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H. P. Lovecraft's

DUNWICH

Adventures and Background
for a Forgotten Village
in Lovecraft Country

Published August 2002

Originally published May 1991
as "Return to Dunwich"



H.P. Lovecraft

1890-1937



For my Aunt Shirley.

*Thanks for the support, the backing, and everything else.
Over the years you've done more for me than
you'll probably ever realize.*

—Keith Herber.

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Chaosium publication 8802. ISBN 1-56882-164-6.

Published in August 2002. Printed in the United States.

H. P. Lovecraft's
DUNMITH



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Introduction

Outsiders visit Dunwich as seldom as possible, and since a certain season of horror, all the sign boards pointing toward it have been taken down.

—H. P. Lovecraft, “The Dunwich Horror.”

H. P. Lovecraft's Dunwich is the first book in the Lovecraft Country series to be revised for use with both the Chaosium and the d20 versions of the *Call of Cthulhu* roleplaying game. Although designed to stand alone, *H. P. Lovecraft's Dunwich* can be used in conjunction with other books in the series, such as *H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham*, *H. P. Lovecraft's Innsmouth*, *H. P. Lovecraft's Kingsport*, and *Beyond the Mountains of Madness*.

This volume is based on Lovecraft's tale “The Dunwich Horror,” but goes beyond the narrow region described in that story to outline and describe more than 100 square miles of farmland and wilderness territory surrounding the centuries old village. All of Lovecraft's characters are described, as well as numerous other residents.

For the enjoyment of the keeper, we have presented the complete text of H. P. Lovecraft's “The Dunwich Horror.” There is no better source for delving into the atmosphere of decay and decay of the area. Keepers who have not yet read the story are strongly recommended to do so before reading the rest of the book. Players should also be encouraged to read the story. This book was written keeping in mind that many players will be familiar with the events of the story. It has been designed so that knowledge of the story will not detract from a player's enjoyment, but in fact enhance his adventure.

The scenario included with this book, “Return to Dunwich,” is a comprehensive adventure that picks up where “The Dunwich Horror” leaves off. Both the keeper and investigators have an opportunity to get to know Dunwich and explore the larger area. The scenario begins in Arkham, but most of the adventure takes place in the township itself. Also included is an appendix with a synopsis of events surrounding the Dunwich Horror and statistics for some of the more important characters. Keepers may use this information to devise their own scenarios based on the story.

In addition, this book also includes “Earth, Sky, Soul,” a mini-adventure/encounter that can be incorporated into a larger scenario taking place in Dunwich. This adventure was first printed in *The Unspeakable Oath* fanzine, issue four, Fall 1991.

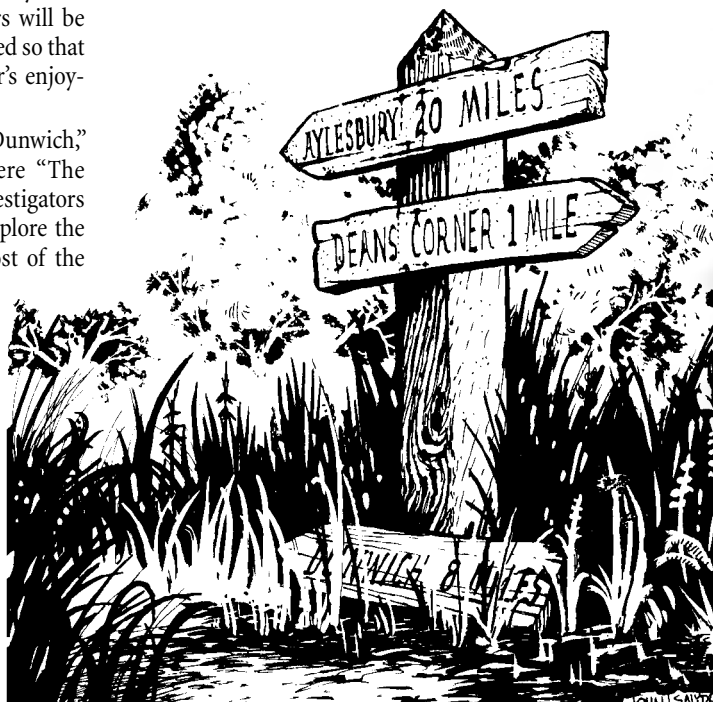
For keepers who wish to use this book with the d20 version of the *Call of Cthulhu* rules, allowances have been made. In every instance where a task roll is

called for we have given both the Classic Cthulhu and d20 Cthulhu requirements. d20 System information is always in brackets: for instance, “[INT, DC 11]” means “Intelligence check at DC 11,” while “[Knowledge (geology), DC 16]” means “Knowledge (geology) check at DC 16.” Furthermore, Appendix 3 offers the d20 statistics for every creature and character encountered in the book.

