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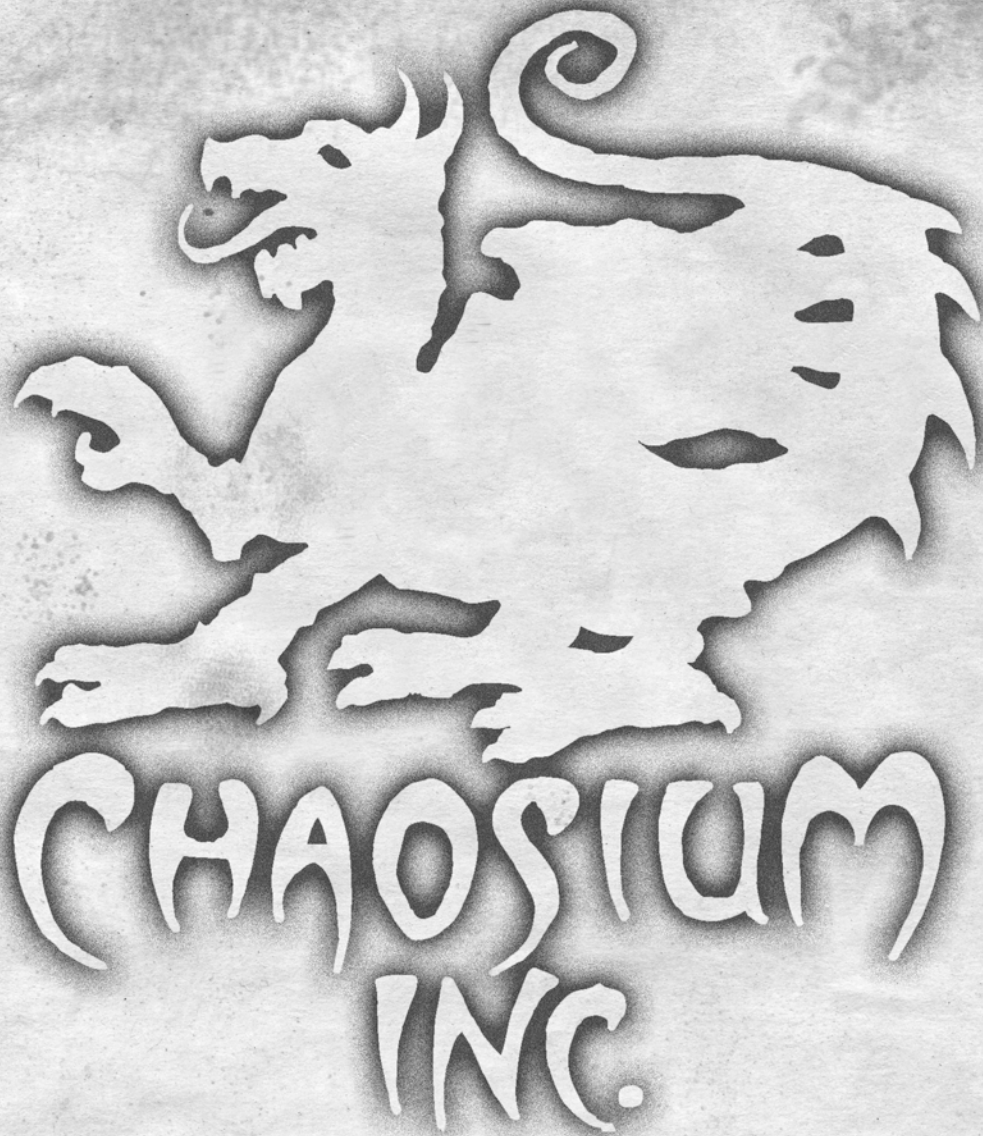


# THE PRIMAL STATE



**A Campaign for Classic-Era Call of Cthulhu,  
Ideally Set in Vermont, 1925-1930**





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# THE PRIMAL STATE

A CAMPAIGN FOR CALL OF CTHULHU, BY JEFF MOELLER



**The Presidential Limousine in Vermont, c. 1925.**

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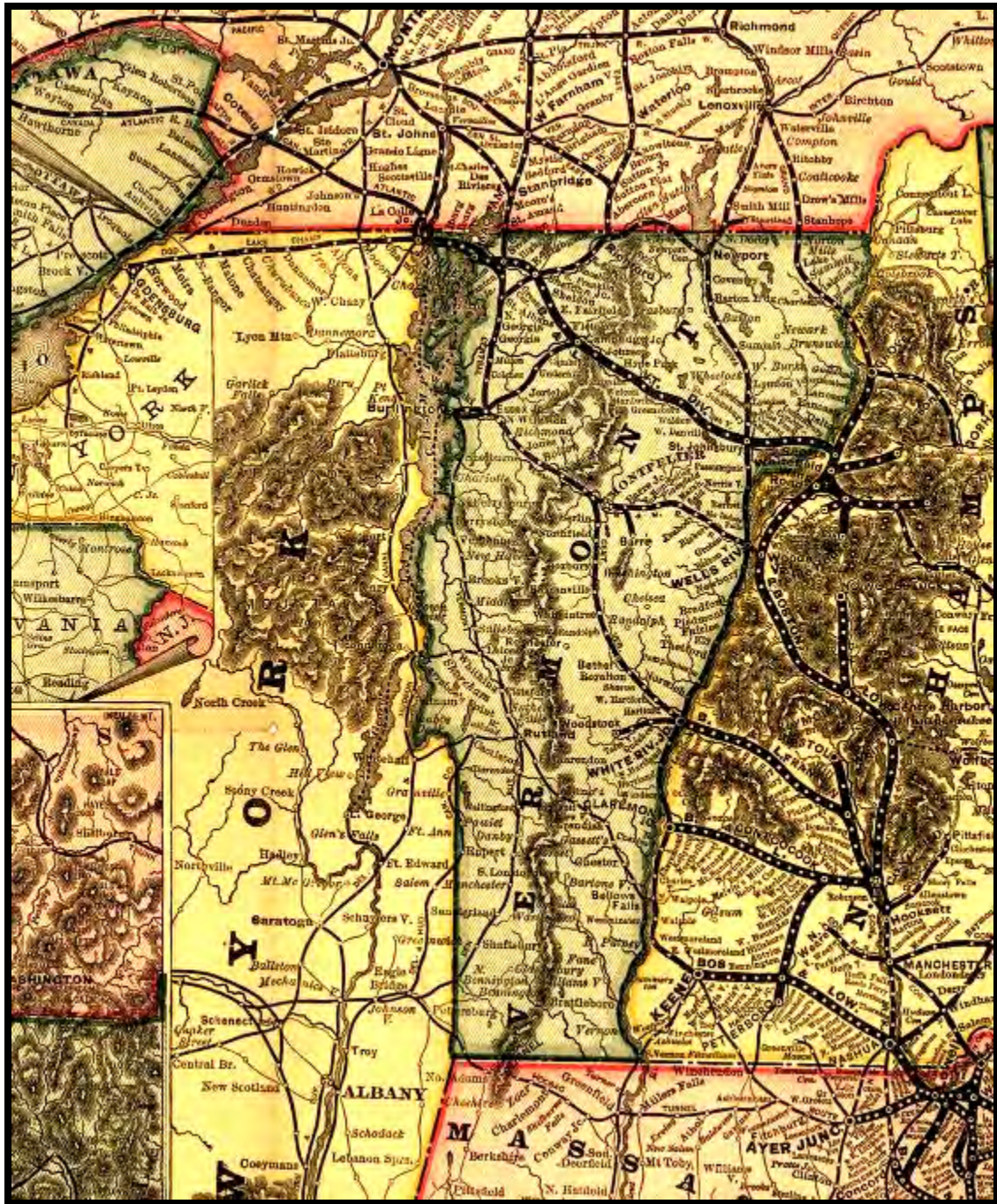
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Vermont is at a crossroads....





Before there were roads, there were railroads....



## AUTHOR'S NOTES AND INTRODUCTION

*To the Southern New-Englander entering Vermont for the first time there is sense of mystic revivification. On the towns of the lower coast the blight of mutation and modernity has descended. Weird metamorphoses and excrescences, architectural and topographical, mark a menacing tyranny of mechanism and viceroyalty of engineering which are fast hurrying the present scene out of all linkage with its historical antecedents and setting it adrift anchorless and all but traditionless in alien oceans.... Reservoirs, billboards and concrete roads, power lines, garages, and flamboyant inns...these things and things like them have brought ugliness, tawdriness and commonplaceness to the urban penumbra. Only in the remoter backwoods can one find the pristine and ancestral beauty which was Southern New-England's....*

H.P. Lovecraft, "Vermont--A First Impression," (1927). Reprinted in Miscellaneous Writings, H.P. Lovecraft (S. T. Joshi, ed.), Arkham House Publishers, Inc. (1995).

*The Primal State* is a campaign for Classic era Call of Cthulhu, ideally set in the 1925-1930 timeframe, and occurring mostly in the state of Vermont. The investigators should expect to encounter the weird legends of New England, and the campaign was written with an eye to establishing and maintaining a subtle, eerie, but nonetheless challenging atmosphere. Witches, burial mounds, legendary monsters, headless specters, cloven hoof prints, entropy, the decay of tradition, and Old Scratch himself in a beguiling mood--these are what *The Primal State* is about. This is not, however, a non-Mythos campaign; the works of Lovecraft, Lin Carter, and Robert E. Howard were influential. The sub-themes in each adventure, likewise

are purposefully Lovecraftian: the price of a scientific society in terms of societal decay (*Invitation to the Dance, The Sap Keeps Running*); atavistic corruption and exploitation by alien monstrosities (*The Beast of Lake Champlain, The Sap Keeps Running*); and ancient curses and cosmic nihilism against which only temporary victories can be achieved (*Home, Sweet Home*). An unusual Shub-Niggurath cult, Zvilpoggua--the Feaster from the Stars, ruins dating from ancient Hyperborea, a link to the Dreamlands, and black altars to forgotten gods; all of these play a central role.

*The Primal State* is not one of those campaigns that demands lockstep adherence to a strict progression of events. *The Sap Keeps Running* is the heart of the campaign, but it is a frame into which you could put any number of pictures. *The Sap Keeps Running* is the ongoing tale of two roadside businesses competing for the dollars of the new automobile tourist industry; the lunatic that runs one of them, and the tragic "Phantom Schoolgirl" that haunts the area. *The Sap Keeps Running* is the connecting thread: events unfold over time, and other adventures can and are intended to intervene. *The Sap Keeps Running* is intended to be structured around the investigators' other affairs, with developments being noticed the next time that the investigators happen by. The other parts of the campaign (*Invitation to the Dance, The Beast of Lake Champlain, Home Sweet Home*, and other plot seeds) are all suggested events that give the investigators an opportunity to drive into Vermont and observe the ongoing saga of Claire Jeplin and the Bahl family. Use these segments as ideas for one-shot adventures, or insert other or additional reasons for the investigators to venture into the Green Mountain State.

Where appropriate, brief accounts of play testing incidents for each scenario have been





included. These have been selected not so much for their value as "you had to have been there" stories, but for their value as suggestions to the Keeper on how to structure events.

The author suggests that however you structure the events, try to bear the theme in mind: the entropic encroachment of societal "advances" upon the traditions of New England, and the opportunities for mischief that result. Lovecraft decried the erosion of traditional New England lifestyles at the hands of modern innovation as abominable, and in the context of this campaign, it is.

This campaign is not for children or the easily offended. While the author detests the overtly lurid as lazy storytelling, and strongly encourages using suggestion and innuendo to convey what has occurred rather than depicting it, this campaign deals with adult subject matters. *Invitation to the Dance* concerns an undead spirit that carnally torments the living. *The Beast of Lake Champlain* puts the investigators directly at odds with a police officer involved in serial killings. *Home, Sweet Home* traps the investigators and tempts them to resort to cannibalism as a way to survive long enough to escape. The antagonist in *The Sap Keeps Running* is an unrestrained succubus. One of the shorter plot seeds concerns the possibility of making a Faustian bargain. Caveat lector.

I started writing what became *The Primal State* in 1993. No, that is not a typo. Rather, it is a reflection of how my life has evolved, and how the industry has evolved. Originally, the project was entitled simply *The Sap Keeps Running*, and focused solely on the machinations of the Bahl family and poor Claire Jeplin. I had been asked by my friends at Pagan Publishing if I was interested in submitting something for an upcoming book to be called *Mysteries of New*

*England*. John Crowe was going to write something, a couple other Paganistas were going to contribute to it, and some fellows out of house were working on a sourcebook section.

At the time, I was married to someone from the area where a lot of *The Sap Keeps Running* is set. The whole thing got started as I was sitting in a Howard Johnson's and started asking myself how long it had been there. When I found out the answer (the early 1930s), I was off and running with a campaign about U.S. Route 7. I had also just come across a volume of Lovecraft's published letters, including the one where he decries Vermont's rapid modernization as a form of reprehensible entropy; this gave me my theme.

I sent *The Sap Keeps Running* in to Pagan Publishing, complete with a map drawn on an early '80s version of MacPaint, and heard back a few months later. This is great, they said, but they had no idea what to do with it, in light of changes at Pagan and a new focus on an upcoming project called *Delta Green*. Maybe they would put it in an upcoming issue of *The Unspeakable Oath*, but they had plenty of material for a while.



**The Vermont Asylum for the Insane,  
conveniently located on U.S. Route 7.**

"Sounds great," I said. And that was the end of this project for close to eight years. Life





got in the way of writing, and there was nowhere to send a finished product.

Meanwhile, I moved to Ohio from Alaska, and quickly found myself divorced and living alone in a one-room studio apartment in Cleveland. Having nothing else to do, in 2002, I dusted off my old writing projects and decided to fill in one of the gaps between scenes in *The Sap Keeps Running*. Over the next several years, the gaps were gradually filled in. And here we are, thirteen years after I started.



A shout out goes to: my old college Cthulhu buddies, including John Crowe and Mike Nagel; to the Ace Detective Agency in Anchorage (all of whom died miserable deaths at the hands of Amelia Bahl); to all the guys at Pagan, past and present. And to Crista, who gave me enough time off from household chores to let me get this thing finally finished.

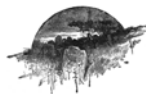
Jeff Moeller, Cleveland, OH, 5/07.

### **Rule Variant—Critical Clues, or, the “License Plate Rule.”**

In any investigative game, the problem of the vital clue that cannot be found is presented. There are a few of those in this campaign; a missed die roll resulting in an enjoyable game grinding to a screeching halt. At the same time, the author does not believe that simply handing the investigators all necessary clues is the best solution; it erodes tension. As a result, please consider utilizing the “License Plate Rule,” so named after a playtesting roll (involving spotting a license plate number) failed and ground an enjoyable scenario to a halt.

At character generation, each investigator gets one token, amounting to a “Get Out of Jail Free Card.” The token can be used to automatically succeed in any one dice roll where success or failure is the consequence, and can be used after a failure to change the outcome to a success. Hence, a Spot Hidden succeeds, a SAN roll succeeds, or a combat roll succeeds. The token cannot be used to affect the degree to which a roll succeeds (hence, a success cannot be turned into a critical success, nor can the amount of a damage roll be altered). An additional token can be awarded by the Keeper if, in his opinion, an investigator successfully imposes a major setback upon the Mythos.

Throughout this campaign, certain investigative rolls with the potential to derail the campaign if missed are noted as “License Plate” rolls. If missed, it would be appropriate for the Keeper to ask if anyone wants to spend a token to find a vital clue. In this campaign, these include finding the hidden basement nook in *Invitation to the Dance*; finding the Black Stone in the *Beast of Lake Champlain*; the Persuade roll with Prof. Abernathy in *Home, Sweet Home*; and the finding the hidden trap door in the finale of *The Sap Keeps Running*.



## SUGGESTIONS FOR EFFECTIVELY RUNNING THE CAMPAIGN

Much of this section will be familiar to the less than casual Keeper, but it bears repeating, especially in a campaign where many things will be occurring over time and "off camera." Read the entire module before starting to run it. Know your recurring characters, what motivates them, and what their plans are. In particular, understand that Amelia Bahl is extremely intelligent, and that the Pownal area Bahls will take their time to avoid attention as a result. If the investigators are suspicious of the Bahls too early in the campaign, have the Bahls allay their suspicions.

It is always difficult to strike a balance between drafting up "the complete campaign," where nearly every move that the investigators might make is addressed and the resulting course of events spelled out in detail, and leaving the Keeper to figure out matters on his own. The author has erred on the side of giving general settings and advice. Since the campaign is modular, allowing entire segments to be added, omitted, or changed between encounters with the Bahls, this is the only practical way to approach the matter. The Keeper should always bear in mind the goals of the Bahls (secrecy, nondetection, removing Claire Jeplin as a means to these ends, and continuing their futile quest of resurrection) and have them act accordingly in response to campaign events.

If you are looking for a "canonical" way to sequence the campaign, the following story path would be appropriate:

*The Sap Keeps Running, Part 1/Invitation to the Dance:* Have the investigators examine the mystery of the dancing gravestones in Bennington,

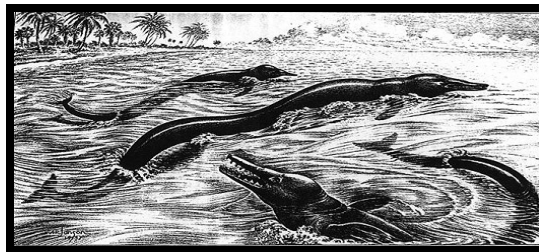
which is a few miles north of Pownal. Have them stop and meet Claire Jeplin. The Bahls' storefront is under construction and the basement is being dug at this time.

Intercede with a few other adventures and plot seeds before returning the investigators to the active campaign.

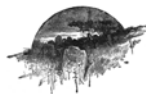
*The Sap Keeps Running Part 2/The Beast of Lake Champlain:* Introduce Amelia and Margaret Bahl, and reintroduce Claire Jeplin. This also serves to introduce Robert Bahl and set the stage for his later involvement. This segment should ideally occur before the flood of November 3, 1927.

*The Sap Keeps Running Part 3/Home, Sweet Home:* The players will be in the Pownal area and in an automobile, of necessity, during the course of *Home, Sweet Home*. If the investigators leave an investigator behind in town when they head into Olaf's Camp, have this lone investigator encounter the ghost of Emily Bahl while on the road.

The conclusion of *The Sap Keeps Running* can then be sprung on the investigators at any time that they are ready. Stage the "Phantom Schoolgirl" event, encourage the investigators to use Claire Jeplin as a research source, and her mental state and ravings will lead the investigators to closely investigate the Bahls. They will probably renew their acquaintance with Robert Bahl once they catch on to the last name.



Nothing to see here, move along.



### a. Know Your Recurring Characters.

investigators in her well-being.

#### CLAIRE JEPLIN

Claire Jeplin lives in an old house situated on the west side of U.S. Route 7 near Pownal, VT, just over the Massachusetts border. She knows a great deal about Vermont folklore and (at least until things take a bad turn for her) loves visitors. She sells syrup and maple sugar candy off of her porch. She is intended to be introduced early in the campaign as an investigation resource. She is the *deus ex machina* who knows the answer to that one question that is confounding the investigators, and who will give them some candy just for stopping by and showing an interest. Invest the



Claire In Her Kitchen

#### CLAIRE JEPLIN, NICE OLD LADY

**Nationality:** American

STR 6 DEX 11 INT 14 CON 10  
APP 11 POW 16 SIZ 9 EDU 11  
SAN 80 Luck 80 Hits: 10 Age: 72

**Damage Penalty:** -1d4.

**Education:** some high school.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Bargain 55%; Drive Automobile 0%; History (Vermont Folklore) 60%; Witchcraft (stories only) 25%; Persuade 50%; Natural History 35%; Make Maple Sugar Candy 90%.

**Languages:** English 65%; French 25%.

**Attacks:** None to speak of.

**Notes:** Claire is a kind, wise, level-headed and strong-willed woman, steeped in New England tradition. Claire believes that witches and such used to exist in New England, and has heard many stories about them and their doings. Claire does not believe that the supernatural exists in modern times, at least at the outset of this scenario. If the Keeper stretches the events in *The Sap Keeps Running* over several years, he should gradually lower Claire's STR, DEX and CON. Claire's SAN at each stage of the campaign is discussed below.

#### THE BAHL FAMILY, POWNAL BRANCH

The Pownal branch of the Bahl family is one of *those* New England families that investigators would just as soon never meet. It consists of three members: Margaret Bahl, Emily Bahl, and Amelia Bahl. Margaret Bahl is a 58 year old woman of ordinary appearance and pleasant, matter-of-fact, Yankee surface demeanor. Margaret was an ordinary shopkeeper in Burlington, VT until twenty years before the campaign begins. Emily, then 18, was Margaret's only child from a short marriage that ended in the accidental death of her husband William in a barge accident. After her husband's death, Margaret devoted much of her energy to Emily's upbringing. Emily had just been accepted to college at Miskatonic U., and Margaret chose to drive her to school in her newly acquired automobile.

Unfortunately, while traveling along a stretch of road near where Claire Jeplin's house is located, Margaret and Emily were involved in a freak accident. The car, which





was being driven by Margaret, got its wheels caught in a rut. Emily got out to push, but her scarf became tangled in the wheels. Oblivious to Emily's peril, Margaret gunned the engine. The car came loose, but Emily fell under the car and was decapitated. Emily's head was never found.

Margaret has never reported her daughter's death to the authorities. Miskatonic U. was sent a short letter advising that Emily would not be attending after all due to lack of funds. Margaret became a recluse, running her candy store but avoiding everyone.

#### **MARGARET BAHL, CANDYSELLER AND CARELESS DRIVER**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 10 DEX 11 INT 12 CON 11 APP 11  
POW 18 SIZ 11 EDU 12 SAN 0 Luck 90  
Hits: 11 Age: 58.

**Damage Penalty:** None.

**Education:** High School; self-taught in recent years.

**Skills:** Accounting 35%; Botany 20%; Chemistry 20%; Cthulhu Mythos 25%; Drive Automobile 15%; Occult 60%; Pharmacy 25%; Sing 50%; Witchcraft 60%; Zoology 20%; Make Maple Sugar Candy 90%.

**Languages:** English 60%; Hebrew 60%.

**Attacks:** Ritual Knife 50%; 1d4+2 damage.

**Spells:** Resurrection, Blight Crops, Call Lilith/Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Child of Lilith.

**Notes:** Margaret is tall, thin, dark-haired and light-skinned. She possesses a Mythos tome, the *Lilith Codex*, a detailed description of which is given above. While not brilliant, Margaret is very crafty when it comes to diverting suspicion away from herself and Amelia.



**Margaret Bahl, with Emily's picture.**

Margaret's feelings of guilt over her role in Emily's death and repressed grief from the previous death of her husband drove her over the edge. On one level, Margaret is in denial, and acts to the public as though Emily is still alive. Margaret will still claim that Emily is "away at school." In private, Margaret became obsessed with restoring Emily to life, and toward that end has delved deeply both into witchcraft and the Mythos.

After many years of study, Margaret realized that without Emily's head, she was beyond Resurrection. By this time in her fifties and beyond normal child-bearing years, Margaret struck a bargain with the mythological figure Lilith, here treated as an aspect of Shub-Niggurath: another child in exchange for undying devotion. Margaret gave birth a lunar month later to the demonic Amelia. In another lunar month's time, Amelia grew to be the image of Margaret at age 25, only more beautiful and perfectly formed. The experience dispensed with what little sanity Margaret had left; she is now a willing servant of Lilith/Shub-Niggurath. More information on Lilith is provided in the section discussing Margaret's basement workshop and the *Lilith Codex*.

Margaret's goals are secrecy, the removal of those who might expose her, and pursuing her futile quest to Resurrect Emily.



Drawn by the rumors of "The Phantom Schoolgirl", and afraid of Amelia's attracting attention in Burlington, Margaret and Amelia soon decided to move to Pownal and set up shop. Margaret and Amelia will engage in their overt cult activities far enough away from Pownal to avoid attention, only bringing back the bodies of their victims to bury under their maple trees. Margaret and Amelia believe that this practice will add something to their maple product. In fact, the Bahl's maple product will have a faint reddish tinge and be of slightly better quality than Claire's, all else being equal.



**Amelia Bahl (left), with clunky shoes.**

Simply put, Amelia is part parthenogenic clone of Margaret and part Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath. She is at the same time devoted "daughter" and demonic spawn of a fertility "goddess" in human form. She is also extremely dangerous. Amelia is utterly ruthless and amoral, viewing her "fellow" man as food. Since her "birth", Amelia has become a popular

fixture at rituals to Lilith/Shub-Niggurath, seducing and then draining victims of all their vital fluids in a twisted celebration of fertility. Amelia will lead the terror

#### **AMELIA BAHL, CHILD OF LILITH**

Nationality: American?

STR 25 DEX 18 INT 18 CON 18 APP 18  
POW 25 SIZ 10 EDU N/A SAN 0 Luck 125  
Hits: 14 Age: 25 (apparent).

Damage Bonus: +1d6.

Education: N/A.

Skills: Amelia possesses all pertinent skills at 80%, except for Sneak, which is at 60%. Track rolls attempting to follow Amelia are at +50%; just look for the cloven hoofprints.

Languages: English 90%; Hebrew 90%.

Attacks: Arm, 80%, damage 1d3+db+grab.

Kiss, only vs. grabbed, enthralled or immobile targets, 1d3 STR drain per round; this STR loss is permanent. Unwilling victims can make a STR vs. STR check to break away each round (good luck!). Enthralled victims are not unwilling. Victims drained to 0 STR are dried, lifeless husks.

Special Abilities: Enthral Male: Amelia's heritage gives her special powers over males. Amelia has the ability to hypnotize men into apparent, promised intimacy on a successful POW vs. POW check by meeting their gaze. Amelia uses this ability to set up her Kiss attack. Hypnotized victims can be snapped out of their trance by a successful damage causing attack, on themselves or on Amelia.

Special Defenses: Amelia takes damage per the normal Dark Young rules: Firearms other than shotguns only do 1 point of damage, 2 points on an impale. Shotguns do minimum possible damage. Amelia "bleeds" a white, viscous, lumpy fluid; SAN loss for viewing this is 0/1d3 if the viewer has not previously checked SAN for learning Amelia's true nature.

Spells: Blight Crops, Implant Fear, Send Dreams, Call Lilith/Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Child of Lilith, Voice of Ra, others the Keeper deems appropriate.

SAN loss: None. Seeing Amelia leave behind cloven hoofprints, even when wearing shoes, costs 0/1d3 SAN. Seeing Amelia drain a victim into a lifeless husk costs 1/1d6 SAN; 1/1d8 if the victim was a close associate. Seeing a drained husk alone costs 0/1d4 SAN.



campaign against Claire Jeplin.

While Amelia appears outwardly human, her heritage causes her to leave cloven hoofprints behind her, even while wearing shoes. Amelia attempts to avoid attracting attention to this, aware of the New England superstition that supernatural activity is often evidenced by inexplicable cloven hoofprints. Amelia flirts from behind the counter, but avoids going out in public except to church. Amelia's goals are to entice, kill and drain as many men as possible while avoiding detection.

Emily is now the ghostly "Phantom Schoolgirl." Her appearances are a twist on the "Black Carriage" legend, variations of which appear throughout New England folklore. Both Margaret and Amelia will act as though Emily is still alive and "away at school." Encounters with Emily are described in following sections. Emily is, if the reader will pardon the pun, simply stuck in a rut.



How this all got started, circa 1910.

### BAHL FAMILY, BURLINGTON

This consists of Robert Bahl, the dock manager at the municipal dock in Burlington, and his wife and children. Robert is Margaret's former brother-in-law. Although they used to be reasonably close, Robert has not seen Margaret in quite some time and knows nothing about Amelia, Amelia's true

nature, or Margaret's sorcerous activities. As far as he knows, Margaret got depressed, possibly got pregnant, and moved away around the time that the campaign begins. Robert also plays a prominent role in *The Beast of Lake Champlain*. Robert is a decent fellow who collects folklore about "Champ," the Beast of Lake Champlain, as a hobby.

#### ROBERT BAHL, DOCK MANAGER

**Nationality:** American.

STR 14 DEX 13 INT 13 CON 14 APP11  
POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 12 SAN 65 Luck 65  
Hits: 14 Age: 45.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Accounting 45%; Credit Rating 35%; Electrical Repair 25%; Drive Automobile 35%; Law 25%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Operate Heavy Machinery 65%; Occult 25% (Champ Lore 70%); Swim 50%; Pilot Boat 75%.

**Languages:** English 60%; French 40%.

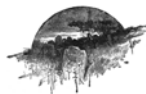
**Attacks:** Big Wrench, 50%, 1d6+db; hand-to-hand skills at +10% over base.

**Notes:** A burly, good-natured roughneck who has worked his way up from dockhand to barge pilot to dock manager, Robert is Margaret Bahl's former brother-in-law. Robert is not at all close to Margaret, but will have a normal amount of interest in his niece Emily's well-being. Robert is superstitious and actually believes that some sort of beast lives in the depths of Lake Champlain, but has made a hobby out of his "irrational" fear.

### FATHER NORBERT MCKENZIE

Father McKenzie is the rector of St. Peter's Episcopal church in Bennington, VT. He plays a prominent role in *Invitation to the Dance*, and depending on how events there go, may be involved in helping Claire Jeplin when her sanity starts to slip later in the campaign. His church is also where Margaret and Amelia attend services. His goal is to do the right thing.





**FATHER NORBERT MCKENZIE,  
BENNINGTON, VT. RECTOR**

**Nationality:** American

STR 11 DEX 11 INT 13 CON 12  
APP 12 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 14  
SAN 59 Luck 65 Hits: 13 Age: 58.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** Episcopalian seminary graduate.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Credit Rating 60%;  
Drive Automobile 25%; First Aid 40%; Law  
25%; Library Use 70%; Occult 25%; Persuade  
75%; Psychology 45%.

**Languages:** English 70%; Latin 30%

**Attacks:** All at base.

**Notes:** A good friend to have, since people  
tend to listen to him.



Along U.S. Route 7, near Bennington.

**SHERIFF MARTIN HUDSON**

Sheriff Hudson has the misfortune to be  
the Sheriff of Bennington County for the  
duration of the campaign, barring his  
untimely demise. As such, he will be the  
police presence for much of the

campaign, including during *The Sap Keeps  
Running, Home, Sweet Home, Invitation to  
the Dance*, and any excursions to the  
“Bennington Triangle”, saving events in  
Burlington. His goal is also to do the right  
thing.

**SHERIFF MARTIN HUDSON,  
BENNINGTON COUNTY (Heaven help  
him).**

**Nationality:** American

STR 13 DEX 13 INT 13 CON 13  
APP 11 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 13  
SAN 65 Luck 65 Hits: 14 Age: 45.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School; Police Academy.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Credit Rating 50%;  
Dodge 38%; Drive Automobile 45%; Law  
35%; Psychology 55%; Spot Hidden 55%;  
Track 55%.

**Languages:** English 70%; French 25%

**Attacks:** Handgun Attack 49%, 1d10 damage  
(.38 revolver).

Nightstick Attack 55%, 1d6+db.

**Notes:** A no-nonsense cop who, while honest,  
thinks that people who babble on about the  
supernatural are disturbed and need to be  
locked up.

***THAUMATURGICAL PRODIGES IN  
THE NEW ENGLISH CANAAN***

This minor Mythos tome is an appropriate  
choice for being the central book in the  
campaign, the reliable Mythos source for  
historical clues about the odd things that the  
investigators will encounter. Authored by  
the esteemed Rev. Ward Phillips, this tome  
deals with New England witches as well as  
various charms, spells, and other weird  
happenings in the Colonial era. The Keeper  
may wish to consider allowing the  
investigators access to this tome for  
purposes of this campaign, or substitute  
another tome covering similar matters. The  
version listed here would be an expurgated



version, but feel free to introduce a more subversive one.

***Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New English Canaan, a Mythos tome.***

**Language:** English; **Mythos Gain:** +1%; **SAN loss** 0/1d2; **Spell Multiplier** x1; **Grants Skill Checks in:** Occult and History; **Spells:** Contact Narlato (Nyarlathotep/Black Man form); Blight Crop.

This tome would, in the context of this campaign, certainly include bits about the legend of the chaousarou in Lake Champlain; some discussion about Zvilpoggua; speculation as to inscriptions on certain burial mounds in the area; and some discussion of Lilith.

**b. Vermont in the 1920s, An Introduction.**

*The Primal State* is almost entirely set in Classic-era Vermont. It assumes that the investigators will be traveling by automobile from one New England state to another periodically, perhaps in the course of other investigations. An understanding of what to expect in terms of New England roads and the Vermont tourist industry circa 1920-30 is helpful to place this scenario in context.

In 1916, Congress enacted the Federal Aid Road Act, providing a large influx of federal funds to states for the purpose of highway construction. An important engineering advance occurred in 1920, when it was discovered that concrete roads on top of a crushed rock base could support significant truck loads. Roads in New England well-suited to automobile travel soon exploded. The first concrete roads sprang up in large urban areas, but town-connecting highways shortly followed. By 1925, the highway system was so complex that the American

Association of State Highway Officials formed and devised the national highway numbering system out of necessity.

After 1925, it was possible to drive on an uninterrupted paved road from any significant New England population center to any other. In more agricultural areas in New England, the farmers paid for macadam "farm to market" roads, well suited to light truck traffic.

At first the toys of the rich, automobiles were middle class fixtures by the late 1920s. The weekend automobile excursion into the countryside became popular, and roadside services were not long to lag behind. The Vermont tourist industry was born. Short and medium distance trips within New England were often accomplished by automobile, although long distance trips were still mostly undertaken by rail (including, until 1927, to Vermont). While a system of paved roads was spotty in many areas of the country, in urban New England concrete roads were the norm by 1930.

Connecting roads ran right through each town, however. Travel time suffered accordingly. Bypasses and superhighways are phenomena of the post-World War II era. Roadside shops catering to motorists, however, are a phenomenon of 1920s and 1930s New England. Keepers are reminded that the New England based Howard Johnson chain of roadside restaurants got their start in the early 1930s.

Events in *The Sap Keeps Running* largely occur along U.S. Route 7, a.k.a. the Ethan Allen Highway. U.S. 7 is the major connecting road in extreme Western Massachusetts and Vermont. It is eminently drivable throughout the 1920s and 1930s. It is also twisting and mountainous in places. U.S. 7 can fairly be described one of the few major paved thoroughways in Vermont in the 1920s and 1930s; Vermont was an exception to the rule about the prevalence of paved connecting roads. Nonetheless, U.S. 7



opened western Vermont to the weekend tourist, and connects lower New England with a series of Vermont ski resort towns. These included Manchester, VT, a notorious playground for the well-to-do throughout the Depression.

U.S. 7 runs north through Pittsfield, MA, passes through the college town of Williamstown, MA, crosses the Vermont border at Williamstown, and proceeds northerly through Vermont to Burlington. Between the state line and Pownal, the site of *The Sap Keeps Running*, it tracks the Hoosic R. and winds its way through forested farmland. Burlington is the largest town in Vermont, and by 1930 is the home of several colleges, including the University of Vermont.

Vermont in the 1920s was a state in transition. In 1920, Vermont was still an extremely rural, agrarian economy with a few scattered small cities supporting a variety of small industry (often related to food processing). Vermont was a small state in every sense of the word; it is about 9,000 square miles in area and had a population of only about 350,000. Industry was small and largely oriented toward finishing agricultural goods (milk processing, textile mills), and was centered in a few larger towns: Barre, Rutland, Springfield and Burlington. Vermont supplied nearly all of the dairy products to Boston and its environs. It was basically the agricultural hinterland for that area. There were few urban areas of any size; the largest city, Burlington (on Lake Champlain) had a population of about 20,000.







At the same time, however, the infrastructure was good. There was a well-developed rail network, a state government that had been in place for 150 years, and well-organized state engineering and sanitation districts. There were, however, only a few significant roads to speak of. Railways dominated Vermont transportation scene in the early 1920s, along with a certain amount of barge traffic along the larger rivers and Lake Champlain.

Over the course of the 1920s, this longstanding state of affairs began to change. The flu epidemic of 1918 killed 2,000 Vermonters. Declining farm prices led to rural-to-urban flight by the young and talented. Industry became increasingly unionized, and the unions tended to be highly ethnic (either French-Canadian or Irish-American). Mutual aid societies, lodges, and ethnic-identity clubs became increasingly important elements of Vermont society, enabling their members to make ends meet in tough times.

**Vt. Central Railroad Line.**  
**EXCURSION ROUTES!**  
 Round Trip Tickets at  
**GREATLY REDUCED RATES**  
**ROUTES FROM BOSTON**  
 — TO —  
*New York, via White Mountains, Burlington, Lake Champlain and Hudson River.*  
*New York, via White Mountains, Burlington, Lakes George and Champlain, and Hudson River.*  
*New York, via Burlington and Saratoga.*  
*New York, via Montreal, Lakes Champlain and George.*  
*New York, via Burlington, Lakes Champlain and George.*  
*New York, via Ogdensburg, Niagara Falls and Hudson River.*  
*Niagara Falls, via Ogdensburg and Thousand Islands.*  
*Suspension Bridge, via Burlington and Saratoga.*  
*Suspension Bridge, via Lake George and Saratoga.*  
*Saratoga, via Burlington, Lakes George and Champlain.*  
*Saratoga, via Burlington and Lake Champlain.*  
*Quebec, via Newport, Vt., Lake Memphremagog, and return via Montreal.*  
*Quebec, via Montreal, and return via Montreal or via Portland.*  
*Quebec, via Ogdensburg, Rapids of the River St. Lawrence (by daylight), Montreal, and return.*  
*Montreal, via White Mountains & Lake Memphremagog, and return via Vt. Central Line.*  
*Montreal, via Rapids of the River St. Lawrence (by daylight), and return.*  
*Summit of Mt. Mansfield and return.*  
*St. Albans and return.*  
*Mount Mansfield.*  
Waterbury to Mansfield House, 10 miles, by stage; Mansfield House to Summit House (Mount Mansfield), 1/2 miles, by stage and saddle horse, and return to Waterbury via same route. This route can be added to any of the above, passing over the Vermont Central R.R., affording a delightful trip to the most celebrated Mountains in New England.  
 The above are a few samples of over  
**100 Different Round Trip Excursion Routes!**  
 To every point of interest in New England and the Canada.  
 FOR PROGRAMMES AND FULL INFORMATION CALL AT  
**5 State Street, Boston,**  
 General Agency Vermont Central Railroad Line. [OVER.]

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The way to go, pre-1920.

Proactively, the Vermont Board of Agriculture jumped on the tourism bandwagon as a way of bringing needed money into the state. The State engaged in an early, affirmative tourism promotion campaign, playing on Vermont’s history, recreational opportunities, skiing, and good rail infrastructure to enable people get to and from these attractions.

With the mid-1920s spate of Federal road construction, culminating in the 1926 opening of a newly-paved U.S. Route 7, the tourism industry really took off. People from Southern New England of reasonable means could hop into their car and drive to Vermont for the weekend, much as they do today. And they did so in droves.

The Vermont roadside tourist industry got a further, albeit unwanted and unforeseen, kick in the pants on November 3, 1927. On this date, the entire state was devastated by a massive flood of Katrina-like proportions. 15 inches of rain fell over two days. 1,200 bridges were washed out by the flood, crippling Vermont’s rail infrastructure. 85 people were killed, and 9,000 homes (out of a total populace of 350,000) were destroyed. Vermont was a major disaster area.

Fortunately for the state, it was the home of the current President, Calvin Coolidge. The Coolidges maintained their “summer White House” at Plymouth Notch, in rural south-central Vermont, from 1923-1929. As a





result, Vermont was not neglected in the ensuing rebuilding effort, and roads increased in importance to the transportation infrastructure. Nonetheless, Vermont's economy was pummeled by the event; the Farm Service Administration (a Federally-managed farm subsidy/social welfare program) played a large role in the economy of the state after the New Deal.

The Vermont roadside tourist industry was not without its critics, many of whom saw the burgeoning roadside clutter as destructive of the traditional charm of rural Vermont. Lovecraft was one of the most vocal of these critics. The campaign to clean up Vermont roadsides from visual clutter did not begin in earnest, however, until the late 1930s. Vermont passed legislation in the late 1930s restricting the size of roadside billboards and mandating a minimum setback distance from the road. The Vermont Supreme Court upheld a constitutional challenge to this law, one of the first of its kind, in 1942.

### c. Plot Seeds

Following are short plot seeds and references that the Keeper might use to give investigators a professional reason to drive north up U.S. 7 into Vermont. These are only suggestions; many dark things may lurk in the Berkshires or Green Mountains, the cold depths of Lake Champlain, or the isolated villages of the 14th state. The details of these side trips are left for the Keeper, but here are some ideas:

**1. Tea and Sympathy:** Elisha Duckworth keeps his office in a dark, quiet alley near the State Capitol building in Montpelier. He jokes that underneath the seats of power is where the choicest crumbs can be found. His office door is neat, his office tastefully decorated. Although he says that he has other employees, they never seem to be there. Nonetheless, tea is always ready for visitors. Always.

Elisha is a thin old man, with a quiet demeanor and a slightly formal, stilted manner of speech. Documents on his wall



suggest that he graduated from law school many years ago. He has a certificate suggesting admission to the Vermont bar sixty years ago. Checking with the Vermont bar association confirms this, even though this is not true. Technically, he is Elisha Duckworth VII; all six of his predecessors, back to the days of the Vermont Republic and before, pretended to be attorneys. He's an old-fashioned attorney; he practices all kinds of law. He's very selective about who he accepts as clients.

Elisha seems well off. There are many, many files in his office. None of them seem to be very big. Although many prominent people have heard of Elisha, and none have anything ill to say about him, he is rarely seen either in court or in society. His fees are negotiable, but he makes very clear that his payment terms are strict. He takes a lot of pro bono cases (no conventional fee). He also makes very clear that while a client decides the goal, he decides how the goal is achieved, and there are no refunds.

Often, after people recoil at his quoted price as far beyond their means, he offers to work for them anyway if they "give something back to the community." These gestures of goodwill are often obscure, but never illegal. Vote for a particular candidate at the next local election; take a job at a particular office; deliver a package to a particular door; or go to Germany and find a former soldier a place to live. Never mind that said candidate ends up being the deciding vote on a highway bill that results in a certain church's corner post being destroyed. Or that delivering the package distracts the recipient so that he is not standing guard when the Lindbergh baby disappears. Or that the job is at the patent office and (because the worker is not very careful) something slips through the cracks. Or that the former soldier is actually a politically ambitious fellow

with odd ideas about German reconstruction.



Vermont county courthouse, c. 1925

The fee agreements are simple and always in writing. Virtually any kind of problem can be solved. Witnesses recant or disappear; fortuitous circumstances occur that render the problem moot. The consequences of breaching the payment terms are subtle but severe. Such people tend to inexplicably meet with mysterious accidents. Former clients are often utterly terrified of Mr. Duckworth. Mr. Duckworth is a reasonable fellow, though, and (if he is of a mind to) may be willing to trade further. However, he never seems to be able to be found—unless he wants to be.

**2. The Shortcut:** To get from Vergennes, Vermont (near the southern edge of Lake Champlain) to the state capital in Montpelier is about 40 miles as the crow flies, but to drive there is a chore. One has to drive north 20 miles up U.S. Route 7 to Burlington, and then backtrack 40 miles southeast. However, there are many backroads, trails, and forgotten ways dating from Revolutionary War days, and local



storytellers are fond of spinning yarns about how they made the trip in record time.

Rumor has it that there is a better way, striking essentially due East through the wilderness and mountains on long-forgotten roads. One morning, a battered, rusted, but strangely late-model automobile rolled into downtown Montpelier and coasted to a halt. The car is registered to Tom North, a notorious hoaxster and storyteller from Vergennes. The car was extremely cold to the touch. In the driver's seat was a pile of dust and a couple of gold fillings. Despite the wear on the vehicle, the newspapers report that Tom North had bought the car new the previous week. North had publicly boasted the previous evening that he had found the shortcut to end all shortcuts, and was going to get to Montpelier in under 30 minutes. North is nowhere to be found. What happened to Tom North?



Vermont State Capitol, c. 1930.

**3. Allen's Tablet:** While investigating a Neolithic mound near South Woodstock, VT, Professor George Allen of the University of Vermont discovers a 3 foot by 3 foot stone tablet. The top half of the tablet is in Ogham Consaine, an ancient, voweless Celtic alphabet. Prof. Allen is stumped by the bottom half of the tablet,

which is in no known language. Prof. Allen has taken the tablet back to the University of Vermont in Burlington for study. An investigator specializing in an ancient language, such as Egyptian Hieroglyphs or Sumerian Cuneiform, is called in for consultation. The tablet may be in some previously undiscovered human language. Alternatively, it may be in Aklo, or some other Mythos-associated language. Tcho-Tchos or other servants of the Mythos may attempt to capture or destroy the tablet. The tablet may hold clues to releasing a Mythos deity to ravage the Earth, hold the location to an ancient site of power, or serve as a Rosetta Stone for a tome confounding the investigators.

