

A Brief History of Eamonvale

The Eamonvale mini campaign setting is featured in the Necromancer Games adventure modules The Grey Citadel and The Eamonvale Incursion by Nathan Douglas Paul. Eamonvale is located in a mist-shrouded mountain range with incessant precipitation.

Eamonvale... A fertile ribbon of life across the otherwise grim and barren Stoneheart Mountains. A stronghold of human civilization on the edge of a wild frontier. Last stop on the trade road before the treacherous mountain passes. Eamonvale: Realm of Adventure.

Eamonvale is the widely accepted name for the deep, verdant valley that holds the River Eamon. From its headwaters high in the Stoneheart Mountains it rushes over mighty waterfalls and churns through deep gorges, foaming white until it reaches the lowlands, where it slows and begins a meandering course to join the Stoneheart River that flows towards the city of Bard's Gate. The River Eamon brings life and prosperity to an otherwise unlivable area, and the humanoid civilizations crouched on its banks rely on the river for food, transportation, and protection.

Eamon Angus and the Trading Post

In the upper third of the valley there exists a natural ford where the river broadens and spills over a wide shelf of dark basalt. Two channels of the river diverge around a rough plateau, forming an island flanked by two swift and shallow streams that rejoin in a tumultuous cascade below the shelf. Just upstream from the island, an even greater waterfall has pounded the bedrock into a deep basin, where the water calms before flowing past the island. This is where the story of Eamonvale really begins.

Many generations before the events of The Grey Citadel, men first began to move up from the grasslands, giving up their nomadic lifestyle to hunt, trap and farm the rich floodplains and lower slopes of the Stoneheart Mountains. As brave explorers pushed the frontier back, small settlements began to appear in the valley, first as tiny clusters of log houses, then as villages with stone-walled inns and the first small mills, smithies and produce markets. A thriving river trade developed at the lower end of the valley where the river slowed, broadened and became

navigable, and the winding paths through the thick forests and moors of the upper valley became roads passable by cart and wagon traffic.

It was during this time that Eamon Angus moved into the valley from the lowland plains. His family had traditionally been herdsman, known for their large and magnificent herds of horses. Eamon, the youngest son of the clan, had grown disillusioned with the life of a herdsman, especially with the encroachment of civilization in the form of wily horse traders from the growing city of Bard's Gate. With four older brothers, he knew that his legacy from his father would likely be meager, so he left his clan at a young age to trap fur in the creeks and streams that fed the mighty river that would someday bear his name.

Eamon Angus knew of the dangers of the wild frontier and experienced firsthand the need for protection from roving tribes of evil humanoids, barbarians and fearsome forest creatures. He understood from his own reliance on traders for supplies such as flour, salt and tools that the remote river valley held a wealth of mercantile potential. He knew of good traders and bad and knew that the mountain men could tell the difference-loyalty and good faith went a long way on the frontier. Returning home to the plains, he hoped to obtain a stipend from his father to found a trading post in the upper valley.

Riding across the windswept grasslands, he saw the smoke billowing from his family's compound from many miles away. All had been burned, his family slain and their valuable horses stolen away by agents of the powerful merchant families of the lowlands. As Eamon circled the charred remnants of the camp and looked upon the scattered peasants searching for salvage or survivors, the seed of distrust towards lowland merchants sprouted within him, a distrust that would be handed down generation by generation and become a part of life in the valley. He stayed only long enough to bury his kin before returning to the mountains with the few members of his father's extended organization who dared to cast their lots with him. At the head of a column of a dozen families, all of whom had lost loved ones in the raid, and with the remaining horses of his family's herd, he journeyed far up the river to the ford below the great waterfall.

With his tiny band of followers, he labored to build a wooden stockade to see them safely through the first winter. He negotiated with trappers for meat for his clan, and in exchange offered them safety within his walls. With the traveling peddlers he negotiated for tools and dry goods, trading the last of the horses to them to supply his band for the harsh winter. When the ever-present rain turned to snow, he had taken in enough supplies for the three-score pioneers in his charge. The season was difficult, but when spring came, the Angus clan emerged healthy and in a good position to offer shelter, advice and a fortified marketplace to the trappers that had wintered on the high slopes and the first merchants of spring venturing up from the lowlands.

