CREATING QUASI-REALISTIC POPULATIONS FOR YOUR LOW-FANTASY CHIMERA CAMPAIGN

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CREDITS

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ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB

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CORE RULES CITATIONS

All Core Rules (CR) citations refer to the ver-sion 1.2 PDF. If you don't already play Chi-mera, check out welshpiper.com/chimera. You will feel better about yourself, your life, and your game.

DEDICATION

No one in particular—just the good folks on the Yahoo! Groups CC2-l list, who have al-ways been willing to answer my questions and review my work (and politely suggest im-provements). Thanks to you all.

Low Fantasy Population Generator

Acknowledgements

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S. John Ross, whose work on *Medieval Demographics Made Easy* (http://www.io.com/~sjohn/demog.htm) has made it possible to create realistic populations for low-fantasy campaigns throughout RPG-dom. Without question, this is one of the most valuable RPG tools on the planet. Really.

Brandon Blackmoor, whose development of *The Domesday Book* (http://www.rpglibrary.org/utils/meddemog/) served as the code base for The Low-fantasy Population Generator. It's refreshing to see how shared ideas and efforts make the global RPG community a better place.

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Introduction

The so-called "swords and sorcery" genre has long been divided into the high-fantasy and low-fantasy varieties. Both are characterised by medieval trappings, but high-fantasy—rife with magic, wizards, evil high priests, fantastic monsters, loads of treasure, and wondrous artefacts—takes a more "swashbuckling" approach to the genre. High-fantasy settings ignore a certain amount of realism, but given the prevalence of magic, this is understandable: GMs of high-fantasy campaigns can safely assume that magic, in some form, compensates for the mundane drudgery of everyday life.

By contrast, low-fantasy settings downplay magic and promote real-world, quasi-historical qualities: literacy (or lack thereof), the amount of land required to feed populations, the ability of armed adventurers to roam unchallenged across the countryside, and the rarity of minted coins in treasure hoards for example. Wizards, magic items, enchanted creatures, and legendary treasures do exist, but their frequency is tempered by a sense of "realism" not found (or necessary) in high-fantasy campaigns.

This article is not intended to promote the merits of one flavour of fantasy over another, and we recognise that high- and low- varieties each require different approaches to create a particular style of play. Instead, this piece provides some realistic values for use in populating fantasy settings; we use the term "low-fantasy" only to indicate the Generator's foundation on the historical record, where (ostensibly) high-fantasy magic is ignored. (The population figures used here were gleaned from *Medieval Demographics Made Easy,* by S. John Ross. While I've not independently corroborated Ross' findings, familiarity with his bibliography compels me to believe that the values provided are certainly reasonable for RPG purposes.) That said, the Low-fantasy Population Generator is useful for any "Middle Ages" milieu, as long as the reader accepts the relative emphasis it places on real-world grit over the fantastic.

As a final note, we've taken liberties for the convenience of game masters. For example, we've established a neat correlation between knights, villages, and manor houses; barons, towns, and keeps; and earls, cities, and castles. While these are helpful and quasi-realistic groupings, they're not 100% historically accurate. Correlations like this make it easier to populate RPG kingdoms and settlements, but the reader is warned against repeating them on his Medieval Studies term paper. Instead, take what we offer for what it is—an RPG tool to facilitate campaign development. If you want more accurate information, please consult our sources (noted on page 2, above).

Regional Area and Populations

The Low-fantasy Population Generator (aka the "Generator") serves two functions: (1) to populate entire regions with settlements, and (2) to populate individual settlements with people. This is a good, "drill-down" approach that requires very little input from you. Start the process by grabbing a map of your campaign and identifying kingdoms and other distinct regions; with minimal input, you can populate each area with reasonable figures.

Inputs

The Generator takes four values to populate a given region:

➢ Region Name: The kingdom or region's name
➢ Population Density: The area's *average* population per square mile
➢ Physical Area: The area's size in square miles
➢ Region's Age: The number of years the area's been inhabited

REGION NAME

The area's name, or what the kingdom or region is commonly called. This is more for your benefit (if, for example, you want to print the Generator's output). The region's name is not used in any of the Generator's calculations.

