale of the hard-won sword was likely told, and the Wizard and the Balrog grew concerned. Realizing that the Flunkies were going to escape and perhaps bring back dangerous legions of reinforcements, the two "baddie" players decided to act.

The plan was simple, and brutal in its directness. The Balrog surged up through the mazes and attacked the encampment, focusing on the wielder of the magic sword. The new wielder was slain, but the screams awoke the rest of the troop. The Flunkies rose up in a panic and fought to the death. Blood flew, and a few sword cuts found their way home in the demon's putrid flesh. But no mere mortals could stand against such a fiend without the powers of sacred magic. The Balrog slaughtered all of the diehard Flunkies, all but one: Greg Svenson's character Svenny.

Towering over the helpless soldier and the piles of mangled bodies, the Balrog told Svenny what he must do: rise and return to the Great Hall of Castle Blackmoor, bearing a warning that something even worse would happen if the Baron Fant should dare to send any more troops into the netherworld. The evil Wizard (remotely) cast spells of light to guide poor Svenny up to the Great Hall, and so the lone survivor carefully picked up the magic sword — with a piece of cloth, and

without daring to wield it — and returned to the Hall of Blackmoor.

A somber private audience was held. The Baron Fant heard the story with grim acceptance, and offered his goodly servant a pile of 150 gold coins for the magic sword. The sword was sold, and the exhausted trooper thus lived to tell the tale.

This would not be the last time the bloodied veteran managed to survive where lesser men would fall. Dave Arneson would later tell the legend of this Superhero, saying, "Many a time, alone, the Great Svenny has dragged himself from the dungeons bleeding from a dozen wounds, vowing never to enter the Dark Passages beneath Blackmoor again, but always he responds when they [*the Lords of Blackmoor*] make an offer he cannot decline."[354]

Although Baron Fant and Greg's shell-shocked character were the only ones to be rewarded in that luckless first expedition, there would be many more dungeon wars waged with the evil minions of the Wizard and Soukup the Balrog. The game had lasted from 1 PM Saturday, all the way to 4 AM Sunday … a 15-hour marathon session of blood and glory!

Greg was hooked: "By the end of the weekend I had fallen in love with the game."[355] And Dave related, "Once begun, they [*the rest of the players*] were hooked, and for some months they plumbed the depths."[356] The players were *so* hooked, in fact, that very soon their characters would completely neglect their surface Barony holdings to focus on treasure hunts in the dungeons.

Player David Megarry once offered some explanation of Arneson's early play style during these ever-evolving dungeon games: Arneson "would say, 'You're at the mouth of a cave,' [*and*] you'd go into the cave and go 10', 20' … [*at*] intersections, you could go left or right or down. And then you'd expand on that to get into more fantastical descriptions. … The Tolkien description of the caves of Moria [*gave us*] a fantastic understanding of what a dungeon crawl is all about."[357]

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[354] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[355] "The First Dungeon Adventure," by Greg Svenson, posted on the Blackmoor mailing list by Gregg Scott.

[356] *The Space Gamer*, issue #21. "An Interview with Dave Arneson."

[357] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 5:45.



"Hell of place to map, and all that noise from the surface, too. So what do you think is going on up there? Is someone feeding the war hounds?"

Even better, Megarry has found some notebooks, maps and sheets relating to the Blackmoor dungeon adventures, so we now know a little more about the entire subterranean setting. Megarry's adventures were quite separate, frequently, from the doings of the nefarious Blackmoor Bunch. "You must understand," he once reminded readers, "I was mostly a loner in the Blackmoor campaign."[358] And, referring to his dungeon delving solo character, "H. W. Dumbo was mostly a loner [*too*]."[359] (We can get an idea of the seriousness with which Megarry coded his characters: following after McDuck, Dumbo is apparently the second one named after a Disney cartoon character.)

Following after the fates of McDuck and Number One, H. W. Dumbo would leave the criminal underworld (and the scuffles with the merchant boss) to other players while Megarry focused on the new lucrative killer sport of dungeon delving.

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[358] See David Megarry's comments at the Zenopus Archives, "Megarry's Copy of the Great Kingdom Map."

[359] Refer to Secrets of Blackmoor, on Facebook, January 17th, 2017 and Megarry's comments there.

For this narrative section, thanks are due to Dan Boggs and the Hidden in Shadows blog (and Secrets of Blackmoor, December 30th, 2016) as most of this information was analyzed at his site under the title "The Oldest Maps in D&D History" (January 16th, 2017). Please refer to that post if you'd like more details on the history behind the H. W. Dumbo tale. Basically, it tells us more about the Blackmoor dungeons than we ever knew before. It also shows us that Judges' Guild *First Fantasy Campaign* booklet — while lacking in some details and with a few errors — features some surprisingly accurate Blackmoor dungeon maps. (We also finally get confirmation that the scale on the FFC maps is indeed 1 square = 10'.)

As Megarry would explain, "I would have one-on-one sessions with Arneson. (*There may have been some men-at-arms under Megarry's control. ~K*) I [*H. W. Dumbo*] spent most of my time underground, mapping and running away — when possible — if I tripped up a monster."[360] Megarry mapped the dungeons as Dumbo explored them, and we can tentatively date these solo adventures with Arneson to early 1972 … the height of the Blackmoor dungeon exploration craze.

The good news is, Megarry was an excellent map maker. The bad news is, his findings were sporadic because he was doubling back, fighting, fleeing, and trying to get out alive. As a result, we have meager glimpses of most of the dungeon levels beneath Arneson's Castle Blackmoor.

Arneson did not make mapping easy. The labyrinthine layout was supposed to be part of the fun. As Megarry notes, "The basic scenario [*would be*] Arneson telling us, [*for example,*] '10 feet, 20 feet, room 20'x20' with an up staircase in southeast corner, down staircase in northwest corner, a passage on the north wall and east wall, and an ugly troll standing in the middle of the room. What are you going to do?' We had about 10 seconds to react. And then, he would announce, 'The troll is attacking. Who is in front?' We would be scrambling like mad to figure out a strategy. We would have been drawing the map by hand, on loose graph paper. If the room was unusually hard to describe, he would draw what we could see on our map. We never got to see his map."

Gary Gygax, most assuredly, would experience this same phenomenon in November of 1972 … and he would carry the tense, exploratory play style on into his own Greyhawk games. In this way, Arneson's hiding of the master dungeon maps — however it was accomplished at the game table — was an early instance of a Dungeon Master's screen.

So what did Dumbo find? Here's some quick samples:

* * * * *

[360] Refer to Secrets of Blackmoor, on Facebook, January 17th, 2017.

On Dungeon Level 1 (which was probably about 20' down from the surface, with the great hall of Castle Blackmoor just above): Some tunnels blocked off by cave-ins, and a tunnel leading out to the side of the bay-overlook cliff. The cave-ins might have been caused by the earlier earthquake on the surface, which was a campaign event.

On Dungeon Level 2 (about 40' beneath the surface): Here there is a torture chamber — perhaps later maintained by Sir Fang, the vampire — and prison cells for victims.

On Dungeon Level 3 (about 60' beneath the surface): A pool of (non-magical?) water, situated at a tunnel intersection. There is also a fire pit chamber, and several other rooms.

On Dungeon Level 4 (about 80' beneath the surface): There is a continuation of the fire pit shaft, which began on level 3, above. There is also a dangerous "devil's fountain" which we know very little about … but it certainly sounds bad.

At some point, Dumbo acquired enough treasure from the dungeon's monsters to build a strategically-placed house[361] on the surface, right near the shoreline in town. He would even dig a tunnel down from there to the dungeons, so that he could have (a) an escape tunnel to hide from any thieving rivals, and (b) a secret and private entrance to the dungeons below. It apparently took about two months[362] of game time to build the house and to excavate the precarious tunnel.

Because of the exact place where Dumbo dug his tunnel — and the way that the dungeon levels line up beneath the surface, as Arneson would measure staircase by staircase — he didn't hit pay dirt until dungeon level 5 … 100' below the surface! In other words, he dug straight past dungeon levels 1, 2, 3, and 4, barely missing various chambers and tunnels along the way.

On Dungeon Level 5 (as noted, 100' beneath the surface): Here, dumbo may have found (sprung?) a deadly spike trap of some kind. He failed to find a secret door which we can see on the master maps, but he did manage to find a long, descending stairway. This stair went all the way down past level 6 and into level 7. This level is where his tunnel came out, so it seems likely that Dumbo may have explored level 6 after level 7, by going up some stairs. Perhaps, Arneson was also compelled to create a seventh level … we don't know if any other adventurers had made it down to this area just yet.

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[361] On the Blackmoor town map which you can view at the Secrets of Blackmoor (Facebook) post from December 2nd, 2016, you can see the house situated on the southwestern isthmus which connects the Castle Blackmoor promontory to the town.
[362] See the Secrets of Blackmoor, on Facebook, December 23rd, 2016.

On Dungeon Level 6 (perhaps 120'-150' below the surface, as it appears there is more space between the "deep levels"): Here, Dumbo found a secret passage which he noted on his personal map.

On Dungeon Level 7 (confirmted to be 200' beneath the surface): This is the deepest that Dumbo got. Here, he found evidence of dwarf-crafted excavations, or signs of dwarven exploration. This seems to hint that the deep dungeons were very old indeed … perhaps dating to the civilization which had dwelled here before the humans of Blackmoor Town ever came. He also found a lair filled with ten nasty ogres, and a "gold(en) dining room." (This seems to be an allusion to treasure, but it might be a magical trick of some kind.) There was also a lair warren overflowing with over 160 goblins, and a horrible secret treasure vault which was home to 33 trolls (!) We can easily see why Dumbo would have given up on his solo excursions in to the netherworld!

At some point, Dumbo went on some outdoor adventures, too. We don't know much about them, sadly. But we do know that he helped Greg Svenson with the planning of Svenny's Freehold.

There is much more to learn, but Megarry's find of the Dumbo mapping book basically doubles our knowledge of the mysteries which lie beneath Castle Blackmoor. Watch this space for future revelations … if more is unearthed in the future, I will do my best to let you know!

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To Dave's bemusement and then chagrin, the sideshow of the dungeons would soon become the main spectacle of the entire campaign. This situation became so dire that eventually there was no significant force in Castle Blackmoor at all, and so evil invaders would surge in and burn the entire Castle to the ground.

Dave loved the new dungeon game, but he soon realized that if the players continued in their obsession over dungeon crawls, the entire dungeon was going to be plundered and emptied in short order. He explained, "It became quickly apparent that there was a need for a greater variety of monsters, more definition even within the type of monsters, and certainly a deeper dungeon."[363]

The dungeon stocking system required elaboration, so that Dave could include more of the newer monsters without necessitating "special encounter" creation whenever some variety in lairs was desired. Also, the experience progression requirements and other rulings would soon necessitate an additional level of

[363] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

character detail, differentiating Flunkies and Heroes from one another with greater granularity. Otherwise, only the equipment carried and treasures found would make the Heroes unique; colorful personalities could only be defined by what they *had*, not what they actually *were*. As a result, it is likely that Dave refined the "personality" (ability score) system in early 1972. We know from the Wizard Gaylord character sheet that the personality scores included the following attributes and skills (and there may have been more besides): Brains, Looks, Credibility, Sex, Health, Strength, Courage, Horsemanship, Woodsmanship, Leadership, Flying, Seamanship and Cunning.[364]

The black binder was probably getting quite big at this time!

By the spring, the infamous binder was stuffed full of haphazard rules. As the characters finished their dungeon romps and cleared out all six levels of Blackmoor's dungeons, it was time for Dave to inject some unexpected events to return the players' attention to the surface. It was time to burn down the Castle.

[364] Refer to the Youtube clip "A History of D&D in Twelve Treasures," posted by Jon Peterson. The commentary appears at approximately 6:50.

CHAPTER 8
TWISTS OF FATE
(MAY — OCTOBER 1972)

A rock troll did her burden throw
Down on Skeggi's skull, I trow.
O'er the battle-ogress saw I flow
Ruby rivers all aglow.
She her iron mouth a-gape
Did the life of Skeggi take.

— *Grettir the Outlaw* (one of the great Icelandic sagas), as translated by Sabine Baring-Gould

FIRST GLORY, then chaos. By the late spring of 1972, the Blackmoor campaign was a glorious mess. Invaders swarmed into the Village, charged up the slope, plundered the treasuries, burned the Castle down, and then leveled the remains. The heroic guardians of Blackmoor were not there to defend their subjects; they were busily traipsing through the dungeons far below, slaughtering monsters and stealing pretty treasures. When they finally emerged into the "Great Hall" up the main dungeon stairs, they found only a smoking ruin.

Understandably, the people of Blackmoor Village rose up and exiled the players' characters from civilization. The shamed and fallen Heroes were forced at sword point into Loch Gloomen (Lake Gloomy), a monster-infested marshland — centered upon an eponymous and miserable swamp-town — situated far away from Blackmoor proper in the misty south.[365] As player David Megarry recalls, "Apparently the other players had depleted NPCs from the town of Blackmoor and the surrounding villages in their adventuring. This incensed the character played by Arneson (the Earl or Duke, I can't remember what title Dave A. used) and he banished all the players to the swamp. I am fairly convinced he wanted us to play

[365] Dungeon Module DA1, *Adventures in Blackmoor* (pg. 43).

test the Temple of the Frog scenario he had created."[366]

This is an historically interesting moment, because it may help us to tentatively date some of the other confused events in the Blackmoor campaign. Dave once wrote that the heroes were exiled to Loch Gloomen "at the end of the 3rd year,"[367] which indicates that his chronicle of game events was likely being retold in the Game Years and not in Real Years. Also, we can note that near to the end of 1972, Arneson wrote an issue of his *Corner of the Table* newsletter (Volume IV, Number 6) which featured updates on his play group's four major campaigns being played at that time. In addition to Blackmoor, there were also games for "Space War" (later to become the TSR game *Star Probe*), World War II and Napoleonics. The Blackmoor report in this same *Corner of the Table* issue is the one that records the exile of the shamed heroes to Loch Gloomen.[368]

The exit of the fallen heroes was decidedly ungraceful: "Under heavy escort, they [*the player characters*] all ended up in Lake Gloomy with [*only*] the goods they could carry, and were dumped there."[369] David Megarry's character was spared this dismal fate: "Arneson told me that I was not subject to the banishment as I had never used NPCs in my adventures [*and not gotten them killed, which is what Megarry is getting at here*]."[370] But it seems that Megarry decided his character would follow a different path:

"[*Arneson*] told me I [*Megarry's character*] could stay and continue in Blackmoor … but I would be out of the mainstream of what the rest of the players would be doing. I could go [*to*] the Temple of the Frog, but would have to make the journey on my own. [*Instead,*] I choose to follow the group. I 'cleverly' decided I would travel there as a leper, and [*so I*] acquired a robe and bell. Unbeknownst to me, I choose the wrong color for the robe! So I followed the group, ringing my bell, thinking I was being a leper. Pete Gaylord, [*playing*] the Wizard [*of the Wood*], was part of the rear guard for the group. He finally noticed me and Arneson explained to him that a figure in a white robe with a bell was following the group.

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[366] See David Megarry's February 3rd, 2017 comment at the Zenopus Archives, on the blog post thread for "Megarry's Copy of the Great Kingdom Map," which was posted on February 2nd.

[367] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 59.

[368] Refer to the Youtube clip "A History of D&D in Twelve Treasures," posted by Jon Peterson. The commentary appears at approximately 8:45.

[369] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[370] See Megarry's February 3rd, 2017 comment at the Zenopus Archives.

(Leper robes are supposed to be yellow!) Pete looked at me for a while, and decided I was some powerful Wizard and decided to leave me alone, as long as I was keeping a safe distance from the group. I, of course, am keeping a safe distance from the group as I don't want to get involved with 'imperial entanglements'[371] to coin a phrase. I was revealed when we finally got there, but was told that Pete was on the verge of throwing one of his 'fireballs' at me. But [*Pete*] decided that if I was a powerful wizard, I could harm him, so he didn't do anything! How much Arneson dissuaded him by his description of my actions, I will never know."

Surely, Arneson was chuckling merrily in his mind, seeing how his players were making the adventure even more interesting by causing accidental confusion with one another!

Additionally, it seems that the people's favorite local-boy-gone-famous, the Great Svenny, was allowed to remain to protect the Village from further incursions. The reasons for this peculiar predicament are rather interesting: it seems that Greg Svenson, Svenny's player, was out of town while this scenario was being played.[372] His fate was therefore controlled by Dave Arneson, with his daring (foolhardy?) actions directed by the other players. Greg noted, "As I understand it, the other players decided to see how far Svenny could go without their support. They may have thought that Svenny could win the battle by himself."[373]

While the on-autopilot hero Svenny was quick to garrison Blackmoor, his efforts were to no avail. Poor old Svenny by that time possessed enchanted armor and a magic sword of his own, but his supporting garrison entailed only sixty sour-demeanored Flunkies in all. The forces of evil saw another opportunity for mayhem when the majority of the Heroes were exiled into the Gloomy Swamp, and so the monsters struck again without delay. The valiant Svenny mustered his troops, hunkered down in formation, and met the onslaught at the southwestern edge of the village. The attack was repulsed, and Svenny managed to valiantly slaughter more than 200 orcs single-handedly before he was finally struck down.[374]

Weeks later, Greg would return to learn that his cherished character had been killed fighting in this heroic final stand. Dave apologized to Greg, and Mike Carr's

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[371] *Star Wars* fans will of course note the allusion to Han Solo and his rather foolhardy (cocky) escapades.

[372] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Loch Gloomen Invasion."

[373] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Loch Gloomen Invasion." Posted June 30th, 2013.

[374] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Loch Gloomen Invasion."

priest character was allowed to resurrect Svenny so that his superhuman adventures could continue.



Come play with us …

Meanwhile, the exiles were trying to survive the swamp by sending squads of their still-loyal troops out from the swamp-town to march about, scouting the surround. The icy and poisonous swamp was filled with haunted houses, caves and various underground complexes, which proved to be the lairs of ogres, trolls, wights, werewolves and other less identifiable horrors of the dark.[375]

Dozens of footmen were killed by the swamp monsters during these trying times, but at some point the Barons Fant and Jenkins managed to redeem themselves through various (yet sadly mysterious) heroic actions.

While this Blackmoor Bunch was suffering in Loch Gloomen, and Svenny assigned to the Village defense, the mount of Castle Blackmoor was taken over by a cohort of elven warriors. This was not necessarily because the elves wanted to rule the Castle or even defend the Village, but rather because they feared what might occur if the surface exit out of the Balrog's dungeon was left unguarded. Faced with the dread certainty that the undead, demons and other unholy fiends would soon be rising out of the dungeons in force to invade the Village of Blackmoor and indeed the entire Barony, the guardian elves created holy water pumping systems. Blackmoor player Jeff Berry (who played the Tékumel character Chirine ba Kal) has noted[376] that Dave Arneson concocted this seemingly anachronistic detail after considering the practicality of Roman aqueducts, ancient pressurized pumping techniques, and similar pre-medieval technologies.

As a result of the Blackmoor Bunch's scouting skirmishes around the formerly-neutral town[377] of Loch Gloomen, the forces of evil became aware that the rest of the Heroes were still stuck in the swamp with limited means of defense. This was a perfect chance for them to wipe out the Blackmoor Bunch once and for all. A deadly surge of giants and other monsters (led by an evil Anti-Superhero riding a dragon, played by Kurt Krey)[378] attacked Loch Gloomen before the Heroes could gain a firmer foothold in the region.

We know little of this Captain Krey, but Arneson once noted that "Krey turned traitor and joined Soukup [*playing one of the Egg of Coot's lieutenants, perhaps the Balrog*], and [*Krey*] betrayed [*Blackmoor*] Castle during the first [*real world*]

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[375] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pp. 59-60.

[376] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "Q&A with Jeff Berry."

[377] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 4.

[378] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

year."[379] Krey was the first dark wizard of the Blackmoor campaign, hungry for power and glorification. (And hey, who wouldn't want to be an epic dragon rider?) He had sold his soul to Soukup the Balrog, and thereby became a champion of darkness.[380]



"Treachery pays, and handsomely. Time for a mount upgrade, eh?"

[379] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition.

[380] Havard's Blackmoor Blog, "Captain Krey — First Dark Wizard" (July 15th, 2010).

Captain Krey led the charge, swooping down to torment Loch Gloomen's defenders. A giant was killed by cannon fire, but the horde of evil counterattacked and one of the player character Heroes (played by Dave Belfry) was shredded by the nefarious dragon soon thereafter. Some of the other player characters (including the hero soon to become known as the "Blue Rider," but still at this time more plainly as William of the Heath)[381] managed to raise additional troops to wipe out an orcish regiment and to rescue Loch Gloomen, but the repulsed evil army turned its flank around and destroyed the valorous relief force.

Disaster was averted when Baron Jenkins, with his trusty Flunky lieutenant (played by David Megarry, who was perhaps still playing H. W. Dumbo, we don't yet really know),[382] managed to fight his way into Loch Gloomen and to secure a workable supply line. The characters played by three other players — David Wesely (playing a Superhero), Scott Belfry (a Hero) and Ross Maker (another Hero, apparently a beleaguered dwarf that Ross would always play)[383] led a force of cavalry against Kurt Krey's dragon, and managed to send it fleeing into the air. With the dragon gone and a giant's cannonball-shattered corpse sprawled in the icy mud, the forces of evil finally broke and scattered into the marshes.

Evil was defeated, but it was a Pyrrhic victory. Dave Arneson, always deeply entertained by these wild heroic struggles, was having a blast. Perhaps he was still teaching a lesson, punishing the players for neglecting their fiefdoms in the name of dungeon adventures.

Dave's ambitious but limited write-up of the Blackmoor campaign to date was published in the late spring of 1972. One of the most interested readers of the account, when it was first released, was none other than Gary Gygax.

At that time, Gary was still busy promoting his *Chainmail* release and working on other materials for publication by Guidon Games. In July, Guidon released a new edition of *Chainmail* to meet the pleasantly surprising surge in demand. Fantasy wargaming, despite the controversy it caused (Why would serious historians ever want to play a mere child's game? *Pshaw!*) was creating a groundswell in interest for the Fantasy Supplement and "Tolkien wargames" in general. This was good news for Gary, and *Chainmail's* new edition had some clarifications which cleaned up the wizard rules and added a few new spells. A few other general

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[381] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 16.

[382] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 2:55.

[383] Refer to twincities.com, the Dave Arneson obituary, April 9th, 2009.

improvements were made as well.

In fact, things were going so well that *Chainmail* had become Guidon's best seller. Dave Arneson was not the only person experimenting with expansions to *Chainmail Fantasy*, although he was definitely the major innovator. Word of mouth was slowly getting stronger for this nascent hobby, but still the sales were not fully sufficient for Gary and his family to live by. While Dave was happily gaming down in his parents' basement, Gary was still working on shoe repairs in a basement of his own.

Therefore, it probably came as quite an unpleasant shock when, later that July, Don Lowry announced that Guidon Games would be moving its operations to Belfast, Maine.[384] Gary was forced to seriously consider following along, because if he agreed to go, his position as Editor-in-Chief would become full time.

We know (from the earlier 1970 move of Gygax's insurance company, which caused him to lose his underwriting job) that Gary was too attached to Lake Geneva to move away. Also, Gary once noted that family concerns came into play in his decision to remain. There was also the serious matter of young Rob Kuntz. You may recall that Rob's father had died before Rob ever knew him, and that Rob's mother was having a difficult time keeping things together and raising teenagers on her own. Rob, present in the Gygax home almost every day, had been part of Gary's extended family since 1968. This arrangement (from a legal perspective) was informal, and Gary was not officially Rob's guardian. If Gary uprooted his family to follow Don Lowry to Maine, what would happen to Rob?

The Gygax family seriously suggested adopting Rob at about this time. As Rob once told the story: "He [*Gary*] had an offer from Don [*Lowry*] to move his whole family to Maine and to become permanently in residence there, working for Guidon Games. And so one day I got off the bus, and when I'd come home from high school I'd get dropped off at the Gygaxes instead of three blocks away at my house. So I took a different bus. And I came walking in — no need to knock in those days — I was part of the family. And the whole family was gathered at the table during the afternoon, which I thought was odd. And I said, 'Hey, what's going on?' And they said, 'We're talking about you.' And I said, 'Oh yeah? For what?' And they informed me about the offer and how they were going to speak to my mother about adopting me [*to take*] me with them, because I was that close to the

[384] Online interview: Refer to the Rob Kuntz interview featured on the Hill Cantons blog, "No Borders: A Conversation with Rob Kuntz" (August 15th, 2011).

family."[385]

Sadly, the adoption proved for various reasons to be untenable. Gary also later noted[386] that even beyond these sobering familial concerns, he also felt serious doubts concerning Guidon's sustainability. Guidon Games' service to buyers was becoming slower and more erratic, and it seemed likely that a move to the coast would only make those matters worse. In Gary's estimation, Guidon was on the verge of falling apart. Therefore, he politely declined Don Lowry's offer of full-time employment.

This fateful decision would have major ramifications later on, because Don would then be much less likely to take on a risky game called *Dungeons & Dragons* for publication. Don's rejection of that game in the following summer would then compel Gary to form his own game company, Tactical Studies Rules, in October of 1973. If Gary had decided to go to Maine instead, who knows what fate could have befallen fantasy role-playing? D&D might have been released by Guidon, only to fail due to that company's business problems. If that had happened, we might not be playing D&D at all today. The entire landscape of published role-playing games, not to mention computer MMORPGs, would probably have been vastly different from what we now enjoy.

Indirectly then, Gary's devotion to his loved ones and Lake Geneva set gaming upon its fated course. From that point on, he would begin to pull away from both Guidon and Lowry. He became more vested, for better and for worse, in the potential (and the business risks) inherent in his own creative endeavors.

As August approached, it was time to conduct the fifth annual Lake Geneva wargaming convention, Gen Con V (Saturday and Sunday, August 19th-20th, 1972). In the past, Gary as founder had taken it upon himself — assisted by family and International Federation of Wargaming staff, such as IFW president Len Lakofka — to plan out, set up and run the convention for the many anticipated hundreds of gamers. This year, however, Gary had made a formal resignation from wargaming (meaning the political side of organization, not the fun side of casual gaming), which meant that the IFW had to try and run the event without him. The improvised plan they ended up with looked great on paper, but as they say, no plan ever survives contact with the enemy. And the enemy, in this case, was a legion of grouchy gamers.

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[385] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip, 'Rob Kuntz Conversations' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 5:25.

[386] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

Gen Con had by this time gotten so successful that the convention had run out of space.[387] The IFW required a larger venue than the quaint Lake Geneva Horticultural Hall, and so Gen Con V was held at the George Williams College Campus of Aurora University in Williams Bay, Wisconsin. The site was (and is) an isolate series of roomy halls, with rustic cottages that could be rented for people to stay there.

Unfortunately, the place was also rundown and uncomfortable. Due to the con being run on a weekend, there were no significant food facilities open. Anyone (meaning everyone) who got hungry had to bring their own food. And since this fact was not communicated very well, con attendees were constantly forced to stop their gaming and to drive over to Lake Geneva, Walworth, or Fontana to get a bite to eat.

To make things even more obnoxious, the game events were spread all over the place. People were wandering around the campus, stumbling into games after they had already started late and short-handed, and the events were starting to flow into one another's time slots with no contingency plan in place to get things back on track.

Yes, it was a mess. The following year would find the Gen Con franchise — now, with a rather sullied reputation — back in its rightful hometown, Lake Geneva.

We do know a little bit about what occurred there:[388] there were armored tank battles using the *Tractics* rules, lots of other World War II games (*Stalingrad*, *D-Day*, *Battle of the Bulge*, *Luftwaffe*, etc. under the lofty term "the Old Masters' Tournament"), *Fight in the Skies*, Napoleonics, and medieval miniatures.

And a few other very good things did happen at Gen Con V, of course, as they always will when gaming and gamers are concerned. For example, a young man named Mike Mornard met Dave Arneson for the first time, and Mike would later (in the fall of 1973) become a greatly valued player in the Blackmoor campaign.[389] He would soon play in Gary's Greyhawk games (late 1972 to mid-1973), and would even become the auspicious link between Professor Phil Barker (of Tékumel fame) and future TSR staff artist, David C. Sutherland III.

Arneson did not bring his Blackmoor game to that ill-fated Gen Con, simply because it was too cumbersome to extract a reasonable semblance of the actual game from the copious notes and scribbled maps. Blackmoor was not an easy game

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[387] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007.

[388] See for example *Liaisons Dangereuses* #136, June 15th, 1972, which has a decent advertisement for the event.

[389] The Collector's Trove Presents: The Michael Mornard Collection.

to pick up, move or demonstrate. It was easy for Dave to invite new players down to his basement to try a game, but attempting to teach strangers the bizarre rules within the confines of a gaming convention's time slots was simply out of the question.

At around this same time however, either at that Gen Con or (perhaps more likely) via an Arneson-penned article in the newly-released *Domesday Book* #13, Gary managed to learn more about Arneson's highly unusual *Chainmail*-derivative game. The more Gary learned about it, the more he wanted to know. It was becoming clear that Arneson had taken Gary's *Chainmail Fantasy* and stripped it down to a hollow shell, which had then been souped up until it became a bizarre (and volatile) hot rod. As Gary once related, Dave "was running a campaign where he was applying [*unusual statistical*] figures, and it was played on a map ... although you could do an outdoor adventure, too. And I said, 'Wow, that's pretty cool, Dave.'"[390] Putting his intrigue mildly, Gary also said, "I thought that this usage was quite interesting,"[391] and further that Arneson's "variant ... sounded fascinating."[392]

Gary also learned that one of Arneson's regular players, David Megarry, had taken an interest in simplifying Arneson's Blackmoor dungeons into a cleaner board game format that could be easily transported and played just about anywhere, by players of any skill level. Megarry, with Arneson's blessing, had developed a prototype of this new game and called it *The Dungeons of Pasha Cada*, and Gary would later become quite impressed by Megarry's distilled approach.[393] Arneson, it seems, was quite impressed with Megarry's efforts at dungeon and game design. As Megarry would remember, "It wasn't until I showed Arneson *Dungeon!* [*at this time, still named* Pasha Cada, *not* Dungeon! ~K] that we became closer in our friendship … as a mutual recognition of talent was established."[394]

Megarry once explained how he decided upon the name of the game: "Pasha is an honorific in the Ottoman Empire, and I wanted the name to have an 'Eastern' flavor to it. Cada is more from a Latin origin, meaning death. It is the Latin word that cadaver is derived. So I was trying to change 'The Dungeon of Lord Death' to

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[390] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 18.

[391] *The Dragon*, issue #7, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

[392] Online interview: RPG.net Interview with Gary Gygax, May 2001.

[393] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted July 2nd, 2006.

[394] See David Megarry's comments on the Zenopus Archives, "Megarry's Copy of the Great Kingdom Map."

something more exotic."[395]

Megarry went on to explain that the game was inspired by Blackmoor's dungeons (as explored by H. W. Dumbo), *The Lord of the Rings* (probably meaning Moria in particular), and *Chainmail*. On that last influence: "As to the influence of *Chainmail*: it [*offered*] a handy list of monsters to populate the dungeon. It was like going to a mythology book and getting monster information. I had a lot of Tolkien monsters and creatures in my original prototype, which had to be eliminated for copyright reasons. Gary used OD&D monsters to fill in the ones taken out." So while David Megarry was the creator of the game, the influence of Arneson and Gygax was there from the very first.

The game was certainly needed, from a gaming group logistics perspective. As Megarry later explained in an interview, *Pasha Cada* "came out of my experience with being a part of David Arneson's play group … We struggled with David being the only referee [*for the Blackmoor dungeons*]."[396]

Arneson greatly enjoyed being the referee for *Blackmoor*, but it was exhausting all the same. As Megarry recalled, "It got to … a point where [*Arneson*] would spend like 14 hours on Saturdays trying to do dungeon expeditions with all of us. And then we finally figured out that we didn't need to actually be physically *there*. We could call [*Arneson*] on the phone. And so, the evenings all of a sudden became filled with [*dungeon exploration*]."[397]

But due to the imperative need for the sole referee, Arneson and Megarry were both interested in coming up with a different game format for the Blackmoor dungeons which might be easier for other groups to play without all the prep time. If they could simplify things enough, Arneson might even get a chance to explore his Blackmoor world from the point of view of a character! As Megarry explained, "As we expanded on that [*the Blackmoor campaign and most particularly its dungeons*], as we experimented with it, it became overwhelming to David. … How could he cut it down?"[398]

Megarry then had the key inspiration for a new and leaner game format: "Let's

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[395] Online web forum post: The Comeback Inn forums. "Dungeon and Blackmoor," February 7th, 2017.

[396] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The comment is made very early in the interview.

[397] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 0:45.

[398] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 3:45.

get rid of the referee. What do I have to do to eliminate the referee out of this game?" he remembered. "And that was the spark that drove me to make the [*Dungeons of Pasha Cada*] game."[399]

Arneson would indeed get to be one of the first players of Megarry's prototype board game. "The weekend after I invented it," Megarry remembered, "I took it to the Arneson basement and presented it to the world after they had finished their battle. And we all enjoyed it."[400]

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The simplification was highly effective. Gary would later remember of hearing about Megarry's *Dungeons of Pasha Cada*, "That came around the same time that Dave Arneson was telling me about his dungeon crawl campaign."[401] Gary talked to David Megarry about this interesting simplified (and referee-free) game mode, and from what Gary heard, he liked the general idea.

As defined later by Gary, *Pasha Cada* "is a board game where each player takes the role of a fantasy character: a Wizard, a Hero, a Superhero, or an Elf. You move them on a board through a six-level dungeon. You enter the room and fight the monster and have to roll on 2d6, pretty much the way *Chainmail* operates."[402] Megarry was an intelligent young man with a highly systematic mindset, who possessed a gift for distilling others' designs down to the essentials. In treating the dungeon symbologically and distilling the Arneson map types down to a load-balanced board matrix, Megarry was able to create an excellent branching dungeon map with balanced lairs and treasures, which would reward path selection and strategic play.

Some of the cool monsters featured in the original *Pasha Cada* rules, printed in Megarry's own handwriting, include: Anti-Heroes, Anti-Superheroes, brown dragons, evil sorceresses, giant snakes, giant spiders, giant worms, green slimes, grey puddings, wererats and weretigers. This tantalizing list gives us an idea of a few more of the monsters which originated with the Blackmoor play group, as opposed

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[399] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 6:20.

[400] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 3:55.

[401] Online web forum post: Quartertothree/CGM interview with Gary Gygax.

[402] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 18.

to the later Greyhawk game.[403]

Astute readers may note that this board game sounds suspiciously like *Dungeon!* (released by TSR in 1975), and that is exactly what it is. *Pasha Cada* was published under the *Dungeon!* name only after an arduous, winding journey through rejections, edits, play tests and refinements.

After Megarry had completed his *Pasha Cada* prototype — which had been conceived as a family game, since a veteran wargaming referee was no longer necessary for dungeon play — he queried with Parker Brothers to see if they would consider publishing it. But he didn't hear anything back, and he would not get a decision from Parker Brothers on his submission until the beginning of 1973. (The rejection letter he would later receive was dated December 28th, 1972. December 28th was a Thursday before a holiday weekend, so it seems unlikely that Megarry would receive the letter before the beginning of January.)[404]

In the meantime, the silence from Parker Brothers was surely frustrating. The next step to publication, it seemed, would involved Megarry asking Gary for a little consideration. Megarry told Gary: "I can't get anybody to look at it [*Pasha Cada*]. Would you be my agent?" And Gary answered, "Sure, if you don't mind my cleaning up a few things."[405]

Intrigued by the creative lengths which the Twin Cities play group had gone to in stripping down *Chainmail* and turning its skeleton into two entirely new beasts, Gary began to realize that he just might have stumbled upon an answer to his own brewing conundrum. *Chainmail* was growing more popular, but that was almost solely because of the Fantasy Supplement, and new players were often frustrated to learn that they needed to study a medieval wargame before they could play the "fun part." If Arneson and Megarry had found new ways to take the best of fantasy gaming out of *Chainmail*, then perhaps the two Daves had *also* found a way to speed Gary's path toward more independent fantasy game design. In short, Blackmoor was even more fantasy-ish than *Chainmail Fantasy* was, and *Pasha Cada* could provide an excellent entry-level introduction to dungeon crawls.

Very likely, at this point Gary was already seriously considering potential collaboration with both Arneson and Megarry. He therefore invited both Daves to

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[403] See also The Acaeum forums, thread "Dungeon board game by David R Megar[r]y TSR Games 1975?"

[404] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 13:30.

[405] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 18.

bring their unique games to Lake Geneva, so that Gary and his play group could see how the new games' innovations worked firsthand. Some sources indicate that this occurred in August or the early autumn, although November is also cited.

The invitation was probably quite exciting to Arneson and Megarry. Gary still had strong connections through Don Lowry and Guidon Games, and his own games were highly regarded. Arneson was already collaborating with Gygax on *Don't Give Up the Ship!* and its related scenarios, and Megarry could expect serious consideration of his own *Pasha Cada* dungeon variant too. The invitation to Lake Geneva then would not just be a call to come down and play some games with distant friends; it would also be a chance for Gary and his fellow testers to gauge the new games' potential commercial viability.

Arneson and Megarry agreed to come. They got busy trying to figure out how on Earth they were going to explain the concept of dungeon crawls to players who had never yet experienced such a thing. But the Lake Geneva players were veterans of many types of games. Perhaps the best way would simply be to surprise everyone, show up, and sit and play.

At around this time (perhaps in November), Arneson got too busy to manage the continuing Blackmoor campaign effectively. Greg Svenson relates that Dave offered up "some of his notes and let me referee a couple of times when he was busy with other things. Dave tells me that I was the third D[*ungeon*] M[*aster*] ever."[406] Also, a game called *Outdoor Survival* was released by Avalon Hill (AH) in September 1972, and this is noteworthy because it had an excellently-designed wilderness map imprinted upon a hexagon grid. Arneson used this map to run wilderness adventures whenever the characters ventured out of Blackmoor's confines, and Gary would later recommend the AH game as a play accessory for *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974).[407] Knowing the month of *Outdoor Survival*'s release is also advantageous, because it allows us to tentatively date some later events in the ongoing Blackmoor campaign.

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[406] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. Blackmoor forums, The Comeback Inn. See also Sham's Grog 'n' Blog blogspot, Q&A with Greg Svenson. Posted May 30th, 2009.

[407] Gary was obviously less in love with the rules of *Outdoor Survival*, and more in love with the full-color map (which would, for quite some time, remain beyond TSR's nascent ability to produce). It's a beautiful and inspiring old school map that would serve early gaming groups well in a time long before TSR — which didn't even exist yet — could give the gaming community everything they wanted to give. Things were just getting started. But a read of *Outdoor Survival* in comparison to the 1974 first printing of OD&D makes it fairly clear that Gary was much more in enamored with the *Outdoor Survival* game board than he ever was with the rules.

As Arneson mentioned in *The First Fantasy Campaign*, "The game moved south, and we then used the *Outdoor Survival* map for this phase of the campaign when the exiles from Blackmoor set up shop after the bad scene at Lake Gloomy."

Many more tumultuous things happened in Arneson's later campaign (c. 1973-1975), including: the rise of King Frederick the First of the Orcs of the Black Hand and the creation of the Orcian Way;[408] the triumph of Great Svenny as "Orc's Bane"; the fall from grace suffered by Baron Fant; the corruption which led Baron Jenkins to become Sir Fang the Vampire Lord;[409] the manifestation of the later-named cleric class (as exemplified by the "Village Priest" of Blackmoor's Church of the Facts of Life, later known as "The Bishop" and played by Mike Carr)[410] which occurred in response to the rise of Sir Fang; the creation of the monk (martial artist) class, inspired by Kung Fu and the Remo Williams "Destroyer" novels by Warren Murphy and Richard Sapir; and the deepening of the Blackmoor dungeons, revealing the deepest and nastiest levels of all.

Some of the original Blackmoor "deep dungeon" encounters are preserved within the text of *The First Fantasy Campaign*.[411] Therein, we learn that dungeon level seven had a dwarf clan, perhaps offering a source for potential allies to lost adventurers. The deep levels were dominated however by trolls, Balrogs, werewolves, goblins, ogres and ghouls. Part of level seven was also controlled by a gigantic fire elemental. Dungeon level eight featured the lairs of two unique beasts inspired by Japanese monster movies: Sinak the Giant Worm, and Siliar the Giant Insect. Dungeon level nine had even tougher monsters, including an armored Balrog, an air elemental and man-eating seaweed. Dungeon level ten had a water elemental lair, and even a room which served as a roost for twelve enormous rocs.

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[408] Refer for example to Dragonsfoot.org. "Early Blackmoor questions."

[409] Refer for example to *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 29. For the attribution of Duane Jenkins to Baron Jenkins and Sir Fang, see Dragonsfoot.org, "Early Blackmoor questions."

[410] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot forums, "Early Blackmoor questions." And as Mike Carr once explained in an interview (the Save Or Die Podcast): "In the early Blackmoor campaign … I played … the original cleric character, and had a small chapel there [*in the town*.] I would go off on a few adventures with others … [*it was*] fascinating and fun." This character, to begin with, was "pretty low level … he had the ability to fight, he carried a mace, and … [*other players'*] characters would come to me for low-level healing. I couldn't raise the dead or anything like that."

[411] Refer to *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pp. 28, 33 and 34.



Dungeon pits of evil … the one-way descent.

