

C-13 [The 13 Colonies]

Role-Playing in an Alternate Universe



A Letter to a Visitor from the Dream World

Dear Traveler,

Let me welcome you to the World of the Thirteen Colonies. Our world is almost a mirror image of yours—in yours, the Thirteen Colonies are a dream. In ours, the world of America and all that she means at the dawn of the twenty-first century is a dream—an important dream but ultimately no more real to us than our world is to yours.

So where to start?

There is no good place. Any simple statement that attempts to describe my world oversimplifies everything and does nothing justice.

So I'll start with the name. It's as good a place as any. The Thirteen Colonies. Well, we don't call it that here—that would be stupid. To us, it's simply our world.

You call it the world of the Thirteen Colonies because that—the founding of the original thirteen American colonies—is where your history and ours diverge.

Remember your lessons? The colonies, followed by the Revolution and then the founding of the United States of America under the Articles of Confederation . . . a few years later, the Constitutional Congress gave birth to the Constitution of the United States of America (you do recall this, don't you? Fifth Grade American History? Mrs. Hargrave scratching out dates in white chalk while you were trying to hit little Suzie Williams in the back of the head wad of paper armed with a chewing gum warhead? Or maybe it was that red-headed kid . . . anyway).

Ah—right. USA. A tiff with the Spanish . . . Mexico. Manifest Destiny. The Gold rush. The Great War. The Greatest Generation. Watergate. Punk Rock. Billy Joel plays the Soviet Union, and so on.

Your world.

None of that happened here.

Here, in the world of the Thirteen Colonies, men came from Europe to the Strange New World that St. Columbus had discovered a little over a century ago. They weren't the first—the Spanish had come first and had come back with gold and nightmares.

But no one ever listens to the Spanish—not in your world, and not in ours—so no one believed it when they said that there were immense golden cities in the deep jungles, abandoned, and covered with carnivorous vines or that the ziggurats built by the natives housed scaled, blind things that spoke in old-woman hisses and could remember the future.

Everyone was impressed with the gold, of course, but they knew that between bragging and drinking, the Conquistadors were not, how shall we say this, reliable witnesses.

So the 1500's went along pretty much as they did in your world, just as the 10,000 years before that matched your world also.

Steam Punk? Modern Day Magic? Historical?

C-13 is some of all of these.

Technology stops around 1940 but air transit is handled by blimp. Out on the frontier a musket is more reliable than machine-tooled parts.

Ships like the Titanic ply the seas and telegraph is still a good way to send a letter. There aren't elves but there are mutations, the Tribes (half-humans), and other races.

You can ride a motorcycle with a .45 on your hip looking at the world through a cool set of shades. You can fight a boarding action thousands of feet above the Art-Deco Metropolis of New York City (still called New Amsterdam by many!) You can spell-duel with summoned demons or sell your soul in an illegal Atlantic City casino.

What About The Rest of the World?

Well, we've got over a hundred pages on thirteen little colonies and you want a few more nations and continents thrown in? Boy are you demanding!

Europe: The seas are dominated by the British Empire (who has her many colonies across the globe). The Ottoman Empire still stands to the East, though and fields the most powerful army in Europe.

In the Middle East the Elemental Jinn have great power here and the swath of desert boasts sparkling cities that are exotic and hard to reach. Egypt is a land of mysteries and spectacles. While magic is "weaker" across the water, the presence of the Jinn have lead to miracles both awesome and terrifying.

Russia is a vast, grim expanse of tundra. There is still a Tsar and a royal family there. It is a place of bloody revolutions. There are architectural marvels, massive cathedrals, and untold wealth in difficult to reach natural resources.

India is a colony but it is also an ancient land and has its own magic. Secret societies, vastly powerful beings ("The Demiurges") and unexplored inlands (unexplored by English colonials, that is) leave it and China as great question marks as well.

It was the English and the Dutch, and those who came—not to plunder, but to live—that discovered how strange a world they lived in.

And there, my friend, your history and ours diverge.

Yours went on as I briefly outlined a few paragraphs ago, and ours—in a great many ways—stopped.