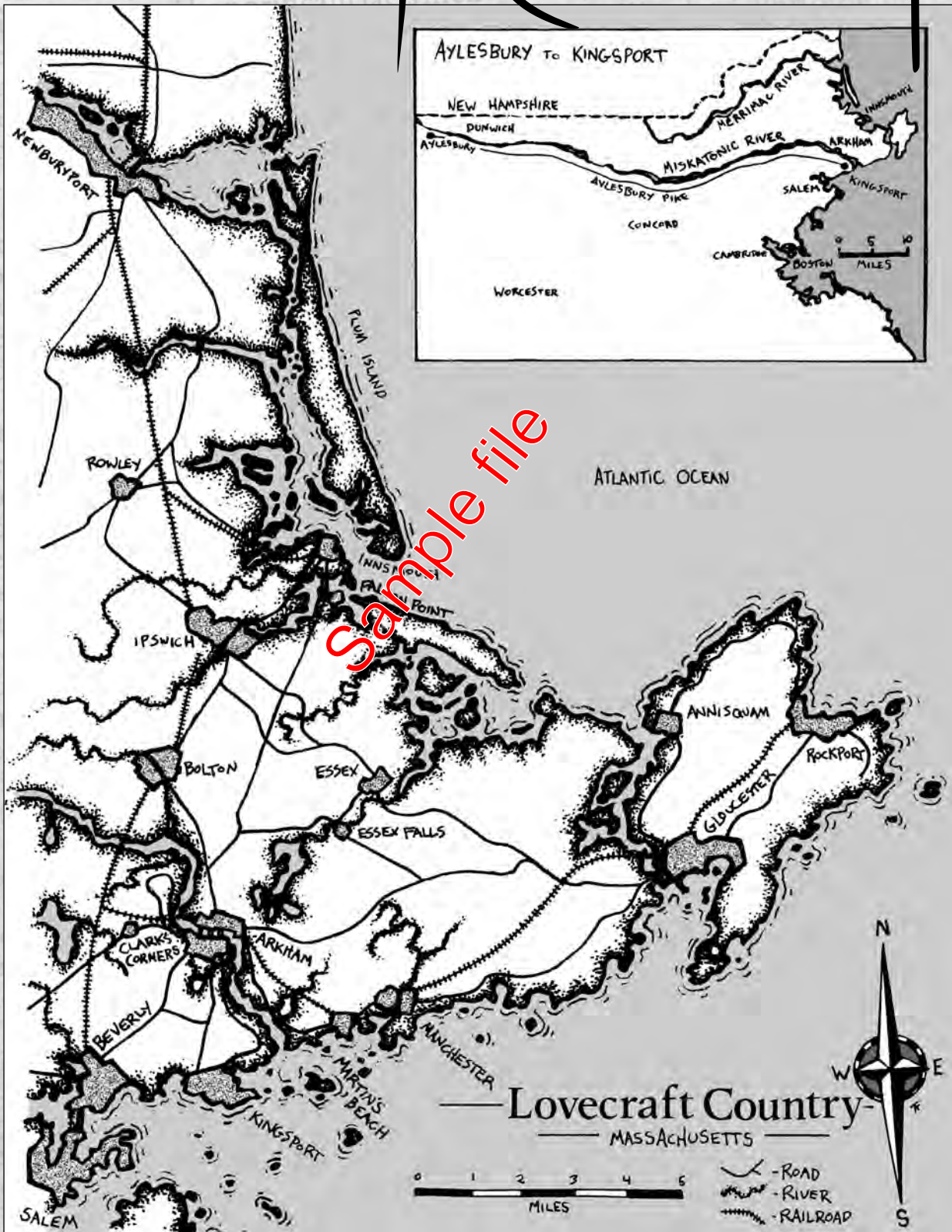
The large foldout map of Dunwich is to be used by players to find their way around. Smaller maps detailing the village and nine different regions of the township are found within the book. These maps are designed so the keeper can add his own creations to Dunwich, including new people, farms, or points of interest simply by sketching them in.