Dave even integrated lasting elements of cause and effect in his dungeon in later games. An earthquake (probably the one which had caused Blackmoor's wandering gypsies to flee during the "Gerti the Dragon" days) affected many levels, making the netherworld even more treacherous and complex. Player Greg Svenson recalled, "The passages [*throughout the dungeon*] were all originally 10' wide. There was some sort of general collapse at some point (I seem to have missed that adventure) in the top level of the dungeon. The 5' passages were dug through the rubble by various player groups until they found the regular 10' passages."[412]

The records are too spotty for me to relate many of these these matters in great detail, and the vast majority of the further dungeon stories are sadly lost in the mists time. Hopefully, in the future I will be able to expand upon these few tantalizing glimpses of "ante-Gloomen" Blackmoor; but for many of the details forever lost, we must content ourselves with knowing that the great game was still being loved

[412] Online web forum post: Odd74.proboards.com. ODD74 Proboard forums, "Blackmoor Dungeon's expanded levels."

and played.

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(N.B. As promised, additional Blackmoor tales from late 1972 — which are slowly coming to light — are featured hereafter.)

The Tale of William's Leap and the Blue Rider

According to player Greg Svenson, this anecdote may date to November of 1972. Greg recalled that the adventure took place on a Saturday, soon after Dave Arneson and David Megarry had returned from Lake Geneva.[413]

The adventure involved Svenny (as played by Greg), William of the Heath (Bill Heaton), Mello the Halfling (Mel Johnson) and perhaps a character played by Steve Rocheford. Mr. Rocheford would later play Saint Stephen of the Rock, the main villain in Arneson's dungeon scenario The Temple of the Frog. Greg had gotten exceedingly skilled at navigating the Blackmoor dungeons, and when Bill and Mel wanted to explore the new deep areas he was happy to oblige them. Using his uncanny directional sense, Svenny managed to get the adventuring party all the way down to dungeon level nine without significant harm.

Exploring further, the adventurers discovered a descending stairway which Svenny had never seen before. Steeling themselves, the heroes crept down through the darkness and found a blank wall at the bottom. Of course this proved to be a secret door, and in opening the door the adventurers discovered the throne room of King Frederick the First … the fearsome overlord who ruled the Orcs of the Blackhand. Greg suspected (rightly) that hundreds of orc warriors and other horrors were lurking nearby, and so he encouraged his companions to get the Hell out of there.

The group found yet another descending stair, and took this way as well. Waves of heat washed over the frightened heroes, and the stench of sulfur stung their nostrils. A foreboding crimson glow came from below as they ventured further. The walls were rough-hewn stone, and the rooms were more like shaped and sculpted caverns than mere catacombs. A winding tunnel led them to a fiery ledge, overlooking a vast cavern of infernal fire far below.

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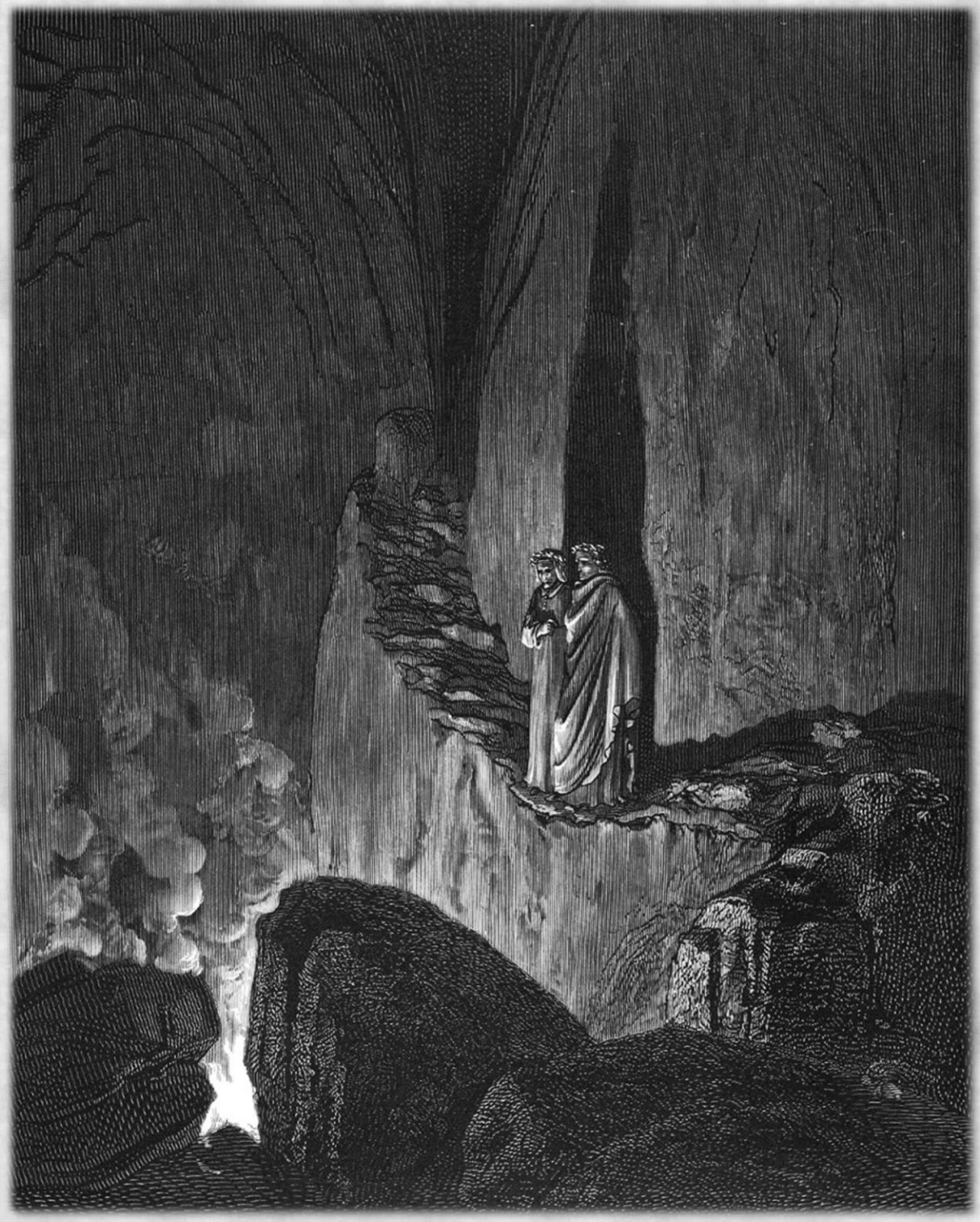
[413] Online web forum post: Blackmoor.mystara.net. The Comeback Inn forums, "The Original Blackmoor Game." This thread was cross-posted to preserve content which originally appeared on the now-lost forums for Zeitgeist Games.



"Game over, man. Game over."

The adventurers stared down in awe-struck silence. A lake of magma covered the cavern's floor, and a spiny island jutted high up from the center of the place. There, immeasurable hills of gold glowed in the diabolic light, and atop the trove there lay coiled an immense and slumbering golden dragon. Golden dragons in Blackmoor are sorcerous and powerful, but not necessarily good![414]

Faced with such a clearly fatal temptation, the adventurers began to argue. Svenny wanted to leave, while William wanted to steal some treasure. Mello sided with William, but simply wanted to watch the fun from a vantage point which might provide the halfling with some vicarious entertainment instead of a certain death. Svenny was being sensible. If William managed to leap down to the island, how was he going to get back up? William said there was treasure involved, and it was worth the risk. Throughout the hushed quarrel, Mello proceeded to engrave "Kilroy was here" on the cavern wall (surely the deepest instance of halfling-inscribed dungeon graffiti known to this author).

William jumped down, and miraculously he managed to land on the island without (a) frying himself or (b) waking the dragon. He searched the island for a particularly choice piece of treasure. Arneson decided that this audacity demanded a special reward, and so he told Bill that William of the Heath could see a mighty clockwork automaton in the shape of a horse, and a cobalt-hued suit of otherworldly powered armor. Bill, surely aware of *Starship Troopers* and other sci fi epics featuring powered battledress, had William strap himself into the powered suit. Greg could not remember what happened next, but considering that William escaped with his treasure it is almost certain that he pressed a button and managed to deploy the suit's jump jets, or he activated the automaton's anti-gravity field. William got his treasure, Svenny got his comeuppance, and the adventurers made their way out of the dungeon and lived to fight another day.

The reader may be curious to know why William became known as the "Blue Rider," and not the "Blue Knight." Apparently, the powered armor was difficult for a medieval-minded Superhero to comprehend. William would sometimes press the armor's arm buttons when he wanted to flee a deadly encounter, only to find that the suit was propelling him straight into the fray. William was the armor's rider, not its controller! Therefore, his legendary battle cries include "No! No, stop!" "How do you turn it off?" and the ever-famous "Let me out!"[415]

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[414] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 57.

[415] *The First Fantasy Campaign*: A Playing Aid by Dave Arneson, with additional notes by Richard Snider. Judges Guild Incorporated, 1980 edition, pg. 16. Refer also to The

The Tale of the Unappreciative Black Dragon

One more salute before the last farewell. Further research has indicated that there are a few additional notes concerning one of the later Blackmoor Castle dungeon adventures, which appears to have occurred in late 1972 or perhaps in early 1973. Player John Snider once reported[416] that he enjoyed many early successes in slaughtering the monsters under Blackmoor Castle, to the point that the orcs, goblins and trolls knew his character's name as a "household word" (a swear word, likely!). He garnered enough treasure to enrich himself and grew ever bolder in his forays. One fateful day, however (isn't that always the way?) his character and another played by David Megarry had a nasty time of it in the underworld. These two greedy Superheroes opened one dungeon door too many, and came face to face with an enormous black dragon.

Luckily, the dragon was asleep. Did the adventurers wisely back out of the room and proceed on their way back toward the surface and sanity? Of course not! A hushed argument ensued, in which John's Superhero advocated killing the beast in its sleep, while David's character said that parley was the wiser course. Imagine, if some kind of mutually beneficial pact could be reached, how powerful a black dragon ally would be in the world above!

David's wisdom won out, and the dragon was awakened to bask in the adventurers' selfless eloquence. Quite nicely, David's character stepped aside and hid under cover, letting John's Superhero do all the talking. John insisted that his "oration would have brought tears to the eyes of the most hard-hearted money grabber," but tragically the dragon seemed to disagree. Growing more bored and agitated by the moment, it summarily announced an end to the audience by rearing back and belching forth a bilious stream of corrosive acid.

John's chatty Superhero, likely objecting to this exceedingly noisome turn of events, perished most horribly under a wave of boiling dragon snot. His last words were reported as, "I'll come back and haunt you, Megarry!"

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It is nearly time for us to consider Arneson's creations, and Gary's invitation for him to provide a interactive demonstration of Blackmoor play.

Arneson, in late 1972, was justifiably worried about moving his precious game

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Comeback Inn forums, "The Original Blackmoor Game." This thread was cross-posted to preserve content which originally appeared on the now-lost forums for Zeitgeist Games.

[416] *Different Worlds: The Magazine of Game Role-Playing*, issue #5. "My Life and Role-Playing Continued," by John Snider, pp. 20-21.

for the upcoming demonstration for Gary Gygax. While he was deciding precisely which pieces of Blackmoor to transport down to Lake Geneva, he realized two things: not only was Gary most interested in the dungeons, but also, the dungeons were the most movable piece of the game. Instead of being played out on the basement Ping-Pong table with houses, miniature trees and figures, the dungeons merely required some notes, maps, dice and a screen to hide all of the referee's materials behind. When Gary, Dave Arneson, and David Megarry all played these dungeons together later that November, the first seeds of the future *Dungeon!* and *The Fantasy Game* would be sown in Lake Geneva. Years later, the mighty and ever-branching TSR would sprout from those very same seeds.

CHAPTER 9
AN AUDIENCE IN LOCH GLOOMEN
(NOVEMBER — DECEMBER 1972)

AT LAST in Lake Geneva, the time was right for the collaborative play testing of the dungeon games to begin. In November of 1972, Dave Arneson and David Megarry drove the 330-odd miles down to Gary's house.[417]

As Arneson once fondly wrote in retrospect (in *Dragon* #320), "We visited our pals in Lake Geneva and shared the madness."



Phantasmagorical, highly infectious, haunted castle madness is the BEST madness.

[417] The date for this fateful excursion is maddeningly impossible to ascertain, as there is no "smoking gun" and it is worth nothing that although Rob Kuntz remembered the month as November, David Megarry would later recall that it was December. Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, at approximately 15:00 and on. Considering however the extreme number of interrelated events which must be logically relegated to the end of 1972, this narrative estimates the *November* timeframe until overwhelming evidence proves otherwise.

The mission was very simple. As David Megarry later noted, "Arneson and I were going down to show off our respective games. Arneson was going to show off his version of *Blackmoor*, which had become fairly sophisticated through all of the game playing that we had been doing with it. And I was going to show off this [*the* Pasha Cada *map prototype*]."[418]

Gary was eagerly awaiting their arrival. With him were Rob Kuntz, Rob's brother Theron (Terry), and Gary's son, Ernie.[419]

The exact date of this journey is impossible to pin down. There is no single day which causes all of the purported timelines to coincide, no panacea to offer us a clean reflection of that now too-distant reality. Due to the amount of travel and Arneson's habit of holiday (and Saturday) gaming, it is tempting to estimate that it was either the weekend of or after Thanksgiving, but (following comments made by Rob Kuntz, who was there) a mid-November timeframe appears more likely. But then again David Megarry recalls December, so who really knows?

When Arneson and Megarry arrived, they sat down at the dining table[420] and Arneson — as judge and game referee — prepared his materials. Blackmoor would be the first game played that weekend. The play testers were surprised from the start, because they were not offered any rules to review before playing the game. Apparently, the following quizzical exchange took place at this time: Rob reasonably asked "What are the rules?" And Arneson explained, "There are none."[421]

As Rob Kuntz further recalled, "Arneson didn't bring out copies of the rules for when we were play testing, or going through that first play session. He said, 'Well, roll the dice,' and he did all of the calculations out of sight. So we didn't know the process."[422] Blackmoor player Greg Svenson once noted that this "secret rolling" technique deliberately added to the anticipation and tension exhibited in this play style: "Dave did lots of secret rolling and never showed us the results or explained

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[418] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 17:55.

[419] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax. Rob also specifically states the November 1972 timeframe in his interview in the Youtube clip, 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 7:30.

[420] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 18:25.

[421] See Secrets of Blackmoor, on Facebook, April 15th, 2017.

[422] Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The relevant story begins at approximately 9:25.

what he was rolling for," he remembered. "I am sure that sometimes he rolled dice just to make us nervous."[423]

(The game mechanics mystery surrounding this particular point, as fun as it was for the players, would soon begin to drive Gary mad …)

Gary and his players were of course veterans of the *Chainmail Fantasy* system, but they had never played anything like Blackmoor. Therefore, Megarry played along with the Lake Geneva players, serving to guide them through the setting and the rules. The game would be quite different from Megarry's perspective, because the Twin Cities Blackmoor campaign involved vicious rivalries between players representing good and evil. For the purposes of this demonstration, however, the players were set up as allies in fellowship and their characters would be acting as a team.

Arneson, too, had to make some adjustments to his game mastering style. In some of the earlier Twin Cities Blackmoor sessions, many of the "big bads" such as evil sorcerers, demons, vampires and so forth had been played by players. With all of these new players now acting as a team, Arneson would need to adopt the role of *all* of the monsters.

These seemingly minor distinctions are interesting because collectively, they mean that Gary's first exposure to the dungeon crawl would demonstrate an adversarial yet judicial Game Master acting to challenge the collective players. Further, that referee was playing the role of every non-player creature in the game. Gary would forever be influenced by the profound impression Arneson's game made on him that day, and many of the precepts to be featured later in *Dungeons & Dragons* would be the result of this first-experienced Blackmoor game.

With the roles of the players thus defined (Arneson as monster commander and referee, Megarry as "caller"), the game began with the players' newly-generated characters appearing in the Village of Blackmoor. The freshly-minted Heroes went to the Comeback Inn as one of their first demonstrations of free will. (Arneson was waiting for them to decide what to do … the concept of role-playing was still very foreign to them in the context of a game.) David Megarry' character would be their guide. They also purchased spelunking and adventuring gear, and then set out up the rise of the frosty hill, approaching under the stark black silhouette of the gothic Castle.

[423] Online web forum post: ODD74 Proboards, "The % Layer of OD&D Archaeology."

Rob Kuntz once detailed[424] a few of the events which the characters experienced as they made their way through the towers' leaning shadows. We can also determine some of the intermediary details from Arneson's previously revealed design of the dungeon levels. First, they encountered the guardian elves who warded the place against undead incursions from below. The elves — they likely first tried to dissuade the adventurers from risking their lives, but humans are foolhardy creatures — sprayed holy water along the path so that the adventurers could get through without being assaulted by the vampire Sir Fang.

The party entered the Great Hall, and from there they descended the bloodstained stairs which led down into the dungeon depths. With torches flaring, the Heroes explored the labyrinthine halls until they discovered the lair of a loathsome troll. This fierce thing was clad in magical armor.

With swords flashing, the Heroes managed to slay the foul thing. They stripped off the troll's magical armor and took it for themselves. We are left to wonder if Dave ruled that the armor shrank to fit a new wearer, much like the Seven League Boots in fairy tales, or The One Ring in Tolkien's epic. A search of the troll's refuse-littered den led to the discovery of a magical sword.[425] One of the Heroes was able to wield this blade, and learned that it had the power of granting wishes to those in dire need.

Searching the dungeons further, the Heroes were accosted by an evil wizard. The wizard hurled a deadly fireball at the party, but most of the heroes — while badly burned — managed to survive. Poor Terry's character, however, was incinerated and killed. The surviving Heroes counterattacked to no avail, discovering to their dismay that the wizard was not alone.

A horde of vile monsters surged forth, and under the onslaught of this legion the Heroes were forced to flee. They eventually found themselves in dungeons deeper still, where they had the disastrously bad luck to encounter four demons of shadow and flame — Balrogs! Choosing the wisest course of action, the Heroes fled for their lives.

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[424] *Wargaming: The Magazine of Fantasy & Historical Simulation* #1, from Fantasy Games Unlimited, 1977. Additional details come from comments made by Rob at the Ruins of Murkhill forums.

[425] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.



The demon of terror finds your plight entertaining.

Roll for initiative.

We do not know exactly how they survived, but they eventually found a treasure map which promised great riches in a farther realm. (The locale presented may have been deeper in the dungeon, but because we know that they also undertook a wilderness adventure that evening, it seems more likely to have been in the nearby wilderness a bit further beyond the Village of Blackmoor.) The group managed to reach the promised site, which proved to be the lair of a tribe of sixteen ogres. A desperate wish from the magic sword allowed the Heroes to fell the ogres, and the hard-won treasure was seized at last.

When the Heroes slogged their way back to the Village weighed down with their hard-won gold, Gary learned another intriguing rule in Dave's campaign: each Hero and Wizard was the player's principal figure, but these successful adventurers could use gold to hire troops and men-at-arms. Such followers could be taken into the dungeons as bodyguards, to increase the leader's chance of survival in further adventures. Or, troops could be led into battle throughout the entire Arch-Barony of Blackmoor, facing the armies of other deadly and powerful individuals, leading to more daring adventures, and potentially even more gold.[426]

It may well have seemed that the entire blueprint to a brand new fantasy game was laid out that very night. Alas, if only things were so simple!

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The session finally ended around midnight. The adventure was a complete success, and the Wisconsinite gamers were hooked. Dave's game was a revelation. As Rob Kuntz explained, the session had "really dug up quite a response from Gary."[427]

Somehow, Dave had taken the distant, tactical feel of medieval wargaming, and had turned it into a choice-driven, ad hoc narrative with Arneson as the storyteller and the players' characters as free-willed explorers whose destiny could only be foretold by player decisions and the roll of the dice. Gary would later mention that the adventure under Blackmoor Castle had reminded him of his own real-life adventures in the old Sanitarium.[428] Relating the tale, Gygax said of Arneson's innovations, "When I played in his 'Blackmoor' campaign I fell in love with the new concept."[429]

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[426] Online interview: RPG.net Interview with Gary Gygax, May 2001.

[427] Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 7:30.

[428] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[429] *Alarums & Excursions* #2.

That same weekend, David Megarry had the opportunity to show off his *Dungeons of Pasha Cada* game. *Pasha Cada* was a beast of a different stripe. Where the "rules" of Blackmoor (which Gary would later realize were arbitrary rulings by the clever Arneson) were still nebulous and unfathomable, the rules of *Pasha Cada* were direct, comprehensive simplifications of concepts found in *Chainmail Fantasy*. Megarry had managed to distill the essence of Arneson's dungeon crawl innovations down to a comprehensible framework, suitable for board game play. This game was not revolutionary, but it was brilliant, direct, and clean!

Gary saw distinct advantages in Megarry's approach, foremost among them being that a simple game of dungeon exploration might serve as an introductory set for new players … players who would later hopefully move onto more complex creations, such as Blackmoor, *Chainmail Fantasy*, or another new game entirely.



Heroic fantasy: dream and ideal.

The players had a good time with *Pasha Cada*, and considering their familiarity with *Chainmail*, they probably played quite well. Unlike Blackmoor of course, *Pasha Cada* is a competitive score-driven game. We do not which player won, but everyone enjoyed themselves. Gary in particular saw the game's vast potential. As Megarry later related, "Gary was completely enamored with *Dungeon!* … He loved this game."[430]

The games at Gary's table eventually had to end, and so Arneson and Megarry packed up their goods and prepared to head back home. For the Lake Geneva players, Blackmoor and *Pasha Cada* had both made significant impressions. Blackmoor seemed to offer limitless complexity, while *Pasha Cada* offered refreshing simplicity. As David Megarry would remember, "Gary had no concept of a board game version of this stuff until I showed him my completed game in Nov[*ember*] 1972. In fact, as I was leaving his house … he explained to Rob Kuntz, 'It's so simple, I should of thought of it.'"[431]

And as Gary later explained, "Between those two games, that's how D&D was born."[432] He would credit Arneson specifically with the most significant inspiration: "When he and I got together, the ideas necessary to create D&D were engendered."[433]

Gary saw huge potential in Arneson's Blackmoor game especially, and although Arneson's complex rules were difficult to deduce from the experienced mode of play, Megarry's concise approaches would help to gloss over some of the rough spots. Between the two games, Gary began to envision the potential of fantasy dungeon *role-playing* as a new and unique game type all its own. "I was enthused," he would later note, "and said I was going to create a full-fledged set of fantasy game rules."[434] Gary's intent would be "to design a special game system, to manage something new."[435]

Gary may have also made a gentleman's agreement with Arneson at this time

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[430] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube video *40 Years of Dungeon!*, produced by Fellowship of the Thing. The relevant conversation begins at approximately 18:25.

[431] Online web forum post: The Comeback Inn forums. "Dungeon and Blackmoor," February 7th, 2017.

[432] *40 Years of Gen Con*, by Robin D. Laws, Trident, Inc. (d/b/a Atlas Games), 2007, pg. 18.

[433] *The Dragon*, issue #26, pg. 29.

[434] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted July 2nd, 2006.

[435] Online interview: RPG.net Interview with Gary Gygax, May 2001.

regarding the publication of a Blackmoor-inspired dungeon crawling game, but unfortunately due to the later legal matters and mutual hard feelings, this point remains unclear. But it seems that Arneson may have approached the co-design of *Dungeons & Dragons* in early 1973 with some such understanding in his mind.[436]

After Arneson and Megarry had returned to the Twin Cities, the Lake Geneva players were abuzz with the potential for evolutionary *Chainmail* variants along the lines of Blackmoor and *Pasha Cada*. The *Chainmail Fantasy* rules, interpreted openly by other designers, had proven to be so versatile that Gary himself was surprised by the imaginative potential hidden away in his own rules set.

With the two Daves gone and the Gygax household relatively quiet once again, Gary had time to consider Arneson's and Megarry's innovations further. As he noted in a later interview, "Between Dave Arneson's modifications of the *Chainmail* Fantasy Supplement figures [*rules formulae*], giving 'Heroes' four hit dice rather than requiring four simultaneous hits to kill them, and 'Superheroes' eight hit dice, and Dave Megar[*r*]y's board game based on a dungeon adventure with *Chainmail*'s 'Wizard,' 'Superhero,' 'Hero,' and 'Elf' competing, exploring, slaying monsters, and gaining treasure by so doing, the special nature of what could be done with the rules bases became evident to me."[437]

Character progression in particular was, to Gary's mind, a monumental innovation. It was somewhat similar to a hierarchy of military ranks, but within a more epic and heroic context. Regarding that progression, Gary noted: "This was a breakthrough. This was a quantum jump from tabletop games with miniatures. Not only was the action of the game to be centered on such characters [*Heroes and Wizards controlled by the players*], but they would grow in power as they successfully progressed through 'adventures.'"[438] However, Gary also realized that progression "did not really fit in the framework of *Chainmail*."[439] To fulfill the potential of experience-based progression, a new game design built around that idea would prove essential.

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[436] Please note, however, that Rob Kuntz (for one) has specifically stated that he does not believe that Dave Arneson had any intention at that time of publishing his *Blackmoor* game. Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 7:30.

[437] Online interview: RPG.net Interview with Gary Gygax, May 2001.

[438] *30 Years of Adventure: A Celebration of Dungeons & Dragons.* Published by Wizards of the Coast, 2004.

[439] *The Dragon #7*, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

Gary also loved the atmosphere of the dungeon itself. He once explained, "Credit Dave Arneson and David Megarry with my concentrating on subterranean settings for the D&D game. The contained adventuring environment was perfect for establishing fixed encounters before a game session, and for developing progressively more hazardous ones as the PCs grew in their capacity to manage them."[440] And the "open book storyteller" aspect of Blackmoor greatly appealed to Gary as well. He was quite taken with the refereed experience in which much of the game is hidden, where Arneson was the mysterious Game Master, the only one who knew all of the rules. And "more astonishing," to Gary, "the play was mostly imagined, not depicted on a table. The impartial and disinterested role of the 'judge' or 'referee' typical for a military miniatures tabletop game now expanded considerably."[441]

With all of these ideas swimming in his head, Gary was eager to discuss the games with Rob Kuntz.[442] In fact, Rob once said that "the very day afterwards [*after the gaming sessions with Arneson and Megarry*], nine hours later, he [*Gary*] was calling me on the phone and had me come over to his office to discuss what we had just experienced."[443] And further, "We sat down and discussed Dave Arneson's concept [*of game mastering Blackmoor*] and attempted to shoe-horn it for 'story-making possibilities' — as Gary put it — for … two sessions of me 'Dungeon Mastering.'"[444]

At first, according to Rob's further recollection, Gary was most interested in this strategy trying to use Arneson's role-playing concept as a way to generate improvisational stories, with Gary as the protagonist and Rob as the environment generator. Gary got some pens, colored pencils and hex paper,[445] and explained that he wanted Rob to referee an outdoor adventure session for him. Gary said that he would have his character move over an empty area, and Rob would describe the surrounding terrain and any other features that Gary's character could see. So Rob drew a map and hid it from Gary's sight. Gary "explored" the map, making his own to emulate the details that Rob was describing. As Rob explained, "I was

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[440] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted June 27th, 2006.

[441] *30 Years of Adventure: A Celebration of Dungeons & Dragons.* Published by Wizards of the Coast, 2004.

[442] Randomwizard blogspot, "Grognard Games / Rob Kuntz Conversations."

[443] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 7:30.

[444] Online web forum post: Ruins of Murkhill, "Tim Kask Blog Post," March 3rd, 2016.

[445] Some of these finer details are from Rob Kuntz's Ruins of Murkhill posts, "Dave Arneson's True Genius" etc., from April-May 2017.

to 'judge' him as a wandering character. The hex paper would be the growing map. As he moved about it I was to describe the terrain he saw (and the imagined inhabitants that I created and he encountered), and with color pencils I was to render the terrain features."

But after about two hours of game play, Gary was disappointed with the lackluster results and abandoned this free-form concept without ever pursuing it any further.[446] Whatever unclassifiable mojo Dave Arneson possessed, the magic was gone as soon as he was no longer the game master.

It was time for a change of tactics. Gary then told Rob that he was "ready to create a new game, and [*also to*] develop the board game [*of* Pasha Cada]." He said further: "These tasks I set to work on with a will."[447]

But as Gary began to think through the design process of his new *Chainmail*-derivative game which would be based upon Arneson's innovations, he realized that he needed to see Arneson's rules *in full* in order to see how to further develop them. Gary of course was intimately familiar with the rules of *Chainmail*, being that game's co-author with Jeff Perren. But this void of understanding in regards to Arneson's dungeon rules must have left him with deep and unanswered questions concerning just what kind of systems Dave had devised that allowed him to run the Blackmoor dungeons for players who might attempt any imaginable action at any time. Being a fellow game designer, Gary wanted to see the inner workings of Blackmoor down to the last cogwheel. In Gary's words, "I asked Dave to please send me his rules additions, for I thought a whole new system should be developed."[448] As Rob remembered it, "it was about two weeks later [*after Arneson's Lake Geneva visit*] that there was what I term a 'furious communication' between Dave and Gary by phone."[449]

Gary also busied himself with the refinement of Megarry's *Dungeons of Pasha Cada*. In contrast to Arneson's game, which had near-infinite scope and cloudy rules, Megarry's game was a small one with a narrow focus. This made it less

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[446] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 7:30.

[447] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[448] *The Dragon #7*, June 1977. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7. See also the Ruins of Murkhill forums, "Tim Kask Blog Post," comments made by Rob Kuntz on March 3rd, 2016.

[449] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 9:25.

ambitious, but it also made it a leaner machine that was much easier to tinker with. Gary revised the monster and treasure cards, and cleaned up the rules. A torture chamber (perhaps inspired by his "secret" basement room designed in his youth along with Tom Keogh?) was added to dungeon level four to balance out both sides of the board a little further, so that each quadrant would seem equally lucrative to the exploring player.[450] It is interesting to note that — since Arneson took his Blackmoor dungeon notes back home with him — this monster card edit probably marked Gygax's first indirect exposure with the *Chainmail* stats for Arneson's new Blackmoor monsters.

Gary would later consider both Guidon Games and Avalon Hill in the futile attempts to find a publisher for Megarry's game. At Gary's direction, Megarry would later send his game to Don Lowry for consideration. Lowry turned Megarry down with some regret. He could see that the game of *Pasha Cada* was entertaining and easy to play, and that production costs would not be out of hand. However, it seems that Lowry too was wary to take on such an unusual concept under his Guidon banner. Liking the game was one thing; agreeing to stake a financial commitment on an unpublished designer's completely-out-of-genre first creation was quite another. The game would later be published by Gary's own company TSR in 1975 as *Dungeon!* The game remains a popular standby to this day, having most recently been republished by Wizards of the Coast.

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When Dave Arneson realized what Gary was asking for — "the rules" — the vastly different mentalities of these two men came clashing to the forefront. Gary assumed that for Dave to be able to run such a detailed and ambitiously new variant of *Chainmail Fantasy* (indeed, Gary had just experienced a demonstration of Arneson's game), there had to be a printed set of rules which Dave had authored and not yet shared. Megarry had very clear rules for *Pasha Cada*; the older Arneson would surely have similar rules for Blackmoor, correct?

So, so wrong.

Dave's mind did not — *could* not — work that way. The things he wrote down prior to each play session were more like notes, suggestions to himself. He improvised any needed rulings (as opposed to "rules") as he went along during play. These rulings were written down when they occurred, to inform future variations of whatever questions had arisen. But then these numerous iterations of similar events would either get stacked up into the black binder, or things that didn't

[450] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Refer to posting on July 2nd, 2006.

work would get discarded. New experiments would take the place of failed ones. In a game where players could attempt any action, any restrictive rules set would forever be insufficient to cover the entire spectrum of possibility. Arneson was already thinking in terms of adjustable interpretation, while Gary (the writer and published designer) required printable systems which he could codify and refine. Systems, in Blackmoor, were only theories designed to be tested out and further modified. Mad scientists rarely deal in chemical equations.

For almost two years, contradictory interpretations of the same game systems nested comfortably in Arneson's binder, which might as well have been entitled "Abandon Hope, All Ye Outsider Game Designers Who Enter Here." So when Gary asked for the rules to Blackmoor, Dave's thought was this: "Rules? What rules?"[451]

There were dark days ahead in the realm of collaborative game design.

In response to Gary's request, Dave may have flipped through his binder with an eye toward "Gygaxian" pieces of Blackmoor, things which had approached a vague statistical cohesion. Gary would probably like tables, as well as notes that corresponded to things directly associated with dungeon crawls. While the majority of these typed notes — they were "typed by members in [*Arneson's play*] group [*in the Twin Cities*]," Rob explained[452] — are either hidden away (either secretly in Gary's estate, or lost, or trashed, or held by a private collector) and unshared with the public, we can guess at some of their contents from statements made by Gary and Rob Kuntz.

The notes that Dave selected for Gary's review *may* well have included the new monsters, the resulting combat matrix extrapolations, personality scores, dungeon and spelunking gear, combat ruling adjustments, and the like. In all, Arneson gathered up about eighteen[453] handwritten pages of such Blackmoor notes, had them typed up by his compatriots, and ran them on his father's Xerox machine.[454] He mailed the copies to Gary and waited for a reply.

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[451] *Different Worlds: The Magazine of Game Role-Playing*, issue #3.

[452] Online web forum post: Ruins of Murkhill. "Tim Kask Blog Post," March 3rd, 2016.

[453] A brief summary of anecdotes will give an idea of the difficulties inherent in trying to write a cohesive history of the creation of *Dungeons & Dragons*. In *Alarums & Excursions* #2 (1975), Gary said "20 or so" handwritten pages. In *The Dragon* #7 (1977), he said "18 or so." In the Lord of the Green Dragons blog, Rob Kuntz, likely with the clearest recollection, said "16 pages of [typed] notes" (2009). And due to various circumstances, anyone who knows where the actual notes are now — if they are not irretrievably lost! — isn't saying anything just yet.

[454] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

About two weeks after the Arneson-Megarry gaming weekend,[455] poor Gary received the requested "rules to Blackmoor" and discovered that he was attempting to communicate with another gifted man who possessed an entirely different mindset. Dave had decidedly different gifts and priorities, as well. As Gary's and Dave's mutual friend Mike Mornard once explained, "Dearly as I love Dave … he was not a very good writer. What he gave Gary was his handwritten notes for an expanded version of *Chainmail*, and it looked like [*crap*]."[456]

Gary tried to make sense of the notes, but he was baffled. These weren't rules, they were intricate tables, transcriptions of play, and half-recorded experiments. Gary was no slouch at interpreting wargaming tables and guidelines, and he had collaborated with Arneson in the recent past (with Mike Carr likely serving as liaison and "translator"). But the Blackmoor packet was so cryptic that Gary could barely make sense of what he termed the "generally useless" material.[457] Rob Kuntz, however, seems to have appreciated the *Strategos* context of Arneson's notes and was of the opinion that the simulation methods Arneson was using in Blackmoor were certainly *occluded*, but not *useless* at all. Rob noted in his insightful and more neutral assessment that Gary told him, "[*Arneson's*] notes were in need of streamlining, and that he would be doing this over the coming weeks as well as continuing to craft a dungeon to play test the refined rules."[458]

In other words, while Arneson's notes were very likely confusing, Gary did not believe they were unsalvageable in 1972. Perhaps, then, Gary's memory of Arneson's notes being "useless" can only be dated to the time period after the development of Dungeons & Dragons … when Gary and Dave were at odds over legal disputes involving controlling of the game and royalties due.

In an interesting interview, Gary would insist, "Dave Arneson never did furnish any solid rules for me to use in devising a new game, although he (and collaterally David Megarry) certainly did provide solid ideas."[459] In Rob's opinion, Dave did not have "any intention of publishing these [*notes*] … this is why there were stream of consciousness parts here and there which he could understand, which most

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[455] Lord of the Green Dragons blog, posted December 14th, 2009.

[456] *Of Dice and Men: The Story of Dungeons & Dragons and the People Who Play It*, pg. 111, by David M. Ewalt.

[457] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[458] Lord of the Green Dragons blog: "Castle El Raja Key, Small Partial of the Introductory, Historical Essay," by Rob Kuntz. Posted December 14th, 2009. See also Ruins of Murkhill, "Tim Kask Blog Post," comments made by Rob on March 3rd, 2016.

[459] Online interview: RPG.net Interview with Gary Gygax, May 2001.

people couldn't [*interpret*] by transference, unless [*they were to*] organize [*the notes*] into a set of rules that were understandable."[460]

Any reader who would care to experience a mind-bending blast of Arnesonian stream of consciousness is welcome to crack open *The First Fantasy Campaign* and read it from beginning to end. Therein, covering the many buried jewels of wisdom you will find: stories without any context; allusions to stories that are not told; sub-systems, presented before the systems that the sub-systems support are ever explained; off-hand confessions of missing material; replacements for missing material, having little or nothing to do with the originals; footnotes and exceptions to rules, before the rules are explained; and so on. And that was in a commercially published product! (It must be noted that Judges Guild published *The First Fantasy Campaign* with only slight editing, when the product could certainly have benefitted from a more thorough methodology of refinement.)[461] Arneson was brilliant in many ways, but his methods could never be replicated because he had no idea how to "explain down" precisely what he was doing for the benefit of the uninitiated.

Gary read the notes again carefully, and realized that he was in part parsing out-of-context excerpts from a referee's campaign diary. That realization, however, brought him nowhere nearer to understanding Blackmoor's "system." Hoping that he was either missing the obvious or perhaps going mad, Gary passed the notes on to Rob Kuntz, along with a friendly warning that he was about to read something highly unusual.

Rob made a little more headway, because he recognized formulae from a stat-based David Wesely wargame called *Strategos-N*, which in turn had been developed from Charles Totten's dense-and-grim 19th-century book which explored the topic of military simulation (*Strategos: A Series of American Games of War, Based Upon Military Principles and Designed for the Assistance Both of Beginners and Advanced Students in Prosecuting the Whole Study of Tactics, Grand Tactics, Strategy, Military History, and the Various Operations of War*).[462] Say that three times quickly, and

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[460] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 9:25.

[461] I am very appreciative of Dan Boggs for pointing out some clarifying materials which correct a misunderstanding I had concerning the editing of *The First Fantasy Campaign*, as featured on Havard's Blackmoor Blog ("Bill Owen on the First Fantasy Campaign," posted January 31st, 2011) and G-Design.us/jg ("Updates Since My Time at Judges Guild," by Bill Owen).

[462] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 9:25.

you'll begin to get a sense of why I tend to steer clear of serius wargaming in my RPG histories … to the extent that I can.

Strategos-N is probably code for "Strategos Napoleonics," and it was one of several *Strategos* game variants played by Wesely and friends. Specific variations of *Strategos* were differentiated by single-letter codes. (By the way, *Strategos* is not related to the Milton Bradley game *Stratego*, but rather to an old 19th-century military simulation. "Strategos" is also the Greek word for "military general.")

In the notes, *Chainmail*'s reliance on six-sided dice had been superseded by Arneson's penchant for percentiles. But Rob could find no over-arching rhyme or reason. Nor could he explain how the notes might correlate to Arneson's refereeing of the Blackmoor demonstration game which he had experienced. As Rob later explained, "I came away with virtually no understanding of a cohesiveness or structure to it at all, but it obviously made sense to Dave as he was judging it."[463] He also once said that Arneson's notes "didn't inform what we experienced when we went through the [*Blackmoor dungeon*] game."[464]

When Rob gave his own assessment and Gary then considered the net results (verifying that what Arneson had sent him was well-intentioned, yet largely indecipherable to the uninitiated), the realization came: the Blackmoor game was not in the rulings and summaries provided, but rather in Dave Arneson's head. It could never be extracted.

The verdict? It was time for Gary to create his own rules, informed by his personal observations of Arneson's game mastering method. That was the only way that Gary could preserve the *essence* of Arneson's innovations in a format that would be comprehensible to others. An entirely new game would be the end result, and that would require a huge investment of time, creativity, dedication and — above all — patience. Arneson's rules and innovations would be retained to a certain degree, but too, they would all be filtered through Gary's own personal understanding of best practices in contemporary game design.

Being Gary, he immediately rolled up his sleeves and went to work.

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By this time, it may have been mid-November. Gary once wrote that he wrote the rules "around November of 1972," and that "The initial 50-page draft of what

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[463] Online web forum post: Odd74.proboards.com. ODD74 Proboard forums, "Lake Geneva Gaming Group?" Posted July 21st, 2010.

[464] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 9:25.

was to become the D&D game took me only about two weeks to write."[465] The way these explanations are written, it *appears* that he both began *and* completed the draft in the month of November. Therefore, before the year was done, he would have a working first draft of his own unique (yet Arneson-inspired) dungeon crawling game. He sat down in his study, pulled up his old portable Royal typewriter, and started to rough out the introduction. As he once noted, however, "I hadn't a clue back in late 1972 when I sat down … and tapped out the initial draft rules."[466] He began typing with the optimistic belief that he might still be writing an advanced supplement to *Chainmail*, but that was a short-lived hope.[467]

Even after receiving and becoming totally confused by Arneson's notes, it seems that Gary was still hoping that a "real" version of Arneson's Blackmoor campaign rules would still be forthcoming. Gary once commented, "Arneson was to send me *all* [*emphasis mine*] the rules notes he used in his campaign, but nothing usable arrived, so I wrote the entire manuscript [*of* The Fantasy Game] off the top of my head."[468]

The working title, a title never intended to make it through to publication, was simply "*The Fantasy Game*." We do not know if this working title was typed out on all of the drafts, or if at some point simply existed in Gary's head. He knew full well that something more colorful would be required before the game could be shopped and sold in the future. But Gary stated the following in a 2001 interview:

"As an aside, I must laugh at some comment I saw about the name for the game being *'The Fantasy Game'* until someone 'wised me up.' Having been employed as an Editor-in-Chief, selecting what game rules and games would be published by Guidon Games since the beginning of 1971, I was well aware of the need to use a working title, the need for some caution in regards using the actual name for a a projected game release. So that's the reason for that bland one on the draft works."[469]

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[465] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. See also the Gary Gygax chat preserved in the user comments at Slashdot.org for February 22nd, 2003 entry entitled "A 1974 Review of D&D."

[466] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted May 14th, 2006.