In your world it is (and I, ahem, hedge) about 2000 and 2 (or so). And so it is (about) the same in ours. But while your world has seen genetic engineering, microprocessors, women's rights, MTV, a lunar landing, and Nick Cave, ours has not.

In the world of the Thirteen Colonies, there is no United States of America. There is still a British Empire—still an Ottoman Empire, too for that matter. The population of the world circa 1600 AD was about yea-million, and it is still about yea-million . . . not the 6+ billion that it is in yours.

But this is not because everyone was frozen, like your Han Solo, in carbonite. This is not because the men of the world of the Thirteen Colonies were forbidden to act or think.

Things stopped for two reasons—

Magic and how it Changes Nothing

The first is that Magic makes it possible. In your world growth and change cannot stop. If nothing else, short of global catastrophe, population growth will continue exponentially. Not so in a world with Magic. Magic is both blunt and subtle, and it subtly tricks conception so that certain couplings will produce one child and no more.

But population is not the only thing that forces change you say—what of technology? And you're right. Technology is an agent of change like no other and as men's minds work within the world, they find the tools to change it.

But Magic works against this as well—again, both subtly and overtly. Overtly, Magic provides many of the same conveniences that technology does, making technological advancement somewhat redundant. But men never needed a *reason* to invent. And so magic is subtle. It makes chemical and atomic reactions of certain kinds unpredictable. Technology past a certain point—transistors, for instance—simply cannot be built reliably in the world of the Thirteen Colonies.

Technology at about the level of the 1940's is achievable, but beyond that, there's nothing but chaos.

And if Magic limits technology and governs population growth, it does one other thing that has made the status quo last—it provides a third and perhaps most potent balancing agent: it satisfies men's wishes at home, while threatening them abroad.

In your world slaves were needed to feed the ravenous agricultural economies of the West Indies and the Southern States. In the world of the Thirteen Colonies, there were

never slaves in the New World because summonsed creatures were simply cheaper. Magic can light rooms, clean houses, and erect walls. It can send messages across a great distance. It can cure disease. It does all of these things in different ways, and it cannot be mass-produced. But Magic takes the edge off life at home.

And it adds that edge to life in the wild. Your world had Indians? Our world has the Tribes and Monsters. Your world had pirates? Ours has Vampire Ships. In your world sea monsters were legends. In ours, Kraken that can take down a ship with all hands are terrifyingly real.

Magic is a balancing force and a harsh mistress, but it is not the only reason that, from the year 1600 AD to 2000 AD, the shape of their world has been remarkably constant. Magic, alone, is necessary but not sufficient.

So what is the second factor that has kept the Empire (there is no need to say British) sunset-less? What has kept the dream of the United States of America at bay? Simply this—

Magic makes it possible, but the decision of men to stay the course has made it happen.

You see, you are only vaguely aware of our world, but we are very aware of yours. If not for magic, we would live in your world and we still see it in visions and half-remembered images. We call your world The Dream—The Dream of what would have been.

And although yours is a world of miracles, it is also a world of nightmares—and so we have, for four hundred years, appreciated what we have rather than what might have been.

It would be wrong to say that during this time nothing has happened. Much has happened.

There has been a war (The Great War—there is still nothing to match it and simply give it a number). What else? There has been a western expansion, but colonizing the New World has proven all but impossible (Magic again—you'll learn the details of the Deeps and the Shallows; I needn't go into it here). And what else?

A thousand details. One which bares mentioning is the little matter of the Colonies, the British Empire, and the Revolutionary War. It never happened here.

Why? Because the Crown was too powerful to defy?

Not exactly. In this world, with magic at the fringes (India and the Americas are both highly magical places), the colonies have some advantages they didn't have in your world (so does Britain for that matter). It's quite conceivable that in the short term, at least, the colonies could fight and win an Independence War (shots were exchanged, as you might guess around 1776 or so in places like Lexington and Concord).

Eventually, though, it comes down to will: the Colonies never revolted because they did not need to.

Forgetting History and Repeating It

We've done a lot of historical research for C-13. Considering that the world was an "alternate universe" to begin with, why'd we bother?

