

*Warhammer 4000:
A Savage Frontier of Perilous Adventure*

Cities of the New World

“Them cityfolks wouldn’t last a week out here in the wild”

- Coot Marston, Prospector

New Marienburg

Everyone comes to New Marienburg. Situated on a great river mouth speckled with islands, it’s already the largest port in the world, dwarfing the docks of Shackleton and Brionne alike. Each month, another ship arrives full of people keen to make their fortune, and half of them never leave the city. Every race and nationality, religion and culture can be found on its streets. In some places, the cobbled alleys overshadowed by clocktowers and factory smoke are the perfect mirror of Shackleton; a few streets away the Sad Ones live in a replica of an ancient elven city; and a few streets beyond that squatters and settlers are extending the city another few miles into the forest.

On every street corner, newsboys and urchins sell their trades, pundits and pilgrims decry the times and the mores and whores and mandrake men ply their trades. It is a city that sprang up so fast that it has not yet had time to organise itself into proper districts for the rich and poor, and as such every social strata must rub elbow with all the others. New Marienburg is the great leveller, where all men may make a fortune, and even a great lord of Albion may be found begging in a gutter. New Marienburg even has a Breton quarter – even the enemy itself is welcome to find a place to sleep in her unprejudiced streets.

The most notable building is the great Admiral Benbow Clocktower. Commissioned by one of the earlier governors, it was designed to be a statement of the city’s cosmopolitan nature – if the tower was almost as tall as the great towers of Shackleton, none could call the new colony provincial. At over a hundred feet, it can be seen from miles away, proclaiming the time, the tides, the forecast and the position of the stars. It is also famous for running slow and needing repairs, and a common phrase among New Marienburgers is “as true as Old Benbow”, meaning to be generally inaccurate or untrustworthy.

Currently, the town is run by the reikland-born Governor Mikael Harrison. Harrison is popular because he is the champion of his town, organising regular fetes and celebrations to remind the citizens of the greatness of New Marienburg. Of course these events and the general upkeep of the great city require an increase in civic taxes, and the hedonistic trends upset the puritans a great deal, so Harrison and his Queens Guard is not free from criticisms, and in no city is the new rise in political punditry and pamphleteering more prevalent than this teeming new bed of worms.

The real business of New Marienburg isn't immigration, trade or even politics, however, but spying. Although ostensibly under Albion control, the city is a trade hub and everyone comes to New Marienburg. Albion battleships, French merchant ships, privateers and pirates all do time at her docks and her taverns are full to bursting with Albion and Breton agents alike, ever-poised to hear any loose-lip give away the secret to victory in the Western Ocean. Of course, every man jack of them will tell you his only allegiance is to the crown, not the coin. True as Old Benbow.

Pickton

Pickton is older than New Marienburg, settled by upright, Maiden-loving Albinners almost a century before that southern port. As such it is now the centre of Albinner power on the continent. It is also, curiously, both the home of the staunchest support for Albion and the chief seeding ground of the separatist movement. The way the Picktonites see it, they were here first, and they should have control over how New Albion is governed. They certainly don't approve of New Marienburg's idea of welcoming all comers to pollute their true Albinner traditions, nor the Saltmarshers tendency to adopt native ideas and act like merchant princes over their slig-tended empires. New Albion is for the Albinners – hence their anger that many politicians back in Shackleton refuse to see it that way, and acknowledge Pickton's presence as a true place in the Empire. It's not freedom they want so much as recognition by the crown for how far they have come.

Of course, while this is the talk in gentleman's clubs and smoking rooms, it isn't the concern of the average Picktonite gentleman. Here is a figure with all the gifts and graces of the Empire, yet in a place free from its obsession with rank and title, able to make his own way in a new and exciting land. There is money to be made, of course, from the great trade ships that come and the thriving textile and craft industries of the bustling town, but there is also scholarship to be obtained, science to pursue and new vistas to be discovered and explored, both in the mind and in the wild lands around their colony. Those that walk the sharply sloped streets of Pickton down to their curved harbour will pass not just bevelled houses with lace curtains and peaked rooves, but many schools, book stores, reading lounges and tea rooms. The sound of printing presses rumble through its rambling streets, but in Pickton they produce not politics but philosophy and poetry.