**4. Edouard Schmidt:** Herr Professor Schmidt lives quietly in Manchester, a permanent guest of the Hotel Equinox. He has been there longer than any of the current staff can remember. He is a retired professor of history from Vienna (so he says), and seems to be about 70 years old, but no one has ever seen his identity papers. They are purportedly in the hotel safe. In fact, the hotel records are not terribly clear on how long he has been there. While he's quite congenial, he never leaves the hotel. His pair of cocker spaniels never leave a mess, never leave his side, and never make a sound. Why is he there? Is he watching the monastery above the resort, or are they watching him?

**5. Holiday in Glastenbury:** Just northeast of Bennington (the site of *Invitation to the Dance* and *The Sap Keeps Running*) stands the ghost town of Glastenbury, lying at the foot of Glastenbury Mountain. Glastenbury was disincorporated in 1937, and today is completely deserted, but in the Classic era, about 20 people still live there, making the area a stark symbol of decay. Glastenbury had been, in earlier times, the site of a charcoal factory, but the forest was over harvested, resulting in the collapse of the town.



Nowadays, Glastenbury is at the heart of what UFO conspiracists have dubbed the “Bennington Triangle.” Do an Internet search on Glastenbury, Vermont and let your imagination go wild. By way of example:

*Some say that a daemon, or Sathanas, lurks on the mountain, snatching up the poor souls who venture into the dark, snow-covered woods of Glastenbury. There are those who say 'strange contraptions' snatched them from the planet Earth.*

R.D. Stock & John Zeller, FATE Magazine, July 1957.

-Local Abenaki natives avoided the mountain, believing it to be cursed.

-A strange beast is rumored to have lived in the area, which once attacked and toppled stagecoaches crossing over the mountain.

-Between 1942 and 1950, several people went missing in the area. One writer suggested that there might be some kind of doorway to another world there, so many people went missing. This particular area bears the charming name of “Hell Hollow.”

-Nowadays, Glastenbury is the Area 51 of the Northeast, replete with sightings of UFOs and Bigfoot. There are several blogs devoted to what their authors call the “Bennington Triangle.”

-The site of the town is supposedly where Joseph of Arimathea arrived on a journey to North America and decided to build a church. It has been mentioned as a possible repository site for the Holy Grail. Grail hunters, saddle up.

-Glastenbury is also (coincidentally?) said to be the home of “Wejuk“, a sort of bear that walks like a man.

-The adventure *Home, Sweet Home* is set in the woods a few miles east of Glastenbury.

-The weirdness that adheres to the Glastenbury area has its own Yahoo! group, at:

[http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/The\\_Bennington\\_Triangle](http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/The_Bennington_Triangle)

#### **d. Classic Lovecraft or Mythos Stories Set in Vermont.**

1. *The Whisperer in Darkness* (Lovecraft), of course, concerns an investigation into certain Mi-Go mining operations allegedly occurring in rural Northern Vermont. Drop the name Akeley and watch knowledgeable investigators shudder.

2. *Strange Manuscript Found in the Vermont Woods* (Lin Carter): In Windham County, Vermont, one Seth Adkins finds the *Journal of Winthrop Hoag* lying about in the woods. The journal explains why summoning Zvilpoggua down from the stars is not a good idea--especially if one is standing in front of a stone altar carved with its image. The story mentions an obscure Mythos tome, *Of Evill Sorceries Done in New-England of Daemons in No Human Shape*, which might be a suitable substitute campaign reference guide; use the same statistics as suggested for *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*, but add Call/Dismiss Zvilpoggua to the spell list, at a Spell Multiplier of x5.

#### **e. Other 1920s-1930s Historical Sites and Points of Interest in Vermont.**

Bennington: Bennington is the largest Southwestern Vermont town, close to Pownal and the site of *The Sap Keeps Running*. Settled in 1749, Bennington was the earliest capitol of Vermont. Between 1920 and 1925, Bennington was the factory site for the Martin Wasp, a luxury automobile in competition with Rolls-Royce. The Wasp Six made its debut in 1924, on a 144 inch chassis and priced at





around \$7,000. An earlier model Wasp was among the favorite automobiles of Douglas Fairbanks. Wasps were elegant and distinctive, with a loyal following amongst their owners. In North Bennington, Bennington College opens its doors in 1932 to a women's student body. "Grandma Moses", a.k.a. Anna Mary Robertson (1860-1961) has her studio in Bennington between 1927 and 1935.

**Manchester:** Manchester is the prototypical elite ski resort town by the 1920s. It lies a short distance north of Bennington. The real-life Hotel Equinox, a beautiful hotel reminiscent of an antebellum Southern mansion, holds up to 400 older generation, upper crust guests. The nouveau riche preferred to ski at the smaller area lodges, but the limousine set continued to frequent the Equinox throughout the Depression. Mt. Equinox provides the skiing, but is itself owned by a Carthusian monastery on the summit. Many true-to-life old guard mansions dot the area. Manchester would be a suitable place for the winter vacation of a rich, dilettante investigator, or a wealthy, old guard villain might live in the area.



#### f. Some Local Native American Legends.

The Abenaki, a tribe of the Algonquian

people, are the major indigenous tribe to Vermont. They are not a recognized tribe in the United States (for no legitimate anthropologic reason); they were largely driven out of Vermont and into Quebec in the late 1600s. Today, they have communities in Quebec, and are pressing for tribal recognition from the U.S. Government. The State of Vermont recognized them as a legitimate tribal entity in 2006. Few speakers of Abenaki remain today; things were slightly better in this regard in the 1920s.

The Abenaki were agrarians who largely lived near floodplains. They have a rich tradition of oral storytelling. Their stories often feature *medolowins*, wizards in contact with the spirit world. Eerily, many of their mythic figures resemble Mythos figures. Some of these noteworthies include:

**Ask-wee-da-eed:** basically, a fire vampire.

**N-dam-keno-wet:** half fish, half men who molest bathing women.

**Tsi-noo:** soul-eating vampires.

**M-ska-gwe-demos:** a beautiful temptress who lives in the woods, and who targets men and male children, seducing and then killing them.

**Tatoskok:** a reptilian, aquatic monster said to dwell in Lake Champlain.

**Atosees:** a wizard who is both a snake and a man.

**P-mola:** a night spirit who creates cold weather and carries men off in the wind.

More Abenaki legends can be found in the *Home, Sweet Home* scenario.



# INVITATION TO THE DANCE

## A SHORT ADVENTURE SET IN VERMONT



**Tried and true witch disposal.**

### 1. Introduction.

*Invitation to the Dance* is a short scenario for Call of Cthulhu set in Bennington, VT, which can be staged either in the late 1920s or in the modern day. It will work best with a small number of investigators.

It must be stressed at the outset that the scenario deals with "witch-riding," whereby New England witches of legend would have sexual relations with sleeping men and "ride them" through the sky, in parallel to the Lilith legends common to Judaic folklore. Although such relations between humans and the

forces of the Mythos are a frequent element of Mythos tales and published scenarios, they are usually part of the back story, or at least occur "off camera." In this scenario, they occur very much "on camera," and those who might be offended by this may wish to run a less adult scenario. Caveat lector. It will also serve to introduce (or reintroduce) the investigators to Father Norbert McKenzie and Sheriff Hudson, and learn a bit about the Lilith aspect of Shub-Niggurath. (A condensed version of this chapter of the campaign was previously published in issue #5 of the *Whisperer* magazine).

### 2. What's Going On, In a Nutshell.

In the quiet churchyard of St. Peter's Church in Bennington, VT, the headstones of Jeremiah Moon, d. 1790, and Constance Jeffries, d. 1789, have mysteriously moved from one corner of the yard to the opposite end, without apparent explanation. Why? Poor Jeremiah was buried too close to a plot of unconsecrated ground used to bury witches. One of these witches, Constance Jeffries, was executed in 1789. Constance would come upon sleeping men, seize them, and "ride them" through the sky. Constance was a devotee of the demoness Lilith, and is referenced as a woman known to come to men in the night in response to their lustful dreams in certain occult works of that period.

When Constance was buried, certain mystic fortifications were added to the churchyard's cornerposts to ensure that she did not continue to plague the men of the town, even after death. This was a wise precaution, as Constance's spirit continued to dwell in the Dreamlands, albeit unable to



affect the waking world as a result.

Unfortunately, the march of progress has disrupted the status quo. A road crew working on widening and expanding U.S. Route 7 accidentally damaged the wards sealing the churchyard a few weeks ago. Constance's spirit can now affect the waking world to a limited extent. Her influence is limited to the graveyard and its immediate environs. But within the graveyard, she has been able to break down the barriers between the waking and dreaming world, particularly at midnight. At midnight on the night of the last full moon, her spirit leaked through into the graveyard and encountered that of Jeremiah Moon, one of her old victims.

Delighted, the foul, decaying spirit of Constance Jeffries "rode" that of Jeremiah Moon through the night skies, to his great torment. This has manifested itself in the waking world by the tombstone of Jeremiah Moon "fleeing" to the other end of the churchyard, "followed" by that of Constance Jeffries. The tombstone of Jeremiah Moon ended lying name-up on the ground, with that of Constance Jeffries resting upon it perpendicularly, in a reflection of sexual activity. Had the bodies been exhumed, the skeletons would have been found in a similar pose. The gravestones will continue to move about periodically, as Constance renews her torments of Jeremiah, coming to rest in some parody of sexual activity, until someone does something about it.

### **3. Getting Started.**

One of the investigators will notice a light-hearted article about the initial movement of the headstones in the Sunday supplement of their local newspaper. See Investigator Handout #1. This should pique their curiosity sufficiently to investigate, particularly if

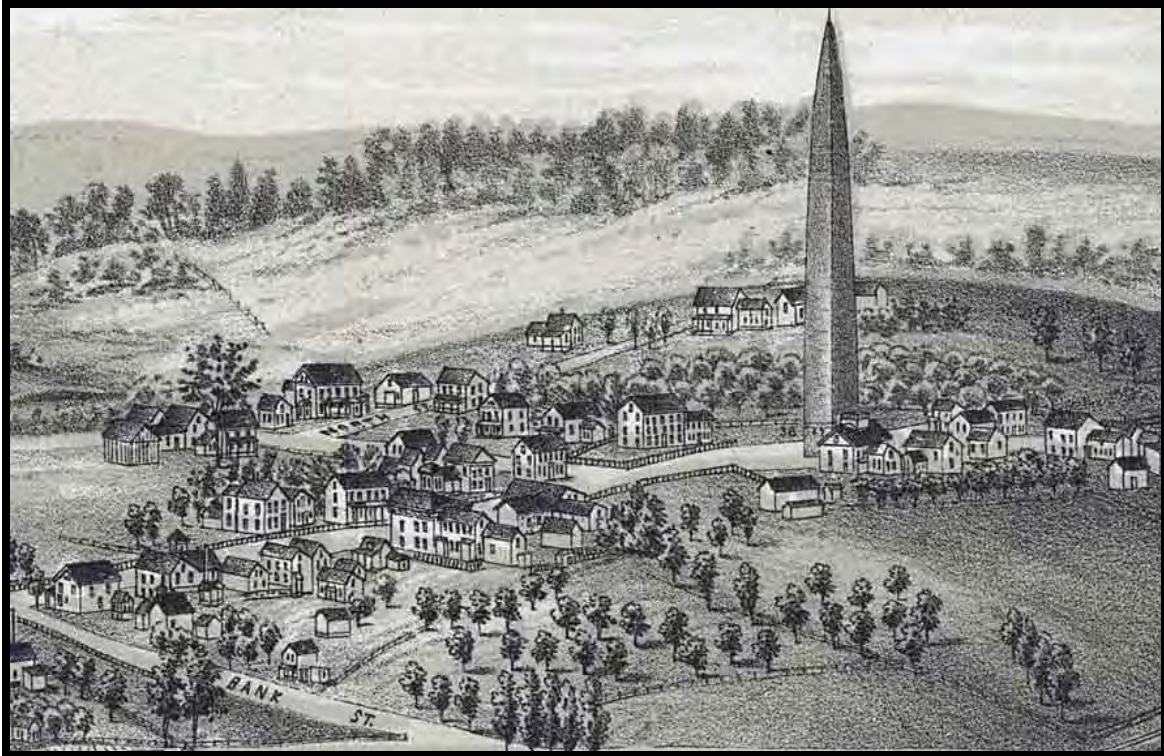
they do any research on Constance Jeffries.

#### **Invitation to the Dance, Investigator Handout #1.**

##### **Spooks at St. Peter's Churchyard?**

Unknown vandals working during the middle of the night desecrated two graves at St. Peter's Churchyard in Bennington, VT earlier this week, moving two gravestones from one corner of the yard to another. Sheriff Martin Hudson reported no leads. The tombstones belonged to two persons who died in the late 18th century, Jeremiah Moon and Constance Jeffries, d. 1790 and 1789 respectively. The stones, each easily weighing over 100 pounds a piece, and having been in the earth for hundreds of years, were found neatly stacked on top of one another, one flat on the ground and the other standing atop it. Despite the churchyard's location in central Bennington, no one apparently witnessed the incident, which must have taken the vandals some time to complete due to the weight and age of the gravestones. Sheriff Hudson speculated that it must have been the work of school-aged pranksters.

Between the time that the investigators read the article and the time that they manage to get to Bennington, the gravestones will have moved again in the night, unseen by anyone. This time they will have to come to rest in a semblance of the missionary position. If the investigators need further motivation, any journalists or authors in the group may be sent by their editors to write a human interest piece about the phenomenon. Private investigators might be asked for (or to return) a favor by a friend in their local diocese, or flat-out hired once the gravestones have moved a third or fourth time. Alternatively, one or more of the investigators might simply decide to go for a weekend in Vermont and stumble onto the situation.



Bennington, Vermont, c. 1925

#### **4. Bennington, Vermont.**

Bennington is a town of a few thousand souls in extreme southwestern Vermont, about 10 miles north of the Vermont/Massachusetts border. It lies along U.S. Route 7, a.k.a. the Ethan Allen Highway, connecting Pittsfield, MA and Burlington, VT. Settled in 1749, Bennington was the earliest capitol of Vermont.

##### **a. The Bennington Inn**

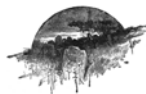
The Bennington Inn is a very nice, three-story, late Colonial-era inn with a restaurant, a bar (depending on the year) and a helpful staff. The investigators will probably want a room or rooms with a good view of the churchyard. The Inn is able to accommodate whatever reasonable room arrangements that the investigators may desire, including putting them on a direct overlook of the cemetery.

##### **b. The Dance**

Since sitting around an inn in southern Vermont is probably the investigators' idea of a nice vacation, it is perhaps fortunate that Constance Jeffries' perceptions extend as far as the inn, and she will look to have a little fun with them. Constance can't actually affect *too* much, either in the churchyard or outside of it, but that doesn't mean that she can't mess with their heads. Suggestions as to how to do this appear in the playtest notes. Constance's powers in the waking world consist of the following:

- Constance can pursue and torment the spirit of Jeremiah Moon, causing their gravestones to move instantaneously about the churchyard in the waking world. She will do this nightly at midnight in an effort to lure the investigators into an in-the-churchyard stakeout, where she can really have some fun with them.
- Constance can cause people to fall





asleep on a successful POW vs. POW check, at a cost of 1 magic point per try. Once they are asleep, she can (and usually will) use her Send Dreams ability to torment the dreamer with disturbing, erotic dreams.

- Constance can cause small, poltergeist-like effects as far as the Inn. She is adept at making these events seem like accidents or coincidences.
- Constance can, with a supreme effort (15 magic points) hex a victim, with the result that they fumble their next Luck roll. As discussed in the playtest notes, this power can be put to a wide variety of uses, including causing the investigators to miraculously miss the gravestones moving.



### **c. Investigations in Bennington.**

There are several lines of background investigation to undertake in Bennington. The investigators will probably talk to the locals (including the police), talk to Rev. McKenzie (the church rector), and survey the church grounds. Experienced investigators will probably look through the old records at St. Peter's, conduct historical research about Bennington, and conduct occult research about the town, the principals, and the church. They may also consult occult sources and/or Mythos tomes for information about Constance Jeffries, the town, or the phenomenon of moving gravestones in

general.

### **1. Local Gossip.**

The investigators will find most residents of town willing and able to talk about the ongoing "vandalism" at the churchyard. The details of the police investigation of the "vandalism" are quite public, and the police will be interested in any tips that they can get, as long as they stay in nominal charge of the investigation and are kept in the loop.

The gravestones, which easily weigh 100 pounds each, were found on top of one another in various positions. No one saw any of these incidents. This is somewhat surprising, as the (fairly limited) local constabulary and especially the staff at the church were trying to be vigilant after the first incident. How the vandals accomplished their work is the primary topic of speculation in town. Reportedly, no signs of dragging or any footprints were found in the churchyard. The stones simply "moved."

At the keeper's option, the investigators may not be the only group in town interested in the phenomenon. This adventure lends itself to reappearance of an historic rival of the investigators putting in an appearance, in an effort to solve the mystery. In the modern-day, this is precisely the sort of thing that a tabloid television show or magazine would take an interest in, and a camera crew may be in town trying to capture the incident on videotape.

If the investigators ask the right questions, locals may be induced to talk about the other "problem" with the church. As discussed below, St. Peter's Church has a minor reputation for having some odd acoustic properties. Locals can explain that the church bells sound one way in most parts of town, but sounded different--softer and more musical--from inside the churchyard. This odd acoustic effect has ended. People are not sure why, although most people are



aware that the change coincided with the roadwork in the area of the church, which ended a few weeks ago. No one has made the connection, however.

## **2. Poking Around the Graveyard.**

The churchyard is about 500 square feet, surrounded by a 6 foot high iron stake fence, with three stone pillars at the corners. The corner where the fourth would be is missing its pillar, and has been rounded off by a nice new segment of paved road, and blocked off by a new section of temporary fence. The churchyard is nearly full to capacity, with the earliest marker dating from the 1750s and the latest dating around 1840.



The investigators can easily find where both Constance Jeffries' and Jeremiah Moon's headstones were originally located. Constance's was in the corner closest to where the missing pillar was, with no graves nearby and a substantial zone of clearance around it. Jeremiah Moon's was buried a short distance away, with a few graves in between. There are no signs of digging, soil disturbance,

fingerprints or other signs of human activity around any of the gravesites, which the investigators should find somewhat unnerving. There are footprints, of course, as neither the sheriff nor Rev. McKenzie have closed the churchyard, but they are few and inconsistent in depth with moving a couple of 100-pound plus headstones. While the investigators are satisfying themselves that there is no rational explanation for the movement of the gravestones, Constance might take the opportunity to mess with their heads in some small way, such as by goosing them, or unzipping their flies repeatedly.

The three remaining stone pillars at the corners of the churchyard are particularly noteworthy. They consist of mortared together granite blocks, about two feet in diameter and eight feet high, with a number of small symbols carved around the bases. To the trained eye, they will appear to have occult significance. A Cthulhu Mythos roll may, at the Keeper's option, suggest that they are some sort of ward. If any of the investigators know the Banishment of Yde Etad spell, they may recognize the symbols as similar to those used to cast that particular spell. Alternatively, the investigators can copy the symbols and consult with appropriate tomes. The result of such an approach is discussed below.

## **3. Exhumation?**

The investigators may want to dig up the graves in the hopes of finding a clue. There is plenty to find, none of it pleasant. Exhumation efforts can play out in several different ways.

First, or at least at first, the investigators may try to secure permission to exhume the bodies. Rev. McKenzie and the local authorities should be expected to resist this idea, perceiving it as unnecessary. What does exhuming the bodies have to do with a case of obvious vandalism, anyway? Resolution of this debate with the good Rev.



McKenzie and the local authorities will have to be played out, perhaps resolved with the intercession of a Persuade roll at the appropriate time. Should the investigators procure permission to exhume the graves, they will find no bodies or coffins where they belong, not even holes. Evidently, the headstones were not placed where the bodies were actually buried(?)

A more enlightened tactic, which may occur to the investigators eventually, is to dig where the gravestones are. Politely phrased requests to dig under the gravestones, looking for trace evidence, are unlikely to draw a serious objection from Rev. McKenzie; after all, the dead won't be disturbed. Directly and not very deep under the gravestones, of course, is where the bodies are, locked in a skeletal, coital embrace mimicking the current position of the gravestones. SAN loss is 1/1d3 for realizing how impossible this is, not to mention disgusting. No matter what the investigators do with the remains, the next time that the gravestones move, the bodies will be under them, in a matching position. SAN loss for the second time would be fairly set as high as 1/1d6. The body of the female skeleton bears a sickeningly broken neck, a memento from Constance's hanging.

It is entirely possible, of course, that the investigators will steal out under cover of darkness and somehow try to do some covert exhumation. Remember that the churchyard is in downtown Bennington, with a rectory adjacent and a sizable hotel right across the street. People drive by every so often, and there is little cover. Of course, these facts have not stopped the "vandals," either. Likely this approach simply puts one or more investigators in the churchyard at midnight.

#### **4. Trying to Observe the Dance, from Afar.**

Undoubtedly, the investigators will set up a stakeout of the churchyard in an effort to "catch the vandals" or otherwise determine what is going on. Assuming that they are doing so from outside of the confines of the churchyard itself, they will fail miserably, and spectacularly. However, the ways in which they will fail will convince them that something weird is going on. The investigators can easily obtain a second story room at the Inn, with a window providing an excellent view of the churchyard.



**Looking out over the churchyard**

No matter how vigilant the investigators are, they will not see the gravestones move. Period. Ever. This is because it happens instantaneously, and exactly every night at midnight after the investigators arrive. You can arrange for explanations of how the investigators missed matters unfolding: the persons or persons on watch fell asleep; a knock on their door that interrupts them for 30 seconds; a brief use of the facilities; blinking at the wrong second. A useful pattern for both mood and pace is to manipulate the investigators into nightly stakeouts, with the implausibility of missing the event quickly becoming increasingly so. Minor SAN losses (0/1) should be handed out when the investigators are distracted for 15 seconds or so and miss the event.



### **Playtest Notes!**

The Ace Detective Agency, being in the southern Vermont area on another case, was enticed into investigating the moving gravestone phenomenon. They easily obtained a room with a facing window on the second floor of the Bennington Inn, and hoping to observe the dance, set up a series of four hour watches. Around midnight, the watcher dozed off for about 15 minutes (an "apparently failed CON check") only to wake up and find the headstones positioned in a new, sexually suggestive position. The detective in question reported suffering from intensely erotic dreams during the lost 15 minutes.

Frustrated at their colleague, but supposing that it was possible that they had just missed the vandals, the investigators went to double shifts the following night. Right around midnight, a beautiful young member of the hotel staff (with whom one of the investigators had been flirting earlier) knocked on their door. One of them went to answer the door, while the other tried to keep a steady watch on the graveyard, but momentarily turned to talk to the young woman. When they turned back around, after a lapse of about 15 seconds, the gravestones had moved again. SAN loss of 0/1 applied.

Afraid of what might happen if they went to the graveyard, but noting the significance of midnight ("the witching hour"), they resolved to try one more time. On the third night, the whole party decided to be awake at midnight, with an array of newly purchased cameras. As midnight approached, a black sedan drove in front of the graveyard exactly at midnight, momentarily obstructing their view (fumbled group Luck roll due to Constance's hex). The gravestones ended up perched precariously on top of one another. SAN loss of 1/1d3 applied. By this time thoroughly infuriated, and tired of finding their flies unzipped in public, the investigators resolved to camp out in the graveyard the next night. Things went poorly for them there.

### **Movie Cameras?**

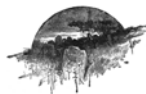
Particularly sophisticated and clever investigators (or most investigators, if the adventure is recalibrated to the modern day) will make a serious effort to film the graveyard in an effort to document the event. This is certainly feasible in the late 1920s, although the investigators will have to find scarce movie camera equipment, arrange proper lighting, find someone who knows how to run one, *etc.* This will be a considerably more challenging feat than using modern video cameras and surveillance equipment. Nonetheless, either way, the result is the same, assuming a successful filming effort. The gravestones move instantly and without apparent explanation in one frame's space of film. SAN loss 1/1d3. Constance, of course, may make efforts to foil the filming.

### **5. St. Peter's Church, Generally.**

St. Peter's Church is a small, gray stone, colonial era structure, built by the Vermont Congregationalists around 1755 and presently in use by the Episcopal Church. It is located in downtown Bennington. The small churchyard borders directly on U.S. Route 7, and lies directly across the street from the Bennington Inn. There is a bell tower which chimes the hour daily between 6 A.M. and 9 P.M. Note however that persons sleeping in the graveyard and falling under Constance's spell will hear the bells chime midnight as well. It is a one-level affair with a bell tower in the steeple, and a separate, adjoining rectory.

Any New England tour guide or general history source that discusses Bennington may briefly mention St. Peter's Church as a quaint example of colonial architecture. Any such source will also mention that St. Peter's Church is noted for the unusual musical properties of the church bells, particularly when heard from the churchyard. Readily available sources offer no explanation for this phenomenon. (This





phenomenon is due to the ward, which retains the sound. The bells at present, however, sound just like any other set of church bells).

### **6. St. Peter's Church, Rev. McKenzie.**

Rev. Norbert McKenzie is the current rector of the church. He has an office off of the main chamber of the church which is unremarkable, and lives in a small rectory on the property which is also unremarkable. Rev. McKenzie is a kind, friendly, pudgy, unmarried 60ish Episcopalian minister who knows little of the occult. He has no idea what is going on in the graveyard, but finds it disturbing from the perspective of someone who doesn't like having his church vandalized. He has been having some disturbing erotic dreams lately, but does not think anything of them (yet) and is unlikely to mention them unless directly questioned. He will not understand what investigators' requests to look through Colonial-era church records have to do with anything, but will allow it if given a plausible enough reason.

He has seen nothing suggesting who is vandalizing the graveyard. Up until now he has been content to let the police do their jobs. However, after the investigators arrive and the stones start moving on a nightly basis, he will pick a night or two to try and catch the "vandals" red-handed himself. He will have about as much luck as the investigators, which is to say none. It is possible that he might be persuaded to camp out in the graveyard with the investigators after becoming frustrated with his unsuccessful efforts. Whether he becomes Constance's target or whether this fate is given to an investigator depends on how the Keeper thinks that his players will take it, and how mean he's feeling.

Rev. McKenzie will not take kindly to

investigator requests to exhume the graves of Jeremiah Moon or Constance Jeffries. Not being of the Montague Summers school of theology, he does not buy into witches, ghouls and goblins. Of course, Rev. McKenzie likewise won't believe that the graves themselves have moved, so he might be persuaded to let the investigators "sift through the dirt for evidence" right around the gravestones.

Rev. McKenzie can discuss what happened to the missing corner post of the churchyard. His superiors in the diocese are suing the State and the road crew for damaging church property without authorization or payment of compensation. The road crew demolished it a few weeks ago when widening that segment of road.

#### **FATHER NORBERT MCKENZIE, BENNINGTON, VT. RECTOR**

**Nationality:** American

STR 11 DEX 11 INT 13 CON 12  
APP12 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 14  
SAN 59 Luck 65 Hits: 13 Age: 58.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** Anglican/Episcopalian seminary graduate.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Credit Rating 60%; Drive Automobile 25%; First Aid 40%; Law 25%; Library Use 70%; Occult 25%; Persuade 75%; Psychology 45%.

**Languages:** English 70%; Latin 30%.

**Attacks:** All at base.

**Notes:** A good friend to have, since people tend to listen to him.

### **7. St. Peter's Church, Old Records.**

The investigators will doubtlessly want to go snooping through the old church records at some point, and will probably head straight for those around the years 1789-90. This will bear fruit with a little bit of work.



### **Invitation to the Dance, Investigator Handout #2: Witch Trial Transcript.**

The box of documents pertaining to Constance Jeffries includes reports of services at which Jeremiah Moon behaved as though bewitched; diary excerpts wherein Jeremiah Moon confesses to the authoring reverend of being visited in carnal dreams by Constance Jeffries and "ridden" by her through the night skies over New England; several increasingly impassioned sermons about the continued dangers of witchcraft; and finally, the doubtlessly anticipated transcript of a secret witch trial held against Constance Jeffries in 1789 by the town fathers. There is a considerable amount of correspondence between the town fathers and members of the clergy in Boston as to how one should hold a witch trial. The church fathers in Boston took the position that the populace of Bennington had taken leave of its senses, but there is a great deal of disturbing detail in the letters from Bennington pleading for advice. These letters include numerous claims about Jeremiah Moon being carnally tormented by Mistress Jeffries, even in her (apparent) absence.

Finally, in desperation, the people of Bennington look overseas for assistance, and procured the services of one Zbigniew Czyzny, an unreconstructed witch-hunter from Poland. Czyzny conducted a textbook witch trial, the textbook in this case being the Malleus Maleficarum.

The trial did not go as he anticipated, however. Czyzny writes in his transcript how Constance Jeffries scoffed at the allegations, scoffed at Czyzny, and scoffed at Czyzny's religion. Worse, throughout the course of the trial Czyzny finds himself fondled, caressed and serviced by unseen entities while Mistress Jeffries cleaned her nails or whistled a tune. Jeremiah Moon testified in graphic detail and at length about the nighttime visitations of Mistress Jeffries, which include "riding" him to witches' sabbats as far away as Boston. Mistress Jeffries was of course promptly found guilty. After a long debate as to whether she should be burnt or hanged, the consensus settled upon a traditional New England hanging. At the time, Vermont was an independent republic with its capital at Bennington, placing the "national leaders" in the loop, so no reprisals or subsequent investigation of the witch-trial occurred. After the execution, Czyzny elected to take "certain precautions" with the body, creating a ward around the churchyard where Constance was disposed of. Czyzny refers to the ward as the Banishment of the Bells. While it is apparent from the correspondence that burying her in a corner of the churchyard was a controversial decision, Czyzny convinced the populace that the sound of the bells would keep her spirit at bay.

The old church records (Library Use roll) are not in the best of order, but are theoretically complete and kept in chests in the basement of the church.

Unfortunately, the readily available church records do not contain a three-ring binder labeled "Witch Trials." In fact, the records from 1789-90 look pretty normal. The investigators need to look for broad patterns, or something missing. A broad look at the church records from 1789-90 may reveal (Library Use at 1/2 or Spot Hidden) that certain records are inexplicably missing. (***This is a LICENSE PLATE RULE clue***). One week's worth of the rector's diary will be missing here, one older page of birth

reports there, one sermon given in 1789 will not be where it belongs. Basically, all of the records pertaining to Constance Jeffries have been pulled. This file has been concealed behind a loose stone in front of which a large chest full of files has been stationed. The reading light is rather poor in the basement, so it is likely that the investigators will haul out the chest and take it upstairs for better reading. A Spot Hidden roll (***This is a LICENSE PLATE RULE clue***) spots the protruding stone, which is marked on close inspection with markings similar to those on the corner posts in the yard. Inside is a sheaf of church records all pertaining to Constance Jeffries and/or Jeremiah Moon. These are described in Investigator Handout #2, above.



The trial transcript and related documents take approximately 20 hours to study, and after a successful Read English roll gives the reader +3% to Occult, +1% to Cthulhu Mythos, and contains one spell (x5 multiplier): Banishment of the Bells (described below). The transcript is quite clear that the fourth post is the most important, and must be circumscribed about its base with any witch's marks appearing on the body of the accused. The transcript mentions that a witch's mark was found under the left breast of the accused, but sadly, does not clearly describe it.



**John Phillips' road crew**

### **8. The Road Crew.**

The road crew presently working in the Bennington area should not come as any surprise to the investigators. They are a frequent sight in the New England of the mid-1920s. The road crew will be working on widening U.S. Route 7 a few miles north of town.

The foreman of the crew, one John Phillips, will talk to the investigators about the work in the area of St. Peter's Church. He will be friendly but defensive about committing any error, insisting that he followed the drawings. Mr. Phillips will acknowledge that his crew, as well as the project engineer, have been sued by the diocese for straying from the plans and damaging the churchyard. The curb cut shown on his plans, which he will gladly show to the investigators, clearly calls for the demolition of one of the corner pillars of the churchyard.

The plans are in due form and sealed by Tony Tralha, P.E., apparently an engineer employed by the State of Vermont. Astute or experienced investigators may recognize this name as an anagram of a familiar Mythos figure. Efforts to find Mr. Tralha fail utterly, as he does not actually exist.

Mr. Phillips did not keep the wreckage of the stone corner post from the churchyard, but can confirm that it was covered with similar "ornamental" carvings as the other three. He can not describe them in any great detail, beyond that they were vaguely star-shaped.

### **9. Occult Research.**

Experienced investigators will no doubt hit the library at some point during the scenario. What they might find out there is organized by topic below.

#### **a. Old New England.**

##### **1. Witch-riding and Transvection in general.**

Any Mythos tome with decent coverage of New England or Western European witches, as well as any number of occult texts such as the *Malleus Maleficarium* or the *Compendium Maleficarum* of Guazzo can relay the following information on transvection. The ability to fly was one of the fundamental aspects common to all witches. Although many people commonly associated witches with flying on broomsticks, this is only one way in which they flew. Very often, witches were reported to fly by riding naked men through the sky. Nor was there any double entendre in the notion of riding naked men



through the night sky; the inference was intended. There are many stories of witches coming to unwary men or enemies in the night, seducing them in their dreams, and then riding them (in every sense of the phrase) through the air to a witches' sabbat.

## **2. Constance Jeffries.**

Mistress Jeffries' witch trial transcript can be found in the hidden archives of St. Peter's Church, and is fully described there. Most Mythos tomes or occult works oriented to New England witch activity will not mention Constance. In fact, the date of Constance's death and alleged witch activity should strike the investigators as quite odd (Occult or History check), as the New England witch hysteria was long over by the late 18th Century. Books covering latter-day witch activity may, at the Keeper's option, describe Constance as a witch rumored to haunt the dreams of sleeping men.

## **3. Jeremiah Moon.**

Although there is no mention of Jeremiah in occult or Mythos tomes, texts such as *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New English Canaan* will mention a Moon family residing in Western Massachusetts and Vermont as notorious and determined witch hunters.

## **4. St. Peter's Church.**

The investigators will not find any mention of the church itself in occult or Mythos tomes, barring only the witch trial transcript in its basement.

## **5. Church Bells.**

Church bells figure in two prominent witch-related legends, one positive and one negative. Play this up to keep the investigators guessing.

### **Banishment of the Bells, a new Mythos spell.**

This spell secures a defined area against the power of one *particular* sorcerer or Mythos being. If the sorcerer or Mythos being (or their mortal remains) is physically present within the area, they are trapped and powerless for the (indefinite) duration of the spell. The spell requires a bell of any size or tone, as well as four pillars carved with arcane symbols detailed in the spell.

The last pillar must include amongst its carvings the "personal sigil" (i.e., the witch's mark) of the target. Once the pillars are erected, a total of 5 POW points, plus 1 POW for each 100 square feet to be warded, must be sacrificed by the caster(s). (Thus, 10 POW would have to be sacrificed to ward the churchyard using the existing pillars). Each caster must know the spell. The caster(s) engage in the specified chant for a number of hours equal to the amount of POW being expended, and the bell must be rung continuously during the chanting.

Once the spell is complete, the area continuously resonates with the sound of the bell, below the threshold of human hearing. Destroying one or more of the pillars breaks the protection of the spell, although they can be repaired and reused in a subsequent casting. SAN loss for each caster is 1d6.

In Constance's case, the fourth and last pillar included her witch's mark. As noted in the St. Peter's church records, her witch's mark is found under her left breast, but is not described in the records.

The first, which can be found in just about every text devoted to witches, has to do with their efficacy at warding off witches. It is widely reported that the ringing of a church bell will forcibly ground a flying witch within earshot. Such reports can be found in the *Malleus Maleficarum* among many other sources.

Alternatively, properly prepared bells were rumored to give sorcerers the power to raise the dead if the bells are laid in a





grave for seven days. Let the investigators wonder.

### **6. The Carvings on the Cornerpost.**

It should be fairly obvious to experienced investigators that the cornerposts are some sort of ward. This would be correct. Identifying the ward and figuring out how to fix it are different matters entirely:

- Examination of the symbols and consultation with appropriate Mythos tomes reveal that the symbols are similar to those involved in the Banishment of Yde Etad spell, although somewhat different. If any of the investigators know this spell, they should be able to note the similarities. They may be able to surmise from this that the ward is targeted against a *particular* being, and localized.
- Further consultation with appropriate Mythos tomes suggests that the alterations have to do with the maintenance of a banishing or warding energy on a permanent basis.
- Certain Mythos tomes may describe the Banishment of the Bells spell in its entirety, although obviously Constance's personal sigil will not be included. Banishment of the Bells can also be found in the trial transcript of Constance's witch trial. Her personal sigil will have to be obtained the hard way—by looking at it.



U.S. Route 7, near Bennington (1930s).

### **7. Spectral Evidence.**

Should the investigators look into the phenomenon of moving gravestones in particular, they will find a few mentions of such matters in the form of warnings against burying the victim of a witch too close to the unconsecrated ground used to bury the witch herself. Numerous witch trial transcripts note that the victims would suffer at the hands of and be chased by unseen assailants "in spirit form." The unexplained movement of gravestones is sometimes attributed to the pursuit of the victim by the restless spirit of the witch. This "spectral evidence" played an important part in the Salem witch trials, as witnesses on the stand writhed under unseen blows and torment, purportedly from the accused witches.

### **8. Witch's Marks.**

The reference in the trial transcript should lead the investigators to inquire into the phenomenon of witch's marks. These are discussed in any significant treatise on witchcraft. One of the reportedly "surest" ways of detecting a witch would be the discovery of one or more witch's marks on his or her person. This was a mark on the witch's skin, from which her familiar allegedly drew blood as nourishment. Witch's marks were typically found in concealed areas of the body, such as under the tongue or near the genitals. Witch's marks would not bleed when pricked. Noted New England witch hunter Cotton Mather was especially convinced of the probative value of witch's marks as evidence of guilt.

### **b. Investigations In The Dreamlands.**

Although there is little chance that the investigators will research occurrences in the Dreamlands at first, should they encounter Constance in the churchyard one night, they may well turn to Dreamlands sources for advice. Mythos tomes of



comparatively recent vintage, particularly those discussing interactions between the waking and dream worlds, may have some coverage of Constance Jeffries. Experienced dreamers may also travel to the Dreamlands and consult knowledgeable Dreamlands figures for information. In such an event, the following information is available:

- Constance Jeffries is not known by name in the Dreamlands.
- A story about a witch or sorceress who pursues men and rides them through the night skies is another matter. Such a sorceress is known to haunt the Enchanted Wood, and is said to be devoted to the goddess Lilith. Men who have tarried too long in the Enchanted Wood have been known to be tormented by disturbing, erotic visions upon occasion.

#### **5. Trying to Observe the Dance, Midnight in the Graveyard.**

Sooner or later, the investigators will opt for a midnight stakeout in the graveyard in an effort to find out what's going on. Constance will encourage them to do this by tormenting them to the extent necessary. (During playtesting, one investigator actually sat on Constance's gravestone, daring her aloud to do something about it). The last scheduled ringing of the church bells occurs at nine P.M. The investigators in the graveyard will find it quite disturbing, as a result, when at midnight the church bells unexpectedly chime 13 times. SAN loss 0/1.

The investigators' gear and personal belongings will remain unaffected, but they will at this point have been shifted into the Dreamlands. Any investigators camped outside of the churchyard will simply observe that the investigators inside it have quietly fallen asleep, without fanfare. It will all be over by the time by

they can get inside the graveyard to try and awaken the rest of the investigators, as everything in the graveyard happens instantaneously to the outside observer.

#### **6. Dream Bennington.**

Inside the churchyard, things appear subtly different. Do not simply advise the players that "you are now in the Dreamlands." Rather, state that a thick night mist has swirled up to the edges of the churchyard as the bells toll 13, and the sky seems somehow darker and stiller. As the investigators take a closer look around, no electric lights can be seen throughout the town, obscured as it is by the mist, and the gravestones seem newer, less worn with age. Keep things ambiguous as long as possible. Experienced Dreamers may recognize that they are now in the Dreamlands from the description; otherwise, they should be granted appropriate rolls when they find themselves abruptly awakened in the Churchyard after things are all over.



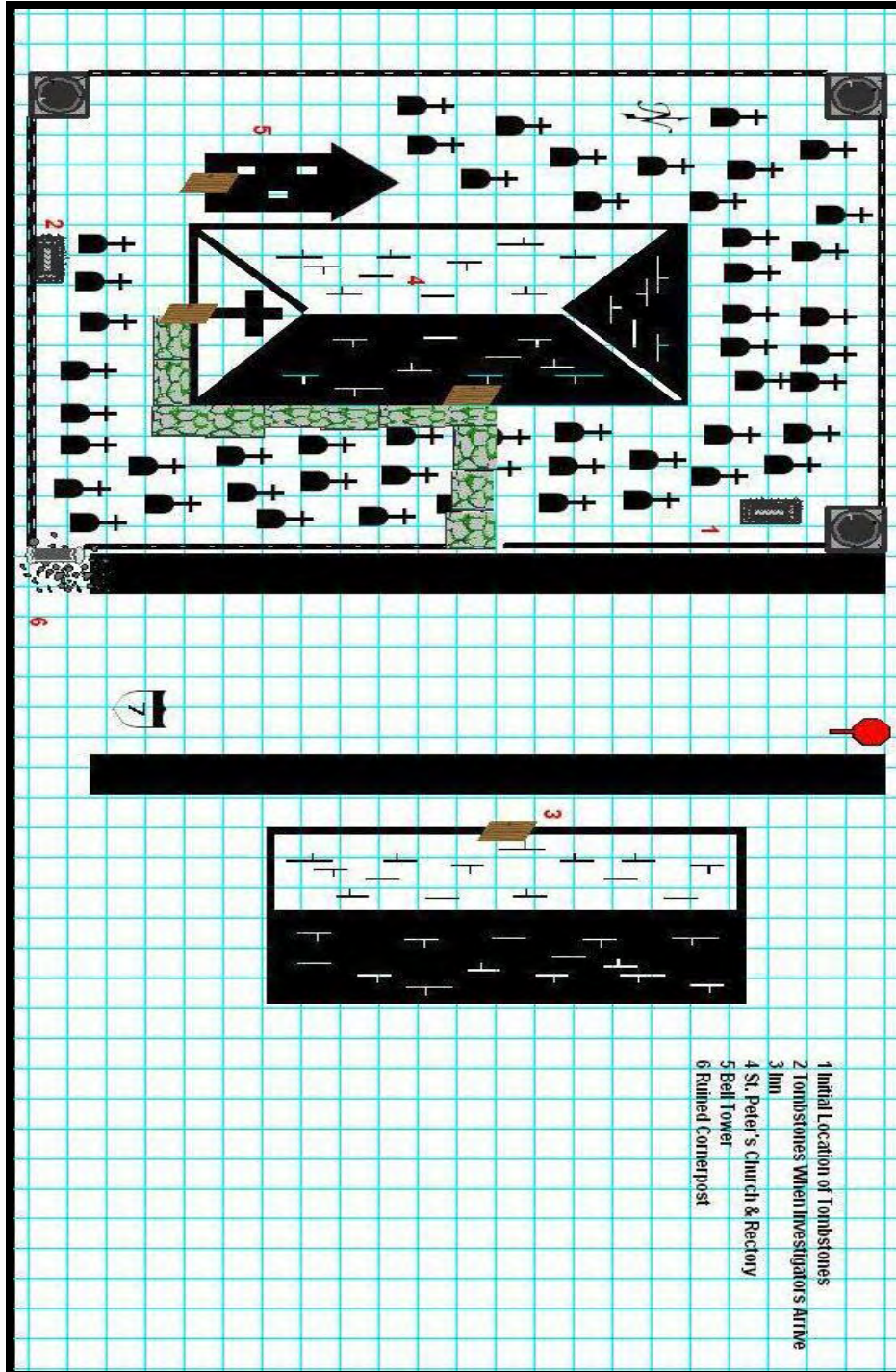
The gravestone of Jeremiah Moon is nowhere to be found. Rather, almost immediately, a thin, older man with sunken eyes and a harried look, dressed in a gown and a nightcap, comes running for his life from one corner of the churchyard. "Mercy, for the love of God," he cries. There will only be a few moments only for conversation, during which time the man can identify himself as Jeremiah Moon, and tell how he is being bewitched by Constance Jeffries. As far as he knows or is concerned, he is alive, the year is 1790,



the investigators are dressed funny, and there's a witch on his tail (figuratively speaking, but only for the moment).

Please refer to the map of the churchyard below for a tactical overview.

### Tactical Overview of Churchyard--Invitation to the Dance





### Constance Jeffries, Undead Vivophilic.

**Nationality:** American.

STR 25 DEX 18 INT 18 CON 18  
APP 18\* POW 20 SIZ 10 EDU 18  
SAN 0 Luck 100 Hits: 14 Age: ??

(\*in Dreamlands).

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Skills:** Any deemed appropriate by the Keeper.