The answer was that C-13 is supposed to have a *sense* of history to it, even as it wildly diverges. Also, to be honest we couldn't make better stuff up if we tried. Bringing the named lions on the steps of the New York Public Library to life was a no-brainer—the George Washington's *Adventurers for Draining the Great Dismal Swamp* (a real company!) would've been pedantic if we'd invented it!

The New Debate (not what type of *government* should we have, but what type of *universe* should we have) may not be the focus of the game you choose to play in this world, but the charged nature of 'people on the brink of a great event' should permeate it—even if it never, in game-time, get settled.

What if I'm Not American?

Lots of our favorite JAGS players aren't from the states—why should they care?

1. The game doesn't have to take place in North America and if it does the characters don't have to be Colonists.
2. There are plenty of "good guys" from all over—Britannia is an alternate world where England is ascendant and its one of the better choices for a universe from our perspective!
3. The Colonies aren't America. Sure, they're aware of The Dream and Manifest Destiny—but they aren't the world-spanning Super Power the US is today. An ultra-valuable jewel to European nations and under protection from England they're far different.

The Great Debate

In our schools, our Mrs. Hargrave was teaching their little Suzie Williams and the red-headed kid and that awful smart-ass in the back of the room (you know who I'm talking about). She was droning on about the Great Debate, while you were ignoring the lecture on the Birth of America.

The Great Debate happened in both worlds, with different decisions and different results. In yours, the men of the Constitutional Convention debated how their nation should be run. They debated the nature of individual freedom and the benefits of a strong central government against those of a loose confederation of states.

The Great Debate in your world (reality, as you call it) was answered with a decision to form the One Nation, Indivisible, which would thereby provide Liberty and Justice for All (well, that was the idea anyway. Whether it worked is wide open).

In the world of the Thirteen Colonies the objects were the same (Liberty, Justice, the Pursuit of Happiness, all that), but the methods were different.

They did not need one nation, and they didn't even need independence.

The Founding Fathers in the world of the Thirteen Colonies realized their utopia without fragmenting the British Empire and without joining into one force. Four hundred years ago, they met, they discussed, and rather than burning down the old world and erecting, in its place, a new one, they chose subtle, simple adjustments.

Their decision—their realization that they could change the world, and their decision not to—was called, in their world (in their Fifth Grade history lessons) The Great Debate. The Debate over Independence and their debate over whether a man would be more free if the power of his government rested in the hands of the Nation or in the hands of the State.

They debated the same issues as the Fathers in your world. They reached a different conclusion. And so your world and theirs diverged.

So that was the Great Debate—a pivotal moment in the history of both worlds, and a moment when the philosophical decision of men about the world they wanted to live in changed the history of all citizens everywhere.

And so history repeats itself—for as their millennium draws to a close, they are faced with a new challenge: once again the opportunity to change everything approaches, and once again, men in the New World are called upon to decide for themselves how they want to live.

The New Debate, as it is called, is another philosophical moment. Another pivot point, from which point on, things might never be the same.

What Strange New World?

But that is a detail you can educate yourself about soon enough. So there is Magic, and so there were different *decisions* made and so our world is somehow different from yours. How so? What is it like? These are good questions, and the answers fill the book you're reading, but I can offer a few points for your enjoyment and education.

One thing you might notice is that we have a different appreciation of history than you do. Your parents can barely understand you. Your grandparents are aliens. And kids these days have no appreciation whatsoever for music.

Generations have always been at odds, but in your world the rate of change is so great that a 20-year difference may be insurmountable. Your great grandparents grew up (probably) in a world without Interstate Highways. You never knew a world without television. Your kids will be amazed that you ever thought the Internet was cool.

A Sense of History

It's not like that in the Thirteen Colonies. Things change, but slowly and in ways that are understandable from any context. We feel *connected* with the men who engaged in the Great Debate because the world they lived in is still there. Oh, the Founding Fathers never had telegraphs or radio, or factories, or any of the marvelous technical advantages that modern residents of the Thirteen Colonies have, but these things have done remarkably little to change our lives—or at least, they're still *recognizable*.