The newest and most inspiring building in Pickton is its new Hawthorn College. A stone-brick building in the style of the old Albion universities, it hopes one day to rival the scholarship and learning of those places as well. That will prove once and for all that they are no longer just a provincial outpost, but as much true Albioners as Queen Hanna's underwear.

Fort Bluster

Located on a promontory between New Marienburg and Pickton is this harbour fort, which has become the headquarters of the Albion armies for the New World. All infantry sent to the colony are disembarked and billeted here before given their marching orders west or north. The high turn-over of men usually prevents any discipline problem, as does the iron fist of Captain Logan, the commanding officer. Logan's approach is to make the new arrival's first few nights so horribly regimented that they will yearn to get to the front and start killing things. He has a large staff of well-trained men who take an equal passion in their work.

The imposing cliff-top fortress, named for the winds that blow around it and designed to defend both land and sea, was built by convict labour, and the fort has recently also become a penal settlement. Criminals that won't fit in the crowded jails of New Marienburg or Pickton are sent up to Bluster to break rocks, forge cannon and mould bullets for the war effort. Any deserters recaptured are also sent to this prison, where Captain Logan takes great pleasure in making sure they learn the true penalty for cowardice.

Arnheim

Arnheim is the oldest still-settled human city on the entire continent, having been established by Wastelander and Sigmarite missionaries more than a millennia before the discovery of darksteel. Back then, of course, exploration was much more dangerous, and the inhabitants of Arnheim were lucky to see a ship once a decade. As a result, they became insular and provincial, and saw no reason to change this attitude when the newcomers arrived ten centuries later. The close-knit religious community had by then grown to be a very large religious community, a town as large as Pickton, but they still kept their inward-looking lifestyle. Not only did they reject the languages and religion of the newcomers – ninety percent of the population still only speaks Reikspiel – but their technology and lifestyle as well.

Clockwork, darksteel and warp-engines are all forbidden in the wide, quiet streets of Arnheim. No one may build anything that does not use their hands. The people retain an almost feudal village life, just like that of the reikland fifteen hundred years ago. It is a quiet, simple and devout life, with the three large temples of Sigmar well attended every Holy Day. The people have no great condemnation for other ways of life, however; they simply prefer to live in their own way. Visitors are welcome, but those who live there must abide by their ways. People are also free to leave, and many do seek the hedonistic streets of New Marienburg with burning desire. Almost as many come back to Arnheim and its surrounds, preferring the life they left to anything they found outside it.

Saltmarsh

To the south of Arnheim, at the southern most point of the Albion colonies lies the sultry city of Saltmarsh. It sits on the edge of a great river delta, nicknamed the Maidenhair, for it spreads in all directions for hundreds of

miles, with thousands of interlocking channels and streams. This creates a great swamp, where the line between solid earth, sugar farm and deep water is rarely clear. Some say the city reflects its landscape, sunken in a morass of immorality, but it is New Marienburg that is frantically, gleefully immoral. Saltmarsh is instead amoral, with no rules to be broken, and a laissez-faire attitude to life. Saltmarsh is content to sit on their wide porches and let life, and the great river, float on by.

The city itself does have an Albion governor, Governor Hastings, but he is quite content with the fact that the real power has always rested in a consortium of the richest merchants who set the taxes and levee the fees. Every two years the leader of this consortium shifts on a rota basis, allowing each landowner his turn to screw his rivals and feather his own nest.