**Languages:** English 90%.

**Attacks:** Grapple: 80%. If Constance successfully grapples a victim, she flies off with him through the night sky, stripping him of clothing article by article, and then subjecting him to her amorous attentions over the rest of the evening, until she drops him, naked and in shock, at some embarrassing locale.

**Special Abilities:** Fly: Constance can fly at speeds of up to 100 m.p.h. with the aid of any number of "traditional" witching devices, including the tried-and-true broomstick, flying ointment made from rendered babies, or a victim of her attentions.

**Special Defenses:** Constance ignores damage from most conventional sources. Spells and enchanted weapons do normal damage; fire also does normal damage. Constance is essentially a spirit, however, and "killing" her only dispels her until midnight next.

**Spells:** Blight Crops, Implant Fear, Send Dreams, Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Nightgaunt, Contact Ghoul, Contact Nyarlathotep (as the Black Man), Voice of Ra, others the Keeper deems appropriate.

**Weaknesses:** At the Keeper's option, Constance is vulnerable to any or all of the traditional weaknesses of witches. Sources that would harm or inconvenience a witch do damage or take effect at the Keeper's discretion. The ringing of church bells in particular will ground and incapacitate Constance, causing appropriate falling damage. Constance is not impressed by any display of religious artifacts, although she might stop to momentarily laugh at the investigator.

**SAN loss:** 1/1d8 for gazing upon her loveliness; more depending on what she does to you.

### 7. Slow Dancing in the Moonlight.

Constance will shortly appear wherever her gravestone was last located. Constance is a foul sight, being an executed, dead and one-year buried witch circa 1790. Her decaying, worm-infested head lolls at an impossible angle. Her rotting, once-voluptuous body half-oozes and half-sashays in a lewd, suggestive fashion toward the nearest male in the churchyard. She half-croaks, half-whispers suggestive little nothings, and her grave-rotted clothing slips a way in a fashion that might be enticing, were she not an animated corpse. Unfortunately for the investigator or NPC in question, she also moves surprisingly fast. SAN loss is 1/1d8 for everyone seeing Constance.

Constance's plan is simple: grab a man, fly off into the night sky, and subject him to her own special brand of torment for the balance of the night. Describing this sufficiently to convey what has happened while avoiding straying into the overtly lurid is an important part of the scenario. The accompanying playtest notes suggest how this might be accomplished.

### 8. Dancing Cheek to Cheek.

It takes Constance, in all likelihood, one round to grab a victim, a second to get airborne, and another three to get completely out of range. In the likely event that the investigators are unable to stop Constance, they awaken shortly thereafter and suffer a 1/1d4 SAN loss. The victim is inexplicably found naked, shivering, and locked in an embrace with the skeleton of Constance Jeffries. He may, upon becoming lucid, be able to relate several hours of inventive torment, courtesy of Mistress Jeffries, as she rode him through the night sky. The author believes that suffering such an extended, tortuous experience at the hands (and other parts) of a hideous, animated witch-corpse merits a "no mercy" SAN loss of 3d6.





### **More Playtest Notes!**

The Ace Detective Agency was determined to get to the bottom of the mystery of the moving gravestones. Three of the investigators camped out in the graveyard, heavily armed with both conventional weapons as well as some less conventional weapons such as crucifixes and Molotov cocktails. One particularly bold investigator opted to sit directly on Constance's gravestone. The fourth investigator kept watch from the hotel room.

From the perspective of the fourth investigator, very little happened. He saw the investigator sitting on the gravestone appear to nod off and then fall backwards over the gravestone and out of sight, followed shortly thereafter by some anguished screaming. He jumped out of the window, shimmied down the wall, and vaulted over the churchyard fence, only to find a bizarre sight. One unfortunate investigator was found naked and filthy, lying atop a woman's skeleton with a badly broken neck. The other investigators were slowly staggering to their feet, having just woken up. Sadly, the victimized investigator required institutionalization for an extended period of time.

From the perspective of the investigators in the graveyard, things were rather more eventful. The two investigators who were not sitting on Constance's gravestone managed to grab Jeremiah Moon and were barking questions at him when Constance appeared, directly behind the third. Constance enfolded him in an embrace and kissed the investigator's neck, her decaying stench filling the air. He turned to see what had grabbed him and promptly went insane. His strangled cries alerted the other investigators who turned to see Constance bearing their friend up, up into the misty skies. Several remarkably well aimed Molotov cocktails nearly succeeded in saving their friend, but his pants were discarded, landing on the head of one investigator. Shortly thereafter, Constance's grave clothes fluttered down, down, down, slowly down, in a preternaturally slow, moonlit spiral. By the light of the full moon, Constance and her victim could be seen only in silhouette, locked in a disgustingly suggestive embrace, as his screams faded slowly away.

For those interested in such matters, historical sources are sharply divided on

whether there is any redeeming value to such an experience. According to the *Demonolotrieiae* of Nicolas Remy (1595) it is "cold and unpleasant," whereas others disagreed quite vehemently.

## **9. Solutions.**

### **a. The Need for Solutions.**

It is obviously very important to the scenario to lure the investigators into the graveyard at midnight. If the investigators just won't go, then Rev. McKenzie, or a group of school kids on a dare, will do just fine, and slap the investigators with an appropriate SAN loss for letting evil run unchecked.

Anyone who is victimized by Constance Jeffries has a number of things to contend with, beyond what is likely to be an incapacitating SAN loss. First, assuming that they did go insane, their soul is Constance's plaything and trapped in the Dreamlands. Should that investigator be experienced in Dreaming, he will be unable to access the Dreamlands. Worse, the investigator will continue to suffer nightly visitations, no matter where he goes, resulting in a 1d3 SAN loss each night, until the end arrives. The end, in this case, would be the delivery of the child of the investigator and Constance Jeffries, "born" on the night when the investigator's SAN finally reaches 0. The investigator will be kept up to date on the status of the "pregnancy" on a nightly basis.

### **b. Solutions at the Churchyard.**

Assuming that the investigators have done their homework, they will have figured out that they can renew the Banishment of the Bells in effect on the graveyard, and since everything was fine before the road crew wreaked its havoc, restoring it should put an end to Constance. This is a correct assumption. However, to restore the ward,



the investigators will have to get a look-see at Constance's witch-mark. The location, under her left breast, is described in the transcript of her witch trial. Getting a look at it could be a bit of a problem.

The investigators may try a more-or-less direct assault on Constance, likely with more firepower than they brought the first time. Here, the success of the scenario depends on playing Constance as credible opposition. Her perceptions do extend as far as the Inn, at least, so any plans that the investigators might be laying might be overheard and prepared for. Should the investigators simply show up again at the graveyard armed for bear, after having laid their plans at the "safety" of the Inn, the Keeper would be well within his rights to have Constance bring a number of friends, in the form of ghouls, nightgaunts, or worse, in a sufficient number to worry the investigators. Once they are beaten, subdued, worn down or scattered, Constance can grab another victim. Constance's accomplices will focus on subduing the investigators and carrying them off as appropriate. If the Keeper has been looking for a way to introduce the investigators to the Dreamlands orthodoxy, the nightgaunts and/or ghouls might deposit them in some out of the way place such as the Vale of Pnath. Otherwise, simply have them take the investigator in question on an appropriate sight-seeing expedition through the Dreamlands, with appropriate SAN losses charged upon awakening.

The church bells are the investigators' greatest weapon. Ringing the church bells incapacitates Constance both in the waking and dreaming world. If the investigators discuss their plans only while the bells are ringing, Constance won't know about them, and might be less prepared. If the investigators ring the bells while Constance is present, she crashes to the ground, screaming, and gives the investigators the needed opportunity to conduct a physical examination (with

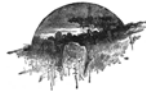
appropriate SAN losses for looking under the left breast of a foul, maggoty, animated corpse to see what is there). Of course, the Keeper should make getting to the bells from the dreamscape of the churchyard a challenge. The investigators will have to go out of the churchyard, into the church, up the spiral staircase of the steeple, and finally to the bells themselves.

There is a great deal of opportunity to stage memorable events and horror movie chase scenes as one or more investigators attempt to make their way from the churchyard to the bells. Constance may notice what they are trying to do and make such investigators her focus. Constance can harass such investigators with poltergeist-like effects, Implant Fear, or attack them with summoned nightgaunts. The church doors might resist being opened. Nightgaunts will break through windows, clutching at the investigators.

Once the investigators have incapacitated Constance to the extent necessary to have a look at her witch's mark, which resembles a seven-pointed star, they can probably "kill" Constance. In Dream Bennington, "killing" Constance just dispels her until the next midnight, but this will allow the investigators to operate in the "real" graveyard uninterrupted and unmolested to renew the Banishment.



Quiet churchyard in Bennington, c. 1935.



### **c. The Dreamlands?**

An alternative to renewing the ward lies in pursuing Constance in the Dreamlands. If the investigators are experienced dreamers, they will probably recognize the Bennington dreamscape as part of the Dreamlands, and may venture to the Dreamlands in an effort to retrieve a victim. As noted previously, Constance keeps a fairly low profile in the Dreamlands, but maintains a lair of sorts in the Enchanted Wood. A story about a witch or sorceress who pursues men and rides them through the night skies may be known to some of the more learned inhabitants of the Dreamlands. Such a sorceress is known to haunt the Enchanted Wood, and is said to be devoted to the goddess Lilith. Men who have tarried too long in the Enchanted Wood have been known to be tormented by disturbing, erotic visions upon occasion.

Constance's lair is a dark, twisted reflection of the church and graveyard from Bennington, situated in a dark clearing of the Enchanted Wood. The Keeper can ad lib exactly where her lair is and how the investigators get there. Villagers in nearby towns may have some vague idea of where the witch's lair is; Dreamlands creatures might be inquired of; an NPC who thinks that he can guide them there might be introduced, *etc.* How long of a journey is entailed and how eventful it is should be tailored to the investigators' collective taste for old-style wilderness romps and fantasy gaming.

The church and churchyard look fairly normal from a distance, except for the fact that the church has no bell tower, only a stub that looks to have been left behind by a lightning strike. As the investigators get closer, however, the gray stone of the church is rather obviously weathered human bones, closely fitted together. (SAN loss 1/1d3). Oddly, it is always midnight in Constance's segment of the Dreamlands, and the moon is always full.

(SAN loss 1/1d3 if this is noticed). The interior of the church is an odd mix of weathered bone walls, slightly twisted church trappings, and opulent luxuries. (By way of example, there is a statue which, on casual examination, appears to be a Madonna with child. Upon close examination, the Madonna bears an uncomfortable resemblance to Constance herself, while the child bears a facial resemblance to any captured investigators, otherwise to Jeremiah Moon).

Although Constance's statistics are the same as in Dream Bennington, here there is no SAN loss for viewing her. She appears as a beautiful, voluptuous, raven-haired young woman, with a quick smile and a ready wit. She will not move to attack the investigators at first, instead inquiring as to why they have come so far. If forced to fight, she keeps 2d4+2 ghouls nearby to do her dirty work for her. She prefers to lure the investigators into a false sense of security, claiming that she is innocent, that they have the wrong person, and that they are being frightfully rude by intruding into her sanctuary. If they tell her that they want to free their companion, she invites them to go behind the altar and get him, but he won't want to leave. Depending on how much time has passed, she may appear and/or act pregnant, which should provoke a SAN loss of 1/1d6 if the investigators realize what this probably means (Idea rolls).

The souls of any captured investigators will be found chained by the neck (with delicate, silver chains) to the "altar" of the church. They will be conscious and coherent, but simply won't want to leave. It's pleasant here, and besides, he wouldn't want to abandon "his family." The chains are easy enough to remove, taking about 2 rounds to accomplish, and the investigator's attitude reverts promptly to normal once the chains are removed.

When their guards are down, or as down as



they're likely to get, Constance will call forth her ghouls and attempt to add the investigators to her collection. This will probably occur when they are trying to free their companion. If killed in her sanctuary, Constance is dead for good. Constance cannot leave her sanctuary in pursuit of the investigators if the Banishment has been restored.

### **10. Conclusion and Rewards.**

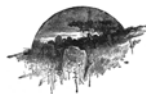
Should the investigators put the spirit of Constance Jeffries to rest by any means, then award each 1d10 SAN. The most likely means of accomplishing this would either be renewal of the Banishment or killing her in the Dreamlands, although the Keeper should keep his mind open to other possibilities. If Constance has captured the soul of an investigator, renewal of the Banishment prevents further SAN loss or visitations while it endures, but the prohibition on Dreaming would remain in effect. Should they give up without success, charge each with a 1d6 SAN loss. Should the souls of one or more investigators remain the eternal playthings of Constance, charge the other investigators a further 1d6 SAN each. The SAN of the tormented investigator will take care of itself, particularly if they have failed to eliminate Constance. As the investigator loses his SAN at a rate of 1d3 per day, he will begin to have dreams of Constance as an expectant mother, bidding him to join her forever, with the dreams leading up to an awful birth. Ultimately, the investigator will have no choice but to give in to pleas for family unity as his sanity slips away.

### **11. Conversion to Modern Day.**

*Invitation to the Dance* lends itself fairly easily to adaptation to the modern era, because the conversion will only give the investigators access to more technological goodies that will not help, leading to higher SAN losses when they confront the

inexplicable. Few changes will be needed. Following are some issues that will likely arise with modern day investigations.

- The investigators are likely to have to contend with interference from a tabloid. They may either see, or be referred to an initial tabloid segment on the churchyard, with a request to investigate.
- Another way for modern investigators to be drawn into the case would be through the eminent domain lawsuit angle. The lawyers handling the case will be totally stymied in their attempts to serve the complaint on Tony Tralha, P.E., who as mentioned previously is fictitious. The State will deny that it was responsible for wrecking the fourth corner post, and there will be two conflicting sets of blueprints floating around. A lawyer or Vermont state official may ask them to look into the matter, which will lead them to the graveyard.
- The investigators are much more likely to attempt to use video surveillance, infrared scanning, motion sensors, parabolic microphones, or other high-tech monitoring techniques. This only leads to applying the heavier SAN losses for the moving gravestones that much earlier.
- The investigators are much more likely to have access to heavy firepower than are parties from earlier eras. Constance does not care.
- Air travel to Bennington is best accomplished by taking a commercial flight to Albany, NY and then driving approximately one hour East in a rental car.

**NPC RECAP****FATHER NORBERT McKENZIE,  
BENNINGTON, VT. RECTOR****Nationality:** American.

STR 11	DEX 11	INT 13
CON 12	APP 12	POW 13
SIZ 14	EDU 14	SAN 59
Luck 65	Hits: 13	Age: 58.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.**Education:** Episcopalian seminary graduate.**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Credit Rating 60%; Drive Automobile 25%; First Aid 40%; Law 25%; Library Use 70%; Occult 25%; Persuade 75%; Psychology 45%.**Languages:** English 70%; Latin 30%.**Attacks:** All at base.**Notes:** A good friend to have, since people tend to listen to him.**CONSTANCE JEFFRIES, UNDEAD  
VIVOPHILIAC****Nationality:** American.

STR 25	DEX 18	INT 18
CON 18	APP 18*	POW 20
SIZ 10	EDU 18	SAN 0
Luck 100	Hits: 14	Age: N/A

(\*In Dreamlands).

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.**Education:** N/A.**Skills:** Any deemed appropriate by the Keeper.**Languages:** English 90%; others at the Keeper's discretion.**Attacks:** Grapple: 80%. If Constance successfully grapples a victim, she flies off with him through the night sky, stripping him of clothing article by article, and then subjecting him to her amorous attentions over the rest of the evening, until she drops him, naked and in shock, at some embarrassing locale. SAN loss 3d6.**Special Abilities:** Fly: Constance can fly at speeds of up to 100 m.p.h. with the aid of any number of "traditional" witching devices, including the tried-and-true broomstick, flying ointment made from rendered babies, or a victim of her attentions.**Special Defenses:** Constance ignores damage from most conventional sources. Spells and enchanted weapons do normal damage; fire also does normal damage. Constance is essentially a spirit, however, and "killing" her only dispels her until midnight next.**Spells:** Blight Crops, Implant Fear, Send Dreams, Call Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Nightgaunt, Contact Ghoul, Contact Nyarlathotep (as the Black Man), Voice of Ra, others the Keeper deems appropriate.**Weaknesses:** At the Keeper's option, Constance is vulnerable to any or all of the traditional weaknesses of witches. Sources that would harm or inconvenience a witch do damage or take effect at the Keeper's discretion. The ringing of church bells in particular will ground and incapacitate Constance, causing appropriate falling damage. Constance is not impressed by any display of religious artifacts, although she might stop to momentarily laugh at the investigator.**SAN loss:** 1/1d8 for gazing upon her loveliness. More depending on what she does to you.





## THE SAP KEEPS RUNNING, PART 1



Roadside tourist stop, Vermont, c. 1930.

### a. Keeper's Information.

Once upon a time, Margaret Bahl ran a candy store in Burlington, VT. While driving her 18 year old daughter Emily to begin college at Miskatonic U., Margaret accidentally killed Emily. Emily had gotten out of their car to push it out of a rut. Margaret gunned the engine, and Emily fell underneath the car. Emily was decapitated; her head could not be found.

Margaret was driven over the edge by the death of Emily. She did not report Emily's death to the police. Instead, she covered it up by pretending that Emily is actually away at school, and by becoming reclusive. Margaret's demented mind partially believes her own lies, but Margaret also began to delve into witchcraft and the Mythos in an effort to get Emily back. Margaret fell in with a cult worshipping Lilith, a demoness found in several different mythic traditions. For purposes of this campaign, Lilith is treated as an aspect of Shub-Niggurath.

At the beginning of the scenario, Emily will supposedly have been "away at school" for close to twenty years. Unable to Resurrect Emily, Margaret instead made a pact with Lilith/Shub-Niggurath to obtain a new daughter, despite her advanced age. The demonic Amelia was carried to term in one lunar month and matured to her apparent age of 25 in another.

Despite being a recluse, Margaret's belated pregnancy did not go unnoticed in Burlington. Moreover, Margaret was aware that her stories about Emily's extended absence had become implausible to her Burlington neighbors. Margaret has just moved from Burlington to an area between Pownal, VT and Williamstown, MA, and is building a roadside shop to (depending upon your point of view) either service the new Vermont roadside tourist industry or ruin the countryside. Margaret has only one immediate neighbor: Claire Jeplin, an old lady who sells maple candy from her porch. Margaret and Amelia have decided that no immediate neighbors



who might inadvertently glimpse cult-related activity would be a more desirable state of affairs, and have set plans in motion to quietly eliminate Claire.

Also of considerable interest to Margaret are rumors of a ghost haunting the area, which is near where Emily was killed. Margaret correctly suspects that the "Phantom Schoolgirl" is the ghost of her daughter Emily. In a sense, Margaret has also moved to the area to be closer to Emily.

While Margaret is not particularly clever or dangerous, Amelia is both *quite* clever and *extremely* dangerous. Amelia appears to be a stunning young woman, but in fact she is a ravaging, demonic variant Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath.

Bear in mind throughout that the contrast between the down-to-earth, homespun Claire Jeplin and the slick, polished, modern/consumer oriented Bahls is specifically intended to be a microcosm of the larger campaign themes.

### **b. Getting Started.**

Prior to an automobile trip to western Vermont, a friend of the investigators mentions that their route will take them by Claire Jeplin's place. He mentions that Claire is a sweet old lady who raises pin money by selling maple sugar candy to passersby, and asks the investigators to stop and bring him back some.

Claire's house is located near the border town of Pownal, VT. The investigators' friend mentions that there is a red sign about 100 yards up the road from Claire's, so they cannot miss it. Otherwise, the Keeper can just suggest that Claire's looks like a nice place to stop. The first trip might be a good time to have the investigators check into the legend of Champ in Burlington or investigate the moving gravestones in Bennington, as they

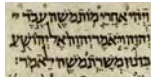
will proceed up U.S. 7 and right by the seat of the campaign.

Soon after the investigators cross the Massachusetts/Vermont border, they see a small, handmade red sign on the side of the road reading "Claire's Candies--100 yards on the left." One hundred yards up the road on the left there is an old but neatly kept house. There are two other automobiles parked out front. A primly dressed, moon-faced woman in her 70s is busy selling wax-paper wrapped maple sugar candy to a happy family with children. Several boxes of such candy are stockpiled on the porch, as are about a dozen jugs of maple syrup. It is obviously an amateur operation run with little aplomb from the woman's porch. Behind Claire's house and extending down both sides of the road is a dense forest of old growth sugar maple. If the investigators arrive in the fall, the landscape will be a beautiful collage of reds and yellows.

Claire's house is located about a mile south of Pownal proper. Pownal is a town of about 500 people with all basic services, including an inn. Claire has no immediate neighbors on the investigators' first trip.

Directly across the road from Claire's home, however, a new house is in the first stages of construction. A lot has been cleared and a stone cellar installed. No one is present at the new house on the investigators' first trip. A jarring, commercial-quality sign, however, advises passersby: "Coming Soon: Margaret's Vermont Souvenirs."

Claire sells large hunks of maple sugar candy for 10 cents, and 1 gallon jugs of maple syrup for 25 cents. Claire is a genuinely sweet old lady who will give away free samples. She is proud of the fact that at age 72, she still makes her own candies and taps her own trees. She lives alone and has no children. Claire will talk to the investigators as long as they want,



and is one of those people who has heard a lot of old legends and stories.

Claire only has one set of enemies, though she does not know it yet: the Bahl family setting up shop across the street. The Keeper should make an effort to have the investigators come away liking Claire, and perhaps even perceiving her as a valuable repository of New England legends. Claire does not have a telephone at this stage, although the innkeeper in Pownal is happy to get messages to her.

### c. Early Reports of the Phantom Schoolgirl.

Between the time of the investigators' first passby of Claire's Candies and their second, the Keeper should slip Investigator Handout #1 into any research the investigators may be doing about New England ghosts (perhaps while doing research on Constance Jeffries). Investigator Handout #1 is a sidelight newspaper story played for laughs by the major newspaper in whatever New England city the investigators are primarily involved with. If the investigators track down Sheriff Hudson or Mr. Dodson, they can offer little more than is in the article. If at some later time the investigators show Mr. Dodson a photograph of either Emily or Amelia Bahl, he will identify the photo as that of the girl with whom he had his encounter.

The "Phantom Schoolgirl" increasingly becomes a common spook story afterwards, complete with several false reports. Mr. Dodson did however see exactly what he claims to have seen on the road between Pownal and the state line. Sheriff Hudson or others in the area, including Claire Jeplin, have heard rumors of persons catching a fleeting glimpse of a female motorist off the road, but these rumors have not been confirmed. Margaret Bahl will not have seen the "Phantom

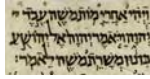
### The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #1: "Phantom Schoolgirl" Article.

#### "Phantom Schoolgirl" Haunts Pownal??

An old New England chestnut has taken a modern twist in a story related by Bennington County, VT sheriff Martin Hudson. Sheriff Hudson advises that a Mr. Robert Dodson of Boston, MA recently surrendered himself, claiming that he had accidentally killed a young woman in an automobile accident. According to Mr. Dodson, he had been driving between the town of Pownal and the state line on a dark, rainy night when he came upon a black automobile stuck in the mud. Mr. Dodson stopped to render assistance to the girl. Mr. Dodson did not obtain her name, but she told him that she was trying to get to school in Massachusetts. Mr. Dodson stated that he could not free the vehicle from the mud, but loosened it somewhat. The girl then asked the imaginative Mr. Dodson to turn over the engine while she pushed, in the hope of finally freeing the vehicle.

Mr. Dodson claims that he complied, but that the girl let out a shriek and the rear wheel of the vehicle ran over something. According to Mr. Dodson (or is it Mr. Crane?), the "Phantom Schoolgirl's" body was found under the car, but her head was missing. Mr. Dodson, in what he described as a state of fright, then rushed to report the matter to the Sheriff Martin Hudson's office. The Sheriff investigated the next morning and found no trace of any black automobile or schoolgirl.

Mr. Dodson has not reported any vengeful headless spectres pursuing him, either with flaming pumpkins or without.



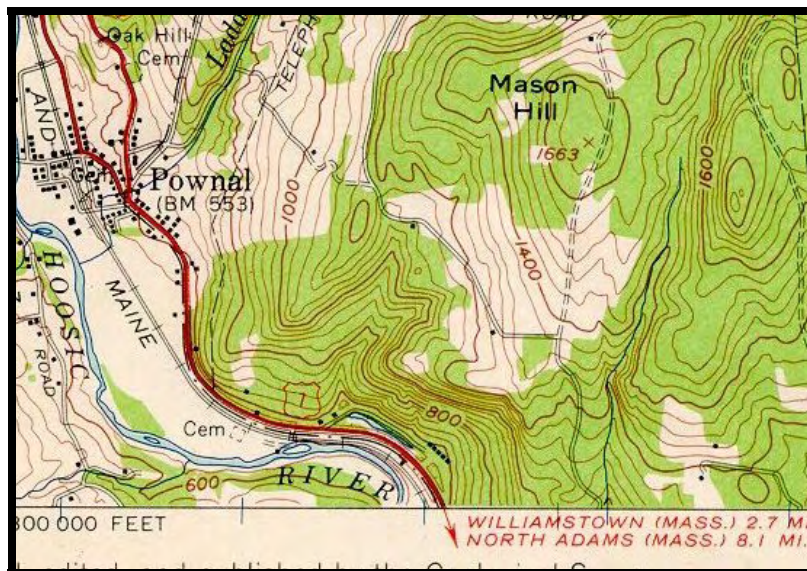
Schoolgirl."

Any investigator with an Occult roll of 25% or more, or who is familiar with New England folklore, will recognize this account as a twist on the old New England "Black Carriage" legends. Such an investigator can be given Investigator Handout #2, on "Black Carriage" stories. The following information on "Black Carriage" legends can also be found by researching any standard reference on New England folklore. For the Keeper who likes to read up on his source material, the author recommends both the classic *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* by Washington Irving, and "The Legend of Peter Rugg" by Lewis A. Taft, in *Mysterious New England*, A. Stevens, editor (Yankee Publishing, Inc., 1971).

At risk of repetition, this event plays into the overall theme of the campaign: the decay and destruction of traditional New England. Emily is not malevolent, but is cursed because her mother was bent on modern progress and took a foolish chance by trying to drive the length of Vermont c. 1910 (rather than simply get on a train). Margaret Bahl is symbolic of this decay, and the demonic Amelia is its ultimate, perverted expression.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #2: General background on "Black Carriage" legends.**

"Black Carriage" stories or variants thereof are common in New England folklore. The typical "Black Carriage" story involves a person attempting a foolish journey in difficult conditions, either by horseback, carriage, or occasionally by sleigh. Invariably the person fails to complete the journey, but their ghost begins to haunt the stretch of road over which they last traveled. Sometimes the person disappears without a trace; on other occasions only part of the body is recovered. On dark, stormy nights, the spectre of the traveler is sometimes encountered: a black carriage drawn by horses with glowing eyes; a headless horseman riding a black steed; or some other variation on this theme. The spectres tend to be reckless and malevolent, chasing travelers and thereby putting them into a situation where they suffer an accident of their own. This is not always the case; in some instances the spectre is merely lost and seeks the traveler's aid in reaching their destination. In many of the stories, the only evidence that the spectre has come and gone is the presence of cloven hoof prints at the site of the encounter.







## THE SAP KEEPS RUNNING, PART 2

*What's New England going to come to if people like that Margaret across the way carry on so?--Claire Jeplin.*

The next time that the investigators drive by Claire Jeplin's, they will see two signs. In addition to Claire's, a much larger, commercial quality sign implores: "Please stop at Margaret's: Vermont Souvenirs and Sundries for the Motorist. 100 yards on the right!"

In stark contrast to Claire's old, gambrelled house, Margaret has set up a two story house with a commercial store front on the first floor. It screams tourist trap/"gift shop." An enormous amount of sign clutter advertises brand names from Coca Cola to stomach aids. Fresh sandwiches and drinks are both advertised and available, as are "GENUINE VERMONT CRAFTS AND MAPLE CANDY." The signs do not suggest availability, they shout availability.



**Margaret's Vermont Souvenirs, from across the street.**

The front door to Margaret's is equipped with a shop bell. Sadly, any traffic parked

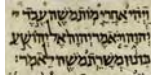
along this stretch of road is parked at Margaret's. Claire will be found moping on her porch, working on needlepoint.

If the investigators stop at Claire's, she will be happy to see them and try to draw them into a long conversation. Claire is lonely; the competition across the street has deeply cut into her candy income, which she has come to rely on. Claire complains that Margaret is selling her maple syrup and candy so low that she must be paying more for the fuel to heat the stove than she makes on sales. Claire's complaint is true; Margaret is trying to drive Claire out as competition. Margaret figures that the fewer neighbors she has available to spy on her at odd hours, the better. Claire initially protests any investigator efforts at charity, but eventually accepts and promises to make something special for them. Claire's SAN remains at 80 at this stage.

If the investigators stop at Margaret's, they should meet both Margaret and Amelia. Margaret does most of the talking. She is polite and chatty, but comes across like an aggressive gift shop saleslady. Amelia looks a great deal like a 25 year old version of Margaret, but is breathtakingly beautiful to boot. Amelia smiles, winks and flirts, but does not come out from behind the counter. Margaret will proudly introduce Amelia as "my daughter, Amelia", and mention that her other daughter, Emily, is away at school. If sucked into the conversation, she will let slip that Emily is a student at Miskatonic.

Any investigators who are professors or students at Miskatonic will not recall any Emily Bahl. Checking student body records back ad infinitum reveal no record of Emily Bahl. Application records for





twenty years before the scenario begins do reference an Emily Bahl, but note that she withdrew her application before entry due to lack of funds. See Investigator Handout #3. The Keeper can have Margaret and Amelia talk their way out of things if confronted with this inconsistency; both are clever at covering their tracks. Usually they will deny having said Miskatonic, instead naming some other school a considerable distance away. Amelia might say that Margaret "gets a bit confused" sometimes, implying early-onset senility.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #3: Letter from Margaret Bahl to Dean Clarence Williams, dated roughly 20 years ago.**

33 Allen Avenue

Burlington, Vermont

Sept. 5, 19--

Mr. Clarence Williams, Dean

Miskatonic University

Arkham, Mass.

Dear Dean Williams,

I am writing to inform you that my daughter Emily Bahl will be unable to begin at Miskatonic University this term. Our family has experienced a downturn in finances. Please excuse any inconvenience.

Very Truly Yours,

Margaret Bahl

Margaret's maple products are priced ridiculously low. They have a slight reddish tinge to them, for which Margaret has no explanation, but they clearly taste better than Claire's. Chemical analysis of

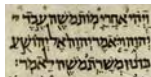
the candy reveals nothing out of the ordinary; the explanation is magical and has to do with how Amelia feeds the trees with the bodies of her victims.

Margaret has for sale other produce and goods from area farmers and craft makers plus other tourist trap trappings appropriate to the year. Sandwiches and a wide variety of brand name foods (soda, ice cream, crackers, etc.) are likewise available. Margaret also has a phone in the shop. Keepers unfamiliar with the state of rural phone service in the 1920s and 1930s should review the following note on party lines.

**Party Lines**

Phone service in rural America was spotty in the years preceding World War II, and was often grist for the comedian's mill. In rural areas service was often on the party line system. Several neighbors would share one exchange, and the operator would ring all the phones at the same time differently depending on whom the call was for. For example, the Smiths might be two short rings, while their neighbors the Joneses might be a long and a short ring. To further complicate matters, one could listen in on a neighbor's calls, since it was all one exchange. Later in the campaign, once Claire gets a phone, this will mean that Margaret and Amelia know whenever Claire receives a phone call and Amelia will be listening in.

Margaret's reputation in town is good, although a few believe that she is trying to run poor Claire Jeplin out of business. Amelia's reputation is *very* high, especially among single men. No one has ever succeeded in getting a date with Amelia, who rarely is seen in town. Amelia is seen by the local young men as something unattainable but irresistible to pursue. Young men from Pownal frequently hang



out at the store.

By this time, most people in Pownal will have heard about Mr. Dodson's encounter with the "Phantom Schoolgirl." They either laugh it off or embellish it with spook stories of their own.



**The sap keeps running, no matter what lies beneath the trees.**

### **What's Cookin', Good Lookin'?**

Keepers interested in historical accuracy, or in simply providing answers to detail oriented players, might want to know how walking into Margaret's store c. 1930 compares to a modern quickie mart. The answer, surprisingly, is that they are not all that different. Margaret will always have the latest consumer product either installed, or available for sale.

There are two gas pumps in front of the store, one providing Socony branded gasoline and the other kerosene. Some other things for sale, on or after the year of introduction indicated, are listed below. (Sources: foodtimeline.org and individual corporate websites. Bracketed items are not for sale at Margaret's but are included for reference purposes):

1902: Marlboro cigarettes  
 1903: Pepsi (Coke even earlier)  
 1906: BC Headache powder  
 1907: Hershey's Kisses  
 [1908: Model T]  
 1911: Crisco

1912: Life Savers, Tarzan books, Oreo's, Cracker Jack (with toy surprise)

1914: Wrigley's Doublemint

1918: Mr. Peanut

[1919: General Motors car lending]

1920: Baby Ruth and Oh Henry candy bars; [6.7 million cars on the road in the U.S.]; refrigerated soda vending chests.

1920s: hot dogs (but not hamburgers or cheeseburgers not commercially widespread until much later)

1921: Chanel No. 5 perfume, Cheez-its, Wonder Bread

1923: Butterfinger and Milky Way candy bars

1924: Wheaties

1926: Good Humor ice cream bars; Cigarette vending machines; Lay's Potato Chips.

1927: Decaf (Sanka)

1928: Velveeta; Smooth peanut butter widespread (Peter Pan; Skippy in 1932); [Mickey Mouse], Rice Krispies

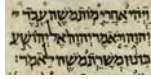
1929: [27 million cars in US (1 out of 5 households); 25% of households bought a car in 1929; 60% bought these cars on credit. Interest rates on cars often exceeded 30%].

1930: Oreo's dominate U.S. cookie sales, (but chocolate chip cookies not commercially available until 1950s);

Twinkies

1937: Spam

Many magazines still popular today had gotten their starts in recognizable modern form by the late 1920s. An issue of *Good Housekeeping* in 1930 carried advertisements for the following products: Franco-American Spaghetti (can), Armour's Star Ham (bagged, not canned), Junket (Vanilla, Orange, Chocolate, Raspberry, Lemon, Coffee), Fleischman's Yeast, Baker's Cocoa, bananas, Del Monte Tomato Sauce (can), Land O'Lakes Sweet Cream Butter, Uneeda Bakers Fruit Cake (Nabisco), Gerber's Strained Vegetables (vegetable soup, spinach, carrots, prunes, peas, tomatoes, green beans), Heinz Mince Meat (glass jar), Brer Rabbit Molasses (can), Steero Cubes (bouillon cubes),



Richardson & Robbins Plum Pudding (can), Ovaltine, Del Monte peaches (can), Gulden's Mustard (glass jar), Wheateana, GWashington Coffee, La Choy food products (sprouts, soy sauce, kumquats, water chestnuts, chow mein noodles, cub kum, cooked rice, brown sauce, bamboo shoots, chop suey), Ballard Pancake Flour (box mix), Pillsbury's Pancake Flour (box mix), Diamond Walnuts, Ralston Whole Wheat Cereal, None Such Mince Meat (box), Knox Gelatin, and Gold Medal Cake Flour.

The 1920s saw the rise of the modern consumer economy, and poor management of the economic shift was one of the chief root causes of the Great Depression. By 1929, the automotive industry comprised 12.7 percent of all manufacturing output, and employed 1 out of every 12 workers. Automobiles stimulated the growth of the steel, glass, and rubber industries, along with the gasoline stations, motor lodges, camp grounds, and hot dog stands that began to dot the nation's roadways. By 1930, two-thirds of all American households had electricity, and half of American households had telephones.



Communications privacy, c. 1930.

Sales of radios soared from \$60 million in 1922 to \$426 million in 1929. The first

commercial radio station began broadcasting in 1919. Phonograph production rose from just 190,000 in 1923 to 5 million in 1929.

All of these consumer product introductions led to a new phenomenon, consumer debt. In order to get their newly invented cars, appliances, radios and other “necessities” into consumer’s hands, the sellers of these goods got into the lending business for the first time. Widespread use of home mortgages and chattel loans (often for cars) took hold in response to the availability of these goods. Rates were often unregulated and loans were given out with little discrimination.

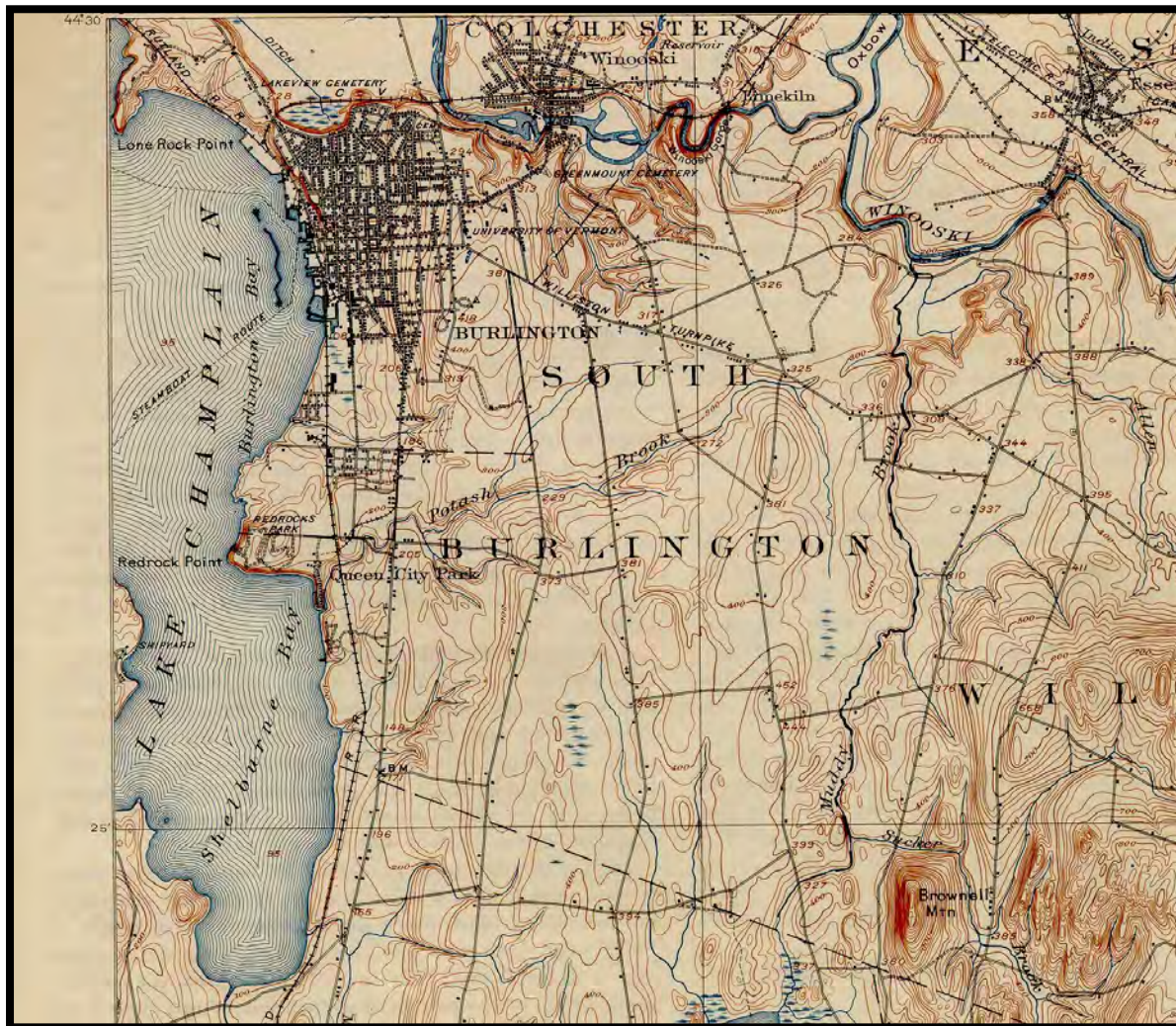
In 1929, sociologists Robert and Helen Lynd published *Middletown*, a book based on field research done in Muncie, Indiana, in 1924 and 1925. The Lynds explored how industrialization had begun to transform traditional values and customs in Middle America. They paid particular attention to people's changing attitudes toward the automobile. The Lynds found that people of every income level were already considering the automobile a necessity, rather than a luxury. People were willing to sacrifice food, clothing, and their savings in order to own a car. In addition to creating a more mobile society, organizing industry on a grand scale, and spawning roadside clutter, the Lynds concluded that the introduction of the automobile had already had profound negative effects on social cohesion. It had disrupted prior levels of family cohesion, as it facilitated children moving away and being independent. It had also profoundly impacted sexual morality, as young adults could get in a car and find privacy away from their parents with unprecedented ease.

In short, Amelia knows *exactly* what she’s doing, and her dark goddess of fecundity and decay wouldn’t have it any other way.





# THE BEAST OF LAKE CHAMPLAIN



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## **1. Introduction.**

*The Beast of Lake Champlain* is a short, deconstructed scenario for Call of Cthulhu set in late 1920s Burlington, Vermont. The scenario is a “whodunit” in which the investigators must uncover the identity of an apparent serial killer running amok on the shores of Lake Champlain. Four separate outcomes are suggested, ranging from the mundane (a serial killer plagued with Lovecraftian corruption of blood) to the fantastic (mighty Zvilpoggua). The goal of the scenario is to provide the Keeper with background material and suggestions on how to put it to use, rather than (in this instance) providing a lock-stepped scenario.

## **2. Synopsis.**

Lake Champlain is rumored to be the home of a fantastic “chaousarou”, a “sea serpent” reminiscent of the Loch Ness monster. The chaousarou is known locally as “Champ.” There are several potential explanations. One is that the chaousarou is the product of mass hysteria, or a hoax. Alternatively, the chaousarou could be any of a variety of aquatic or vaguely reptilian Cthulhoid beasts: an enormous Deep One; a Iloigor; or a Star Spawn of Cthulhu. Or, “Champ” could be a cryptozoologist’s dream come true, although that will be hard to prove for reasons described below.



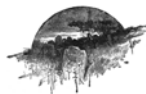
**Barges on Lake Champlain, c. 1930.**

Robert Bahl, a recurring NPC who manages the Burlington docks and collects legends and lore about “Champ” as a hobby, will almost certainly be introduced to the investigators. Bob Bahl resurfaces at the end of the campaign as he looks into disturbing rumors concerning his former sister-in-law, Margaret.

“Champ” is one of those legends to which people are quick to attribute the slightest suggestive occurrence as “hard evidence” of its existence. Unfortunately for the people of Burlington, there has been no shortage of “hard evidence” recently. Water levels in Lake Champlain have been very high over the past few years, and when the waters temporarily recede, disturbing things have been left behind. In particular, human body parts (“washups”) have been occasionally surfacing near the shores of Lake Champlain. Disturbingly (although this fact has been kept from the public), they have shown signs of predation. And not just predation from fish--some of the more recent flotsam has been disturbingly intact, except for a limb or two violently separated from a torso.

In this scenario, the investigators will be presented with a number of possible theories. Through basic detective work, they should be able to ascertain a pattern in the timing of the deaths and make some deductions as to where all of the deaths have been occurring. What they find at the site is somewhat variable. Four options include a morally gray cult reluctantly conducting sacrifices to “appease” the mighty Zvilpoggua; a great, devilish Serpent; a cryptozoological explanation in the form of a carnivorous, amphibian Eocene proto-whale; or a deranged serial killer who will be referred to as Mr. Blink. Take your pick, or (as was done in playtesting) mix and match explanations.





### **3. Getting the Players Involved.**

Dr. John Sinclair, the county coroner in Burlington, VT, needs some help. Drowning victims in Lake Champlain are not unusual, nor is it unusual for such victims to wash ashore in various stages of predation. The number of such victims has been unusually high in the past year (ten in the past ten months, one per month), but that in and of itself is not cause for excessive concern. But the last case demanded unusual attention, for a number of reasons.

First, the victim has been positively identified as Roberta Eauclaire, the wife of a local councilman. Mrs. Eauclaire vanished two days before her body was discovered, while walking her dog Scamp near the shores of Lake Champlain. Scamp turned up at home the next morning, dragging his leash. In short, Mrs. Eauclaire was unlikely to have gone into the lake of her own accord.

Second, while Mrs. Eauclaire's body was mostly intact, large bits were missing, including a couple of limbs. She was not in the water long enough for decomposition and/or small fish to have accomplished this. Something sectioned her.

Third, the coroner is, because of Mrs. Eauclaire's social prominence, under considerable pressure to figure out what actually happened to her--unlike the prior itinerants and ne'er-do-wells who had preceded her and who were not greatly missed by society.

If any of the investigators have biology, forensics, big game hunting or (especially) cryptozoology backgrounds, they might be contacted directly by the coroner to render an opinion as to what occurred. Investigators might also be called in privately by Mr. Eauclaire to conduct an independent investigation of her death, as

the police seem stymied. Alternatively, a report of the death (and a sizable reward for information leading to a solution) might appear in a local newspaper.