In the Thirteen Colonies, we have a sense of history—a sense that the men of four hundred years ago would understand and appreciate the world we live in today. Of course they still wouldn't like the noise that kids these days listen to.

And in the Thirteen Colonies, unlike your world, if we don't like what the kid next to us is listening to, we can probably get away with smacking him in the head. You see, the liberal, progressive rights that you see as modern and natural (of course you can't just go and smack someone) never took hold here. We would use the term "traditional" you (especially if you're female) might call it "repressive" (or worse, depending on what kind of mouth you have on you).

The Social Order

There are advantages—slavery was never institutionalized in the New World, so if you're African, there's no special stigma. You're much *rarer* in the New World, but if you're there, it's because you chose to be (the Spanish still used slave labor in the Islands—and paid for it by falling apart—but slavery wasn't economical in North America, where Magic made it redundant).

How progressive your society is depends on where you live. The Puritan North East and the Deep South both have their detractors. The Middle Colonies (Pennsylvania) is probably the most egalitarian place in the world, and although there are no promises about special treatment, if you're good, no one there cares what color, gender, or faith you happen to belong to.

And Then There's Magic

Ah, right . . . and then there's Magic. And what does that do to a society? We know it stabilizes thing . . . smoothes out the time-line a bit. But when you're faced with a magician pulling a rabbit out of thin air (and doing it for real), it's hard to see it as a force for calm.

Magic is practiced by Magicians (the other names are not in use much, except for terms that refer to a specific practice such as Summoner or Necromancer). Magicians are trained through apprenticeship, but they usually start with a college education, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Magical Studies (very few reputable magicians will accept an apprentice who has not graduated and is *bonded*).

If you can afford the education, pass the bar, and find a Master to teach you the basics of the trade, you can make a very handy life for yourself. Most magicians specialize in spells that their community needs. In the South, this means tending to the crops and summoning the Beasts to plow the fields and reap the harvest. In the North East, this means doing as little magic as possible (healers are always welcome), and in the Middle it can mean a variety of things (Astrologers work for the major brokerage houses, for instance).

Magicians who can answer questions (divination, augury) are always in demand by lawyers, judges, spies, and others who have an interest in knowing things that are difficult to come by. Many Magicians practice medicine—or rather, many Doctors practice magic.

One type of magic that is not much in demand in civilized areas is the type that lets you defend yourself or offend your enemies. Attack spells (and, especially Elder School Spells) are considered bad form. If you've taken trouble to learn them, people wonder what sort of person you are. If you don't want people wondering about you (and, believe me, you don't), you keep it to yourself.

On the Frontier, it's a different matter. As you go into the Shallows, Magic becomes stronger and just as you need them most, your guns become less reliable. If you fight monsters, on their turf, you want a fireball backing up your Tommy gun.

Witchcraft is a special case. There might be a few good reasons to be wary of witches, but in the World of the Thirteen Colonies there are some people who think that you *better* be afraid. It helps to understand Summoning.

Summoning is especially important to the world—magical items are expensive and difficult to make, but spirits can be called forth and *bound* to create persistent magical effects. The spirits don't like this much, but since they barely even exist, it's not considered unethical. Summoning is integral to the world and most people own bound spirits that make their lives easier in much the same way technology might.

Spirits can come from many places, and the spirits summonsed to make "every day" goods come from the aether, itself. In a sense, they come into existence when called and seek (eventually) to return to their "natural" state (non-being).

These are called "clean" spirits are considered transient natural phenomena, much like lightning or a strong wind. Harnessing them and using them is no more oppressive than building a windmill.

Machine Tools and Mass Production

Magic doesn't just shut down complex devices (although it does that as well). Anything that is machine-tooled or mass-produced tends to malfunction the closer one gets to the frontier!

A handmade watch will function out west of the Mississippi. A factory made timepiece will break a hundred miles east of Philly.