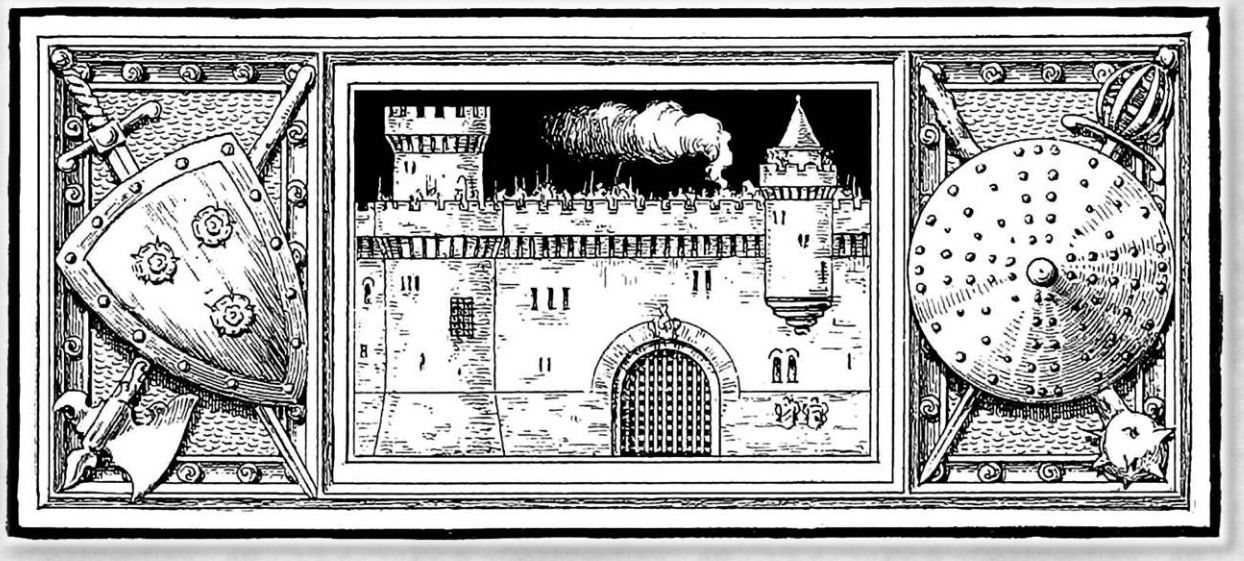
[467] *Polyhedron* #1. Also know as RPGA News, Volume I, Number 1, Summer 1981. "Special: Interview with E. Gary Gygax," perhaps conducted by Frank Mentzer.

[468] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted July 2nd, 2006.

[469] Online interview: RPGNet interview with Gary Gygax, Part 1 of 3, by Scott Lynch.

Early on, perhaps on that same title page, Gary attributed Arneson. "Although D&D was not Dave's game system by any form or measure," he explained, "he was given co-billing as author for his valuable idea kernels."[470] More specifically as to the details of these "idea kernels," he once elaborated: "Dave Arneson's focus on underground play, using maps, and his suggestion of having a Hero be able to work up to Superhero status were most helpful."[471]

And yes, Gary would end up doing almost all of the work from this point forward, but the truth of the matter is that without Arneson's innovations, their co-authored game would never have come into being at all.



Two castle warlords, one conflict. One destiny?

Please note that this is *not* to say that Gary had nothing further to contribute to this co-authored new game. Far from it. Gary knew pulp fantasy front to back, with a depth of comprehension that even Arneson (or just about anyone else) would be hard-pressed to match in a single lifetime.

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[470] *The Dragon* #7. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

[471] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted July 3rd, 2005.

As Gary once explained, "I have read thousands of swords and sorcery, heroic fantasy, fantasy, mythology, and fairy-tale books since [*c. 1950-1956*]."[472]

And he did not just read pulp magazines, fanzines, and purchased paperbacks either. He sometimes went much farther afield for information than that. As one example, he once noted, "As I recall, I found a fair amount of information on the Seelie and Unseelie [*faerie*] courts back in the 1970s by using the local library here [*in Lake Geneva*] to tap into the Wisconsin interlibrary loan system to get old books — mostly from the U[*niversity*] of Wi[*sconsin*]."[473]

(This should also put to rest the theory — put forward by some other researchers — that Gary would not have had convenient and affordable access to books that only appeared in hardcover, or in limited editions. That certainly does not seem to be the case. Consider also this comment: "The scale-mailed bull model of a gorgon came directly from a copy of a medieval bestiary, the title of which I do not recall, but it was and probably still is in the local (Lake Geneva) public library.")[474]

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Just four months before his death, Gary provided a "top ten" list of the authors who most informed his conception of *Dungeons & Dragons*, in addition to "a score of [*twenty unlisted*] others."[475] Regardless of other such summaries such as Appendix N, I feel that *this* particular list is quite important, because it offers us an irreplaceable insight into Gary's "final word" on the game's major inspirations beyond the works of Dave Arneson himself.

Here, I provide Gary's top ten list with some additional comments concerning his most-recommended book(s) from each of the authors, as well as a summary of some of the specific innovations that those authors supplied. Do note that the game, to Gary's mind, was not nearly "complete" until the publication of the *Dungeon Masters Guide* in the summer of 1979. However, most of these authors' inspirations appear in original *Dungeons & Dragons* (1974), and therefore many of their ideas were included in the first and second drafts of 1972 and 1973. Gary had deep respect for all of these luminaries, and the lights of their creative visions were reflected in the evolving game that he designed.

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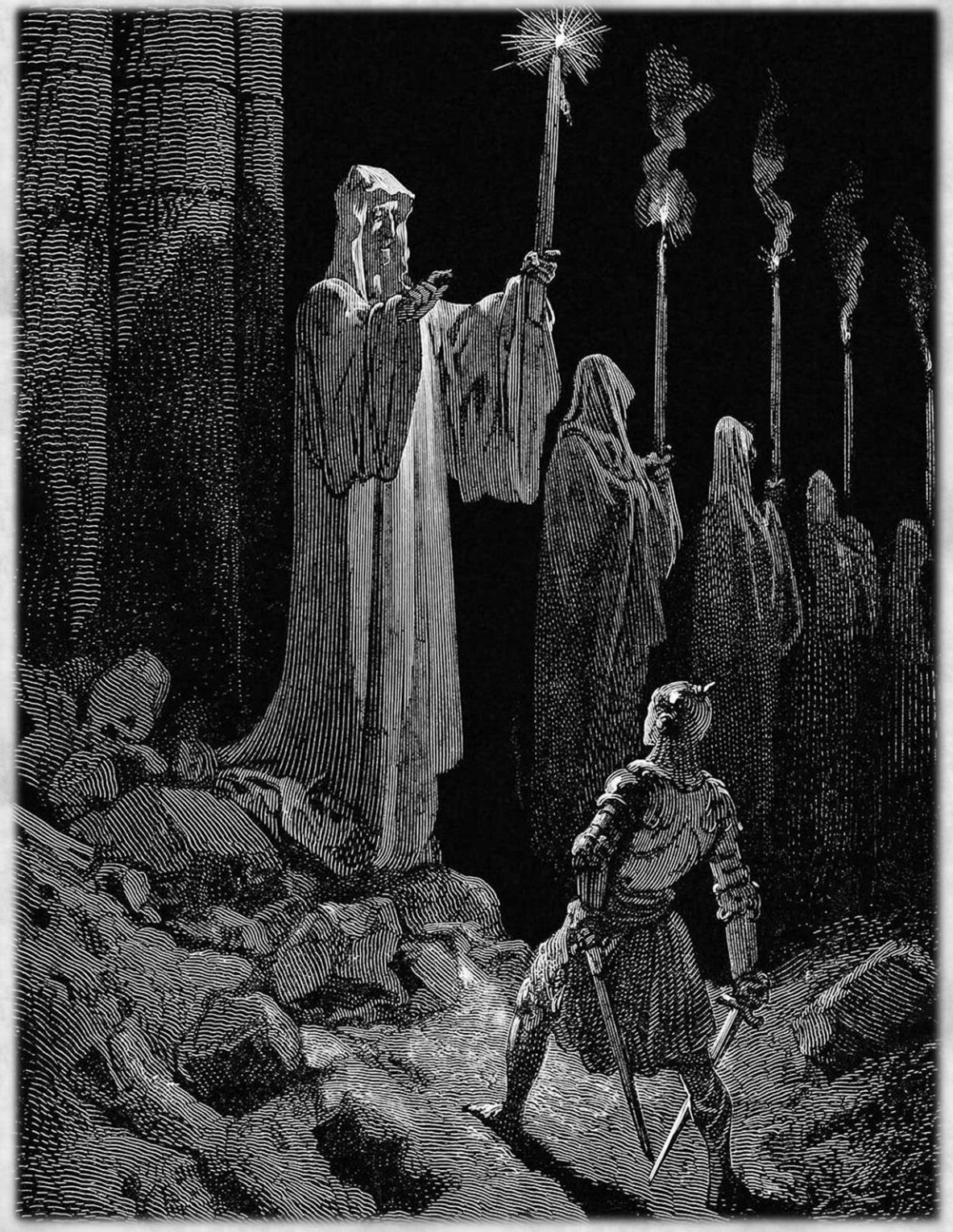
[472] *Dragon* magazine, issue #63, pg. 72.

[473] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Q&A with Gary Gygax, Part II. Posted June 9th, 2005.

[474] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted May 13th, 2006.

[475] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted October 28th, 2007.



Learn from the glory of those who came before.

The authors are:

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At position #10, J. R. R. Tolkien. Tolkien's contributions have been discussed at length, including original creatures such as the Balrogs and the Nazgul. The Professor was ubiquitous, especially in the late 1960s and early 1970s. "Tolkien had taken the colleges by storm," Tim Kask remembered, "because of bootleg copies of *The Hobbit* and *The Lord of the Rings*."[476] It is an open secret that Gary greatly appreciated *The Hobbit*, and hated *The Lord of the Rings*.[477] It is a *less* open secret that he continually downplayed the importance of Tolkien for many decades, because he felt that the good Professor's works were overly appreciated at the expense of other worthy authors! Therefore, it is this author's opinion that Tolkien should realistically be placed much higher on this list. And as Gary once wrote: "I created the D&D game to sell, to get to as many consumers as possible, and the best way to do that was to include races that were favored by the many young Tolkien fans."[478] He also noted, "The 'influences' from JRRT's work that I included in the game were mainly there to interest others in playing it, not what caused me to want to create it."[479]

It is clear that Gary had a very grudging admiration of Tolkien in regards to the Professor's influence on D&D ("I must say," he once opined, "that I was so bored with his tomes that I took nearly three weeks to finish them"), but nevertheless he did admire him.[480]

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At position #9, Poul Anderson. The Anderson works that Gary loved best were *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (1953-1961), *The High Crusade* (1960, seemingly less influential than *Three Hearts* until the advent of *Metamorphosis Alpha*) and his first fantasy novel, *The Broken Sword* (1954, 1971). *The Broken Sword* is highly regarded by Michael Moorcock, who cites it amongst his personal favorites. *Three Hearts* in particular would inspire the general outline of a D&D wilderness

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[476] Youtube video: "Tim Kask on TSR #11: Two-Hour Un-Cut Q&A," as posted on the Dorks of Yore channel. This quote appears at approximately 1:23:50.

[477] Refer for example to ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XI. Posted July 19th, 2006.

[478] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted April 13th, 2005.

[479] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 29th, 2002.

[480] *Dragon* magazine, issue #95, pg. 12.

adventure. Influences from Anderson's work include, but are by no means limited to: the alignment system, evil elves, healing spells, manticores, nixies, "other self" character personas, paladins, planar travel, protective magics, special magic swords and "true" regenerating trolls.

When Poul Anderson passed away, Gary lamented, "another of the F[*antasy*] & S[*cience*] F[*iction*] giants whose work I am so fond of is now gone."[481]

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At position #8, Fred Saberhagen. Readers of fantasy are often confused by Gary's mention of Saberhagen, because none of the works seem to have directly influenced *Dungeons & Dragons* to a significant degree. Gary said that "Saberhagen is listed for his *Empire of the East* that I very much liked."[482]

There are four books in that post-apocalyptic saga, of which the first two — *The Broken Lands* (1968) and *The Black Mountains* (1971) — had seen publication by the time Gary was working on his first draft of D&D. The most influential volume however — *Changeling Earth*, also known as *Ardneh's World* — was not released until 1973. Perhaps Gary was reading this particular book while he was struggling to publish *Dungeons & Dragons*. Gary also once wrote that his conception of the Great Kingdom itself (within the later World of Greyhawk, c. 1979-1985) would be modeled after the Empire of the East, as ruled by the arch-villain John Ominor.[483]

The major innovation from Saberhagen appears to be the concept that chaotic breakdowns in the clashing laws of physics could result in the creation of weird science and magical beasts. Gary loved to provide pseudo-scientific explanations for the existence of magic, as evinced by the Vancian "fire and forget" spell system (based upon memory and temporary amnesia), psionics, and his conception of the outer planes. It seems likely that Saberhagen, as well as the "Harold Shea" stories, strongly influenced the direction of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons* (1977-1979) and also *Gamma World* (by Jim Ward and Gary Jaquet), without having been read in time to impose a significant impact upon the design of original D&D (1972-1974). Please refer to my interlude essay featured in Book II of **HAWK & MOOR**, where I explore the boundaries of this theory in greater detail.

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[481] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 21st, 2002.

[482] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted October 29th, 2007.

[483] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted July 13th, 2007.

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At position #7, Howard Phillips Lovecraft. Gary appreciated many of Lovecraft's works, especially those pertaining to the Cthulhu Mythos. To be certain, Gary cited Lovecraft as a "major influence" in one of his 1985 articles featured in *Dragon* magazine.[484]

One of his favorite Lovecraft tales was *The Lurking Fear*,[485] and it is likely that this tale influenced the design of some aspects of the Greyhawk dungeons (such as labyrinthine tunnels filled with swarms of degenerate humanoids). He also once noted that a collection which included *Pickman's Model* and *The Rats in the Walls* gave him several nightmares, so those stories certainly stuck with him as well.[486]

However, in my opinion his early D&D borrowings were largely confined to a detailed reading of *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath* (1926-1927, first published 1943). This story features incarnations of gods and demigods, ghouls, ghasts, gargoyle-like night-gaunts, wyvern-like shantaks, and dholes/bholes (probably one inspiration for the *purple worm*, which had formerly been the *purple dragon*).

Kadath is also one of the major inspirations for the "Under-Oerth" setting, which in Gygax's conception features the drow (interpreted from the *svartalfar* of Norse mythology). Significantly, the Kuo-Toa appear to be influenced by Lovecraft's Deep Ones, and the mind flayers (Illithids) were based upon the cover illustration for a Mythos-themed book by Brian Lumley. Gary also once noted that Lovecraftian ghouls were included in the *Chainmail Fantasy* games of 1971;[487] but it appears that most of these influences would affect the *Monster Manual* (1977) and the Drow series of Dungeon Modules (1978). Rob Kuntz's and Jim Ward's research, along with that of Dr. John Eric Holmes, would also cause the Cthulhu Mythos to be featured in the excellent first edition of *Deities & Demigods* (1980). And to my mind, the most Lovecraftian of Gary's own works is Dungeon Module WG4, *Forgotten Temple of Tharizdun*.

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[484] *Dragon* magazine, issue #95, pg. 12.

[485] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted May 12th, 2003. See also Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part VII, posted August 1st, 2006.

[486] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VII. Posted January 31st, 2005.

[487] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted August 13th, 2005.

At position #6, Abraham Merritt. "Merritt was a marvelous fantasy author," Gary wrote.[488] The most important stories, from Gary's perspective, are *Creep, Shadow, Creep*; *The Moon Pool*; and *Dwellers in the Mirage*. He also once noted admiration for *The Fox Woman* and *Return to the Moon Pool*, although the latter (by that title) is unknown to me.[489] I believe he was referring to the second part of the tale's original serialization.

Although sometimes unmentioned, *The Face in the Abyss* appears to be very important as well. Merritt's early contribution seems to be one of atmosphere, and the idea that (beyond mere "dungeons") an entire lost world of caverns, voids and forsaken temples permeates existence just beyond the fringe of civilization. Merritt would deeply influence Gary's "Under-Oerth" setting, particularly the Sunless Sea, the existence of primeval gods, and the idea that entire races had been driven underground by cataclysm and the encroachment of humanity.

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At position #5, Michael Moorcock. Gary explained, "The first two Elric stories were very influential in the development of the D&D game."[490] This is a more complex comment than it seems, due to the convoluted publishing history of the Elric saga. Elric first appeared in the novelette *The Dreaming City* (1961), and then in the further novelettes *While the Gods Laugh*, *The Stealer of Souls*, *Kings in Darkness* and *The Flame Bringers*. These works were collected into what is now regarded as a full Elric novel, *The Stealer of Souls* (1963). Additionally, there were four novellas published after the novelettes: *Dead God's Homecoming*, *Black Sword's Brothers*, *Sad Giant's Shield*, and *Doomed Lord's Passing*. These were collected as *Stormbringer*. This explains why Gary especially recommended *The Stealer of Souls* and *Stormbringer* in Appendix N of the *Dungeon Masters Guide*.

These stories would help Gary to clarify his alignment[491] and planar systems, and the intelligent (and cursed) swords of AD&D are drawn directly from the example of Elric's Stormbringer. Arneson's system influenced Gary's design of intelligent magic weapons. Elementals and various spells would be borrowed from the Elric saga as well. Indirectly, Elric was also the inspirational source of D&D's later multi-

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[488] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XII. Posted April 1st, 2007.

[489] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted October 16th, 2007.

[490] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted October 29th, 2007. See also in the same thread, posted on April 28th, 2007.

[491] Refer for example to ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX, posted June 2nd, 2005.

classing rules, because Gary (as he expressed in *Chainmail*) had difficulty categorizing Elric as either a warrior or a wizard. Indeed, in the tale *The Stealer of Souls*, Elric is described by the merchant lord Pilarmo as exhibiting "particular qualities as both swordsman and sorcerer."[492]

Outside of the Elric saga, Gary's favorite Moorcock tale was "Dorian Hawkmoon,"[493] by which he probably meant the saga beginning with the post-apocalyptic Hawkmoon novel *The Jewel in the Skull* (1967).

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At position #4, Fritz Leiber. Gary said of Leiber's tales that they were amongst his very favorites, and were "pure, pure Swords & Sorcery."[494] Virtually all of the *Fafhrd & Gray Mouser* stories would inform Gary's conception of the City of Greyhawk. Also, Gary's later *Gord the Rogue* novels would be recognizable as being strongly Leiber-derivative (with Gord representing the Gray Mouser, and Fafhrd a near cousin to Gord's barbarian companion Chert). It is safe to say that Leiber is the number one influence on urban adventuring, and also that the devil-may-care wanderlust expressed by the protagonists greatly influenced Gary's own conception of adventuring parties. Such "fellowships" in D&D are not noble and self-sacrificing as they are in Tolkien's works; they are mercenary, nomadic and carousing, yet not without fierce loyalties shared between sword-brothers.

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At position #3, Jack Vance. Vance was Gary's favorite author, and as such his influences were significant. The *Dying Earth* tales would prove to be the most influential, especially *The Eyes of the Overworld* and *The Dying Earth*. Gary once fondly recalled that "*The Eyes of the Overworld* published by Ace Books, Inc. in 1966 absolutely enthralled me as no work of fantasy had done for a long time. To my mind Cugel the Clever was just the sort of anti-hero that the genre needed."[495] In later life, however, Gary would cite the *Planet of Adventure* novels as perhaps

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[492] *The Stealer of Souls*, Chapter I, by Michael Moorcock.

[493] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VII. Posted August 5th, 2006.

[494] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted July 31st, 2007.

[495] "Jack Vance & the D&D Game," an article by Gary Gygax which originally appeared in *The Excellent Prismatic Spray* #2, 2001.

his favorite Vancian series, with *The Demon Princes* series in second place.[496]

Gary dismissed most of Arneson's reagent-based magic, and decided upon a formulaic "Vancian" system instead. "I chose to use a system of magic inspired by the worlds of Jack Vance because it fit the whole of the game I devised," Gary wrote. "For example, think of an archer with a quiver of arrows. When one is shot, it is gone. Magic spells, more potent than arrows, are much the same. So archers need to select their arrows before going forth to battle, so too the M[*agic*]-U[*ser*]s in the game."[497]

And, more explicitly (when challenged by the many proposals and requests for a spell point system to replace the Vancian magic approach), Gary had this to say:

"The D&D magic system is drawn directly from *Chainmail*. It, in turn, was inspired by the superb writing of Jack Vance. This 'Vancian' magic system works splendidly in the game. If it has any fault, it is towards making characters who are magic-users too powerful. This sort of fault is better corrected within the existing framework of the game — by requiring more time to cast spells, by making magic-users progress more slowly in experience levels. Spell points add nothing to D&D except more complication, more record keeping, more wasted time, and a precept which is totally foreign to the rest of the game."[498]

Cleary, Gary believed that *Dungeons & Dragons* demanded the Vance-inspired magic system which he originally designed for it. And so it remains, more than 40 years on. And counting!

But there is more to Vancian D&D than just spell casting. The entire magic-user and thief classes, in regards to their overall design, are strongly inspired by Vance's many fictional characters. (Gary however did *not* design the thief class, at least not at first; but that is a tale for another day.) Several magic items, as well as the naming conventions for D&D spells (e.g., "Wizard Name's / Adjective / Noun") are borrowed from the illustrious realm of Vance as well.

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[496] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted April 12th, 2005. See also Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part VII, posted August 5th, 2006.

[497] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted September 4th, 2002. In the ENWorld Q&A, Gary added the following: "The 'memorize then fire and forget' principle for casting spells Jack Vance assumed in his fantasy stories seemed perfect to me for use by D&D magic-users. It required forethought by the player and limited the power of the class all at once."

[498] *The Dragon*, issue #16, pg. 16.

At position #2, the collaborative team of L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt. Gary stated that de Camp was one of his favorite authors, particularly when he was collaborating with Fletcher Pratt.[499] Gary did not enjoy de Camp's Conan tales for the most part, however, explaining that he found these stories "inferior to [*Howard's*] original writing."[500]

The Carnelian Cube is mentioned in Gary's list of inspirations, but the most influential works were the "Harold Shea" or "(In)Complete Enchanter" tales, comprising *The Roaring Trumpet* and *The Mathematics of Magic*, as well as the later *Castle of Iron* and *Wall of Serpents*. The Harold Shea stories are perhaps the strongest advocates for the "magic is weird science" idea which Gary preferred. *The Roaring Trumpet*, in particular, inspired the G series of modules (1978). Many spells, scenes and environments featured in these stories made their way into various incarnations of *Dungeons & Dragons*.

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At position #1, Robert E. Howard. "I find the raw power of Robert E. Howard's swords & sorcery tales compelling," Gary wrote.[501] He also wrote "My real impetus was Howard's 'Conan,' not surprisingly" when asked which fantasy works had most inspired the development of *Dungeons & Dragons*.[502]

Virtually everything in Howard — particularly its robust swashbuckling spirit — can be found somewhere in *Dungeons & Dragons*. The Conan tales were Gary's favorite, and for various reasons *Red Nails* inspired him the most,[503] although as we have seen *The Scarlet Citadel* was also of great import. It is also worth noting that Howard appears to be the *one* major influence which both Gygax and Arneson agreed upon with great enthusiasm. (Gary was also known to have been re-reading the excellent Ballantine editions of Howard's Conan — a series which begins with *The Coming of Conan* — in 2007, which indicates that his admiration of Howard

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[499] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted November 5th, 2003.

[500] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV. Posted November 5th, 2003. See also Part XIII, posted April 14th, 2007.

[501] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted April 12th, 2005.

[502] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part II. Posted February 17th, 2003.

[503] Gary also once wrote: "'*Red Nails*' is an outstanding tale of chilling adventure action that I would love to be able to emulate in an RPG module." (Dragonsfoot, May 22nd, 2005.) Lamentably, this never came to pass.

was certainly life-long.)[504]

Citing too many examples of Howard's influence in D&D is an exercise in futility; it is much easier to say that *Dungeons & Dragons* is above all else a simulation of Howard's fiction.

It is also worth noting too that — perhaps because Howard had written the Swords and Sorcery tale which had first captured Gary's imagination — Gary eventually tracked down and read everything he could find by the author, including the tales of Conan, Kull, Bran Mak Morn and Solomon Kane. "Everything Robert E. Howard wrote," Gary once insisted, "has been perused by these weary eyes."[505]

There were many other authors who inspired Gary as well. Many people — Rob Kuntz perhaps foremost among them — have expressed surprise that Gary did not seem to acknowledge any significant debt being owed to weird fiction author Clark Ashton Smith, a colleague of both H. P. Lovecraft and Robert E. Howard. Smith's stories are (in my opinion) pure *Dungeons & Dragons*, but perhaps Gary simply did not like Smith's writing style … or thought that Lovecraft, Howard, and Vance did a similar thing slightly better. No one really knows.

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These summaries of the most important originators are just scratching the surface. As can be seen, both Dave and Gary brought a great deal of valuable ideas to the game design table.

Many other *ideas* which would appear in early D&D were Arnesonian, but the *rules* which would be followed in the Greyhawk games to come were strictly Gygaxian. In itself, Gary's method of collaboration and the assimilation of others' ideas is not surprising, especially when we consider that Arneson and Megarry had already worked directly from Gygax's own *Chainmail* game to create their derivative interpretations, which they then shared with Gary once again. The precedent of aggressive borrowing had already been set by Arneson, and Arneson had surely noted that *Chainmail* itself was the end result of Gygax borrowing from Perren. In returning the favor, Gary was merely completing an already-established circle.

With all of these precedents in mind, Gary began formulating his own rules. Arneson had written down notes solely for his own use, and so Gary needed to tease out the meanings, to create new and cohesive systems which had the spirit of

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[504] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted April 14th, 2007.

[505] *Dragon* magazine, issue #63, pg. 72.

Arneson's work without the vagaries or confusion. As one example, Dave's excellent idea of the "village priest" of Blackmoor as a healer and vampire hunter would be expanded by Gary, informed not only by Van Helsing but also by Bishop Odo of Bayeux, Archbishop Turpin, Friar Tuck from the Robin Hood legends, and the Order of the Knights Hospitaller.[506] Evil clerics, meanwhile, were probably inspired by Lovecraft's cultists and Howard's Stygian priests and priestesses of Set.



"Blood and dust for Set, my lovelies.

We need sacrifices! Where are all the adventurers?"

While Gary was struggling with these issues, trying to figure out how to solidify the rules which would make the fantastic practical, he also worked again on Megarry's board game. It is tempting to think that the simplicity of *Pasha Cada* helped to serve as a "Rosetta Stone" between Blackmoor and *Chainmail*, so that the work on *The Fantasy Game* draft could move forward more quickly.

Dave, for his part, would soon realize that Gary's mindset was going to cause

[506] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part XIII. Posted October 17th, 2007.

some disagreements and misunderstanding. "He [*Gygax*] thinks you can write a rule to cover any situation," Arneson once explained. "I don't. There are just too many possibilities, especially when you're asking people to use their imaginations."[507]

At first the remote collaboration involved phone calls[508] in which Gary asked questions, Dave gave answers, and Gary interpreted the answers in his own way. Dave noted, "We talked on the phone a lot. You should see the phone bills we ran up."[509] These phone calls likely served to clear up much of the confusion which Gary had experienced while reading Arneson's Blackmoor rules (without Arneson being present to provide the context).

However, persons such as Mary Gygax and Arneson's parents were probably quite interested in these expenses! Soon the two men switched to letters to save money, and Arneson's contributions became ever more remote. From Arneson's vantage of understanding, the design work "was done by phone and correspondence. There were also a couple weekends in Lake Geneva, but the final draft was done by phone and mail."[510]

Gary wrote the core system first at a mere ten pages, and then kept adding detail around the core until the results began to approach playability.[511] While this expansion of the rudimentary first draft of *The Fantasy Game* was still underway, Gary told Rob that he had "begun crafting a 'dungeon' setting similar to Dave's [*Dungeons of Castle*] Blackmoor." This experimental dungeon would soon be given an innocuous name, Castle Greyhawk.

Castle Greyhawk would not just be a clone of Blackmoor, however. It would be a funhouse, a haunted mansion, a crystallization of Gary's youthful memories of the old Sanitarium. With the new rules draft quickly nearing a workable form, Gary just needed to make some maps and invite his players to try some games. Very soon, it would be time for Gary's own game of swords, sorcery and dungeon crawls to finally begin.

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[507] Online web forum post: Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[508] Refer for example to references documented in United States District Court (Fourth Division, Minnesota) Civil Action 4-79-109, Arneson v. Gygax.

[509] Dungeon Master: The Life and Legacy of Gary Gygax, Wired.com.

[510] *The Space Gamer*, issue #21. "An Interview with Dave Arneson."

[511] Lord of the Green Dragons blog.

INTERLUDE

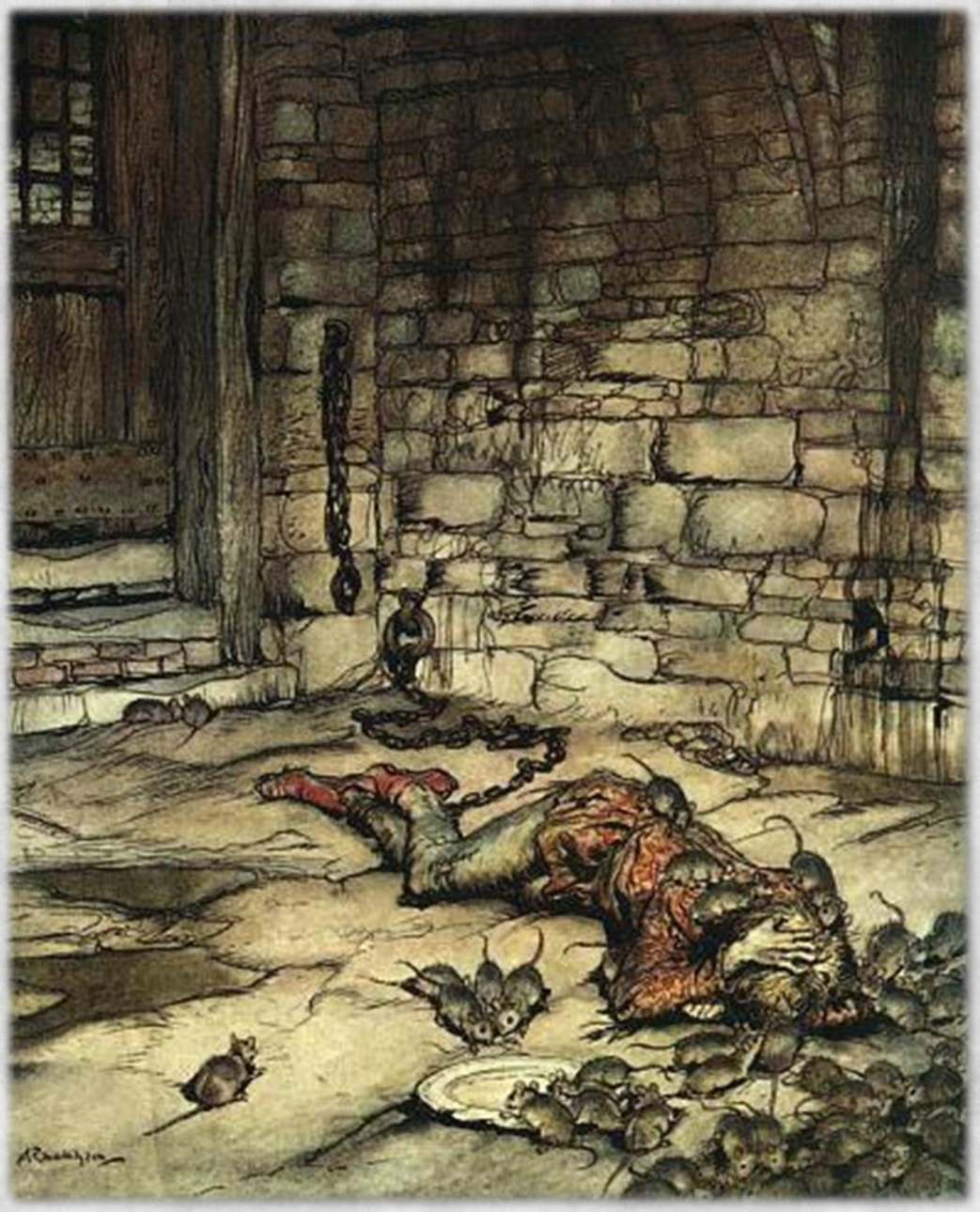
THE RATS IN THE WALLS … OF GREYHAWK? (OF R. E. HOWARD, H. P. LOVECRAFT, BLACKMOOR, AND GREYHAWK)

BEFORE WE consider Gary's Castle Greyhawk as being directly influenced by his own first November 1972 play experience (deep in the dungeons under Castle Blackmoor), there is another intriguing source of potential inspiration which should be considered rather carefully: *The Rats in the Walls*, an outstanding weird horror story penned by Howard Phillips Lovecraft.

At its very simplest, *Rats* can be distilled and considered (unfairly) as a mere haunted castle yarn. Haunted castle stories comprise a medieval-themed sub-genre within the broader landscape of mythic tales and horror-fantasy fiction. These stronghold-dominated stories were by no means uncommon by Lovecraft's time, having already grown in many directions through Gothic tales such as Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) and Stoker's *Dracula* (1897). Also noteworthy in the haunted castle sub-genre is "The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was," as collected from Germanic folklore by the Brothers Grimm (c. 1807-1810). Arguably, even Bluebeard's castle from Charles Perrault's *Histoires ou Contes du Temps Passé* (1659) can be regarded as a significant influence on many later haunted castle interpretations. There are many much earlier tales dating to the medieval period as well. But even though all of these stories feature monsters — and the Brothers Grimm story especially focuses on attacks by devils and the undead — Lovecraft's own castle tale is unique in featuring nearly-indescribable monsters dwelling beneath a ruin, within the "sub-cellar" and "grinning caverns" of a dungeon setting. In other words, Lovecraft went far beyond mythology and Gothic tropes in creating otherworldly, slimy and fungal new monsters to populate the castle's underworld.

The Rats in the Walls was written in August and September of the year 1923. It was inspired by the grim famine legend of Bishop Hatto and the "Mouse Tower" of Bingen, as well as *The Fall of the House of Usher* written by Lovecraft's idol, Edgar Allan Poe. It appears further that the story was developed following a brief idea which Lovecraft scribbled down in his commonplace book near to the end of 1919, which read as follows: "Horrible secret in crypt of ancient castle — discovered

by dweller."[512]



Do be careful when inheriting dungeon-harboring ancestral strongholds.

[512] The intriguing plot leads which Lovecraft scribbled down in his commonplace book throughout the years are freely available as a general text in many locations online; for example: the Wired.com entry by Bruce Sterling, dated July 4th, 2011.

Sounds like the perfect seed for dungeon adventuring, does it not? By extension, we could arguably date the earliest "new school" dungeon adventure idea (featuring unheard-of monsters with a weird and / or cosmic bent) to 1919, almost two decades before Tolkien's now-legendary Goblin Town and Erebor featured in *The Hobbit* (1937, 1938).

Some of the details in *Rats* are strangely similar to elements in Castle Blackmoor and its dungeons, while others share parallels with the Greyhawk dungeons and other Gygaxian underworld environments. As one example, the sample dungeon featured in Gary's *Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979) includes encounters with giant rats, ghouls, evil cultic priests, and the horribly altered remains of the man who headed the monastery above before it fell to ruin.[513] All of these interrelated ideas appeared earlier in Lovecraft's story.

The Rats in the Walls first appeared in print in the March 1924 issue of *Weird Tales* (Volume 3, Number 3). It was reprinted in the June 1930 issue (Volume 15, Number 6). Notably, an impressionable and creative young man named Robert E. Howard enjoyed the story very much. After reading it he corresponded indirectly with Lovecraft beginning in August of 1930. Howard wrote that he was deeply impressed by several historical elements within the story, and Farnsworth Wright (editor of *Weird Tales* at the time) passed the admiring letter on to Lovecraft. The rest, as they say, is history.

Despite some philosophical differences in temperament, Howard and Lovecraft got along famously by letter, and so Howard would soon begin weaving many more weird fiction elements into his proto-Swords & Sorcery tales. The two men also debated the merits of barbarism vs. civilization (no points for guessing which man argued for what), and Howard later conceptualized the mythic barbarian realm of Cimmeria — soon to be the homeland of Conan — in 1932. The most Lovecraftian "dungeon tale" which I know of, *The Tower of the Elephant* (1933), would soon feature not only Conan, but also a giant spider, an evil sorcerer, and a trans-dimensional entity imbued with Cthulhu-like cosmic powers.

The Rats in the Walls is very interesting from a *Dungeons & Dragons* history perspective, because it shares many peculiar traits with the early dungeons that were conceived by both Dave Arneson and Gary Gygax. Rob Kuntz has noted,[514] and

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[513] *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 1979, pp. 94-96.

[514] The Lord of the Green Dragons blog, "Mood in the Original Campaign: An Essay into the Mind and Imagination of E. Gary Gygax," posted March 15th, 2009.

Gary himself once wrote,[515] that *Rats* was indeed one of Gary's favorite Lovecraft stories. The influences of *Rats* upon D&D environments are perhaps not direct, but nevertheless there are numerous and remarkable similarities which are worthy of consideration.

Near to the village of Anchester, the ruined castle at the heart of Lovecraft's story is also a priory, which is (specifically) a monastery which is headed by a religious prior who ranks below an abbot. We are reminded again of Gary's sample dungeon: "There is a rumor in the village that something strange and terrible lurks in the abandoned monastery not far from the place."[516]

The horrific tale in *Rats* is told by a narrator surnamed Delapore, who is descended by blood directly from the mysterious (un)holy residents of Exham Priory proper. These ancestors were whispered of in fireside tales as belonging to "a race of hereditary daemons beside whom … the Marquis de Sade would seem the veriest tyro [*novice*]" by way of comparison. "The worst characters, apparently," Lovecraft continues in his telling, "were the barons and their direct heirs."

These unsavory noble cultists seem to bear a resemblance to the nameless progenitor-Lords of Blackmoor Castle: "At various times in the history of Blackmoor," Arneson wrote (as I first quoted in Chapter 7 of this work), "a *sadistic* [*emphasis mine*] Duke or Baron would make cruel use of the Castle's dungeons and torture chambers for their own amusement and purposes. As a result, the dungeon area of the Castle is supposedly abound in wandering spirits of the poor wretches that succumbed within those confines."[517]

There are several other lesser near-allusions which are also curiously echoed in early D&D. Exham Priory is also rumored to have been built upon the ruins of a Druidic temple "contemporary with Stonehenge," much as Gary's Temple of Elemental Evil was built over an ancient subterranean fane. In its pre-medieval incarnation, Exham housed "a strange and powerful monastic order," which dimly mirrors Arneson's Temple of the Frog and the monk character class as well. The superstitious villagers who dwell in Anchester believe that the Priory is "nothing less than a haunt of fiends and werewolves," and of course demons and lycanthropes are found in both the Blackmoor and Greyhawk dungeons.

When Delapore comes "home" to the ruined castle, it is described as "a jumble of tottering mediaeval ruins covered with lichens and honeycombed with rooks'

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[515] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part III. Posted May 12th, 2003.

[516] *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 1979, pg. 96.

[517] *The First Fantasy Campaign*, pg. 21.

nests, perched perilously upon a precipice," which later could serve as a fair description of Gary's own Castle Greyhawk.



A little refurbishment and redressed stone ought to do the trick.

Now, to check the cellar …

After several atmospheric interludes in which Delapore sleeps within the castle and believes that he hears strange things tunneling inside the walls, he decides to explore the black reaches and cellars beneath the ground. The descent into the castle's dungeons is guarded by giant rats. Lovecraft describes the "ravenous, gigantic rats" which haunt the ruins in a masterful, disturbingly evocative manner as only he can: "The scampering army of obscene vermin which had burst forth from the castle three months after the tragedy that doomed it to desertion — the lean, filthy, ravenous army which had swept all before it and devoured fowl, cats, dogs, hogs, sheep, and even two hapless human beings before its fury was spent."



Family. It's complicated.

In Dungeon Module B2, *The Keep on the Borderlands*, Gary describes giant rats that "swarm chitteringly from their burrows — a wave of lice-ridden hunger seeking to overrun the adventurers with sheer numbers."[518] More tellingly, the stairs which lead from the moathouse ruin to the dungeons below in T1, *The Village of Hommlet*, are protected by "a hungry horde of thirteen giant rats" that are "hungry and will attack without fear."[519] There are several player tales of giant rats being encountered in the ruins and dungeons of Castle Greyhawk as well.

The story continues once the rats are discovered in their descent. In the sub-cellar beneath Exham, Delapore unearths ancient inscriptions which seem to warn of a fearsome unholy queen, "whose dark worship was once vainly forbidden to Roman citizens." (A tentative parallel can be drawn to Zuggtmoy and her forbidden temple, near to the villages of Nulb and Hommlet.)

Below the sub-cellar of Exham lie the familial crypts, and many secret tunnels between the two subterranean areas exist as burrows dug by the giant rats which plague the place. Ghoul-like degenerates also dwell within the deeper Priory crypts, feasting on corpses just as the rats do.