Eamon Angus lived for another thirty years before his death due to wounds suffered in a battle against raiding orcs. During that time, his tiny trading post grew from the original wooden stockade to a cluster of two dozen stone lodges surrounded by a sturdy log palisade, with gates facing each ford and a year-round population of several hundred. Homesteaders and trappers for miles around traded their goods at his post, brought their families in from the wilderness on festival days and recognized his leadership in times of crisis. He had been their lord and protector in every way but title, and the river-which had always been known simply as "the river"-was named Eamon in his honor after his death. Over the years, the other communities further downstream adopted the name as well, and the Eamon River Valley became known locally as Eamonvale.

Adventuring in the Early Days of Eamonvale

The era of Eamon Angus' exploration and the foundation of his trading post is an exciting time to set an adventure. Consider creating a party to accompany Eamon and his small band of refugees into the wilderness, shielding them from roving bands of evil humanoids, forest creatures and harsh weather. The party could be adventurers for hire, humanitarians or perhaps the most capable of the survivors with their families in tow. The building of the first stockade requires negotiation skills, good leadership and efficient engineering. Possible antagonists include rival merchant interests, indigenous isolationist tribes opposed to settlement and possibly even the deep gnomes

whose underground kingdom is an important part of The Grey Citadel.

Expansion and the Frontier War

In the generations that followed Eamon Angus' initial claim in the valley his scions continued to develop the community and expand their influence further up and down the length of the river. However, the Angus clan was not the only faction with an economic interest in the region. A lowland merchant prince had plans for the island fortress, ideally situated as it was on the only ford of the River Eamon between the river terminus at the edge of the grasslands and the high mountain passes leading to the exotic lands beyond the Stoneheart Mountains.

To assert his claim to the region, he founded the town of Broadwater on the bluffs above the point where the River Eamon became too treacherous for merchant traffic. From then on, all trade goods bound for the communities of the upper valley passed through his control and were subject to his taxes. The resultant price increases weighed heavily on the fledgling infrastructure of Eamonvale, and many hunters and homesteaders abandoned the valley in favor of unsettled land or urban living. The products of Eamonvale were taxed as well, if the merchants chose to transport them to the lowland markets by river. The alternative-caravans across the windswept plains-was far more dangerous, and many merchants lost their lives to nomadic raiders in hopes of preserving their profit margins.

The situation escalated over the course of a decade, with a number of minor skirmishes breaking out between the minions of the merchant prince and the people of Eamonvale. When the merchant prince formed an invasion force and began to march up the trade road, the Lords of Angus had no choice but to raise an army of their own. The merchant army was made up of mercenaries- trained fighting men paid with merchant gold and equipped to the highest standards. The defenders of Eamonvale consisted of hunters, trappers and crofters, a few mercenary militia and company of volunteer horsemen from the plains who had their own interests at stake in the fight against the lowlanders and their soldiers of fortune.

In a series of battles fought up and down the length of Eamonvale, the frontiersmen forced the

merchant prince's army from the valley. The final confrontation took place on the river bluffs near Broadwater, where the plains horsemen tipped the scales in favor of the frontiersmen when a headlong charge swept a portion of the merchant prince's archers and highly paid mercenary artillery company into the River Eamon. With the destructive fire interrupted, the fierce rabble of homesteaders charged headlong into the prince's army while a group of huntsmen and rangers used the overgrown banks of the river to infiltrate and exploit a poorly protected flank.

The merchant prince abandoned his emporium, which was quickly looted by smaller, rival merchant houses, and fled for the safety of his father's coastal empire. Broadwater was left standing, but quickly fell into social disorder. Various merchant factions vied for dominance, but those who appeared from across the plains in force found themselves bullied into submission by the Angus clan and by the independent merchants of Broadwater. It took many years for the town's economy to stabilize, and by the time of The Grey Citadel it is run by a consortium of independent traders under the nominal supervision of the head of the Angus clan.

Adventuring during the Frontier War

During the Frontier War, The people of Eamonvale were desperately in need of capable mercenary adventurers to carry out guerilla raids against the larger, more competent and better-equipped army of the merchant prince. Consider an adventure in which the townspeople of the island city contract the party to harass and delay the march of the prince's army while they organize a larger force, then detail the party to infiltrate Broadwater and undermine the prince's defenses and support networks.