There are other kinds of spirits though. There are spirits with lives beyond their summoning—natural spirits (spirits in the rocks and trees... spirits in the waves). These two can be “bound” and they are often quite powerful, but they are real things with real minds and enslaving them is ethically risky and (at times) mortally dangerous. Sometimes they cause trouble and they have to be appeased or banished. Sometimes there can be ‘deals’ made—arrangements, in which they are ‘indentured’ for a period of time. And sometimes they are so powerful and dangerous that letting them roam free is a risk no one is willing to take... but in general, Natural Spirits should not be bound.

And after that, there are the Unclean. The Unclean include spirits of the dead (although it is unclear if they are actually the souls of dead people or spirits taking on their memories and characteristics—mocking them, in a dreadful way). Ghosts, Banshee, and others are considered unclean and vile. Necromancers who deal with them are treated with mistrust at best and out-and-out fear at worst. It is not that Necromancers are evil, but they work close to it.

For most people the hierarchy of the Invisible World stops with the Unclean. There may be unclean that are more powerful than others. Spirits that are crueler; more malicious . . . There may even, most scholars accept, be a warped infinite funhouse maze of doors, each hiding a terror more awful than the last, but they are all simply Unclean and that is that.

But for some, there is an even lower realm—the Damned. The Damned are spirits that live in the graces of and under the service of the Great Deceiver. They are cruel and cunning, but unlike the Unclean, they have a purpose—the desecration of Creation; the corruption of All That Is.

And if the Damned are an army of demons, then the Forces that Witches commune with are their Generals.

There is little proof of this theory (and the Witches, especially the ‘white’ ones strongly deny it), but it is not altogether unproven. There may well be a force of darkness in this world—a force of evil that lies under the surface. It is difficult to be sure.

And of course there’s more. Much more. I could tell you stories about each of the Colonies. How Rhode Island, well in the hands of the Agrarian Party and dutifully printing its own money is called *Rogue Island* by those who have to trade with her. I could tell you about the odd things found in the territories purchased from the French, and the odd poems written on the graves in New Orleans. I could tell you about the Mason’s secret meetings in the windowless temple under Wall Street, or about the offices of Ladies of Virtue looking down at the crowds of businessmen in the Market Street Plaza in Philadelphia.

I could tell you a thousand stories and still not scratch the surface so I’ll say this instead—your world is a dream to us. Ours is a fantasy to you. But just as your dream of skyscrapers and light-speed math, and a democratic Super Power is a fascinating dream to us, I think you’ll find our dream of a quieter world full of mystery and on the edge of a revolution of the mind is a fascinating one to you.

Come inside, traveler, and welcome,
--The Authors

The Event

In 1500 AD a ship left port from Spain—its name is unknown as is information regarding its captain and crew. Whether they knew it or not, every man on board was sentenced to die to ensure that we wouldn't know anything either. In its hold, in a case, wrapped in silk and cushioned on velvet was a golden egg the size of a man's head. The egg is said to have been the result—the final result, the end product, the reason de entrée—of the Spanish Inquisition, one of the most monstrous institutions mankind has ever created. Within that egg was the Soul of Magic. How it was entombed we don't know—and probably never will. When the egg was made, and while it remained whole, magic itself was snuffed out in the world.

The ship crossed the oceans silently, the crew unaware, two guards, both grimly willing to die to protect their precious cargo stood watching over those many weeks. When land was sighted in the southern continent (a continent enwrapped in misty jungle where, the men had heard, it was said lizards the size of galleons stalked human prey) the call was given and the ship neared shore and dropped anchor.

The boats departed. Back on the ship, those who had stayed behind with the vessel's contingent were quietly slaughtered by the remaining guards. Those ashore knew nothing of it. They reached the foreign beach and then started their expedition—up and up—into the mountains. The lands were so wild and strange it is a wonder they survived but they knew what they sought and perhaps had a path, a map, or a guide. High in the aerie of the Sierra Nevada mountains they found a cave. It was a natural maze complete with deadfalls, quicksand, and spiky rocks that threatened to fall from the ceiling. There may even have been man-eating plants and plague-carrying giant rats. Whatever. In the back of the cave, they deposited the chest, which held the egg.