Similarly, in the dungeons beneath Gary's moathouse ruin (again T1), there is a burial crypt which serves as a lair for predatory ghouls.[520] These horrors compete with the giant rats who have created a nasty labyrinth of tunnels, stealing the ghouls' charnel delicacies whenever they can. Giant rats apparently do this quite frequently in Gary's dungeons! "Their burrows honeycomb many graveyards," Gary wrote in the *Monster Manual* (1977), "where they seek to cheat ghouls of their prizes by tunneling to newly interred corpses."[521]

For the unfortunate Delapore in Lovecraft's tale, the "dungeon" adventure begins with a fateful discovery: he and a servant detect a secret trapdoor by carefully observing the effects of a draft of air upon the flickering flame of a candle. Delapore is far too afraid to lift the floor-slab during that initial exploration, deciding rather to slumber again in safety above ground. But he suffers nightmares which seem to force upon him the secrets which he refused to steal away for himself. The dream-envisioned monsters beneath Exham include a horde of "fungous, flabby beasts whose appearance filled me with unutterable loathing." These horrors, "wallowing in filth," are actually the troll-like ghouls (thouls?) who are the

[518] Dungeon Module B2, *The Keep on the Borderlands*, pg. 3.

[519] Dungeon Module T1, *The Village of Hommlet*, pg. 14.

[520] Dungeon Module T1, *The Village of Hommlet*, pg. 15.

[521] *Monster Manual*, 1977, pg. 81.

subterranean descendants of Delapore's own ancestors.

The "fungous" hint is especially interesting. Did Gary note and appreciate this detail? Could the slimes which lair in the dungeon-prisons with Zuggtmoy perhaps represent that last remains of corrupted worshippers of the demon queen? Delapore also dreams of a "white-bearded daemon swineherd" who dwells "with his unmentionable fungous beasts" in "the twilight grotto." In Dungeon Module T1-4, the ally of the "Lady of Fungi" — Zuggtmoy — is known as Iuz the Old. Iuz is rumored to be a half-demon, and of course the dungeons of Zuggtmoy which he frequents are filled with thrall-swarms of monsters such as giant rats, ghouls, trolls, slimes, degenerate humanoids and fungi.

Later in *Rats*, when Lovecraft's narrator has steeled himself and assembled a party of cellar-delving specialists to accompany him, the secret trapdoor under Exham is finally opened. Beneath the slab looms a well-worn staircase littered with rat-gnawed bones. Some of the bones are human, others humanoid. Down the stairs and within secret caverns hidden far beneath the sub-cellar, an even more horrific discovery is made:

"It was a twilit grotto of enormous height, stretching away farther than any eye could see; a subterraneous world of limitless mystery and horrible suggestion. There were buildings and other architectural remains — in one terrified glance I saw a weird pattern of tumuli, a savage circle of monoliths, a low-domed Roman ruin, a sprawling Saxon pile, and an early English edifice of wood — but all these were dwarfed by the ghoulish spectacle presented by the general surface of the ground. For yards about the steps extended an insane tangle of human bones, or bones at least as human as those on the steps. Like a foamy sea they stretched, some fallen apart, but others wholly or partly articulated as skeletons; these latter invariably in postures of daemoniac frenzy, either fighting off some menace or clutching other forms with cannibal intent."

Eerie scenes such as these are found throughout Gary's published dungeons and underworlds, but there are two especially striking examples of similar locales which bear special mention. The troll warrens beneath the *Hall of the Fire Giant King* (Dungeon Module G3) are filled with troll nests, each comprising a "heap of sticks, bones, hide and skin scraps, and other nauseous material."[522] Similar troll lairs found in D1, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, are "filled with a noisome mess of rotting carcasses, bones, sticks, excrement, pelts, etc."[523] Near to the D1 troll warrens, there is a vast fungal garden where troglodytic dwellers tend creeping and

[522] Dungeon Module G3, *Hall of the Fire Giant King*, pg. 12.

[523] Dungeon Module D1, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, pg. 10.

edible fungi: "The fungi are fed with the refuse and offal," Gary writes.[524]

When Delapore's party members behold these unspeakable horrors, they do not dare to venture very deep. "We shall never know what sightless Stygian worlds yawn beyond the little distance we went," the narrator insists, "for it was decided that such secrets are not good for mankind." But we may catch in Rats an early glimpse of one of Gary's inspirations for the later Elder Elemental God, or perhaps Tharizdun himself: Delapore says that his guardian familiar — a cat — was "determined to lead me on even unto those grinning caverns of earth's centre where Nyarlathotep, the mad faceless god, howls blindly to the piping of two amorphous idiot flute-players."

Thus led to his doom, Delapore suffers the ultimate revelation: his ancestors were cannibalistic cultists who dwelled in a vast subterranean complex and worshipped evil demon-gods beneath the earth. This may have been one of the inspirations for the many deities and demon lords found within the early Greyhawk dungeons, including "The Nine," Fraz'urb-luu, and perhaps even Gary's own neutral-yet-insane alter ego, Zagyg the Mad Archmage.

When Delapore finally encounters one of the degenerate netherworlders spawned by his own ancient bloodline, he is driven mad. It could be said (in D&D terms) that he falls prey to demonic possession, and in that compelled state he is forced to eat the corpse of one of his hapless fellows. To his eternal detriment he survives, and he is dragged to an insane asylum. There, long after the terrors suffered during his underworld misadventure, he offloads the entire tale on some unfortunate visitor (the reader). "They must know that I did not do it [*devour the flesh of the unfortunate companion*]," he pleads. "They must know it was the rats; the slithering, scurrying rats whose scampering will never let me sleep; the daemon rats that race behind the padding in this room and beckon me down to greater horrors than I have ever known; the rats they can never hear; the rats, the rats in the walls."

That is the end of Lovecraft's tale. And, for Gary and his own inspirations in planning the beginnings of Castle Greyhawk, perhaps it was a beginning. Lovecraft's imagined dungeon — hollowed beneath the castle ruins, filled with ghouls, hints of demonic entities, mad gods and other nameless horrors — became an inspirational touchstone for Robert E. Howard. It is well known that Arneson was inspired by Conan novels in creating Blackmoor, and Gary too wrote that "The most immediate influences upon AD&D were probably de Camp & Pratt, R[*obert*] E[*rvin*] H[*oward*],

[524] Dungeon Module D1, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*, pg. 10.

Fritz Leiber, Jack Vance, H[*oward*] P[*hillips*] L[*ovecraft*] and A. Merritt."[525] [*I-14*]

It all began with the rats, daring the unwary questers for forgotten lore to detect a secret doorway down into the dungeons deep. And now, more than likely, you will never gaze upon the mere giant rat in the *Monster Manual* as a harmless beastie, possessing half a hit die, ever again.

[525] *Dungeon Masters Guide*, 1979, pg. 224.

CHAPTER 10
THE CASTLE OF MADNESS
(NOVEMBER — DECEMBER 1972)

The Lion strode through the Halls of Hell;
Across his path grim shadows fell
Of many a mowing, nameless shape —
Monsters with dripping jaws agape.
The darkness shuddered with scream and yell
When the Lion stalked through the Halls of Hell.

— Robert E. Howard, *The Scarlet Citadel*

ALCHEMY WAS at hand, for Hawk and for Moor. Between the two masters, the ominous Black castle of Arneson's imagination — re-sculpted under Gygax's hand — soon gave way to the Grey.

As *The Fantasy Game* wove its way into reality, Gary created his own castle ruin and a dungeon to situate beneath it. This was in the "late autumn" of 1972 according to various accounts.[526] This would have likely been in late November and into early December, not very long after the Arneson-Megarry games were played in Lake Geneva.

Gary's Castle had meager beginnings. People tend (quite rightly) to imagine the Greyhawk dungeons as a vast and sprawling labyrinth, but the reality is more complex. The conceptual design was incremental over a period of five years. The very first play test version of the dungeon comprised only a single level, drawn in pencil on one sheet of graph paper.[527] Similarly, the encounter key was probably contained on a single sheet as well. Even the final design would be nothing like a TSR Dungeon Module; the Castle was always designed for play by an *improvasitore* who made up all of his game mastering details as he went along. The later published modules which we are familiar with today were written not as representations of

[526] Yahoo Group: Gygax Discussion List, 2004; *Castle Zagyg: The Upper Works*; et. al.

[527] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IV.

Gary's own campaign materials, but rather as play aids for Dungeon Masters who would never have the benefit of playing at Gary's side. There is no "super-module" of the Greyhawk dungeons, only the maps and scrawled encounter keys revised through repeated play. I will address this matter in more depth a little further on.

At first, while he was still conceptualizing the whole of his future work, Gary was striving to emulate what little of Castle Blackmoor's dungeons he had "seen" during his own adventure in Dave's mysterious netherworld. Following from that example, Gary wrote out a summary of themes he wanted to include in his own underworld.

*(**Please note:** There are many,* many *varying accounts which were provided by Gary over the years, which I will try to synergize as best I can. Of all of the topics in this book, the creation of Castle Greyhawk is by far the most complex. There is no way to take* all *of the existing accounts and to assemble them into a master version of events, because these accounts are mutually inconsistent and frequently contradictory. Reluctantly acknowledging this reality, I have simply done the best I can. ~KDK)*

With the above warning being stressed, I can state that it *appears* Gary originally conceived of his super-dungeon as being ten levels deep. This was while he was working on dungeon level one and preparing for the very first play test. Later, the ten levels would become *thirteen* in actual game play, devised through December 1972 and into the summer of 1973. By late 1973 or early 1974 (when Rob Kuntz was his co-DM), the thirteen-level version was scrapped and replaced by a massive conglomeration of great levels by both Gary and Rob, reaching perhaps twenty-five levels deep with numerous special and thematic "side levels" situated on adjacent graph paper sheets. These "special area" sheets attached via various corridors and slides to the northern, southern, eastern and western edges of the "core" (the vertical assemblage of levels positioned directly beneath the Castle). In all, there would eventually be more than seventy (!) of these Gygax/Kuntz levels before development of the Castle layout was ended. The creation of additional encounter keys for existing levels, however, was continued into the 21st century as Gary ran his dungeon for newer play groups who had never experienced the earlier incarnations of Zagyg's realm.

The entire plan reminds one of the dire warning of Florimel to the intrepid Harold Shea, as featured in L. Sprague de Camp's and Fletcher Pratt's classic adventure tale *The Mathematics of Magic*. She warns him thusly, *"There be*

gruesome great dungeons below."[528]

In several of Gary's later recollections, he offered a summary of the planned levels which he had derived from his list of dungeon themes created in late 1972. These thematic levels would be planned and situated in ascending degree of difficulty, and a corresponding descent in depth. Taking several of Gary's conflicting examples into consideration at once,[529] it is likely that the first "build plan" for Castle Greyhawk looked something like this:

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Above Ground: The Upper Works, or simply the Ruins. (Later, more vertical ruins of towers would be added above this ground level.)

Dungeon Level 1: The Barracks, or the Vaults, or Dungeons. (*Literal* dungeons, as in oubliettes and places of imprisonment).

Dungeon Level 2: The Storerooms, or the Catacombs, or Cellars, or Dungeons.

Dungeon Level 3: The Cells, or the Crypts, or Lower Dungeons.

Dungeon Level 4: The Torture Chambers. (Perhaps inspired by the torture chamber he had added to level 4 of Megarry's *Pasha Cada.*) Also noted as The Crypts. Later conceptions also hint at "the Laboratories," but it is not yet known if that was part of the earliest castle design.

Dungeon Level 5: The Maze, or Catacombs. Similarly to "the Laboratories" mentioned above, this level might also include "the Menagerie," but we don't yet know if that was part of the earliest castle.

Dungeon Level 6: The Labyrinth.

Dungeon Level 7: The Catacombs, or Lesser Caves.

Dungeon Level 8: The Crypts, or Greater Caves.

(Later, several levels would be inserted at approximately this point to expand the main dungeon from 10 levels to 13: perhaps the Lesser Caves, the Greater Caves, the Lesser Caverns, and the Greater Caverns. There is some confusion because of the 10-to-13 expansion and the very scant information about the design transition.)

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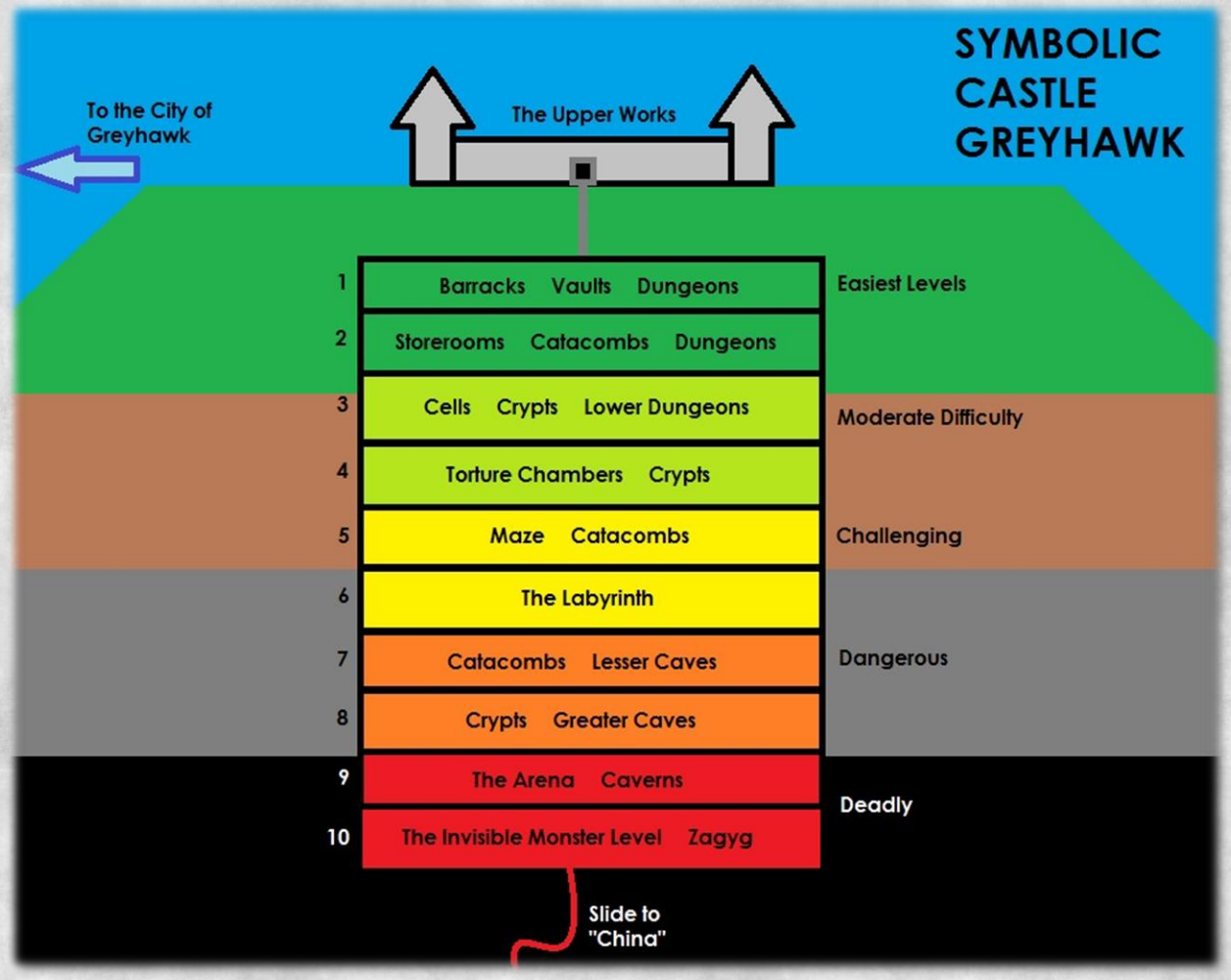
[528] *The Mathematics of Magic*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt. In my Baen edition of *The Complete Compleat Enchanter*, this quote appears on pg. 233.

[529] We also have information now from the El Raja Key archive of Rob Kuntz's materials. This material mostly preserves Rob's campaign and the shared dungeon between him and Gary, but it also reveals a bit more about the earliest layouts of the castle levels. Refer also to Allan Grohe's blog From Quroth's Quill, "The Many Levels of Castle Greyhawk," a two-part post from August 2017.

Dungeon Level 9: The Arena, or Caverns.

Dungeon Level 10: The Invisible Monster Level. (Later, this nadir would be reconceived as "Zagyg's Zone," the domain of Zagyg, the Mad Archmage.)



Castle Greyhawk V1.0, 101.

Like Dave Arneson, Gary's conceptualization of the dreaded dungeons beneath his fated castle would be inspired by the tales of Robert E. Howard and other authors. "Of course I read all the Conan books before the D&D game was created," Gary once wrote.[530]

Two of the passages featured in Howard's *The Scarlet Citadel* prove particularly

[530] Refer to the thread "Gygaxian Monsters" on the ENWorld forums.

enlightening here:

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"When the city was founded three thousand years ago there were ruins of an earlier city on and about this hill. King Khossus V, the founder, built his palace on the hill, and digging cellars beneath it, came upon a walled-up doorway, which he broke into and discovered the pits, which were about as we see them now. But his grand vizier came to such a grisly end in them that Khossus in a fright walled up the entrance again. He said the vizier fell into a well — but he had the cellars filled in, and later abandoned the palace itself …"

And:

"The tunnels were not silent. From the bowels of the earth in all directions came sounds that did not belong in a sane world. There were titterings, squeals of demoniac mirth, long shuddering howls, and once the unmistakable squalling laughter of a hyena ended awfully in human words of shrieking blasphemy. He [Conan] *heard the pad of stealthy feet, and in the mouths of the tunnels caught glimpses of shadowy forms, monstrous and abnormal in outline. It was as if he had wandered into hell — a hell of* [the mad wizard] *Tsotha-lanti's making."*

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There were other influence we might consider as well. In his future designs of the dungeons, Gary would also be thinking about the Sanitarium, as well as tales such as Theseus in the labyrinth of the minotaur, the Brothers Grimm tale of "The Twelve Dancing Princesses," and Jules Verne's underworld exploration novel, *Journey to the Center of the Earth*.[531]

Another direct line of inspiration (later acknowledged in Gary's famous Appendix N) was drawn down from *Sign of the Labrys* (1963), a peculiar post-apocalyptic novel by Margaret St. Clair. The word "labrys" — meaning, a symbolic ceremonial axe weapon of a goddess — likely has the same lingual root as the word "labyrinth," which specifically means an underworld laid out in a deliberate sacred coiling pattern.

St. Clair's *Labrys* setting is notable because its netherworld includes wandering "monsters" and patrols, depraved fungus-eating denizens, brown mold (mutated cryogenic yeast), witches and witchcraft, lab rats, water traps, illusionary horizons, secret tunnels, and more. Most particularly, St. Clair also explains the concept of sub-levels or "tiers" which Gary directly borrowed from when he was writing the

[531] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part V. Posted January 28th, 2004.

manuscript for *Dungeons & Dragons*. If (for example) you refer to the side-view dungeon schematic on page 3 of D&D's *Volume 3: The Underworld & Wilderness Adventures*, you will see this concept in action. This "tier" idea — differentiating the concepts of dungeon *depth* and dungeon *levels* — would also appear in 1977's *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set* rulebook, on page 38, where we can see the Great Stone Skull and the Domed City, hidden far beneath the world. As we see in Book II of **HAWK & MOOR**, Gary utilized the "tiers" idea to great effect in 1973 and 1974, developing "side levels" that would allow the Castle Greyhawk dungeons to feature over 70 tiers in all.

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That innovation, however, was still far in the future. First, Gary needed to create the first dungeon level of them all!

When Gary was ready to prepare his first two maps (one for the castle ruin and one for the *singular* dungeon level) for play testing, he needed to know the relative dimensions of his own model castle. The shallowest levels — those closest to the surface — were going to share their width and breadth with the dimensions of the ruins above them. The castle was going to stand high upon a prominent mount, much like Castle Blackmoor. Because the shallowest dungeon levels could not exceed the size of this mount's flattened plateau, the drawing and scaling of the castle would give Gary an idea of the scale to use in his own dungeons. He may have also wanted to use the miniature kit because that would allow him to situate the castle ruin on a sand table; or, perhaps he intended to use the model as a visual aid for the players.

Gary had by this time already acquired the Hausser kit for "Castle Bodenstedt," [*sic*] perhaps from Jeff Perren's collection. Armed with this as well as the older rules for *The Siege of Bodenburg*, he could start establishing the features of his own ruined castle. With these ideas in mind, he went down to his chilly basement late at night, eager to measure the castle kit on its table.[532]

He wrote down the measurements, then went up to his cramped (but much warmer) study, and there started scaling out the walls and towers on graph paper. To his chagrin, he realized that the castle was square, and his paper was of course rectangular. Worse, the castle miniature featured cliff faces and escarpments

[532] Many of these details come from Gary's account in *Dragon Annuals* #2 and #4, as well as *To Forge a Fantasy World: Greyhawk's Creation, Castle Zagyg, Europa* 6-8 (the earliest account), various issues of *Dragon* magazine, and several less-detailed asides in Internet blogs and forum threads. The minor trick in determining the contents of Castle Greyhawk is in locating mentioned room descriptions; but the *major* trick involves a chronological understanding of all the various iterations.

surrounding the castle (which would represent the plateau for Gary's own fortress), which meant there was no way to both use the miniature castle *and* to develop the shallow dungeon levels on rectangular paper without wasting a third of each sheet's space. If the model "Castle Bodenstedt" was to be used, each dungeon level below it would be depressingly small.

To solve this problem, he did the wise thing: He ignored the castle miniature's limitations, and focused on his blank sheet of paper. He elongated the walls of the castle on two sides, so that the overall ruin became rectangular and filled the paper. Careful readers may have come to the realization by now that Gary's design for the Keep on the Borderlands (as featured in Dungeon Module B2) was quite similar to Castle Greyhawk in its outlines.

Once the castle's features (gate, barbican, walls, towers, outbuildings and the Great Keep itself) were sketched in, Gary placed three hidden staircases leading down to the dungeon level. These areas were hidden by rubble fallen down from the castle walls. Four areas on the map were then keyed on a sheet of note paper with minor nuisance monsters for the play testers' characters to encounter: bandits, giant rats, and giant centipedes.

Veteran D&D players, many of whom are still waiting to see the real maps and keys to Gary's dungeon to this day, prefer to imagine that our sagely Dungeon Master had an elaborate key written up for his masterwork from the very beginning. After all, Gary's Dungeon Modules which would be written a few years later (such as *Tomb of Horrors*, *The Keep on the Borderlands*, and *Shrine of the Kuo-Toa*) are all meticulously detailed virtual environments, with notes on history, atmosphere, room contents and monster tactics, all meticulously written out. But Gary's notes for the original castle and dungeons were extremely sparse. As he once explained in regards to his level keys for the dungeon, "What we used was not 'pro' but simply veteran DM notes to more easily wing the actual action. Traps and 'trick' areas were detailed in regards to trigger and damage or result from activating a trick." He further wrote, "Monster encounters looked like this: '12 orcs, 4 with crossbows, 7-12 gold pieces each, potion of heroism in hole under water barrel. Will fight until death.'"[533]

Yes, that's it.

This succinct glimpse of Gary's encounter format is interesting not because of its content, but rather because it implies that much of the original dungeon's magic was resident in Gary's improvisations and the players' unexpected actions, *not* the detail of the setting itself. If Gary's dungeon notes should ever emerge to suffer

[533] Greyhawk Online forums post, February 13th, 2004.

under public scrutiny, many diehard fans will no doubt feel an overwhelming sense of disappointment. The true majesty of Castle Greyhawk reigned in Gary's heart and mind, not on pieces of paper.

We also know that Gary made his dungeon encounters highly variable in nature, with *ranges* of figures given instead of *set numbers* in many cases. In other words, the encounter notes were ideas for improvising the adventure, and the circumstances of each encounter varied according to the power of the explorers. "Depending on the party entering their area," he wrote, "the hit points would be set high, or rolled, or set low. Likewise, the orcs might have a spy hole, detect the approaching party, fire through loopholes in the door and wall, or else be sitting around and possibly surprised."[534]

Further data was rarely required, although "special encounters might be more detailed, two or three lines of notes. … Whatever was there was just to stimulate the DM's imagination and inspire something that suited the party for good or ill."[535]

Once the few encounters were scrawled in, Gary decided that the map of the ruins was still a little too tame for play. Therefore, an "unwilling descent" was also placed, in the form of a pit trap that would cause an unwary explorer to plummet down to the dungeon level alone (and perhaps resulting in a broken neck, or at least some serious injury). With these basic atmospheric bits placed within the ruins (now termed the "Upper Works," a name which would later be shared with the remaining upper floors of some of the ruined towers), Gary began sketching on a second sheet of graph paper. It was time to design the dungeon down below.

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[534] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VI. Posted February 12th, 2004. Similarly, Gary once expressed the following example of variable monster encounter difficulty levels based on the size of the adventuring party: "Encounters named only something like '9-16 gnolls' in an area. If it was a big party of PCs entering I'd make that 16 gnolls and have some sort of leader or leaders with them. If only a few characters of low level were exploring and entered the place, they might encounter only 9 of those critters." And interestingly, Gary once wrote that "At the time when those rules [*D&D* in 1973] were written, it was assumed a typical adventuring party would have about 8 PCs plus as many hired men-at-arms. In my 30-plus years of gaming, I have very rarely played with a group of 16 dungeoneering characters! But this estimate is useful as we in the Old School Renaissance attempt to create somewhat balanced encounters for classic dungeon adventures, and so I preserve this detail as an historical curiosity here.

[535] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part VI. Posted February 12th, 2004.

The first step in designing the solitary dungeon level was to carry over the positions of the staircases from the ruin, so that the maps would correctly line up with one another. Then Gary made some chambers and passages, and covered the entire map with mazy lines. As he once explained, "The first level was a simple maze of rooms and corridors, for none of the participants [*in the play test*] had every played such a game before."[536] He almost certainly thought about David Megarry's balanced *Pasha Cada* game board and his first experiences under Castle Blackmoor while he drew.

Gary's early style featured clusters of small and interconnected rooms as "islands," surrounded by "seas" of labyrinth. Anyone who is interested in seeing a very similar dungeon design by Gary, circa 1976, should study a copy of *Dungeon Geomorphs, Set One: Basic Dungeon* (TSR stock codes F1002, 9004; also reprinted as part of product 9048.) That product features room and maze assortments which are very similar to the few existing photographic glimpses of Gary's actual dungeon. (Which, by the way, the curious soul can now behold by searching images on the Internet; try the keywords "Greyhawk dungeon map." Enjoy.) The available pictures are frustratingly blurry, but several excellent analyses have teased out significant design features which reveal much of Gary's dungeon design methodology.

When this first-ever dungeon map was done, Gary placed some encounters in the rooms. Cleverly, he saved time and simultaneously gave the level a "theme" by repeating encounters throughout the level. For example, if encounter #2 was "5 to 8 goblins," then multiple rooms on the map could be keyed as encounter #2. Gary once explained the process he used in creating these early dungeon levels like this: "I usually made one-line notes for my dungeon encounters, from around 20 to 25 of same for a typical level done on four-lines-to-the inch graph paper … [*and then*] a few more on five-, six-, or seldom-used eight-line graph paper. The other spaces [*tunnel networks between the rooms*] were empty, save for perhaps a few traps or transporter areas and the like."[537] By using a labyrinthine design with very little unused space and where most every square was separated from every other, Gary was able to make the dungeon seem much larger than it actually was.

Every reader, of course, would like to know exactly what all of these rooms were actually like, and what the monsters and treasures were as well. Sadly, anyone who possesses the original maps — or copies of them — isn't sharing those secrets

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[536] *Europa* 6-8, 1975. This online file preserves the text of *Europa* Newsletter issues #6, #7 and #8.

[537] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted September 15th, 2005.

just yet. (I know it's an agonizing wait; I have waited through 35 years of playing Dave's and Gary's game, and counting.) Any sleuthing in that direction is complicated by the fact that Gary re-created his dungeon entirely in the mid-1970s, and he often re-keyed rooms after they were cleared of monsters. This was done so that the next group of players might enjoy their own adventures, without finding only looted chests and bloody corpses everywhere. Even more confounding, Gary also ran a differently-keyed version of this classic dungeon in the early 2000s, which is often the version for which the most information is available. The sum effect of all of these varying manifestations is that the castle's original encounters can never be definitively classified.

Despite these challenges, we know from stories and various accounts what *some* of the early monsters were, and some of the treasures as well. There were giant centipedes, just like in the upper ruins. There were stealthy kobold skirmishers and goblin slavers, and these two groups of diminutive humanoids had a mutual pact of alliance to support one another whenever the big nasty humans came down into their lairs with their nasty burning spells and swinging swords.[538] In later designs of dungeon level one, the kobold presence would grow until the little raiders filled two sub-complexes of interconnected rooms.

In later revisions of Greyhawk Castle (after 1972 and all the way into 2007), Gary would re-populate this level not only with the infamous OGK (Old Guard Kobolds), but also with groups of bandits, cave bats, dwarves, an evil priest, flesh beetle swarms (perhaps inspired by *The Mummy*, as Gary expressed interest in that movie's nasty scarabs?), ghouls, giant centipedes, giant fire beetles, giant rats, a giant snake, giant stink (bombardier) beetles, gnolls, gnomes, goblins, great (large and huge) spiders, a half-orc fighter, a huge wolverine, orcs, skeletons, snakes, and at least one very hungry gelatinous cube.

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The convoluted process of dungeon level creation — involving waves of design, stocking, modifications resulting from play, preparations for restocking, and then the effects of yet another adventuring party's explorations — was exhausting, especially considering that Gary had never designed a dungeon before. As he recalled, "That drawing [*of dungeon level one*] took up all my spare time during the following day. It was a level that had lots of corridors and rooms, few squares penciled in to indicate solid stone. There were, however, only about 20 encounters on it, for I was truly a novice Dungeon Master and quite unprepared for the avid

[538] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX.

plundering that was about to begin."[539]

When these first twenty monster lairs were all finally placed, it was time for Gary to place the room and corridor traps. "A couple pits were placed on the first dungeon level below the ruins of Castle Greyhawk," Gary recalled. "These initial pits were no more than holes in the floor, open spaces that made it difficult for the characters to follow their routes in the dark labyrinth."[540]

After these traps, the treasures still needed to be placed as well. Gary conceived of the game's coinage based on his reading of many Fafhrd & Gray Mouser stories, and in a very Leiber-esque manner the most worthless coins in *Dungeons & Dragons* would soon be known as "copper pieces," or farthings. To the play testers, these were basically pennies. These coins, due to their relative worthlessness, would be found in bulk throughout that first imagined dungeon level. This design choice on Gary's part would lead to an amusing scene involving a huge "treasure" chest filled with pennies later on, as related in Book II of HAWK & MOOR.

With the rooms, tunnels, lairs, treasures and traps fully delineated throughout the map and key, the design of the dungeon level was complete. This monster- and trap-filled environment would create an ideal introductory area for Gary's players, allowing them to learn (through a trial and error process quite dangerous for their imaginary characters) how to navigate the mazes, to map the rooms on paper, to sneak about undetected, to avoid traps, to open doors, to battle monsters and to search for treasure. Good play was rewarded with treasure and experience; bad play awarded nothing, except perhaps an opportunity to roll a new adventurer. And somewhere hidden away beyond the deepest rooms, there would be a stairway down into the deeper underworld, the upper cusp of an uncreated dungeon level two.

When all was done, it was time to name the dungeon. To both compete with and to honor the precedent set by Arneson's Blackmoor, the Lake Geneva dungeon setting would need an equally evocative name. Gary decided, at first, on something like *Castle Black Hawk*. This name came from Gary's admiration of Chief Black Hawk, a heroic Sauk leader in 1800s Wisconsin, known in his native tongue as *Ma-ka-tai-me-she-kia-kiak*. "As an amateur historian," Gary once explained, "I was much interested in the Native Americans, and I always felt that [*Chief*] Black Hawk was a brave and tragic example of the fate of the original inhabitants of the

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[539] *Dragon Annual* #2. "Founding Greyhawk: The Creation and Development of the Greyhawk Campaign, 1972-75," by Gary Gygax.

[540] *Dragon* #294. "Up on a Soapbox," by Gary Gygax.

continent."[541]

He realized however that a name like "Castle Black Hawk" would be far too identifiable to his players (and to those in the Twin Cities) as a Blackmoor reference, and so he settled on the slightly more original name "Castle *Grey* Hawk" instead.

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As this preliminary castle-and-dungeon play test area took shape, Gary was also busy finishing his first rough draft of the rules for *The Fantasy Game*. After two weeks of pecking away at his trusty Royal typewriter, Gary completed his typed draft. Gary once said that he had played "for perhaps a month"[542] before he typed up the first draft,[543] which would date the draft's completion to late December of 1972. (He once noted, "I wrote the first draft at the close of 1972,"[544] which likely means around the time of the Christmas holiday.)

However, there were only a few pages of rules-notes in existence when the play tests actually began. "We probably started with less than ten pages of rules," Rob Kuntz once explained. "So he [*Gary*] was constantly typing it up and updating them."[545]

At various times, Gary would remember this text as being 50, 100 or 150 pages long. His occasional uncertainty on this point over the passing years would eventually become inevitable and chronic, because Gary's original rules manuscript has … *yes* … regrettably been lost. (Gary wrote in 2002 that he had lost it, and it probably went missing a very long time before that.)[546]

Further, as of this writing (2017) there is no publically available confirmation

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[541] *Dragon Annual* #2. "Founding Greyhawk: The Creation and Development of the Greyhawk Campaign, 1972-75," by Gary Gygax.

[542] Masters of Fantasy: TSR, the Fantasy Factory. A documentary which aired on the Sci-Fi Channel in 1997. The comment appears at approximately 9:35.

[543] Rob Kuntz has also noted (on the Ruins of Murkhill forums, July 2017) that even before this Gary had created a series of play notes: "A very base, preliminary, set of guides / rules for play, the latter amounting to 10 pages." We don't have any textual evidence of this document yet, but we could safely term such a thing the "pre-first draft guidelines" or something similar.

[544] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted March 18th, 2005.

[545] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The story begins at approximately 11:55.

[546] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted October 14th, 2002.

that *any* play test copies derived from that first draft are available for our perusal either. "Dalluhn" seems to be as close as we can get. Therefore, the first draft to this day remains a mystery document, whose contents must be inferred from both earlier and later iterations of the rules. However, the 50-page figure is the one which most likely corresponds to the first draft with a fair degree of accuracy.

Our first question pertaining to all of this mess is rather simple: "Hey, what precisely does 'lost' mean?" Well, it may hint that the manuscript is somewhere in Gary's basement (unlikely), or that it was still in his TSR office in 1985 when Lorraine Williams literally locked him out of it (sadly, much more likely). It may be in a stealthy collector's hands; or in a warehouse belonging to the game's current curators, Wizards of the Coast; or it may be stuck in Gygax's piles of manuscripts at his family's house, and held — either knowingly or unknowingly — by his estate. So we do not yet know what has truly become of it … but like all great artifacts, it may indeed be lost forever to time, to be replaced by something greater, a legend of itself which grows with every retelling.

The contents of the draft, however, *are* somewhat known to us. Unlike Dave's Blackmoor notes, Gary's rules for *The Fantasy Game* explained everything from the beginning, including the process of "how to create a 'character,' a wholly imaginary game persona."[547] There were rules for three types of characters included: the *Fighting Man* (based on the Hero and Superhero derived from *Chainmail*), the *Magic-User* (based on the Wizard), and that Arnesonian/Gygaxian hybrid newcomer, the *Cleric*. In Gary's version of the rules, the characters would never start out as Heroes. That title needed to be earned. Newly-rolled characters in this game would not be quite as weak as the Flunkies in Blackmoor, but they would still be mortal and highly vulnerable. Death, in the dungeon, would lurk for them at every turn.

Following the precepts laid out in various Swords & Sorcery pulps and exemplified by weird fiction authors such as Fritz Leiber, Robert E. Howard and H. P. Lovecraft, these characters would show glimmers of potential from the very beginning. However, these young adventurers would be naïve, having barely come of age. Teamwork between player characters was strongly implied in Gary's rule set, because groups of such non-Heroes would desperately need each other just to survive. Death would be their teacher, if no one else.

The random tables and rolling processes featured in Gary manuscript would also include "some new systems, some based on Arneson's Blackmoor notes, and others

[547] *30 Years of Adventure*. Published by Wizards of the Coast, 2004.

entirely new."[548] But in a way, *everything* was new. There cannot be clichés where creative ground is still being broken. As Gary explained, "Much of what is now taken as standard and hackneyed in the D&D game was all new back in 1972 and 1973."[549]

The first draft also indicated that the game was controlled by a "judge," or "game referee." The appellation "Dungeon Master" (which I use for its familiarity) remained in the hazy future. One of the key crucial concepts carried over from Arneson's innovations was clearly highlighted in Gary's rule set as well: "What was most strongly pulled from Blackmoor," Gary later wrote, "was the general concept: players selected an archetypal fantasy character to play, and then set forth to explore a subterranean dungeon. In the dungeon lurked horrible monsters, guarding fantastic treasures. Skillful and careful play were [*both*] rewarded, and there were many tricks to daunt thoughtless players, and deadly traps set for the careless."[550]

Beyond these generalities, we have hints from those *Chainmail* systems which were borrowed from, and similar hints from other materials as well. *Chainmail* however was apparently not the basis of Gary's new game, although he would later tie the two rule sets together for public consumption and to increase marketability. Rob Kuntz has said that "*Chainmail* didn't factor into the play test whatsoever, except maybe in the sense where you got to look at a mass combat situation."[551] Rob explained further that "there were no rules in the play test … we sculpted those as we went along. It [*Dungeons & Dragons*] doesn't derive explicitly from wargames."[552]

Unfortunately, we know very little about the actual first draft rules, their text, or their conception. Documents are still being unearthed and researched by others at this time, but unfortunately there are significant pieces which cannot (yet?) be released into the public domain. The first draft is a cipher; here I can only offer you a dim reflection of its treasures.

Gary was deservedly proud of this first manuscript. He knew that the rules were

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[548] *Alarums & Excursions* #2.

[549] *Dragon* #287. "Up on a Soapbox," by Gary Gygax.

[550] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #9, May 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax, pg. 2.

[551] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The comment appears at approximately 13:50.

[552] Online interview: Refer to the Youtube clip 'Rob Kuntz Conversations,' with Martin Brown of Grognard Games. The comment appears at approximately 16:10.

very good, and was excited about the play test yet to come. "I was absolutely certain that the D&D game would be popular and have legs back in 1972," he once wrote, "when I completed the initial draft of the rules. That assurance never wavered from then on."[553] To be specific, he believed that the potential fan base for his game would include "military game fans and imaginative literature (S[*cience*] F[*iction*], fantasy, horror, occult) readers — maybe 100,000 persons or so. That's why I was careful to add as much as possible to appeal to the fans of J. R. R. [*Tolkien*], so as to broaden the audience base."[554]

Despite their rough nature, these rules were just about ready for dissemination before they had even seen play. This in itself seems to imply that Gary's first draft system was very close to that already embodied by *Chainmail*.

A few days after the manuscript was completed, he went out and made approximately twenty or thirty copies for the upcoming remote play test. These copies would be sent out to Castle & Crusade Society members — along with other trustworthy friends — for the purposes of experimentation and constructive feedback. Arneson's group would of course receive one or more copies as well. Once the copies were stapled and ready, they "were sent to the Twin Cities and to several other groups for comment."[555]

To this day there is confusion over whether Gary mailed these copies out just *before* (less likely) or just *after* (more likely) he had begun his own play test at home. A particular point which clouds this question further pertains to the game's transition of title. Was *The Fantasy Game* crossed out on the first page, and changed to *Dungeons & Dragons* before the copies were ever mailed? Was the title *The Fantasy Game* ever even typed out for anyone to see? No one seems to know. This is one of the hundreds of tiny mysteries surrounding the game's creation. I provide a few details hereafter so that the reader may understand the difficulties inherent in compiling a full and detailed history from distant memories, where tales are retold too many times, and where partial or missing primary sources can never tell the entire story.

In one early account, Gary stated, "When the scant manuscript was copied and mailed off to some two dozen or so gaming comrades, mostly IFW [*International Federation of Wargaming*] members, of course, a few days later, it bore the title,

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[553] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted March 15th, 2005.

[554] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted March 15th, 2005.

[555] *The Dragon* #7. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

'*Dungeons & Dragons*.'"[556] And a later account: "I had sent out for play-testing about a score of drafts of the 50-page manuscript I had written under the working title '*The Fantasy Game*.'"[557] Taken together, these accounts may imply that the game was renamed immediately prior to the copies being made, but this is uncertain. Both offer an implied timeframe of late 1972. However, a third account by Gary reads, "As an aside, I had [*re*]named *The Fantasy Game* [*as*] *Dungeons & Dragons* in the summer of 1973 after compiling two lists of potential titles, with 'Dungeons' on one [*list*] and 'Dragons' on the other."[558] How can these contradictory statements ever coincide? Did Gary perhaps decide upon the title of *Dungeons & Dragons* in 1972, but not apply it until 1973?

Considering that Gary was probably asked literally hundreds of times exactly how *Dungeons & Dragons* came to be named, *and* that some of his recollections were going back over thirty years, it should come as no surprise that the accounts of these details are highly variable. But the sad fact remains that we now always have a *general* idea of what transpired, while pinning down the details is inevitably a matter of calculated interpretation.

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To come up with the title for his game (whenever that may have been), Gary began putting two lists of names together, names which he felt were appropriate to the themes of his new creation. He then took up a piece of paper and wrote down the beginnings of two columns for potential title elements. (Par for the course, the number of chosen words is unknown to us; perhaps there were twenty, perhaps thirty in all. No one knows, the list is gone.) A few of these words were meant to stand alone, while many others were meant to be used in alliterative pairings, similar to the genre precedents of "Swords & Sorcery" and "Castle & Crusade."

Gary did once provide a hint to precisely what many of those words were, although he could not remember all of them: "You can see for yourself some of the 'rejected' choices on the covers of the three booklets that eventually come to comprise the finished product, the first edition of the *Dungeons & Dragons* game."[559] Several other hints about these "potential title words" are given elsewhere. Most likely then, one of Gary's columns included the words Dungeons,

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[556] *The Dragon* #7. "Gary Gygax on *Dungeons & Dragons*: Origins of the Game," pg. 7.