Keepers should feel free to customize Dunwich to suit their own taste. Change or eliminate characters as you see fit. The many abandoned farms in the area are waiting to be occupied by special characters or things the keeper might wish to see in his version of Dunwich.

The following people deserve special thanks for help with this project: Jackie Blake, Brian Campbell, David Ray Condon, Kevin Ross, Lynn Willis, Tom Esposito, and Scott Aniolowski.



Lovecraft Country



Lovecraft Country is a land located in the northeast of Massachusetts. The most important portion stretches along the Miskatonic river valley, from Dunwich in the far west to where it enters the Atlantic Ocean, between Arkham, Kingsport, and Martin's Beach. References to other books in the Lovecraft Country series are noted when they contain central information.

Annisquam—A summer resort community that is located within Gloucester (see below).

Arkham—pop. 22,562, settled in 1692, incorporated in 1699. Textiles form the bulk of the present industry. Home of Miskatonic University. Mysterious sightings have occurred in the nearby Billington's Woods and at Nahum Gardner's farm, both located west of town. Detailed in *H. P. Lovecraft's Arkham*.

Aylesbury—pop. 16,539, founded in 1802 on the site of the former village of Broton. A planned industrial city financed by Arkham and Boston industrialists. Textiles are the main industry.

Beverly—pop. 27,478, settled in 1626 as part of Salem, incorporated in 1688. Home of the first cotton mill in the U.S. (1788). Shoes and shoe manufacturing machinery are its main industries.

Bolton—pop. 15,539, founded in 1650. An industrial town specializing in shoes, leather goods, and textiles.

Boston—pop. 782,623, first settled in 1630. The capital of Massachusetts. Site of Bunker Hill, Faneuil Hall, the Boston Massacre, and the Boston Tea Party. Important libraries include the Boston Public Library with over a million volumes, The Boston Athenaeum, the Massachusetts Historical Society, the New England Historical Genealogical library, and the the Boston Society of Natural History. Major industries include printing and publishing, men's and women's clothing, and shipping. Boston is an international port.

Cambridge—pop. 124,451, first settled in 1630. Home of Harvard University, Radcliffe college, and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Cambridge is the site of the first printing press in America. Industries include printing and publishing, and the manufacture of soap, candy, and electrical apparatus.

Concord—pop. 7056, founded 1635. Site of "the shot heard round the world." Home of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, and Louisa May Alcott.

Danvers—pop. 11,893, located approximately three miles west of Beverly. Settled in 1626 and until 1757 known as Salem Village. The center of witchcraft activity in 1692 and the birthplace of Israel Putnam. Nearby is the Massachusetts State Hospital for the Insane.

Dean's Corners—pop. 83, settled in 1821. A small town on the Aylesbury Pike, last stop before Aylesbury. Originally a stop on the stage line, now Dean's Corners occasionally trades with motorists on their way to Aylesbury. A combined Boston Society for American Indian Research and Miskatonic University archeological Dig is being conducted just a few miles southeast. Detailed in *Tales of the Miskatonic Valley*.

Dunwich—pop. 373, settled in 1692. A small farming community. Formerly the site of several large

lumber mills. Dark forces seem ascendent among the decadent inhabitants of Dunwich.

Essex—pop. 1654, first settled in 1634, incorporated in 1819. Famous for its small shipyards and its clam beds.

Falcon Point—pop. 56, settled in 1696. A small fishing village just south of Innsmouth. Detailed in *Escape from Innsmouth* and *Adventures in Arkham Country*.

Fitchburg—pop. 45,448, located ten miles southeast of Dunwich, past the Aylesbury Pike. Incorporated in 1764. It is a large paper manufacturing industry and a Worcester county seat.