POPULATION DENSITY

Select the option that best describes the kingdom or region's *average* population density, or the number of people who live in a square mile (640 acres). Because this value indicates the average across the *entire* area, be aware that some locales may have more or fewer people per square mile than the figure you select.

Population density relies heavily on land quality, or the ability of the area to sustain settlements. In most cases, this means food—whether grown or hunted—but land quality can also refer to valuable trade goods, abundant raw materials, or excellent natural defences. In all cases, the better suited the land is to growing crops, yielding resources, providing access, and supporting commerce, the higher the population density.

The Generator provides a general description of land

characteristics or temperature for each population density figure. For example, a population density of "40" is considered "Rocky, Chilly." This means that the land is either dominated by broken wasteland, crags, and rocky soil, *or* that the climate is, on average, chilly, with limited growing seasons or viable crop options. Either, or both, of these conditions limit population density to about 40 per square mile.

However, you do not have to interpret these descriptions literally. A value of "20," for example, is described as "Barren, Cold." Ordinarily, this indicates a relative wasteland or a climate with temperatures too low to include much of a growing season. However, it could also describe a region just recently settled—barren implies little growth, and a kingdom's frontier, for example, would have less cultivated acreage than its heartland. In this case, "barren" doesn't mean crops *won't* grow, just that crops aren't *being* grown. With that in mind, feel free to take some creative license when assigning population density.

PHYSICAL AREA

This is the kingdom or region's size in square miles. The figure represents all the land within the region's borders, regardless of terrain. Depending on how your campaign map is rendered, there are different ways to determine area:

➢ Area equals length times width, so if you want a fast (but inaccurate) figure, just multiply the region's east/west dimensions by its north/south dimensions.

➢ If your map has a square grid, count the number of squares in the region and multiply the result by the area of each square. This grants a more accurate figure than the method above.

➢ If your map has a hex grid, count the number of hexes in the region and multiply the result by the area of each hex. You can figure out a hex's area if you know how many miles the hex measures from side-to-side:
  • Length of a side (D = distance between parallel sides): $s = D / 1.732$
  • Length of a side (D = distance between "corners"): $s = D / 2$
  • Area (A) = $2.598 * s^2$

➢ Some cartography softwares provide a function to calculate area; for example, *Campaign Cartographer's* AREA command gives you the area of a region selected with the mouse

➢ If your map scale is metric, remember that one mile equals 0.621 kilometres.

REGION'S AGE

This is how long the kingdom or region's been settled, in years. The Generator uses this value to determine how many fortifications, active and ruined, are within the re-

gion. Another way of interpreting this input is to ask yourself, "How long has the area been settled by a fortification-building culture?"

Regional Results

After supplying the generator with population density, size, and age, you get a whole host of population data:

➢ Regional Area: A division of arable and non-arable land
➢ Regional Population and Distribution: The number of inhabitants and settlement distribution
➢ Universities and Fortifications: The number of universities and fortress distribution

REGIONAL AREA

This is the kingdom or region's size in square miles and acres (if you need to know such things). Based on the population density figure selected, the Generator decides how much of the region is arable and how much is wilderness (also provided in square miles and acres).

Arable land is suitable for settlements and may or may not be currently cultivated (or even occupied). Wilderness is a catch-all for terrain that doesn't support agriculture (forest, marsh, heath, swamp, moor, hills, scrubland, mountains, desert, tundra, et al.) though some *might* be converted to farmland if sufficient manpower, technology, and finances were applied.

REGIONAL POPULATION AND DISTRIBUTION

Population is the product of region area and population density. Based on these factors, the Generator distributes people across the region in villages, towns, and cities. The total number and overall population of each settlement type is shown, and the average population for each village, town, and city is provided for convenience.

➢ Isolated: Itinerant individuals or those living in homesteads outside settled areas. Isolated folk include hermits, wanderers, exiles, outlaws, and the odd family who tries to forge its own way in the wilderness. Life is hard for the isolated: not only do they lack the resources and safety offered by an organised settlement, but unless they can demonstrate that some community or lord vouches for them, they'll be marked as outlaws (regardless of their actual intentions or disposition).

