

# The Free City of Weyrcliff

Perhaps the most unusual independent land in the Western Shores, Weyrcliff is located on top of a mesa-like cape only fifteen square miles in area. It is surrounded by 400-foot tall cliffs. Weyrcliff is also the only state which does not date back to the time of the Empire.

Weyrcliff was founded in C.Y. 2860, at the height of the Twenty Years War between Ambria and Daria. At that time, Darian troops were off at war rather than busy oppressing the peasants. An enterprising young farmer named Uri took this opportunity to sow the seeds of unrest in his hometown in southern Daria. King Kron was even less popular than most Darian monarchs, and it didn't take much rabble-rousing on Uri's part to incite the citizenry to kill the royal Tax Collector.

The movement had progressed rather far along by the time a reserve battalion of troops arrived. By this time, Uri had nearly 200 followers. Knowing that he could never defeat the Darian army, Uri ordered a mass emigration, claiming that if they fled southward far enough, the soldiers would leave them alone.

Unfortunately, Uri had not counted on the blind obedience of the Darian Army. Even though they were sorely needed elsewhere, the battalion pursued the rebels all the way to the southern tip of Daria, where a tall wall of cliffs blocked any travel further southward. The story of Weyrcliff might have ended right then and there, if it hadn't been for the timely arrival of a huge dragon that lived atop the cliffs. The soldiers immediately attacked the beast, but the rebel farmers hid in the craggy rocks at the cliff base. In the ensuing battle, the battalion was reduced to ashes, but the dragon was also mortally wounded, and it died no more than 100 yards away from where Uri had hidden himself.

Inspired by the fact that such a gigantic creature could live undetected atop the mesa, Uri ordered several of his more nimble followers to scale the cliffs and scout the plateau. What they found was truly unbelievable. The Dragon had accumulated a vast horde, apparently from attacking ships. The ground also appeared to be incredibly fertile, as all manner of trees and plants grew atop the mesa, many of them enormous in size! It wasn't long before the rebels (now settlers) set up a basket winch and hoisted the entire group to the top. Eventually a small village was constructed and named Weyrcliff (A bastardized combination of the words Weir, a dragon's home, and cliff).

Later, against the wishes of some, Uri ordered a narrow road to be carved from the landward cliff face, in order to facilitate trade with the outside world. Kron, in the meantime, had forgotten the settlers entirely. When he learned of the village, he sent scouts to report on the possibility of sending troops to clean the place out. When it was reported that a handful could hold off an army from the mesa, Kron grudgingly accepted the village's independence. Today, Weyrcliff has grown to be a city of 300,000 inhabitants, most of them Darian refugees. The city is ruled by a governor who answers to a city council. The current governor is a wealthy merchant named Golthos.

## Roleplaying Synopsis

Weyrcliff is an isolated, self-governing city, much like Hong Kong would if it were on a Pacific atoll. A self-contained urban environment, Weyrcliff epitomizes all that is good and bad about medieval cities. As such, it makes a good location for city adventures. THE LAY OF THE LAND

Weyrcliff is built on a mesa eight miles long by two miles wide. The mesa is 400 feet high, and is

surrounded on three sides by water and on the north side by Ambria, which gained the land from Daria at the conclusion of the Twenty Years War. The city itself is built at the southern tip of the mesa.

Weyrcliff is blessed with mild summers and winters, being so near the sea. The land atop the mesa is also very good for growing all manners of crops. Only a few wild creatures, such as squirrels and hedgehogs live there. The cliff walls, however, are home to thousands of sea birds, which wheel constantly about the mesa and the city.

## LIFE IN WEYRCLIFF

Weyrcliff has been steadily growing since its founding 400 years ago. Now several hundred-thousand strong, the city-dwellers are beginning to feel the effects of overcrowding. Slums and shanty towns are springing up outside the city walls, and crime is becoming more and more common. Still, Weyrcliff's healthy trade industry and secure location continues to draw new immigrants to the free city.

The plateau lands have been unable to support the entire population of Weyrcliff for more than 250 years. As a result, the city must trade for its food. Most of its exports are finished goods made by the city's craftsmen. Because they are the only true source of income for the city, items crafted in Weyrcliff tend to be of the highest quality. The city has a healthy reserve in a huge vault (the dragon's horde and trade tariffs), but this is only used in times of dire need, and only the governor, treasurer, and city council know the true extent of this wealth.

At the bottom of the mesa's seaward sides are the many docks for visiting merchant ships. A few ramshackle buildings are also scattered among the rocks. This area, known simply as Docktown, is filled with the worst sort of individuals, and is rife with crime. Consequently, most ships only dock to load and unload cargo, weighing anchor in the harbor at night.

Only two ways exist for getting people and cargo up to the mesatop. One is the north road, which is carved into the cliff face, very narrow, and with many hairpin turns. Any wishing to use this road must pass a guardhouse at the bottom and top. The other way to enter this city is more unusual. Huge winches have been constructed (powered by tethered mules and oxen) which lift wooden baskets the size of small cottages directly from the docks up to the top of the cliffs. In windy weather, riding one of these can be quite a harrowing experience!

Weyrcliff proper is a racial and ethnic melting pot bustling with frenzied activity. While most citizens are of Darian or Ambrian background, people of every ethnic group in the Western Shores can be found within the city walls. Dwarves, Halflings, and even some Elves can also be found in all parts of the city. In the city center is the Old Town, where the elite make their homes. This area is walled off from the rest of the city, and noncitizens are only allowed there during daylight hours. At the center of this area is the town hall and other official buildings. Beneath the town hall in the city vault lies the greatest treasure horde in all the Western Shores. Also interred there are the bones of the dragon which delivered the first settlers from the hands of the Darians. Weyrcliff has no official religion, and all the major faiths of other nations are practiced in the city. The Ambrian Church is the most popular. Magic in Weyrcliff is quite common, as the city has no regulations disallowing it.

## PLACES OF INTEREST

**City Market:** the second-largest open-air bazaar in the Western Shores (the largest is in Zylibul), nearly anything can be purchased here if one has the money. Of course, it also helps to know who to ask.

**Public Library:** the only one of its kind to exist since the days of Celinad, this large building is home to nearly 50,000 books and scrolls on almost every subject imaginable. Dusty Dog Inne and Tavern: One of the most famed inns in all the Western Shores, the 'Dog and its outbuildings take up an entire city block. The tavern bar is as big as a feast hall, and the rooms range from coffin-sized to palatial. Adventurers and those seeking their services meet here from all over the world to discuss business.

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