Framingham—pop. 25,118, located fifteen miles west of Boston. first settled in 1640, incorporated 1700. Industries include straw hats, boots and shoes, rubber goods, boilers, and patent medicines. It is the seat of the state arsenal and the location of the state reformatory for women.

Gloucester—pop. 25,101, first settled by English fishermen in 1623, incorporated 1642. A popular summer resort and the greatest salt-water fishing port in the U.S. Within the city limits is the summer resort community of Annisquam.

Innsmouth—pop. 367, founded in 1643. Originally active in the China trade. Launched many privateers during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. Fishing is the main industry. A sugar refinery is still in operation. Innsmouth is being controlled by the decadent Marsh family, and over the years there have been hints of a malevolent force dwelling beneath the sea, at nearby Devil's Reef. Detailed in *Escape from Innsmouth*.

Ipswich—pop. 1,098, first settled in 1633 as Aggawam, incorporated in 1634. A popular summer resort and site of the oldest arched bridge in America. The home of the Rev. Nathaniel Ward.

Kingsport—pop. 7834, founded in 1639, incorporated in 1651. Home port of numerous privateers during the Revolutionary War. A summer resort and artist colony, fishing is the main industry. Rumors abound of a strange fire cult worshipping beneath the streets of Kingsport. Detailed in *H. P. Lovecraft's Kingsport* and *Tales of the Miskatonic Valley*.

Lexington—pop. 7785, located five miles northwest of Cambridge along the 3. Founded 1642. Site of the first armed conflict of the American Revolution and the destination of Paul Revere's ride. Truck gardening and dairying are the principal industries.

Lowell—pop. 114,759, located ten miles north of Concord on the Merrimac River. Incorporated in 1826. Home to many textile mills and the birthplace of James McNeil Whistler. A Middlesex county seat.

Lynn—pop. 106,081, located five miles southwest of Salem. Founded 1629. An industrial city famous for its shoes and boots, an industry it began in 1636. The first smelting works in New England were established here in 1643.

Manchester—pop. 2599, settled 1630. A resort area thought by some to be the most beautiful on the Atlantic coast and a favorite summer residence with many foreign diplomats.

Marblehead—pop. 8414, located just southeast of Salem. Settled in 1629, separated from Salem in

1649. Launched many privateers during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. A popular summer resort and a yachting center. Principal industries include the manufacture of children's shoes, fishing, and yacht and launch building. Claimed by some to be "the birthplace of the American Navy."

Martin's Beach—pop. 867, first settled in 1644. A small fishing village and vacation spot. On occasion, a strange creature has been seen in the ocean. Detailed in *Dead Reckonings*.

Mayotteville—pop. 1,997, founded in 1667 by settlers from Bolton, located just a few miles down the road. Recently the source of a strange winged apparition. Detailed in *Adventures in Arkham Country*.

Newburyport—pop. 16,618, settled in 1635, separated from Newbury in 1764. A manufacturing town and shipping port, Newburyport was active in privateering during the Revolutionary War and War of 1812. The town was also famous for its smugglers and before the Civil War an active fishing, whaling, and trading port. An Essex county seat.

Peabody—pop. 21,677, located just west of Salem, which it was originally part of. It was incorporated in 1855. The town specializes in the manufacture of leather, leather-working machinery, and cotton goods.

Quincy—pop. 67,655, originally settled in 1625 as Merry Mount, a community reputed to have danced around maypoles and worshipped Dagon. The original settlers were finally driven off by members of the nearby Puritan communities. Now the home of modern naval shipyards. The birthplace of John Adams, John Quincy Adams, and John Hancock.

Rockport—pop. 2345, originally settled in 1690, separated from Gloucester in 1840. A summer resort famous for its large artist colony.

Salem—pop. 44,688, founded in 1626 by Roger Conant. Site of the Salem witch trials of 1692 and birthplace of Nathaniel Hawthorne. Salem was once very active in the China trade and was home of America's first millionaire, Elias Haskett Derby. The town launched many privateers during the Seven Years War, the Revolutionary War, and the War of 1812. Home of the Essex Institute, the Peabody Maritime Museum, and the Salem Athenaeum.

Waltham—pop. 38,144, located ten miles west of Cambridge along the 117. Incorporated 1738. Home of the world's largest watch factory and the site of the first cotton power mill in America (1814).