### **4. Burlington, VT & the Coroner.**

Burlington is the largest town in Vermont, with a 1920 population equaling 22,779. It is the home of several colleges, including the University of Vermont. Burlington sits on the east bank of Lake Champlain, on the western border of the state, and is connected by U.S. 7 to Williamstown, MA and points south. Burlington is a port town servicing barge traffic along Lake Champlain, as well as a commercial hub.



**Burlington street corner, 1930s.**

Dr. Sinclair is the current coroner, a part time job held in addition to his doctor's practice.

How cooperative he is with the investigators depends upon their reason for being there. If they are working in some official or quasi-official capacity, he is cooperative and will tell them whatever he knows, as well as point them in the direction of others who might be able to answer their questions. Cooperation would extend to private investigators hired by Mr. Eauclaire, or any biologist, zoologist or academic types called in as experts to assist with the cause of death. People not acting in a quasi-official capacity will be turned away, politely but



firmly. In that case, everything that he knows is in his case file, and his office is far from a fortress.

Either way, Dr. Sinclair will mention their interest to Detective Summers, for good or ill. Dr. Sinclair, while nominally in charge of determining the cause of death for “washups” from Lake Champlain, delegates the shoe leather work to the local police. In terms of what the police have been able to find out, he only knows what Detective Jim Summers has told him secondhand.

- Dr. Sinclair can relate that there has been a string of ten similar “washups” of sectioned bodies from the Lake over the past year. Each has been discovered roughly monthly.
- Although Dr. Sinclair has not made the connection, the dates of the body discoveries roughly coincide with new moons, an easy connection to make with an almanac.
- None of the bodies had been in the water more than a few days when discovered. They washed up within a range of about a quarter of a mile north of the City docks. He can help the investigators mark where this occurred with a map.
- Until the latest victim, all of them were men who defied positive identification. All were poorly dressed and showed signs of having engaged in manual labor; Dr. Sinclair suspects (rightly) that they were itinerants of one description or another. Two of the bodies (suspected to be Jean Lucent and James Desainte, although they could not be positively identified) were barge hands on passing boats who did not return after a night’s liberty. The police questioned their employers. They were both prone to drink, had no known enemies in Burlington, and did not know one another. Each of these gentlemen were among the first “washups.” (As they were decapitated, they could not

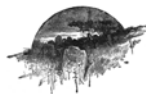
be definitively identified, but Dr. Sinclair’s suspicions about their identities are correct).

- He kept photographs of the various bodies, and is still in possession of Mrs. Eauclaire’s body. Visualize the victim of an extremely large shark attack, and you can imagine what each of the bodies looked like, including Mrs. Eauclaire. SAN loss 0/1. It should be obvious to anyone with any medical, biological or forensic training that the bodies were *not* predated by small fish over time.
- If the investigators are consulting experts, or have specific permission from Mr. Eauclaire (which he will give after a reasonable explanation to anyone in his employ), they may inspect the remains of Mrs. Eauclaire. SAN loss 0/1. She has been cleaved in half. Her bones and spine show signs of crushing or chopping injuries.

### 5. A Scenic Shore.

Lake Champlain is immense. The lake runs along the state line of Vermont and New York, stretching up to Quebec province. Extending 109 miles in length and up to 11 miles in width, Lake Champlain is 400 feet deep in places, cold, and has a surface area of 440 square miles. It is close in size to a small Great Lake, and there are numerous remote, forested islands. The lake is believed to be the product of the isolation of an inlet only occurring approximately 10,000 years ago.

In the 1920s, it still sees a fair amount of barge traffic, but the improvements in rail capacity and roads have begun to erode the importance of Burlington as a barging center.



**What's that dark thing in Lake Champlain?**

### **6. Why Here?**

Regardless of which ultimate explanation for the recurring deaths that you decide to go with, the investigators will eventually be led to a soggy area on the shore near Lone Rock Point, about two miles north of the Burlington docks. A footpath (normally significantly above the waterline) now strays within a few feet of the surface, covering several feet of basal height of saplings and brush. The area sees a fair amount of traffic during the day (serving as an informal park and picnic area), but is quiet and dark at night.

Persons knowledgeable about navigating the lake (such as Robert Bahl) can volunteer that there is a steep drop-off not far off shore; people have drowned here before. Locals can advise that the water has been this high, off and on, for the better part of a year. (In November 1927, Vermont endured an extremely destructive season of floods that destroyed hundreds of bridges and related infrastructure).

Likewise, regardless of the ultimate explanation, there is a noticeable current flowing south toward the town and some unpleasant things to be found in the mud, muck and water in this area. Have all of these things be present regardless of the explanation you choose to go with; this is a bad place on a number of levels, and who is to say that the presence of the altar is not, in some quantum fashion, partly

responsible for whatever else is going on? If any of the investigators are psychic or have a POW over 18, this place should give them the willies; a vague sense of unease; and a feeling of being watched.

### **A. Body Parts.**

Numerous body parts in various states of decay might be found in the muck, given sufficient time and diligent sifting (Critical Spot Hidden, once per hour). Mostly these will be either larger bones (showing disturbing crunching/severance injuries) or indigestible things (such as a boot with the foot still intact). Minor SAN losses (0/1) might be applied to a particularly gruesome find.

If someone were to somehow drain the area and really spend some time digging, they would find what amounts to a landfill of human and animal skeletons going very deep into the bed. Some of the bones might not be of any recognizable modern animal, were one to dig deep enough.



**The edge of Lake Champlain, c. 1925.**

### **B. The Stone Altar.**

Under the water a few feet offshore is what appears, upon casual inspection, to be a smooth and regularly shaped stone ledge sticking out from the bank. Until recently, this was buried not far beneath the surface of the lake's edge but the recent rising and



lowering of the lake level has eroded parts of the bank away. Upon closer (underwater) investigation, however, the stone is obviously worked, and perhaps more disturbingly, is covered with odd, deliberate symbols meriting a Cthulhu Mythos roll. Success reveals that the writing is in Aklo, a Hyperborean-era pre-human language, and the visible portion reads as follows:

**The Beast of Lake Champlain,  
Investigator Handout #1: An  
Excerpt from *Of Evill Sorceries***

(Zvilpoggua) hath the Likeness of a great Toade, black as pitch and glist'ning with foetid slime, bewing'd like ye Bat and with ye nether-limbs of ye Behemothe, splayed and clawed and Webb'd betwixt ye Toes thereof, and Face hath it naught, butte from where ye Face shouldst e'en be sprouteth a Horrid Beard of crawling tentacles. And it feasteth of the Fleshe, and Swilleth of ye Bloode of Men, but at its gluttonous Leisure, for first it is said to bear men aloft into ye Sky, and may bear them thus an hundred Leagues or more ere it will rip and tear and Feede, then dropping them to Earth far from whence it snatch'd them up.

To Summon-Down the Feaster from the Stars, seek those nights when first Algol riseth above ye Horizon, and, if that ye be Thirteen gather'd in Coven, join hands in ye ring about ye Stone and chaunt in unison as followeth, Iä! Iä! Iä! N'ghaa, n'n'ghai-ghai! Iä! Iä! N'ghai, n-yah, n-yah, shoggog, phthaghn! Iä! Iä! Y-hah, y-nyah, y-nyah! N'ghaa, n'n'ghai, waphl phthaghn-Zvilpoggua! Zvilpoggua! N'gui, n'-gha'ghaa y'hah, Zvilpoggua! Ai! Ai! Ai! And note well that ye Response to ye Name Zvilpoggua, the which is to be onlie chaunted by ye Coven-Master, is Ghu-Tsathoggua, the which doth signify ye Son of Tsathoggua, and ye above Name onlie may be spake forth in ye common or vulgar Tongue.

*(Strange Notebook Found in the Vermont Woods, by Lin Carter).*

**“...N'ghaa, n'n'ghai, waphl phthaghn-Zvilpoggua....”**

A second Cthulhu Mythos roll, or research with an appropriate Mythos tome, provides background information on Zvilpoggua, the “Feaster from the Stars.” Said to be the son of Tsathoggua, Zvilpoggua is a rather useless entity, said only to visit the Earth when summoned, and specifically comes to feed. Hyperborean-era works might contain a reference to the worship of this thing by certain rare and especially debased wizards, mostly to placate it. Accounts are consistent that worship of the entity has never resulted in any tangible benefit to anyone. Coverage of Zvilpoggua is fairly extensive in the minor Mythos tome *Of Evill Sorceries Done in New-England of Daemons in No Human Shape*. This Colonial-era tome describes Zvilpoggua in extensive detail, and provides a chant for summoning it to Earth. Summoning can normally only occur in the fall, when the star Algol (where it makes its home) is visible in the night sky.

Certain older Mythos tomes concerned with prehistoric magic or Hyperborean society (such as the *Book of Eibon*) would also be likely to contain some information on Zvilpoggua.

The altar itself, a well-seasoned thing of ancient power and evil, dispenses with the need for Algol to be in the right position in the sky, and allows for Zvilpoggua to be summoned at any time during a clear night sky, with a human sacrifice and thirteen people stupid enough to summon it down from the stars. Zvilpoggua cares nothing for worshippers; it is only here for the cuisine. However, Zvilpoggua is certainly not above threatening, cajoling or flat out lying to humans to induce them to summon him on a regular basis.



### **C. Natural Hazards.**

Even without help from Eocene proto-whales, demonic serpents, serial killers or Mythos horrors, Lone Rock Point (as the area is known) is a dangerous place from a drowning perspective. The area is not lit, and is situated on an irregular spit protruding out into the lake. After dark, it is quite treacherous, especially near the water. The rising water has turned what was once a footpath well above the shoreline into a soggy, slippery, eroding mess. It is not hard at all to imagine how someone might slip and fall into the water. The water has risen to cover tree roots, shrubs and thickets, which someone might get caught on. But the number of drowning victims is still too high, and too regular, for an accidental explanation to be plausible.

### **D. Footprints.**

There are numerous footprints in the muddy soil of the footpath and around it. On a Critical Spot Hidden, however (one attempt per hour), searchers might uncover a truly bizarre one. The print is generally round, about two feet across, and displays four webbed toes each ending in a small hoof print. (*This is a License Plate Rule clue*).

This chunk of the bizarre should astound even most academics. With sufficient diligence, the investigators might eventually get referred to a paleontologist specializing in Eocene mammals (of which, in the 1920s, there are very few). In this era, fossils of proto-whales had been found, but they were not well understood. However, an appropriate paleontologist might be able to explain in general terms that there is a theory that modern cetaceans (whales) evolved from even-toed ungulates (hoofed mammals which gave rise to such modern animals as pigs and hippos), and are thought to have gone through a transitional amphibian

phase. Thus, a huge, webbed but also hoofed footprint would be the sort of thing one might expect a proto-whale to leave behind. If such things existed, of course.

If news of the footprint leaks out, the investigators can expect a raft of Champ hunters, bored newsmen, wannabe cryptozoologists, and the like to descend on the lake in short order. Whether these are the footprints of the Feaster from the Stars, a hungry proto-whale, or some kind of a hoax, is up to the Keeper and the story path selected. (Mr. Blink would certainly not be above faking Champ footprints to throw suspicion off of himself, for example).

### **7. Research.**

There are a number of investigative avenues to pursue. Experienced investigators will not only conduct a logical investigation, but look into any unusual history for the area. There is plenty to find.

#### **A. The University of Vermont.**

This would be a logical place for the investigators to start, particularly if they are interested in historical events. Burlington is home to the main campus of the University, which has both substantial history and engineering departments.



University of Vermont, Burlington, c. 1925





**Dr. Daniel Abernathy, Mediocre but Genial Archaeologist (Prior to Olaf's Camp Dig)**

**Nationality:** American

STR 12 DEX 12 INT 16 CON12  
APP 12 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 21  
SAN 65 Luck 65 Hits: 13 Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** Ph.D., Archaeology, Cornell University.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 70%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 40%, Drive Auto 30%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 70%, Library Use 75%, Listen 25%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 39%, Occult 25%, Persuade 44%, Photography 25%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 44%.

**Languages:** English 90%; French 50%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; Old Norse 55%.

**Attacks:** None over base.

**Notes:** A genial, avuncular fellow who is not destined for a great academic career, but knows what he knows. He is not particularly ambitious, but is a respected (though not preeminent) authority on Norse exploration in particular and Vermont archaeology in general.

- **Currents:** If the investigators are interested in where the bodies might have entered the water, they might be looking for research on this issue, either at the University or elsewhere. Knowledgeable persons will refer investigators looking for current patterns, navigations hazards, etc. in the area to the dock manager, Robert Bahl, who has a set of continuously updated charts.
- **Archaeology:** The head of the University's archaeology department is Dr. Daniel Abernathy (assuming that this is being run prior to the unfortunate events of *Home, Sweet Home*), or his replacement, if not.
- **Cryptozoology:** Everyone in town has heard the stories about Champ, the local lake monster. Most people believe that Champ is a myth. Local historians or biologists may know bits and pieces of the information that Robert Bahl does, but again, if someone seems really interested in learning as much about Champ stories as possible, Robert Bahl is widely known as the man to ask. The University can also offer biologists able to opine that any hoofed footprints found at the Black Stone belong to no known animal.

Abernathy is a 50ish pipe smoker, and a friendly sort who generally makes time to answer polite questions about archaeology and history. Abernathy can relate the fact that up until about 10,000 years ago, Lake Champlain was an inlet open to the Atlantic. Hence, Dr. Abernathy's pet theory is that people apart from local Native Americans may have been able to explore Lake Champlain. He and his colleagues (including Dr. Allen) have found some evidence of ancient pre-Colombian explorers. (See the *Allen's Tablet* plot seed, or the *Home Sweet Home* adventure, for examples). His pet project when the investigators meet him will be the extent of Norse exploration of North America; he believes that Norsemen may have explored Vermont incident to the Vinland excursions, and would like to find evidence of this. (This offers a segue into the events of *Home, Sweet Home*). He would be profoundly interested in the discovery of writing on the stone ledge (the Black Stone). His specialties are early exploration and navigation in general and Norse history in particular. He believes that the earliest humans had the capacity to conduct some degree of transoceanic exploration, and is open to the idea that the human civilizations that we know of might not be the earliest that there were.



### **B. Folklore, Legends and the Occult.**

Investigators may look for sources of local legends or clues in Mythos tomes. What they find depends on what they look for.

- Prudence Goode: Little information on Prudence Goode can be gotten from readily available, non-Mythos sources. Certain historical records might mention a suspected witch named Prudence Goode who was drowned in Lake Champlain. Robert Bahl knows about this much of the Prudence Goode story.
- Champ or Lake Monsters, Generally: Champ legends are summarized under the entry for Robert Bahl. Mr. Bahl is well-known as the local expert on Champ lore.
- Rising Waters: Persons familiar with Abenaki legends can tell of a local belief going back generations that the spirits of the lake had to be propitiated during certain months with offerings of meat (usually a deer). According to legend, the meat would be left at the full moon, when a particular star (Algol) was above the horizon. If the offering was unacceptable, devastating floods would supposedly occur the following spring.

If the investigators happen to think of it, and assuming that Zvilpoggua is the option being pursued by the Keeper, then a little over a year ago--right around the time that the washups started--Detective Summers was talking to the same sources.

### **C. Mythos Tomes.**

Appropriate Mythos tomes will contain information helpful to the players' inquiries. Again, the author suggests providing early access to a minor, New England-oriented Mythos tome, such as *Thaumaturgical Prodigies* or *Of Evill Sorceries*, to facilitate and unify the campaign.

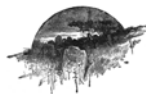
- Lake Champlain research/Prudence Goode: Research into Lake Champlain might lead to one of two possible clues. Select pre-Colonial or later tomes dealing with witches (including *Of Evill Sorceries* and *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*) will mention the Prudence Goode "serpent" legend, detailed below. Alternatively, a variant of the "Rising Waters" legend might be found in Hyperborean era tomes, specifically linked to Zvilpoggua. For example, a sample excerpt from the Book of Eibon follows (Investigator Handout #2):

#### **The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #2: from the Book of Eibon or other Mythos tome.**

The legends of Commoriom tell of a particularly foolish wizard, one Torrik, who a score of generations ago turned his face from the worship of Tsathoggua in search of an explanation for the series of tides that menaced his City. Searching for answers, he consulted lore best left unseen, and communed with the Feaster, who boasted that he was responsible for the tides and that unless he was venerated over his father, they would continue until Commoriom was no more. Torrik believed the Son of the Toad, and his dark servants began to harvest the men of Commoriom to sate Zvilpoggua's endless hunger. This continued on for many years, until Torrik grew old and died. The tides did not abate, and the men of Commoriom built a sturdy break wall to protect their realm. Zvilpoggua is a creature of the aether and the air; how could he influence the tides?

In addition, any number of red herrings concerning aquatic Cthulhoid menaces might be inserted into the debate.

- Vermont, generally: In addition to the foregoing, a number of older tomes might contain some references to the



“Black House”, variously described (e.g., Dark Home, Shadow Refuge, Dark School, etc.). It is rumored to be an ancient source of mystical power where many wizards over time have spent time studying or communing. Depending on where the author was situated, the directions given to arrive there (by reference to star alignments and “green mountains”), certainly make it sound like, wherever this place is, it is near Vermont. (This is another potential segue into *Home, Sweet Home*). Any tomes discussing the Mi-go, in addition, may discuss their historical mining operations in Northern Vermont.

- Altars and Webbed Footprints: Researching these two things in combination may lead to general information on Zvilpoggua, summarized above.

#### **D. The Police.**

The police investigation will have gone nowhere, despite pressure from the town council. The investigators might think that this is odd or suspicious. If so, they would be correct. The police detective in charge of the investigation, Jim Summers, is in the thick of things, regardless of which explanation you care to go with. He is, alternately, the reluctant leader of the cult appeasing Zvilpoggua; a crazed serial killer; or a deluded nut who thinks that life would be better if Champ (be it natural or supernatural) ate all the foreign transients.

In any case, he is now having a nervous meltdown because of the attention being focused on his activities. Under any of the options, he wants the investigators to butt out of his business, as quietly and diplomatically as possible. He will cooperate only to the extent that he has to in order to avoid drawing further, overt suspicion to himself. The good news is that, unless he is truly cornered with no way out, the investigators are unlikely to

be sacrificed to any demon (literal or figurative) that he may be serving.

Summers will make himself available, upon request, to talk to the investigators. How much information he provides depends upon their role and credentials. If they are government sanctioned, he will tell them what he has found (which is not much). He will probably share in any logical deductions that the investigators might have made; he will not risk steering them in another direction. Psychology rolls indicate that he is worried and stressed about the situation; this contrasts with what people may be telling them about how he has been acting during the course of the investigation. If they are not government sanctioned, he will ask them to please stay out of his way.

#### **Detective Jim Summers, Madman of One Stripe or Another.**

**Nationality:** American

STR 15 DEX 13 INT 11 CON15  
APP 15 POW 13 SIZ 16 EDU11  
SAN 0 Luck 65 Hits: 16 Age: 48.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Bargain 40%, Camouflage 60%, Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%; Drive Automobile 40%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 50%, Hide 60%, Law 40%, Listen 55%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Persuade 45%, Photography 15%, Psychology 40%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 70%, Swim 50%, Track 50%, Zoology 20%.

**Languages:** English only.

**Attacks:** .38 Revolver, 50%, 1d8; Splitting Maul, 70%, 1d8+db.

**Spells Known:** Varies depending on the story path.

**Notes:** The most dangerous kind of cultist is the one who is convinced that he is doing what must be done.



**E. Dragging the Lake; Going Fishing; or Local “Champ” Experts--Robert Bahl.**

Any of these three lines of inquiry will quickly lead to the investigators being referred to Robert Bahl. “Bob” is a genial employee of the Burlington Port Authority who manages the city dock. He is an experienced pilot and knows Lake Champlain like the back of his hand. Among other things, he is one of the best people in town to talk to about prevailing currents, historic water levels, and other navigational issues. Bob is also one of the leading authorities anywhere on “Champ.” His office at the docks is a veritable shrine to “Champ”, complete with clipped and framed newspaper articles, copies of history books, blurry photographs, and toy sea serpents. Although he has work to do, the city fathers generally look the other way when someone offers him a “donation” to take them out on the lake looking for “Champ.” They figure that it is good for tourism. He is used to having oddballs, journalists and academics asking him questions about “Champ”; he is the semi-official spokesman on such topics (or at least, the one that everyone thinks of as someone to go talk to). He readily shares stories, and is fairly easily Persuaded to borrow a city boat and cart academic types around the lake. If told that the investigators are looking into the death of Mrs. Eauclaire, he is virtually certain to cooperate.

Bob will not admit to thinking that any lake monsters live out in Lake Champlain. He believes that the occasional unexplained thrashing and splashing out in the lake is the result of a seiche tide, *i.e.*, a sporadic vertical current stemming from the shape and depth of the lake. He is quite open about his doubts, but secretly, he is nervous and internally wrestling with the notion that something might be out there. A summary of what Robert Bahl can tell the investigators about “Champ” legends follows on Investigator Handout #3.



**Burlington waterfront, c. 1920.**

Bahl is in regular correspondence with renowned (and real life) Dutch cryptozoologist Antoon Oudemans, a 70ish, retired (in the 1920s) former head of the Dutch Royal Zoological Gardens. Bahl has a signed copy of Oudemans’ seminal (real life) work, *The Great Sea Serpent* (1892) (grants check in: Natural History). Oudemans’ theory is that all of the various lake monsters residing in various large, deep, coldwater Northern Hemisphere lakes are early proto-whales known as zeuglodon (a more serpentine, less hairy cousin of ambulocetis), which became isolated when these lakes--all of which are the result of fjord isolation during the last Ice Age 10,000 years ago--were formed.

If the newspapers get a hold of rumors of a determined Champ hunt, or should Bob Bahl himself see something, the chance that Dr. Oudemans arrives with an entourage of academics is fairly high.





### **The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #3: Summary of “Champ” Lore**

- Some historians place the earliest sighting of the creature by a European with Samuel de Champlain, after whom the lake is named. Champlain is supposed to have mentioned the creature in a chronicle he wrote in 1609. A careful reading of the text, though, shows that the animal described by Champlain might have been a large garfish, rather than a monster.
- After Champlain’s initial report, there are no Champ reports for over two hundred years. The area around Lake Champlain (with the exception of Burlington) was sparsely settled until the early 1800s, when there was a large (150,000) and sudden influx of settlers. It is not unusual for encounters between humans and wildlife to increase when humans start to pressure their habitat. Bahl can volunteer that most wild animals--especially predators--prefer to avoid humans unless they can no longer help it.
- One of the earliest reported sightings occurred in 1819, when early settlers reported seeing a large “beast” of some sort stick its head out of the water and flee quickly.
- Reports of the monster start showing up in large numbers in newspapers around 1873. This coincides with the advent of regular steamboat traffic on the lake.
- According to an 1873 story in the *New York Times*, a railroad work crew was laying track near Dresden, New York, when they saw the head of an "enormous serpent" emerge from the water. After a moment of paralyzing shock, the workmen ran away. The creature, in turn, swam away. Witnesses reported that the animal had bright, silver-like scales that glistened in the sun. "The appearance of his head was round and flat, with a hood spreading out from the lower part of it like a rubber cap often worn by mariners."
- In August of that same year, a small steamship, loaded with tourists, allegedly struck the creature and nearly turned over. According to newspaper accounts, the head and neck of the animal were sighted afterward about 100 feet from the ship.
- In 1878 and 1879, there were several sightings reported, including by a yachting party and three University of Vermont students. The three students reportedly saw about 15 feet worth of monster above the water. Showman P.T. Barnum posted a \$50,000 reward for the "hide of the great Champlain serpent to add to my mammoth World's Fair Show" around this time.
- Reports appeared in the newspapers for the rest of that century. In July of 1883 the Clinton County Sheriff saw "an enormous snake or water serpent" which he estimated to be 25-35 feet long.
- In 1887, a farm boy spotted the creature "making noises like a steamboat" a mile out in the lake. That same year, a group of picnickers near Charlotte, Vermont, reported seeing an animal 75 feet long and "big around as a barrel" out in the water.
- Also in 1887, a group of picnickers at Lone Rock Point saw Champ coming around a bend, getting spooked when people screamed, and fleeing under the waves.
- While on board the steamer “The Spirit of Ethan Allen” in 1884, 80 people saw a greenish-brown, 30 foot long monster that had several humps.
- In 1886, a gentleman was duck hunting when he saw a giant serpent-like creature with legs curled up onshore. When he moved slightly, it ferociously reared its head and crashed its way through the bushes.
- Another group of picnickers at Lone Rock Point were startled and dispersed in 1892, scattering canoeists.
- In 1915, according to the *New York Times*, a couple of witnesses supposedly got a look at a 40’ specimen floundering in the mud on the New York side of the lake. It moved surprisingly quickly, however, and fled under the water heading for Vermont. (Bob Bahl has spent a lot of time trying to find these people, without success. He doubts that they exist).
- Most reports describe Champ as anywhere between 10 and 200 feet long, with one to four or more humps or up to five arching coils. Colors reported range from black, to a dark head and white body (like an orca), to gray, to black and gray, to brown. Some have described the beast as furry, drab or shiny, or even slimy.





Keepers' Notes about Champ stories in Investigator Handout #3: With respect to the 1915 New York Times story, these people do exist. At the Keeper's option, the investigators might be able to locate these tourists at their homes in Connecticut. The description that they will give will match the description of an ambulocetis, regardless of whether one is actually out there or not.

The picnic site near Lone Rock Point from the 1887 and 1892 reports is the "ground zero" that the investigators are looking for, and also the site of the Black Stone altar. The investigators (with a critical Track or Natural History roll) might realize that a predator that is startled is probably near its home, and would not have been active for long prior to the encounter.

Boat Trips: The investigators may well try to finagle a guided boat trip out of Robert Bahl. He will oblige them without too much difficulty, providing that they have some sort of official sanction and pick up the tab for gas. He is an excellent pilot who is quite familiar with the lake.

**Important Keeper Note:** *Regardless of whether "Champ" exists or not under your chosen story path, by all means have some fun with the investigators while they are out on the lake.* If they stray near the picnic site, perhaps one of the higher POWs in the group feels uneasy. Have the background chatter of birds and animals stop for a bit without explanation, only to suddenly resume. Tempt one of them into diving into the frigid lake. If "Champ" is out there, let one (and only one) investigator get a vague (or maybe even a very good) look at...something...while the others are distracted. Maybe he sees enough of something to force a minor SAN check. Let them get a grainy photograph, or encounter a particularly vigorous seiche tide. ***But under no circumstances let all of them, or even more than one of them, see "Champ" or***

***get any hard evidence.*** Dissension about the existence of "Champ" within the group leads to a wonderful and memorable denouement, as suggested in the playtest notes at the end of the scenario. If there is an investigator with a particularly low SAN, or who sees the supernatural everywhere, let ***that*** person take a 1 point SAN loss from getting a very good look at "Champ", and let the others think he is delusional...for now.

### **Robert Bahl, Burlington Dock Manager**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 14 DEX 13 INT 13 CON14  
APP 11 POW 13 SIZ 14 EDU 12  
SAN 65 Luck 65 Hits: 14 Age: 45.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

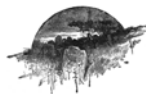
**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Accounting 45%; Credit Rating 35%; Electrical Repair 25%; Drive Automobile 35%; Law 25%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Operate Heavy Machinery 65%; Occult 25% (***Champ Lore 70%***); Swim 50%; Pilot Boat 75%.

**Languages:** English 60%; French 40%.

**Attacks:** Big Wrench, 50%, 1d6+db; hand-to-hand skills at +10% over base.

**Notes:** A burly, good-natured roughneck who has worked his way up from dockhand to barge pilot to dock manager, Robert is Margaret Bahl's former brother-in-law. Robert is not at all close to Margaret, but will have a normal amount of interest in his niece Emily's well-being. Robert is superstitious and believes that some sort of beast lives in the depths of Lake Champlain, but has made a hobby out of his irrational fear. Robert's resolve about matters of protocol and borrowing city equipment usually falter in the face of a sufficient gratuity.



### F. Good Old Fashioned Detective Work.

#### Who Benefits?

The detective's first question when solving a rational crime, sometimes the absence of an apparent answer is instructive. In this case, seemingly no one benefits from this series of crimes, at least for any rational reason. This suggests predation of some kind.

#### Victim Patterns?

With the exception of Mrs. Eauclaire, the victims are mostly itinerant vagrants who would not be missed, but not exclusively so. In every case except Mrs. Eauclaire, however, they are not locals. This is not a coincidence. In each case where the victim could be identified, they were last seen heading off alone, and in some state of impairment. With the exception of Mrs. Eauclaire, all of the victims were either suspected or confirmed drunks, and hence, vulnerable to drowning or assault. This, again, is consistent with predation of some kind. Query what kind of predation, however.

#### Timing Patterns?

There are a number of suspicious timing patterns associated with the recent spate of washups. First, the victims went missing at night, and were probably alone. (Mrs. Eauclaire was certainly alone; the drunks and itinerants who preceded her could reasonably be surmised to have been alone. There are no witnesses of any stripe). Second, the washups have been regular (roughly monthly, and corresponding to the new moon, when it would have been especially dark out). Third, they have been recent, suggesting that some precipitating factor is at work. This could either logically be a change in behavior (e.g., a recent arrival in town) or some other change in the status quo. The rising water levels (and coincident

exposure of the Black Stone) closely coincide with the beginning of the washups. The investigators should rightly be thinking that there is some particular location that has become dangerous in the recent past.

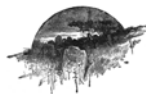
#### Current Patterns?

The scientific approach is a good one. All of the washups have been found over an area near the docks, and had been in the water for some time. The investigators should be thinking about where they might have gone into the water. Mrs. Eauclaire, in particular, went missing promptly, so assuming that she died around that time and went into the water where she died, the investigators should be able to make some deductions about where she went into the water.



#### **What's THAT out in Lake Champlain?**

Either the University of Vermont or Robert Bahl can help the investigators in this regard. Both have the same excellent set of nautical charts, complete with current patterns and hazards to navigation. Either will express the opinion that someone who had been in the water for the two days that it took Mrs. Eauclaire to wash up, given currents, depths and shore contours, likely went into the lake somewhere north of town, and south of Lone Rock Point, a



projecting spit about two miles north of town. Lone Rock Point is a popular picnic area, as well as the site of some historical “Champ” sightings. This gives the investigators a nicely manageable search area. They can narrow it even further by walking the shore trail, taking note of the picnic area where the water is quite high, and searching. They can also narrow it further by feeling the presence of the Black Altar, or with the assistance of Scamp, or possibly with the use of bloodhounds.

Oddly, the police have not pursued this line of inquiry.

#### Stake Out, Or, Setting a Trap?

This is where things will almost certainly lead, in the end. The results depend on the extent to which the investigators remained unobserved, both by anything that might be in the lake as well as by Detective Summers. If they act as though something intelligent might be watching them and conceal their activities accordingly, a trap of some kind is more likely to succeed. A quiet stakeout of the picnic site--particularly on the night of a new moon--is likely to be very instructive.

#### Scamp?

Investigators who have seen one too many 1950s era “boy and his dog” shows might take an interest in Scamp, Mrs. Eaucloire’s terrier. Scamp is of some value to the investigation, although he is not going to run from the Eaucloire’s house to the “well that Timmy fell down.”

What Scamp will do, however, is act excitedly and strain to get away from whoever is walking him if he is brought to the altar site, offering some corroborating evidence about where something happened to Mrs. Eaucloire. This is particularly the case if he is with Mr. Eaucloire; he may dash back and forth and act in a generally

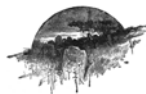
animated fashion. He will also resist being led up to the edge of the water in this area. Finally, he might buy the investigators a round, as cannon fodder against Champ or worse.



**Scamp, scourge of the Mythos.**

#### 8. Resolutions.

Eventually, the investigators will focus their attention on the right area of the shore, and suspect that some sort of predator is at work. They may have gotten a glimpse of something in the water; should be aware of the Black Altar and its connection to Zvilpoggua; may be wondering what involvement (if any) Prudence Goode has with what is going on; and perhaps suspect that Detective Summers is not completely trustworthy. Once they have gathered the evidence, they will likely do one of two things. They will start investigating Detective Summers (hopefully with extreme discretion), or they will stake out the picnic area around the new moon in the hope of seeing something. What will happen depends on two things: 1) which version of events you choose to run with and 2) the extent to which Detective Summers is aware that they suspect him.



### Option 1-Care and Feeding of the God:

In this story path, there is a somewhat traditional cult of 13 locals involved in calling down Zvilpoggua to take monthly sacrifices. Their motivation, however, is a bit unusual: they think that they *have* to do this in order to save their town. In a sense, they are offering up the proverbial virgin to save the town from the nearby dragon. The dragon, of course, only lives near the village because of the easy pickings, but he's not telling the villagers that.

Jim Summers is the cult leader in this story path. The other 12 members of the cult are all fairly respectable members of the community, including a town councilmember or two. They do not discuss their activities; they do not relish them. They all simply know that one of them has to somehow steer a victim to the site of the Black Stone on the night of the new moon. They take turns doing this, so as to avoid suspicion falling on any particular person. There, the unfortunate victim is ritually sacrificed upon the Black Stone, and Zvilpoggua (so they think) is appeased. Up until last month, this grisly act of apparent utilitarianism had proceeded without disruption; Zvilpoggua came down from the stars, shredded the victim, and told his "faithful" that they were safe for another month from his terrible wrath.

Why is Jim Summers involved in this? He does not want to be, any more than anyone else does. Unfortunately, as careful genealogical investigation might perhaps uncover, Det. Summers is a descendant of Prudence Goode, a notorious local witch. While researching his family history a year ago, Det. Summers came across a copy of *Evill Sorceries*, and it broke his mind. He underwent a vision, in which Zvilpoggua led him to the site of the Black Stone, and told him that the floodwaters were of Zvilpoggua's doing. To save the town, he

needed to pay Zvilpoggua his grisly due, each month at the new moon. This is utter hogwash, but Jim Summers does not know this. He has convinced himself that this is his fate because of his ancestry, and that he cannot escape it.

Under the influence of the Black Stone, Det. Summers believed Zvilpoggua's lies, and recruited other townsfolk to assist him (whose minds have likewise since been twisted by the Black Stone). Det. Summers and his followers believe, in short, that monthly sacrifices are necessary to save the town and control the flooding. This is completely nuts and wrong, but Summers' ability to work magic and fact that floods constantly threaten but never happen have convinced twelve other townsfolk. The nudging of the altar, plus the sight of the opportunistic Zvilpoggua himself, have shoved this well-intentioned(?) but grossly misguided group over the edge of sanity.

#### **Zvilpoggua Cultists (x12)**

**Nationality:** American

STR 11 DEX 11 INT 11 CON 11  
APP 11 POW 11 SIZ 12 EDU 11  
SAN varies (some 0, some low) Luck 55  
Hits: 12 Age: varies.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Education:** varies.

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 5%; others the Keeper deems appropriate.

**Languages:** English 55%; some may speak a variety of languages.

**Attacks:** Axe, 35% 1d6+2.

**Spells Known:** Call Zvilpoggua.

**Notes:** A smattering of people, either under Summers' thumb or fellow prominent citizens, all of whom have been duped by Zvilpoggua into thinking that appeasing him will spare Burlington from his watery wrath.



After last month, however, there is now quite a bit of dissension and argument within the group. Many of them were friends of Mrs. Eauciaire, and are not happy that she had to be sacrificed because no other suitable victim could be lured out to the site. Some of these (4-5) who are not yet completely insane have become disgruntled, and may mutiny if a ceremony is disrupted by meddling investigators.

What will likely occur, given this story path, is that the investigators will have staked out the site and be quietly waiting for something to happen. Alternatively, they may be keeping an eye on Summers, especially as the new moon approaches. They will not see him openly encourage any drifters to get in his car, or spend the night down by the picnic area--one of his associates will be doing that. But if they watch him closely enough, and go undetected, they will see him quietly, nonchalantly slip away and head for the site. If accosted before anything inexplicable occurs, he will (plausibly) claim to be patrolling the area, or searching for evidence. He and the rest of the cult wear normal clothes; there are no cult trappings, odd tomes, funny looking blades, or the like. Summers keeps an ordinary looking splitting maul in the back of his truck, a common enough work tool in the area; he is careful to keep it clean. (A splitting maul is a heavy logging tool that looks like a cross between a wood axe and a sledge hammer).

To catch the cult, the investigators will need to well and truly wait until the victim shows up. The cult will subdue, gag, and bind the victim, put him in the shallows where the Black Stone lies, and Call Zvilpoggua. At the point where they assault the victim, their plausible deniability will be gone. If confronted by the investigators at this point, they will do the last thing the investigators might expect: plead with them not to interfere! They will argue that if the sacrifice does not go forward, Zvilpoggua will flood the

town. Summers will earnestly explain the entire situation to them and try to win them over. They must be able to feel the evil of the Black Stone as well, he will plead (and some of them might well be able to). If (as is likely), the investigators do not go along, he will then try to sacrifice them to Zvilpoggua. Some of the cult members may hang back, flee, or actually try to help the investigators, having finally had enough. Summers is certainly not above sacrificing himself to Zvilpoggua, who appears quite quickly in this instance to

### **Zvilpoggua, the Feaster from the Stars (Great Old One)**

STR 35 DEX 21 INT 20 CON 53  
POW 33 SIZ 47 Hits: 50.

**Damage Bonus:** +4d6.

**Move:** 10"/17" Flying.

**Skills and Spells:** Contact Tsathoggua; Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua; others appropriate to a Great Old One.

**Attacks:** Tendrils, 85%, grapple and fly off. Zvilpoggua can carry up to 41 SIZ points of victims at a time.

Bite, automatic when grappled, 2d6 +1d10 STR drain.

**Armor:** Minimum damage from all physical, non-enchanted weapons. Fire, chemicals, electricity, spells and magical weapons take normal effect. Reaching zero hit points dispels Zvilpoggua into a formless cloud until the next rising of the star Algol.

**SAN loss:** 1d2/1d10 for viewing Zvilpoggua.

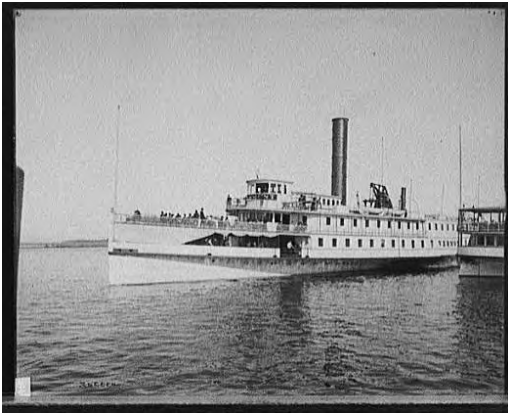
**Notes:** Zvilpoggua cares nothing for its worshippers, the fate of humanity, or anything other than filling its belly. If this option is used, Zvilpoggua will have conned its "priest", Jim Summers, into summoning it once a month for a quick meal on the pretense that Zvilpoggua will keep "elder forces" from destroying the town by flood.





claim his prize.

If Zvilpoggua is successfully summoned, the investigators are well advised to run. Zvilpoggua will grab his victim, rending and tearing, only to drop the less palatable remains from a great height, where they are next to wash up on shore.



Heading out to drag the lake...again....

### **Option 2-Dear Prudence:**

Consider, alternatively, the following excerpt from a Colonial-era Mythos tome:

#### **The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #4.**

A man of my Order has told me of one Prudence Goode, whom the people on the shores of Lake Champlain did try as a witch in the Year of our Lord 1720. Mistress Goode was placed upon the ducking-stool and given trial by water in Lake Champlain. It is said by some that true witches will float, while the innocent sink. When they lifted up the ducking-stool, Mistress Goode was gone. In her place it is said was a great black Serpent. The Serpent didst escape into the depths of the Lake. It is known to many that the Serpent is a common form of the Devil. After hearing this tale, I journeyed to this settlement, and did bless the waters of the Lake.

If the Serpent is real, is it a transformed

Prudence Goode? If so, does she need to be released, destroyed, or let alone? Was Prudence Goode a witch, or an innocent? In either case, this is where she was put upon the ducking stool, and where the Serpent is most easily found.

### **Option 3-Chaousarou:**

When it comes to sea monsters, anyway, cryptozoology often boils down to arguing about which of a number of weak and troubled explanations cannot be convincingly ruled out. For example, as can be related by Robert Bahl, one of the most troubling aspects about there being a lake monster in Lake Champlain is that no one has ever seen a dead one. Unless one presumes that they are immortal, they must surely breed and die. A breeding population would require perhaps a hundred creatures or more. How could the body of one never wash up? Furthermore, since Lake Champlain (like Loch Ness) is long, deep, cold and narrow, whatever lived there would either have to be warm blooded or hibernate (alligators would not survive a single winter).

A theory popular with modern cryptozoologists about "Champ" is that a population of zeuglodons, or other proto-whales, live in Lake Champlain. Zeuglodons are primitive, carnivorous, ancestral whales, long and sinuous in form, with (depending on their degree of evolution) functional hind legs. As mammals, they would be warm-blooded, and they filled a niche similar to that of an immense alligator: a heavily aquatic ambush predator, that can and would snatch unsuspecting prey off a bank or from shallow water. Adding fuel to this fire is the fact that, in the 1970s, zeuglodon fossils were found not far from Lake Champlain. And at least in the 1920s, the many islands in Lake Champlain were still poorly accessible, providing possible hiding places for amphibious creatures.



Zeuglodon, based on the fossil record, were streamlined and serpentine, ranging from 45 up to 70 feet in length. Earlier proto-whales (such as *ambulocetis*) were smaller (about 10 feet in size), more crocodylian in shape, and certainly amphibious, with two pairs of functional legs. Proto-whales are believed to have evolved from primitive even-toed ungulates, branching off from pigs and hippopotami. Their head was wedged-shaped, and up to five feet long, with both seizing and rending dentition (much like a dog).

“Champ” (possibly multiple “Champs”), in this option, will be somewhere midway between *ambulocetis* and the later zeuglodon. Roughly 20 feet long, they will be primarily aquatic but with functional limbs and the capability of landing; essentially an enormous, furry, vaguely serpentine, warm-blooded alligator. They will have been taking advantage of recent higher water levels to access human prey on an opportunistic basis. The Black Stone site will be a favorite of theirs because of its close proximity to a deep shelf not far from shore, to which they can quickly retreat with (and drown) what they have caught.

Champ’s behavior will also be basically that of an alligator: a shy, concealed ambush predator and scavenger, only smarter. Champ will be very hard to see in the water, and is smart enough to wait until someone is seemingly alone before striking.

In this story path, Jim Summers is less of an overt psychopath, but still thoroughly bonkers. While conducting his genealogical research, he came across the Prudence Goode legend, and using the information in *Evill Sorceries*, he came to the conclusion that something was living in Lake Champlain. Summers in this story path is a psychotic control freak, extremely concerned with keeping the “wrong

element” out of Burlington. As a result, Summers has taken to luring “undesirables” out to the park and arranging (with varying degrees of assistance) for whatever lurks in the lake to ambush them. Should the investigators somehow gain access to his diary, his xenophobic, maniacal ramblings provide all the evidence someone might need to put him away for good.

### **Champ, Legendary Lake Monster and Hungry *Ambulocetis*.**

STR 30 DEX 8 INT 3 CON 20  
POW 11 SIZ 30 Luck 55 Hits: 20

**Damage Bonus:** +3d6.

**Move:** 5”/8” swimming.

**Armor:** 5 points of fur, hide and proto-blubber.

**Skills:** Listen 20%, but Sense Vibration or Movement 80%; Sneak Along Shore 60%; Hide 80%; Swim 100%.

**Attacks:** Bite 60%, 1d10 +db.

Grab 60% (will retreat and drag under water to drown).

**SAN Loss:** 0/1d3 for viewing Champ.

**Notes:** An ambush predator, Champ is quicker than he looks. His effective Listen check is excellent; while his hearing per se is not particularly good, his lower jaw functions as an evolving, vibration sensitive echolocation system. This enables Champ to sense movement and vibrations very well. Champ is about as smart as a dolphin, which is to say, pretty smart. His fur and proto-blubber enables him to easily deal with cold water and adverse weather.



### Option 4--Mr. Blink.

Detective Summers, in this option, is simply a crazed serial killer, a sadistic bastard who uses his badge to gain the confidence of transients or other victims of opportunity, lure them out to the park and vent his perversions. If forensic science had advanced sufficiently in the 1920s to detect it, his DNA would be all over portions of the bodies, as would fiber evidence from the ropes he uses to bind his victims before killing them. He chooses the altar area to stage his abominations because, for some reason, it feels right, and it's a fabulous place to dump a body given the deep shelf and the currents. He discovered, about a year ago, that he was descended from the infamous witch, Prudence Goode; whether his weak mind used this as an excuse, or whether there is something to be said for atavistic guilt and compulsion, is unclear.

