

A Brief History

The New Harbor Colony was established in the year 1597, on the same site as Roanoke colony which vanished in 1587. During the 10 years between the Roanoke mysterious disappearance New Harbors founding several smaller settlements and forts were attempted and lost. The earliest settlers endured incredible hardships, many starved or were killed in conflicts with the natives but thanks to the providence of god and the last minute intervention by the crown the colony has survived. Early in 1600 Queen Elizabeth the first received a letter that the prior colonial governor had been killed defending the colony but peace had finally been secured but it was unlikely the colony would survive with no food and few skilled people left alive to rebuild. In one of her last acts before her passing the great monarch declared a royal expedition of the finest experts in the land, no expense was to be spared. When the expedition still could not be completely filled people of quality from all of Europe were found to fill in the gaps. A fleet full of supplies and new people landed in the winter of 1601. Well supplied and full of hope and expertise these second wave of colonists turned the tide and for the first time New Harbor began to prosper. You came to the new world on the great second expedition, you answered the crowns call despite the dangers and uncertainty of the new world. The year has just turned and winter will soon be over in 1603. Your first year has been hard but the all is seems well in the colony. Food reserves lasted the winter, trade and peace has flourished with the nearby tribes and a strange optimism lights the future. Today, your old life seems a distant memory and tomorrow is full of promise.

Setting and Time Period

While this is the story does take place in an alternate history 1601 and has strong survival horror elements associated with an isolated colony in a distant and unexplored land, visually and technologically the period will be closer to the year 1700. This means you are free to choose modes of dress that were common between 1575s (closer to Conquistadors and Pilgrims) thru 1700 (more like Pirates of the Caribbean and Sleepy Hollow). Players will start close to 1600s era technology and have the opportunity to progress.

Another major alteration to the historical setting will be gender equality. Women and men can hold any occupation in the new world. This has evolved out of the need for everyone to fully participate for the survival of the colony. Women can be skilled crafters, own and run their own farm and even rise to become community leaders. It is still uncommon for a woman to be in certain occupations like sailors and soldiers but it's not so rare as to merit notice.

Religious and racial tolerance, while not a modern utopia the members of the New Harbor Colony are much more tolerant of various ethnicities and denominations of Christianity. The colonies official religion is Church of England but there are many Calvinist, Shakers, Quakers, Puritans and even Catholics in the colony. If someone practices another religion outside of Christianity they should expect some level of persecution and mistrust and likely need to keep it a secret. The colony is also relatively tolerant of other ethnicities since many volunteers came from all across Europe to answer the call of the second wave. The Colony is still an English colony and there can be tensions during times of war but for the most part the feuds of Europe seem like a distant problem compared to the daily survival concerns of the colony. The philosophical views of the colonist may also cover a wider time period than was

historically accurate. We will be allowing a 1575 – 1700 time range so Quakers and many other protestant denominations have come on to the scene, humanism is gaining wider acceptance and parts of Europe are beginning to embrace the enlightenment.

Superstition versus Science

Society in the Europe and the colony are undergoing a major thought shift as ideas from the enlightenment begin to spread. Those with more education or have lived in Western European capitals (this includes German and Italian city states) are more likely to have begun favoring science as an explanation for the larger world around them while those from more distant and rural locations are more likely to still cling to superstition to answer questions about natural phenomenon. The setting for the Colony will be a Darker and gritty version of Sleepy Hollow. “Supernatural” events will occur just outside the peripheral of PCs and will often have plausible scientific explanations. At game start all occurrences will have a rational explanation though many odd events may be witnessed in this strange and new land. This may change based on player decisions, a thematic component of this game will be this tension between the rational and forces beyond the players comprehension. A struggle will be occurring between science and the supernatural to determine the fate of the new world.

Darkness is the measure of how dark and supernatural the setting will become. Acts of evil or ignoring the evil acts of others will raise the darkness counter for the world. Acts of good and sacrifice to help others and the colony will push back the darkness. As this counter increases the players will be more likely to encounter the supernatural and the strength and fantastical nature of these supernatural occurrences will grow. At 100 darkness old gods will rise and destroy the new world, there will be no survivors. Players will frequently be offered short cuts to get what they want in exchange for increasing the colonies darkness. Other players will need to be very vigilant to catch and stop players harming the colony in this way.

New Haven Social Groups

Old Colonists - These colonists have survived several very harsh years together and formed surprisingly close knit bonds with one another. Even those that dislike one another treat each other with grudging respect. Only about half these colonists were there from the beginning, many of the others are traders, trappers, explorers and remnants of other expeditions. You should expect any member of this group to have strong combat and survival skills, anyone who wasn't is no longer with us. PCs may not be a member of this group. (About 100 Colonists remain)

Second Wave (The Royal Expedition) – The vast majority of PCs will be from this group. They saved the colony during winter of 1601 and won the goodwill of most the Old Colonists. They represent the majority of skilled crafts men and successful farmers in the colony. The majority of these colonists are from the elite of a rising merchant class. They are often close socially and friendly towards one another but do not share the same kind of bonds as the old colonists. You should expect any member of this group to be more educated and skilled with a trade or useful knowledge's than most people of their time. Any PC making a member of the expedition will receive additional XP to purchase knowledge and trade based skills. (About 100 Colonists remain)

Others – Anyone who has come to the colony after the second wave is a member of this group. It mainly includes merchants, traders, sailors and exiles from other colonies. These exiles are often motivated by a difference in religious views as most the other colonies are very small, close knit religious communities. This group is so widely varied it is hard to define them further and make up a very small number of overall colonists.

New Colonists – Rumors have begun to swirl around the colony that King James has funded a new expedition of colonists. Many members of the colony fondly remember all the great things that came over during the last expedition and hardly a day goes by there is not rampant speculation about the great things they will accomplish for the colony.

Background thoughts for Characters

Life in the new world is difficult, PCs will need to have a strong reason to motivate them to leave their old life behind and make their way in this new land. This is especially true of second wave colonist with the royal expedition. These colonists had relatively good lives as skilled and educated members of the merchant class. Some possible ideas are, religious persecution, gender inequality, ambition, personal tragedy, on the run from enemies and second chance stories. Please do not let this limit you but you will need a reason why your character would risk such hardship and keep it in mind when considering your characters motivations.

Notes from the Storyteller

Nothing here is set in stone, I will continue to evolve and add to this document. This is new and you should expect some things to not be perfect. I will do my best to make fixes quickly as they come up with player fun and remaining true to the story as my main priorities. I will also be asking players to assist at different points with adding their own stories and ideas. This may come in the form of back ground secrets woven in to the larger plot, writing side plots and adding details to NPCs. I will be posting more background information and creation rules later this month. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or suggestions you may have. Expect next major update to include basic rules including character creation to be added towards end of month.