Worcester—pop. 197,788, first settled in 1657 but twice abandoned due to Indian attacks, first in 1675 then in 1702. Incorporated in 1722. Industries include wire and wire products. The home of Clark University, Worcester Polytechnic, the Jesuit College of the Holy Cross, and Assumption college. Site of the American Antiquarian Society, the Worcester Natural History Society, and the Worcester Historical Society, all with museums and libraries. Home at one time or another to Elias Howe, Eli Whitney, Dorothea Lynde Dix, and Clara Barton. ■

Hey hey! Noise from the barn today
What's in the attic what did the arab say senses erratic
More more! Don't open that door
It's an encasement slime on the ~~broken~~ floor up from the basement
I'm goin' down to Durwick please don't bother waiting up
No no! Into the box you go in it's ~~an~~ ~~old~~ ~~man~~ feed it and watch it grow furring gas
Hey hey! Killed any cows today?
Ja Ja Yog ~~broth~~! Leaving a trail of festering broth

"Goin' Down to Durwick"
The Darkest of the Hillside Thickets

The Dunwich Horror

by H. P. Lovecraft

Gorgons, and Hydras, and Chimaeras—dire stories of Celaeno and the Harpies—may reproduce themselves in the brain of superstition—but they were there before. They are transcripts, types—the archetypes are in us, and eternal. How else should the capital of that which we know in a waking sense to be false come to affect us at all? ... That we naturally conceive terror from such objects, considered in their capacity of being able to inflict upon us bodily injury? O, least of all! These terrors are of older standing. They date beyond body—or without the body, they would have been the same.... That the kind of fear here treated is purely spiritual—that it is strong in proportion as it is objectless on earth, that it predominates in the period of our sinless infancy—are difficulties the solution of which might afford some probable insight into our ante-mundane condition, and a peep at least into the shadowland of pre-existence.

—Charles Lamb, "Witches and Other Night-Fears"

When a traveller in north central Massachusetts takes the wrong fork at the junction of the Aylesbury pike just beyond Dean's Corners he comes upon a lonely and curious country. The ground gets higher, and the brier-bordered stone walls press closer and closer against the ruts of the dusty, curving road. The trees of the frequent forest belts seem too large, and the wild weeds, brambles, and grasses attain a luxuriance not often found in settled regions. At the same time the planted fields appear singularly few and barren; while the sparsely scattered houses wear a surprisingly uniform aspect of age, squalor, and dilapidation. Without knowing why, one hesitates to ask directions from the gnarled, solitary figures spied now and then on crumbling doorsteps or on the sloping, rock-strown meadows. Those figures are so silent and furtive that one feels somehow confronted by forbidden things, with which it would be better to have nothing to do. When a rise in the road brings the mountains in view above the deep woods, the feeling of strange uneasiness is increased. The summits are too rounded and symmetrical to give a sense of comfort and naturalness, and sometimes the sky silhouettes with especial clearness the queer circles of tall stone pillars with which most of them are crowned.

TAKING THE WRONG FORK



Gorges and ravines of problematical depth intersect the way, and the crude wooden bridges always seem of dubious safety. When the road dips again there are stretches of marshland that one instinctively dislikes, and indeed almost fears at evening when unseen whippoorwills chatter and the fireflies come out in abnormal profusion to dance to the raucous, creepily insistent rhythms of stridently piping bull-frogs. The thin, shining line of the Miskatonic's upper reaches has an oddly serpent-like suggestion as it winds close to the feet of the domed hills among which it rises.

As the hills draw nearer, one heeds their wooded sides more than their stone-crowned tops. Those sides loom up so darkly and precipitously that one wishes they would keep their distance, but there is no road by which to escape them. Across a covered bridge one sees a small village huddled between the stream and the vertical slope of Round Mountain, and wonders at the cluster of rotting gambrel roofs bespeaking an earlier architectural period than that of the neighbouring region. It is not reassuring to see, on a closer glance, that most of the houses are deserted and falling to ruin, and that the broken-steeped church now harbours the one slovenly mercantile establishment of the hamlet. One dreads to trust the tenebrous tunnel of the bridge, yet there is no way to avoid it. Once across, it is hard to prevent the impression of a faint, malign odour about the village street, as of the massed mould and decay of centuries. It is always a relief to get clear of the place, and to follow the narrow road around the base of the hills and across the level country beyond till it rejoins the Aylesbury pike. Afterward one sometimes learns that one has been through Dunwich.