Colm Angus and the Greenskin War

Life in Eamonvale was reasonably peaceful for several generations following the Frontier War. The population of the island city grew, and the first stone fortification was built. This tower, which was designed in the simple and functional style of the borderlands, was built during the leadership of Colm Angus, a grim-faced and stoic leader who held the respect of locals and traders alike for his hard-line politics and profitable economic practices. Colm dubbed the new fortification Dun Eamon after his ancestor,

and the name was gradually adapted to represent the entire community.

The people of Dun Eamon continued to live their chosen lives, toiling tirelessly in a harsh land and defending their homes from marauding beasts and humanoids. During Colm's lifetime, an increasing presence of orc-kin became evident on the slopes above the river, drifting down from the high slopes to raid below the treeline. As more trappers reported trouble on the fringe of his realm, Colm sent his best huntsmen into the wilderness to gather information on the nature of the threat.

When his rangers returned, Colm was awestruck at the immensity of the danger: an enormous army of orcs and orc-kin was moving slowly across the Stoneheart Mountains from the far side, displaced by an unknown agency or simply in search of new raiding grounds. Colm's greatest fear was that the orcs desired a stronghold on near side of the Stonehearts to serve as a base of operations for raids on the softer lowland communities further down the trade road. As the year wore on, it became more and more evident that these were indeed the intentions of the green horde.

With an ever-growing tide of refugees taking up residence within the walls of Dun Eamon, Colm Angus grew desperate for assistance. He dispatched his swiftest riders to exit the valley and cross the plains to the cities of Reme and Bard's Gate, to petition their rulers and councils for support in defending the frontier. Despite the messengers' reminders that the metropolitan areas would feel the impact of the invasion if the frontier were to be lost to hostile forces, they were rebuffed by the diplomats and turned out without any expression of concern. The influence of the merchant empires, now many times denied a place in Eamonvale's economy, is generally thought to have been the deciding factor. The messengers passed word of the coming conflict in the taverns and markets, rallied a few sell-swords and nobly minded warriors and returned to Eamonvale.

When the messengers returned with no pledge of support, Colm could see only one option. He dispatched adventurers to carry messengers to carry requests to the other humanoid settlements of Eamonvale: the dwarves of the craggy mountains, the gnomes of the wooded riverbanks and the secretive elves of the deepest forests. As his dispatches made their way far from the

familiar trade road into unknown territory, Colm set about provisioning the refugees and fortifying the island as efficiently as possible.

The envoys met with various degrees of success. The gnomes, a noble and clever race that inhabited small villages along the heavily wooded banks of the River Eamon, pledged their support, but they were not a warlike people. Some of their number had already left their pastoral lifestyle to trade and live in the growing city, and their abilities with arcane arts was not unknown. During the upcoming conflict, the gnomes would distinguish themselves and brave and cunning warriors, providing magical support to an otherwise primitive army of farmers and hunters.

The dwarves had not yet integrated themselves in Dun Eamon's society, yet the humans knew of their presence and a tentative peace existed between the two peoples. Their lands were exclusively above the treeline, high in the mountains in terrain unsuitable for farming. They lived in massive underground cities so mysterious that their nature was a source of fantastic speculation in Dun Eamon's taverns. The dwarven nation pledged its support in keeping with a great prophecy of their people, and immediately dispatched a company of warriors to supplement the defenders. The bulk of their forces would wait underground for the greenskin army to pass by, allowing a rear flanking action.

The elves were by far the most mysterious of those contacted for support. Scattered throughout the deepest and thickest tracts of forest in the valley, they lived a primitive existence with no contact with the human settlers. They declared that the human settlement of the valley existed only as a flashing moment in their long history, and was therefore of little concern to them. Their resources, they said, were unsuited to fighting beyond the dense woodlands of their home and would be of little use in a pitched battle. Still, they agreed to lend support if the threat of invasion ever reached their lands in the lower valley.

