

THE HISTORY OF THE CITY OF MARKESH

The city of Markesh was founded eightyfive years ago.

It began when Agelmund Greybeard built his castle where the Annis River joins the mighty Mithil River.

Agelmund Greybeard was a strong, energetic man. He was also an ambitious man. Serving in the King's army did little to satisfy his hunger for adventure and fame. Being born into the lower middle class gave him little hope of ever rising higher than the rank of captain, even though he was one of the most gifted men in the realm in the art of battle.

When Greybeard could take it no longer, he struck out on his own to find riches and wonders. He took with him a dozen good men from his company and they travelled west.

Unfortunately, his term of service to the King had not expired. Greybeard was declared a deserter along with his band of followers. One night, a week after they had departed, they were ambushed by twentyfive of the King's soldiers. The soldiers were unaware of the skill which Greybeard and his henchman possessed. They were quickly cut down by the more experienced veterans of Greybeard's troop. Greybeard, however, paid a high price for his victory. His best friend, Markesh, was felled by a lucky arrow as he rose to meet the challenge of the guard. Greybeard was heartbroken and furious. He wanted to return immediately to Altair and slay the King who had ordered their execution. His men talked sense into him, however, and persuaded him to wait and gather his strength. They continued their journey west until they came to the headwaters of the Mithil River. They made rafts and floated downriver. When they arrived at the junction of the Mithil and Annis rivers they went ashore to make camp for the winter.

During the short, cold days the party hunted, fished, and scouted the land. Greybeard decided that this was an ideal place for his base of operations. During the spring the men built shelters and a stockade. Then, as summer came on the small party of warriors went to work in earnest. They cleared the land of evil orcs, horrid ogres, and all other sorts of undesirable inhabitants. In the course of their raiding and looting they became very wealthy and very renowned. They saved more than one village from being overrun by raiding creatures. After each victory their coffers grew full and their ranks increased. More and more men flocked to fight in the service of Greybeard the Slayer.

After three years of fighting, Greybeard had the resources to build his own castle. After two more years the castle was completed. It was named Markesh after Greybeard's fallen comrade.

Years passed and more and more people came to make their home around the protective walls of castle Markesh. Markesh became a center of trade due to its strategic location on the river. Cities both upstream and downstream paid tribute to be allowed free use of the waterways for commerce. The treasury of Markesh swelled with toll money, and the merchants of Markesh grew rich from the many goods which passed through.

Back in Altair, the King had all but forgotten the deserters long ago. In Markesh, however, Greybeard grew restless. Being king took much of his time, yet he yearned to avenge the death of his dearest friend.

Years passed. Greybeard married and had four children--two boys and two girls. Greybeard's wife, Aleeta, instructed her daughters in all things which royal princesses should know. Greybeard taught his sons to manage a kingdom, how to handle other people, and how to fight. But most of all he taught his sons his hate for the

king of Altair. If he himself could not avenge his loyal friends needless death, then his sons--or his sons' sons--would some day bring justice to the royal family of Altair.

With this as a base, you can decide which direction to take the campaign. Greybeard could be at war with Altair. Or Greybeard's sons could be at war. Perhaps an assassin has been hired to seek vengeance. Anywhere from 10 to 1000 years could have passed since the founding of Markesh. It is up to each individual DM to decide how he wishes to develop the campaign. This rough background should provide many different alternatives for adventuring.