Outsiders visit Dunwich as seldom as possible, and since a certain season of horror all the signboards pointing toward it have been taken down. The scenery, judged by any ordinary aesthetic canon, is more than commonly beautiful; yet there is no influx of artists or summer tourists. Two centuries ago, when talk of witchblood, Satan-worship, and strange forest presences was not laughed at, it was the custom to give reasons for avoiding the locality. In our sensible age—since the Dunwich horror of 1928 was hushed up by those who had the town's and the world's welfare at heart—people shun it without knowing exactly why. Perhaps one reason—though it cannot apply to uninformed strangers—is that the natives are now repellently decadent, having gone far along that path of retrogression so common in many New England backwaters. They have come to form a race by themselves, with the well-defined mental and physical stigmata of degeneracy and inbreeding. The average of their intelligence is woefully low, whilst their annals reek of overt viciousness and of half-hidden murders, incests, and

deeds of almost unnamable violence and perversity. The old gentry, representing the two or three armigerous families which came from Salem in 1692, have kept somewhat above the general level of decay; though many branches are sunk into the sordid populace so deeply that only their names remain as a key to the origin they disgrace. Some of the Whateleys and Bishops still send their eldest sons to Harvard and Miskatonic, though those sons seldom return to the mouldering gambrel roofs under which they and their ancestors were born.

No one, even those who have the facts concerning the recent horror, can say just what is the matter with Dunwich; though old legends speak of unhallowed rites and conclaves of the Indians, amidst which they called forbidden shapes of shadow out of the great rounded hills, and made wild orgiastic prayers that were answered by loud crackings and rumblings from the ground below. In 1747 the Reverend Abijah Hoadley, newly come to the Congregational Church at Dunwich Village, preached a memorable sermon on the close presence of Satan and his imps; in which he said:

"It must be allow'd, that these Blasphemies of an infernal Train of Daemons are Matters of too common Knowledge to be deny'd; the cursed Voices of Azazel and Buzrael, of Beelzebub and Belial, being heard now from under Ground by above a Score of credible Witnesses now living. I my self did not more than a Fortnight ago catch a very plain Discourse of evil Powers in the Hill behind my House; wherein there were a Rattling and Rolling, Groaning, Screeching, and Hissing, such as no Things of this Earth could raise up, and which must needs have come from those Caves that only black Magick can discover, and only the Divell unlock."

Mr. Hoadley disappeared soon after delivering this sermon; but the text, printed in Springfield, is still extant. Noises in the hills continued to be reported from year to year, and still form a puzzle to geologists and physiographers.

Other traditions tell of foul odours near the hill-crowning circles of stone pillars, and of rushing airy presences to be heard faintly at certain hours from stated points at the bottom of the great ravines; while still others try to explain the Devil's Hop Yard—a bleak, blasted hillside where no tree, shrub, or grass-blade will grow. Then too, the natives are mortally afraid of the numerous whippoorwills which grow vocal on warm nights. It is vowed that the birds are psychopomps lying in wait for the souls of the dying, and that they time their eerie cries in unison with the sufferer's struggling breath. If they can catch the fleeing soul when it leaves the body, they instantly flutter away chittering in daemoniac laughter; but if they fail, they subside gradually into a disappointed silence.

These tales, of course, are obsolete and ridiculous; because they come down from very old times. Dunwich is indeed ridiculously old—older by far than any of the communities within thirty miles of it. South of the village one may still spy the cellar walls and chimney of the ancient Bishop house, which was built before 1700; whilst the ruins of the mill at the falls, built in 1806, form the most modern piece of architecture to be seen. Industry did not flourish here, and the nineteenth-century factory movement proved short-lived. Oldest of all are the great rings of rough-hewn stone columns on the hill-tops, but these are more generally attributed to the Indians than to the settlers. Deposits of skulls and bones, found within these circles and around the sizeable table-like rock on Sentinel Hill, sustain the popular belief that such spots were once the burial-places of the Pocomtucks; even though many ethnologists, disregarding the absurd improbability of such a theory, persist in believing the remains Caucasian.