Summers does not blink--ever--and uses a splitting maul to mangle and crush his victims when he is done with them. Irritatingly, he will not admit to having been responsible for the death of Mrs. Eauclaire in this event--he will deny it unto death. Let this worry the investigators--why would he have risked the exposure that he had so far avoided by attacking someone well known?

Should the investigators somehow manage to gain access to his boarding house room (he lives alone), they will find a treasure trove of evidence carefully arranged and catalogued under the bed, including body parts, locks of hair, and other keepsakes. His diary meticulously discusses every victim, from how he stalked them, to how he killed them, to what he did with them before, during and afterwards. Perusing the diary reveals that, apart from being a sadistic sociopath, Summers had begun hearing voices coming from the altar, telling him secrets about inevitable futures.

### *The Summers Diary*

In colloquial English, +1% Cthulhu Mythos, -0/1d3 SAN, 6 hours to read. In this story path, alter Det. Summers' statistics in this instance to remove his spells, but otherwise, leave him the same. His diary clearly notes that he had nothing to do with Mrs. Eauclaire's death and fears exposure as a result of it.

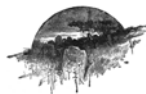
### So What's Canon?

If you are a looking for a "canonical" way to run this scenario, utilize the Zvilpoggua cult option, but have Champ actually be lurking in the Lake as well, serving as a wild card.

Lure the investigators out onto the Lake, and have one particular investigator get a good, SAN-losing look at Champ, as well as any number of hints and glimpses when the others' attention is distracted.

Champ will have been frequenting the park site in recent months, taking the chance of being observed, because of the free leftovers that follow when Zvilpoggua feeds. Champ will silently glide over to the scene of any strange nighttime activity at the park, looking for a cheap meal. Sit back and let the chaos ensue.

Scamp should somehow survive.



### 9. Rewards and Retribution.

Should the investigators destroy the sunken altar, award each 1d6 SAN. Eliminating Detective Summers also garners 1d6 SAN. Under no circumstances should the investigators be allowed to definitively kill Champ, capture Champ or clearly photograph Champ. Grainy photos, momentary glimpses, wounded monsters sinking into the murk, or bizarre footprints are another matter, of course.

#### NPC RECAP

#### **Dr. Daniel Abernathy, Mediocre but Genial Archaeologist (Prior to Olaf's Camp Dig).**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 12	DEX 12	INT 16
CON12	APP 12	POW 13
SIZ 14	EDU 21	SAN 65
Luck 65	Hits: 13	Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** Ph.D., Archaeology, Cornell University.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 70%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 40%, Drive Auto 30%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 70%, Library Use 75%, Listen 25%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 39%, Occult 25%, Persuade 44%, Photography 25%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 44%.

**Languages:** English 90%; French 50%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; Old Norse 55%.

**Attacks:** None over base.

**Notes:** A genial, avuncular fellow who is not destined for a great academic career, but knows what he knows. He is not particularly ambitious, but is a respected (though not preminent) authority on Norse exploration in particular and Vermont archaeology in general.

#### Playtest Notes!

The Ace Detective Agency had staked out the picnic grounds. One of them, as the result of an "obvious hallucination" while out conducting reconnaissance on the Lake, insisted that the lair of some great, hairy serpent-like thing must be nearby. The investigators were shocked to see a large group of citizens, led by Detective Summers, appear with a bound and gagged drunkard they had noticed earlier in the day. Once chanting began in some unwholesome language, and an eerie light began to glow at the edge of the water, the investigators decided to chance a frontal assault. A desperate fight ensued, with some of the cultists fleeing, and others pleading with the investigators not to interfere for the sake of the town. The fight went badly for the investigators; blood flowed and bodies fell into the murky lake. Detective Summers, almost apologetically, incapacitated an investigator (the same one who had seen Champ earlier) and prepared to sacrifice him on the submerged altar to the Feaster from the Stars. Fortunately, one impressive Luck roll later, Summers learned that there was indeed a monster in the lake. The captured investigator went temporarily insane, and none of the other investigators saw a thing...other than some strange, webbed hoof prints in the muck. Of course, no one could exactly explain what happened to Summers or how the incapacitated investigator managed to survive...until bits of Summers washed up a few days later...but it was dark and chaotic at the shore...who is to say what exactly happened?

#### **Detective Jim Summers, Madman of One Stripe or Another.**

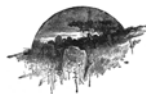
**Nationality:** American

STR 15	DEX 13	INT 11
CON15	APP 15	POW 13
SIZ 16	EDU11	SAN 0
Luck 65	Hits: 16	Age: 48.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Bargain 40%, Camouflage 60%, Climb 70%, Cthulhu Mythos 8%, Drive



Automobile 40%, Fast Talk 50%, First Aid 50%, Hide 60%, Law 40%, Listen 55%, Mechanical Repair 45%, Persuade 45%, Photography 15%, Psychology 40%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 70%, Swim 50%, Track 50%, Zoology 20%.

**Languages:** English only.

**Attacks:** .38 Revolver, 50%, 1d8; Splitting Maul, 70%, 1d8+db.

**Spells Known:** Varies depending on the story path.

### Robert Bahl, Burlington Dock Manager

**Nationality:** American

STR 14	DEX 13	INT 13
CON 14	APP 11	POW 13
SIZ 14	EDU 12	SAN 65
Luck 65	Hits: 14	Age: 45

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Accounting 45%; Credit Rating 35%; Electrical Repair 25%; Drive Automobile 35%; Law 25%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Operate Heavy Machinery 65%; Occult 25% (*Champ Lore 70%*); Swim 50%; Pilot Boat 75%.

**Languages:** English 60%; French 40%.

**Attacks:** Big Wrench, 50%, 1d6+db; hand-to-hand skills at +10% over base.

**Notes:** A burly, good-natured roughneck who has worked his way up from dockhand to barge pilot to dock manager, Robert is Margaret Bahl's former brother-in-law. Robert is not at all close to Margaret, but will have a normal amount of interest in his niece Emily's well-being. Robert is superstitious and believes that some sort of beast lives in the depths of Lake Champlain, but has made a hobby out of his irrational fear. Robert's resolve about matters of protocol and borrowing city equipment usually falter in the face of a sufficient gratuity.

### Zvilpoggua Cultists (x12)

**Nationality:** American

STR 11	DEX 11	INT 11
CON 11	APP 11	POW 11
SIZ 12	EDU 11	SAN
varies (some 0, some low)		Luck 55
Hits: 12	Age: varies.	

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Education:** varies.

**Skills:** Cthulhu Mythos 5%; others the Keeper deems appropriate.

**Languages:** English 55%; some may speak a variety of languages.

**Attacks:** Axe, 35% 1d6+2.

**Spells Known:** Call Zvilpoggua.

**Notes:** A smattering of people, either under Summers' thumb or fellow prominent citizens, all of whom have been duped by Zvilpoggua into thinking that appeasing him will spare Burlington from his watery wrath.

### Zvilpoggua, the Feaster from the Stars (Great Old One)

STR 35	DEX 21	INT 20
CON 53	POW 33	SIZ 47
Hits: 50.		

**Damage Bonus:** +4d6.

**Move:** 10"/17" Flying.

**Skills and Spells:** Contact Tsathoggua; Contact Formless Spawn of Tsathoggua; others appropriate to a Great Old One.

**Attacks:** Tendrils, 85%, grapple and fly off. Zvilpoggua can carry up to 41 SIZ points of victims at a time.

Bite, automatic when grappled, 2d6 +1d10 STR drain.

**Armor:** Minimum damage from all physical, non-enchanted weapons. Fire, chemicals, electricity, spells and magical weapons take normal effect. Reaching zero hit points dispels Zvilpoggua into a





formless cloud until the next rising of the star Algol.

**SAN loss:** 1d2/1d10 for viewing Zvilpoggua.

**Notes:** Zvilpoggua cares nothing for its worshippers, the fate of humanity, or anything other than filling its belly. If this option is used, Zvilpoggua will have conned its “priest”, Jim Summers, into summoning it once a month for a quick meal on the pretense that Zvilpoggua will keep “elder forces” from destroying the town by flood.

### Champ, Legendary Lake Monster and Hungry Ambulocetis

STR 30	DEX 8	INT 3
CON 20	POW 11	SIZ 30
Luck 55	Hits: 20.	

**Damage Bonus:** +3d6.

**Move:** 5”/8” swimming.

**Armor:** 5 points of fur, hide and proto-blubber.

**Skills:** Listen 20%, but Sense Vibration or Movement 80%; Sneak Along Shore 60%; Hide 80%; Swim 100%.

**Attacks:** Bite, 60%, 1d10 +db.

Grab, 60%, (will retreat and drag under water to drown).

**SAN Loss:** 0/1d3 for viewing Champ.

**Notes:** An ambush predator, Champ is quicker than he looks. His effective Listen check is excellent; while his hearing per se is not particularly good, his lower jaw functions as an evolving, vibration sensitive echolocation system. This enables Champ to sense movement and vibrations very well. Champ is about as smart as a dolphin, which is to say, pretty smart. His fur and proto-blubber enables him to easily deal with cold water and adverse weather.



The shore of Lake Champlain, near a certain flooded, muddy spit, c. 1930.



## THE SAP KEEPS RUNNING, PART 3



Between the investigators' second and the third visits, Amelia and Margaret will have been hard at work eroding Claire's sanity. Amelia has been covertly casting Send Dreams and Instill Fear on Claire, to gradually erode her faculties. Margaret will have been using Blight Crops to ruin Claire's stand of trees.

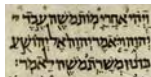
At the same time, Margaret will have been making a public show of concern for Claire. Margaret will have been bringing Claire meals, sent by a doctor to check on her health, and suggested to Sheriff Hudson that she is concerned that Claire is developing senile dementia.

It should be obvious to the investigators that Claire is having troubles. The maples on her side of the road are sickly and dying. Closer inspection reveals (on a

successful Natural History roll) that they are inflicted with a serious fungal infestation. If little time has elapsed since their last visit, this may pique investigator suspicions.

Claire's house is also in need of maintenance. The yard is unkempt, and depending on the length of time since the last visit may need several coats of paint. Claire herself is not outside on her porch this time. Claire will answer the door, however, and will be glad to see the investigators.

Claire looks tired, haggard, unkempt, nervous and weak. How much she tells to the investigators depends on their prior relationship. If Claire knows that the investigators pursue the paranormal, and she trusts them, they get the whole story.



Otherwise, the Keeper should make a judgment call about how Claire relates recent events. Claire's SAN at this point in the scenario is down to 40.

Claire has been plagued by dreams, and has been sleeping very little. In her dreams, she consistently hears an automobile pulling up to her house at all hours of the night. The automobile is black, and shines its headlights right into her window. When she gets up to see who it is, it is a headless woman, clutching for her. In the morning, when Claire wakes up, she finds nothing outside but strange little tracks, leading nowhere. They look like little cloven hoofprints. The investigators can go look, but they will not be able to find any such hoofprints.

At this point in her story, Claire breaks down into tears. Claire wonders if she's getting "old timer's disease", since she has also been suffering short-term memory lapses. To top everything off, she is living off of her limited savings, since her trees have contracted some sort of blight and people have stopped coming to buy her wares. Claire is a lonely, frustrated woman with nowhere to go, but she adamantly refuses any investigator offers to take her in. Pride is Claire's fatal flaw.



**Anyone want to "buy the farm" across the street? Inquire within.**

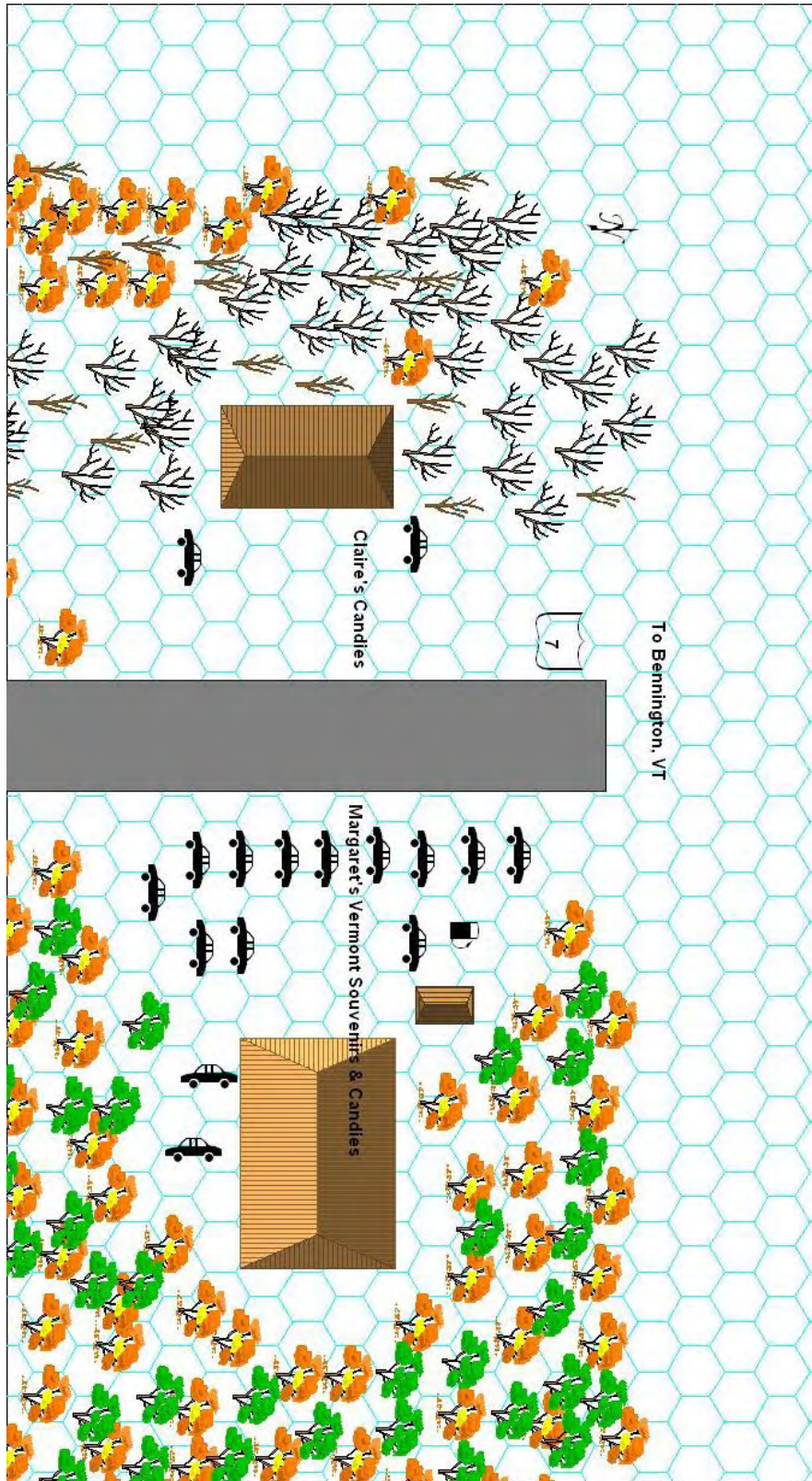
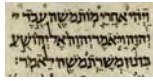
On the other hand, Claire has nice things to say about "Margaret and her girl" for a change. Claire muses that she must have been wrong about them, since Margaret has been bringing her meals and coming by to check on her well-being. Margaret has even paid to have a telephone installed in Claire's house. The phone is on a party line with that of Margaret and Amelia (which means they know whenever she gets a call).

If asked, Claire has never seen daughter Emily come back from school for a visit, or for the holidays.

Margaret and Amelia are apparently glad to see the investigators, too. Claire has mentioned the investigators to Margaret as being nice folks. If any of the investigators are known to Claire to be occult investigators, Margaret will have been told this as well.

Margaret will come over during the investigators' visit, unless they are extremely covert in their arrival. She draws the investigators aside and suggests that Margaret is becoming senile and needs a more "structured setting." Claire will hear nothing of such a suggestion. Psychology rolls against Margaret are useless; Margaret really does want Claire out of the picture as quietly as possible. If the investigators are particularly close to Claire, Margaret may suggest that they offer to take her in. Margaret can also take this opportunity to brag about how well her daughter Emily is doing in school.





Margaret and Claire's homesteads, overview.



# HOME, SWEET HOME

A LONGER SCENARIO SET IN VERMONT



Norse map of Vinland, c. 800

## 1. Introduction.

*W*æa bapowakan aig ojitta gia—  
 “Here is a joke for you.”--Abenaki  
 storyteller’s beginning.

*Arinbjörn segir: “Ekki ætla ek þat fjarri  
 lands lögum, at þú eignaðisk fé þat, en þó  
 þykki mér nú fét fastliga komit; er  
 konungsgarðr rúmr inngangs, en þröngr  
 brottfarar. Hafa oss orðit margar torsóttar  
 fjárheimtur við ofreflismennina, ok sátu  
 vér þá í meira trausti við konung en nú er,  
 því at vinátta okkur Hákonar konungs  
 stendr grunnt, þó at ek verða svá at gera*

*sem fornkveðit orð er, at þá verðr eik at  
 fága, er undir skal búa.”--“I don’t think  
 there’s a law in this country that prevents  
 you from acquiring that property,” said  
 Arinbjorn, “but it seems to have been put  
 in very secure hands. The king’s palace is  
 an easy place to enter but hard to leave. I  
 have had a lot of trouble claiming debts  
 from those overbearing characters, even  
 when I enjoyed a much closer confidence  
 with the king, because my friendship with  
 King Hakon is only recent. But I must do  
 as the old saying has it: ‘Tend the oak if  
 you want to live under it.’--*Egil’s Saga*,  
 stanza 154.*





*Home, Sweet Home* is a multi-session scenario for Call of Cthulhu, set in 1920s rural Vermont. The investigators will be forced to drive in order to get to Olaf's Camp, so someone should be able to drive and have access to a vehicle. The scenario, while containing investigative elements, is meant for experienced investigators, is potentially quite violent, and the potential for high casualties exists. The adventure is intended to be run with a semi-comic tone, similar to such zombie/comedies as "Dead Alive", "Cabin Fever" or "Shaun of the Dead": while the threats are real, the zombies should be completely over the top. The Keeper is advised to try and keep true, final investigator casualties to a minimum.

## **2. Synopsis.**

It is the middle of summer, and in the Vermont foothills in Bennington County, near the largely abandoned town of Glastenbury, an archaeological dig investigating the site of an Abenaki Native American village has gone very, very wrong. Initially, the team from the University of Vermont was confused, finding both signs of a small, abandoned Abenaki village as well as some older, incongruous artifacts. As work progressed, however, Daniel Abernathy, the leader of the dig, grew steadily more excited. It began to appear to him that rather than just another old Abenaki site, his long-held suspicions were correct: the Abenakis had built on top of some Norse ruins, and perhaps even met some Norse explorers.

Prof. Abernathy did not know the half of it. The site (hereafter "Olaf's Camp") has been a site of dark pilgrimage for countless aeons. It has been, in no particular order, a Serpent Man school of sorcery, a Hyperborean temple to the being known as Zvilpoggua, a place of refuge for certain degenerate Etruscan blood-magic workers, and a portal to the Sumerian underworld.

Layers lie on top of endless layers.

About 1,000 years ago, an Icelandic rogue and wizard, Olaf Ulfsson, noticed some odd correlations in a variety of Mythos tomes to which he had access, including the *Liber Ivonis* and fragmentary Serpent Man writings. Olaf kept stumbling on to references to the "Black/Dark/Ebon/Night --House/School/Place/Retreat," described in various combinations of these two concepts, consistently said to be across the Western Sea under a particular alignment of stars. Smelling an opportunity, and with the people of Iceland growing tired of his sorcerous experiments, Olaf and a few adherents set out for Vinland, and struck inland from there. Olaf knew when he had arrived, as the portents were all correct, a few ancient ruins remained visible, and the place stank of dark, alien power.

Olaf set up shop, building a longhouse, installing his adherents, and raiding the local Abenaki villages for sacrificial victims. The Abenaki would have none of it, and by the end of the first year, Olaf found himself threatened with starvation and under constant pressure from Abenaki punitive raids. The monsters that Olaf had to summon to quell the dissent taxed his resources in a fashion that he found most distracting. Finally having had enough of the annoying protests of the friends and relatives of his raw materials, Olaf determined to lay a trap and teach the self-righteous locals a lesson.

Shortly before winter, a large force of Abenaki marched on his camp, but when they arrived, they found that Olaf and his servants had left, taking most things of value. When they entered the longhouse, however, they found a curious thing: bones set into the stone foundation, in a mosaic of a horse's head, with strange symbols carved into them. The Abenakis were puzzled, but were satisfied. They finished razing the longhouse, buried the stone foundation (under which lay other



ruins from *many* bygone eras), and resolved to use the clearing and mound as the site for a village of their own.

This was not entirely their choice, of course. Olaf's mosaic, left behind out of spite, was an enormous Norse níð-pole. If the Abenakis wanted the "Black House" to be their home, then it would be such forever, even after death. The curse that Olaf left behind made the Abenakis want to live there, and never leave. The isolation that the curse imposed--and the fact that even the dead refused to leave--led to the abandonment of the site, at least as soon as the initial generation of Abenaki died off, and their zombified remains finally crumbled to dust. Abenaki legends now warn about ever venturing to, let alone inhabiting, the "Black House."

The curse is still in effect. *Anyone or anything that starts living at the site never wants to leave.* To make the suffering more exquisite, the dead continue to shamble about the area, intelligent and aware that they cannot leave--whether human, insect, or animal--until they literally fall to pieces. Even then, their consciousness remains intact, forced to dwell in the area forever. The area has a long history of people mysteriously disappearing; some refer to it as the "Bennington Triangle." For purposes of this adventure, the curse is why.

Prof. Abernathy's team, having set up an extended camp at the site, has fallen under the power of Olaf's curse. He and his two students (James McDougal, and Kevin Bride) realized that something was deathly wrong, as the sounds and incursions from undead animals and insects gradually wore on their sanity. Yet they had no desire to leave, and they themselves slowly sunk into insanity. Eventually, worn down by bugs that kept going even after being swatted, illness resulting from a lack of food and fresh supplies (no one wanted to leave to get more) and increasing despair,

McDougal snapped and murdered the others. This included the recently arrived Aimee Lark, who had been sent to find them. Or at least, McDougal tried to murder the others. Being murdered, of course, did not end their suffering. McDougal, still alive, still lives at the camp, wallowing in despair. The other three are dead (well, undead), but still exist in one sense or another; they try to interfere with the dig and/or wreak revenge on McDougal.

### 3. Getting the Players Involved; Interviews--University of Vermont.

This adventure initially presents itself as a missing persons case, suitable for a private investigator. Ideally, this adventure will have been run after the events of *The Beast of Lake Champlain*, during the course of which the investigators may have made the acquaintance of Prof. Abernathy or other Burlington notables who will think of them as good detectives. In any case, the players will be summoned to Burlington, VT by concerned persons in the Archaeology Department at the University of Vermont, on the recommendation of a prior acquaintance.

Prof. Daniel Abernathy and two graduate students, James McDougal and Kevin Bride, were on an archaeological dig somewhere near Glastenbury, VT, in the southern part of the state. They were expected to be gone until two weeks ago. They were overdue by a week, at which point, the University dispatched another graduate student, Aimee Lark, to try and find them. Now Aimee Lark has been gone for a week without checking in. As a result, the University now wants experienced investigators to look into the matter.

If asked, his departmental colleagues will have some limited information on the purpose for the trip:



- Abernathy is a decent archaeologist, but one with a rather narrow frame of interest. His interest lies principally in the hypothesis that pre-Columbian explorers reached North America, be it Irish monks, Viking explorers, or others even earlier. Viking sagas certainly suggest that at least some explorers reached Labrador, but Abernathy believes that they penetrated as far south and as far inland as Vermont. He has spent a lot of his career looking for hard proof.
- Abernathy has a solid command of Old Norse/Icelandic; most of his recent publications, in fact, have been commentaries on medieval Icelandic eddas and sagas, rather than hard archaeology.
- After a trip to Iceland a few months ago, Abernathy said that he believed that there might have been a Viking era settlement somewhere near Glastenbury, VT. He suspected that it might be quite close to an Abenaki village site. His colleagues (and even his students) thought this unlikely, given how far inland Glastenbury is. (Glastenbury is located in the southwest corner of Vermont, in the Berkshire mountains, about 100 miles from the ocean).
- Abernathy was nonetheless convinced that a dig needed to be undertaken. He took two of his graduate students, James McDougal and Kevin Bride, with him. He was rather secretive about what exactly he expected to find, but they planned to be in the field for two months. McDougal and Bride expected that they would find an old Abenaki village site, but Abernathy seemed to think there was more.
- People thought it odd when Abernathy did not check in at all in the interceding two months, but just assumed that the site was particularly out of the way. However, when he did not return for the beginning of the summer term, people started to worry.
- At that point, Aimee Lark, his newest

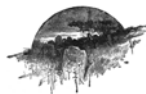
and last graduate student, was sent to look for him. She promised to contact the University as soon as she could. She has been gone for a week without a word, as well.

- Everyone at the University who was intimate with the details of what Abernathy was doing, or exactly where he was going, are now missing. Abernathy is married, however.

#### **4. Interview--Abernathy's Wife, Glynis.**

Prof. Abernathy's wife, Glynis, is a resource that should be offered to the investigators, even if they do not think to do any poking around before heading off to Glastenbury. She, for example, has at least a vague idea of where the archaeology team went, and has some valuable information about what Abernathy was up to in Iceland. Glynis is in her early 50s, kind, plain and unassuming, who works as a typist/transcriptionist. She is on crutches from an ankle sprain, and so will not (for now) accompany the investigators.

- Glynis can relate that she and her husband undertook periodic trips to Iceland and Denmark in recent years; he would study medieval records in the course of publishing scholarly articles about Viking eddas and sagas, and she would keep him company.
- Prof. Abernathy had a good relationship with one Arne Sigurdsson, a curator at the national archives in Reykjavik. He had gotten a wire from Arne about a new manuscript uncovered during construction last year. It had been found buried with a horde of Viking silver outside of Reykjavik. This prompted the latest trip to Reykjavik.
- Prof. Abernathy had Glynis prepare a copy of the work. It was not terribly long, 10,000 words or so, but was in some sort of kenning (a way of poetic writing that relies heavily on metaphor



and allusion). It was an anti-hero saga about a Viking named Olaf Ulfsson, someone she had never heard of before. She only understood bits and pieces of it, instead doing a very mechanical transcription.

- She remembers few details of what she transcribed. Abernathy said that Olaf had undertaken a colonization mission to Vinland, and he thought that he had trekked far inland, looking for a specific place called the “Dark Home.” That comported with what Glynis understood of the saga. It was a beautiful book; her copy of it went into a standard, brown, leather journal.
- Abernathy’s team was planning to head to Glastenbury, VT, and strike generally east into the mountains. He had done some work with some star charts before leaving; he took the

charts with him.

Other research opportunities available in Burlington are discussed in the “Research” section, below. Side trips to Reykjavik are likewise discussed in the “Research” section, below.

A note on the Old Norse skill: If, for some odd reason, one of the investigators has Icelandic as a language, the medieval Norse of the various writings that the players are going to encounter will be quite cognizable, except that they will be written in the futhark (runic) alphabet. Modern Icelandic can be substituted for Old Norse at a -10% penalty. Spoken Old Norse is treated as functionally equivalent to Modern Icelandic for purposes of this adventure. Hence, Mrs. Abernathy’s 10% is enough to navigate Reykjavik, order meals, mechanically copy a text without really understanding it, and have a halting, simple conversation.

### Glynis Abernathy, Worried Wife

**Nationality:** American

STR 10 DEX 11 INT 13 CON 12  
APP 13 POW 12 SIZ 11 EDU 14  
SAN 60 Luck 60 Hits: 12 Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.

**Education:** B.A., Modern Languages, University of Vermont.

**Skills:** Anthropology 24%, Archaeology 13%, Bargain 35%, Credit Rating 35%, Drive Auto 30%, History 40%, Library Use 50%, Listen 35%, Natural History 33%, Persuade 28%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 35%.

**Languages:** English 70%; French 70%; Spanish 40%; *Old Norse 10%*.

**Attacks:** None above base.

**Notes:** Glynis will eventually come looking for her husband herself, when she gets frustrated enough. The timing of her arrival should be used for dramatic purposes, and should occur at a time when the investigators are themselves in trouble, replaying their arrival at Olaf’s Camp from the opposite perspective.

### 5. Olaf’s Camp, and Fun Getting There.

Olaf’s Camp is located deep in the mountains of Southwestern Vermont. To get there, the investigators will need to drive U.S. Route 7 to a point slightly north of Pownal, VT, take a side macadam road to Glastenbury (a nearly deserted ghost town with few services), and then hike about five miles east into the mountains.

The players may ask around about the area in general, either in Glastenbury or otherwise, prior to embarking. The results of inquiring about local legends and the like are discussed in later sections. Asking around in Glastenbury does not result in any legends (the few people still living there are not inclined toward telling a good story), but they can comment on a few matters of interest:

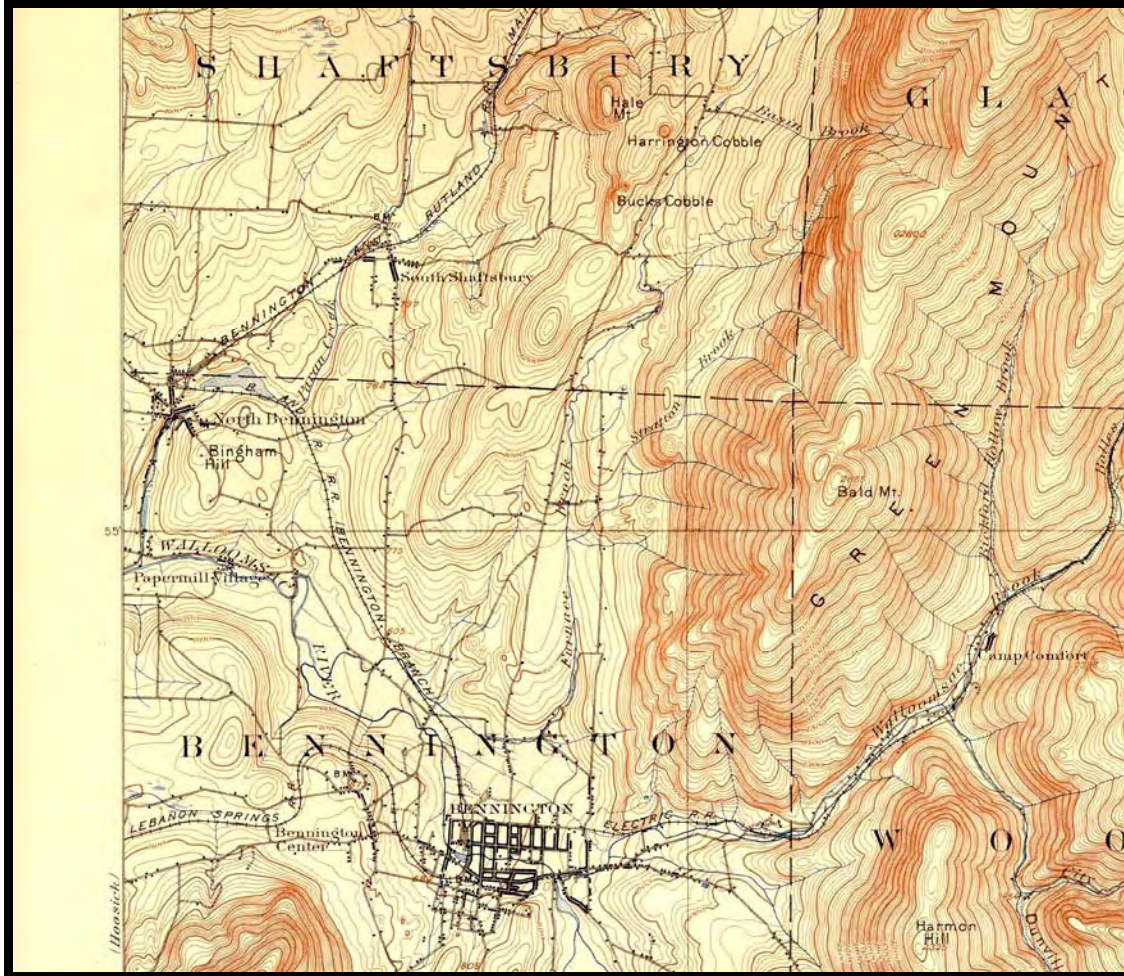
First, they can point out the archaeological team’s vehicle; they are storing it in a barn (and have been for the past few months).



The vehicle is unremarkable; in fact, if the investigators look for somewhere to park their vehicle, by all means play up the scene where their vehicle is stored right next to Abernathy's.

Second, the locals can advise the investigators that no one from Abernathy's team has been seen since the day they left the vehicle and took off hiking to the east,

roughly three months ago. The locals are not exactly sure where they went; just generally to the East, up in the mountains. They cautioned Abernathy that it is easy to get lost up in those mountains; they offer the same caution to the investigators. No one notices Aimee Lark come through town.



At the far right edge of the map, where the railroad line ends.

How things go in the woods for the investigators depends on what their intentions are. If their intentions are to follow the rough directions given to them in Burlington, they find it remarkably easy to find the camp. Despite some confusing terrain, every questionable decision that they have to make pans out for them and

keeps them on track for the camp. This is not at all natural. If the investigators, for example, flip a coin to decide which way to go, the result is always whatever points them to the camp. It is unlikely that they will pick up on this, but if they do, dock them 1 SAN.





Somewhat more likely is that the investigators decide to turn back for some reason. This is possible before they officially take up residence at the “Black Home”/Olaf’s Camp, but the curse is insidious. Navigation rolls suffer a -50% penalty if the investigators are trying to avoid going to the Black Home before getting there. The sun, stars, *etc.* are of no help; the sky is perpetually clouded up, only to clear when they get back on track and start heading for the camp again. This still might not prevent them from going back; extreme measures such as blazing every tree and forcing a straight line with rope might still get them out.

Short of such ridiculous, time-consuming measures, however, the investigators will find themselves thinking that they are headed in the right direction back to town, but instead will be traveling in wide circles, crossing the same stream again and again, tripping over the same root again and again, *etc.* Minor SAN losses (0/1) might be applied, depending on how silly things get. Keepers familiar with the middle reels of “The Blair Witch Project” should have a good idea of how to flesh out this segment of the adventure. Most likely, however, the investigators will simply have a rough, challenging, confusing but ultimately successful five mile trek generally east to the campsite, and will approach the camp along an animal trail coming in from the west.

A reminder about the Natural History skill: The Natural History skill reflects one’s familiarity with getting by in the wild. It covers such things as foraging, obtaining adequate shelter, knowing which plants not to sleep in or hide in, ways to fend off bugs, practical trailblazing, and other outdoor survival skills.

#### **A. When the Players Arrive; Dealing with McDougal.**

When the investigators arrive at the camp,

they will notice a few things right away. The camp is situated at the base of what looks initially to be a large, rocky hill. A path has been cleared up the side of the hill (stakes and a guide rope are in place to aid in ascents and descents). The camp smells bad, but not in an overpowering way. The accompanying map gives the general layout of the camp.

Things at the camp will look generally normal, but a bit quiet. A large, semi-permanent tent is situated at the middle of the camp; this serves as the work area for the dig. There are two other, smaller overnight tents (used for storage), a latrine area, and a screened sun shower. There are no vehicles, although there are a couple of jerry cans of water and one of kerosene for lanterns. A semi-permanent pit fire, with a grill and crude hearth, appears well tended, although the woodpile is rather small (McDougal is reluctant to go out looking for wood).

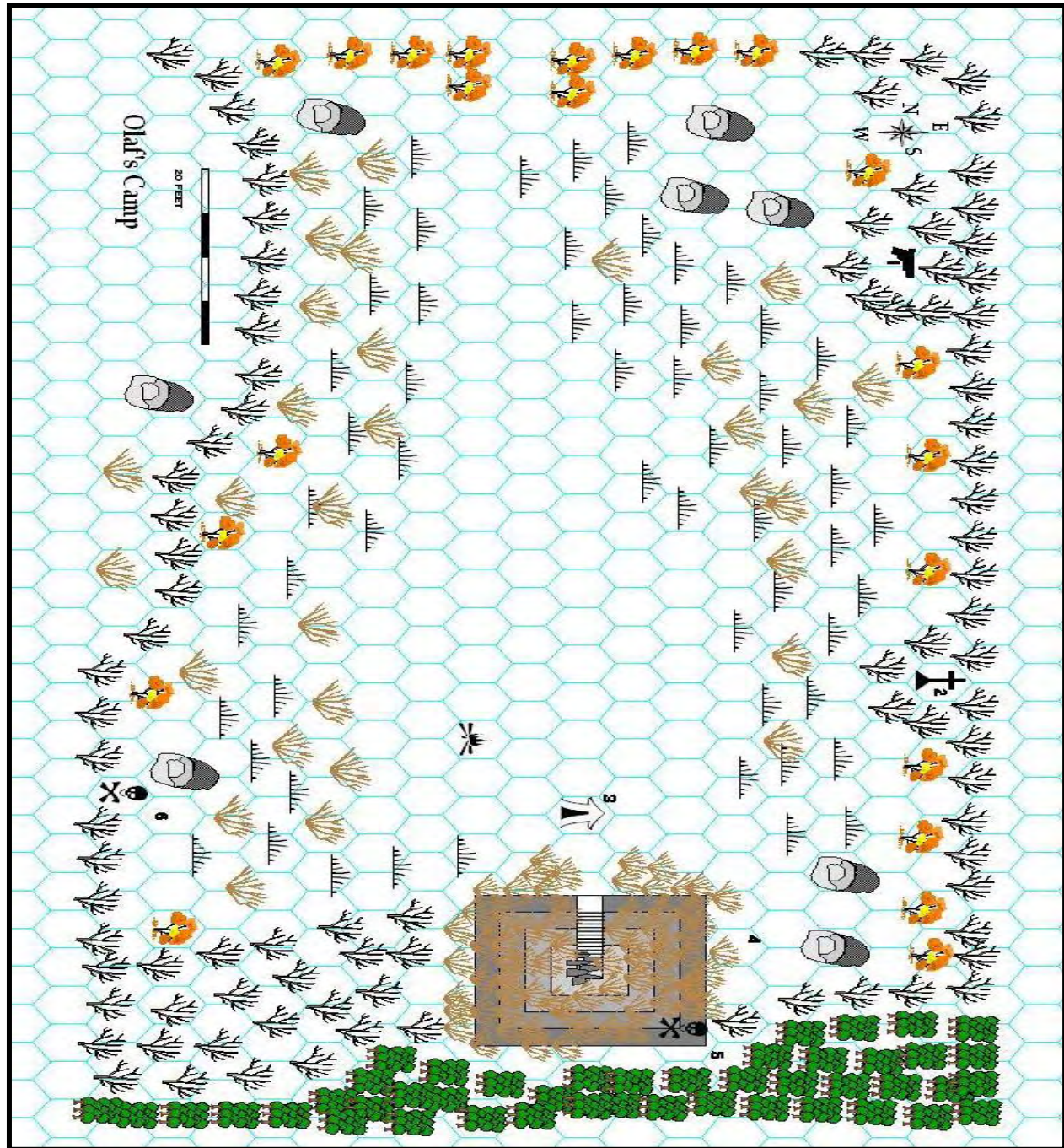
All of the easy approaches to the clearing have been crudely booby trapped with alarm-sounding trip wires, to alert McDougal if anyone is stealing up on the camp. The investigators can avoid them if they are looking for such things; otherwise, the lead person must make a Spot Hidden to see the trip wire, which will drop a bundle of clattering cans. The one odd thing is that there are a lot of bugs about, regardless of the season. A Natural History roll suggests that there are far too many bugs. Capturing one of the bugs intact reveals, on a Luck roll, an obviously dead/flattened bug whose wings are nonetheless intact; it writhes, bites and flinches continuously unless and until completely obliterated. SAN loss 0/1.

McDougal’s reaction to the investigators’ approach will depend on whether he hears them coming or not. Either way, it is not going to be positive. McDougal’s perspective on life is this: He was, prior to coming to the camp, a good and



responsible person. He is aware that he does not want to leave, and aware of how stupid this is. He feels (rightly) trapped, and he has been worn down by borderline dehydration, near starvation, and exposure. He is contemplating suicide, completely

distraught, and deeply ashamed that he “had” to kill his mentor and friends.



Home, Sweet Home—Olaf's Camp (map key follows in text).



On a rational level, McDougal is convinced that his associates are dead--notwithstanding the fact that he hears them occasionally (especially Bride). He "had" to kill them, you see, so that he could focus on his own survival. In short, for a variety of reasons--scarce resources, a shred of remaining humanity, and not wanting to be found out--he does not want any visitors. He also does not want to share Abernathy's dismembered limbs, since there is little else left to eat at the campsite besides largely inedible foliage.

Sadly, McDougal is also quite incoherent, at least initially. If he hears the investigators coming, he is capable of little more than opening fire and making ambiguous comments such as "There's no going back now!" and "You can't have my food!" He will try his best to drive off investigators with his rifle, and may kill someone in an exchange of gunfire. However, he will not deliberately execute someone, freezing up at the last minute (largely because he thinks they will come back to haunt him).

If the investigators manage to get the drop on McDougal, however, and manage to physically secure him (which will basically require complete subdual and thorough binding), then they may get a chance to question him. If they kill him (or, if he kills any of them), then barring a headshot, he/they will reanimate as a zombie the next morning. A headshot occurs on an impale doing at least 10 points of damage, or by declaring a headshot against a helpless opponent.

If McDougal is about to be captured and has an opportunity to act, he will commit suicide by shooting himself in the neck. If he does this, however, it will not do enough physical destruction to prevent him from reanimating later. When he reanimates, the last of his SAN will be

### **James McDougal, Curse Victim (Prior to Reanimation)**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 12 DEX 11 INT 16 CON 12  
APP 9 POW 12 SIZ 14 EDU 18  
SAN 10 Luck 60 Hits: 13 Age: 27.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** M.A., Archaeology,  
University of Vermont.

**Skills:** Anthropology 36%, Archaeology 63%, Bargain 35%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 30%, History 60%, Library Use 85%, Listen 55%, Natural History 53%, Navigate 29%, Persuade 28%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 52%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 50%;  
Ancient Greek 50%; **Old Norse 15%.**

**Attacks:** Rifle 40%, .30-06 bolt action, 2d6+4, 130 yards, 1x per round, 5 shots. McDougal has a box of bullets with 32 reloads remaining. He keeps 12 of them with him, loose, and 20 more in the box, secreted at a hiding place at the edge of camp (in case he has to flee, he can circle back around to get them).

**Indefinite Insanity:** Paranoia; specifically, afraid that those he killed will come back to get him.

After reanimation, adjust McDougal's stats to STR 24, CON 26, DEX 7, APP 0, POW 1 and SAN 0.

gone, and he will simply try to kill as many people as he can before he is restrained or put down for good.

Questioning of McDougal (unlikely, but possible) is discussed below.

### **B. The Curse and How It Works; Norse Curse Poles in General.**

The mound of the "Black Home," in whose shadow the camp literally rests,



consists of layers upon layers of ancient ruins, covered with thin soil and thickets. The mound is about 40' high. An ancient, overgrown flight of stairs winds up from the camp side of the mound. The stairs have been recently cleared and marked with archaeology stakes. While it is possible to climb the mound other than by use of the stairs, it is a difficult climb through brambles and thickets up a steep slope. (Envision an almost completely overgrown step pyramid, with one clear flight of steps on one side). The top of the mound is not visible from the ground.

The topmost layer of the mound is (now that some overgrowth has been cleared off) about a 100' by 100' level surface, consisting of ancient flagstones, covered in most places by overburden, and a few crumbled surface ruins. A series of very large runes have been carved into the flagstones where exposed. A stylized, bone mosaic horse's head also occupies the entirety of the artificial plateau. When the players arrive, however, only about half of the plateau at the top has been cleared.

A curse pole (or, in Old Norse, a *níðstöng*) is a method of levying a particularly vicious and personal curse in Norse legend. An important point to understand about them (critical for purposes of this scenario) is that while powerful and essentially unbreakable, they are also directional. (Critical Occult roll). They work in the direction that the horse's head is pointed, and strictly according to their terms. Norse curses (Occult roll, **this is a License Plate Rule clue**) are not simply broken, they must be outwitted or negotiated away.

Egil Skallagrimson, a black magic practicing anti-hero of Icelandic lore, was fond of using níð-poles to curse his enemies:

*(Egil set) a horse's head on a pole*

*(níðstöng)...saying, "Here I set up a níð-pole, and declare this níð against King Eiríkr and Queen Gunnhildr," — he turned the horse-head to face the mainland — "I declare this níð at the land-spirits there, and the land itself, so that all will fare astray, not to hold nor find their places, not until they wreak King Eiríkr and Gunnhildr from the land." He set up the pole of níð in the cliff-face and left it standing; he faced the horse's eyes on the land, and he rist runes upon the pole, and said all the formal words of the curse.*

*Egil's Saga, stanza 57.*

When Olaf was run off by the local Abenaki, he put a whopper of a níð-pole up: he made the whole mound into one. The formal words of the curse (critical to any investigators who hope to escape its clutches) were: **"Any who dwell in the shadow of the Black Lodge, in the shadow of this níð pole, shall dwell there forevermore. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it."**

The words of the curse are engraved in Norse runes on the flagstones at the top of the mound (although it has not been completely cleared yet). The second sentence ("Let all who seek it...") has been uncovered when the investigators arrive, along with half of the stylized horse's head; the first sentence has not yet been uncovered. (Abernathy's team disintegrated at that stage).