With only meager support present and little more promised, Colm Angus awaited the inevitable. The orc horde, accompanied by scores of larger ogres and other evil humanoids, divided itself into two forces after crossing the mountains and came at the city from both sides. Immediately upon witnessing their troop

movements, Angus and his advisors began to suspect that some other agency was orchestrating the invasion. True to their word, the dwarves emerged from their underground dwellings behind the upriver battlegroup of orcs striking at their camps and flanking their columns. Downriver, a tide of refugees fled before the second battlegroup, struggling to salvage their meager possessions. These refugees reported unseen skirmishes in the woods around them, and periodically a pile of orc corpses would block their path on the trade road, riddled with elven arrows.

The Siege of Dun Eamon was prolonged and costly, even with dwarves and elves striking at the enemy from behind. The magic of the gnomes and the longbows of Eamonvale's hunters inflicted great damage from the city walls. In addition to the numerous orc and goblin attackers, their marshals showed themselves on the final day of the siege: a group of magic users, both arcane and profane, steeped in the lore of undeath. With foul magic weakening their already outmatched army, the defenders began to lose faith that the siege would be lifted.

With the city surrounded on both sides and their numbers failing, the citizens resolved to fight to the last man, but the timely arrival of unexpected reinforcements carried the day. From downriver, a group of plains horsemen reprised their efforts during the Frontier War and rode hard into the greenskins' war machines from behind, lifting the hail of missiles that was battering the wooden defenses. From upriver, a noble paladin and his retinue descended on the command post, scattering the necromancers and interrupting their death-spells.

At great cost to all, the defenders won the day. Colm Angus was fatally wounded defending the palisade wall from orcish sappers. The paladin, Roark the Righteous was slain as well while fighting undead in the necromancer's camp. Hundreds of men, dwarves and gnomes fell in defense of the island city. The elves disappeared without leaving a single body behind.

Adventuring during the Greenskin War

The Greenskin War was the greatest threat to Eamonvale's way of life, and is an exciting time to set an adventure. Allow the party to represent Colm Angus and deliver his requests for aid to the dwarves, elves and gnomes. Dispatch them to delay the approach of the orc army to allow

refugees to escape to the city, or have them coordinate the efforts of the allies while cut off from the besieged city. Pursuing the fleeing orcin can lead the party into an extended campaign.

Alliance and Fortification

Following the Greenskin War, the lowland city of Bard's Gate saw new potential in their neighbors on the frontier. As a buffer between themselves and the wilderness, they saw the people of Eamonvale as a hearty and resilient defense force. Marauding orcs were known to be a recurring threat, and the militia of Bard's Gate was ill suited to mountain warfare and was in constant demand to shield the river and plains traders from pirates and bandits. Clearly, the Eamonvale frontiersmen were not easy to dislodge from their mountain fortress, and would be much better allies than enemies. Hastily making excuses for their lack of support in repelling the orc threat, the lowlanders offered treaties for trade and mutual defense.

The Angus heir considered the offer before submitting terms of his own: a provisional alliance with Bard's Gate and its patron, the Grand Duke, with economic autonomy, strict limitations on guild influence and a bilateral defense agreement. Eamonvale came under the banner of the Grand Duchy, and the Angus clan was awarded hereditary lordship of a realm that stretched from the mountains passes above the headwaters of the River Eamon to the edge of the grasslands below Broadwater. Eamonvale had entered into a new era of politics and diplomacy, but even with the alliance signed, Dun Eamon's remote location effectively removed it from the political arenas of the lowlands and the trade limitations proved difficult to enforce. In reality, only the vigilance of the Lord of Eamonvale prevents the infiltration of merchant agents into the valley's economy.

The alliances with the humanoid communities of Eamonvale proved easier to sustain and more profitable for the citizens, at least in the short term. Some of the dwarves settled in the city, bringing their expert knowledge of stonework and ironworking to the reconstruction effort. The ruined wooden palisade was replaced with the first of several stone ramparts; the city began to acquire its local nickname of the Grey Citadel from the dark stone blocks that encircled it. The first dwarven forge was built as well, and the city

began to earn its reputation as a producer of quality weapons and tools.

The gnomes that stayed behind brought a lighthearted atmosphere to the rugged frontier city. Skilled gnomish brewers, distillers, bakers and cheesemakers contributed to the 'atmosphere' of the city with their fine foods and spirits, and travelers who had typically come to the city only for shelter began spending an extra day or two before continuing on their journey. The presence of the gnomes fostered an era of literacy and knowledge that might have otherwise been a long time in coming to a frontier outpost, and their use of arcane magic further heightened the level of sophistication in the rain-soaked city.