11

It was in the township of Dunwich, in a large and partly inhabited farmhouse set against a hillside four miles from the village and a mile and a half from any other dwelling, that Wilbur Whateley was born at 5 a.m. on Sunday, the second of February, 1913. This date was recalled because it was Candlemas, which people in Dunwich curiously observe under another name; and because the noises in the hills had sounded, and all the dogs of the countryside had barked persistently, throughout the night before. Less worthy of notice was the fact that the mother was one of the decadent Whateleys, a somewhat deformed, unattractive albino woman of thirty-five, living with an aged and half-insane father about whom the most frightful tales of wizardry had been whispered in his youth. Lavinia Whateley had no known husband, but according to the custom of the region made no attempt to disavow the child; concerning the other side of whose ancestry the country folk might—and did—speculate as widely as they chose. On the contrary, she seemed strangely proud of the dark, goatish-looking infant who formed such a contrast to her own sickly and pink-eyed albinism, and was heard to mutter many curious prophecies about its unusual powers and tremendous future.

Lavinia was one who would be apt to mutter such things, for she was a lone creature given to wandering amidst thunderstorms in the hills and trying to read the great odorous books which her father had inherited through two centuries of Whateleys, and which were fast falling to pieces with age and worm-holes. She had never been to school, but was filled with disjointed scraps of ancient lore that Old Whateley had taught her. The remote farmhouse had always been feared because of Old Whateley's reputation for black magic, and the unexplained

death by violence of Mrs. Whateley when Lavinia was twelve years old had not helped to make the place popular. Isolated among strange influences, Lavinia was fond of wild and grandiose day-dreams and singular occupations; nor was her leisure much taken up by household cares in a home from which all standards of order and cleanliness had long since disappeared.

There was a hideous screaming which echoed above even the hill noises and the dogs' barking on the night Wilbur was born, but no known doctor or midwife presided at his coming. Neighbours knew nothing of him till a week afterward, when Old Whateley drove his sleigh through the snow into Dunwich Village and discoursed incoherently to the group of loungers at Osborn's general store. There seemed to be a change in the old man—an added element of furtiveness in the clouded brain which subtly transformed him from an object to a subject of fear—though he was not one to be perturbed by any common family event. Amidst it all he skewed some trace of the pride later noticed in his daughter, and what he said of the child's paternity was remembered by many of his hearers years afterward.

"I dun't keer what folks think—ef Lavinny's boy looked like his pa, he wouldn't look like nothin' ye expeck. Ye needn't think the only folks is the folks hereabouts. Lavinny's read some, an' has seed some things the most o' ye only tell about. I cal'late ef a man is as good a husban' as ye kin find this side of Aylesbury; an' of ye knowed as much abaout the hills as I dew, ye wouldn't ast no better church weddin' nor her'n. Let me tell ye suthin'—*some day yew folks'll hear a child o'Lavinny's a-callin' its father's name on the top o' Sentinel Hill!*"

The only persons who saw Wilbur during the first month of his life were old Zechariah Whateley, of the undecayed Whateleys, and Earl Sawyer's common-law wife, Mamie Bishop. Mamie's visit was frankly one of curiosity, and her subsequent tales did justice to her observations; but Zechariah came to lead a pair of Alderney cows which Old Whateley had bought off his son Curtis. This marked the beginning of a course of cattle-buying on the part of small Wilbur's family which ended only in 1928, when the Dunwich horror came and went; yet at no time did the ramshackle Whateley barn seem overcrowded with livestock. There came a period when people were curious enough to steal up and count the herd that grazed precariously on the steep hillside above the old farmhouse, and they could never find more than ten or twelve anaemic, bloodless-looking specimens. Evidently some blight or distemper, perhaps sprung from the unwholesome pasturage or the diseased fungi and timbers of the filthy barn, caused a heavy mortality amongst the Whateley animals. Odd wounds or sores, having something of the aspect of incisions, seemed to afflict the visible cattle; and once or twice during the earlier months certain callers fancied they could discern similar sores about the throats of the grey, unshaven old man and his slatternly, crinkly-haired albino daughter.