

Greener on the Other Side



It was 1865. A group of seemingly unremarkable rangers had been mapping and surveying the eolian deposits of the Eastern Plains of Colorado, and found something entirely unexpected in the heart of the wind-blown wastes: a shimmering curtain of space. A window. A portal.

Through this mysterious gap in their world they could see lush flora and foliage, and their ears were met by the song of a rushing, bubbling river.

They tried throwing through a pebble. It landed on the other side.

Then, a shoe. It, too, landed.

Then a sandwich, taken in jest from one of their own.

And then one of them - the one who'd lost their sandwich - found the courage

to step

through

themselves.

Word of this discovery spread quickly, however it was the **Vanguard Consortium**, whose rapid mobilization and hunger for profit saw them first on the scene. This alliance of wealthy business-people already had a smattering of frontier towns to their name, but saw an opportunity for great profit in what was now being referred to as the Rift. Promising young representatives were tasked with the risky business of capitalising on the new venture. After warding off a few dogged challengers to the territory, they established the town of Consequence at the edge of the Rift, and circulated a request for settlers.

Progress was slow at first, but soon groups began to show interest in relocating their operations to Consequence. The first wave of settlers were ranchers, as the lush & bountiful grassland on the Other Side represented ideal grazing for cattle. Horses, however, became skittish around the Rift and refused to pass through. The next wave were primarily prospectors, seeking gold and other precious mineral

resources. Tents were the primary means of accommodation in the area until Vanguard arranged for teams of **Chain Gang** convicts to serve their sentences as labourers in Consequence, and by 1867 construction had begun on the town proper.

Around this time an organisation known as **The Foundry**, which had manufactured armaments for both sides during the Civil War, refocused its operations towards mining and agricultural equipment and was invited by Vanguard to set up operations in Consequence. Although the Foundry accepted the invitation, they laughed at the idea of trading in Vanguard credits which had become the currency of the town, preferring cold, hard American currency instead.

More settlers began to arrive, some with less than noble intentions, who passed through Vanguard's checkpoints and then disappeared into the wilderness of the Other Side. Vanguard soon found their exploration hampered by these roving bands of bandits. In response they enlisted and trained their own law-enforcement officers who became colloquially known in Consequence as the "Blood & Bone" after the bleached bone and deep crimson of their uniforms.

In 1868 Vanguard relocated their central offices to a new building on the Other Side. The populace joked that they had done so to avoid the jurisdiction of US Marshals who had begun to show interest in their operation, as it could be argued that the Other Side was not technically a United States territory. Vanguard continued to tax all traffic in and out of the Rift.

Madame Opal, a carnival fortune-teller, struck out on her own and founded the **Carnival of Wonders**, gathering the best performers she can (poaching them from other shows if necessary) by promising a lucrative opportunity in Consequence as the only show in town.

In early 1869, the **Smithsonian Institute**, having followed the development of events at the Colorado Rift for some time, finally received the go-ahead from their Board of Regents to send a research expedition to research and document the natural history of the Other Side. Preparations began in earnest, with scholars jumping at the chance to be the first to publish their findings on what are sure to be wondrous discoveries.

On May 10, a golden spike was driven at Promontory, Utah, signalling the completion of the first transcontinental railroad. Travel to Consequence became a matter of weeks rather than months. News of the Rift had travelled across the globe, and all manner of eccentric individuals made the journey looking for a fresh start.

The first of this new wave of settlers, consisting largely of Vanguard reinforcements, Chain Gang labourers, Smithsonian Expedition members and Madame Opal's Carnival of Wonders, are due to arrive in Consequence on November 1st 1869.