The elves proved to be more reluctant to join in the new sense of community in the valley. Enigmatically, they faded from sight and memory within years, all evidence of their participation in the Greenskin War absorbed by the thick forests in which they made their homes. A few oldsters theorized about their demise around the tavern fires, and others insisted that they remained invisible to men's eyes, but only rarely does anyone penetrate the thick woods to seek the nation of wild elves, and even more rarely does one return with a tale to tell.

Adventuring During the Era of Alliance and Fortification

Adventures during the era of alliance in Eamonvale are less dominated by pitched battle, but the potential for intrigue and espionage is unlimited. Consider using a party of trusted adventurers to escort the Angus leader to Bard's Gate (a city supplement available from Necromancer Games) to initiate the discussions of the proposed alliance. The merchant houses, regularly ousted from an economic position in Eamonvale are sure to be less than content with Angus' restrictions on franchised trade, and may make an attempt on Angus' life or try to mislead the negotiations.

The Grey Citadel

At the time of the events described in The Grey Citadel, centuries after Eamon Angus first entered the valley, expansion of the duchies and kingdoms on either side of the Stoneheart Mountains and development of trade between them have caused the tiny trading center and way station to grow into a heavily fortified citadel, with the charter and lordship still in the hands of

the Angus family. Now, Dun Eamon is a bustling center for trade and transportation with a population of more than 5,000. Thanks to its critical position on the trade road, Dun Eamon is highly successful, but its remote location also ensures that it will never be terribly sophisticated.

The presence of the dwarves since the days of the Greenskin War has been a key factor in the city's thriving economy, and Dun Eamon is renowned as the location of the finest forges in the land. Dwarven engineering harnessed the power of the River Eamon to power the bellows and regulate the temperature, resulting in near-perfect conditions. Nearly any tool, weapon or other metal item can be crafted here, and the quality of their alloys and strength of their castings are unsurpassed. The quality and availability of tools and the location on the trade road has resulted in Dun Eamon becoming a city of artisans and craftsmen. It continues to garner the attention of foreign guilds wishing to expand their influence and tap the region's unique market, but the Angus family has always enforced strict regulations that limit guild activity and encourage free trade. The current rulers are no exception, and their policies have not made them popular among the powerful lowland merchant houses.

In addition to its mercantile presence, the Grey Citadel is an important defensive fixture and waystation on the mountain trade route. In times of war, its walls are the outer line of defense for the lowlands below the Stoneheart Mountains. Many hunters and trappers pass through the gates every season to sell their pelts and to resupply for another trip into the wild mountains beyond. It is a hiring point for caravan laborers and guards for the dangerous journey over the mountains to the distant kingdoms beyond. Traveling minstrels, adventurers and highwaymen all call the city home from time to time.

The people of Dun Eamon are hardy and self-sufficient, hardships are taken in stride and respect is reserved for those who have earned it. Two dominant social groups exist in the city, and are usually at odds with each other. The woodsmen and crofters who people the forested slopes around the citadel regard the merchant class as arrogant foreigners from pampered lowland cities; the merchants regard the locals as savages whose uncouth lifestyle they tolerate only in the interests of profit. Given past history

with lowlanders, especially the merchant prince's ambitions that gave way to the Frontier War, such animosity is understandable. While the details of the Frontier War are all but forgotten, the people of Dun Eamon have inherited their ancestors' grudge against franchised traders, and the underlying tension regularly boils over in tavern brawls and scuffles in the market and caravan camp.

Adventuring parties are generally regarded as a natural part of the traffic through the gates. Rangers, druids and barbarians are welcomed into the community, as are fighters and bards to a slightly lesser degree. Paladins are not unwelcome, but the citizens are generally intolerant of judgment by outsiders. Dun Eamon attracts plenty of rogues, mostly bandits and highwaymen rather than burglars. Wizards and monks are uncommon, mostly due to the lack of social refinement. Clerics and sorcerers are not treated any differently than anywhere else.