[557] *The Crusader: The Journal of the Intrepid Adventurer*, issue #13, October 2008. "How It All Happened," by Gary Gygax.

[558] Online web forum post: ENWorld.org. ENWorld Gary Gygax Q&A, Part X. Posted July 2nd, 2006.

[559] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX.

Enchantments, Fantasy, Magic(al), Magicians, Mazes, Men, Sword(s), Underworld, and Wizard(s). The other column probably included the words Adventure(s), Castles, Dragons, Giants, Labyrinths, Magic, Monsters, Sorcery, Treasure(s), Trolls, Warfare, and Wilderness.[560] There would surely have been more such offerings in the word lists, now lost to time.

It had taken awhile for Gary to come up with this dual list of marketable phrasings. "I spent a couple of days finding names I thought would be compelling," he once wrote, "hoping that one would do, as such [*a single-word title*] is usually best for a product."[561] But no one word could define such an unusual game. Soon, and "loving alliteration,"[562] Gary decided that he liked the combination "*Dungeons & Dragons*" the best.[563]

Despite his own decision, the title would be a matter of marketing. He still wanted to find out if there might be an unaware consensus on the matter, a name which was more compelling that he himself had not considered.

Therefore, he passed the completed list to several family members, as well as to his most trusted gamer friends. His future play testers Ernie, Elise, Don, Rob and Terry were almost certainly involved. Several people selected the same title as Gary had. In the end, however, it was his youngest daughter's enthusiastic selection of the same words which convinced Gary that he had indeed made the right choice.

Gary made it clear that *multiple* people had indeed chosen the same title when he wrote, "My youngest daughter Cindy was adamant that I must use '*Dungeons & Dragons*.' *As a number of others were in agreement with that choice* [*emphasis mine*], and I liked the alliteration, that's what I went with."[564] As soon as the game was named, the Lake Geneva gaming group at once abbreviated the evocative title to "D&D."

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[560] Perhaps the most detailed treatment of this topic (to date) can be found in the Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A Part IX discussion which took place on March 4th, 2007.

[561] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part IX. Posted March 4th, 2007.

[562] *Dragon Annual* #2. "Founding Greyhawk: The Creation and Development of the Greyhawk Campaign, 1972-75," by Gary Gygax.

[563] See for example the Gary Gygax chat preserved in the user comments at Slashdot.org for February 22nd, 2003 entry entitled "A 1974 Review of D&D."

[564] Online web forum post: Dragonsfoot.org. Dragonsfoot Gary Gygax Q&A, Part I. Posted February 23rd, 2005.

The packets were sent, and Gary awaited feedback. Regardless of precisely when the copies were issued, we do know that there were only a few: estimates given have included twelve, twenty, twenty-four, or thirty. Copies were given to members of the local Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association, and also mailed out to members of the Twin Cities play group and the Castle & Crusade Society.

Some of the recipients were high school students, while most were in college. The fact that many of these people were collectively hard-pressed for cash (due to their youth and/or ongoing education) would actually have a profound effect on the newborn game's popularity in the months to come, because *Dungeons & Dragons* first proliferated via sharing, lending, copying, reinterpretation, and enthusiastic word of mouth.

The rules are so open-ended that such reader-driven control of the game would have happened inevitably, given enough time for proliferation. The rules to *Dungeons & Dragons* — as a simulation of everything — can never be complete, and so every Dungeon Master fills the rule gaps in his or her own way, to one's own satisfaction. This spirit of reader-designer participation was (perhaps accidentally) part of the game's DNA from the very beginning. Once this eternally-configurable paradigm was out there in the wild, its interpretation would forever be beyond Gary's control.

With the copies sent, Gary was free to focus upon the deeper levels of his labyrinth, and the actual play of the game. At around this time (December of 1972) he approached his daughter Elise and his son Ernie, and he posed them a simple question: "Would you like to play a game?"

Those very first play tests shall be the foremost subject of our next story, and so the Greyhawk campaign — castle, dungeon, wilderness, and city — will dominate our continuing chronicle, as featured in Book II of **HAWK & MOOR**, *The Dungeons Deep*.



We have explored the first horizon. Beneath and beyond us, the adventure continues …

AN END
TO THE SAGA OF BOOK I

AND NOW here upon the misty verge of the castle ruin we have come, as they say, to the end of the beginning.

Throughout the vast chronicle entire of the creation of *Dungeons & Dragons*, hundreds of coincidences, accidents, off-hand decisions, and random bits of trivia all somehow managed to concoct themselves into one of the most influential games of all time.

Book Two of **HAWK & MOOR**, *The Dungeons Deep*, explores the play tests which brought Castle Greyhawk's dungeons to life. The game grew as Gary's adventurers delved ever deeper, adding, treasures, levels and spells to the ever-more-fantastical whole of Zagyg's wondrous underworld.

The second book therefore chronicles not only dungeon levels one through thirteen, but also the conflicts with Dave Arneson, the city and gods of Greyhawk, the Mad Archmage, the black dragon labyrinth, the founding of TSR, and the eventual publication of the game. We will learn the tales of the heroes Ahlissa, Murlynd, Otto, Quij, Robilar, Tenser, Terrik and others, as well as the storied villains: Obmi, the Balrog, the Thouls, the Jeweled Man, the Old Guard Kobolds, and all the rest.

The unpredictable wilderness of D&D's inspirations is now falling away behind us, and so we shall enter upon the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk very soon. Our journey will be a long one. Ready your blades, pack your iron spikes and ten-foot poles. I will lead the way, but do be ready to step over my lifeless corpse and take the lead …

(Don't worry, avid reader; if you wish to linger on the tale, I assure that you will find a *significant* plethora of worthy appendices material hereafter.)

I hope that you will join me for that next journey into the deep, and until then I thank you for reading!

APPENDIX I:
THE *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS* CHRONICLE:
A TIMELINE FOR THE YEARS 1937 TO 1971

*(**Please Note:** In addition to TSR- and D&D-specific events, and a hefty helping of relevant pop culture, this chronicle also includes various life events and various activities pertaining to the Gygax family, Arneson, and other important personages. The chronicle also includes detailed origination dates for many of the films, books, and other inspirational sources which informed the creation of Dungeons & Dragons. Some of this more technical information is solely for my own use in further research and dating corroboration, but most of it should be of interest to just about anyone. Enjoy.)*

THE YEAR 1937	
January 1937	*The Thing on the Doorstep*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *Weird Tales* magazine.
January 9th-February 13th, 1937	*Seven Worlds to Conquer*, a Pellucidar saga by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is serialized in *Argosy Weekly* magazine.
March 15th, 1937 (a Monday)	Howard Phillips Lovecraft passes away in Providence, Rhode Island.
August 15th, 1937 (a Sunday)	Ernst (Ernest) Gygax marries Almina Emelie Burdick.
September 1937	Back to the Stone Age, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published.
September 21st, 1937 (a Tuesday)	The novel *The Hobbit*, by John Ronald Reuel (J. R. R.) Tolkien, is published in the United Kingdom.
October 1937	C. S. Lewis reviews *The Hobbit*.
Late December 1937	J. R. R. Tolkien begins writing a sequel to *The Hobbit*.

THE YEAR 1938	
January 8th, 1938 (a Saturday)	Part one of *Carson of Venus*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Argosy* magazine.
January 1938	*Ibid*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *The O-Wash-Ta-Nong*.
Spring 1938	*The Hobbit* is first published in the United States.
July 27th, 1938 (a Wednesday)	Ernest Gary Gygax is born to Almina "Posey" and Ernest Gygax, Sr. in Chicago, Illinois.
Summer 1938	The infant Gary visits family in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin with his parents.
November 1938	*Jack and Jill* magazine, issued by Curtis Publishing Company, begins publication.
(Unknown Date) 1938	*History of the Necronomicon*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1938	*The Descendant*, a story fragment by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *Leaves* journal.
THE YEAR 1939	
January 1939	*The Synthetic Men of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, begins its serialization in *Argosy* magazine.
March 1939	*Unknown* magazine begins publication.
April 1939	*The Wicked Clergyman*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *Weird Tales* magazine.
July 1939	*Black Destroyer*, by A. E. van Vogt, is published in *Astounding* magazine.
August 1939	*Two Sought Adventure*, the first Fafhrd and Gray Mouser story by Fritz Leiber, is published in Street & Smith's *Unknown* magazine.

THE YEAR 1940	
March 1940	*The Reign of Wizardry*, by Jack Williamson, is published in *Unknown Fantasy Fiction*.
May 1940	*The Roaring Trumpet*, an Incompleat Enchanter tale by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published in *Unknown Fantasy Fiction* magazine.
Summer 1940	*The Very Old Folk*, a story fragment by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *Scienti-Snaps* fanzine.
August 1940	*The Mathematics of Magic*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published.
November 1940	*The Bleak Shore*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Unknown Fantasy Fiction* magazine.
(Unknown Date) 1940	*John Carter of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published by Whitman Publishing Company.
THE YEAR 1941	
January 1941	*John Carter and the Giants of Mars*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Amazing Stories* magazine.
March 1941	*The City of Mummies*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Amazing Stories* magazine.
March 1941	*Slaves of the Fish Men*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Fantastic Adventures* magazine.
April 1941	*The Castle of Iron*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published in *Unknown Fantasy Fiction* magazine.
May 1941	The *Teenie Weenies* cartoon strip, soon to be Gary's favorite, resumes its Sunday comics run in the *Chicago Tribune*.
May 1941	Part one of *The Case of Charles Dexter Ward*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published in *Weird Tales* magazine.

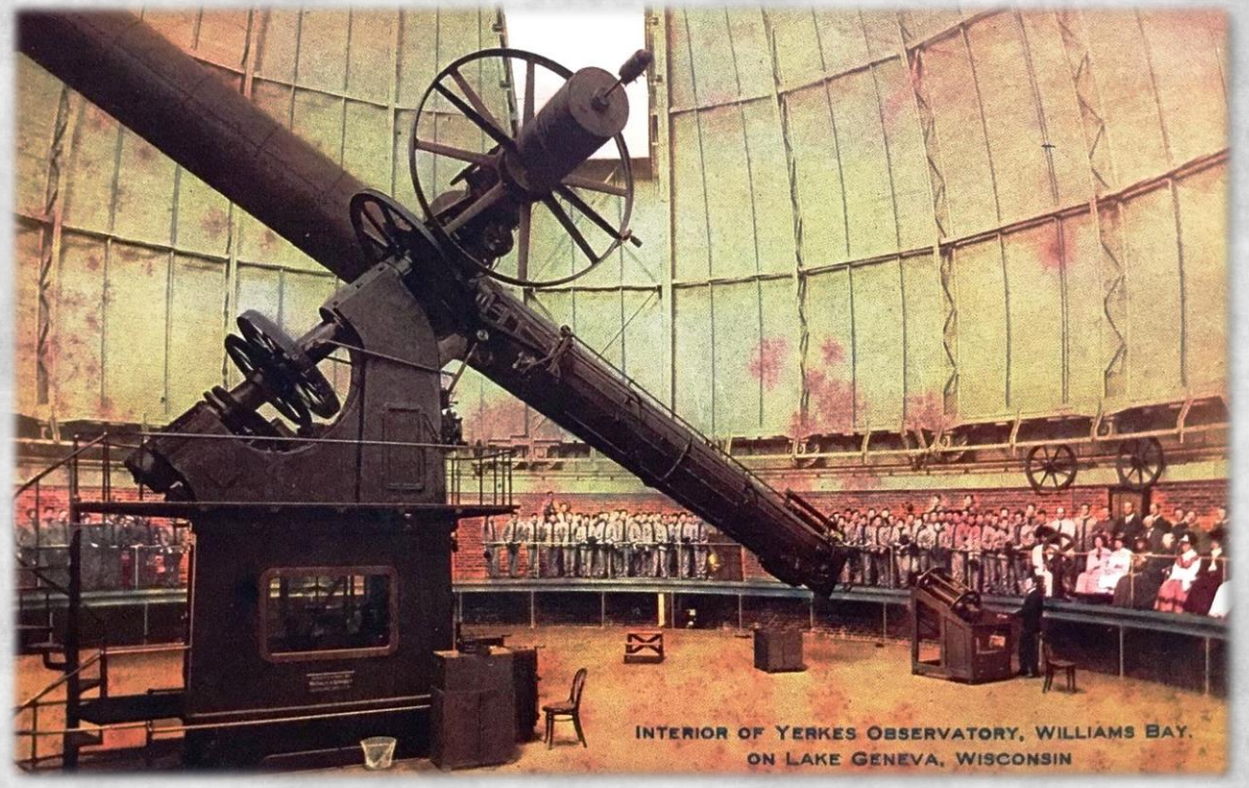
June 1941	*Black Pirates of Barsoom*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Amazing Stories* magazine.
June 1941	*The Howling Tower*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Unknown* magazine.
July 1941	*Goddess of Fire*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Fantastic Adventures* magazine.
THE YEAR 1942	
February 1942	*The Sunken Land*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Unknown Worlds* magazine.
March 1942	*War on Venus*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Fantastic Adventures* magazine.
(Unknown Date) c. 1942	Gary's brother tells him all about the adventure movie *King Kong*, but he will not yet be able to see the movie.
THE YEAR 1943	
February 1943	*Skeleton Men of Jupiter*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in *Amazing Stories* magazine.
February 1943	*Thieves' House*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Unknown Worlds* magazine.
March 5th, 1943 (a Friday)	The movie *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* is released in theaters.
August 27th, 1943 (a Friday)	*The Phantom of the Opera* is released in theaters.
(Unknown Date) 1943	*The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published for the first time in the collection *Beyond the Wall of Sleep* by Arkham House.
(Unknown Date) c. 1943	Gary begins reading fairy tales on his own.

(Unknown Date) c. 1943	Gary learns the card game pinochle.
(Unknown Date) c. 1943	Gary and his father explore the Chicago Field Museum, heightening Gary's interest in dinosaurs, mummies and so forth.
THE YEAR 1944	
April 17th, 1944 (a Monday)	*The Lady and the Monster* is released in theaters.
May 1944	*Land of Terror*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published.
June 1944	*Arena*, by Fredric Brown, is published in Astounding magazine.
c. Summer 1944	Gary, enjoying a summer vacation with family in Lake Geneva, Wisconsin, meets and befriends Don Kaye.
(Unknown Date) 1944	*Marginalia*, a collection of H. P. Lovecraft writings, is published by Arkham House.
(Unknown Date) c. 1944	Gary learns the game of chess from his grandfather Hugh Burdick, which will encourage his later interest in wargames. The influence of chess on his later game designs can be seen not only in the hierarchical warrior-knight-hero-superhero Chainmail combat system, but also arguably in the flank attack grids which were published in the *Dungeon Masters Guide*. Also, Gary would publish several chess game variants of his own invention, including the Greyhawk favorite known as Dragonchess.
(Unknown Date) c. 1944-1945	Gary meets Mary Jo Powell, his future wife.
THE YEAR 1945	
March 1945	*I Remember Lemuria*, the first tale in Richard Sharpe Shaver's "The Shaver Mystery" series, is published in *Amazing Stories*.

(Unknown Date) c. 1945	Gary plays sword-and-shield games with his Chicago neighbor friends.
(Unknown Date) 1945	Gary first visits the eerie Yerkes Observatory.



Early views of the acclaimed Yerkes Observatory, with the grounds adjacent to the golf course in 1909 …



… And the interior in 1915.

THE YEAR 1946	
c. Early Summer 1946	Gary gets into a huge fight with rival neighborhood children, prompting his father to decide to move the family to Lake Geneva.
July 1946	Gary moves with his parents to Lake Geneva.
October 1946	*Escape on Venus*, a collection by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published.
THE YEAR 1947	
Early Summer 1947 (or 1946?)	Gary stays with the Dimerys while his parents are in California.

Early Summer 1947	Gary, staying overnight at the Dimerys' house, experiencing an event which he will later term supernatural.
October 1st, 1947 (a Wednesday)	David Lance Arneson is born in Minneapolis.
(Unknown Date) 1947	*Night's Black Agents*, a collection of tales by Fritz Leiber (containing some Fafhrd and the Gray Mouser tales), is published by Arkham House.
THE YEAR 1948	
Early 1948	*The Well of the Unicorn*, a fantasy novel by "George U. Fletcher" (Fletcher Pratt), is published.
March 26th, 1948 (a Friday)	*Llana of Gathol*, a collection of Barsoom tales by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published.
November 1948	Gary, alone at home, has what he believes is another experience with a supernatural phenomenon.
(Unknown Date) 1948	Gary gets to explore Porcupine Mountain in Upper Michigan.
(Unknown Date) 1948	*The Carnelian Cube: A Humorous Fantasy*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published.
THE YEAR 1949	
c. Fall 1949	Gary and two friends first explore the abandoned Sanitarium on the hill.
Fall 1949	By or before this time, Gary had completed his reading of the tales of Edgar Allan Poe. (Refer to *Dragon* magazine #95, pg. 12.)
(Date Unknown) 1949	The board game *Clue* is released, and will soon become a favorite of Gary's. He will prefer to play as Colonel Mustard, which would partly inspire his later jesting nickname for himself, Colonel Pladoh.

THE YEAR 1950	
April 1950	The EC Comics series *The Vault of Horror* begins publication.
May 1950	The EC Comics series *The Haunt of Fear*, *Weird Fantasy*, and *Weird Science* begin publication.
Summer 1950	*Conan the Conqueror*, republishing *The Hour of the Dragon* by Robert E. Howard, is published by Gnome Press. This tale will become Gary's first experience with the Swords & Sorcery genre.
September 23rd, 1950 (a Saturday)	*The World the Children Made*, a story by Ray Bradbury, appears in the *Saturday Evening Post*. This sci fi tale would deeply influence Gary Gygax.
October 1950	The EC Comics series *Tales from the Crypt* begins publication.
c. Fall-Winter 1950	Gary, now a devout fan of sci fi and fantasy, begins reading a pulp fiction book or zine virtually every day.
(Unknown Date) 1950	*The Castle of Iron: A Science Fantasy Adventure*, a collection by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published by Gnome Press.
(Unknown Date) 1950	*The Voyage of the Space Beagle*, by A. E. van Vogt, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1950	*The Dying Earth*, a collection of tales by Gary's future favorite author Jack Vance, is published by Hillman Periodicals.
(Unknown Date) c. 1950	Gary and a friend construct a raft to emulate Tom Sawyer.
THE YEAR 1951	
February 1951	*The World the Children Made*, retitled as *The Veldt*, appears in *The Illustrated Man*.
April 27th, 1951 (a Friday)	*The Thing from Another World*, more commonly known as *The Thing*, is released in theaters. This movie would terrify

	Gary and stir his imagination.
September 4th, 1951 (a Tuesday)	Future Blackmoor player and TSR staffer Mike Carr is born.
Fall 1951	*Dark Vengeance*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Suspense* magazine.
October 1951	*The Man Who Sold Rope to the Gnoles*, by Margaret St. Clair, is published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.
(Unknown Date) 1951	*Dragon's Island*, by Jack Williamson, is published.
(Unknown Date) c. 1951	Gary begins reading Isaac Asimov's *Foundation* series.
THE YEAR 1952	
July 31st, 1952 (a Thursday)	*Ivanhoe* is released in theaters.
August 1952	*The Blue Star*, by Fletcher Pratt, is published in *Witches Three*.
(Unknown Date) c. 1952	Gary works as a farmhand.
(Unknown Date) Early 1950s	Gary begins making maps of fantasy castles and secret rooms.
THE YEAR 1953	
May 1953	*The Seven Black Priests*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Other Worlds* magazine.
June 1953	*The Wall of Serpents*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published in *Fantasy Fiction* magazine.
July 18th, 1953 (a Saturday)	*The Quatermass Experiment* airs in the UK.

August 26th, 1953 (a Wednesday)	*The War of the Worlds* is released in theaters.



Aftermath: the War of the Worlds.

September 1953	Part one of *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, a tale by Poul Anderson, is published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.
(Unknown Date) 1953	*The Sword of Rhiannon*, by Leigh Brackett, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1953	*The Silver Chair*, by C. S. Lewis is published.

(Unknown Date) 1953	Charles Swann Roberts designs the wargame *Tactics*.
(Unknown Date) 1953	*King Conan: The Hyborean Age*, a collection of tales by Robert E. Howard, is published by Gnome Press.
(Unknown Date) 1953	A reprint of Sir Charles William Chadwick Oman's 1885 *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* is published in a revised and edited format by John H. Beeler. This will become a core research work for Gary Gygax.
(Unknown Date) c. 1953	Gary reads *The Day of the Triffids*.
THE YEAR 1954	
February 12th-March 5th, 1954	*The Creature from the Black Lagoon* is released in theaters.
March 3rd, 1954 (a Wednesday)	The film *The Naked Jungle* is released in theaters.
March 1954	The EC Comics series *Weird Science-Fantasy* begins publication.
June 19th, 1954 (a Saturday)	*Them!* is released in theaters.
July 29th, 1954 (a Thursday)	*The Fellowship of the Ring*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, is published in the UK.
November 3rd, 1954 (a Wednesday)	*Godzilla* is released in theaters.
Early November 1954	*The Green Magician*, by L. Sprague de Camp and Fletcher Pratt, is published in *Beyond Fantasy Fiction* magazine.
November 11th, 1954	*The Two Towers*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, is published in the UK.

(Unknown Date) 1954	Gary spends his free time in Chicago.
(Unknown Date) 1954	*The Book of Beasts*, translated and re-released as *The Book of Beasts: Being a Translation from a Latin Bestiary of the Twelfth Century*, by T. H. White, is published. This is one of the first major printings of a medieval bestiary in English.
(Unknown Date) 1954	Allan B. Calhamer designs a prototype of the innovative quasi-role-playing strategy game *Diplomacy*.
(Unknown Date) 1954	*The Broken Sword*, by Poul Anderson, is published.
THE YEAR 1955	
April 16th, 1955 (a Saturday)	The *Looney Tunes* cartoon *The Hole Idea*, the inspiration for the portable hole magic item, is released.
May 11th, 1955 (a Wednesday)	The film *Bride of the Monster* is released in theaters.
June 1st, 1955 (a Wednesday)	*This Island Earth* is released in theaters. This movie may have inspired the appearance of the doppelganger monster.
July 1955	The movie *It Came from Beneath the Sea* is released in theaters.
c. August 1955	The O & M Hausser toy company begins manufacturing medieval miniatures made with Elastolin.
October 20th, 1955 (a Thursday)	*The Return of the King*, by J. R. R. Tolkien, is published in the UK.
November 1955	*The Fellowship of the Ring* is broadcast as a dramatization series on BBC radio. The serialization will continue through December.
(Unknown Date) Mid-1950s	Gary attempts to create a wargame for his toy soldiers.

THE YEAR 1956	
January 1st, 1956 (a Sunday)	Ernest Gygax, Sr. passes away at the age of 72.
February 5th, 1956 (a Sunday)	*Invasion of the Body Snatchers* is released in theaters.
March 15th, 1956 (a Thursday)	*Forbidden Planet* is released in theaters. This movie may have inspired the invisible stalker monster.
Spring 1956	A disaffected Gary drops out of high school, and joins the United States Marines.
April 1956	*Amra* magazine begins publication.
April 27th, 1956 (a Friday)	The film *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* is released in theaters.
July 1956	Tony Bath publishes his first medieval rules system.
July 15th, 1956 (a Sunday)	*It Conquered the World* is released in theaters. This movie may have been one of the inspirations for the xorn monster.
(Unknown Date) 1956	By this time, Gary believes that he has "caught up" with all of the worthwhile American-published releases of speculative fiction.
THE YEAR 1957	
February 10th, 1957 (a Sunday)	*Attack of the Crab Monsters* is released in theaters.
May 1957	The film *Monster from Green Hell* is released in theaters.
May 26th, 1957 (a Sunday)	The movie *The Deadly Mantis* is released in theaters.
June 1957	*The Monster That Challenged the World* in released in theaters. This movie may have been one of the inspirations for the carrion crawler monster.

October 11th, 1957 (a Friday)	*The Black Scorpion* is released in theaters.
December 18th, 1957 (a Wednesday)	The film *The Monolith Monsters* is released in theaters.
(Unknown Date) c. 1957	Gary leaves the service of the marines on a medical discharge.
(Unknown Date) 1957	Gary gets a job as a shipping clerk at a Chicago insurance company (Kemper Insurance).
THE YEAR 1958	
c. January 1958	Gary and Mary Jo begin dating.
February 14th, 1958 (a Friday)	Gary and Mary Jo become engaged.
Early? 1958	The wargame *Tactics II* is released.
May 8th, 1958 (a Thursday)	The film *Dracula*, starring Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, is released in theaters.
July 3rd, 1958 (a Thursday)	*Fiend Without a Face* is released in theaters. This movie may have been one of the inspirations for the intellect devourer monster.
c. Summer 1958	Avalon Hill releases *Gettysburg*, which will soon become Gary's favorite wargame.
c. Summer 1958	Gary begins wargaming.
September 14th, 1958 (a Sunday)	Gary marries Mary Jo Powell.
October 7th, 1958 (a Tuesday)	*The Trollenberg Terror* is released in UK theaters. This movie may have been a later inspiration for the beholder monster created by Terry Kuntz.

October 12th, 1958 (a Sunday)	*The Blob* is released in theaters.
November 1958	The *Gettysburg* game is popularized nationally by a mention in *Newsweek* and other sources.
December 23rd, 1958 (a Tuesday)	*The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad* is released in theaters.
Christmas Season, December 1958	Gary and Don Kaye purchase their own copy of the *Gettysburg* game.
(Unknown Date) 1958	Gary attends the Chicago Chess & Checker Club, and then the Rogers Park Chess Club.
(Unknown Date) 1958	*The Mask of Cthulhu*, by August Derleth, is published by Arkham House.
THE YEAR 1959	
January 29th, 1959 (a Thursday)	The animated film *Sleeping Beauty* debuts in theaters. This movie will affect the conception of several spells and monsters in D&D (such as faerie fire, passwall, sleep, and orcs / Goons).
Early 1959	Gary and Don become obsessed with *Gettysburg*, playing it to the exclusion of virtually all else.
Spring 1959	Gary devises his own rules additions for *Gettysburg*.
May 4th, 1959 (a Monday)	*The Hound of the Baskervilles* is released in UK theaters.
June 25th, 1959 (a Thursday)	*The Killer Shrews* is released in theaters.
August 8th, 1959 (a Saturday)	The movie *Caltiki — The Immortal Monster* is released in theaters.

September 2nd, 1959 (a Wednesday)	Ernest Gary Gygax Jr. (Ernie) is born.
September 25th, 1959 (a Friday)	*The Mummy* is released in UK theaters.
October 1959	*Attack of the Giant Leeches* is released in theaters.
October 16th, 1959 (a Friday)	*Sampo*, aka *The Day the Earth Froze*, is released in the USSR.
November 1959	*Lean Times in Lankhmar*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Science Fiction Stories* magazine.
December 16th, 1959 (a Wednesday)	*Journey to the Center of the Earth* is released in theaters.
(Unknown Date) 1959	The *Diplomacy* game is commercially released by Allan Calhamer in New York.
(Unknown Date) 1959	*The Shuttered Room and Other Pieces*, a collection by H. P. Lovecraft, is published by Arkham House.
THE YEAR 1960	
May 1960	*When the Sea-King's Away*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Science Fiction Stories* magazine.
July 1960	Part one of *The High Crusade*, by Poul Anderson, is published in *Astounding* magazine.
August 17th, 1960 (a Wednesday)	The film adaption of *The Time Machine*, by H. G. Wells, is released in theaters.
November 1960	The fanzine *Eldritch Dream Quest*, further popularizing Tolkien's Middle Earth tales as swords and sorcery, begins publication.
Late 1960	*The High Crusade*, a collected novel of the serialization by Poul Anderson, is published.

(Unknown Date) 1960	Gary moves with his wife and son to Chicago.
THE YEAR 1961	
April 1961	The genre label "sword-and-sorcery" is suggested by Fritz Leiber.
May 1961	*Scylla's Daughter*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* magazine.
June 1961	*The Dreaming City*, the first Elric tale by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.
July 1961	*Nightmares and Geezenstacks*, by Frederic Brown, is published by Bantam Books.
August 1st, 1961 (a Tuesday)	Mary Elise Gygax is born.
August 1961	An expanded novel version of *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, by Poul Anderson, is published.
October 1961	*While the Gods Laugh*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.
December 20th, 1961 (a Wednesday)	The film version of *Mysterious Island* is released in theaters.
(Unknown Date) 1961	The hexagon-grid revision of the *Gettysburg* game is released by Avalon Hill.
THE YEAR 1962	
February 1962	*The Stealer of Souls*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in Science Fantasy magazine.
August 1962	*Kings in Darkness*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.

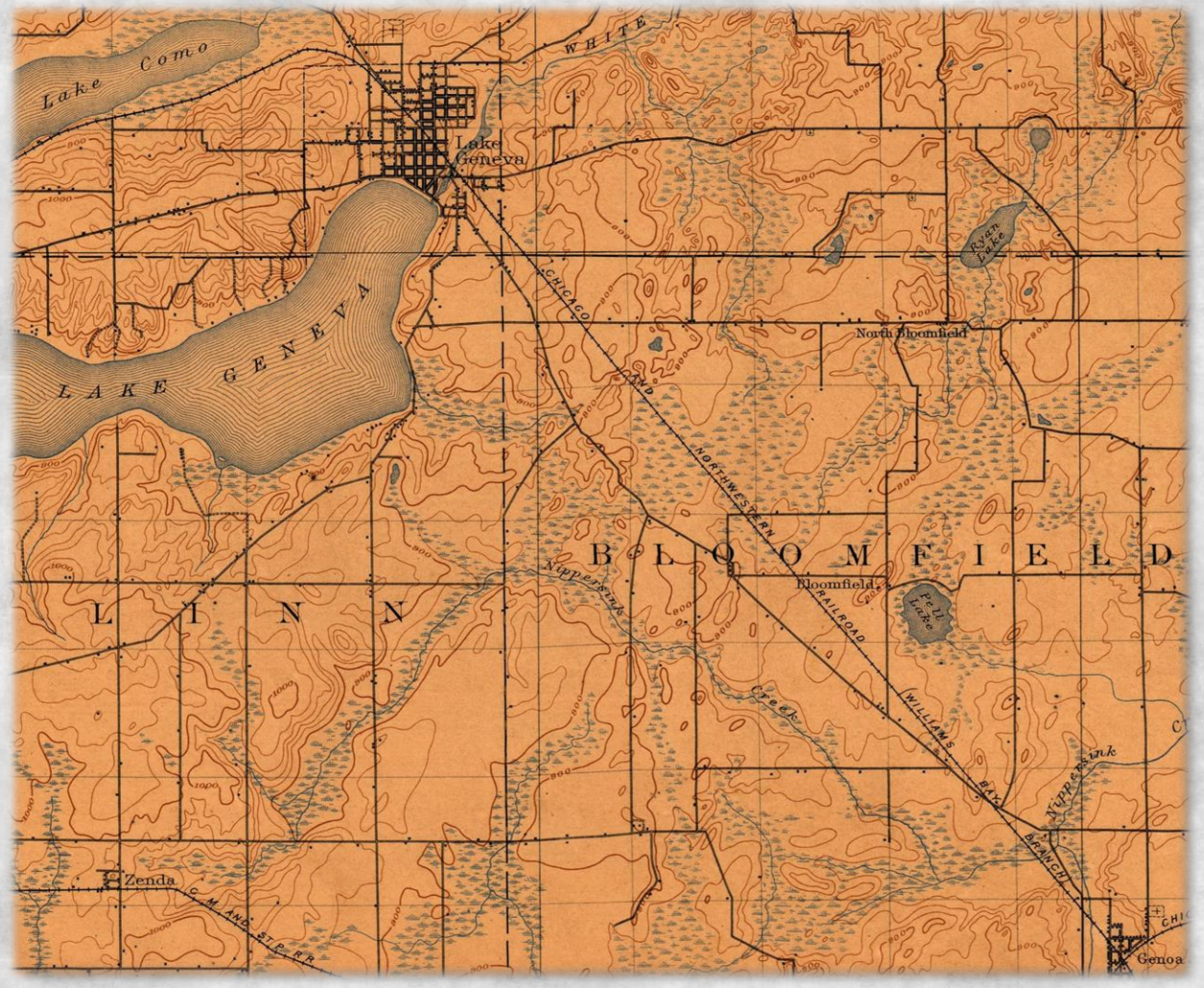
August 11th, 1962 (a Saturday)	*King Kong vs. Godzilla* is released in theaters.
October 1962	*The Flame Bringers*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.
October 1962	*The Unholy Grail*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* magazine.
(Unknown Date) 1962	Gary secures employment at the Fireman's Fund Insurance company as an underwriter.
(Unknown Date) 1962	*Battle Beyond the Sun* (a butchered re-edit of a Russian original movie) is released in American theaters. This movie would inspire the otyugh and roper monsters.



Pallas and raven in remembrance.

THE YEAR 1963	
January 25th, 1963 (a Friday)	*The Raven* is released in theaters.
April 12th, 1963 (a Friday)	*Witch World*, by Andre Norton, is published by Ace Books.
April 17th, 1963 (a Wednesday)	Tom Keogh, a childhood friend of Gary's, dies. He will be memorialized in D&D as "Keoghtom."
May 1963	*The Cloud of Hate*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* magazine.
June 1963	*Dead God's Homecoming*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.
June 19th, 1963 (a Wednesday)	*Jason and the Argonauts* is released in theaters.
June 21st, 1963 (a Friday)	*The Strangler of Blackmoor Castle* is released in West German theaters.
July 1963	*Strange Tales* #110 is published, introducing the mage character Dr. Stephen Vincent Strange.
August 11th, 1963 (a Sunday)	*Matango* (aka *Attack of the Mushroom People*) is released in Japanese theaters. This movie may have been one of the inspirations for shriekers and giant fungi.
August 1963	*Bazaar of the Bizarre*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* magazine.
August 1963	*Sign of the Labrys*, by Margaret St. Clair, is published.
Fall 1963 to Spring 1964	David Wesely and Ray Allard found and develop the Twin Cities Military Miniatures Group (TCMMG), which will later (with contributor Dave Arneson) become the Midwest Military Simulation Association (MMSA).
October 1963	*Black Sword's Brothers*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in

	Science Fantasy magazine.
Late 1963	Gary moves his family back to Lake Geneva, and into the house at 330 Center Street.
November 1963	*Savage Pellucidar*, by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published in Amazing Stories magazine.
December 1963	*Swords and Sorcery: Stories of Heroic Fantasy*, a collection edited by L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1963	Gary writes to Tom Shaw of Avalon Hill, inquiring about the availability of blank hex sheets.
(Unknown Date) 1963	*The Stealer of Souls*, a collection of Elric tales by Michael Moorcock, is published by Neville Spearman Ltd.
(Unknown Date) c. 1963	Jeff Perren begins collecting medieval miniatures.
(Unknown Date) c. 1963	Gary begins working in insurance. He will end up commuting daily from Lake Geneva to Chicago via the Chicago and Northwestern Transportation Company train.



A 1904 topographical map of the Lake Geneva region, showing the lake and town (grid at upper left) and the course of the Chicago-bound rail line (diagonal line connecting the grid to the lower right-hand corner of the map).

THE YEAR 1964	
January 1964	Part one of *The Lords of Quarmall*, by Fritz Leiber and Harry Otto Fischer, is published in *Fantastic Stories of Imagination* magazine.
February 1964	*Sad Giant's Shield*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.

February 10th, 1964 (a Monday)	*The Outer Limits* episode *The Bellero Shield* — the inspiration for the cube of force magic item — is aired.
April 1964	*Tales of Three Planets*, a collection by Edgar Rice Burroughs, is published.
April 1964	*Doomed Lord's Passing*, by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Science Fantasy* magazine.
May 1st, 1964 (a Friday)	*The General*, a soon-to-be-influential magazine, is published by Avalon Hill.
June 1964	*The Secret Life of Elric of Melniboné*, an essay by Michael Moorcock, is published in *Camber* magazine.
August 6th, 1964 (a Thursday)	*The First Men in the Moon*, one of the inspirations for the carrion crawler monster, is released in UK theaters.
October 20th, 1964 (a Tuesday)	Heidi Jo Gygax is born. She will be known in D&D lore as "Johydee."
December 20th, 1964 (a Sunday)	The movie *Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster* is released in (American?) theaters.
(Unknown Date) 1964	An excellent set of Robin Hood toy soldiers, soon to be used by medieval wargamers, is released by Airfix.
(Unknown Date) 1964	*Web of the Witch World*, by Andre Norton, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1964	Gary discovers *Little Wars* and *Fletcher Pratt's Naval War Game*.
(Unknown Date) 1964	*The Reign of Wizardry*, by Jack Williamson, is published in novel form by Lancer Books.
THE YEAR 1965	
January? 1965	*The Maker of Universes*, by Phillip José Farmer, is published by Ace Books.
January? 1965	*Three Against the Witch World*, by Andre Norton, is

	published by Ace Books.
May 1965	Ace Books releases an unauthorized paperback edition of *The Fellowship of the Ring* in the US. This edition will cause the popularization of Tolkien's works in America.
June 1965	*The Spell of Seven*, a swords and sorcery anthology edited by L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
July 1965	Ace Books publishes unauthorized editions of *The Two Towers* and *The Return of the King*.
Summer 1965	Tolkien works to revise *The Lord of the Rings*, (in part) so that he can establish his copyright in the United States.
c. Summer-Fall 1965	Tolkien admirer James Wright creates a Middle Earth *Diplomacy* game variant.
September 1965	*Stardock*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic* magazine.
October 1965	*Year of the Unicorn*, by Andre Norton, is published.



Year of the Unicorn.

(Unknown Date) c. 1965	Gary begins to favor miniatures games over Avalon Hill board wargames.
(Unknown Date) c. 1965	Dave Arneson becomes involved with the Twin Cities Military Miniatures Club (TCMMC).
(Unknown Date) 1965	*Stormbringer*, an Elric collection by Michael Moorcock, is published by Herbert Jenkins.
THE YEAR 1966	
January 1966	The United States Continental Army Command (USCAC) gaming club is founded by Bill Speer.
February 1966	Following from James Wright's design of 1965, the Middle Earth II *Diplomacy* scenario variant (by Don Miller) is published.
April 17th, 1966 (a Sunday)	A newspaper runs an article on wargaming, featuring a photograph of Dave Wesely and others.
May 1st, 1966 (a Sunday)	The Society for Creative Anachronism (SCA) is founded.
June 27th, 1966 (a Monday)	The television series *Dark Shadows* premieres on ABC.
July 17th, 1966 (a Sunday)	The *Ultraman* show premieres in Japan. Indirectly, this series would inspire various monsters including the bulette (by wa of unauthorized toy figures which Gary would purchase in the early 1970s).
July 31st, 1966 (a Sunday)	The film *The War of the Gargantuas* is released in Japan.
September 1966	The Tolkien Society at the University of Wisconsin-Madison is founded.
September 1966	Gary Gygax joins the United States Continental Army Command (USCAC) gaming club. A memory from USCAC member Scott Duncan: "We ran into another guy advertising [*seeking fellow wargamers*] who sounded promising and his

	name was Gary Gygax. And so Gary joined, and was real enthusiastic about a lot of stuff, and so Bill and Gary and I were kind of the head officers."
December 16th, 1966 (a Friday)	Cindy Lee Gygax is born.
December 30th, 1966 (a Friday)	*One Million Years B. C.* is released in theaters.
(Unknown Date) 1966	Bill Hoyt joins the Twin Cities gaming group.
(Unknown Date) 1966	*The Eyes of the Overworld*, by Jack Vance, is published by Ace Books. Gary, upon reading it, will be inspired by the antihero Cugel the Clever.
(Unknown Date) 1966	*The Gates of Creation*, by Phillip José Farmer, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1966	*Conan the Adventurer*, book 5 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published. (And yes, the Lancer *Conan* books were published out of sequence, to the confusion of collectors and pulp historians everywhere.)
THE YEAR 1967	
January 1967	*Strategy & Tactics* magazine begins publication.
January 19th, 1967 (a Thursday)	The *Star Trek* episode *Arena* is aired.
January? 1967	*The Jewel in the Skull*, a Hawkmoon novel by Michael Moorcock, is published.
February 1967	Tullio Proni begins publishing *The War Report* in support of his innovative game *War of the Empires*.
February 1967?	(Double bill with another film.) The movie *Island of Terror* is released in theaters.

February 1967	*The Hall of the Dead*, by Robert E. Howard and L. Sprague de Camp, is published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.
February 18th, 1967 (a Saturday)	The vampire character Barnabas Collins appears on *Dark Shadows* for the first time.
Spring 1967	*The Vale of Lost Women*, by Robert E. Howard, is published in the *Magazine of Horror*.
Spring 1967	Tullio Proni abandons *War of the Empires*.
May 1st, 1967 (a Monday)	The USCAC becomes the International Federation of Wargaming (IFW).
May 1st, 1967 (a Monday)	*Warlock of the Witch World*, by Andre Norton, is published by Ace Books.
May 1967	*The Fantastic Swordsmen*, edited by L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
c. Late Spring 1967	Bill Speer (of the IFW) leads the preparations for an upcoming wargaming convention to be held in Malvern, Pennsylvania. There is an interesting memory from Scott Duncan: "Now Gary couldn't come [*to Malvern*], and so he held what some people call Gen Con Zero at his house."
June 1967	*Nine Princes in Amber*, by Roger Zelazny, begins its serialization in *Kallikantzaros*.
July 1967	*The Siege of Bodenburg*, a medieval wargame by Henry Bodenstedt, begins its serial publication in *Strategy & Tactics* magazine.
July 15th, 1967 (a Saturday)	An IFW wargaming convention is held in Malvern, Pennsylvania. Henry Bodenstedt demonstrates *The Siege of Bodenburg*.
August 1967 (a Saturday)	Gary invites his wargaming friends to play games at his house over the weekend. This event will later be known as "Gen Con Zero."