Anyone who begins, as a result, to "dwell" within the "shadow" of the mound (presently defined by the sun's path as the east, west and north sides of the mound) has to stay there. Period. They cannot leave for more than a few minutes. Nor can the curse be cheated by having someone else physically drag them off. They do not **want** to leave--even under extreme stress, privation, or lack of supplies. (Thus, while a capable person





might try to escape by creating a Gate, they will not want to use it). If compelled to leave, they will (at the first opportunity) immediately and unerringly return.

### **C. Recent and Current Effects of the Curse.**

Olaf's curse wages an inexorable war of attrition on an investigator's health and sanity.

- **Inability to Leave/Lack of Desire to Leave:** The investigators are, in essence, imprisoned. Worse, they know that they are imprisoned; they know that despite how silly it is, they do not want to leave.
- **Supplies:** The Keeper will want to keep track of available food, water, clothing and other consumables. The investigators will not be leaving to get any more.
- **Water:** Is available at the camp in amounts to stay alive, with a bit of work, but it is not plentiful. There are a few (empty) jerry cans and a sun shower set up under a tree, but the stored water was used up about a week before McDougal snapped. (This was one of the things that finally sent him over the edge). There is a 20 gallon fuel can (with only about a gallon of fuel left), containing kerosene to light lanterns and run a camp stove (Use of the stove was abandoned in favor of a cook fire when fuel began to get low). Water has to be worked for: digging leach pits, tapping trees, praying for rain; but assuming a fair amount of work, there should be just enough to drink. There are no streams in the curse zone, and only a few sizeable trees. Mostly it is a rocky, picked over wasteland at the foot of what seems to be a rocky hill (actually an overgrown mound). The time spent getting together enough water to survive is factored into the time needing to be spent uncovering the site. If the

investigators do not get water together, daily, they quickly expire (although this is hardly the end of them).

- **Food:** is entirely another matter. The investigators have whatever they brought with them, and that's about all. The proper food at the camp is long gone. The denizens of the camp had been, in their last days, starving slowly. As the investigators have a chance to look around, they will notice a great deal of upturned stumps, stripped bark, tapped maples producing no noticeable sap, and other unmistakable signs of starving humans trying not to die. Most of the available firewood in the area has also been used.
- **Attrition:** The physical privations require a daily check against CONx5, starting on the first full day after whatever food the investigators brought with them is used up. The site has been stripped to the point where Natural History rolls do nothing to improve these odds (in fact, a successful Natural History roll reveals that people with good outdoor survival skills have been doing their best for some time). Failure indicates the (temporary) loss of a point of CON, regained only when proper nutrition is achieved (in which case, one point per day is regained). One point of CON is automatically lost each week (the seventh roll each week automatically fails). A fumbled roll indicates that the investigator has contracted a disease (pneumonia, food poisoning, giardia, infected wound, or the like) and loses 1d6 points of temporary CON.



- **Regaining CON loss?** Barring one very unpleasant alternative, or magic, halting temporary CON loss is not going to occur while the players are at the camp, because of the lack of food. Eventually, they will succumb to a combination of starvation, exposure and illness, falling bedridden when their CON reaches 2, and dying when it reaches zero. (At which point, they will reanimate the following morning, and food and disease will no longer be an issue, although SAN certainly will).
- **Durable supplies:** These are plentiful, however. Abernathy's team's semi-rigid pavilion tent is sturdy, weather-proof, big enough for six people, and adequately supplied with archaeological tools (including such things as hammers, saws, an axe, blankets, a first aid kit, rope, writing journals, pen and ink, a few archaeology texts, kerosene lanterns, and the like). The tent is not noticeably bloody; McDougal cleaned up the tent after butchering his colleagues in their sleep. However, if the investigators look under things or for blood splatters in out of the way places, they are there to be found, in abundance.
- **Cannibalism:** Particularly disturbing, of course, are the butchered human limbs (formerly belonging to Prof. Abernathy) that McDougal has been eating since his downward spiral ended in utter insanity. SAN loss for seeing the obviously cannibalized (but not finished!) limbs, which have been packed in all the salt McDougal could find, wrapped in a rain slicker, and hidden under his bed, is 1/1d4. Eating them out of desperation is good for another 1/1d4 SAN loss per meal. McDougal's impromptu curing is not ideal, but the meat will keep for a while. On the other hand, if the investigators do resort to cannibalism, there is enough left to count as adequate nutrition (and stave off temporary CON loss) for 10 man-days. A typical investigator will yield enough for 30 man-days, assuming some reasonable effort at preservation, should the investigators take to eating their deceased comrades. SAN loss for out and out cannibalization of a colleague should be on the order of 1d3/1d8. SAN loss for cannibalizing a zombie should be on the order of 1d4/1d10, but distressingly, it does work.
- **Effect on Hygiene:** The investigators are going to have a hard time keeping clean. Water is scarce and only idiots (or someone who has gone around the bend) will waste it bathing. Poor hygiene and its physical and psychological consequences are taken into account by the periodic SAN and CON loss for being at the site, but the Keeper should also impose appropriate APP penalties, down to a maximum loss of 6.
- **Undead Denizens and Living Under Constant Harassment:** Eventually, things that live here crumble to dust, but the curse area is a highly artificial environment: things are drawn to live here, and do not (eventually) need to eat or sleep. They also keep going after death, until their physical form is substantially disrupted. This means that there are a lot of creepy-crawlies in the area (mostly bugs and birds, but also the occasional undead skunk, raccoon or rodent). This makes it very hard to get a good night's sleep, as





well as keeping the players under constant psychological pressure. The effect of this is accounted for under the periodic SAN and CON loss rules. However, it is important to play the constant harassment up.

- **Sanity Erosion:** Imprisonment is bad, but imprisonment without significant food or sleep and no apparent means of escape or end, other than death followed by zombification? And constant harassment by hordes of bugs, that keep going after swatting? All together, this is good for a daily SAN loss of 0/1d3, with every seventh day, or a fumbled health check, resulting in automatic failure. Well role-played investigators will go through stages reflecting their SAN loss: disbelief, anger, frustration, desperation, and finally teamwork will erode. Anyone going indefinitely insane at Olaf's Camp should be considered for one of the following insanities: paranoid homicidal mania, like McDougal (to preserve scarce resources in your favor); suicidal ideation; or catatonia (succumbing to despair, curling up in a ball and waiting to die).
- **Zombification:** Death is no excuse for leaving home. Anyone who dies while under the ambit of the curse will reanimate as a form of zombie at sunrise the next morning, unless their head is largely destroyed. If they are buried, they will gradually dig themselves out. As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage to such a person. Their stats will change as follows: STR 24; CON 26; DEX -1d6, APP -1d6 if plausibly alive (no obvious life threatening wounds, but pale and still not quite right), but 0 otherwise; POW 1. INT, memory and mental skills remain horribly unimpaired. SAN loss is 1d20 upon realizing that one is reanimated. When reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, a living character

reanimates as a zombie, at full zombie hit points, the next morning at sunrise (as soon as the sun's shadow hits the camp). The curse is not contagious; the zombies do not hunger for human flesh or, for that matter, for anything. Rather, they are *afturganga*, persons being magically prevented from fully dying. It should be stressed that even players awaiting reanimation remain conscious, but are unable to move or interact in any way until the next morning. They may think that they are paralyzed or semi-conscious.

- **Loss of hit points after reanimation reflects physical dissection of the body.** When a zombie hits 0 hit points post-reanimation, this merely indicates that enough physical dissection has occurred that it has been rendered ineffective (either through massive damage or brain disruption). The soul of the zombie, for whatever it is worth at that point, remains aware and dwelling in the shadow of the Dark Home. Zombies cannot regain loss hit points, except through magical means.

#### **D. Some of the More Ambulatory Denizens.**

Due to the way that the curse works, essentially condemning those who live here to keep living here for all eternity, the camp site is physically threatening as well as psychologically disturbing. By and large, many of the denizens of the camp are not a physical threat: they are immobile and/or buried. Nonetheless, their psychic presence is oppressive. Anyone who is psychically sensitive will feel like they are standing in a crowded elevator.

Bugs are one of the primary physical nuisances. They have to be physically smashed to be rendered irrelevant. Swatting them, gassing them, and the like just does not get the job done. The mosquitoes and biting flies--which are



present regardless of whether they are in season--are quite literally maddening. Their effects are taken into account in the foregoing sections on Sanity Erosion and Physical Exhaustion, but keep reminding

the investigators of their constant presence.

The primary physical threats are Dr. Abernathy, Aimee Lark, and especially Kevin Bride. Although MacDougal has killed all of them, the curse prevents them from actually dying, and they each have agendas that may or may not be compatible with the continued survival of the investigators.

### **Prof. Daniel Abernathy, Mediocre and Undead Partial Archaeologist**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 1 DEX 1 INT 16 CON 26  
APP 0 POW 1 SIZ 6 EDU 21  
SAN 2 Luck 5 Hits: 16 Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** none.

**Education:** Ph.D., Archaeology, Cornell University.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 70%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 2%, Drive Auto 0%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 70%, Library Use 75%, Listen 25%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 39%, Occult 25%, Persuade 44%, Photography 0%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 44%.

**Languages:** English 90%; French 50%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; **Old Norse 55%.**

**Attacks:** Bite 10%, 1d3.

**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

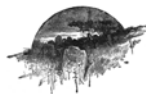
**Indefinite Insanities:** Homicidal thirst for revenge, melancholia.

**Notes:** Undead, almost irretrievably insane, dismembered, muted, and driven by revenge. Fortunately, he's not very quick. He moves at a speed of ½" as he rolls/crawls along the ground, hoping to bite MacDougal. Abernathy costs 0/1d3 to see; 1/1d8 if or when you realize that he is a zombie.

**Abernathy:** Dr. Abernathy has had his arms and legs chopped off and his tongue cut out, but MacDougal wrongly assumed that this would be the end of him. Abernathy has managed to belly crawl into a hiding place not far from the camp, where his broken mind is waiting for an opportunity to wreak vengeance on MacDougal. Although his intellect is intact, with neither arms nor legs nor voice there is little that he can do other than crawl slowly and use his teeth. So he hides, and bides his time. He might be momentarily brought to lucidity by a Psychoanalysis roll, but he is dead and he knows it. He can still communicate through grunts and signals, but his Sanity is almost utterly and irrevocably gone. Nonetheless, he is (if he can be brought to a momentary semblance of sanity) an important resource toward escape, as he is the only one likely to be at the site with a respectable Old Norse roll.

**Bride:** Former graduate student Kevin Bride is an especially ghastly sight. Although not dismembered, he put up a strong fight and required many, bloody, punishing blows before he went down. The bugs have gotten to him as a result. Bride is a raw, oozing, pustular, shambling, roiling mass of insect larvae and decay, with a macabre sense of humor. Picture the especially disgusting zombie in a low-budget horror movie; the one that appears near the end of the film to up the special effects ante. That's Bride.

Bride spends his inactive time at the dig



itself, concealed in the thickets and slumped against a runestone. However, he is often on the move, harassing and playing tricks on the living. He is quite mad and wants only to share his suffering.

He is a stealthy madman, however, with his intellect intact, and so will use traps, snares, ambushes and (if he can get a hold of them) weapons. He has a bowie knife at the beginning. (An empty sheath can be found in the tent). Unlike Abernathy or Lark, he cannot be Psychoanalyzed or reasoned with, but that is not to say he will not taunt, tease and harass the living before torturing and killing them (and then repeat

the process once they reanimate).

**Lark:** Former graduate student Aimee Lark is likewise dead, but considerably more intact and passable in polite society than either Abernathy or MacDougal. She was killed with a few shots to the abdomen, but is far from immobile. MacDougal buried her in a shallow grave, from which she has gradually managed to escape. Initially, Aimee cautiously hides and roams the perimeter of the curse area, looking for help.

Aimee Lark does not initially realize that she is dead, and she is somewhat able to communicate. She thinks that she has simply miraculously survived a violent assault. She has armed herself with a cudgel, and generally looks like she has been shot in the stomach and then escaped being buried alive. She is suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

When initially met, as a result, she has not yet suffered the 1d20 SAN loss for realizing that she is, in fact, dead. Eventually, when someone points out that she does not eat, drink or sleep, or tries to treat her (obviously fatal, maggoty and untreated) stomach wounds, she will figure it out, and relapse into active insanity.

Aimee is the one most likely to be able (eventually) to give the investigators a summary of what has gone before. Since her SAN is not 0, however, remember to roleplay her and keep track of her SAN erosion.

Depending on the surviving/functional investigators' facility with research, archaeology or psychoanalysis, she may be indispensable to their chances of survival, in addition to complicating the matter of breaking the curse.

Don't be shy about introducing other undead denizens, however. Undead skunks, porcupines, corvids, field rodents,

### Kevin Bride, Especially Slimy Living Dead

**Nationality:** American.

STR 24 DEX 8 INT 16 CON 26  
APP 0 POW 1 SIZ 14 EDU 18  
SAN 0 Luck 5 Hits: 20 Age: 25.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Education:** M.A., Archaeology,  
University of Vermont.

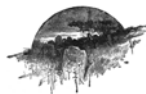
**Skills:** Anthropology 35%, Archaeology 60%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 60%, Library Use 75%, Listen 55%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 29%, Occult 20%, Persuade 48%, Photography 45%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 54%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 50%;  
Ancient Greek 50%; Old Norse 15%.

**Attacks:** Knife Attack 55%, 1d4+2+db.

**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

**Notes:** Bride is so obviously dead that he costs 1/1d8 SAN to see, right off the bat.



and the like should not be shy about putting in appearances. Use normal animal statistics for these critters, adjusting for their resistance to damage and imposing SAN losses on the order of 0/1d3.

### **E. Adjudicating Whether The Investigators Are Under the Ambit of the Curse.**

“Dwelling”, for purposes of the curse, is defined as being present from sundown to sunrise. Since it is not too cold out, the investigators probably did not bring their own extensive gear (since they hiked in). As the curse’s “event horizon” makes it very difficult to find one’s way back to town, they will almost certainly camp the night. Besides that, the investigators (while they may know that something is wrong) have no reason to suspect that spending the night at a sturdy, pre-made camp is a bad decision. Nonetheless, if some paranoid sot does not spend the night within the shadow of the mound (the south side is safe), they avoid the curse. (Of course, this likely means that they spend time wandering in circles through the woods, slowly wearing themselves out, until they decide to head back to the camp, at which point the curse takes hold).



**Lording it over a small and barren realm?**

### **F. Daily Life (and Unlife) at the Camp.**

Eventually, the investigators will stabilize

the camp against the immediate physical threat of McDougal. Some of them may be dead by that point, in one sense or another; others will be insane or well on their way. For those able to function, there are a few choices about how to bide their time. This section provides a high-level overview of the likely sequence of events at the camp, once the investigators settle in.

#### **Aimee Lark, Cursed Coed**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 24 DEX 7 INT 14 CON 26  
APP 9 POW 1 SIZ 12 EDU 21  
SAN 44 Luck 5 Hits: 19 Age: 23.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Education:** B.A., Archaeology, University of Vermont.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 55%, Astronomy 35%, Bargain 40%, Credit Rating 25%, Drive Auto 25%, Fast Talk 40%, History 60%, Library Use 80%, Listen 35%, Natural History 38%, Navigate 10%, Persuade 47%, Psychology 33%, Spot Hidden 48%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 25%; Ancient Greek 25%; *Old Norse 10%*.

**Attacks:** None over base.

**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

**Indefinite Insanity:** Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

**Notes:** Aimee thinks that she has been horribly brutalized, badly hurt, buried alive, and driven to the brink, but she does not (yet) understand that she is dead. She is quite aware that neither she nor any of her colleagues wanted to leave, even when driven to madness and deprivation. When someone realizes that Aimee, too, is dead, SAN loss is 1/1d8.



Bear in mind that anyone who has been killed, or is killed at the camp, but who has not had their brain destroyed, is likely going to be driven at least temporarily insane by the 1d20 SAN loss incurred upon reanimating the next morning.

**1. Day 1, Disposing of McDougal:** The initial challenge will be what to do with McDougal (dead or not), and any dead investigators. Whether or not any investigators are killed, the investigators may well want to leave camp immediately, either to summon the authorities, seek medical attention, or haul bodies out.

Good luck. Even though they are not technically under the curse prior to spending the night, the camp's immediate area has an event horizon causing all Navigation rolls made with an intent to leave the camp to be *fumbled* (not just rolled at -50%). Ridiculous methods have to be resorted to in order not to wander in circles if trying to leave the camp. By contrast, anyone trying to get back to the camp automatically succeeds, with every confusing turn miraculously panning out. And if said ridiculous methods were not employed on the way in (five miles of marking every single tree, five miles of guide rope), the investigators will just keep wandering in circles until they give up and head back to camp.

If McDougal is alive and subdued, they will probably try to interrogate him. McDougal is insane and only semi-coherent, but some careful questioning and/or Psychoanalysis might get a few basic, teasing tidbits out of him:

- The others (Abernathy, Bride and Lark) are dead. He will not admit, in so many words, that he killed them. But he will say a few things that tiptoe right up to the edge of an admission. Comments might include such things as "I had no choice"; "I had to eat" and "You can't have my food!"

- If asked why he didn't just leave, McDougal is particularly incoherent. The best he can manage is that "this is my home", expressed as though the perfectly reasonable proposition that someone would go out for supplies to avoid starving to death is baffling to the point of stupidity.
- On the other hand, McDougal says a few truly bizarre and incongruous things as well. The investigators will doubtlessly ask where the bodies of the others are. Lark is buried not far away, he will admit, and will give the investigators some general directions. Her grave, when the investigators arrive, has been dug out of, and Lark is not immediately at hand. If this news is shared with McDougal, he is somehow not surprised.
- Abernathy, he will say, "got mouthy" so he "had to deal with him." He just shrugs if asked where Abernathy's body is; he honestly does not know, since Abernathy belly-crawled off even after being dismembered.
- If asked about Bride, he will simply say "don't ask" and chuckle insanely to himself.

If McDougal is killed, then in all likelihood he reanimates the next morning, perhaps taking the investigators by surprise and resulting in bloodshed. Of course, any dispatched investigators in all likelihood reanimate the next morning as well, and likely promptly go insane (1d20 SAN loss).

McDougal's cache of rifle ammunition is secreted in a hole at the base of a tree at (MAP location 1). (Please refer to the map at page 80).

**2. Day 2, Introducing Lark:** If the investigators do manage to interrogate McDougal, Lark's grave (MAP location 2) is one of the things they will probably go looking for first. Alternatively, have it be something that they stumble onto early the





next day. Whenever they find it, it is empty, although tracks and blood stains lead away into the woods before petering out.

As she is still under the effect of the curse, Lark has not wandered far. However, she is terrified of McDougal, does not quite understand yet that she is dead, and is hiding. Once she sees the investigators set up camp, however (likely toward the middle of the second day), she will stumble out of the woods, distraught, terrified and looking for first aid and help.

She will not be hungry or thirsty, and likely, the party's initial exchange with her will be rather short. Someone will try to treat her wounds; a few questions might be exchanged while this is happening; she and whoever is treating her will discover her obviously fatal wounds; and a bunch of SAN will be lost all around (1d20 for Lark, 1/1d8 for the investigators). Realizing that she is dead, Aimee Lark dissolves into hysteria for several days, barring successful Psychoanalysis, and an argument likely ensues among the investigators about what to do with their new zombie/campmate. Eventually, she recovers some semblance of lucidity, and assuming that the investigators have not dispatched her, successful Psychoanalysis enables the investigators to continue her questioning. Much of what she knows is only second-hand, since she only arrived about a week ago:

- Everyone knew that something was wrong as soon as they got here. The place was "creepy" and Abernathy was surprised to find that the hill on which Olaf's Camp was built was actually an artificial mound. He commented that it looked like several layers of different ruins on top of one another, some incredibly ancient. He mentioned that he thought that he saw some Sumerian writing on some of the bottom layers, and some other

language he could not identify (Etruscan) higher up. Abernathy was not expecting anything like this, and could not understand why no one had stumbled onto such a thing previously. (In fact, they had, and simply died here, unable to leave).

- People realized that something was really wrong, however, when after a few weeks of work on top of the mound (where there are Viking ruins and some sort of large pictogram covering the top of the hill), they began to run low on food. Even so, no one wanted to leave to get more. Abernathy started muttering something about "the curse" and spending a lot of time reading the Icelandic texts that he had brought with him. A huge fight soon broke out over food, and kept re-erupting periodically. Abernathy managed to keep everyone under some semblance of control, at least for a while.
- Abernathy decided that they needed to keep working on the site, to get insight into what was going on. When she arrived about one week before the investigators, however, work had stopped because of dissension. McDougal, in particular, would not even get out of bed. They figured that among the three of them, they had about 20 days of excavation to go (60 man-days of skilled archaeology).
- They continued (after her arrival) eating bark and recycling water to survive, but tensions were high.
- McDougal kept complaining about how hungry he was, and slept a lot. One night, about three days before the investigators arrived, he snapped and attacked everyone with a rifle that had gone missing. He killed the others and shot her in the side as she was running away. She guesses that he must not have hit anything vital (she remains in denial about her undead state). She found herself buried and hurt, and dug herself out.
- She has no idea where the others are.



- At the top of the mound, there are a few Abenaki ruins, built on top of a ruined Viking longhouse. As they were clearing the site, they uncovered half of some immense pictogram (they are not sure what it is) and some Norse runes at the top, which Abernathy was able to translate as: “Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.”

### **3. Introducing Abernathy (much later):**

Abernathy should *not* be introduced at first, unless the investigators do an *unfathomably* diligent and impressive job of finding him. He is a horrible sight, and wants nothing more to get revenge on McDougal. In fact, he may well refuse any investigator requests unless they throw McDougal to him, at which point, he will (if able) kill (or rekill) Abernathy with his bare teeth.

Hold Abernathy back as an unpleasant surprise, if at all possible, for as long as possible. Introduce him by having him do something such as attacking a bound McDougal when no one is looking. When the investigators arrive, they see a horrid sight tearing at McDougal’s neck. He will watch and listen as best he can from concealment, and if he thinks he can barter his skills for a shot at McDougal, he will come slowly crawling into the camp site. This will not happen until he hears the investigators bemoaning their lack of facility with Old Norse, and even then, he will wait and pick his shot for a time when the investigators have the entire wording of the curse, to maximize his bargaining leverage.

Pantomime any efforts at negotiation with Abernathy; if McDougal is available in any way, shape or form, he will initially insist on revenge in exchange for any aid. Knowingly allowing Abernathy to kill McDougal costs 1/1d6 SAN for being accessories to murder--even though it may well be necessary to translate the balance

of the inscription and hence, escape.

Abernathy is *extremely* well-concealed in a crevice under a large rock, somewhere too small for an entire person to fit. He has done a very good job of concealing the tiny entrance with leaf litter. (MAP Location 6).

### **4. Introducing Bride (c. Day 7):**

Bride should be introduced as a harassing force once the investigators start work on the top of the mound. In best slasher flick form, he will stalk the party, including Lark and McDougal, trying to pick people off one at a time while leaving their mutilated bodies displayed in some grotesque but ironic fashion (hanging from a tree while undead ravens in the area perch on his shoulder, in a mockery of the Yggdrasil legend; on the camp table roasted and trussed, with a hoarded apple in their mouth, *etc.*).

Bride has no real interest in whether or not the dig is completed, although if he can incapacitate an investigator and taunt them with hints of the madness that lies underneath the Viking-era layer of ruins, he will. He will set snares and pits, distract investigators with crashing sounds, short sheet their beds, and generally make a nuisance of himself. His mind is gone, and he has nothing better to do.

There is no reasoning with Bride; he simply needs to be put down. He is quite smart, though, so it is entirely possible that he will be responsible for the zombification of one or more investigators. He moves around, but likes to hang out if possible on top of the mound, concealed in thorny thickets (MAP Location 5).

**5. Site Inspection:** The investigators will soon explore the general area. A map of the site with important areas noted can be found on page 80.

**A. Curse zone:** The curse zone (and hence, the only places where resident



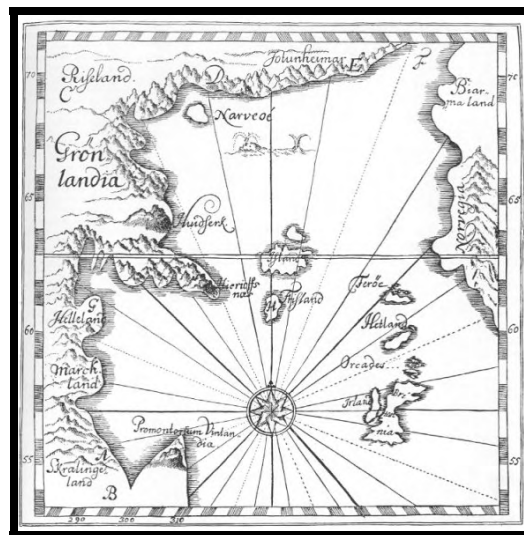
investigators will want to go) is not that big. Once the investigators get acclimated, they may notice an effective boundary (they must figure this out for themselves; no rolls allowed). They can only go where, at some point during the day, the mound's shadow strikes. They can also go to the top of the mound, but not the southern edge or to the south. This includes the immediate campsite, and an irregular area on the north, east and west sides of the mound (the southernmost exposure is never in the mound's shadow). The area only runs a few hundred feet due east and west (when the sun is lowest), to the immediate area of the camp in the north. This area, when the investigators arrive, has been almost denuded of trees, wood, and anything vaguely edible.

**B. Camp:** The main tent (MAP Location 3) is a sturdy, long-term, semi-rigid field tent with a collapsible table and chairs. Since everyone only brought what they could carry initially, apart from archaeology tools and supplies, there is little beyond Spartan accommodations. Abernathy brought a journal (which he has not spent much time writing in), some pencils, and one of the transcribed (but untranslated) copies of *The Saga of Olaf Ulfsson*. The *Saga* proper is discussed in a following section.

**C. Abernathy's Journal:** In the main tent, this is in English and contains general descriptions of the site and copies of some of the various layers of inscriptions he has observed. He has identified some of the inscription as apparently Sumerian and Etruscan, and speculates that this is some kind of long-used, historic trade site, perhaps driven inland by a change in elevation or coastline retreat. He has been unable to translate any of these writings. His journal, at the end, does include an English translation of the second part of the Norse inscription at the top of the mound, and speculates that it may be part of a curse.

Abernathy stresses the importance of carefully continuing the excavation to make certain that the wording of the curse is fully understood. *Abernathy's Journal* is in English, requires 4 hours to read, and grants skill checks in Archaeology and Occult (+1% maximum gain). It grants no Mythos knowledge and contains no spells.

Sadly, Abernathy did not bring any Old Norse dictionaries with him for the investigators to use; he does not need them.



**6. Exploring the Mound:** The investigators will explore the mound (MAP Location 4) eventually. This section deals with a general surveillance of the mound; continuing work at the top of the mound is discussed in a following section.

From any sort of distance, the mound appears to be a small, steep hill. It is about 40' high, rather square in shape, and measures roughly 100' feet per side at the top. It appears to be covered with scraggly grass and brush. It is not remarkable vis-à-vis the surrounding terrain when viewed from anything other than a very low altitude flight under normal circumstances. However, about half of the top of the mound has been excavated, revealing (from a low altitude) a flat, stone plaza



with stone rubble ruins and a pictogram (with accompanying runes) carved into the surface.

In actuality, as close inspection will determine, the hill is quite artificial. It is a step pyramid in apparent form; however, anyone with minimal training in Archaeology (10% or better) will quickly realize that, in fact, this site has been built on top of, layer upon layer, by centuries of different builders. Successful Archaeology rolls reveal (from the ground or the sides of the mound) four different layers, in ascending order:

- Unknown but highly advanced construction with primitive and unintelligible pictograms, reflective of no known culture. Feel free to introduce any prehistoric culture that you like; the runes may be in Hyperborean Tsath-Yo, Stygian, or Muvian, and make reference to any of a wide variety of ancient beings;
- Sumerian circa 2500 B.C. (complete with cuneiform inscribed faience bricks depicting human sacrifice, divination activities using human remains, and study of the stars);
- Etruscan circa 500 B.C. (complete with bas relief sculpture depicting human sacrifice, rituals involving summoning creatures using human remains, and study of the stars; references to the “Great Mother” are frequent); and
- Viking circa 1000 A.D. (complete with Futhark runes which, if anyone can read them, discuss human sacrifice, bargaining for knowledge with the “Magna Mater”, and study of the stars).

Each of these layers (given appropriately impressive Archaeology rolls or appropriate language rolls) reveal the same thing: this is a place where wizards have come for aeons to study, and it is known as the Dark/Black/Ebon etc.

House/School/Lodge etc.

A fifth layer (Abenaki) is apparent at the top of the mound; these appear to simply be ordinary village remains.

Digging into the soil from ground level any significant distance is only asking for trouble. The curse does not prevent this (since the investigators are not leaving the shadow of the mound). Suffice it to say that there are even older ruins--pre-human ruins--extending deep into the ground. Serpent Man ruins, Hyperborean ruins, Elder Thing ruins--take your pick. Guardian things might likewise exist below ground, at the Keeper's option, perhaps bringing an early end to the investigators' suffering (or, at least, zombifying them and resulting in SAN loss as whatever they unleash rampages through the countryside).

A fairly recent (Viking era) stairway has been cut up the north/camp side of the mound; this has been roped, cleared, and cleaned. Distressingly, odd runes (not Viking/Futhark runes despite the era of the stairs) have been carved into these steps. If one of the investigators makes a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll, they will note various references to Mythos beings known to trade in power and secrets, such as Yog-Sothoth and Nyarlathotep, in these carvings.

**7. Excavation:** Eventually, after some initial reconnaissance and a fair bit of chaos, the investigators will probably read *Abernathy's Journal*, extract some information from Lark, realize their plight, and turn to with continuing the excavation. Anyone with any facility in Archaeology (10% or better) will realize that in order to get a good excavation (good enough to uncover the balance of the mosaic and message) they will have to proceed to **carefully** strip off the overlying Abenaki ruins and a thousand years of overgrowth. It has to be done correctly, and this will



take time.

As this process drags on, people will go insane, perhaps die and reanimate, grow steadily weaker in any case, and have to deal with Bride's sadistic pranks and torture. Eventually, whether alive or undead, however, they will get to a point where they will be confronted with an excavated plaza with an inscription in Old Norse, a language that none of them likely understand except for whatever is left of Lark (and she, not very well).

**8. Trying to Make a Deal With Abernathy for Help:** If the investigators get to the point where they have uncovered the rest of the inscription, and wish they knew what it said, a number of things might occur. There is an outside chance that either Lark or McDougal might be able (and willing) to translate it, but their Old Norse skills are low. Bride is of no help, and none of the investigators are likely to have any facility with Old Norse. Most likely they are going to be frustrated. If their frustration is loudly expressed, *this* is when Abernathy will shamle/crawl into the camp, scaring the bejeezus out of everyone.

Pantomime out the ensuing encounter with Abernathy. Do not shortcut around efforts to communicate with Abernathy. He has no arms, no legs, and no tongue, and is not a pleasant sight. McDougal (if around) will be terrified and plead for mercy. Abernathy will (however the investigators can arrange communication) finally offer the following deal: give me McDougal to kill, and I'll translate the message for you. Abernathy will keep his part of the bargain, and translates the inscription accurately (no roll needed)--if the investigators make his deal. Otherwise, they have a translation problem staring them in the face. Again, SAN loss for allowing McDougal to be torn apart by Abernathy is 1/1d6.

It may be that the investigators simply intuit the solution to the curse. If so, good for them. The critical importance of the precise wording of the curse, however, makes this unlikely and in any case, very risky.

**9. Glynis Shows Up:** Eventually, at a time that will maximize dramatic effect and keep the story engaging, Glynis Abernathy will wander into the camp. Worried about her husband, but not wanting to make any more of a fuss than she already has, she has set off on her own to look for him. She parked her car right next to that of the investigators, and has shown up alone (without, of course, notifying the authorities or bringing anyone along). Remember to track Glynis' SAN when she arrives, and remind the investigators that they may not, in so many words, tell her stay away. This scene should be replayed to the maximum extent possible as the flip side of the investigators' own initial approach to Olaf's Camp.

Glynis' arrival can be used as a catalyst for an endgame at the Camp. First, what to do with her may provoke conflict among the investigators. This is particularly due to the fact that she has brought the equivalent of three (3) man-days worth of food with her (in the form of sandwiches and sodas--not at all practical) and a fight may break out over how to share them.

Second, Glynis will insist on finding Abernathy's body, and will insist that the investigators help her. A concerted effort to find Abernathy--who, on the assumption that he is not just "zombie dead", but "once and for all dead", may not have even been looked for yet--will now uncover him. This will lead to SAN loss on the part of Glynis, and make Abernathy's demand for revenge all the more horrible.

Finally, Glynis is not completely useless. She might be able (at the Keeper's option) to do something to help sway Abernathy





from his mad thirst for vengeance. Even if not, she is a warm body to help dig, and has a modest Old Norse skill. Sadly, it is quite modest.

### **G. Getting A Message Out?**

Obviously, conventional means of contacting the outside world, at least in the Classic era, are not going to work. The party will not have cel phones, laptops, GPS systems, satellite phones, or things of that nature. This does not mean that there are not a few things that they can do to get messages out, however. This is particularly the case if they left one or more investigators behind in town (out of an abundance of caution, because the party was split, or because a player was absent). The curse does not prohibit the sending of some messages out; that way, more people are likely to come and join the fun.

It is entirely possible that, if an investigator was left behind, they may have the sense to attempt a flyover. It can be done, but you should not hand-wave efforts to find a plane, find a pilot, and have the pilot successfully negotiate the treacherous hills and mountains at an elevation low enough to find the site. Or, the investigators might come up with some very clever way to get a message to a friend or ally somewhere, including magic. If they can, then good for them. ***The two things that the curse will not allow them to do is suggest either that 1) they want to leave (because they do not) or 2) that the recipient does not want to come.*** The curse prevents them from thinking that way. Sending out messages for supply drops or research requests are another matter, however. Reward investigator ingenuity.

A bad idea along these lines would involve starting a large enough forest fire to attract attention with smoke. The attention that they would be trying to attract would be five miles away across uneven terrain.

Attracting that kind of attention will basically require a large scale forest fire. Unless they set it very, very carefully (a Critical Natural History roll to set very good firebreaks, a process which should take several man-days), the fire spreads out of control and the investigators perish of smoke inhalation (and then possibly reanimate if not consumed by flames). This may succeed, however, in luring some firefighters to the area, who then probably get stuck at Olaf's Camp as well. Only now, there is no food at all, resulting in automatic failures of CON checks.

A smaller fire is another matter, discussed below.

There is nowhere nearby to land a plane. Anyone attempting to land in the general area and hike into the camp ends up getting drawn into the trap.

Smoke signals, morse code with signaling mirrors, stones spelling out short messages, magical means of communication, and things of that nature are different matters, if there is anyone to receive the message. The investigators might be able to get resupplied and/or farm out some research tasks. Do not, however, hand-wave their accomplishment of these tasks either. They take time, may fail or lead to confusion, and Bride may well have some fun with them. And since they cannot warn people off, well role-played investigators may try to round up a relief party, which then probably gets stuck at the camp as well, after perhaps avoiding spending the night at the camp and wandering the woods for a while.

### **6. Research**

As usual, research is critical. It is entirely plausible, however, that inexperienced, unsuspecting or overconfident investigators will neglect to perform any prior to heading to the site. In addition, none of the offsite investigation that they



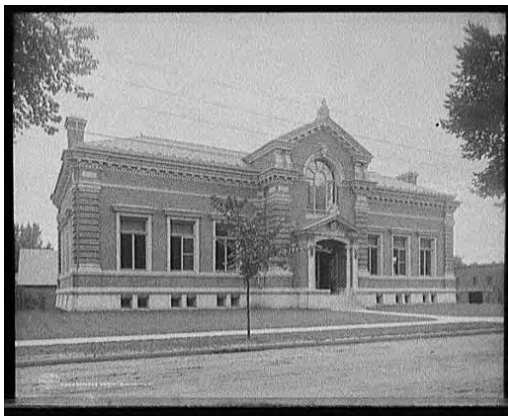
can perform will alert them to the existence of a trapping curse, or any ways around it. Nonetheless, there are numerous interesting tidbits of information to be discovered.

#### A. The University of Vermont

In terms of his past research, anyone at the University can either tell the investigators about Abernathy's field of interest, or show them some of his recent publications. For an archaeologist, Abernathy spends an awful lot of time translating sagas, writing literary commentary on sagas, and speculating about Norse exploration in North America.

#### B. Folklore, Legends and the Occult--the Bennington Triangle

Appropriate sources (including Claire Jeplin) can advise the investigators that the hill country east of Glastenbury has an unsavory reputation as somewhere where people get easily lost, and sometimes simply disappear. General discussion of the Glastenbury area (where plenty of weird things happen) is given in the "Plot Seeds" segment of the campaign.



University of Vermont, c. 1920.

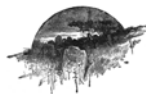
#### C. Mythos Tomes

Delving into Mythos tomes for clues is an inevitable part of any adventure.

- "Black House": It is entirely fair game to have virtually any Mythos tome, from any era, contain a reference to the legendary "Black House." The combination of these two ideas, one sinister and foreboding (Dark, Black, Ebon, Night, Shadow) and the other safe and secure (Retreat, House, Home, School) appear again and again, in different permutations and combinations, as a place to learn and seek sorcerous power for a price. The story is always the same: the wizard sails off to the Black House seeking dark knowledge, having found instructions on how to get there in some other Mythos tome. He follows star-based navigation directions (which may be slightly different depending on the era the tome dates from, the direction sailed from, and what the pertinent stars are called), but which are noticeably similar. They come back noticeably more powerful and more confident, but strangely, any people that they traveled with do not return with them.
- Olaf Ulfsson: Olaf Ulfsson is discussed in his *Saga*, but also might be discussed in post-medieval, comprehensive treatments of Mythos cults. Olaf might be mentioned as a fairly accomplished Icelandic sorcerer devoted to the Byzantine sect of the Magna Mater in works such as *Unausprechlichen Kulden* or *De Vermis Mysteriis*. Such works might also mention that Olaf had found the legendary "Black House", where sorcerers had communed and studied for aeons, but was driven off by angry locals.

#### D. The Reykjavik Side Trip.

Hopefully the investigators do not decide that they need to review the original of a manuscript written in Old Norse and housed in Reykjavik, Iceland before heading out to the campsite on what should be portrayed as a rescue mission.



After all, Glynis can tell them that Abernathy took her verbatim transcription with him. If they insist on doing so, however, play it out. An Idea roll suggests that this is a months-long endeavor, and it is. Unfortunately, play-testing has revealed that the investigators often insist on either heading to Reykjavik first or (a slightly better idea) splitting the party and sending one or two investigators to Iceland. Accordingly:

First, the investigators will have to arrange for passage to Reykjavik; figure a week at least to get there and another to get back. Then, they will have to persuade the National Archives to let them (or some designee) inspect a valuable and fragile manuscript. Then, they will need to read the *Saga*. Although it is short, it is written in a complex kenning and requires 1d3+2 weeks and a successful Read Old Norse roll to understand. (Kenning is an internally rhyming poetic form that makes heavy use of metaphor and allusion). Because it is written in kenning, a precise translation into English really is not possible with losing much of the innuendo. So the investigators, assuming that they can find an appropriate academic to help them, are looking at a 1d3+4 week detour before they could set out to the camp.

By that time, things may be quite different when they arrive. If they are, Abernathy will have stalked and slain McDougal; Bride will have killed both Abernathy (nailing him to a tree in a mockery of Odin's ordeal on Yggdrasil) and Lark (eating her just for fun), and then dispatched himself with a rifle. No one will be left there to interview, but the camp will be every bit as entrapping. On a successful Idea roll--that their delay is responsible for worsening the situation--charge each with a 1d4 SAN loss. Alternatively, you can simply assume that it took Abernathy's party longer to disintegrate and play the scenario as written.

The Reykjavik version of the *Saga* is not particularly helpful to solving the puzzle, but does give the investigators a little bit more information up front. It is a short Mythos tome, granting +2% to Cthulhu Mythos, and costing -1d6 SAN to read, with an optional spell multiplier of x5, and one spell available: Heal.



The *Saga* is a general recounting of the legend of Olaf Ulfsson, a Norse anti-hero in the mold of Egil Skallagrimsson. Olaf is brave, strong, a crafty liar, and a tricky merchant, with a black sense of humor and a quick temper. These traits stand in odd juxtaposition to a sense of fair play, a fondness for children, and a respect for clever opponents. The *Saga* makes clear that he is also a sorcerer of no small repute, sacrificing not to the Norse gods (and certainly placing no truck in Christianity). Instead, disturbing references are made to a youth spent in the Varangian Guard in Constantinople and tutelage there in the cult of the Magna Mater. A Cthulhu Mythos roll equates the cult of the Magna Mater to Shub-Niggurath worship in the Roman/Byzantine world.

A brief reference is made in his *Saga* to Olaf's having sought out the "Black House" across the western sea, a place where sorcerers had made pilgrimages for thousands of years. Directions are given in



terms of navigating by the stars (to the west and south from Iceland, and then trekking inland), and there are references to the “odd abundance of similar directions” in “olden books of sorcery.” Olaf returned to Iceland after a year, and speaks of a “dark revenge” taken against his “enemies across the waters who drove him from the School.”

In all likelihood, all that this tells the investigators is that something bad has

probably happened to the Abernathy expedition, and gives them some idea to expect Mythos involvement.

No discussion of the particulars of the curse in question is included, although mention of Olaf’s general penchant for elaborate curses is made. Somewhat more information is available in the annotated transcript located at Olaf’s Camp.

### Iceland and Reykjavik in the Classic Era

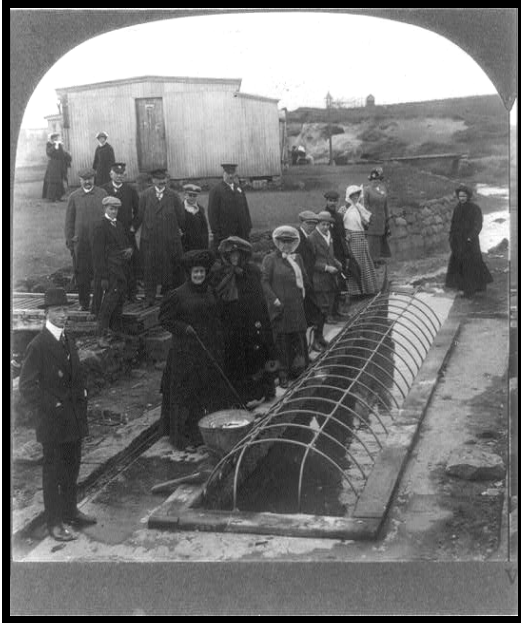
Much like Vermont, Iceland and its capital city, Reykjavik, are undergoing rapid change and modernization in the 1920s. In the preceding 20 years, Reykjavik has gone from a Danish-governed (and rather neglected) agricultural town to a small, modern city of about 15,000 (1920), growing to 30,000 (1930). A previous Danish-run trade monopoly has ended, and the economy has become dominated by commercial cod fishing and fish processing. A large, modern fishing fleet has recently emerged, industry is on the rise, and a lot of construction is ongoing.

Throughout the 1920s, Iceland is a newly independent republic, though technically still in a political union with Denmark. Icelandic nationalism is on the rise, trade unions are forming, and industrialization is rapidly ongoing. This is the era in which modern universities, museums, and the like were opened in Reykjavik. Icelandic (almost indistinguishable from medieval Old Norse) is spoken, but unlike today, finding someone who also speaks English is more of a challenge.

In 1927, some original manuscripts of the Icelandic sagas were returned to Reykjavik from Copenhagen, and a National Archive for them started. Until after World War II, the archives were held and studied at the Althing building in Reykjavik (the Icelandic parliament building).



**If you had any idea how hard it was to find a copyright free picture of Reykjavik, Iceland c. 1926, here depicting the central square, you would wonder why I bothered.**



Some Icelandic folk doing their laundry in a hot spring, c. 1926, and literally the only other copyright free picture that I could find.

As long as people are going to Reykjavik, following are some weird things that they might get drawn into during their research:

- **Zombies:** The investigators may be amused (eventually) to learn that zombies are perhaps the quintessential Icelandic monster. In Icelandic tradition, they are known as *afturganga*, and usually result either from a curse or to wreak unfinished revenge. Common story threads are that the *afturganga* does not realize that it is dead, or those encountering it learn later that the person had died not long before. *Afturganga* tend to be very lifelike to casual observation. Icelandic zombies often repeat themselves and cannot speak of God; otherwise, they are very hard to spot. The Keeper would be well within his rights to impose such restrictions on investigators reanimated at Olaf's Camp, and such tests can be used as a sort of "zombie detector"

later.