Humans are the dominant race of Dun Eamon, Eamonvale and much of the rest of the surrounding lands. Dwarves and gnomes have been an active part of the Eamonvale population since the Greenskin War and are quite common in the ranks of artisans, shopkeepers and adventurers. Halflings are found in the city in limited numbers, as they tend to mingle freely with humans everywhere they are found. Elves and half-elves are uncommon; elves found in Dun Eamon will almost certainly be foreigners, as Eamonvale elves are wild and feral and practice strict isolationism. Half-orcs are even more rare, and they are generally not trusted at all—the Greenskin War is not yet so faded from memory.

In appearance, the Grey Citadel of Dun Eamon is imposing, yet dreary. Its stone buildings are quarried from the same gray basalt as the bedrock they sit on, as are the city walls and keep. The rest of the buildings are half-timbered two and three-story structures, with roofs of thatch or shingle. The cobblestone streets and alleys are always shiny and damp, and everything in the city hosts at least a thin sheen of green moss; many buildings have thick clumps of ferns growing on the roof. Amid the green-forested slopes and drifting gray rain clouds, the gray-green edifices of the city blend right in.

The trade road bisects Dun Eamon through the lower city; a massive gatehouse guards each

entrance where the road rises up from the ford. A rampart wall surrounds the entire island, with watchtowers evenly distributed along it. Where the second falls spill over the edge, the island rises steeply to a flat-topped promontory. On this slab of rock sits the upper city, consisting of the craftsman's district, the vast market and the largest taverns. Rising from the very tip of the island and towering over the dizzying waterfall is the Angus castle and keep, the central point of defense for the entire region.

For the city stat block, map and location descriptions for Dun Eamon, refer to *The Grey Citadel*, available from Necromancer Games.

A Tale of Three Brothers

The current rulers of Dun Eamon are descended from the same bloodline as the original plainsman who first ventured into the Stoneheart Mountains to seek a new life. Three brothers rule the city; Arb Angus is the eldest, and inherited land and title from his father; Bron is the middle brother and the Captain of the Mist Watch; the youngest brother, Cael, is the Master of the Temple of Fortitude.

Arb Angus is tall and robust with brown hair and beard, both of which are shot through with streaks of gray, a token of his years of responsibility. In addition to being a firm and even-handed ruler, he is a capable huntsman and falconer and a regular attendee of bardic performances in the local taverns. A great deal of speculation takes place in Dun Eamon as to Arb's affections for the lady Elinda Bannon, a local scholar and arcanist, but Arb is deliberate about his responsibilities to his citizens being first and foremost.

Bron Angus is a young but experienced military captain charged with administration of the Mist Watch, the standing militia of Dun Eamon. He spent his youth in a number of mercenary companies, traveling the world and gaining knowledge of tactics and administration. His notable deficit, however, is in his social graces... his etiquette is adequate due to his noble upbringing, but he is noticeably uncomfortable in societal gatherings. He prefers to spend his time training alongside his men, where he can predict the outcome: sharp response, total loyalty and utter dedication.

Cael Angus is the youngest of the three brothers. He rose quickly through the ranks of

the Temple of Fortitude, becoming the youngest master the temple had ever known. He has proven capable and wise, leading his faith to unprecedented acceptance in the city. He is also generally thought to be the happiest and most well adjusted of the brothers, as he carries his responsibility with more grace than Arb and authority less stressfully than Bron. His reputation is that of a gentle confidant and advisor, despite his powerful physique.

The stat blocks for all three Angus brothers can be found in *The Grey Citadel*, available from Necromancer Games. Check out Creek's concept sketch of the Angus brothers in the Eamonvale Gallery.

The Future of Eamonvale

Please refer to the News section of Dark Loch for the latest of the publication of Nathan Douglas Paul's second mini-campaign and sourcebook, *The Eamonvale Incursion*. This volume, forthcoming from Necromancer Games and Kenzer & Company, details the bustling town of Broadwater, one of Eamonvale's numerous small villages and several wilderness locations. This book can be used independent of *The Grey Citadel* or as a complimentary expansion for the Eamonvale campaign setting.

A Brief History of Eamonvale was conceived and written by Nathan Douglas Paul, with the creative aid of the many players who have adventured there over the years.

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