September 9th, 1967 (a Saturday)	*The Superman / Aquaman Hour of Adventure* first appears on television. This show would inspire various Steve Marsh-created aquatic monsters, such as the ixitxachitl.
Late 1967	David Wesely reads the book *Strategos*, which will influence his later design of the Braunstein role-playing wargame scenarios.
November 15th, 1967 (a Wednesday)	The film *It!* is released in theaters.
Early December 1967	*The Siege of Bodenburg*'s serial publication in *Strategy & Tactics* is completed.
(Unknown Date) 1967	*Conan the Usurper*, book 8 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1967	*Conan the Warrior*, book 7 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1967	*Conan*, book 1 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1967	*The Glass Harmonica: A Lexicon of the Fantastical*, by Barbara Ninde Byfield, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1967	The Lancer Books edition of *Conan the Conqueror* is published.
(Unknown Date) 1967	*The Mind Parasites*, by Colin Wilson, is published by Arkham House. This story is the likely inspiration for the cerebral parasite and brain mole monsters.
THE YEAR 1968	
January 20th, 1968 (a Saturday)	Dave Arneson's gaming group plays out a World War II scenario, which will soon be summarized in the first issue (Volume 1, Number 1) of his *Corner of the Table Top* fanzine. (This event is primarily listed here as a date marker, showing when Arneson began reporting his group's gaming activities

	in the pages of COTT.)
Late January, 1968	Dave Arneson publishes the first issue (Volume 1, Number 1) of *Corner of the Table Top*.
Early 1968	David Wesely begins designing his first *Strategos*-derivative system.
Early? 1968	*Little Big Horn*, a wargame designed by Gary Gygax, is published.
April 1968	Young gamer Mike Carr receives a letter from Gary Gygax, telling him that he and his friend Don Kaye enjoyed Carr's World War I aerial wargame, *Fight in the Skies*. Gary had questions, so Mike would begin communication with him. (This is a date marker showing when Mike would first be in touch with Gary.)
Spring 1968	Gary and the IFW begin planning for a summer gaming convention, which will become Gen Con.
Summer 1968	The Lake Geneva Playboy Club (a future Gen Con site) opens.
August 1968	Gary rents the Horticultural Hall for the upcoming gaming convention.
August 1968	*The Two Best Thieves in Lankhmar*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic* magazine.
August 24th, 1968 (a Saturday)	The Lake Geneva Wargames Convention (aka Gen Con I) is held in the Horticultural Hall.
August 25th, 1968 (a Sunday)	The convention is held over for another day, and Gary is able to play The Siege of Bodenburg.
September 1968	*Swords in the Mist*, a collection by Fritz Leiber, is published.
Fall 1968	Gary runs ads seeking the purchase of Elastolin figures.
October 1st, 1968 (a Tuesday)	The film *Night of the Living Dead* is released in theaters.

October 1968	*Conan the Freebooter*, book 3 of the Lancer Book *Conan* series, is published.
November 1968	Gary, showing an interest in fantasy games, inquires about a *Diplomacy* variant based on *The Hobbit*.
c. December 1968	Gary meets Robert J. Kuntz.
December 1968	Dave Arneson's gaming group begins developing a Napoleonic warfare and campaign system.
December 1968	*The Goblin Tower*, by L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
December 19th, 1968 (a Thursday)	*The Green Slime* is released in Japanese theaters.
End of 1968	Scott Duncan publishes his *1066* medieval miniatures system, which would later inspire Gary's design efforts.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*A Private Cosmos*, by Phillip José Farmer, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*City of the Chasch*, by Jack Vance, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*Conan of the Isles*, book 12 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*Conan the Avenger*, book 10 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*Conan the Wanderer*, book 4 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) c. 1968	Gary plays in the play-by-mail science fiction game *War of the Empires*.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*Sorcerer's Amulet*, aka *The Mad God's Amulet*, a Hawkmoon novel by Michael Moorcock, is published by Lancer Books.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*Sorceress of the Witch World*, by Andre Norton, is published by Ace Books.

(Unknown Date) 1968	*Swords Against Wizardry*, a collection by Fritz Leiber, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*The Broken Lands*, by Fred Saberhagen, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*The Sword of the Dawn*, a Hawkmoon novel by Michael Moorcock, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1968	*The Swords of Lankhmar*, by Fritz Leiber, is published by Ace Books.
THE YEAR 1969	
January? 1969	*Kothar and the Demon Queen*, by Gardner Fox, is published by Tower Books.
Early 1969	Gary runs an ad seeking to buy medieval miniatures for gaming.
Early 1969	Gary writes to Tullio Proni, hoping to resurrect the *War of the Empires* game.
February 1969	*Giant of World's End*, by Lin Carter, is published.
Spring 1969	Gary revives the *War of the Empires* game on his own.
April 1969	*Kothar — Barbarian Swordsman*, by Gardner Fox, is published.
April 1969	Dave Arneson discusses beginning a University of Minnesota wargaming club.
April 1969	Gary publishes issue #1 of *The New War Reports* in support of the resurgent *War of the Empires* game.
April 1969	Gary publishes his *Arsouf* medieval miniatures rules.
Spring 1969	Dave Arneson begins running his Napoleonic Simulation Campaign. (This timeframe is stated by Mike Carr in his 1974 article in *El Conquistador*.)

May 1969	Gary's article *Warfare and the Hyborian Age* appears in *International Wargamer* magazine.
May 1969	Gary publishes issue #2 of *The New War Reports*.
May 1969	A set of ancient wargaming rules by Gary Gygax is published in *IFW Monthly* magazine.
May 1969	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The Blue Star*, by Fletcher Pratt, is published.
June 1969	*The Book of Imaginary Beings*, a 1957 book by Jorge Luis Borges, is published in an English edition. This book will influence the creation of various monsters for *Dungeons & Dragons*.
June 1969	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, by Lord Dunsany, is published.
First Half (Unknown Date) of 1969?	David Wesely runs the first *Braunstein* role-playing wargame, involving a Napoleonics scenario.
August 1969	Jeff Perren expresses interest in medieval wargames.
August 1969	*The Dirdir*, by Jack Vance, is published.
August 1969	*The Shadow People*, by Margaret St. Clair, is published.
August 23rd-24th, 1969 (a Saturday and Sunday)	The Gen Con II conference is held in Lake Geneva. Dave Arneson meets Gary Gygax, and they agree to collaborate on future rules design.
August 31st, 1969 (a Sunday)	The second printing of *War of the Empires*, revised by Gary Gygax, is published.
September 1969	Issue #3 of *The New War Reports* is published.
September 1969	Gary, along with Tom Webster helps to found the IFW Ancients Society. (Campaign notes from the Ancients Society, sometimes featuring a bit of mythology, would later be featured in the *Domesday Book*.)

September 1969	*Kothar of the Magic Sword*, by Gardner Fox, is published by Belmont Books.
c. September 1969	Gary's white dragon article appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 3.
c. Fall 1969?	Dave Arneson, Bill Hoyt, and others run a Viking-themed wargame scenario involving raids on an early medieval church and castle. This is one of the events that might be later termed a "medieval Braunstein." Whether it was a wargame or a true "Braunstein" is an open question. There may be a few glimmers of role-playing here; for example, there is a mention that the defender can gain points by "eliminating enemy commanders" via "melee or assassination," and admittedly it is difficult to imagine that there were hard-and-fast rules for stealth, infiltration, or assassination in a purely rules-driven wargame. Similarly, there is a mention concerning allies that the defender player(s) would have an option to gauge others' trustworthiness: "You may suffer if you accept them, and if you don't accept them as full-fledged friends." (See the Secrets of Blackmoor Facebook post of October 28th, 2016 for scans, tentative dating, and more information.)
Fall 1969	Dave Arneson joins the IFW.
Fall 1969? (Perhaps Fall 1968)	Gary and Don Kaye build a sand table for gaming.
October 1969	Gary publishes an article on medieval knights in wargaming in *International Wargamer* magazine.
October 1969	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy anthology *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes*, edited by Lin Carter, is published.
October 1969	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy anthology *The Young Magicians*, edited by Lin Carter, is published.

October 31st, 1969 (a Friday)	Gary's joking Smaug letter appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 4.
Late 1969	Gary and Dave collaborate on a game design that will eventually become *Don't Give Up the Ship!*.
November 8th, 1969 (a Saturday)	The *Horror Incorporated* "Creature Feature" movies begin playing on television (KSTP-TV Channel 5) in the Twin Cities. This will become a favorite inspiration for Dave Arneson, and will later influence the development of Blackmoor.
November 8th, 1969 (a Saturday)	The debut pilot for Rod Serling's television series *Night Gallery* is aired.
November 27th, 1969 (a Thursday)	Gary's black dragon article appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 5.
c. End of 1969 / Beginning of 1970	Gary buys his collection of Elastolin figures for wargaming, purchasing Jeff Perren's collection.
(Unknown Date) 1969	*A Fantastic Bestiary*, by Ernst and Johanna Lehner, is published by Tudor Publishing Company. This book will influence the appearance of various monsters in *Dungeons & Dragons*.
(Unknown Date) 1969	*Conan of Cimmeria*, book 2 of the Lancer Book *Conan* series, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1969	*Servants of the Wankh*, by Jack Vance, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1969	*The Face in the Frost*, by John Bellairs, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1969	*The Secrets of the Runestaff*, a Hawkmoon novel by Michael Moorcock, is published.
(Unknown Date) Late 1960s	Gary designs the Conanomancy / Hyperborean scenario variant for the *Diplomacy* game. (Details on this innovation are hard to come by; there is a note in *Thangorodrim*, V1N3, October 1969 where we read Bill McDuffie stating, "Next issue I hope to have a new variant for you — either Gary

	Gygax's Conan variant or something I did up myself."
THE YEAR 1970	
January 1970	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *Land of Unreason*, by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
February 1970	Gary describes how to construct a sand table for gaming in *International Wargamer* magazine.
c. February 1970	The Lake Geneva Tactical Games Association (LGTGA), the wargaming group that will become the Lake Geneva Tactical Studies Association (LGTSA), is founded by Gary Gygax, Don Kaye, and several others.
c. February 1970	Jeff Perren designs his own four-page system for medieval wargaming. This rules set will become the foundation for Gygax's and Perren's *Chainmail*.
c. February 1970	Gary, with Jeff's permission, begins revising the Perren rules. This will become the LGTSA Miniatures Rules.
February 27th, 1970 (a Friday)	Gary writes a letter outlining his intent to establish a medieval wargaming interest group within the larger IFW. This will lead to the foundation of the Castle & Crusade Society.
March 1970	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy volume *At the Edge of the World*, by Lord Dunsany, is published.
March 1970	Technically, the LGTGA becomes the LGTSA at this time.
March 1970	In the *International Wargamer Supplement*, Rob Kuntz inquires about the general interest in a medieval wargaming society.
March 1970	*High Sorcery*, by Andre Norton, is published.
March 7th, 1970 (a Saturday)	Gary's green dragon article appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 6.
March 15th, 1970 (a Sunday)	The *Domesday Book* #1, the founding newsletter for the Castle & Crusade Society, is published.

March 29th, 1970 (a Sunday)	Len Lakofka becomes President of the IFW.
Spring 1970	Dave Arneson meets Greg Svenson, and invites him to participate in the following Saturday's Napoleonic campaign session.
Late? 1970 (Unknown dates, after spring, leading into Blackmoor)	Future Twin Cities gamer Charles (Chuck) Monson enters the picture, having traveled from his home in Duluth to the Little Tin Soldier Shoppe, located on West Lake Street in Minneapolis. (The Shoppe would later host lots of D&D materials and gaming tables.) From there, Chuck is introduced to a Diplomacy game at Greg Svenson's home (future player of Svenny in Blackmoor). That in turn leads to fellow gamer Bill Heaton (future player of William of the Heath in Blackmoor), and so to a future gaming group meeting in St. Paul. There, Chuck will meet Dave Arneson. Chuck played in Blackmoor from time to time, and his character was especially adept at getting fried in his armor. Monson's forces got established and then "wiped out" near the desert and the City of the Gods. Chuck Monson would later run a Blackmoor-inspired campaign in Duluth, with a play group perhaps named the Duluth Fanatics. (This is a major placeholder and a future research item, and will likely be better-elaborated in future editions of this book if at all possible.)
April 1970	*Domesday Book* #2 is published.
April 1970	*Ill Met in Lankhmar*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.
April 1970	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *Phantastes*, by George MacDonald, is published.
April 1970	*The Snow Women*, by Fritz Leiber, is published in *Fantastic* magazine.

April 1970	Gygax and Perren's Geneva Medieval Miniatures rules, the predecessor of *Chainmail*, appear in *Panzerfaust* magazine.
April 1970	Publication of *Domesday Book* #3.
c. April 1970	By this time, Dave Arneson is probably playing (along with Gary Gygax and Tom Webster) in the Atlantis campaign.
April 15th, 1970 (a Wednesday)	Printed publication date for *Domesday Book* #3 (perhaps released earlier).
Mid-April, 1970	Dave Arneson joins the Castle & Crusade Society.
May 1970	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published.
May 1970	*Swords and Deviltry*, a collection by Fritz Leiber, is published.
Spring? 1970	Leonard Patt designs "Rules for Middle Earth," allowing the New England Wargamers Association to play fantasy wargames.
June 1st, 1970 (a Monday)	Printed cover date for the *Domesday Book*, issue #4.
June 1970	*Domesday Book* #4 is actually published.
June 1970	The Castle & Crusade Society, benefiting from its innovative noble ranking system for contributors, significantly increases its membership.
June 1970	*Nine Princes in Amber*, by Roger Zelazny, is published.
July 1st, 1970 (a Wednesday)	Printed cover date for the *Domesday Book*, issue #5. (Refer to *The Dragon* #15, pg. 13.)
July 3rd, 1970 (a Friday)	Gary's blue dragon article appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 8.
July 1970	Gary plays the Mordor vs. the World II game.
July 1970	*Domesday Book* #5 is actually published.

July 1970	*Swords Against Death*, a collection by Fritz Leiber, is published.
July 1970	Don Lowry illustrates Gary's *chaturanga* article in *The General*.
Summer 1970	The film *The War of the Gargantuas* is released in U. S. theaters.
Summer? 1970	Patt and his group play the fantasy wargame rules, using Airfix sets and miniatures.
August 1970	*Domesday Book* #6 is published.
August 14th, 1970 (a Friday)	Gary's purple worm / wyrm article appears in *Thangorodrim* Volume 1, Number 9. This appears to be the last issue of this fanzine.
August 22nd-23rd, 1970 (a Saturday and Sunday)	The Gen Con III convention is held in Lake Geneva. Gary meets Don Lowry, future publisher of *Chainmail*. Gary also meets David Megarry, the future designer of the Blackmoor-derivative board game *Dungeons of Pasha Cada*, which will become one of the inspirations for *Dungeons & Dragons*. (Refer to the Youtube video 40 Years of Dungeon!, beginning at approximately 15:20, 16:10 and 17:00.)
Late August 1970	The Castle & Crusade Society again increases its membership due to popularity and the success of Gen Con.
September 9th, 1970 (a Wednesday)	The film *House of Dark Shadows*, based on the *Dark Shadows* television series, is released in theaters.
September 1970	*Domesday Book* #7 is published.
September 1970	*Kothar and the Conjurer's Curse*, by Gardner Fox, is published.
Fall 1970	The "Creature Feature" movies begin playing in the Chicago area.
October 1970	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy anthology Golden Cities, Far,

	edited by Lin Carter, is published.
October 1970	The comic book *Conan the Barbarian*, issue #1, is released.
October 10th, 1970 (a Saturday)	Miniature Figures of America Convention (7th annual Wargames Convention). Leonard Patt's Battle of the Pelennor Fields layout wins Best of Show.
Late October 1970	Gary loses his insurance job at the Fireman Fund's America Insurance Company of Chicago. Indirectly, this will lead to his future career as a game designer.
Late 1970	*Domesday Book* #8 is published.
Late 1970	Gary becomes associated with Don Lowry's company, Guidon Games.
c. Early November, 1970	Patt's fantasy wargame rules are published in *The Courier*. Gary Gygax reads this system and will soon incorporate elements of it into *Chainmail*.
November 7th, 1970 (a Saturday)	Lucion "Luke" Paul Gygax is born.
November 1970	Gary begins devoting his time to game design. Around this time, he loses interest in waiting for Tom Webster's Atlantis campaign rules, and develops his own systems further.
c. November 1970	Using Patt's rules as a model, Gary begins writing the material that will become the Fantasy Supplement of *Chainmail*. This is a last-minute addition to Gary's write-up. It seems likely that if he did not have Patt's prototype to refine, the fantasy rules would have never made it into *Chainmail* at all.
November-December 1970	Gary and his play group test the *Chainmail* medieval wargaming systems.
December 1970	Gary lingers on unemployment while working on the *Chainmail* rules draft.
December 1970	*Assassin of Gor*, by John Norman, is published.

December 1970	*Kothar and the Wizard Slayer*, by Gardner Fox, is published.
(Unknown Date) 1970	*Behind the Walls of Terra*, by Phillip José Farmer, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1970	*The Pnume*, by Jack Vance, is published by Ace Books.
(Unknown Date) 1970	*Warlocks and Warriors*, edited by L. Sprague de Camp, is published by G. P. Putnam's Sons.
THE YEAR 1971	
c. January 1971	*Domesday Book* #9 is published, featuring the map of the Great Kingdom.
January 1971	The paperback versoin of *Warlocks and Warriors* is published by Berkeley Medallion Books.
January 1971	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The Broken Sword*, by Poul Anderson, is published.
Early 1971	Gary writes a letter to *Wargamer's Newsletter*, indicating his intention to "write up rules for Tolkien fantasy games, using LGTSA Medieval Miniatures rules as the basic starting point." This is a reference to the system which will become the Fantasy Supplement in *Chainmail*.
Early 1971	Gary writes the Fantasy Supplement. His play group tests the system using the sand table and various miniatures. The Battle of the Brown Hills scenario may date to this time period.
Early 1971	Gary finalizes the *Chainmail* manuscript.
Early 1971	Gary convinces a doubtful Don Lowry to publish *Chainmail* as a whole, without cutting the Fantasy Supplement out of the back.
February 1971	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The Boats of the 'Glen Carrig,'* by William Hope Hodgson, is published.

February 1971	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *The Doom That Came to Sarnath*, by H. P. Lovecraft, is published.



Sarnath in contemplation.

March 1971	The first edition of *Chainmail* is published by Guidon Games. Leonard Patt's inspirational contribution to the Fantasy Supplement goes unmentioned, and will not be rediscovered for 45 years.
Spring 1971	Arneson's play group does the Wild West-themed Braunstein that is set in Brown Stone, Texas. This is a mini-campaign over multiple sessions. Duane Jenkins controlled most of the

	game mastery details. Dave Fant played the sheriff. Arneson plays a Pancho Villa-inspired character, nicknamed El Pauncho. In David Megarry's opinion: "[*Duane Jenkins*] created the third role-playing game. Set in the 1880's, in a town called Brown Stone, his game took the role-playing genre to another level. It was Duane Jenkins who introduced the campaign concept to role-playing games. Instead of a game that was played in one session, his game allowed people to play the same persona over multiple game sessions." (See also the Secrets of Blackmoor post of October 21st, 2016 for more information.)
March or Early April, 1971	Dave Arneson buys a copy of *Chainmail*.
c. March-April, 1971	Upheaval in Arneson's Napoleonics campaign inspires him to try something completely different in the name of fun over historical realism.
April 2nd, 1971 (a Friday)	The final episode of *Dark Shadows* airs on ABC.
April 1971	The Robert E. Howard tale *The Tower of the Elephant* is adapted in *Conan the Barbarian*, issue #4.
April 1971	*Domesday Book* #10 is completed (but not yet widely reaching the group membership), featuring the "Pygmalion" play report from Dave Arneson and Tom Webster.
April 1971	Gary discusses the history of medieval armor in *Panzerfaust* magazine.
April 10th, 1971 (a Saturday)	The movie *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man* plays on *Horror Incorporated*. This movie may have inspired some elements of the upcoming Blackmoor campaign.
c. April 1971	Arneson designs his own medieval fantasy scenario, using the *Chainmail* Fantasy Supplement as a guide. He will also be inspired by his experiences in the Braunstein games.

April 1971	Arneson, via his *Corner of the Table* fanzine, announces a forthcoming "medieval Braunstein" game.
April 17th, 1971 (a Saturday)	The "mythical Braunstein" game, later to be regarded as the very first Blackmoor / Black Moors session, is played.
c. Mid- to Late April 1971	The Braunstein / Blackmoor play group begins developing new monsters for the ongoing adventure games.
April 24th, 1971 (a Saturday)	Speculated date for the second Braunstein/Blackmoor game session.
April 30th, 1970 (a Thursday)	Dave Arneson (with oversight/approval of Tom Webster) writes up a "final report" from the Ancients Society, alluding to activities in the Atlantis campaign etc. The report is from "the servant of the Pygmal[/]ion." In Greek mythology, Pygmalion is a sculptor (artificer?) who created a magical statue of a woman, which became real. (To avoid confusion: in mythology, Pygmalion was the male sculptor, while Galatea was the female sea nymph he sculpted; but in Arneson's mythos, "the Pygmalion" is code for Galatea and perhaps even her name or title.)
Late April and Early May, 1971	The weekend Braunstein/Blackmoor games continue, with ongoing character activity.
Spring 1971	Gary and Dave continue collaborating on their set of naval rules for Napoleonics gaming. These rules will become *Don't Give Up the Ship!*.
Spring 1971	Gary finds that he is receiving more letters expressing interest in the Fantasy Supplement than in the *Chainmail* medieval wargame proper.
May 1971	*Conan the Buccaneer*, book 6 of the Lancer Books *Conan* series, is published.
c. May? 1971	Dave graduates from college (the University of Minnesota) with a degree in history.

May 22nd, 1971 (a Saturday)	The Twin Cities gamers hold a Napoleonic campaign meeting on this day, followed by a Braunstein gaming session. The most significant artifact we have from that session now is being termed the "Spanish Royals" sheet, which is a character matrix showing ability scores for the royal family of Spain. It is proof that the Twin Cities play group was using ability scores in their games as early as 1971, perhaps influenced by the works of Tony Bath. The game intent of the sheet and its meaning is still being debated at this time. (This is a placeholder for a future potential research item.)
June 1st, 1971 (a Tuesday)	Gary, hoping to renew interest in the lingering Castle & Crusade Society, assumes "kingship" of the gaming club.
June 1971	*Don't Give Up the Ship!*, designed by Gygax and Arneson, begins its serialization in *International Wargamer* magazine.
June 1971	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy edition of *Vathek*, by William Beckford, is published.
June 1971	Dave travels with his family to Sweden, temporarily disrupting the Braunstein/Blackmoor gaming sessions.
July 1971	*Jack of Shadows*, by Roger Zelazny, begins its serialization in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*.
July 1971	Dave returns to the Twin Cities and begins planning for a more ambitious fantasy campaign. The Braunstein/Blackmoor games resume at about this time.
July 1971	David Megarry (see ODD74 Proboards, "Did Dave Arneson's Blackmoor Campaign Actually Start in 1970?" and the Hidden in Shadows blog entry for October 9th, 2016) estimates that he began playing in the Blackmoor games at this time. (This is a placeholder for future research, which may need to move when more accurate information is secured.)
July 1971	Gary discusses his gaming group's "Tolkien fantasy games" in *Wargamer's Newsletter*.

July 24th, 1971 (a Saturday)	*Godzilla vs. Hedorah* is released in Japan. This movie may have been one of the inspirations for the demon lord Juiblex (along with Dr. Seuss, the "Oobleck").
Summer 1971	The delayed *Domesday Book*, issue #10, is finally reaching the group members by this time.
Summer 1971	The concepts of the Blackmoor campaign expand with repeated play sessions.
Summer 1971	From this point in time through December 1971, Gary focuses on playing in the Napoleonic Simulation Campaign to the exclusion of other wargames.
August 4th, 1971 (a Wednesday)	The film *Night of Dark Shadows* is released in theaters.
August 1971	Gary provides some minor updates to *Chainmail* in *International Wargamer* magazine. Len Lakofka also provides a review of the game.
August 1971	Gary is forced to let the Castle & Crusade Society languish once again as he focuses more on work and family.
August 1971	Gary, needing to work more to establish a reliable income for his family, purchases shoe repair equipment which will be installed in the basement. The gaming sand table is moved from to Don Kaye's garage.
August 21st-22nd, 1971 (a Saturday and Sunday)	Gen Con IV is held in Lake Geneva. Events included *Panzerblitz* (apparently very popular at this time), Napoleonics, FitS, and a GHQ armor miniatures game engaging "fast-play rules."
c. Fall 1971	Very tentative timeframe for the earthquake in the Blackmoor setting. (This is a placeholder and a research item.)
October 1971	The Ballantine Adult Fantasy anthology *The Spawn of Cthulhu*, edited by Lin Carter, is published.

October 30th, 1971 (a Saturday)	*Chamber of Horrors* is presented on *Horror Incorporated*.
Late 1971	*Domesday Book* #11 is published.
Late 1971	Alan Lucien attempts to resurrect the *War of the Empires* game, but is not successful.
November 1971	Gary's article on the Battle of the Brown Hills appears in *Wargamer's Newsletter* magazine.
November 1971	The Robert E. Howard tale *Rogues in the House* is adapted in *Conan the Barbarian* #11.
November 1971	*The Clocks of Iraz*, by L. Sprague de Camp, is published.
November 14th, 1971 (a Sunday)	A Napoleonic campaign letter, written in character by Gary Gygax and sent to fellow player Dan Nicholson on behalf of Don Kaye, dates to this day.
December 11th, 1971 (a Saturday)	*The Walking Dead* is featured on *Horror Incorporated*.
December 25th, 1971 (a Saturday)	The movies *Night of Terror* and *The Lady and the Monster* are played on *Horror Incorporated*. These movies may have inspired some aspects of Dave's conception of the Blackmoor dungeons.
c. December 25th-31st, 1971 (a Saturday through Friday)	This is the likely timeframe for Dave's design of the original Blackmoor dungeons (six levels).
Late (End of?) 1971	Arneson and others name their changing gaming club the Midwest Military Simulation Association (MMSA).
(Unknown Date) 1971	*The Black Mountains*, by Fred Saberhagen, is published by Ace Books.

THE YEAR 1972

(Please refer to **HAWK & MOOR** Book II *for further details on the chronology of* Dungeons & Dragons *and its inspirations.)*

APPENDIX II:
GYGAXIAN ARCANA:
RECOMMENDED READING AND VIEWING IN REGARDS TO THE INSPIRATIONS FOR *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*

FOR THOSE worthy souls who wish to retrace many of Gary's footsteps which led to the development of *Dungeons & Dragons* (particularly from 1972 to 1979), the following sources are especially recommended. Astute readers may well recognize that the foundation of this list of recommendations hails directly from Gary's own Appendix N: Inspirational and Educational Reading, which appeared originally toward the end of the *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons Dungeon Masters Guide* (1979).

To that very succinct and oft-time cryptic Appendix N list, however, I have here added significant and ongoing research which, to date, has resulted in the following improvements:

[1] Relevant book titles for authors where no titles appeared at all;

[2] Detailed listings of all relevant titles in a recommended series;

[3] Books from other sources of recommendations (such as Gary's summary of resources used to develop AD&D's weapon and armor systems);

[4] Compendiums of fairy tales and mythology which Gary directly cited;

[5] Specific tales which most resoundingly influenced various aspects of the game (such as *The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was* from Grimm);

[6] Works which clearly influenced Gary without being cited in Appendix N (as one example, Lewis Carroll for Dungeon Modules EX1 and EX2);

[7] Comic book series which Gary cited (or alluded to) as inspirational for spells and treasures;

[8] Recommended reading orders by series;

[9] Unspoken inspirations (such as William Hope Hodgson's *The House on the Borderland*, which influenced the title and a bit more for Dungeon Module B2);

[10] Gary's own *Gord of Greyhawk* tales;

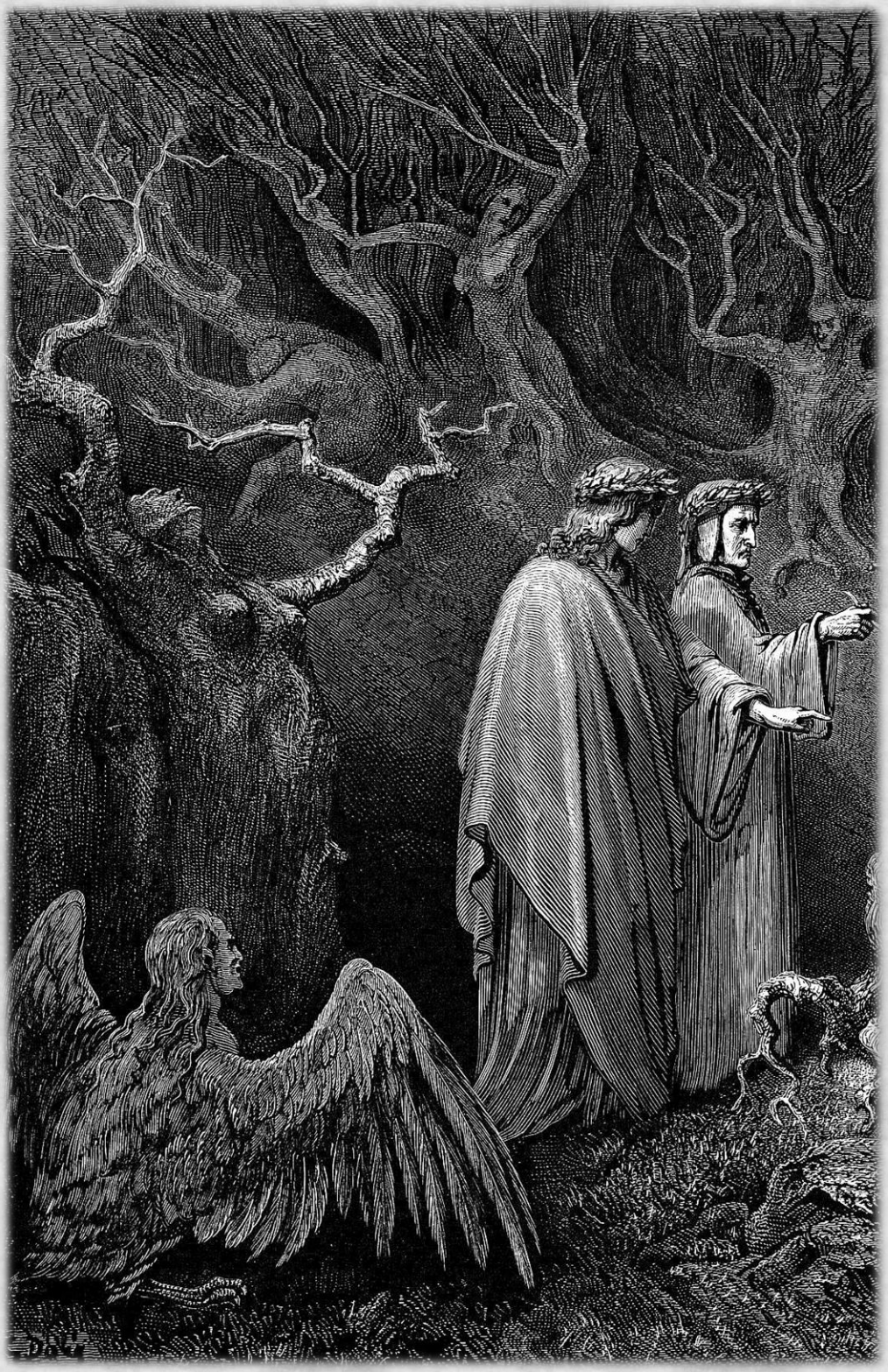
[11] General notes on editions and appearances; and

[12] Movies and television episodes which inspired the creation of monsters, spells, treasures, and game mechanics; (along with several other series of improvements).

And last but not least, I have to the best of my ability worked to include some of David Arneson's influences, particularly involving his viewing habits (as midnight movies greatly inspired the approach he took with the Blackmoor campaign). I hope to include more of Arneson's favorites in the future as more such material comes to light.

As an example of the level of detail provided here: the original Appendix N lists 29 author entries (sole authors and also collaborative endeavors), with 22 individual works also specified by title. This appendix in turn lists over 140 entries and over 430 titled works — a more than elevenfold increase in information.

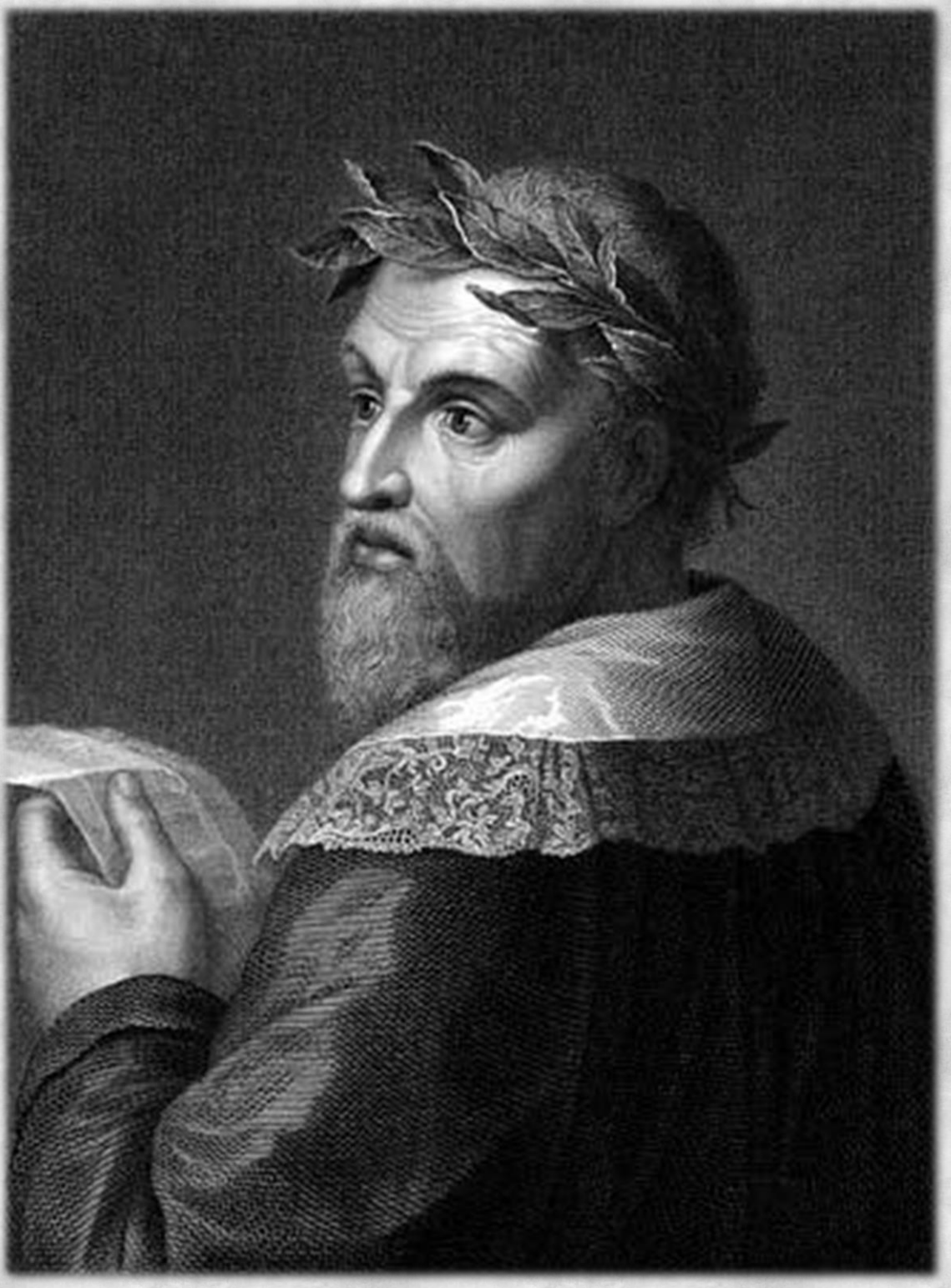
But please note that this list is certainly still very partial and incomplete, and will forever remain so. Further recommendations by you, the reader, are always welcome!



Dante Alighieri.

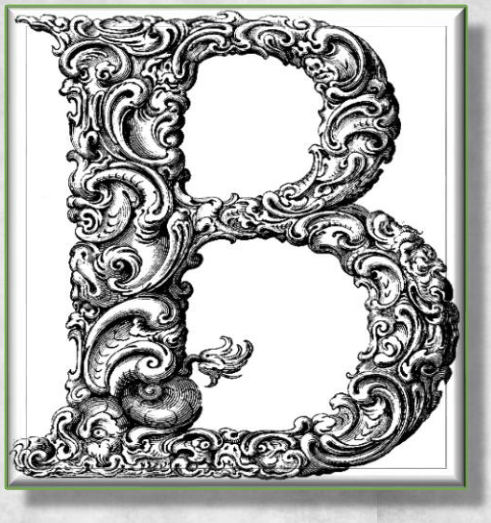


[1]	**ALIGHIERI, DANTE** Gygax once noted that he "did use a bit of Dante's *Inferno* (c. 1300-1315 AD) in developing the denizens of the Nine Hells." This is most clearly evident in the *Monster Manual* entry for horned devils. **[A-1]** *The Inferno*
[2]	**ANDERSON, POUL** The three most influential novels by Anderson (from a D&D perspective) were *Three Hearts and Three Lions* (1953 / 1961), *The Broken Sword* (1954, perhaps enjoyed by Gygax in its Ballantine Adult Fantasy printing of 1971), and *The High Crusade* (1960). **[A-2]** *Three Hearts and Three Lions*, **[A-3]** *The Broken Sword*, **[A-4]** *The High Crusade*



Ludovico Ariosto.

[3]	**ARIOSTO, LUDOVICO** *Orlando Furioso* (1516-1532 AD), particularly as illustrated by Gustave Dore, is a major source of lore for the hippogriff monster. [A-5] *Orlando Furioso*
[4]	**ATTACK OF THE CRAB MONSTERS (FILM)** This 1957 movie may have partly inspired the inclusion of giant crabs in the D&D monster lists. [A-6] *Attack of the Crab Monsters*
[5]	**ATTACK OF THE GIANT LEECHES (FILM)** This 1959 horror movie probably inspired the inclusion of giant leeches in the D&D monster roster. [A-7] *Attack of the Giant Leeches*



[6]	**BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY** Gary was a devout reader of the highly influential Ballantine Adult Fantasy series, which (re-)popularized many oft-forgotten classic tales of speculative fiction. The series ran from 1969 to 1974, the exact period

when Gary was tapping imaginative fiction for influences in his game designs. The series was spearheaded and edited by Lin Carter.

It may be useful to cite the dates of some of the most prominent books in this series, and these stories are generally recommended overall. I felt that it was important to classify these works under the Ballantine banner for the purposes of future research of Gary's influences.

The most important volumes (for D&D influences), to my mind, are:

Selections from the Ballantine Adult Fantasy Series

[B-1] Book 1: *The Blue Star*, by Fletcher Pratt (May 1969). **[B-2] Book 2:** *The King of Elfland's Daughter*, by Lord Dunsany (June 1969). **[B-3] Book 6:** *Dragons, Elves, and Heroes*, compiled by Lin Carter (October 1969). This anthology reads like a how-to manual of Gygaxian RPG influences: it includes *The Ogre* (from Beowulf), *Barrow-Wight* (from *The Grettir Saga*), *The Sword of Avalon* (from Mallory's *Le Morte d'Arthur*), *The Lost Words of Power* (from *The Kalevala*), *Wonderful Things Beyond Cathay* (from Mandeville's *Travels*), *Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came* (by Robert Browning), and much more. **[B-4] Book 7:** *The Young Magicians*, compiled by Lin Carter (October 1969). This anthology includes *The Sword of Welleran* (by Lord Dunsany), *The Cats of Ulthar* (by H. P. Lovecraft), *Through the Dragon Glass* (by A. Merritt), *Turjan of Miir* (by Jack Vance), *The Dragon's Visit* (by J. R. R. Tolkien), and more. **[B-5] Book 10:** *Land of Unreason*, by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp (January 1970). **[B-6] Book 13:** *At the Edge of the World*, by Lord Dunsany (March 1970). **[B-7] Book 14:** *Phantastes*, by George MacDonald (April 1970). **[B-8] Book 15:** *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, by H. P. Lovecraft (May 1970). **[B-9] Book 22:** *Golden Cities, Far*, compiled by Lin Carter (October 1970). This reads like another ensemble of Gygaxian inspirations, including: *The Descent of Ishtar to the Netherworld* (from the Sumerian epic *Angalta Kigalshe*), *Wars of the Giants of Albion* (from Geoffrey of Monmouth), *The Yellow Dwarf* (by Madame d'Aulnoy) and *The Palace of Illusions* (from *Orlando Furioso*, by Ludovico Ariosto). **[B-10] Book 24:** *The Broken Sword*, by Poul Anderson (January 1971). **[B-11] Book 25:** *The Boats of the 'Glen Carrig,'* by William Hope Hodgson (February 1971). This tale would inspire the Jungle of Lost Ships setting entry in the 1983 *World of Greyhawk* boxed set. **[B-12] Book 26:** *The Doom That Came to Sarnath and Other Stories*, by H. P. Lovecraft (February 1971). **[B-13] Book 31:** *Vathek*, by William Beckford (June 1971). I believe that this book was

	one of the inspirations for the early version of *Lost Caverns of Tsojconth*, and the unseen lore character Daoud. **[B-14] Book 36:** *The Spawn of Cthulhu* (October 1971). An anthology which includes *The Yellow Sign* (by Robert W. Chambers), *The Return of Hastur* (by August Derleth), *The Children of the Night* (by Robert E. Howard), and *Litany to Hastur* (by Lin Carter). **[B-15] Book 47:** *Beyond the Fields We Know*, by Lord Dunsany (May 1972). **[B-16] Book 52:** *Great Short Novels of Adult Fantasy I*, compiled by Lin Carter (September 1972). Includes *The Wall of Serpents* (by Fletcher Pratt and L. Sprague de Camp) and *The Maker of Moons* (by Robert W. Chambers). **[B-17] Book 54:** *Orlando Furioso: The Rings of Angelica, Volume 1*, by Ludovico Ariosto (September 1972). **[B-18] Book 55:** *The Charwoman's Shadow*, by Lord Dunsany (February 1973). **[B-19] Book 58:** *Imaginary Worlds: The Art of Fantasy*, by Lin Carter (June 1973). In some ways, reading this book gives the idea that Gygax's Appendix N was a collective critical opinion upon the Swords & Sorcery genre which was formed after taking Carter's volume into consideration. It is probably one of Carter's finest books. **[B-20] Book 62:** *Hrolf Kraki's Saga*, by Poul Anderson (October 1973). **[B-21] Book 65:** *Over the Hills and Far Away*, by Lord Dunsany (April 1974).
[7]	**BARING-GOULD, SABINE** As I explain in HAWK & MOOR Book IV, I believe that Gary may have been influenced by Baring-Gould's book *Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe* when he was designing troglodytes, and the netherworld warrens depicted in Dungeon Module D1, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*. **[B-22]** *Cliff Castles and Cave Dwellings of Europe* (1911)



Sabine Baring-Gould.