- **Lake monsters:** Yes, they have them there as well: *skrimsl*.
- **Trolls**, which in Icelandic tradition are confined to the darkness and turn to stone if exposed to daylight.
- There is also the rich Scandinavian tradition of elves, dwarves, little people and even semi-human fish fiends. Roads are placed so as to circumvent traditional "elf-hills", under which the elves and others are said to live. *Alfholsvegur*, or Elf-Hill Road, is a major avenue in Reykjavik itself.
- One of the most famous stories in all of twentieth-century weird fiction is set in Iceland: Jules Verne's *Journey to the Center of the Earth*. Before the heroes in that story wind up in a weird

#### Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #1: an Abenaki story about the Night Village

In the mountains near the Hoosic River was a place where shamans would go to be alone. It was a place that no one else was allowed to live. The shaman's retreat was known as the Night Village, and had been there as long as anyone could remember.

Many centuries ago, a strange wizard from distant lands went to the Night Village. His followers were spirits. They ignored the children, but took the men and women of nearby villages. None of these people ever returned.

Soon, a council of the shamans was held. They decided to attack the wizard, and succeeded in driving him away. When they returned, it was decided to build a camp at the Night Village, to guard against the wizard's return. However, those that were sent there were not heard from. People sent to the Night Village to find them never returned. People sent to find these searchers never returned. Eventually, the shamans decreed that the Night Village should be shunned. And so it was.



subterranean world of giants and dinosaurs, they travel to Iceland to find the hidden entrance, which only appears in the location stated by a legendary text where the shadow of a particular mountain falls on a particular day.

E. Abenaki Sources: A Library Use roll while researching the topic of Abenaki legends reveals a story about the Night Village. This story, to be found in an appropriately scholarly text on Abenaki legends, is set out on page 99 (Investigator Handout #1).

F. Viking Sources: A Library Use or Anthropology roll can reveal the following general information about Viking practices.

- Just Desserts/Poetic Justice: Vikings had an odd sense of fair play, and the literature is largely about revenge. Justice should be fitting, and a condemned man could escape his fate in bold ways. For example, Egil Skallagrimsson, condemned to death for being disrespectful of the king of Norway, Eiríkr Bloodaxe, won his freedom by composing an impromptu (and still cheeky) poem praising Eiríkr. This is a very common theme of Norse sagas.
- Norse wizards: Although not something to be proud of, many sagas and stories from the Viking era feature villains or anti-heroes with various sorts of magical powers. Typically these individuals studied under Lapp or other foreign wizards. The prototypical Norse wizard is more of an enchanter and less of a fireball-throwing artillery piece: they lay curses, enthrall people, change their shape, summon up the dead, brew potions and make charms.
- Shadow School/Vinland: Apart from *Olaf's Saga*, and at the Keeper's option, other Viking tomes might

discuss a "Shadow School" across the western sea where many wizards at least claim to have studied or made pilgrimage. Only *Olaf's Saga* provides actual directions among Viking tomes, however.

- Níð-poles: A common sort of curse, many sagas or other Icelandic sources that discuss sorcery will discuss níð-poles. A níð-pole is a powerful, essentially unbreakable, curse, usually created to wreak revenge. The revenge tends to be ironic. A níð-pole may or may not be aimed at a particular person, but it is directional (it covers a specific area). A níð-pole is created by erecting a horse's skull on a pole, with appropriate runes and incantations. A classic use of a níð-pole, as discussed in the saga of Egil Skallagrimsson, would condemn a particular person not to leave from or return to a particular place (in the direction the horse's head faced) until certain conditions were met.



**Olaf's Camp, picked clean.**

G. The Saga of Olaf Ulfsson (Olaf's Camp version): This is in plain sight in the main camp tent, along with Abernathy's few other texts and journals. It is in Old Norse (transcribed in a neat print but not translated), and requires 1d3+2 weeks and a successful Old Norse roll to read. It is a short Mythos tome, granting +2% to Cthulhu Mythos, -1d6 SAN to read, with





an optional spell multiplier of x5, and one spell available: Heal. As discussed above, it is a general recounting of the legend of Olaf Ulfsson, a Norse anti-hero in the mold of Egil Skallagrimsson.

**Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #2: Abernathy's Saga Annotations.**

- The *Saga* is written in kenning, using heavy and often obscure metaphor. Abernathy was puzzled initially, but seems to have gotten the gist of things when he realized that the author was obscuring Olaf Ulfsson's penchant for dark sorcery.
- This place was known to Olaf as the "Shadow School" or "Black Lodge", a place where he apparently thought that he could parlay with dark powers.
- Olaf was driven off by the local Abenaki. He took some time to plot his revenge before leaving.
- Olaf was famed for his cunning, ironic revenges.
- Abernathy believes that Olaf has put a curse on the site, via an enormous "níð-pole" at the mound.
- The idea of the curse was to give the Abenaki what they wanted--sole possession of the "Black Lodge"--and to make them regret it.
- A complete understanding of the exact particulars of an ironic Viking curse is essential to escape it.
- Physically destroying a níð-pole is difficult and dangerous, and often results in the death of the destroyer.

In addition to the information and general hints contained in the Reykjavik version of the *Saga*, important additional information is contained in marginal annotations (thankfully in English) by Abernathy. They are cryptic and fragmentary, but anyone who spends two hours perusing just the annotations may attempt an Idea roll to gain the information in Investigator

Handout #2 (these are Abernathy's conclusions, all of which happen to be accurate).

Between this and Abernathy's journal, the investigators should be on the track of trying to figure out the precise terms of the curse, and figuring out a way to sidestep it.

**7. Continuing the Dig?**

Investigators who have done their homework will set to finishing the excavation. Finishing the excavation is an incredibly painstaking and time-consuming process involving carefully removing a top layer of Abenaki ruins; carefully digging out the underlying plaza from an average of 6" of overburden (without damaging the underlying stonework); and cleaning the underlying plaza. It cannot be done quickly in a way that does not damage the underlying runes and risk the loss of key information. Anyone with a smattering of Archaeology skill will know this.

How long will this take? *120 man-days of skilled archaeological work.* Someone who would be fairly described as a professional archaeologist (Keeper's discretion) works at a rate of one day=one man-day. Unskilled helper labor can follow tasks at his or her direction at a rate of two days=one man-day. A party of five investigators, one of whom is an archaeologist, will take 40 days to finish the excavation working as hard as they can, assuming enough time is taken to collect water. And yes, it is mathematically likely that the conditions at the Camp are going to result in the investigators being either dead/reanimated, insane, or in very bad shape by this time. Reanimated investigators work at the same pace as living ones; while they may be stronger and not need rest, they are clumsier and doubtlessly distracted by their undead state.



How to pace the excavation is going to be a matter of knowing your players. The first several days should be played out in excruciating detail. Once they get situated and turn to comparatively uninterrupted digging, you may want to compress the narrative a bit, letting many days simply turn into “we keep digging and make our CON checks”, broken up by a periodic weird event or plot development.

The investigators may well be tempted to stoop (either out of desperation or insanity) to purposeful physical desecration of the site in the hope of escaping. Such efforts fall under the category of “overtly trying to leave the camp” and therefore would never happen; cursed investigators do not really want to do that, thanks to the curse. Delusional and insane investigators who think they are doing something else (or who are simply berserk) might, however, and in the Keeper’s discretion, get a little busy with some physical destruction.

Accidentally (non-wilfully) damaging the níð-pole is another matter, however. The good news is that doing a significant amount of damage to the níð-pole (more than from isolated sloppy excavation; rather, damage that would be consistent with fires, explosives, bulldozing, consistently hurried excavation, or about two hours with a pickaxe) will lift the curse. The bad news is that the ensuing blast of magical death does 20d6 of damage to everyone within the curse zone, or at all nearby. Any curse zombies somehow outside of the blast zone (or somehow surviving the blast) collapse like unstrung marionettes and crumble into oozing piles of festering goo, the only thing keeping them alive now having been destroyed. Have a nice day.

## 8. The Buried Runes.

As noted, 120 man-days of work is what it takes to get to the point where the whole inscription can be read. In Old Norse runes, the entire inscription reads: “*Any who dwell in the shadow of the Black Lodge, in the shadow of this níð pole, shall dwell there forevermore. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.*” However, if a translation roll is failed (a distinct possibility without Abernathy’s help), the translation comes out closer to: “*Any who dwell beneath the Black Lodge, beneath this níð pole, shall dwell there forever. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.*”

Make the translation roll in secret and give out the appropriate version of Handout #3 based on the result. Likely, both versions will end up being given out, and a delightful argument over who is right will ensue.

Use the following handout in the event that the translation roll fails, assuming that the translator has at least a 10% skill in Old Norse:

### **Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #3: The Runes, Translated.**

“Any who dwell beneath the Black Lodge, beneath this níð pole, shall dwell there forever. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.”

The term “níð” does not translate exactly into English. The closest is “magical curse”, although there is an innuendo of both revenge and justice in the term.

Use the following handout, instead, on a successful translation check:



### **Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #3: The Runes, Translated.**

“Any who dwell in the shadow of the Black Lodge, in the shadow of this níð pole, shall dwell there forevermore. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.”

The term “níð” does not translate exactly into English. The closest is “magical curse”, although there is an innuendo of both revenge and justice in the term.

### **9. Breaking the Curse, or, How's Your Old Norse?**

With the complete text uncovered, and hopefully with some understanding of how Viking curses work, the investigators have two choices: they can either destroy the níð-pole, or they can try to think of a way to outsmart it.

Of course, understanding the curse requires an accurate translation of the curse. Abernathy is willing to make a deal with them, but it is one with steep moral considerations. Alternatively, they can get a message out, in the hope of getting an accurate translation, or they can rely on one of the reanimated graduate student's flimsy skill with Old Norse.

Destroying the níð-pole is not dependent on an understanding of níð-poles, Old Norse, or the concept of poetic justice. All that they really have to do is smash at it long enough. As discussed above, this blasts the entire party into oblivion. A major complication, however, is that they will not *want* to do this. Additionally, even if they do not understand that destroying the pole is really, really dangerous, they should understand that the curse is keeping the undead going (including at least one innocent (Lark) and possibly some of the investigators themselves). In addition, as the

investigators gradually strip off the overburden from the top of the mound, and realize that it is, in fact, a step pyramid, the feeling of palpable power, barely constrained, will gradually be felt.

The investigators might try to choke off the níð-pole with a magical ward of some sort, the Elder Sign, or other powerful magic. Whether or not this works is left to the Keeper's discretion, but again, this is going to have to be done by someone (such as a reinforcement) who is not yet under the curse's influence. Either that, or they are going to have to have an extremely good rationalization as to why this does not amount to “trying to leave.” However, the consequences of magically deactivating the curse are not good, either. Any reanimated investigators or NPCs have their only means of life support cut, and crumple into goo. An Idea roll might call this to the investigators' attention before it is too late: the curse is the only thing keeping several participants “alive”.

The best solution by far is to figure out a way to cheat the níð-pole. This is unlikely to occur to the investigators without a good understanding of what is going on, in terms of both Viking curses in general, and the precise terms of this one in particular. However, with that knowledge, there is a way out, which is not itself inconsistent with the prohibition against wanting to leave. These types of curses are directional, and in this case, tied to the “shadow of the mound.” The trick is to move the shadow of the mound off of their campsite. This, the investigators will find themselves able to attempt, once they puzzle it out. Indeed, aside from leaving, reorienting the shadow to the other side of the mound has separate benefits, such as better access to food and fuel (useful for actually wanting to stay).

Most ways that the investigators might have of trying to accomplish this are impractical, dangerous or just plain



foolhardy. The mound is forty feet high, and lumber or building materials are scarce. There are two methods of recasting the mound's shadow which are theoretically in the investigators' reach.

The first option is to wait until it is a very dark night (a new moon; the keeper may want to establish a lunar phase at the outset of the narration and pay attention to the calendar). Then, the investigators create a big enough light source (i.e., burning everything flammable that they have) on one side of the mound, such that the only shadow cast by the mound is away from the campsite.

Another possibility would be an attempt to alter the topography of the mound, or the campsite, such that the campsite is not hit by the mound's shadow. This could, in theory, be accomplished (such as by drilling a big enough hole through the mound to let enough sunlight through to create a sunny spot on the camp) or by digging the camp itself deep into the dirt (enough of the camp so that it could be fairly said that their dwelling is no longer in the *mound's* shadow). Can this be done? Yes. How long will it take? A long time, in the Keeper's discretion, but probably long enough to render any surviving investigators into zombies. Are there consequences? Depends on where and how deep they dig. This is an aeons-old school of sorcery, and place where wizards can chat up dark spirits. There are indeed subterranean layers. At the Keeper's option, there might even be a trap door at the top of the mound, revealing a crude stairway stretching down into the noisome, Stygian darkness....

The consequences of such cleverness are that the curse remains in place, but the investigators are temporarily removed from its control. Since they are not dwelling where the shadow of the mound is now falling, they are free to leave, but the power of the curse still sustains them.

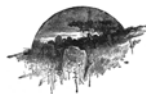
Zombified investigators and NPCs taking advantage of the opportunity to flee remain in their current state. Moreover, they can effectively escape the area, since they are no longer looking (in any sense) for Olaf's Camp, having already found it. Bravo.

Lucky(?) *afturganga* investigators may, with some determined and covert cleaning up, cosmetics and/or prophylactic surgery, be able to pass for human (at least upon cursory examination). This depends in large part on how blown to bits they are, and how being unable to say "God" will play back home. Such escaped zombies will not heal wounds/damage normally, and medicine is of no use to them. Their POW is only 1, so they are crippled from spellcasting or resisting magic. Only magical healing will allow zombies to regain hit points.

While these are significant disadvantages, *afturganga* zombies do not eat, sleep, rest or need to breathe, are extremely strong, scoff at poison, still retain their intellectual functions, and are very good at passing themselves off as dead. If the Keeper is feeling kind (and some kindness is certainly called for by this point), the Heal spell may be included in *Olaf's Saga*, at a spell multiplier of INTx5. (**This might be allowed as a License Plate Rule roll**). Allowing access to this spell will allow cursed zombie investigators to remain in play indefinitely, with amusing complications.

### 10. Finally Leaving--Rewards and Repercussions

Anyone who actually manages to escape from Olaf's Camp (in whatever state) gains 2d4+2 SAN. Killing Bride garners another 1d8 SAN.

**NPC RECAP****Glynis Abernathy, Worried Wife****Nationality:** American.

STR 10	DEX 11	INT 13
CON 12	APP 13	POW 12
SIZ 11	EDU 14	SAN 60
Luck 60	Hits: 12	Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Education:** B.A., Modern Languages, University of Vermont.**Skills:** Anthropology 24%, Archaeology 13%, Bargain 35%, Credit Rating 35%, Drive Auto 30%, History 40%, Library Use 50%, Listen 35%, Natural History 33%, Persuade 28%, Psychology 35%, Spot Hidden 35%.**Languages:** English 70%; French 70%; Spanish 40%; **Old Norse 10%.****Attacks:** None above base.**Notes:** Glynis will eventually come looking for her husband herself, when she gets frustrated enough. The timing of her arrival should be used for dramatic purposes, and should occur at a time when the investigators are themselves in trouble, replaying their arrival at Olaf's Camp from the opposite perspective.**James McDougal, Curse Victim (Prior to Reanimation)****Nationality:** American.

STR 12	DEX 11	INT 16
CON 12	APP 9	POW 12
SIZ 14	EDU 18	SAN 10
Luck 60	Hits: 13	Age: 27.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.**Education:** M.A., Archaeology, University of Vermont.**Skills:** Anthropology 36%, Archaeology 63%, Bargain 35%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 30%, History 60%, Library

Use 85%, Listen 55%, Natural History 53%, Navigate 29%, Persuade 28%, Psychology 45%, Spot Hidden 52%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; **Old Norse 15%.****Attacks:** Rifle 40%, .30-06 bolt action, 2d6+4, 130 yards, 1x per round, 5 shots. McDougal has a box of bullets with 32 reloads remaining. He keeps 12 of them with him, loose, and 20 more in the box, secreted at a hiding place at the edge of camp (in case he has to flee, he can circle back around to get them).**Indefinite Insanity:** Paranoia; specifically, afraid that those he killed will come back to get him.

After reanimation, adjust McDougal's stats to STR 24; CON 26; DEX 7, APP 0, POW 1 and SAN 0.

**Prof. Daniel Abernathy, Mediocre and Undead Partial Archaeologist****Nationality:** American

STR 1	DEX 1	INT 16
CON 26	APP 0	POW 1
SIZ 6	EDU 21	SAN 2
Luck 5	Hits: 16	Age: 52.

**Damage Bonus:** +0.**Education:** Ph.D., Archaeology, Cornell University.**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 70%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 40%, Cthulhu Mythos 2%, Drive Auto 0%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 70%, Library Use 75%, Listen 25%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 39%, Occult 25%, Persuade 44%, Photography 0%, Psychology 25%, Spot Hidden 44%.**Languages:** English 90%; French 50%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; **Old Norse 55%.****Attacks:** Bite 10%, 1d3.**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie



rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

**Indefinite Insanities:** Homicidal thirst for revenge, melancholia.

**Notes:** Undead, almost irretrievably insane, dismembered, muted, and driven by revenge. Fortunately, he's not very quick. He moves at a speed of ½" as he rolls/crawls along the ground, hoping to bite MacDougal. Abernathy costs 0/1d3 to see; 1/1d8 if or when you realize that he is a zombie.

### Kevin Bride, Especially Slimy Living Dead

**Nationality:** American

STR 24	DEX 8	INT 16
CON 26	APP 0	POW 1
SIZ 14	EDU 18	SAN 0
Luck 5	Hits: 20	Age: 25.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Education:** M.A., Archaeology, University of Vermont.

**Skills:** Anthropology 35%, Archaeology 60%, Astronomy 25%, Bargain 30%, Credit Rating 30%, Drive Auto 50%, Fast Talk 30%, Geology 35%, History 60%, Library Use 75%, Listen 55%, Natural History 33%, Navigate 29%, Occult 20%, Persuade 48%, Photography 45%, Psychology 25%, Sneak 55%, Spot Hidden 54%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 50%; Ancient Greek 50%; **Old Norse 15%**.

**Attacks:** Knife Attack 55%, 1d4+2+db.

**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

**Notes:** Bride is so obviously dead that he costs 1/1d8 SAN to see, right off the bat.

### Aimee Lark, Cursed Coed

**Nationality:** American

STR 24	DEX 7	INT 14
CON 26	APP 9	POW 1
SIZ 12	EDU 21	SAN 44
Luck 5	Hits: 19	Age: 23.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Education:** B.A., Archaeology, University of Vermont

**Skills:** Accounting 25%, Anthropology 45%, Archaeology 55%, Astronomy 35%, Bargain 40%, Credit Rating 25%, Drive Auto 25%, Fast Talk 40%, History 60%, Library Use 80%, Listen 35%, Natural History 38%, Navigate 10%, Persuade 47%, Psychology 33%, Spot Hidden 48%.

**Languages:** English 90%; Latin 25%; Ancient Greek 25%; **Old Norse 10%**.

**Attacks:** None over base.

**Special Defenses:** As per normal zombie rules, physical weapons do ½ damage, and impaling weapons only do 1 point of damage.

**Indefinite Insanity:** Post-traumatic Stress Disorder.

**Notes:** Aimee thinks that she has been horribly brutalized, badly hurt, buried alive, and driven to the brink, but she does not (yet) understand that she is dead. She is quite aware that neither she nor any of her colleagues wanted to leave, even when driven to madness and deprivation. When someone realizes that Aimee, too, is dead, SAN loss is 1/1d8.





**On the bright side, no more doctor's bills.**



## THE SAP KEEPS RUNNING, PART 4

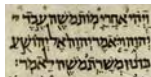


### a. The Good Samaritan Meets The "Phantom Schoolgirl."

When the Keeper is ready to bring the campaign to a climax, he should arrange for a lone investigator to make an automobile trip past Claire's. An ideal candidate would be a new player who has not been involved in the campaign previously; let the other investigators witness and wince at the events. Alternatively, the Keeper could stage this

encounter a fair distance away from Claire's, to divert investigator suspicions.

Due to a series of road mishaps, have the investigator only reach the outskirts of Pownal after dark. A sudden storm, complete with lightning flashes and driving rain, springs up. Pulled over on the side of the road, the investigator sees a disabled, older model black (Martin Wasp) automobile. Desperately flagging the investigator to stop is an attractive young



woman, soaked to the bone. If the investigator has met Margaret and Amelia, on a successful Idea roll the investigator realizes that the young woman looks similar to Amelia, but younger and not quite so breathtaking.

If the investigator does not stop, Emily and her car are waiting for him again around the next bend. SAN loss for this occurrence is 0/1. If the investigator still does not stop, the black sedan gives chase, with a headless Emily behind the wheel. Guidelines for this chase can be adapted from the "Devil's Bend" section, below.



**Isolated stretch of U.S. Route 7, c. 1930.**

The young woman tells the investigator that she is stuck in a rut, and asks him to gun the engine while she pushes. She insists on pushing; she does not want the investigator to get dirty too. If the investigator insists on pushing, have Emily relent and gas the car, but then get out at the last minute for a final push before tragedy strikes.

If the investigator asks her name or what she is doing out on a night like this, she

says that her name is Emily, and that she is trying to get to school. If the investigator asks if she is Emily Bahl, she is astonished and asks the investigator how he knew her name. From Emily's perspective, she lives in Burlington, VT, has no sister Amelia, and is on her way to Miskatonic U. Allow any appropriate questioning of Emily to elicit this information. Emily cuts off further discussion, observing that her shoes are getting ruined and that they can talk later.

Assuming that the investigator complies with her request, Emily gets behind the car and shouts "OK, Now!" Regardless of whether the investigator gives the car gas or not, the gas pedal slams to the floor. Emily lets out an enormous scream of pain, which is cut very short by a sickening crunch. The car stalls out. Assuming that the investigator checks on Emily, her decapitated corpse protrudes from under the rear of the vehicle. Her head is nowhere to be found. SAN loss is 1/1d6.

As soon as the investigator takes his eyes off the body for a few moments (either to retch, to go get the sheriff, or for whatever reason) the rain suddenly stops. The headless body of Emily gets up(!), blows the investigator a faceless kiss, and drives off. Emily's automobile does not leave tire tracks, but instead a string of cloven hoof prints and an exhaust trail of brimstone. Her head cannot be found. SAN loss for viewing this development is 1/1d8. If the investigator does not see Emily drive off, but only later notices the cloven hoof prints and stench, SAN loss is only 0/1d3.

The Vermont Institute for the Insane is in Brattleboro, conveniently located along Route 7. This is where an investigator who goes insane from this event will next find himself, screaming about headless spectres.

If the incident is reported to Sheriff



Hudson, he laughs and throws the investigator either out of his office or into the nearest mental hospital, depending on the investigator's demeanor. The author suggests a cure rating of 50% for the Vermont Institute. Another lighthearted newspaper story, this time prominently mentioning the investigator's name, appears a few days later. The investigator loses 1d6 points of Credit Rating as a result.

### **b. Investigating Margaret Bahl.**

When the Good Samaritan recovers his wits and relates his experience to the rest of the investigators, light bulbs should click on. Potential sources of information can be found at Miskatonic U. and through detective work in Burlington, VT.

**1. Miskatonic U.:** The investigators may check into Emily Bahl's attendance records at Miskatonic. As discussed previously, the only records that Miskatonic has of Emily is her aborted admittance, twenty years before the scenario began. Margaret's letter to the Dean at Miskatonic, dated twenty years ago, was given previously as Investigator Handout #3. Obviously, Emily is not away at school, contrary to Margaret's claims. From there, they might wonder if the Bahls are somehow connected with Claire's dreams, since the dreams now appear to be related to Emily as well.

Neither Sheriff Hudson nor the authorities in Burlington have received any report of Emily's death or disappearance. Without a body, Sheriff Hudson will be reluctant to become involved in some sort of investigation of the Bahls, who enjoy a good reputation in Bennington County. Follow up investigations in Burlington, VT will likely ensue.

**2. Burlington, VT:** Burlington is the largest town in Vermont, with a 1920 population equaling 22,779. It is the home

of several colleges, including the University of Vermont. Burlington sits on the banks of Lake Champlain, on the western border of the state, and is connected by U.S. 7 to Williamstown, MA and points south. Burlington is a port town servicing barge traffic along Lake Champlain as well as a commercial hub. The investigators might be led here by the dateline on Margaret's withdrawal letter to Miskatonic U. Also, if an investigator successfully engaged Emily in a brief conversation, the town of Burlington might have been mentioned. If the investigators have been through the *Beast of Lake Champlain* scenario, the last name may induce them to look up Robert Bahl.

33 Allen Avenue (the return address on the letter to Miskatonic; the address might also be gotten from Robert Bahl or old tax records) is in a downtown shopping district. It is a walkup storefront, with first floor shops and second floor apartments. The current resident at No. 33 is one George Pomeroy, Bookseller. Pomeroy is a balding, scrawny, 70ish fellow who loves old books. He is also a male chauvinist pig. His shop is small and specializes in regional history and architecture. Mr. Pomeroy is not interested in the occult, except in its historical context; no mystic tomes are to be found here. Valuable clues however are.



Assuming that the investigators are reasonably polite and not too shabbily





dressed, Mr. Pomeroy is happy to engage them in a conversation. He bought the storefront shortly before the beginning of the campaign from Margaret Bahl, who lived alone and ran a candy store here. He was only slightly acquainted with her prior to buying her property. He knows that Mrs. Bahl had been widowed for many years, and that she had mentioned a daughter Emily who was away at school. Mrs. Bahl was moving south. Mr. Pomeroy does not know where Emily was attending school.

If the subject of the conversation turns to why Mrs. Bahl sold and moved away, Mr. Pomeroy lowers his voice and relates that he assumes it was because of her "indiscretion." Mr. Pomeroy guesses that Margaret was about 50 at the time, but he chauvinistically relates that she was "as big as a barn", "in a family way", etc. The following sexist quote from Mr. Pomeroy is a possibility (not endorsed by the author): "I don't see how a woman of that age got herself in a family way in the first place; I guess it's not impossible. But she was as big as a barn (uses hands to exaggerate). Someone her age should have known better."

Mr. Pomeroy has never heard or met any daughter Amelia. If the name Amelia comes up in passing, Mr. Pomeroy asks if that is what Margaret named the new baby. Obviously, Mr. Pomeroy has no idea as to who the father is. If the investigators do not catch on to the fact that this time frame is all wrong for Amelia, call for an Idea roll. Birth certificate record searches are useless; there is no birth certificate, of course. Or school records, or any other kind of records, for that matter.

The investigators might try to track down relatives of Margaret by searching Burlington sources for the last name "Bahl." If they have been through the *Beast of Lake Champlain* adventure, then they probably have already met Robert and

know where to find him. Either way, they find her late husband's younger brother, Robert Bahl, without too much difficulty. Robert is an affable, fortyish man who manages the municipal docks in Burlington and who collects lake monster lore as a hobby.

Robert has not heard from Margaret since she left Burlington, and spoke to her only very infrequently since Emily left for school. Robert knows that Emily left for school roughly twenty years before the campaign began, and Emily should be about forty years of age by now. He has not heard a thing of Emily since she left for school twenty years ago.

Robert can state affirmatively that Margaret has no twenty-five year old daughter Amelia. If she did, Robert observes, she would have been born a few years before Emily left for school, a time during which he saw Margaret fairly often.

Robert has also heard some rumors that Margaret somehow became pregnant shortly before the campaign began, but laughed them off and did not seek her out. If shown a picture of Amelia, he confuses it for a picture of Margaret from when she married his brother William.

Robert Bahl will now be totally perplexed, and will probably head down to Margaret's to see what is up. Depending upon how fast the investigators act, Robert might arrive before they do and be killed by Amelia; or arrive during an investigator break-in. Robert might also be persuaded to accompany the investigators, depending on any former dealings they may have had. Robert's stats are repeated at the end of the scenario.



**This boiling vat of syrup in the Bahl's side shed is likely where Robert Bahl ends up.**

Phoning Claire at this stage with a warning is a mistake. Amelia will be listening in on the party line, and the Bahls will be ready for the investigators when they arrive.

By this time the investigators should realize that Margaret is totally nuts, and wonder just what Amelia really is. If the foregoing is not enough to prod the investigators into searching the Bahl homestead, a week or so later the investigator with the closest ties to Claire receives a phone call. A terrified, hoarse voice (Idea roll to identify as Claire) screeches: "The hoof prints! In Margaret's yard!", and is followed by a dead line. Claire will have expired of a heart attack.

The funeral (overseen by Rev. McKenzie, should he be in an acceptable condition to perform it) should prompt another trip to the Pownal area.

### **c. Claire Decays.**

If Claire has died, her body will be quickly "discovered" by her "good friend" Margaret, and the sheriff will be promptly notified. In all likelihood, he will have already arrived on the scene and removed Claire's body before the investigators arrive. Sheriff Hudson cooperates with the investigators if he knows or is convinced that they are good friends of Claire's, as

she has no next of kin. In such a case, Sheriff Hudson permits the investigators to take control of the house and make the funeral arrangements. Claire has died of a heart attack, and there is no overt evidence of foul play.

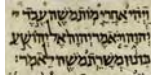


**But Claire Jeplin does not.**

Later that day, the bank in Pownal contacts the investigators. Claire will have left a safety deposit box with instructions to contact the investigator with whom she was the friendliest if she should pass away. In the box is a short holographic will leaving everything that Claire has to the investigator. Claire's worldly possessions consist of a bank account containing \$2.37 plus her house, which has been mortgaged to its full value through the Pownal bank recently. Claire had been living off the mortgage money. If the investigators do not act, Margaret buys the mortgage, forecloses, razes Claire's house, and has no neighbors to worry about.

If Claire has not yet died, she is in an even sorer state than before. The sign for Claire's Candies is missing; a new, larger sign for Margaret's is in place. The maple trees around her home are all but dead; the blight has spread a bit across the road, but only a bit. Claire's house is in serious disrepair; if the investigators go into Margaret's during business hours, a motorist complains about the eyesore across the way. Claire herself has lost a





great deal of weight, is down to 20 SAN, and has developed a phobia regarding black automobiles. If the investigators drive a black automobile and park in front of her house, she becomes very agitated and demands that they park across the street.

Claire is barely rational and needs to be Psychoanalyzed to be of any use to the investigators. Claire still believes that Margaret is a friend, but raves that Amelia must be some kind of a witch. She claims that she saw Amelia walking out back of Margaret's place a few weeks ago, and that she left cloven hoof prints behind.

Sadly, this story about Amelia is entirely true. Unfortunately, Margaret and Amelia suspect that Claire is wary of Amelia, and as a result have recently intensified the onslaught of nightmares. If the investigators do not act, Claire dies in the manner described above a few weeks later

**d. Margaret's Vermont Souvenirs.**

The Bahl homestead is a dangerous place for investigators to tread uninvited. Amelia's senses are keen, and she never sleeps. She is also extremely clever, and will not get involved in a toe-to-toe slugfest with multiple investigators. Amelia will stay on the move in the case of a home invasion, trying to get the investigators to split up. Then she tries to pick off male investigators one by one and suck them dry. Female investigators are left for last, and killed in the most expedient manner available. Given an opportunity, she takes a look around for the investigators' vehicles and disables them if possible. Maple syrup in the carburetor is one option.

Margaret, if confronted by investigators, will generally sink to the floor and beg for mercy, sobbing uncontrollably and telling them to take whatever they want. If she thinks that she can make it, she flees for

the Back Woods and hides, hoping that the investigators will split up and allow Amelia to get her licks in. If cornered or under assault, she attacks with whatever she can get her hands on (kitchen knife, sacrificial knife, maple tree tap and mallet), yells for Amelia, and fights to the death.

<b><u>Where the Bahls are:</u></b>		
<b><u>Night (10 p.m.-6 a.m.)</u></b>		
<b><u>% roll</u></b>	<b><u>Margaret</u></b>	<b><u>Amelia</u></b>
01-20	Asleep/Room 5	Room 8
21-40	Asleep (" ")	Back Woods
41-60	Asleep (" ")	Room 6
61-90	Asleep/Bsmnt.	Back Woods
91-00	Basement	Basement
<b><u>Morning (6 a.m.-8 a.m.)</u></b>		
<b><u>% roll</u></b>	<b><u>Margaret</u></b>	<b><u>Amelia</u></b>
01-20	out	Room 8
21-80	Room 4	Room 8
81-00	Room 1	Room 1
<b><u>Day (8 a.m.-8 p.m.)</u></b>		
<b><u>% roll</u></b>	<b><u>Margaret</u></b>	<b><u>Amelia</u></b>
01-80	Room 1	Room 1
81-90	out	Room 1
91-00	Room 3	Room 1
<b><u>Evening (8 p.m.-10 p.m.)</u></b>		
<b><u>% roll</u></b>	<b><u>Margaret</u></b>	<b><u>Amelia</u></b>
01-50	Room 4	Room 4
51-00	Basement	Basement

At any given time, the Bahls can generally be found in the locations in the accompanying boxed text, until they notice or are prepared for an investigator intrusion. One exception is on the night of the new moon. Both will leave via the Gate in the basement to attend cult



activities in the Boston area, and return shortly before dawn the next morning. Often they will bring the remains of Amelia's last victim back with them. That morning, before opening the shop, Amelia will bury the victim's remains in the Back Woods.

Another exception is on Sunday morning, when Margaret and Amelia go to church for about two hours to maintain appearances. (Yes, Amelia goes to church. Yes, she leaves behind cloven hoof prints. Yes, Father McKenzie has noticed, but he is in denial). The store opens on Sunday when Margaret and Amelia get back from church. The dice rolls are optional; the chart can be used as general reference for where Margaret and Amelia are likely to be.

### Inside the Bahl Residence, Room Descriptions:

It always comes down to breaking and entering, best conducted during church hours on Sunday or the night of a new moon (the only times when Amelia leaves the house and environs).

#### Ground Floor:

**Room 1:** This is the store front. Store hours are 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. daily. During the day, Amelia is always present, running the cash register behind the counter. In fact, Amelia never leaves, for any reason, while the store is open, unless the investigators are raiding the place. There is a party line phone in the northwest corner, and another line on the porch. The door is equipped with a bell that rings when it is opened. Margaret is also present during store hours, unless she is out running errands or in the bathroom. Amelia, oddly, never even goes to the bathroom.

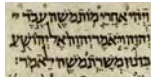


**Room 2:** This is a store room used to warehouse supplies for the store. Boxes of candy, jugs of maple syrup, and restocking supplies can be found in crates and boxes. Astute investigators will remember (from the beginning of the campaign, when they saw it being built) that there is a stone basement underneath the house. (If they have forgotten, this would be an appropriate License Plate Rule roll). Yet there is no obvious entrance to such a basement, anywhere, so eventually they will start scouting around for secret doors. A trap door lies in the northeast corner of the room, concealed under some empty boxes. A ladder leads down to the basement.

**Room 3:** This is the downstairs bathroom, complete with toilet, sink and tub. Visitors are directed to an outhouse on the north side of the store.

**Room 4:** This is the kitchen/dining area. Margaret eats breakfast and dinner here. Amelia does not eat normal food, but often keeps Margaret company during dinner time.

**Room 5:** Margaret's bedroom. It is fairly unremarkable, with one exception. Margaret keeps her sacrificial knife in the nightstand drawer next to her bed. This knife is elaborately carved from a human thigh bone, and can strike creatures only subject to magical weapons.



Interior Map of Margaret Bahl's Vermont Candies

- Ground Floor
1. Storefront
  2. Storeroom (secret trap door to Basement)
  3. Bathroom
  4. Kitchen/Dining Room (back door to Back Woods, Stairs up to Second Floor)
  5. Margaret's Bedroom



- Second Floor
6. Amelia's Room
  7. Emily's Room
  8. Study
  9. Upstairs Bathroom
  10. Spare Room



- Basement/Study/Resurrection Lab
1. Emily's (Headless) Remains
  2. Darkness (Gate)
  3. Altar and Statue (Lith)
  4. Stairs up to Ground Floor
  5. Restricted Library Stacks

Floor plan for Bahl's store and house.



### Second Floor:

**Room 6: Amelia's bedroom.** Amelia does not sleep, and so spends little time here. The bed is always made. If Amelia is here, she is either reading, changing clothes or dispatching an enamored investigator. A faint smell of animal spoor can be detected in this room.

**Room 7: Emily's bedroom.** Margaret's obsession/delusion regarding Emily has caused her to keep this room always made up and clean. Old clothes of Emily's are in the drawers, and old personal effects are about the room. A rotting black teddy bear keeps watch from the bed.

**Room 8:** This is the "clean" study. There are chairs, a table, a desk and a bookcase full of magazines, novels and standard reference works here. The west facing windows look out onto the road and Claire's house. Amelia spends a lot of time here spying on Claire and casting sanity-shattering spells at her. Amelia always keeps the lights off in this room, and would notice if they were on. There is another phone extension in the northwest corner of this room.

**Room 9:** This is the upstairs bathroom. Amelia comes here to wash up after her nighttime hunting jaunts through the Back Woods. Amelia is not always careful to clean up the stains in this room, figuring that no one will ever come up here. Accordingly, investigators might observe blood specks in the sink and tub, or bloody cloven hoofprints on the floor (SAN loss for the latter is 0/1).

**Room 10:** This is a rarely used spare bedroom and overflow storeroom.

**Basement:** This is the "dirty" study. The only conventional access is down a ladder from the trap door in Room 2. The trap door can be barred from the inside, and has been iron-reinforced. It

will require a successful STR check against a STR of 25 to force it from the outside.

There is also a door-sized area of utter blackness on the north wall of the basement. This is a Gate leading to a dark, dense area of forest north of Boston, near a site used for rites to Shub-Niggurath. Alternatively, if the Keeper has a Shub-Niggurath cult prepared, it could lead to that site. The Keeper is encouraged to integrate this aspect of the Bahls' social life into another scenario. It costs 2 Magic Points and 1 SAN to utilize the Gate. The Gate has an activation word: "Lilith."

Many other interesting things adorn this room. For example, along the west wall is a glass coffin containing the bones and dust of a headless human body. These are the remains of Emily, minus her head, awaiting hoped-for Resurrection. A successful Biology roll identifies the bones as female. Sheriff Hudson would be interested in this find. Margaret and Amelia would sooner die than rot in jail.

**A note on the Zohar:** The Zohar is a real-life mystical book, with an English translation available in most metropolitan public libraries. It was originally authored by one Moses de Leon circa 1280 A.D. It is the central work in medieval Judaic mysticism. The prevailing English translation probably in your local library has been reorganized by topic, and is in three thick volumes. It is a fascinating if difficult read; add +3% to your Occult skill on a successful Read English roll after a study time of 2 weeks.

Along the east wall is a bookcase containing many standard, and some non-standard, occult works. There are several dealing with the raising of the dead and





contacting spirits. Several others deal with Judaic mystical matters, including a very old, first edition of the *Zohar*. Many are in Hebrew.

The *Lilith Codex* (discussed in the next section) is sitting on a reading table in the northeast corner of the room, near a comfortable chair.

Along the south wall is a shrine to the goddess Lilith. This consists of a stone altar topped with a very old alabaster statue of Lilith, depicted as a woman with flames for a body below the navel. On either side are large copper incense braziers. Two prayer pillows are in front of the altar.

Margaret and Amelia use this room to pay homage to Lilith. Margaret also continues her futile quest to Resurrect Emily here.

**Back Woods:** This refers to the area **east of and behind the Bahl's house**. It is a thick, dark maple forest, interspersed with other hardwoods. A black Martin Wasp, in excellent condition, is parked out back. This car looks exactly like Emily's ghost car, as well as the car described by Claire from her dreams.

Many of the trees in the Back Woods are tapped, with red-tinged syrup slowly oozing out and collecting in buckets. The withered, drained bodies of many of Amelia's victims are buried in shallow graves around these trees. Sheriff Hudson would be remarkably interested by this find. Should the bodies ever be removed, the red tinge to the sap will gradually disappear.

One of Amelia's favorite pastimes is to strip down and hunt deer (or people) in these woods. She does this about every other evening. She crushes her victims with her bare hands and brute strength before draining them. Coming across a crushed, drained deer carcass, trampled by

cloven hooves, costs 0/1d3 SAN.

If the investigators go hunting Amelia in the Back Woods, they quickly become the hunted. Remember that Amelia is a genius; is superhumanly strong; and that her Hide, Track and most other rolls are all at a natural 80%. The area is thick with cloven hoof prints. Amelia does not believe in sporting chances. Margaret is not particularly dangerous competition, but Amelia should be played as credibly as possible. Crushed, drained husks stamped with cloven hoof prints should be the typical result of an ill-prepared woodland encounter with Amelia.

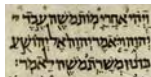
#### **e. Lilith and the *Lilith Codex*.**

The *Lilith Codex* can be found in Margaret Bahl's basement. Note that Margaret and Amelia do not go down to the basement every day. As a result, its pilfering might not immediately be noticed. However, if someone borrows the book and its absence is noticed, Amelia will be on alert.

The *Codex* is an old, crumbling, brass bound vellum manuscript roughly the size of a collegiate dictionary. It is in Hebrew. A few blank pages of modern paper have been inserted at the back of the book, and contain Margaret's annotations, in plain but fragmentary English. Margaret's annotations are both cross-referencing (e.g., "page 12 conflicts with Vol. 11, Stanza 39 of Glaaki") as well as biographical ("felt the baby kick for the first time today. Not much longer now.").

A hurried perusal of just the annotations takes two hours. With successful Read English rolls the reader is left with the following impressions from a hurried perusal (one roll may be attempted per conclusion):

- Margaret's daughter Emily died approximately twenty years before the campaign began;



- Margaret was somehow involved in her daughter Emily's death;
- Margaret knows how to Resurrect Emily, but cannot find her head, and needs it to do so;
- Margaret made a pact with an entity called Lilith to obtain another child;
- Lilith is an aspect of Shub-Niggurath (a successful Cthulhu Mythos roll is also needed to gain this information);
- a new child was born to Margaret shortly years before the campaign began;
- Margaret's new child is a girl, whom Margaret named Amelia; and
- Margaret's new child grew to adulthood very rapidly after she was born.

SAN loss for the quick perusal of just the annotations is 1 point. A more detailed study of the *Lilith Codex* will take the usual 2d6 months, plus a successful Read Hebrew roll.

In addition, the author of the *Lilith Codex*, one "Apocryphus", was steeped in Cabalistic lore; an in depth understanding of Cabalistic tradition is required to grasp the intricacies. A successful Occult roll is therefore also necessary.

The *Lilith Codex* is a detailed (and persuasive) Cabalist argument that Lilith and many other mythological figures are in fact Shub-Niggurath, drawing on many aspects of the Mythos. It includes purported correspondence between the author and Abd al'Azrad, who by the 13th Century had been dead for 500 years or so.

Sanity loss for the *Codex* is 2d4; +7% to Cthulhu Mythos; and Spell Multiplier x4, but with only the following spells available: "Praise Lilith" (Call Lilith/Shub-Niggurath) and "Lilith's Gift" (Summon/Bind Child of Lilith).

Summon/Bind Child of Lilith impregnates the summoner with a Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath similar to Amelia, but resembling and loyal to its parent. The spell's description in the *Lilith Codex* does not say this directly; rather it cryptically states that the ritual will cause Lilith to "smile" upon the caster and send her a "perfect child." In other respects its casting is identical to Summon/Bind Dark Young of Shub-Niggurath.

The child is born in one lunar month and matures in another; the child is always female. Undergoing this process costs the caster 3d10 SAN, and can be quite painful if the caster is male (it still works, sadly for the caster).

Usually Lilith only grants one Child of Lilith to a servant for the asking; exceptional service would be required for multiple Children. If used in a campaign, any Shub-Niggurath cultist who learns that the investigators have this tome will be coming for it.

Investigator Handout #4, below, gives background information on Lilith, which can be gleaned either from skimming the *Lilith Codex* (automatically successful) or general occult research.



**Lilith's master plan, revealed; foul but fecund life, free from the traditional restraints of home and hearth, clogging and polluting the earth.**





As a mother who strangled and decapitated her only daughter, albeit inadvertently, Margaret Bahl was a perfect target for Lilith's attentions. Given her nature, Lilith will never permit Margaret to succeed in Resurrecting Emily. Emily's head will never be found.

At the Keeper's option, *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New English Canaan*, *Evill Sorceries*, or another Mythos tome might have additional information on how to protect oneself against Lilith. Investigator Handout #5 is the pertinent

excerpt.

If the investigators create and wear charms like those described in *Thaumaturgical Prodigies*, they will have two effects. First, they will be immune to Amelia's ability to Enthrall Males. Second, they will see Amelia for the ghastly, inhuman monstrosity that she truly is: a beautiful woman from the navel up, but a writhing, muscular, gelatinous, cloven-hoofed Thing, strongly reminiscent of a Dark Young, from the navel down. SAN loss for seeing Amelia's true form is 1d3/1d10.