When the job was done and the captain and his men were taken care of, the guards, cleaning the site carefully, collapsed the entrance to the cave and covered it over with dirt. Then, they started back down—they did not (and had no intention of) ever reaching civilization.

What happened then, for hundreds of years, we cannot say for certain. Magic was extinguished from the world by means forgotten (and now judged to be impossible). Cities grew. Technology advanced. Mankind multiplied and swarmed across the globe. Satellites blinked in orbit around the earth. Rocket ships landed on the moon. Atoms were broken and elemental energies poured down on cities.

Sometime at the dawn of the new millennium a drilling expedition in the mountains of South America found the cave. Imagine them moving 500-year-old rocks with their machines—brushing them aside. Imagine them turning over old graves of the conquistadors and their sonic imaging machines finding a chamber beyond the rubble. And within? Within, untouched by age was a chest. The first to touch it, no doubt died—for while there was no magic in their world, surrounding the golden egg, whose shell had become soap-bubble thin, there was power. Imagine their flesh melting or their eyes turning to swarms of deadly wasps. Imagine what you will for the architects of the End of Magic had built their defenses to deter anyone ... or anything—but the men weren't. The chest was broken open and inside—inside was the egg.

Perhaps they shattered the egg in the act of sundering the chest. Perhaps they opened the egg delicately, after studying it under lights in a laboratory. Perhaps it was ruptured when the stone

Could Magic Be Bottled Again?
Could the genie be put back in the bottle? Most experts say no. Whatever secrets were discovered—however it was done the first time, when the candle of magic was snuffed out the architects of its demise were dealing with a spark—an ember. Even without access to the New World, Magic was more 'distributed' then ... less prevalent ... less concentrated.

The Event unleashed a torrent of energy that, it is believed, cannot be contained (or even turned back in on itself) without use of The Observatories. It isn't simply a matter of closing the bottle: the genie is out.

What Happened to the People?
Did The Event result in genocide? In Billions of people being wiped out—never to have existed? It's a tough question but most philosopher-scientist who have studied it say "*no—but you wouldn't understand.*"

Further prompting gets something like this: "*There are fewer people alive now, it seems, than in The Dream—but they are not dead. It seems that many are 'yet to be' in the philosophical sense and lots of people today 'still are.'* It deals with both folding and translation. Folding is when a person today is an amalgam of one or more person (or aspects thereof) of a person in The Dream. Translation is when a person becomes the same sort of person in our world that he was in The Dream. He has no knowledge of his former self but he seems to hold the similar ... parameters. It becomes complicated ..."

roof collapsed. Perhaps. But the egg was split and that was The Event. Magic flowed backwards and forwards and inwards and out—it permeated space-time and gushed into elsewhere and filled the void with invisible, untouchable aether. It was explosive, catastrophic, and very, very strange.

It Changed Everything

Well, not *everything*. Magic flowed up the landmass like an invisible river of force and now, like a throbbing vein it winds through the western super-continent and flows like water down to the coasts. Where man has made a foothold, in the northern continent along the shoreline its presence is felt most strongly. For the decades *before* that, for the western world, at least, things seemed relatively normal. Sure there was magic and wizards and witches—but there were all those things *anyway*. Sure the Middle East and the Far East and the stretches of Russia were mysterious—but they were *always* mysterious. For the kings and queens and beggars and thieves and merchants and sailors and soldiers and everyone else it all looked pretty logical until Columbus hit the New World (for the second time in a manner of speaking).

The discovery (re-discovery) of the "New World" brought back incontrovertible proof of just how strange the world could be. Since the Event had permeated the New World with magic it was unlike any terrain anywhere ever. While

the Spaniards plundered (or tried to plunder) the southern continents, the French, English, and Dutch settled the north. And here we diverge—almost—for while the world was never the same again (and not even as it had been 'before') some things didn't change. New Orleans still opened her ports at the mouth of the Mississippi. Florida was still a Conquistador-eating swamp (with the Fountain of Youth in there somewhere to be sure!) and the 13 colonies grew and prospered on the Atlantic shores of North America.

The rest is history.