[8]	**BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN (FILM)** This 1959 movie (especially in its reworked format) is the likely inspirational source for the otyugh and roper monsters. **[B-23]** *Battle Beyond the Sun*
[9]	**BAUM, FRANK L.** The Oz book *Ozma of Oz* (1907) was one of the inspirations for the svirfneblin (netherworld gnome) race featured in the D series of Dungeon Modules.

	[B-24] *Ozma of Oz*
[10]	**BELLAIRS, JOHN** Bellairs is known for *The Face in the Frost*, a comedic 1969 fantasy novel that informed Gary's conception of magic-users, the study and memorization of spells, and unpredictable magic. The story would partially continue in a little-known sequel fragment entitled *The Dolphin Cross* (2009). [B-25] *The Face in the Frost*, [B-26] *The Dolphin Cross*
[11]	**BEWARE! THE BLOB (FILM)** This 1971-1972 movie probably inspired the creation of other slime monsters beyond the black pudding, perhaps including the ochre jelly. [B-27] *Beware! The Blob*



Ambrose Bierce.

[12]	**BIERCE, AMBROSE** *The Death of Halpin Frayser* (1891) (in addition to the *Kothar* writings of Gardner Fox, more directly) was probably an indirect inspiration for the lich monster. **[B-28]** *The Death of Halpin Frayser*
[13]	**BIRO, CHARLES** Gygax once stated that the shambling mound monster was inspired by the character known as the Heap, as featured in Biro's *Airboy* comics (1942-1950s). **[B-29]** *Airboy*
[14]	**THE BLACK SCORPION (FILM)** This 1957 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the inclusion of the giant scorpion in the D&D monster roster. **[B-30]** *The Black Scorpion*
[15]	**THE BLOB (FILM)** This 1958 movie inspired David Arneson's creation of the black pudding monster. **[B-31]** *The Blob*
[16]	**BORGES, JORGE LUIS** The 1969 English edition of Borges's *Book of Imaginary Beings* was a significant source of monster inspirations. **[B-32]** *The Book of Imaginary Beings*
[17]	**BRACKETT, LEIGH** Today, Brackett is remembered for working on the early script for *The Empire Strikes Back* (delivered to Lucas in 1978). In the 1940s and 1950s, she was a frequent contributor to the pulps which Gary loved, and wrote Sword & Planet stories in the vein of Edgar Rice Burroughs such as *Queen of the Martian Catacombs* (1949) and *Enchantress of Venus* (also 1949). "All my Mars stories came out of Burroughs," she once affirmed in an interview. She was also inspired by A. Merritt. The tonal association

	with these two authors makes Gygax's appreciation for her a bit clearer in retrospect. In recommending Brackett, Gary may also have been thinking of the well-regarded anthology *The Halfling and Other Stories* (1973). **[B-33]** *Queen of the Martian Catacombs*, **[B-34]** *Enchantress of Venus*, **[B-35]** *The Halfling and Other Stories*
[18]	**BRIDE OF THE MONSTER (FILM)** This 1955 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the inclusion of the giant octopus in the roster of D&D monsters. **[B-36]** *Bride of the Monster*
[19]	**BROWN, FREDERIC** In recommending Brown, Gary was probably thinking specifically of the acclaimed gatherum of very short fantasy-horror "flash" fiction, entitled *Nightmares and Geezenstacks* (1961). The book has also been favorably recommended by Stephen King. **[B-37]** *Nightmares and Geezenstacks*
[20]	**BUDGE, SIR ERNEST ALFRED THOMPSON (E. A.) WALLIS** Budge translated the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, *Rw Nw Prt M Hrw* (c. 1550-50 BC), which is arguably an inspirational source for giant (Apshai) beetles, demons, and many Egyptian spells. **[B-38]** *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*
[21]	**BULFINCH, THOMAS** In the 1970s (and for many decades earlier), *Bulfinch's Mythology* (1855-1863) was regarded as the finest popular collection of tales from the Greek and heroic mythos. It was almost certainly one of Gary's major sources. **[B-39]** *Bulfinch's Mythology*
[22]	**BURROUGHS, EDGAR RICE** The prolific Burroughs was one of Gary's favorite authors from an early age. Gary enjoyed the lost world tale *The Cave Girl* (1913), but for D&D

	inspirations he specifically noted three series: Barsoom (aka John Carter of Mars), the Pellucidar "hollow world" tales, and the Carson Napier of Venus saga. **The Barsoom (John Carter of Mars) Series** **[B-40] Book 1:** *A Princess of Mars* (1912-1917), **[B-41] Book 2:** *The Gods of Mars* (1913-1918), **[B-42] Book 3:** *The Warlord of Mars* (1913-1919), **[B-43] Book 4:** *Thuvia, Maid of Mars* (1916-1920), **[B-44] Book 5:** *The Chessmen of Mars* (1922), **[B-45] Book 6:** *The Master Mind of Mars* (1927-1928), **[B-46] Book 7:** *A Fighting Man of Mars* (1929-1931), **[B-47] Book 8:** *Swords of Mars* (1934-1936), **[B-48] Book 9:** *Synthetic Men of Mars* (1939-1940), **[B-49] Book 10:** *Llana of Gathol* (1941, 1948), **[B-50] Book 11:** *John Carter of Mars* (1940, 1943, 1964) **The Pellucidar Series** **[B-51] Book 1:** *At the Earth's Core* (1914), **[B-52] Book 2:** *Pellucidar* (1915), **[B-53] Book 3:** *Tanar of Pellucidar* (1929-1930), **[B-54] Book 4:** T*arzan at the Earth's Core* (1930), **[B-55] Book 5:** *Seven Worlds to Conquer, aka Back to the Stone Age* (1937), **[B-56] Book 6:** *Land of Terror* (1944), **[B-57] Book 7:** *Savage Pellucidar* (1942, 1963) (See also HOLMES, JOHN ERIC.) **The Carson Napier of Venus Series** **[B-58] Book 1:** *Pirates of Venus* (1932-1934), **[B-59] Book 2:** *Lost on Venus* (1933-1935), **[B-60] Book 3:** *Carson of Venus* (1937-1938), **[B-61] Book 4:** *Escape on Venus* (1941-1942, 1946), **[B-62] Book 5:** *The Wizard of Venus* (1941, 1964)
[23]	**BYFIELD, BARBARA NINDE** Ms. Byfield was the author of a very clever and curious work entitled *The Glass Harmonica*, later retitled as *The Book of Weird*. This charming and finely illustrated work, I believe, served as an inspiration to Gygax in his early writings for *Dungeons & Dragons* (as I will show in later volumes of the **HAWK & MOOR** series.) **[B-63]** *The Glass Harmonica*



[24]	**CALTIKI — THE IMMORTAL MONSTER (FILM)** This 1959 film may have partly inspired the conception of slime monsters. [C-1] *Caltiki — The Immortal Monster*
[25]	**CARROLL, LEWIS (pen name of CHARLES LUTWIDGE DODGSON)** Gary was inspired by *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* (1865), which would receive direct tribute in Dungeon Module EX1, *Dungeonland*; and *Through the Looking Glass and What Alice Found There* (1871), which was mirrored (ahem) by EX2, *The Land Beyond the Magic Mirror*. I also recommend the first draft of Wonderland, entitled *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* (1864), because it is fascinating in its own right (with Dodgson's handwriting and amateur illustrations) and it much more clearly depicts Alice's land of adventure as a netherworld. In its ties with reality, by the way, Wonderland is conceived by Carroll as lying beneath the ruins of Godstow Nunnery on the River Thames in Oxford. [C-2] *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, [C-3] *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, [C-4] *Through the Looking Glass, and What Alice Found There*



Charles Lutwidge Dodgson.

[26]	**CARTER, LIN** Beyond his critiques, anthologies and collaborations, Gary also somewhat admired Carter's *World's End* series (sometimes called the *Gondwane* series). I recommend the following reading order, which some may disagree with:

	[C-5] Recommended Book 1: *Giant of World's End* (1969), [C-6] Recommended Book 2: *Warrior of World's End* (1974), [C-7] Recommended Book 3: *The Enchantress of World's End* (1975), [C-8] Recommended Book 4: *The Immortal of World's End* (1976), [C-9] Recommended Book 5: *The Barbarian of World's End* (1977), [C-10] Recommended Book 6: *The Pirate of World's End* (1978) (See also BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY and DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE.)
[27]	**CHAMBERS, ROBERT W.** The comedic romance *In Search of the Unknown* (1904) gave its title to the later Dungeon Module B1, by Mike Carr. Also, some of the scenes may have inspired Gygax's conception of the Kuo-Toa. Chambers is today most admired for *The King in Yellow* (1895), which Gary was also familiar with. [C-11] *The King in Yellow,* [C-12] *In Search of the Unknown* (See also BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY.)
[28]	**COX, PALMER** In addition to the *Teeny Weenies* comics, Gary's ideas for the folkloric brownie monster were likely inspired in part by Cox's *The Brownies: Their Own Book* (1887, with numerous sequels). [C-13] *The Brownies: Their Own Book*
[29]	**THE CREATURE FROM THE BLACK LAGOON (FILM)** This 1954 movie is probably one of the partial inspirations for Gygax's Kuo-Toa race, and may have partly inspired Marsh's sahuagin as well. [C-14] *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*



[30]	**DARK SHADOWS (TELEVISION SERIES)** This long-running television series influenced the development of vampires (both as monsters and characters) in the Blackmoor campaign. **[D-1]** *Dark Shadows*
[31]	**DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE** Gary mostly appreciated de Camp's collaborations with other authors (Lin Carter and Fletcher Pratt in particular). However, he also enjoyed de Camp's 1939 alternate history novel, *Lest Darkness Fall*. More specifically in regards to D&D, Gary greatly enjoyed *The Fallible Fiend* (1972-1973). That tale is part of the *Novarian* series, which is cited here in full for future reference. Recommended reading order: **The Novarian Series** **[D-2] Recommended Book 1:** *The Emperor's Fan* (1973), **[D-3] Recommended Book 2:** *The Fallible Fiend* (1972-1973), **[D-4] Recommended Book 3:** *The Goblin Tower* (1968), **[D-5] Recommended Book 4:** *The Clocks of Iraz* (1971), **[D-6] Recommended Book 5:** *The Unbeheaded King* (not published until 1983), **[D-7] Recommended Book 6:** *The Honorable Barbarian* (not published until 1989) **The Swords & Sorcery Tomes**

	De Camp also compiled and edited an important series of Swords & Sorcery anthologies, which are as follows: **[D-8] Recommended Book 1:** *Swords and Sorcery: Stories of Heroic Fantasy* (December 1963). Includes tales by Anderson, Dunsany, Howard, Leiber, Lovecraft, and others. **[D-9] Recommended Book 2:** *The Spell of Seven* (June 1965). Includes tales by Leiber, Dunsany, Moorcock, Vance, and Howard. **[D-10] Recommended Book 3:** *The Fantastic Swordsmen* (May 1967). Includes tales by Dunsany, Howard, Lovecraft, Moorcock, and others. **[D-11] Recommended Book 4:** *Warlocks and Warriors* (1970). Includes tales by Howard, Leiber, Dunsany, Zelazny, and others.
[32]	**DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE & CARTER, LIN** The Lancer / Ace *Conan* anthologies are noteworthy for their collections of non-Howard tales. They are also noteworthy because they are frequently the versions which Gary and Dave had at hand during the development of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The books in the series (with the recommended reading order series numbers, as opposed to the actual chronological printing history), and the non-Howard tales specifically cited, are as follows: **[D-12] Book 1:** *Conan*. First published in 1967. Features *The Thing in the Crypt*, *The Hall of the Dead*, *The Hand of Nergal*, and *The City of Skulls*. **[D-13] Book 2:** *Conan of Cimmeria*. First published in 1969. Features *The Bloodstained God*, *The Castle of Terror*, *The Curse of the Monolith*, *The Frost Giant's Daughter*, *The Lair of the Ice Worm*, and *The Snout in the Dark*. **[D-14] Book 3:** *Conan the Freebooter*. First published in 1968. Features *Hawks Over Shem* and *The Road of the Eagles*. **[D-15] Book 4:** *Conan the Wanderer*. First published in 1968. Features *Black Tears* and *The Flame Knife*. **[D-16] Book 5:** *Conan the Adventurer*. First published in 1966-1967. Features *Drums of Tombalku*. **[D-17] Book 6:** *Conan the Buccaneer*. First published in 1971. Features the full novel. **[D-18] Book 7:** *Conan the Warrior*. First published in 1967. Features an introduction by de Camp, but otherwise focuses on Howard tales. **[D-19] Book 8:** *Conan the Usurper*. First published in 1967. Features *The Treasure of Tranicos* and *Wolves Beyond the Border*. **[D-20] Book 9:** *Conan the Conqueror*. First published in 1967. Features the Howard novel, preceded by a de Camp introduction. **[D-21] Book 10:** *Conan the Avenger*. First published in 1968. Features *The Return of Conan* (with Björn Nyberg). **[D-22] Book 11:** *Conan of Aquilonia*. First published in 1977. Features *The Witch of the Mists*, *Black Sphinx of*

	Nebthu, *Red Moon of Zembabwei*, and *Shadows in the Skull*. **[D-23] Book 12:** *Conan of the Isles*. First published in 1968. Features the full novel.
[33]	**DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE & PRATT, FLETCHER** Gary cited the work *The Carnelian Cube* (1948) as a worthy predecessor work to *Dungeons & Dragons*. He also cited the Harold Shea stories (about a dimension-hopping magician from our own reality) as one of the most significant influences on the game of Dungeons & Dragons. The stories are as follows: **[D-24] Book 1:** *The Roaring Trumpet* (1940-1941), **[D-25] Book 2:** *The Mathematics of Magic* (1940-1941), **[D-26] Book 3:** *The Castle of Iron* (1941), **[D-27] Book 4:** *Wall of Serpents* (1953-1954), **[D-28] Book 5:** *The Green Magician* (1954)
[34]	**THE DEADLY MANTIS (FILM)** This 1957 film may have influenced Gary's re-conception of Erol Otus's early anhkheg monster. **[D-29]** *The Deadly Mantis*
[35]	**DERLETH, AUGUST** I recommend *In Lovecraft's Shadow* (1998). Mr. Derleth is primarily well-regarded for his (re-)popularization of the weird fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, despite some of his own additions to the Mythos being of questionable quality. This volume collects the Derleth Mythos works and is recommended to the casual reader. Refer also to the noteworthy *The Mask of Cthulhu* (1958). **[D-30]** *The Mask of Cthulhu*, **[D-31]** *In Lovecraft's Shadow*
[36]	**DOCTOR STRANGE (COMIC)** Tim Kask has noted (particularly in his Gen Con Q&A) that the Doctor Strange comic was loved by both him and Gary Gygax. Further, he stated that it had a significant inspirational effect on the development of the psionics system as featured in *Eldritch Wizardry*. Further, he alluded that the Astral Plane concept as detailed in AD&D was influenced by Doctor Strange as well.

	[D-32] *Doctor Strange*
[37]	**DOYLE, SIR ARTHUR CONAN** The "giant rat of Sumatra," as mentioned in the Sherlock Holmes tale *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire* (1924), was one of the inspirations for the 1977 *Monster Manual* entry on "Sumatran" giant rats. [D-33] *The Adventure of the Sussex Vampire*



Bram Stoker.

[38]	**DRACULA (FILM)** The portrayal of vampires in the *Monster Manual* is based on the *Dracula* movies (particularly the 1931 version starring Bela Lugosi) and the original novel by Bram Stoker. The 1958 film is also noteworthy for its cast, which included Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. **[D-34]** *Dracula*
[39]	**DUNSANY, BARON EDWARD JOHN MORETON DRAX PLUNKETT** Gygax's primary work may have been the collection *Beyond the Fields We Know* (1972), as collected by Lin Carter for the Ballantine Adult Fantasy series. For a wider reading of what seem to be D&D influences, I recommend the *Pegana* books and a loose series of collections which I term the *Books of Wonder*. **The Books of Pegana** **[D-35] Book 1:** *The Gods of Pegana* (1905), **[D-36] Book 2:** *Time and the Gods* (1906) **The Books of Wonder (aka The Dreamer's Tales)** **[D-37] Recommended Book 1:** *The Sword of Welleran and Other Stories* (1908), **[D-38] Recommended Book 2:** *A Dreamer's Tales* (1910), **[D-39] Recommended Book 3:** *The Book of Wonder* (1912), **[D-40] Recommended Book 4:** *Fifty-One Tales, aka The Food of Death* (1915), **[D-41] Recommended Book 5:** *Tales of Wonder, aka The Last Book of Wonder* (1916), **[D-42] Recommended Book 6:** *Tales of Three Hemispheres* (1919), **[D-43] Recommended Book 7:** *The King of Elfland's Daughter* (1924) (See also BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY.)



[40]	**FARMER, PHILIP JOSÉ** *Dungeons & Dragons* was inspired in part by the acclaimed *World of Tiers* series. The volumes are as follows: **The World of Tiers Series** **[F-1] Book 1:** *The Maker of Universes* (1965), **[F-2] Book 2:** *The Gates of Creation* (1966), **[F-3] Book 3:** *A Private Cosmos* (1968), **[F-4] Book 4:** *Behind the Walls of Terra* (1970), **[F-5] Book 5:** *The Lavalite World* (1977), **[F-6] Book 6:** *Red Orc's Rage* (published in 1991), **[F-7] Book 7:** *More Than Fire* (published in 1993)
[41]	**FELIX THE CAT (CARTOON)** According to Rob Kuntz, the cartoon entitled *The Magic Bag* was the inspiration for the magical bag of tricks. **[F-8]** *The Magic Bag*
[42]	**FFOULKES, CHARLES JOHN** Gary cited the 1909 book *Armour & Weapons* as one of the major influences on the topic for *Chainmail* and *Dungeons & Dragons*. The research in the work is outdated and has been at times refuted, but it does feature specific mentions of banded mail, bracers, cuir bouilli, falchions, holy water sprinklers, Lochaber axes, ranseurs, ring mail, scale armour, voulges, and much more.

	[F-9] *Armour & Weapons*
[43]	**FIEND WITHOUT A FACE (FILM)** This 1958 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the reimagining of the intellect devourer monster for its appearance in the 1977 *Monster Manual*. [F-10] *Fiend Without a Face*
[44]	**THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON (FILM)** The Harryhausen-animated moon cow in this 1964 movie was almost certainly an inspiration for the appearance of the carrion crawler monster. [F-11] *The First Men in the Moon*
[45]	**FISCHER, HARRY OTTO** The life-long boon companion of Fritz Leiber, and the inspiration for the Gray Mouser. Of note is "The Childhood and Youth of the Gray Mouser," an approved article featured in *The Dragon* #18 (1978). [F-12] *The Childhood and Youth of the Gray Mouser*
[46]	**FORBIDDEN PLANET (FILM)** This 1956 movie may have inspired the depiction of the invisible stalker monster. [F-13] *Forbidden Planet*
[47]	**FOX, GARDNER F.** In the Golden Age of comics, Mr. Fox was famed for his stories featuring Batman, the Flash, the Justice Society, and more. Later in life, he wrote the "*Kothar*" tales (which were basically inspired by Howard's Conan) and the "*Kyrik*" tales (which were probably inspired by Moorcock's Elric). In my opinion these later works are inferior, but Gary explicitly noted that they were to be strongly associated with *Dungeons & Dragons* as being influential. **The Kothar Series**

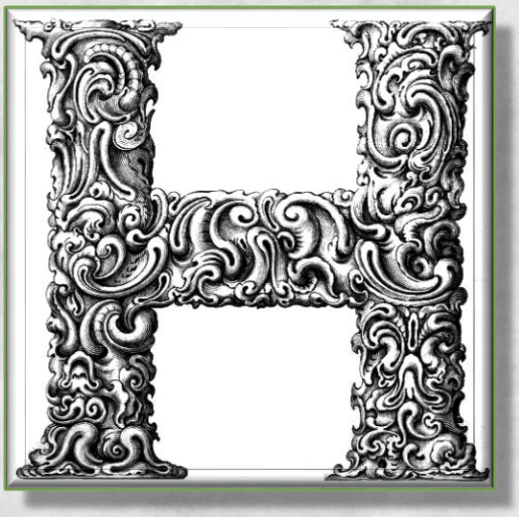
	[F-14] Book 1: *Kothar, Barbarian Swordsman* (1969), **[F-15] Book 2:** *Kothar of the Magic Sword* (1969), **[F-16] Book 3:** *Kothar and the Demon Queen* (1969), **[F-17] Book 4:** *Kothar and the Conjurer's Curse* (1970), **[F-18] Book 5:** *Kothar and the Wizard Slayer* (1970) **The Kyrik Series** **[F-19] Book 1:** *Kyrik, Warlock Warrior* (1975), **[F-20] Book 2:** *Kyrik Fights the Demon World* (1975), **[F-21] Book 3:** *Kyrik and the Wizard's Sword* (1976), **[F-22] Book 4:** *Kyrik and the Lost Queen* (1976)
[48]	**FRANKENSTEIN (FILM)** This 1931 movie, along with Mary Shelley's original novel, is the inspiration for the flesh golem monster. **[F-23]** *Frankenstein*
[49]	**FRANKENSTEIN MEETS THE WOLF MAN (FILM)** Due to its Gothic horror and supernatural elements, and its Twin Cities air date of April 10th, 1971, I believe this is one of the movies which influenced David Arneson to create certain elements of the Blackmoor campaign. **[F-24]** *Frankenstein Meets the Wolf Man*
[50]	**FROGS (FILM)** I believe this 1972 horror movie may have been one of Dave Arneson's inspirations for the Temple of the Frog. **[F-25]** *Frogs*



[51]	**GAINES, WILLIAM & FELDSTEIN, AL** Gary once told readers that he dearly loved "*Weird Science*, *Crypt of Horror*, and all the rest of the EC Comics line." The following summary can help the reader to locate reprint compendiums and the like. **The "Horror" Trifecta** **[G-1]** *The Haunt of Fear* (comic book series). 28 issues, originally published from May 1950 to November 1954. **[G-2]** *Tales from the Crypt* (comic book series). Early issues were also titled as The Crypt of Terror. 43 issues, originally published from October 1950 to March 1955. **[G-3]** *The Vault of Horror* (comic book series). 29 issues, originally published from April 1950 to January 1955. **The "Weird" Trifecta** **[G-4]** *Weird Fantasy* (comic book series). 22 issues, originally published from May 1950 to December 1953. **[G-5]** *Weird Science* (comic book series). 22 issues, originally published from May 1950 to December 1953. **[G-6]** *Weird Science-Fantasy* (comic book series). 7 issues, originally published from March 1954 to June 1955.
[52]	**GARGOYLES (TELEVISION FEATURE)** I believe this 1972 made-for-TV movie (along with the sculptures of Notre Dame) may have influenced the early versions of the gargoyle monster which Gary included in the Castle of Greyhawk setting.

	[G-7] *Gargoyles*
[53]	**GHIDORAH, THE THREE-HEADED MONSTER (FILM)** This 1964 movie may have partly inspired the pyrohydra monster. [G-8] *Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster*
[54]	**GODZILLA & GODZILLA, KING OF THE MONSTERS! (FILMS)** These were favorite movies of Dave Arneson, and likely influenced his development of monsters and situations for the Blackmoor campaign. [G-9] *Godzilla*, [G-10] *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!*
[55]	**GODZILLA VS. HEDORAH (FILM)** This 1971 movie may have been one (along with Lovecraft's shoggoths) one of the inspirations (along with Dr. Seuss) for Gygax's enigmatic demon lord, Juiblex. [G-11] *Godzilla vs. Hedorah*
[56]	**THE GOLDEN VOYAGE OF SINBAD (FILM)** This 1974 movie may have partly inspired the D&D version of the folkloric centaur monster. The movie also depicts a griffon, a homunculus, and a creature similar to type V demon. [G-12] *The Golden Voyage of Sinbad*
[57]	**THE GREEN SLIME (FILM)** This 1968 movie inspired the green slime monster, of course, and perhaps also the idea of gas spores. [G-13] *The Green Slime*
[58]	**GRIMM, JACOB & WILHELM** The Brothers Grimm are forever famed for their *Grimms' Fairy Tales*, earlier known as *Children's and Household Tales, Volumes 1 and 2*. The original 1812 edition is fascinating because it is a serious adult work of research; later volumes expurgated most of the offensive elements until today their work is regarded as a collection of children's stories. I

	recommend the earliest edition you can find; or, you may enjoy *Grimm's Grimmest* (compiled by Maria Tatar), which makes a deliberate point of highlighting the most lurid rarities. The tales which I regard as being highly influential upon *Dungeons & Dragons* include: **Select Tales from the Brothers Grimm** **[G-14]** The haunted castle and dungeon tale, *The Story of the Youth Who Went Forth to Learn What Fear Was*. **[G-15]** The netherworld faerie tale *The Shoes That Were Danced to Pieces* (cited as a favorite by Gygax). **[G-16]** *The Water Nixie*. **[G-17]** *The King of the Gold Mountain*. **[G-18]** *The Griffin*; and **[G-19]** *Blaubart* (*Bluebeard*), which is typically missing from all but the earliest editions.
[59]	**GYGAX, E. GARY** Gary wrote his own volumes of Swords & Sorcery tales set in Greyhawk, the *Gord the Rogue* series. The stories are derivative tributes to Leiber, Howard, Burroughs, and Lovecraft. The quality is uneven, but *Saga of Old City* is especially fine, and I sincerely believe that *At Moonset Blackcat Comes* is one of the greatest Swords & Sorcery tales ever written that I have experienced to date. **The Gord the Rogue Series** **[G-20] Book 1:** *Saga of Old City* (1985), **[G-21] Book 2:** *Artifact of Evil* (1986), **[G-22] Book 3:** *City of Hawks* (1987), **[G-23] Book 4:** *Night Arrant* (1987), **[G-24] Book 5:** *Sea of Death* (1987), **[G-25] Book 6:** *Come Endless Darkness* (1988), **[G-26] Book 7:** *Dance of Demons* (1988) And: **Adjuncts to the Gord the Rogue Series** **[G-27]** *At Moonset Blackcat Comes* (in *Dragon* magazine, issue #100), **[G-28]** *Evening Odds* (1996) (in *Tales of the Eternal Champion*), **[G-29]** *The Return of Gord* (2006) (with K. R. Bourgoine)



[60]	**HODGSON, WILLIAM HOPE** The excellent weird fiction novel *The House on the Borderland* (1908) inspired aspects of Dungeon Module B2, including the title. **[H-1]** *The House on the Borderland* (See also BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY.)



William Hope Hodgson.

[61]	**THE HOLE IDEA (CARTOON)** According to Rob Kuntz, this obscure 1955 *Looney Tunes* short was the inspiration for the arcane magical known known as the portable hole. **[H-2]** *The Hole Idea*
[62]	**HOLMES, JOHN ERIC** Dr. John Eric Holmes is well-regarded for his work on the 1977 *Dungeons & Dragons Basic Set*, which greatly popularized the game with younger audiences. He also wrote memorable pulp fantasy tales, such as *The Maze of Peril*. And, Gary also admired his two Burroughs-inspired *Pellucidar* books, which are cited here as potential influences on D&D. **The Continuation of the Pellucidar Series** **[H-3] Book 8:** *Mahars of Pellucidar* (1976), **[H-4] Recommended Book 9:** *Red Axe of Pellucidar* (1980, 1993) (See also BURROUGHS, EDGAR RICE.)
[63]	**HOWARD, ROBERT E.** The excellent (yet repetitive!) Robert E. Howard tales have undergone a significant resurgence, and there are many collections available. (I recommend beginning with *The Coming of Conan the Cimmerian*, Del Rey, 2005.) Rather than list the many confusing collections, I will here list the Conan tales by Howard. Please note that this list is provided not in publication order, but rather in the tentative order of a timeline of Conan's life, thereby representing a chronological saga. This suggested order is based on the excellent and thoroughly detailed research by Amra the Lion represented online at conan.com. **The Conan Saga** **[H-5]** *The Frost-Giant's Daughter*, **[H-6]** *The God in the Bowl*, **[H-7]** *The Tower of the Elephant*, **[H-8]** (The *Nestor* Synopsis), **[H-9]** *Rogues in the House*, **[H-10]** (The *Yaralet* Fragment), **[H-11]** *Black Colossus*, **[H-12]** *A Witch Shall be Born*, **[H-13]** *The Man-Eaters of Zamboula, aka Shadows in Zamboula*, **[H-14]** *Queen of the Black Coast*, **[H-15]** (The *Shumballa* Typescripts), **[H-16]** *Xuthal of the Dusk, aka The Slithering Shadow*, **[H-17]** *Iron Shadows in the Moon, aka Shadows in the Moonlight*, **[H-18]** *The Devil in Iron*, **[H-19]** *The People of the Black Circle*, **[H-20]** (The *Tombalku* Typescripts), **[H-21]** *The Vale of Lost Women*, **[H-22]** *The*

	Servants of Bit-Yakin, aka *The Jewels of Gwahlur*, [H-23] *The Pool of the Black One*, [H-24] *Red Nails*, [H-25] *Beyond the Black River*, [H-26] *The Black Stranger*, [H-27] (The *Wolves Beyond the Border* Typescripts), [H-28] *The Phoenix on the Sword*, [H-29] *The Scarlet Citadel*, [H-30] *The Hour of the Dragon* (See also DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE & CARTER, LIN.)



[64]	**ISLAND OF TERROR (FILM)** This 1966 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the otyugh monster. [I-1] *Island of Terror*
[65]	**IT! (FILM)** This 1966 movie inspired the portrayal of the folkloric clay golem monster. [I-2] *It!*
[66]	**IT CAME FROM BENEATH THE SEA (FILM)** This 1955 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the inclusion of the giant octopus in the roster of D&D monsters.

	[I-3] *It Came from Beneath the Sea*
[67]	**IT CONQUERED THE WORLD (FILM)** Although it is tenuous, this 1956 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the appearance of the xorn monster. [I-4] *It Conquered the World*
[68]	**IVANHOE (FILM)** This is the 1952 movie that inspired Gary Gygax to engage in "melee" with a childhood friend. [I-5] *Ivanhoe*



[69]	**JASON AND THE ARGONAUTS (FILM)** Talos the colossus, as depicted in this 1963 movie, was the inspiration for the iron golem monster. The movie is also the primary inspirational source for animated skeletons. [J-1] *Jason and the Argonauts*
[70]	**JOURNEY TO THE CENTER OF THE EARTH (FILM)**

	This 1959 movie may have partly inspired the inclusion of giant subterranean lizards in the D&D monster roster. **[J-2]** *Journey to the Center of the Earth*



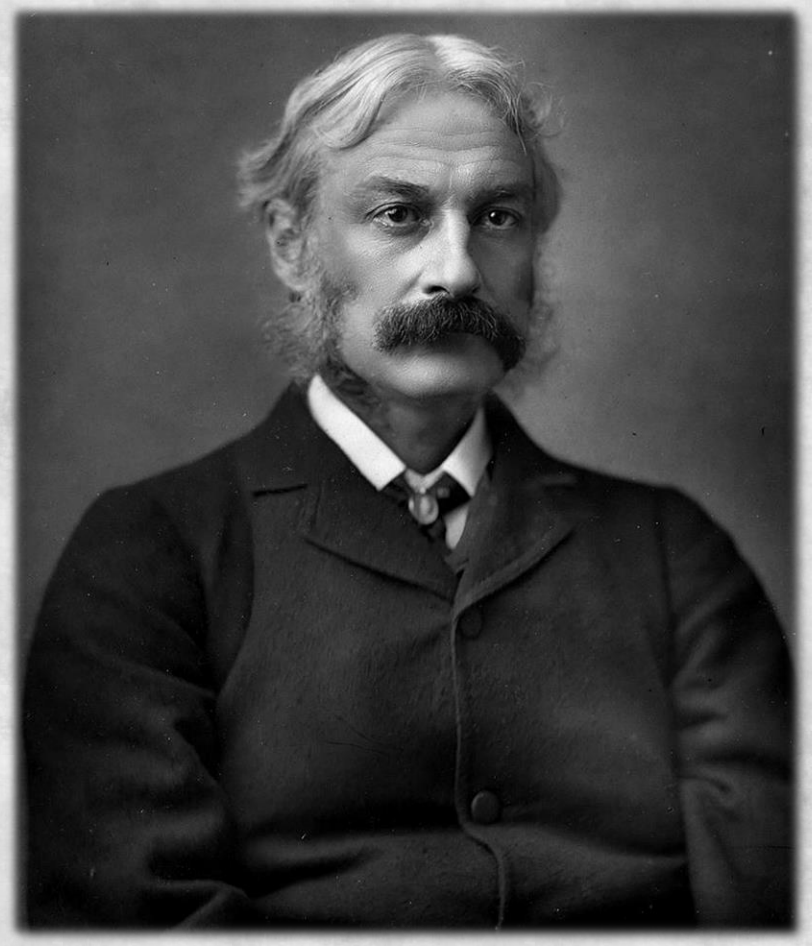
[71]	**KING KONG (FILM)** This 1933 movie inspired Gygax's Isle of the Ape setting, and also the Monkeying Around special level found in the dungeons of Castle Greyhawk. **[K-1]** *King Kong*
[72]	**KOLCHAK, THE NIGHT STALKER (TELEVISION SERIES)** Gary was a fan of this series, due to its Chicago noir setting and supernatural subject matter. Episode 11 certainly inspired the rule that rakshasas can be slain by blessed crossbow bolts. Other episodes may have influenced the depiction of various monsters in the 1977 *Monster Manual*: **Selected Episodes from Kolchak, the Night Stalker** **[K-2] Episode 2**, *The Zombie* (air date September 20th, 1974): Zombies, **[K-3] Episode 3**, *They Have Been, They Are, They Will Be …* (air date September 27th, 1974): Invisible stalkers, **[K-4] Episode 4**, *The Vampire* (air date October 4th, 1974): Vampires, **[K-5] Episode 5**, *The Werewolf*

	(air date November 1st, 1974): Lycanthropes, **[K-6] Episode 6**, *Firefall* (air date November 8th, 1974): Doppelgangers and ghosts, **[K-7] Episode 9**, *The Spanish Moss Murders* (air date December 6th, 1974): Shambling mounds? (tenuous), **[K-8] Episode 11**, *Horror in the Heights* (air date December 20th, 1974): Rakshasas, **[K-9] Episode 13**, *Primal Scream* (air date January 17th, 1975): Yeti, **[K-10] Episode 16**, *Demon in Lace* (air date February 7th, 1975): Succubi, **[K-11] Episode 17**, *Legacy of Terror* (air date February 14th, 1975): Mummies, **[K-12] Episode 20**, *The Sentry* (air date March 28th, 1975): Lizard men



[73]	**THE LADY AND THE MONSTER** Due to its subject matter and Twin Cities air date of December 25th, 1971, I believe this film (1944) is one of the movies that influenced the design of Arneson's dungeons beneath Castle Blackmoor. **[L-1]** *The Lady and the Monster*
[74]	**LAND OF THE LOST (TELEVISION SERIES)** Gary did not to my knowledge ever specify a direct link between Land of the Lost and D&D, but there are compelling similarities between the Sleestak race of netherworld villains, and Gary's own conception of troglodytes. (Troglodytes are primarily from Greek myth and Abraham

	Merritt, but the trog illustration in the original 1976 Tsojconth module bears a striking similarity to the Sleestaks.) **[L-2]** *Land of the Lost*



Andrew Lang.

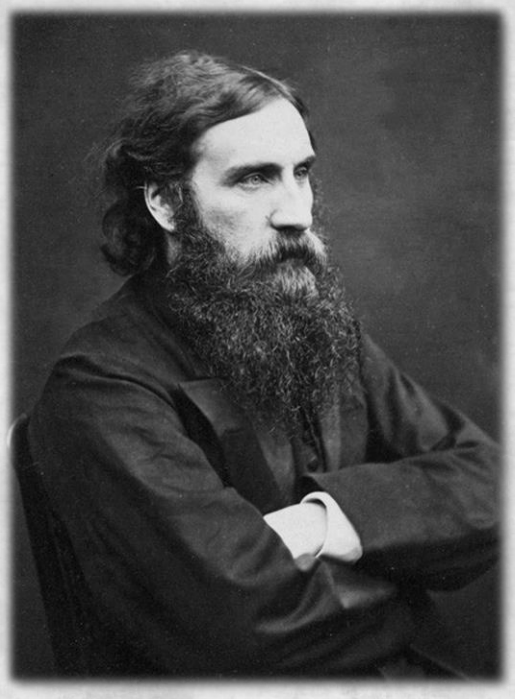
[75]	**LANG, ANDREW** Gary was fond of the Andrew Lang fairytale books, and for that reason I have provided a full list of the major works which comprise that series. Also, Lang may have been one of Gary's gatekeepers for the tales which are known as the *Arabian Nights Entertainments*. There are many different versions of the *Arabian Nights* (aka *The Thousand and One Nights* etc.), but I have here selected Andrew Lang's easily readable

	version which includes *The Seven Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor.* (See also however WIGGIN, KATE DOUGLAS et al.) **The Fairy Books of Many Colors** **[L-3] Book 1:** *The Blue Fairy Book* (1889). This book includes the haunted castle and dungeon story, which is entitled *The Tale of a Youth Who Set Out to Learn What Fear Was* (also in Grimm). Also includes *The Terrible Head*, *Blue Beard*, *The History of Jack the Giant-Killer*, and *The Red Etin*. **[L-4] Book 2:** *The Red Fairy Book* (1890). Includes *The Twelve Dancing Princesses*, *Soria Moria Castle*, *The Death of Koschei the Deathless*, and *Jack and the Beanstalk*. **[L-5] Book 3:** *The Green Fairy Book* (1892). Includes *The Golden Mermaid* and *The Three Dogs*. **[L-6] Book 4:** *The Yellow Fairy Book* (1894). Includes *The Dragon of the North*, *The Seven-Headed Serpent*, and *The Nixy*. **[L-7] Book 5:** *The Pink Fairy Book* (1897). Includes *How the Dragon Was Tricked*, *The Snow-Queen*, *The Troll's Daughter*, and *King Lindworm*. **[L-8] Book 6:** *The Grey Fairy Book* (1900). Includes *The Magician's Horse* and *The Ogre*. **[L-9] Book 7:** *The Violet Fairy Book* (1901). Includes *Schippeitaro*, *The Three Princes and Their Beasts*, *The Nunda*, *Eater of People*, and *The Princess Who Was Hidden Underground*. **[L-10] Book 8:** *The Crimson Fairy Book* (1903). Includes *The Prince and the Dragon*, *Niels and the Giants*, and *The Horse Gullfaxi and the Sword Gunnfoder*. **[L-11] Book 9:** *The Brown Fairy Book* (1904). Includes *Kisa the Cat* and *The Knights of the Fish*. **[L-12] Book 10:** *The Orange Fairy Book* (1906). Includes *The Two Caskets*, *The Three Treasures of the Giants*, *How the Stalos Were Tricked*, and *The Magic Book*. **[L-13] Book 11:** *The Olive Fairy Book* (1907). Includes *The Green Knight*, *The Prince and the Princess in the Forest*, and *The Boy Who Found Fear at Last*. **[L-14] Book 12:** *The Lilac Fairy Book* (1910). Includes *The King of the Waterfalls*, *The Three Crowns*, *The Groac'h of the Isle of Lok*, and *The Winning of Olwen*.
[76]	**LANIER, STERLING E.** Gary greatly enjoyed the book *Hiero's Journey* (1973), which inspired aspects of not only *Dungeons & Dragons*, but also *Metamorphosis Alpha* and especially *Gamma World*. In later years he also noted that he would have included the sequel, *The Unforsaken Hiero* (1983), in Appendix N if it had only been written earlier. Sadly, the series never progressed beyond those two significant volumes.