#### **The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #4: Background Information on Lilith.**

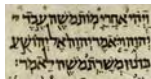
Lilith is a "Dark Goddess" archetype who appears in many different traditions, but is perhaps most completely treated in certain medieval Judaic works. In Babylonian myth, Lilith is a sort of succubus that tempts men but ultimately gives no satisfaction. She represents procreative potential unfulfilled. In the Talmud, Lilith is described as the first wife of Adam. When Lilith would not unite with Adam in the man-superior position, because she perceived herself to be his equal, she fled Eden and later gave birth to thousands of demons.

Lilith is treated most extensively in the *Zohar*, the 13th Century Cabalistic commentary on the Old Testament. In the *Zohar*, Lilith is depicted as having the upper body of a beautiful woman, but being flame from the navel down. After her breakup with Adam, Lilith becomes the consort of Samael, a blind angel or blind dragon who serves as the Cabalistic devil. As the bride of the devil, Lilith obviously fits in well with New England witchcraft legends. To men, she fulfills the archetypal roles of seductive witch, strangling mother, and succubus. Other aspects of Lilith involve her role as the wild, instinctual, feminine force in Nature. She roams wild at night, and is a particular threat to male children. The screech owl is the animal most often associated with Lilith. Lilith also has a lunar aspect, tied to the waning of the moon.

Treatments of Lilith conflict on whether she can be seen as a fertility symbol. In Babylonian tradition, she is infertile. In the *Zohar*, she is quite fertile. Her offspring, however, are demonic. She is always a force opposed to normal children and normal procreation in any tradition.

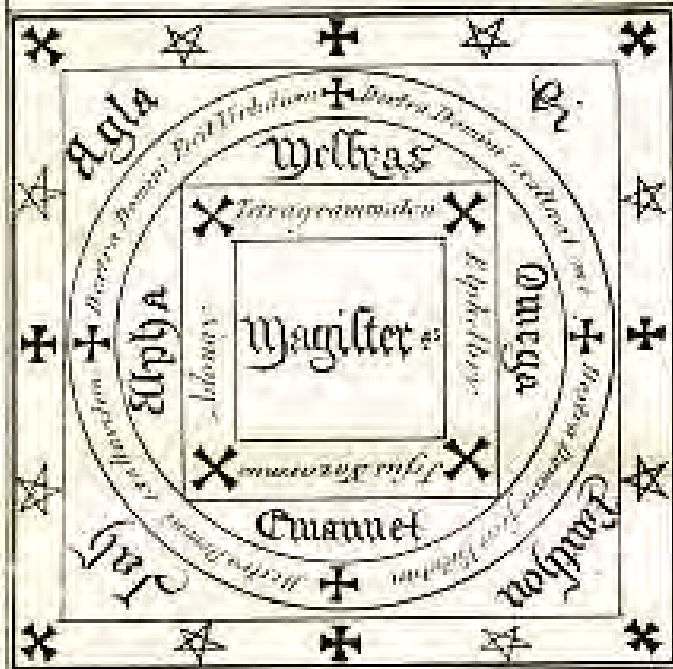
#### **The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #5: An excerpt from *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New English Canaan*.**

Lilith is known as the infernal bride of the Devil, and delights in the strangling of unbaptized children, especially male children. To ward boy-children against her, some superstitious folk say, one must take a charm made of silver and inscribe thereon the Names of the three Angels who did bar her from Eden: *Sanvi*, *Sansanvi*, and *Semangetaf*, and place this charm about the child's neck. Such charms are naught but the Devil's work, and no good Christian man would heed such blasphemy....

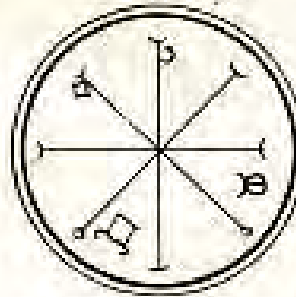


# Signs, Characters, and Magical Knife.

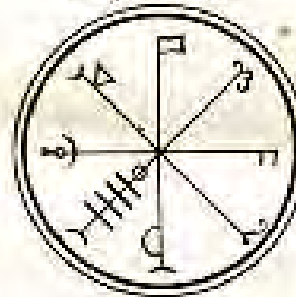
A True Figure of the Circles for the Magister and his Disciples  
to sit in, showing here, and after what fashion it should be made.



Whoever hureth this sign,  
all spirits will be  
brought downe.



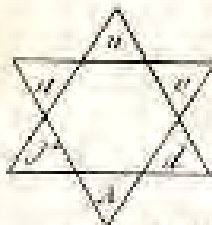
Whoever hureth this sign  
will have his  
spirits downe.



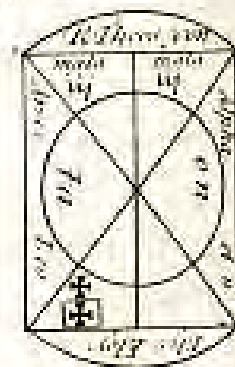
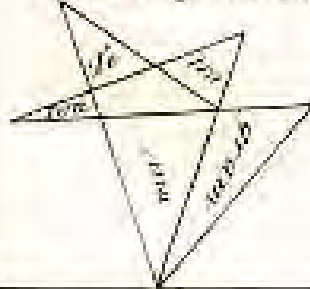
A Good Character



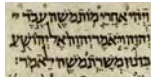
The two Scales of the Earth without which  
no Spirit will appear



The best of Characters



Sanvi, Sansanvi, and Semangetaf.



### **f. Devil's Bend.**

Assuming that the investigators manage to eliminate both Margaret and Amelia Bahl, their troubles are not over. The next time that they are driving over any remote New England road at night--including leaving the scene of a successful nighttime raid on the Bahl residence--the Keeper should stage the following scene.

As the investigators drive along, the weather rapidly deteriorates. A howling wind springs up, and the rain falls in sheets. Another vehicle, a black sedan, is driving up behind the investigators' vehicle at breakneck speed. The headlights of the black sedan are burning, green flames. The flames clearly depict the three figures: a shrieking Margaret Bahl, Amelia Bahl (who is applying lipstick in the vanity mirror), and a headless Emily Bahl. Margaret is driving, Amelia is riding shotgun, and Emily is being drug along behind. Emily's headless corpse bounces into view periodically. SAN loss is 1/1d8.

At this point, the chase is on. The black sedan relentlessly pursues the investigators' vehicle through the rainstorm, and through increasingly bad road conditions. Investigators who jump out are unerringly run over and suffer 3d8 points of damage. Worse still, anyone killed in this particular manner joins the Bahls in the black sedan's rumble seat for all eternity.



**Devil's Bend, nowhere to get off of the road.**

Nothing physical will affect the black sedan; whether spells or magic have any effect is up to the Keeper.

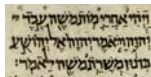
The black sedan's goal is to cause a high-speed accident. If the driver goes insane at the sight of the ghost car, an accident is almost certain, unless a quick-thinking passenger makes a Drive Automobile roll at -20% to grab control. Otherwise, a harrowing chase ensues.

Numerous successful Drive Automobile rolls should be required to stay on the road for any length of time, say to get to the nearest town. U.S. 7 is full of tight turns, so it is easy for the black sedan to force a Drive Automobile roll at a time when failure could have dire consequences (off a bridge, into a ravine, or into another car). If such a roll is failed, each occupant takes 2d6 damage from the crash.

If a Drive Automobile roll is fumbled, the result is far worse. For a bridge, the vehicle goes into the water, with the attendant risk of drowning. A headlong plunge into a ravine is good for 2d8 points of damage; a Luck roll will be needed to avoid being trapped in the wreckage. The wreck then bursts into flames after 1d6 rounds, resulting in 1d6 points of burn damage the first round and 1d3 points each round thereafter until extinguished. The head-on collision option results in 3d8 points of damage, halved on a successful Luck roll.

Cruel Keepers will try to stage this last option: the driving investigator will face criminal charges if he survives. The other driver will have seen no ghostly sedan, and the police will have none of it.

The safest bet for the investigators would be a controlled crash, where the driver deliberately runs off into a pasture or similar area. The black sedan may (or may not) give up and disappear once the investigators reach the nearest town or



crash. Each passenger receives 1d8 points of damage in various bumps and bruises. For dramatic tension, however, a few harrowing incidents should have to be navigated before such an opportunity presents itself.

Another bad idea is to permit a crash with the black sedan, such as by doing a bootlegger's turn right in front of it. If given a chance, the black sedan runs right over the investigators' vehicle. The investigators' vehicle is smashed, and everyone in it takes 3d8 points of damage on impact. The investigators' vehicle bursts into green flames one round later, inflicting 1d6 points of damage in the first round and 1d3 points each round thereafter.

Near wherever the investigators' vehicle comes to rest, cloven hoof prints will be burned into the concrete surface, and the smell of brimstone will be unmistakable. SAN loss for this observation is 0/1. Locals will begin to refer to the area as Devil's Bend.

### g. Catharsis.

Award 2d4 SAN for eliminating both Margaret and Amelia Bahl. If Margaret escapes, charge each investigator 1d3 SAN. If Amelia escapes, charge each investigator 1d3 SAN, plus another 1d3 SAN if they are aware of her true nature. If they prevent the death of Claire Jeplin, award each 1d3 SAN. If Claire Jeplin dies, charge each investigator with 1d3 SAN. Finally, if the investigators escape the revenge of the Bahls at the end of the scenario without casualties, award each investigator 1d3 SAN.



### NPC RECAP

#### Claire Jeplin, Nice Old Lady.

**Nationality:** American.

STR 6	DEX 11	INT 14
CON 10	APP 11	POW 16
SIZ 9	EDU 11	SAN 80
Luck 80	Hits: 10	Age: 72

**Damage Penalty:** -1d4.

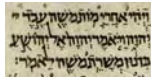
**Education:** some high school.

**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Bargain 55%; Drive Automobile 0%; History (Vermont Folklore) 60%; Witchcraft (stories only) 25%; Persuade 50%; Natural History 35%; Make Maple Sugar Candy 90%.

**Languages:** English 65%; French 25%.

**Attacks:** None to speak of.

**Notes:** Claire is a kind, wise, level-headed and strong-willed woman, steeped in New England tradition. Claire believes that witches used to exist in New England, and has heard many stories about them and their doings. Claire does not believe that the supernatural exists in modern times, at least at the outset of the campaign.



**Margaret Bahl, Candyseller and Careless Driver.**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 10            DEX 11            INT 12  
 CON 11           APP 11            POW 18  
 SIZ 11            EDU 12            SAN 0  
 Luck: 90        Hits: 11        Age: 58

**Damage Penalty:** None.

**Education:** High School; self-taught in recent years.

**Skills:** Accounting 35%; Botany 20%; Chemistry 20%; Cthulhu Mythos 25%; Drive Automobile 15%; Occult 60%; Pharmacy 25%; Sing 50%; Witchcraft 60%; Zoology 20%; Make Maple Sugar Candy 90%.

**Languages:** English 60%; Hebrew 60%.

**Attacks:** Ritual Knife 50%; 1d4+2 damage.

**Spells:** Resurrection, Blight Crops, Call Lilith/Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Child of Lilith.

**Notes:** Margaret is tall, thin, dark-haired and light-skinned. She possesses a Mythos tome, the *Lilith Codex*, a detailed description of which is given above. While not brilliant, Margaret is very crafty when it comes to diverting suspicion away from herself and Amelia.

**Amelia Bahl, Child of Lilith.**

**Nationality:** American?

STR 25            DEX 18            INT 18  
 CON 18           APP 18            POW 25  
 SIZ 10            EDU N/A        SAN 0  
 Luck: 125       Hits: 14        Age: N/A  
 (apparent age 25).

**Damage Bonus:** +1d6.

**Education:** N/A.

**Skills:** Amelia possesses all pertinent skills at 80%, except for Sneak, which is at 60%. Track rolls attempting to follow Amelia are at +50%; just look for the cloven hoof prints.

**Languages:** English 90%; Hebrew 90%.

**Attacks:** Arm, 80%, damage 1d3+db+grab.

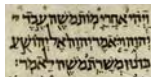
Kiss, only vs. grabbed, enthralled or immobile targets, 1d3 STR drain per round; this STR loss is permanent. Unwilling victims can make a STR vs. STR check to break away each round (good luck!). Enthralled victims are not unwilling. Victims drained to 0 STR are dried, lifeless husks.

**Special Abilities:** Enthral Male: Amelia's heritage gives her special powers over males. Amelia has the ability to hypnotize men into apparent, promised intimacy on a successful POW vs. POW check by meeting their gaze. Amelia uses this ability to set up her Kiss attack. Hypnotized victims can be snapped out of their trance by a successful damage causing attack, or by a successful damage causing attack on Amelia.

**Special Defenses:** Amelia takes damage per the normal Dark Young rules: Firearms other than shotguns only do 1 point of damage, 2 points on an impale. Shotguns do minimum possible damage. Amelia "bleeds" a white, viscous, lumpy fluid; SAN loss for viewing this is 0/1d3 if the viewer has not previously checked SAN for learning Amelia's true nature.

**Spells:** Blight Crops, Implant Fear, Send Dreams, Call Lilith/Shub-Niggurath, Summon/Bind Child of Lilith, Voice of Ra, others the Keeper deems appropriate.





**SAN loss:** None under ordinary circumstances. Seeing Amelia leave behind cloven hoof prints, even when wearing shoes, costs 0/1d3 SAN. Seeing Amelia drain a victim into a lifeless husk costs 1/1d6 SAN; 1/1d8 if the victim was a close associate. Seeing a drained husk alone costs 0/1d4 SAN.

**Notes:** Amelia is a Child of Lilith, a semi-human Dark Young variant conceived when Margaret cast the Summon/Bind Child of Lilith spell. Other Children of Lilith would have similar statistics and abilities, but look like and be loyal to the human that is responsible for their existence. Amelia is immortal, and will never age past her apparent age of 25. She can, however, be killed. She is tall, extremely shapely and fit, dark-haired and fair-skinned, with piercing blue eyes.

**Robert Bahl, Dock Manager.**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 14	DEX 13	INT 13
CON 14	APP 11	POW 13
SIZ 14	EDU 12	SAN 65
Luck: 65	Hits: 14	Age: 45.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School.

**Skills:** Accounting 45%; Credit Rating 35%; Electrical Repair 25%; Drive Automobile 35%; Law 25%; Mechanical Repair 65%; Operate Heavy Machinery 65%; Occult 25% (Champ Lore 75%); Swim 50%; Pilot Boat 75%.

**Languages:** English 60%; French 40%.

**Attacks:** Big Wrench, 50%, 1d6+db; hand-to-hand skills at +10% over base.

**Notes:** A burly, good-natured roughneck who has worked his way up from dockhand to barge pilot to dock manager,

Robert is Margaret Bahl's former brother-in-law. Robert is not at all close to Margaret, but will have a normal amount of interest in the well-being of his "nieces."

**Sheriff Martin Hudson, Bennington County (Heaven help him).**

**Nationality:** American.

STR 13	DEX 13	INT 13
CON 13	APP 11	POW 13
SIZ 14	EDU 13	SAN 65
Luck 65	Hits: 14	Age: 45.

**Damage Bonus:** +1d4.

**Education:** High School; Police Academy.

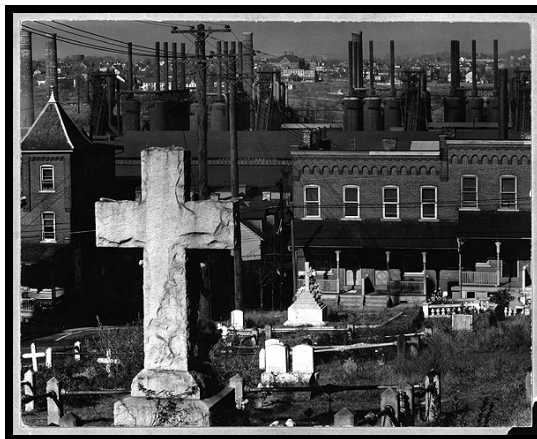
**Skills:** Accounting 25%; Credit Rating 50%; Dodge 38%; Drive Automobile 45%; Law 35%; Psychology 55%; Spot Hidden 55%; Track 55%.

**Languages:** English 70%; French 25%.

**Attacks:** Handgun Attack 49%, 1d10 damage (.38 revolver).

Nightstick Attack 55%, 1d6+db.

**Notes:** A no-nonsense cop who, while honest, thinks that people who babble on about the supernatural are disturbed and need to be locked up.



**The end of an era.**



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Additional (copyrighted) period photographs of Iceland can be found online at the Fiske Icelandic Collection, <http://cidc.library.cornell.edu/howell>



Under new management?

## MAPS & HANDOUTS

### **Invitation to the Dance, Investigator Handout #1.**

#### **Spooks at St. Peters' Churchyard?**

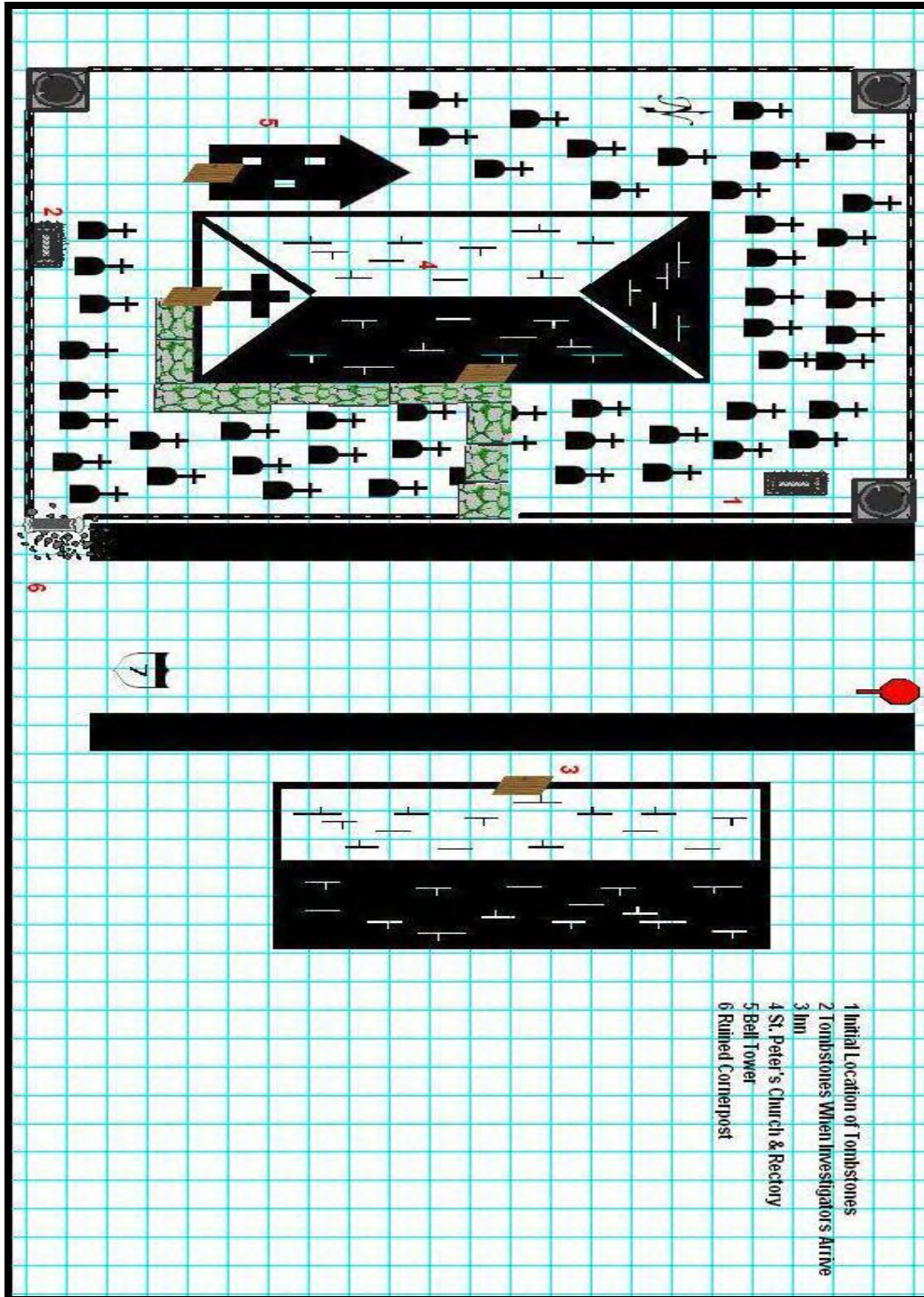
Unknown vandals working during the middle of the night desecrated two graves at St. Peter's Churchyard in Bennington, VT earlier this week, moving two gravestones from one corner of the yard to another. Sheriff Martin Hudson reported no leads. The tombstones belonged to two persons who died in the late 18th century, Jeremiah Moon and Constance Jeffries, d. 1790 and 1789 respectively. The stones, each easily weighing over 100 pounds a piece, and having been in the earth for hundreds of years, were found neatly stacked on top of one another, one flat on the ground and the other standing atop it. Despite the churchyard's location in central Bennington, no one apparently witnessed the incident, which must have taken the vandals some time to complete due to the weight and age of the gravestones. Sheriff Hudson speculated that it must have been the work of school-aged pranksters.

### **Invitation to the Dance, Investigator Handout #2: Witch Trial Transcript.**

The box of documents pertaining to Constance Jeffries includes reports of services at which Jeremiah Moon behaved as though bewitched; diary excerpts wherein Jeremiah Moon confesses to the authoring reverend of being visited in carnal dreams by Constance Jeffries and "ridden" by her through the night skies over New England; several increasingly impassioned sermons about the continued dangers of witchcraft; and finally, the doubtlessly anticipated transcript of a secret witch trial held against Constance Jeffries in 1789 by the town fathers. There is a considerable amount of correspondence between the town fathers and members of the clergy in Boston as to how one should hold a witch trial. The church fathers in Boston took the position that the populace of Bennington had taken leave of its senses, but there is a great deal of disturbing detail in the letters from Bennington pleading for advice. These letters include numerous claims about Jeremiah Moon being carnally tormented by Mistress Jeffries, even in her (apparent) absence.

Finally, in desperation, the people of Bennington look overseas for assistance, and procured the services of one Zbigniew Czyzny, an unreconstructed witch-hunter from Poland. Czyzny conducted a textbook witch trial, the textbook in this case being the Malleus Maleficarum. The trial did not go as he anticipated, however.

Czyzny writes in his transcript how Constance Jeffries scoffed at the allegations, scoffed at Czyzny, and scoffed at Czyzny's religion. Worse, throughout the course of the trial Czyzny finds himself fondled, caressed and serviced by unseen entities while Mistress Jeffries cleaned her nails or whistled a tune. Jeremiah Moon testified in graphic detail and at length about the nighttime visitations of Mistress Jeffries, which include "riding" him to witches' sabbats as far away as Boston. Mistress Jeffries was of course promptly found guilty. After a long debate as to whether she should be burnt or hanged, the consensus settled upon a traditional New England hanging. At the time, Vermont was an independent republic with its capital at Bennington, placing the "national leaders" in the loop, so no reprisals or subsequent investigation of the witch-trial occurred. After the execution, Czyzny elected to take "certain precautions" with the body, creating a ward around the churchyard where Constance was disposed of. Czyzny refers to the ward as the Banishment of the Bells. While it is apparent from the correspondence that burying her in a corner of the churchyard was a controversial decision, Czyzny convinced the populace that the sound of the bells would keep her spirit at bay.



Tactical Overview of Churchyard, *Invitation to the Dance*.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #1: "Phantom Schoolgirl" Article.****"Phantom Schoolgirl" Haunts Pownal??**

An old New England chestnut has taken a modern twist in a story related by Bennington County, VT sheriff Martin Hudson. Sheriff Hudson advises that a Mr. Robert Dodson of Boston, MA recently surrendered himself, claiming that he had accidentally killed a young woman in an automobile accident. According to Mr. Dodson, he had been driving between the town of Pownal and the state line on a dark, rainy night when he came upon a black automobile stuck in the mud. Mr. Dodson stopped to render assistance to the girl. Mr. Dodson did not obtain her name, but she told him that she was trying to get to school in Massachusetts. Mr. Dodson stated that he could not free the vehicle from the mud, but loosened it somewhat. The girl then asked the imaginative Mr. Dodson to turn over the engine while she pushed, in the hope of finally freeing the vehicle.

Mr. Dodson claims that he complied, but that the girl let out a shriek and the rear wheel of the vehicle ran over something. According to Mr. Dodson (or is it Mr. Crane?), the "Phantom Schoolgirl's" body was found under the car, but her head was missing. Mr. Dodson, in what she described as a state of fright, then rushed to report the matter to the Sheriff Martin Hudson's office. The Sheriff investigated the next morning and found no trace of any black automobile or schoolgirl.

Mr. Dodson has not reported any vengeful headless spectres pursuing him, either with flaming pumpkins or without.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #2--General Background on "Black Carriage" legends.**

"Black Carriage" stories or variants thereof are common in New England folklore. The typical "Black Carriage" story involves a person attempting a foolish journey in difficult conditions, either by horseback, carriage, or occasionally by sleigh. Invariably the person fails to complete the journey, but their ghost begins to haunt the stretch of road over which they last traveled. Sometimes the person disappears without a trace; on other occasions only part of the body is recovered. On dark, stormy nights, the spectre of the traveler is sometimes encountered: a black carriage drawn by horses with glowing eyes; a headless horseman riding a black steed; or some other variation on the theme. The spectres tend to be reckless and malevolent, chasing travelers and thereby putting them into a situation where they suffer an accident of their own. This is not always the case; in some instances the spectre is merely lost and seeks the traveler's aid in reaching their destination. In many of the stories, the only evidence that the spectre has come and gone is the presence of cloven hoofprints at the site of the encounter.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #3: Letter from Margaret Bahl to Dean Clarence Williams, dated roughly 20 years ago.**

33 Allen Avenue

Burlington, Vermont

Sept. 5, 19--

Mr. Clarence Williams, Dean

Miskatonic University

Arkham, Mass.

Dear Dean Williams,

I am writing to inform you that my daughter Emily Bahl will be unable to begin at Miskatonic University this term. Our family has experienced a downturn in finances. Please excuse any inconvenience.

Very Truly Yours,

Margaret Bahl

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #4: Background Information on Lilith.**

Lilith is a "Dark Goddess" archetype that appears in many different traditions, but is perhaps most completely treated in certain medieval Judaic works. In Babylonian myth, Lilith is a sort of succubus that tempts men but ultimately gives no satisfaction. She represents procreative potential unfulfilled. In the Talmud, Lilith is described as the first wife of Adam. When Lilith would not unite with Adam in the man-superior position, because she perceived herself as his equal, she fled Eden and subsequently gave birth to thousands of demons.

Lilith is treated more extensively in the *Zohar*, the 13th Century Cabalistic commentary on the Old Testament. In the *Zohar*, Lilith is depicted as having the upper body of a beautiful woman, but being flame from the navel down. After her breakup with Adam, Lilith becomes the consort of Samael, a blind angel or blind dragon who serves as the Cabalistic devil. As the bride of the devil, Lilith obviously fits in well with New England witchcraft legends. To men, she fulfills the archetypal roles of seductive witch, strangling mother, and succubus. Other aspects of Lilith involve her role as the wild, instinctual, feminine force in Nature. She roams wild at night, and is a particular threat to male children. The screech owl is the animal most often associated with Lilith. Lilith also has a lunar aspect, tied to the waning of the moon.

Treatments of Lilith conflict on whether Lilith can be seen as a fertility symbol. In Babylonian tradition, she is infertile. In the *Zohar*, she is quite fertile. Her offspring, however, are demonic. She is always a force opposed to normal children and normal procreation in either tradition.

**The Sap Keeps Running, Investigator Handout #5, an excerpt from *Thaumaturgical Prodigies in the New English Canaan.***

Lilith is known as the infernal bride of the Devil, and delights in the strangling of unbaptized children, especially male children. To ward boy-children against her, some superstitious folk say, one must take a charm made of silver and inscribe thereon the Names of the three Angels who did bar her from Eden: *Sanvi, Sansanvi, and Semangetaf*; and place this charm about the child's neck. Such charms are naught but the Devil's work, and no good Christian man would heed such blasphemy....

**The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #1: An Excerpt from *Of Evil Sorceries***

(Zvilpoggua) hath the Likeness of a great Toade, black as pitch and glist'ning with foetid slime, bewing'd like ye Bat and with ye nether-limbs of ye Behemothe, splayed and clawed and Webb'd betwixt ye Toes thereof, and Face hath it naught, butte from where ye Face shouldst e'en be sprouteth a Horrid Beard of crawling tentacles. And it feasteth of the Fleshe, and Swilleth of ye Bloode of Men, but at its gluttonous Leisure, for first it is said to bear men aloft into ye Sky, and may bear them thus an hundred Leagues or more ere it will rip and tear and Feede, then dropping them to Earth far from whence it snatch'd them up.

To Summon-Down the Feaster from the Stars, seek those nights when first Algol riseth above ye Horizon, and, if that ye be Thirteen gather'd in Coven, join hands in ye ring about ye Stone and chaunt in unison as followeth, Iä! Iä! Iä! N'ghaa, n'n'ghai-ghai! Iä! Iä! N'ghai, n-yah, n-yah, shoggog, phthaghn! Iä! Iä! Y-hah, y-nyah, y-nyah! N'ghaa, n'n'ghai, waphl phthaghn-Zvilpoggua! Zvilpoggua! N'gui, n'-gha'ghaa y'hah, Zvilpoggua! Ai! Ai! Ai! And note well that ye Response to ye Name Zvilpoggua, the which is to be onlie chaunted by ye Coven-Master, is Ghu-Tsathoggua, the which doth signify ye Son of Tsathoggua, and ye above Name onlie may be spake forth in ye common or vulgar Tongue.

(*Strange Notebook Found in the Vermont Woods*, by Lin Carter).

**The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #2: from the *Book of Eibon* or other Mythos tome.**

The legends of Commoriom tell of a particularly foolish wizard, one Torrik, who a score of generations ago turned his face from the worship of Tsathoggua in search of an explanation for the series of tides that menaced his City. Searching for answers, he consulted lore best left unseen, and communed with the Feaster, who boasted that he was responsible for the tides and that unless he was venerated over his father, they would continue until Commoriom was no more. The Son of the Toad and his dark servants began to harvest the men of Commoriom to sate Zvilpoggua's endless hunger. This continued on for many years, until Torrik grew old and died. The tides did not abate, and the men of Commoriom built a sturdy break wall to protect their realm. Zvilpoggua is a creature of the aether and the air; how could he influence the tides?



### **The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #3: Summary of “Champ” Lore**

- Some historians place the earliest sighting of the creature by a European with Samuel de Champlain, after whom the lake is named. Champlain is supposed to have mentioned the creature in a chronicle he wrote in 1609. A careful reading of the text, though, shows that the animal described by Champlain might have been a large garfish, rather than a monster.
- After Champlain’s initial report, there are no Champ reports for over two hundred years. The area around Lake Champlain (with the exception of Burlington) was sparsely settled until the early 1800s, when there was a large (150,000) and sudden influx of settlers. It is not unusual for encounters between humans and wildlife to increase when humans start to pressure their habitat, Bahl can volunteer that most wild animals--especially predators--prefer to avoid humans unless they can no longer help it.
- One of the earliest reported sightings occurred in 1819, when early settlers reported seeing a large “beast” of some sort stick its head out of the water and flee quickly.
- Reports of the monster start showing up in large numbers in newspapers around 1873. This coincides with the advent of regular steamboat traffic on the lake.
- According to an 1873 story in the *New York Times*, a railroad work crew was laying track near Dresden, New York, when they saw the head of an "enormous serpent" emerge from the water. After a moment of paralyzing shock, the workmen ran away. The creature, in turn, swam away. Witnesses reported that the animal had bright, silver-like scales that glistened in the sun. "The appearance of his head was round and flat, with a hood spreading out from the lower part of it like a rubber cap often worn by mariners."
- In August of that same year, a small steamship, loaded with tourists, allegedly struck the creature and nearly turned over. According to newspaper accounts, the head and neck of the animal were sighted afterward about 100 feet from the ship.
- In 1878 and 1879, there were several sightings reported, including by a yachting party and three University of Vermont students. The three students reportedly saw about 15 feet worth of monster above the water. Showman P.T. Barnum posted a \$50,000 reward for the "hide of the great Champlain serpent to add to my mammoth World's Fair Show" around this time.
- Reports appeared in the newspapers for the rest of that century. In July of 1883 the Clinton County Sheriff saw "an enormous snake or water serpent" which he estimated to be 25-35 feet long.
- In 1887, a farm boy spotted the creature "making noises like a steamboat" a mile out in the lake. That same year, a group of picnickers near Charlotte, Vermont, reported seeing an animal 75 feet long and "big around as a barrel" out in the water.
- Also in 1887, a group of picnickers saw Champ coming around a bend, getting spooked when people screamed, and fleeing under the waves.
- While on board the steamer “The Spirit of Ethan Allen,” in 1884, 80 people saw a greenish-brown, 30 foot long monster that had several humps.
- In 1886, a gentleman was duck hunting when he saw a giant serpent-like creature with legs curled up onshore. When he moved slightly, it ferociously reared its head and crashed its way through the bushes.
- Another group of picnickers were startled and dispersed in 1892, scattering canoeists.
- In 1915, according to the *New York Times*, a couple of witnesses supposedly got a look at a 40’ specimen floundering in the mud on the New York side of the lake. It moved surprisingly quickly, however, and fled under the water heading for Vermont. (Bob Bahl has spent a lot of time trying to find these people, without success. He doubts that they exist).
- Most reports describe Champ as anywhere between 10 and 200 feet long, with one to four or more humps or up to five arching coils. Colors reported range from black, to a dark head and white body (like an orca), to gray, to black and gray, to brown. Some have described the beast as furry, drab or shiny, or even slimy.

### **The Beast of Lake Champlain, Investigator Handout #4**

A man of my Order has told me of one Prudence Goode, whom the people on the shores of Lake Champlain did try as a witch in the Year of our Lord 1720. Mistress Goode was placed upon the ducking-stool and given trial by water in Lake Champlain. It is said by some that true witches will float, while the innocent sink. When they lifted up the ducking-stool, Mistress Goode was gone. In her place it is said was a great black Serpent. The Serpent didst escape into the depths of the Lake. It is known to many that the Serpent is a common form of the Devil. After hearing this tale, I journeyed to this settlement, and did bless the waters of the Lake.

### **Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #1: an Abenaki story about the Night Village**

In the mountains near the Hoosic River was a place where shamans would go to be alone. It was a place that no one else was allowed to live. The shaman's retreat was known as the Night Village, and had been there as long as any could remember.

Many centuries ago, a strange wizard from distant lands went to the Night Village. His followers were spirits. They ignored the children, but took the men and women of nearby villages. None of these people ever returned. Soon, a council of the shamans was held. They decided to attack the wizard, and succeeded in driving him away. When they returned, it was decided to build a camp at the Night Village, to guard against the wizard's return. However, those that were sent there were not heard from. People sent to the Night Village to find them never returned. People sent to find these searchers never returned. Eventually, the shamans decreed that the Night Village should be shunned. And so it was.

### **Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #2: Abernathy's Saga Annotations**

- The *Saga* is written in kenning, using heavy and often obscure metaphor. Abernathy was puzzled initially, but seems to have gotten the gist of things when he realized that the author was obscuring Olaf Ulfsson's penchant for dark sorcery.
- This place was known to Olaf as the "Shadow School" or "Black Lodge", a place where he apparently thought that he could parlay with dark powers.
- Olaf was driven off by the local Abenaki. He took some time to plot his revenge before leaving.
- Olaf was famed for his cunning, ironic revenges.
- Abernathy believes that Olaf put a curse on the site, via an enormous "níð-pole" at the mound.
- The idea of the curse was to give the Abenaki what they wanted--sole possession of the "Black Lodge"--and to make them regret it.
- A complete understanding of the exact particulars of an ironic Viking curse is essential to escape it.
- Physically destroying a níð-pole is difficult and dangerous, and often results in the death of the destroyer.

**Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #3: The Runes, Translated.**

“Any who dwell in the shadow of the Black Lodge, in the shadow of this níð pole, shall dwell there forevermore. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.”

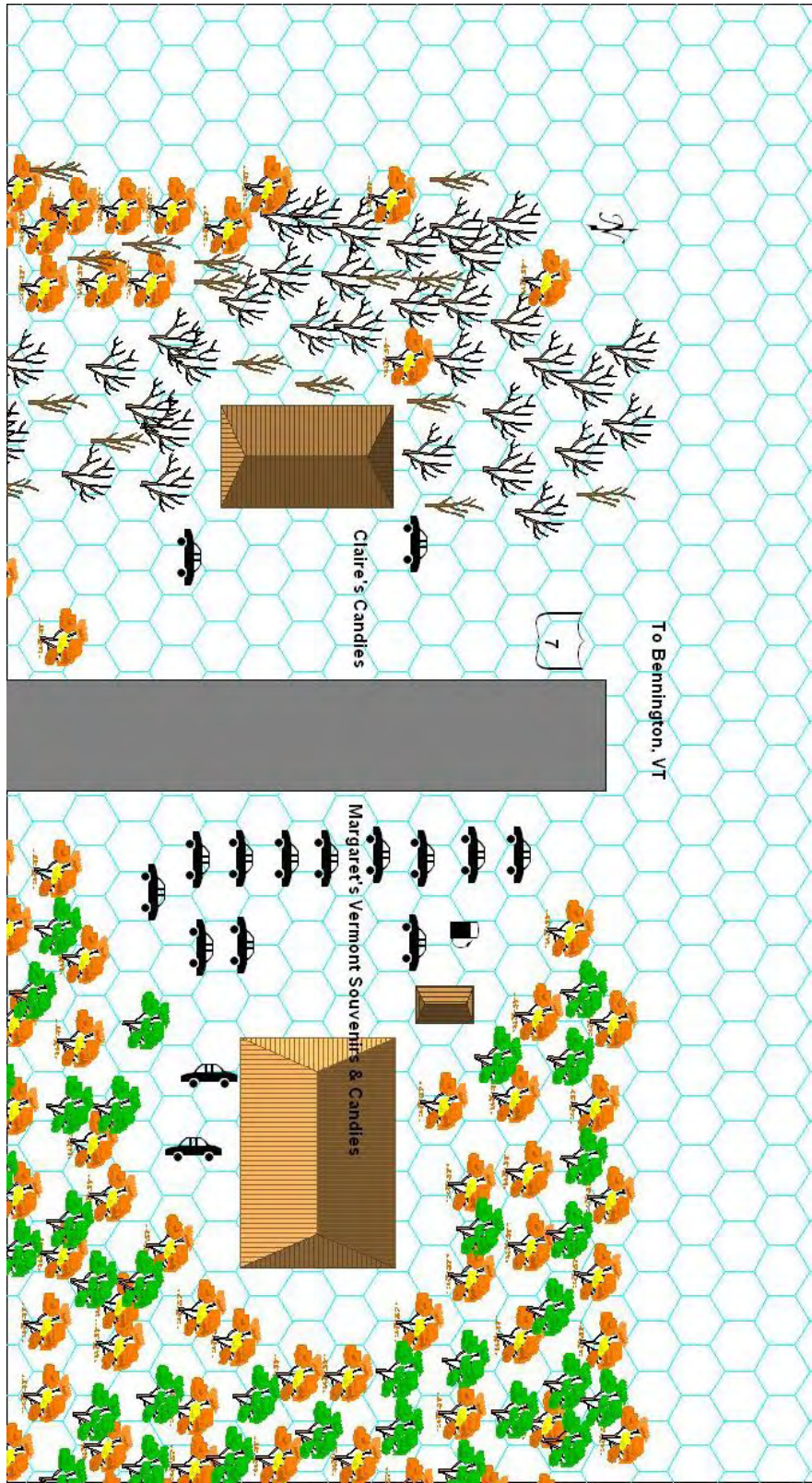
The term “níð” does not translate exactly into English. The closest is “magical curse”, although there is an innuendo of both revenge and justice in the term.

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**Home, Sweet Home, Investigator Handout #3: The Runes, Translated.**

“Any who dwell beneath the Black Lodge, beneath this níð pole, shall dwell there forever. Let all who seek it, find it; let those who shun its hospitality, suffer it.”

The term “níð” does not translate exactly into English. The closest is “magical curse”, although there is an innuendo of both revenge and justice in the term.



*The Sap Keeps Running, Margaret and Claire's homesteads, overview.*



Interior Map of Margaret Bahl's Vermont Candies

- Ground Floor
1. Storefront
  2. Storeroom (secret trap door to Basement)
  3. Bathroom
  4. Kitchen/Dining Room (back door to Back Woods, Stairs up to Second Floor)
  5. Margaret's Bedroom



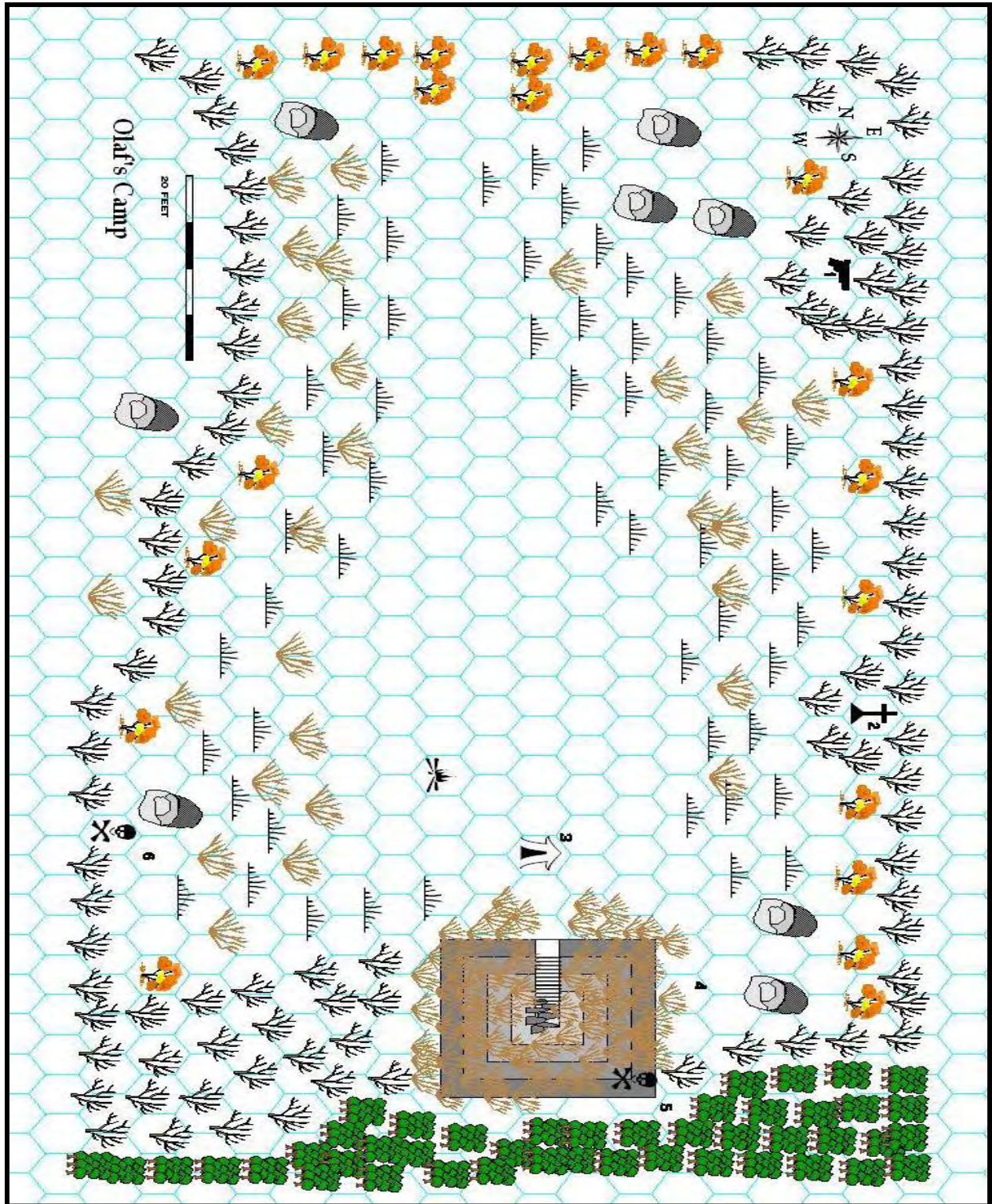
- Second Floor
6. Amelia's Room
  7. Emily's Room
  8. Study
  9. Upstairs Bathroom
  10. Spare Room



- Basement/Study/Resurrection Lab
1. Emily's (Headless) Remains
  2. Darkness (Gate)
  3. Altar and Statue (Lith)
  4. Stairs up to Ground Floor
  5. Restricted Library Stacks

*The Sap Keeps Running*, floor plan for Bahl's store and house.





*Home, Sweet Home, campsite map.*





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