A Brief History of the Americas (13 Colonies)

1492 In 1492 Columbus discovered the New World. The journey had already been marked by the sighting of aquatic serpents the length of the Santa Maria in the waters near the coast. When he arrived (at the southern islands) he discovered a deep and mysterious jungle, gold-skinned natives with odd war paint and heads of animals, and heard rumors of the magnificent empires and cities inland.

1500 Between 1500 and 1540 the likes of De Soto, Ponce De Leon, Hernan Cortez, Coronado, and Francisco Pizarro searched for the Fountain of Youth, discovered the Incas and the Aztecs, reached the Kansas territory, and found the Mississippi river. They brought back vast amounts of gold that fueled an even greater drive by Spain to conquer the lands in the southern continents (South and Central America). These failed (and even with the gold, Spain went bankrupt twice in that period). They failed because unlike in The Dream world (and it is said that the Conquistadors were driven by The Dream to believe they *could* succeed in conquest) the jungles were carnivorous. The natives had real godlike beings that they housed in gold-covered pyramids, and they had magicians. Spain found itself committed to a war with madness. Sea monsters devoured

ships, entire forces were swallowed by the jungles and, while the gold and jewels flowed back, it began to seem to some as though the New World was as hungry for them as they were for it.

1585 In 1585 the Northern Colonies started (the famously ill-fated Roanoke was founded by Sir Raleigh). These were followed over the next hundred years by the 13 colonies themselves (the last of which was Georgia in 1732). By this time Spain had failed in the south and her navy had been bested. The British Empire was successfully colonizing everywhere else and the colonies (especially the agriculturally rich southern colonies) started producing.

1776 There was, however, unrest and dissatisfaction with the crown—in 1776 The Independence War was fought. It concluded four months later with a treaty between the colonies and England that maintained their status but allowed a Federal government to hold authority (this is discussed in more detail in the section on Pennsylvania).

1803 The French in the Louisiana Territories were having a tough go of it without much support (and often combat with) the Colonial Army. In 1803 they sold the territories to the Colonies—but due to the chaos of the magical frontier they remain largely unsettled and there is no 14th colony to claim them. New Orleans is still a French Owned port, just like there are still a few Spanish Forts in Florida (mostly abandoned, all haunted) but for people in the western hemisphere, that's about it.

1861 For the next century the colonies grew—and stratified. In 1861 cannon fire was exchanged at Fort Sumter in a second short-lived Succession War between the South and the Mid and Central Colonies (from the Colonial Congress, really). The parties laid down their arms after another few short months of fighting, but the South has never fully felt itself a part of the 13 Colonies in all respects.

Gold was discovered in the West (the west still being east of the Mississippi) and the Mare Imbrium Express was started—today the only train line capable of running through the Shallows. Today it still services mining towns out in the far reaches where ordinary machines don't work and monsters seem as plentiful as men.

1919 The Twentieth Century brought The Great War. By this time, the Colonies were recognized as being important international players (both for their depth of thought, strength of arms, and access to powerful magic). The War was resolved after a great deal of bloody trench fighting, but the empires remained. The flag of the Ottoman Empire still flies.

1939 There was a depression about a third of the way through—but the ties with England helped there: her empire was more or less recession proof and while there were tough times (especially in the North and Middle colonies) the colonies' economy recovered after half a decade.

1940 The end of the 20th century came with a whisper, not a bang: technological revolution in the 40's and 50's had brought radio, automobiles, telephones (and extensions of the telegraph) great airships (airplanes were seen as unnecessary and unreliable), and mass production. It is the philosophical challenges that are most prevalent now: mankind's math and science and proved (as was long suspected) that a new universe could be forged—and there are those in a position to do so who are considering exactly that.

2000 Overseas stability has not bred peace: there are small conflicts both overt and covert all over the world. The English seem to have the upper hand but the French, Spanish, Dutch, Italians, and Ottomans have their hands in the colonial game. The inward looking Middle East has vast riches that some of the European nations have their eyes on—and their inward gaze may not last

long in any event. It is an age of diplomacy and treachery, of great triumphs and wonders. It's the age of the 13 Colonies: welcome to it.