	[L-15] *Hiero's Journey*, [L-16] *The Unforsaken Hiero*
[77]	**LEHNER, ERNEST & JOHANNA** *A Fantastic Bestiary* (1969) was one of the sources for the depictions of creatures featured in the *Monster Manual*. [L-17] *A Fantastic Bestiary*
[78]	**LEIBER, FRITZ** Gygax was a devoted fan of the Fafhrd and Gray Mouser series, which continued long after the publication of Appendix N in the 1979 *Dungeon Masters Guide*. There is little doubt that he loved all of Leiber's fantasy writings, and so the entire series is considered here. The saga is told in a bewildering array of short stories, which can be intimidating for new readers. The following recommendations include the more affordable collections of Leiber's Fafhrd and Gray Mouser tales in their order of publication. Readers who want to read the tales in the order which they occurred in the chronology of Nehwon, however, are on their own! The Fafhrd and Gray Mouser Series [L-18] Recommended Book 1: *Swords and Deviltry*. A collection compiled in 1970, featuring tales originally written from 1957 to 1970. [L-19] Recommended Book 2: *Swords Against Death*. A collection compiled in 1970, featuring tales originally written from 1940 to 1970. [L-20] Recommended Book 3: *Swords in the Mist*. A collection compiled in 1968, featuring tales originally written from 1947 to 1968. [L-21] Recommended Book 4: *Swords Against Wizardry*. A collection compiled in 1968, featuring tales originally written from 1964 to 1968. [L-22] Recommended Book 5: *The Swords of Lankhmar*. A novel published in 1968, featuring material from 1961. [L-23] Recommended Book 6: *Swords and Ice Magic*. A collection compiled in 1977, featuring tales originally written from 1973 to 1977. [L-24] Recommended Book 7: *The Knight and Knave of Swords*. A collection compiled in 1988, featuring tales originally written from 1977 to 1988.
[79]	**LEWIS, C. S.**

	The Silver Chair (1953), in the Narnia series, was one of the inspirations for the svirfneblin race featured in the D series of Dungeon Modules. **[L-25]** *The Silver Chair*
[80]	**LÖNNROT, ELIAS & CRAWFORD, JOHN MARTIN** *The Kalevala, the Epic Poem of Finland into English*, was a major inspiration for Gygax (especially in regards to his own favorite PC, Mordenkainen.) **[L-26]** *The Kalevala, the Epic Poem of Finland into English*
[81]	**LOVECRAFT, HOWARD PHILLIPS** Please note that selection collections of Lovecraft can be problematic, due to the extreme number of such collections in print and their variance in quality. (Arkham House tends to be the best.) Rather than list collections, this selection will list tales which are particularly resonant with D&D inspirational material. **The Dreamlands Cycle** These tales are recommended in chronological order of creation, not publication: **[L-27]** *Polaris*, **[L-28]** *Beyond the Wall of Sleep*, **[L-29]** *The White Ship*, **[L-30]** *The Doom That Came to Sarnath*, **[L-31]** *The Statement of Randolph Carter*. Recommended due to the introduction of a key character, not necessarily for plot. **[L-32]** *The Cats of Ulthar*, **[L-33]** *Celephais*, **[L-34]** *Ex Oblivione*, **[L-35]** *The Quest of Iranon*, **[L-36]** *The Other Gods*, **[L-37]** *Hypnos*, **[L-38]** *What the Moon Brings*, **[L-39]** *The Silver Key*, **[L-40]** *The Strange High House in the Mist*, **[L-41]** *The Dream-Quest of Unknown Kadath*, **[L-42]** *Through the Gates of the Silver Key* **The Mythos Cycle** The topic of what constitutes a "Mythos" tale can be argued to R'lyeh and back and throughout eternity, but to my mind the tales below form the essential core. These stories are recommended in chronological order of creation, not publication, because I believe Lovecraft's themes are best understood if the reader approaches them in the order which they were developed by the author. **[L-43]** *Dagon*, **[L-44]** *Nemesis* (Poem), **[L-45]** *Nyarlathotep*, **[L-46]** *The Nameless City*, **[L-47]** *The Music of Erich Zann*, **[L-48]** *Azathoth*, **[L-49]**

	The Hound, **[L-50]** *The Rats in the Walls*, **[L-51]** *The Festival*, **[L-52]** *Under the Pyramids*, **[L-53]** *The Call of Cthulhu*, **[L-54]** *Pickman's Model*, **[L-55]** *The Colour out of Space*, **[L-56]** *History of the Necronomicon*, **[L-57]** *The Dunwich Horror*, **[L-58]** *The Mound*, **[L-59]** *Fungi from Yuggoth* (Poetry), **[L-60]** *The Whisperer in Darkness*, **[L-61]** *At the Mountains of Madness*, **[L-62]** *The Shadow over Innsmouth*, **[L-63]** *The Dreams in the Witch House*, **[L-64]** *The Horror in the Museum*, **[L-65]** *Out of the Aeons*, **[L-66]** *The Thing on the Doorstep*, **[L-67]** *The Shadow out of Time*, **[L-68]** *The Haunter of the Dark* (See also BALLANTINE, IAN & BETTY.)
[82]	**LUMLEY, BRIAN** The cover illustration for *The Burrowers Beneath* (1974) (but not the tale inside) was cited by Gygax as one of the inspirations for the mind flayer monster. The Star Spawn of Cthulhu in Lovecraft's writings, however, are almost certainly another inspirational source. **[L-69]** *The Burrowers Beneath*



George MacDonald.



[83]	**MACDONALD, GEORGE** *The Princess and the Goblin* (1872) partly inspired Tolkien's depiction of humanoid monsters in the Middle Earth tales, and may have also inspired Gygax as well. **[M-1]** *The Princess and the Goblin*
[84]	**MATANGO (FILM)** This 1963 movie may have partly inspired the depiction of violet fungi and shriekers, although *Hiero's Journey*, *Sign of the Labrys*, and *The Moon Pool* are certainly stronger sources. **[M-2]** *Matango*
[85]	**MERRITT, ABRAHAM** A. Merritt had several significant stories which Gygax drew heavily from in creating his environments, particularly for the D series of modules. The major works are: [1] *The Moon Pool* (1919) (originally published in two parts, with *The Moon Pool* and *The Conquest of the Moon Pool*); [2] *The Face in the Abyss* (1923-1931, again originally published in two parts); [3] *Dwellers in the Mirage* (1932); and [4] *Creep, Shadow!* (1934). There are many other quality stories, but those are the ones which Gary drew most heavily from.

	[M-3] *The Moon Pool*, [M-4] *The Face in the Abyss*, [M-5] *Dwellers in the Mirage*, [M-6] *Creep, Shadow!*
[86]	**MODE, HEINZ** The book *Fabulous Beasts and Demons* (1975) is almost certainly a source work which informed the development of the *Monster Manual*. [M-7] *Fabulous Beasts and Demons*
[87]	**THE MONOLITH MONSTERS (FILM)** This 1957 movie may have partly inspired the depiction of earth elementals in *Dungeons & Dragons* (although Moorcock and Paracelsus are certainly stronger sources). [M-8] *The Monolith Monsters*
[88]	**MONSTER FROM GREEN HELL (FILM)** This 1957 film may have been one of the inspirations for the inclusion of giant wasps in the D&D monster roster. [M-9] *Monster from Green Hell*
[89]	**THE MONSTER THAT CHALLENGED THE WORLD (FILM)** The aquatic horror in this 1957 film may have been one of the inspirations for the carrion crawler monster. [M-10] *The Monster That Challenged the World*
[90]	**MOORCOCK, MICHAEL** Mr. Moorcock has many, many books of worthy tales; but Gygax was most interested in the first two major collections of the Elric saga, and the stories of Dorian Hawkmoon. Due to the number of different editions and the various collections, I have broken down the title lists as follows: **The Early Elric Saga, First Phase: The Stealer of Souls** [M-11] Novelette 1: *The Dreaming City* (1961), [M-12] Novelette 2: *While the Gods Laugh* (1961), [M-13] Novelette 3: *The Stealer of Souls*

	(1962), **[M-14] Novelette 4:** *Kings in Darkness* (1962), **[M-15] Novelette 5:** *The Flame Bringers* (1962) **The Early Elric Saga, Second Phase: Stormbringer** **[M-16] Novelette 6:** *Dead God's Homecoming* (1963), **[M-17] Novelette 7:** *Black Sword's Brothers* (1963), **[M-18] Novelette 8:** *Sad Giant's Shield* (1964), **[M-19] Novelette 9:** *Doomed Lord's Passing* (1964) Outside of the Elric saga, Gary's favorite Moorcock tale was "Dorian Hawkmoon," by which he probably meant the saga beginning with the post-apocalyptic Hawkmoon novel *The Jewel in the Skull* (1967). **The Hawkmoon Saga, First Phase: The History of the Runestaff** **[M-20] Book 1:** *The Jewel in the Skull* (1967), **[M-21] Book 2:** *The Mad God's Amulet* (1968), **[M-22] Book 3:** *The Sword of the Dawn* (1968) (Gary specifically recommended the first three books in the Hawkmoon series, above. The implication is that the later books were deemed less influential.) **[M-23] Book 4:** *The Runestaff* (1969) **The Hawkmoon Saga, Second Phase: The Chronicles of Castle Brass** **[M-24] Book 5:** *Count Brass* (1973), **[M-25] Book 6:** *The Champion of Garathorm* (1973), **[M-26] Book 7:** *The Quest for Tanelorn* (1975)
[91]	**THE MUMMY (FILM)** This 1932 movie, and the many sequels which followed, was the inspiration for mummies as they appear in the D&D roster of monsters. **[M-27]** *The Mummy*
[92]	**MYSTERIOUS ISLAND (FILM)** This 1961 movie may have inspired the inclusion of axe beaks and giant crabs in the monster lists. **[M-28]** *Mysterious Island*



[93]	**THE NAKED JUNGLE (FILM)** Rob Kuntz has noted that this 1954 film was likely one of the inspirations for the D&D portrayal of giant ants. [N-1] *The Naked Jungle*
[94]	**NIGHT GALLERY (TELEVISION SERIES)** Rob Kuntz has noted that the episode *The Caterpillar* (1972) was the inspiration for the monster known as the ear seeker. [N-2] *Night Gallery*
[95]	**NIGHT OF THE LIVING DEAD (FILM)** This 1968 movie was one of the main inspirations for the D&D depiction of zombies. [N-3] *Night of the Living Dead*
[96]	**NORTON, ANDRE** Gygax's respect for Ms. Norton is a bit problematic, because she wrote a 1978-1979 novel entitled *Quag Keep* which used elements of the Greyhawk campaign with permission, but Gary was not privy to the working draft and was not allowed any significant input to the creative process prior to publication. Nevertheless, he cited Norton as an

admired favorite, and I believe his interest revolves primarily around the earlier-established Witch World series.

Unfortunately, due to later collaborations over several decades, back-filling, and historical restructuring, a reading order of *Witch World* in the in-novel chronology would be confusing if it were to be cut off at 1979. Therefore, I list the early books in the approximated order of publication. (I am open to reinterpretation of this order by a reader who has mastered the entire series!)

<u>The (Early, Non-Collaborative) Witch World Series</u>

[N-4] Book 1: *Witch World* (1963), **[N-5] Book 2:** *Web of the Witch World* (1964), **[N-6] Book 3:** *Year of the Unicorn* (1965), **[N-7] Book 4:** *Three Against the Witch World* (1965), **[N-8] Book 5:** *Warlock of the Witch World* (1967), **[N-9] Book 6:** *Sorceress of the Witch World* (1968), **[N-10] Reading Order 7:** *Ully the Piper* (1970 short story), **[N-11] Reading Order 8:** *One Spell Wizard* (1972 short story), **[N-12] Reading Order 9:** *The Crystal Gryphon* (1972), **[N-13] Reading Order 10:** *Spell of the Witch World* (1972) (At this point, you may need to pick up the 1980 collection *Lore of the Witch World* to continue on with some of the novellas.) **[N-14] Reading Order 11:** *Legacy from Sorn Fen* (1972 story), **[N-15] Reading Order 12:** *The Toads of Grimmerdale* (1973 novella), **[N-16] Reading Order 13:** *The Jargoon Pard* (1974), **[N-17] Reading Order 14:** *Spider Silk* (1976 novella), **[N-18] Reading Order 15:** *Trey of Swords* (1977), **[N-19] Reading Order 16:** *Sword of Unbelief* (1977 novella), **[N-20] Reading Order 17:** *Zarasthor's Bane* (1978), **[N-21] Reading Order 18:** *Sand Sister* (1979 novella), **[N-22] Reading Order 19:** *Falcon Blood* (1979 short story)



[97]	**OMAN, SIR CHARLES WILLIAM CHADWICK** Oman was the author of the monumental *The Art of War in the Middle Ages* (1885), which was one of Gary's go-to references for *Chainmail* and the later medieval-inspired combat system of *Dungeons & Dragons*. **[O-1]** *The Art of War in the Middle Ages*
[98]	**OFFUTT, ANDREW J. (EDITOR)** Gary specifically recommended the anthology volume *Swords Against Darkness III* as being an inspiration for elements of *Dungeons & Dragons*. For the sake of completely, I have listed all of the Offutt-edited anthologies in the series here. **The Swords Against Darkness Series** **[O-2] Book 1:** *Swords Against Darkness* (I) (February 1977). Includes tales by Howard, Anderson, Wellman, and others. **[O-3] Book 2:** *Swords Against Darkness II* (September 1977). Includes tales by Norton, Wellman, Offutt, and others. **[O-4] Book 3:** *Swords Against Darkness III* (March 1978). Includes tales by David C. Smith (*Descales' Skull*), David Madison (*Tower of Darkness*), David Drake (*The Mantichore*), Wellman (*The Guest of Dzinganji*) and others, along with Anderson's essay *On Thud and Blunder*. **[O-5] Book 4:** *Swords Against Darkness IV* (September 1979). Includes tales by Anderson, Wellman, and others.

	[O-6] Book 5: *Swords Against Darkness V* (November 1979). Includes tales by Ramsey Campbell, Tanith Lee, and others.
[99]	**ONE MILLION YEARS B. C. (FILM)** This 1966 movie, along with many earlier lost world tales, is a likely inspiration for the inclusion of dinosaurs and giant lizards in the D&D monster roster. [O-7] *One Million Years B. C.*
[100]	**THE OUTER LIMITS (TELEVISION SERIES)** According to Rob Kuntz, the episode entitled *The Bellero Shield* (1964) was the inspiration for the cube of force. [O-8] *The Outer Limits*



[101]	**PLINY THE ELDER** *Naturalis Historia* (the *Natural History*, 1st century AD) was one of the sources for significant numbers of monsters of Greek mythology. [P-1] *Naturalis Historia*



Pliny the Elder.

[102]	**PRATT, FLETCHER** Besides his collaborative fiction and his influential wargaming rules, Gary recommended Pratt's novel *The Blue Star* (1969). I could also recommend the earlier novel *The Well of the Unicorn* (1948). **[P-2]** *The Well of the Unicorn*, **[P-3]** *The Blue Star* (See also DE CAMP, L. SPRAGUE & PRATT, FLETCHER.)



[103]	**THE QUATERMASS EXPERIMENT (FILM)** This 1955 movie may have been one (along with Lovecraft's shoggoths and the Oobleck of Dr. Seuss) one of the inspirations for Gygax's enigmatic demon lord, Juiblex. [Q-1] *The Quatermass Experiment*



[104]	**RALSTON, M. A.** Consider *Russian Fairy Tales: A Choice Collection of Muscovite Folk-Lore*. I recommend this edition mostly for the tireless and extensive mentions of Baba Yaga (here regarded as a species of witches / ogresses), and the tale of Koschei the Deathless. Please note that Gary was probably introduced to these tales as a child from other sources (perhaps including *Jack and Jill*), including *The Red Fairy Book* of Andrew Lang (which features *The Death of Koschei the Deathless*). **[R-1]** *Russian Fairy Tales: A Choice Collection of Muscovite Folk-Lore*
[105]	**THE RAVEN (FILM)** This 1963 film was the source of many D&D spells, including magic missile and ray of enfeeblement. **[R-2]** *The Raven*
[106]	**ROHMER, SAX** Rohmer's 1913 novel *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu* may have partly inspired Gary's inclusion of giant centipedes in the *Dungeons & Dragons* game. **[R-3]** *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu*



[107]	**SABERHAGEN, FRED** Gary specifically mentioned *Changeling Earth* as an inspiration upon D&D, which is known for its portrayal of Orcus, arch-mages, and an empire based on the ethos of lawful evil. However, *Changeling Earth* is actually part of an ongoing series: **The Empire of the East Series** **[S-1] Book 1:** *The Broken Lands* (1968), **[S-2] Book 2:** *The Black Mountains* (1971), **[S-3] Book 3:** *Changeling Earth, aka Ardneh's World* (1973), **[S-4] Book 4:** *Ardneh's Sword* (but not published until 2006)
[108]	**ST. CLAIR, MARGARET** *Sign of the Labrys* (1963) and *The Shadow People* (1969) were both strong influences on the development of the Gygaxian netherworld. Also, the 1951 short story *The Man Who Sold Rope to the Gnoles* (derived from a Lord Dunsany-scripted predecessor tale) inspired the depiction of gnolls in D&D. **[S-5]** *The Man Who Sold Rope to the Gnoles*, **[S-6]** *Sign of the Labrys*, **[S-7]** *The Shadow People*
[109]	**SAMPO (AKA THE DAY THE EARTH FROZE) (FILM)** This 1959 film was vaguely recollected by Gary in later years as being the inspiration for his fascination with the *Kalevala* (which includes Lemminkäinen, from which the name Mordenkainen was taken). **[S-8]** *Sampo aka The Day the Earth Froze*
[110]	**SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE (TELEVISION SERIES)** Tim Kask's conception of the landshark, or bulette, monster was inspired in part by a repeated SNL skit which began airing on November 8, 1975. **[S-9]** *Saturday Night Live*
[111]	**THE 7TH VOYAGE OF SINBARD (FILM)** This 1958 movie inspired many monsters and scenes in the Greyhawk campaign, especially the roc. **[S-10]** *The 7th Voyage of Sinbad*

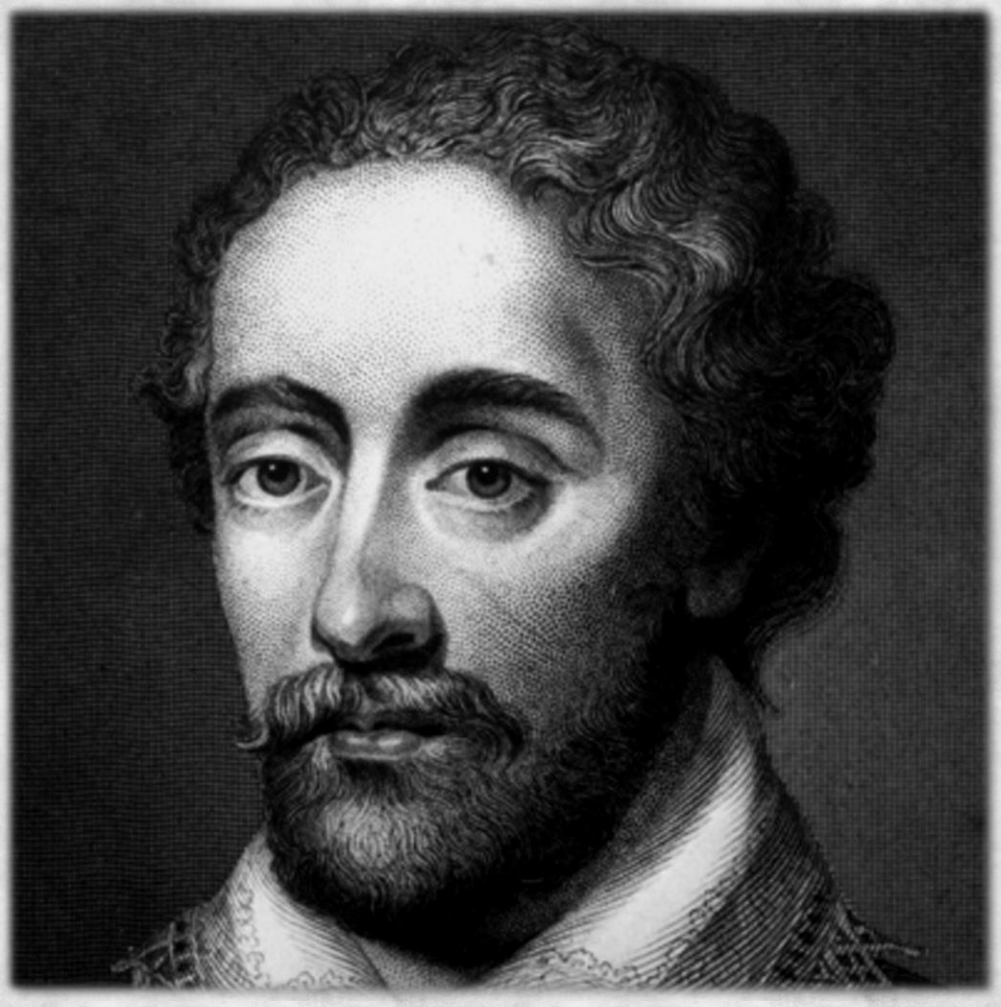
[112]	**SHELLEY, MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT** *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus* (1818) is the primary inspirational source for the flesh golem monster. **[S-11]** *Frankenstein, or The Modern Prometheus*



Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley.

[113]	**SHAVER, RICHARD SHARPE** Mr. Shaver was the author of the *Amazing Stories* cycle of tales now known as *The Shaver Mystery* (c. 1945-1948). These tales featured a race of Detrimental Robots, aka the DeRos. This race appears to be the inspiration for Gygax's derro race, as featured in Dungeon Module S4 and *Monster Manual II*. The first volume of collected tales is recommended as pulp curiosity. **[S-12]** *The Shaver Mystery, Book One*

[114]	**SIGFUSSON, SAEMOND ET AL** Sigfusson was a collector of the anonymous works that are sometimes known as the *Elder Edda(s)* (13th century AD and earlier). I recommend the fairly approachable version found on Project Gutenberg: *The Elder Eddas of Saemund Sigfusson, translated from the Original Old Norse Text into English*, by Benjamin Thorpe; paired with *The Younger Eddas of Snorri Sturluson, Translated from the Original Old Norse Text into English*, by I. A. Blackwell. **[S-13]** *The Elder Eddas* (See also STURLUSON, SNORRI.)
[115]	**SINBAD AND THE EYE OF THE TIGER (FILM)** This 1977 film, although a relatively late work, may have inspired some aspects of *Advanced Dungeons & Dragons.* **[S-14]** *Sinbad and the Eye of the Tiger*
[116]	**SLEEPING BEAUTY (FILM)** The Goon minions which appear in this 1959 Disney movie were likely one of the inspirations for the portrayal of pig-faced and dungeon-dwelling orcs. There are many interestingly parallel spell effects as well. **[S-15]** *Sleeping Beauty*
[117]	**SPENSER, EDMUND** *The Faerie Queene* (1590, 1596) inspired aspects of the Harold Shea tales, as well as Tolkien's elves, and may also have affected Gary's depiction of gray elves and other races of faerie. **[S-16]** *The Faerie Queene*



Edmund Spenser.

[118]	**STAR TREK (TELEVISION SERIES)** The 1967 episode *Arena*, featuring the Gorn race, is probably one of the inspirations for the lizard man monster. [S-17] *Star Trek*
[119]	**STERANKO, JIM & LEE, STAN ET AL** Gary was apparently a fan of the *Doctor Strange* comic books, featuring (among many other series of tales) the occult magic-user, Doctor Stephen Vincent Strange. Doctor Strange debuted in *Strange Tales* issue #110 (July 1963). The character's self-titled comic book run began in 1974.

	[S-18] *Strange Tales* [S-19] *Doctor Strange* (See also separate entry for DOCTOR STRANGE.)
[120]	**STOKER, BRAM** The portrayal of vampires in the *Monster Manual* is based on the Dracula movies (particularly the 1931 version starring Bela Lugosi) and the original 1897 novel by Bram Stoker, in addition to *Dark Shadows*. [S-20] *Dracula*
[121]	**STURLUSON, SNORRI** Sturluson was the compiler of the *Younger Eddas aka The Prose Edda* (early 13th century AD). [S-21] *The Younger Eddas aka The Prose Edda*
[122]	**THE SUPERMAN / AQUAMAN HOUR OF ADVENTURE (TELEVISION SERIES)** The episode *Menace of the Black Manta* (1967) appears to be the chief inspiration for the ixitxachitl monster. [S-22] *The Superman / Aquaman Hour of Adventure*



[123]	**THEM! (FILM)** Rob Kuntz has noted that this 1954 film was likely one of the inspirations for the D&D portrayal of giant ants. **[T-1]** *Them!*
[124]	**THIS ISLAND EARTH (FILM)** This 1955 movie appears to have directly inspired David C. Sutherland's "exposed brain" representation of the doppelganger in the *Monster Manual*. **[T-2]** *This Island Earth*
[125]	**THOMAS, ROY ET AL** Thomas is the master of the Marvel line of Conan comics. In particular: **The Conan the Barbarian Comic Book** Comic book series. 275 issues, running from October 1970 to December 1993. Please note that there are also 12 issues of the *Conan Annual* (1973 to 1987) and five issues of *Giant-Size Conan* (1974 and 1975). Significant issues include: **[T-3] Issue #4:** *The Tower of the Elephant* (April 1971), **[T-4] Issue #11:** *Rogues in the House* and *The Talons of Thak* (November 1971), **[T-5] Issue #14:** *A Sword Called Stormbringer*, introducing Elric (March 1972), **[T-6] Issue #58:** *Queen of the Black Coast* (January 1976) **The Savage Sword of Conan Comic Magazine** A "magazine" series (oversized and to avoid the restrictions of the Comics Code Authority), featuring good artwork and a diverse series of tales. Issues #1 to 235 ran from August 1974 to July 1995. Significant issues include: **[T-7] Issue #2:** *Black Colossus* (October 1974), **[T-8] Issue #4:** *Iron Shadows in the Moon* (February 1975), **[T-9] Issue #5:** *A Witch Shall Be Born* (April 1975), **[T-10] Issue #15:** *The Devil in Iron* (October 1976), **[T-11] Issue #16:** *The People of the Black Circle* (December 1976), **[T-12] Issue #24:** *The Tower of the Elephant* (November 1977), **[T-13] Issue #26:** *Beyond the Black River* (January 1978), **[T-14] Issue #30:** *The Scarlet Citadel* (June 1978), **[T-15] Issue #34:** *The Lair of the Ice Worm*

	(October 1978) (And for the curious: One of the most telling instances which shows that the Conan the Barbarian comic was indeed on Gary's (and Rob's) mind in the early 1970s: the artwork featured on the cover of the *Domesday Book*, issue #12, is a direct copy of the cover art which had earlier been featured on *Conan the Barbarian*, issue #1.)
[126]	**THE TIME MACHINE (FILM)** This 1960 film, along with the original 1895 H. G. Wells novella, likely inspired some aspects of the Drowic netherworld featured in the D series of Dungeon Modules. [T-16] *The Time Machine*
[127]	**TOLKIEN, J. R. R.** Despite Gary's frequent downplaying of the obvious level of influence, the Professor's works are some of the most directly influential on the early design of *Dungeons & Dragons*. The important volumes are of course *The Hobbit* (1937), and the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy, which consists of *The Fellowship of the Ring* (1954), *The Two Towers* (also 1954), and *The Return of the King* (1955). [T-17] *The Hobbit*, [T-18] *The Lord of the Rings: The Fellowship of the Ring*, [T-19] *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*, [T-20] *The Lord of the Rings: The Return of the King*
[128]	**THE TROLLENBERG TERROR (AKA THE FLYING EYE) (FILM)** This 1958 film seems suspiciously like an inspiration for Gary's reinterpretation of Terry Kuntz's beholder monsters, especially with their abilities of levitation and mind control. [T-21] *The Trollenberg Terror aka The Flying Eye*



[129]	**ULTRAMAN: A SPECIAL EFFECTS FANTASY SERIES (TELEVISION SERIES)** While likely not a direct Gygaxian inspiration, the monster featured in episode 9 (*Operation: Uranium*, 1966) likely inspired the "prehistoric beast" toy which Kask and Gygax later statted out as the bulette. [U-1] *Ultraman*



[130]

VANCE, JACK

Vance was Gary's favorite author. The most influential series were *The Dying Earth*, and *Planet of Adventure*.

The Dying Earth Series

[V-1] Book 1: *The Dying Earth* (1950), **[V-2] Book 2:** *The Eyes of the Overworld* (1966), **[V-3] Book 3:** *Cugel's Saga* (not published until 1983), **[V-4] Book 4:** *Rhialto the Marvelous* (not published until 1984)

The Planet of Adventure Series

[V-5] Book 1: *City of the Chasch* (1968), **[V-6] Book 2:** *Servants of the Wankh* (1969), **[V-7] Book 3:** *The Dirdir* (1969). *The Dirdir* was of course the inspiration for the "Dirdir level" adventures which branched off dimensionally from the dungeons beneath Castle Greyhawk. **[V-8] Book 4:** *The Pnume* (1970)



Jules Verne.

[131]	**VERNE, JULES** The 1864 novel *Journey to the Center of the Earth* (original French title *Voyage au Centre de la Terre*) was one of the inspirations for the Drowic underworld, and of course lent its title in part to Dungeon Module D1, *Descent into the Depths of the Earth*. [V-9] *Journey to the Center of the Earth*
[132]	**VAN VOGT, ALFRED E.** Van Vogt's tale *Black Destroyer* (1939) (which became part of the novel *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*, 1950) inspired the displacer beast monster, and perhaps also the blink dog. Rob Kuntz has noted this is also the inspiration for Arneson's City of the Gods setting. [V-10] *Black Destroyer*, [V-11] *The Voyage of the Space Beagle*



A Vinycomb.

[133]	**VINYCOMB, JOHN** The book *Fictitious and Symbolic Creatures in Art* (1906) appears to have inspired the depiction of various D&D monsters in illustrations made by David A. Trampier, and possibly by David C. Sutherland III as well. [V-12] *Fictitious and Symbolic Creatures in Art*



[134]	**WALPOLE, HORACE** Although not a mentioned primary source of either Arneson or Gygax, Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1764) is certainly the major inspiration for the much later cinematic interpretation of Gothic dramas by Hollywood. Which, of course, led to the classic monster movies, which in turn inspired Arneson and Gygax in developing monsters and other elements for *Dungeons & Dragons*. [W-1] *The Castle of Otranto*



The Gothic and Otranto.

[135]	**THE WAR OF THE GARGANTUAS (FILM)** This 1955 movie may have been one of the inspirations for the inclusion of the giant octopus in the roster of D&D monsters. [W-2] *The War of the Gargantuas*
[136]	**WEINBAUM, STANLEY G.** I have never been able to ascertain which stories by Mr. Weinbaum Gary had originally intended to recommend to fans of *Dungeons & Dragons*, but my best guess (at this time) is that he was fond of *A Martian Odyssey* (1934), and perhaps also *Valley of Dreams* (also 1934). [W-3] *A Martian Odyssey*, [W-4] *Valley of Dreams*
[137]	**WELLMAN, MANLY WADE** In recommending Wellman's works to readers who would like to read tales associated with D&D, Gary may have been thinking in one of two directions. Firstly, he may have been recalling Wellman's tales which appeared in the early *Swords Against Darkness* anthology volumes. Specifically, *Straggler from Atlantis*, *The Dweller in the Temple*, and/or *The Guest of Dzinganji*. Secondly, he may have been recalling Wellman's acclaimed Arkham House anthology, entitled *Worse Things Waiting* (1973). [W-5] *Worse Things Waiting*
[138]	**WELLS, H. G.** The classic Wells dystopian novella *The Time Machine* (1895) was an inspiration for the development of the Drowic underworld, as featured in the D series of Dungeon Modules. [W-6] *The Time Machine*
[139]	**WEREWOLF OF LONDON** I believe that this 1935 movie (and the many in the werewolf genre that followed it) influenced the conception of lycanthropes in *Dungeons & Dragons*. [W-7] *Werewolf of London*

[140]	**WIGGIN, KATE DOUGLAS & SMITH, NORA A.** I recommend *The Arabian Nights: Their Best-Known Tales* (1909). This edition was nicely illustrated by Maxfield Parrish. This version includes *The Story of the City of Brass*, as well as *The Story of Aladdin*, *The Story of Sinbad the Voyager*, and others. **[W-8]** *The Arabian Nights: Their Best-Known Tales* See also LANG, ANDREW.
[141]	**WILLIAMSON, JACK** Although it remains a mystery, I believe that in recommending Mr. Williamson to fans of D&D, Gygax may have had *The Reign of Wizardry* (serialization 1940, novelization 1964) in mind. There are several other candidates, however, including *Dragon's Island aka The Not-Men* (1951) and *The Power of Blackness* (1976). **[W-9]** *The Reign of Wizardry*, **[W-10]** *Dragon's Island aka The Not-Men*, **[W-11]** *The Power of Blackness*
[142]	**WILSON, COLIN** Rob Kuntz has noted that Wilson's novel *The Mind Parasites* (first published in 1967) inspired the creation of the brain mole, intellect devourer, thought eater, and cerebral parasite monsters. **[W-12]** *The Mind Parasites*



[143]	**ZELAZNY, ROGER** Gary recommended the tale *Jack of Shadows* (1971) as well as, to a lesser extent, *The Chronicles of Amber*. The early volumes of *The Chronicles* are as follows: **[Z-1]** *Jack of Shadows* **The Chronicles of Amber** **[Z-2] Book 1:** *Nine Princes in Amber* (June 1970), **[Z-3] Book 2:** *The Guns of Avalon* (1972), **[Z-4] Book 3:** *Sign of the Unicorn* (February 1975), **[Z-5] Book 4:** *The Hand of Oberon* (1976), **[Z-6] Book 5:** *The Courts of Chaos* (1978)

(Please note that research in this vein is considerable, and forever ongoing. Much more will be added to this resource in the future. ~KDK)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

BEGINNING PLAY as a chaotic neutral normal human with one measly hit point to his name, KENT DAVID KELLY eventually became apprenticed to a magic-user of ill repute ... a foul man who dwelt in the steamy deeps of the Ivory Cloud Mountain. After this mentor carelessly misplaced an intelligent soul-sucking sword and then died under suspicious circumstances, his former henchman Mr. Kelly escaped to the deeper underground and there began playing Satanic role-playing games. This, the legends tell us, occurred in the year 1981.

Hoary wizard-priests who inspired Mr. Kelly in his netherworldly machinations included the peerless Gygax, Carr, Arneson, Cook, Hammack, Jaquays, Bledsaw, Moldvay, Kuntz, Schick and Ward. Sadly, a misguided made-for-the-basements movie entitled *Mazes and Monsters* gave Mr. Kelly's parents conniptions in 1982. As a result of that blasphemous Tom Hanks debacle (and other more personal lapses in judgment), Mr. Kelly was eventually forbidden from playing his favorite game for a considerable length of time.

Nonplussed but not defeated, he used this enforced exile to escape to a friend's alehouse, and there indulged himself in now-classic computer RPGs such as *Zork*, *Telengard*, *Temple of Apshai*, *Ultima*, *Tunnels of Doom*, *The Bard's Tale*, *Phantasie*, *Pool of Radiance*, *Wizard's Crown* and *Wasteland*. He then went on to write computer versions of his own FRPGs, which led to his obsession with coupling creative design elements with random dungeons and unpredictable adventure generation.

Mr. Kelly wrote and submitted his first adventure for *Dungeon* magazine #1 in 1986. Unfortunately, one Mr. Moore decided that his submission was far too "Lovecraftian, horrific and unfair" to ever serve that worthy periodical as a publishable adventure. Mr. Kelly, it must be said, took this rejection as a very good sign of things to come.

In the late 80s and 90s, Mr. Kelly wrote short stories, poems and essays ... some of which have been published under the Wonderland Imprints banner. He wrote several dark fantasy and horror novels as well. Concurrently, he ran Dark Angel Collectibles, selling classic FRPG materials as Darkseraphim, and assisted the Acaeum with the creation of the Valuation Board and other minor research projects.

At this time, Mr. Kelly and his entourage of evil gnomes are rumored to dwell in the dread and deathly under-halls of the Acaeum, Dragonsfoot, ENWorld, Grognardia, Knights & Knaves, ODD, and even more nefarious levels deep in the mega-dungeon of the Web.

There he remains in vigil, his vampiric sword yet shivering in his hand. When not being sought outright for answers to halfling riddles or other more sundry sage advice, he is to be avoided by sane individuals at all costs.

OTHER BOOKS
BY KENT DAVID KELLY

CHRONICALLY AFFLICTED with the "Partial Completion Curse" of the Magus Arneson, Kent is the author of hundreds of partial manuscripts, ranging from role-playing games, to novels, to poems, to songs, to short stories and gaming articles. A few dozen of these pieces have even been published and read by others! If you enjoyed this book, the following additional works are available for your consideration:

Perhaps the most relevant to **HAWK & MOOR** is THE STEAM TUNNEL INCIDENT, the real-life account of the legendary "satanic hysteria" and the tragic death of James Dallas Egbert III.

Mr. Kelly also publishes the well-received CASTLE OLDSKULL line of system-neutral gaming supplements, intended to inject classic "old school" flavor into any Fantasy Role-Playing Game. To date, there are eight books in the Castle Oldskull series, detailing world design, dungeon design, character creation, urban encounters, monsters, treasures, and more. A similar extensive line of 5E (Fifth Edition D&D) gaming supplements is available through DMsGuild.com, and Wizards of the Coast. The 5E DMsGuild line exemplifies gaming systems which are used to bring old school (OD&D & 1E) themes, atmosphere, and methodologies into the current 5E system.

Kent has also published three novels to date. The first is ARACHNE, a dark fantasy epic which is available in two volumes: (I) *Death, the Beginning* and (II) *The Weave of Fate*. The second full novel is NECRONOMICON: THE CTHULHU REVELATIONS, a grimoire which depicts the nightmarish life of H. P. Lovecraft's anti-hero, Abd Al-Azrad. Third and most acclaimed is FROM THE FIRE, a gripping post-apocalyptic tale which is available both in a special omnibus edition and as a series of novellas, beginning with *Episode One: End of Days*.

To date, Kent's published poetry has also been made available in two volumes, comprising THE LYRIC BOOKS OF SHADOW. These volumes include *For the Dark Is the Light* and *The Summoning of Dark Angels*.

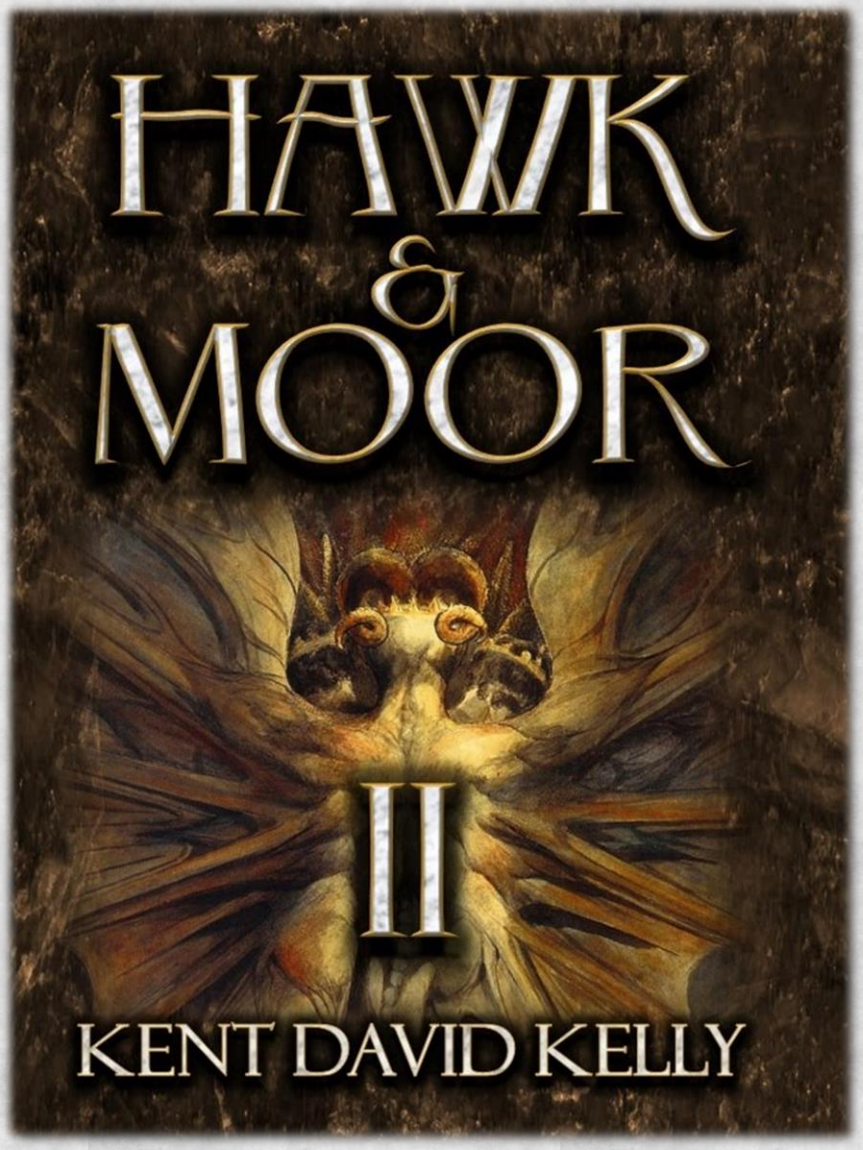
All of these works are available as affordable eBooks via Amazon.com, DMsGuild.com, CreateSpace (limited selections to date) and other sites as well. I do try to balance my family's financial needs with the interests and convenience of my readership, and run free promotions and sales on my eBooks whenever I can. Paperbacks may be released in the future if there is sufficient interest; please let me

know of your preference!

Many additional works are being prepared as well. I ask that you always feel welcome to contact me via Facebook, my Amazon Author page, or at. You can also reach me through the Dragonsfoot.org or Acaeum.com websites (although replies may be delayed) via account name darkseraphim.

If you have enjoyed this book, please do consider leaving me a review online, as that "tip jar" has a direct and lasting positive effect on my future success. And if you would be kind us to tell at least one friend about this book, I would grateful. Who knows? Someday, I may even convince my family that my hobby is almost as important as my day job. I thank you in advance!

HAWK & MOOR
BOOK II: THE DUNGEONS DEEP



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