Merchants dominate the town outside of politics as well. To the south lies endless plantations of sugar, and farms of other kinds, an immense food supply that the rest of the continent and old Albion crave in equal measure. These farms are almost all tended by sligs, and the endless trade of slaves for sugar is the constant business of the streets of Saltmarsh. With no law above the dollar, religion is scarce and legal brothels and drug houses dominate the shoreline, catering to the eager sailor. The legend says that the best whores in all the world are found in Saltmarsh, and the best drink, in the form of the sweet sugary ale they manufacture, called grog.

Of course, all the money in Saltmarsh means the rest of the colony is not content to let Saltmarsh just sit, and politics is a growing industry in its upper echelons. What's more, the gigantic slig population has caused the town to acquire a slig-quarter, where slann priests sell black magic and strange roots, and a new type of music is heard from the grog houses and shanties. Such behaviour is becoming harder and harder to tolerate even for the easy-going salties. Saltmarsh is on a slowburn, but if it ever ignites, the explosion would shake the entire Empire.

Smaller Towns

Covenant

Perhaps the farthest west of any Albiner town, Covenant was settled by desperate explorers, who prayed to the Maiden for shelter from the cruel blizzard they found themselves lost in. Nestled in the shadow of a mountain, this fertile piece of land was like a gift from the Goddess herself, and their salvation. Things improved further when they found the mine was rich with warpstone. However, the winters are still extremely bleak, and the ghosts prowl the nearby forests, and trade and military support rarely come this far west. As a result, the town prefers to rely on the Maiden to support them, and the statue to her on their steeple is quite impressive indeed. So strong and ardent is their faith that they cannot countenance why the Maiden would send a demon amongst them, but there is no other explanation for it. Something was unleashed down in the warpstone mines, and this dark, ugly force is

feeding on the townsfolk's very souls - and corrupting their young women's bodies.

Fishmouth

Technically beyond the borders of the Albion colony, Fishmouth sits in a no-man's land, too small for either Albiner or Breton troops to bother about. The only reason the town is known is because of their record-breaking fish catches every season. Every year, brave Picktonites head north for the fish festival, keen to taste the latest catches and the new exotic methods of pickling them or serving them, many of which are inspired by the Norscan-descended inhabitants. To date, few have thought to ask why the people of Fishmouth catch more fish than any village that size should ever be able to catch, and those that do simply get the famous shake of the head and finger to the nose that has typified the fisherman and cooks of the Fishmouth – it is simple code for “trade secret”.

Cannon City

Cannon City is by no means a city. It is barely even a town. Its nickname has stuck, however, and it certainly is home to many cannon. Cannon City sits on a huge gromril mine west of New Marienburg and is one of the largest producers of darksteel in the colony. With the war in full swing, almost all of this is used to forge cannon for the Albion armies. The small town is dwarfed by the great smelting forge at one end, and is littered throughout by the cast-aside corpses of flawed or cracked barrels, or half-smelted cannon balls. Cannon City would be a thriving enterprise if it wasn't for the fact that Albion generals have prevented Cannon City from trading with anyone but them, and that they keep their prices low. Situated in rocky hills, farming is scarce and having to import supplies is slowly sucking the town dry. The embargo has to be lifted, and the town is bristling for action. All they need is a leader.

Cape Fortitude

Not far from New Marienburg lies the promontory of Cape Fortitude, where the very first Albiner settlement was set up. It soon became a haven for pirates and privateers, however, and was abandoned for the much greater harbour on the river. But the town thrived, and has kept much of its piratical feel – and customers - as it has grown to embrace other, more civilised businesses. Nowadays, it still has enough smugglers to keep its reputation but does plenty of legitimate business as well, in fishing, crafts and holiday houses. The townsfolk are also responsible for manning the great lighthouse which guides ships into New Marienburg harbour, an enterprise taken very seriously indeed by the Navy. Some Albion strategists believe this is the Achilles heel of the Empire, for a small squad of agents could attack the unprotected cape and destroy the lighthouse, shutting down trade for weeks or even months. But as yet, no solution has been found.