➢ Villages: A village, hamlet, or thorp numbers between 10 and 1,000 people. Most are devoted to agriculture, though some gain an income from mining, timbering, or extracting some other resource. Village leadership can take the form of a local council, though a local lord (typically a baronet or knight) holds the village in fief. Local lords typically dwell in a manor house (typically of timber, fortified if the lord is wealthy).

➢ Towns: A community between 1,000 and 5,000 inhabitants. Towns rely less on agriculture and more on

production and trade. Craftsmen, artisans, guildsmen, and freeholders of all trades congregate in towns, pooling resources, employing labourers, providing trade education, and boosting the local economy. These benefits result from a relative independence from farming: people have more time to pursue other advances when they *buy* their food instead of *grow* it. Towns are usually protected by a tower or keep occupied by a viscount or baron who holds the town in fief. Few towns are walled.

➢ Cities: Populations of 5,000 to 30,000 people make up a city. The commercial advantages of towns are magnified in cities. In addition to the concentration of freeholders, cities support other amenities possible only where part of the population can spend time doing things other than cultivating food or crafting trade goods. Thus, cities contain libraries and universities, diplomatic quarters, parks, bath houses, theatres, and other non-essentials. As a by-product, cities are more prone to guild politics, (semi) organised crime, and other intrigues. Cities are typically held in fief by a "lord mayor" who probably shares the burden of leadership with a council composed of guildsmen, political advisors, and (rarely) a representative or two of the clergy; directly or indirectly, this body is vassal to the local earl, who rules from a nearby castle.

➢ Big Cities: Settlements with populations greater than 30,000 are extremely rare and occur in only the largest regions of ideal land—there may be only one or two metropolises on a single sub-continent. Such are governed much the same way as smaller cities, though the levels of bureaucracy are deeper. Big cities are almost invariably walled, and the local liege (typically an earl, but possibly the king or emperor) dwells in a castle or fortified palace compound.

The Generator also provides a rough distance between settlements of each type. This helps you place communities logically throughout your region—settlements too close together compete for resources, while settlements too far apart become isolated and risk reverting to wilderness. Use these figures as guidelines, and place cities on your regional map before towns; it's unlikely that you'll want (or be able) to show villages on a large-scale map, as they will be too numerous to render clearly.

Free Cities

A city might be "free," having secured a charter from the king (or the ranking ruler of the realm) to conduct its own affairs and provide certain resources in exchange for autonomy.

Officially, a free city was outside the jurisdiction of the king, and so could establish laws, field troops, pursue diplomatic relationships, and dictate trade practices without adherence to or permission from the crown (essentially akin in to a modern-day "incorporated" community). Free cities might be called upon to provide military support to the king, or to pay certain fees in exchange for protection if the countryside were threatened. However, free cities could not be taxed, nor were they obligated to provide troops for the king's army.

Charters could be obtained through a variety of means, but money was usually the most effective, especially if the crown needed cash. Alternately, an extremely powerful city might leverage its role in trade or production to obtain a charter. Once free, a city might voluntarily revoke its charter, particularly if it could not protect itself, and thus place itself once again under the auspices of the king.

In all cases, the designation of a free city had more to do with economics and power struggles than anything else. For RPG purposes, we recommend the following frequencies: small city (1/12 chance), average city (4/12 chance), and large city (8/12 chance).

UNIVERSITIES

Historically, medieval universities grew out of the need to instruct professional clergy, and as they developed, some came to include secular disciplines as well (e.g., logic, language, oratory, economics, et al.). Most universities produce "intellectuals," who are armed with whatever knowledge qualifies someone as "educated" in the setting.

Depending on the campaign, universities may or may not provide religious studies; such were often the exclusive province of monasteries or smaller "cathedral schools." Tradecraft, or knowledge of artisans and craftsmen, is not taught in universities, being the intellectual property of its respective guild.

Large universities were sometimes viewed as guilds in themselves, with Bachelors, Masters, and Doctors forming the ranks of apprentice, journeyman, and master. Universities are invariably located in the region's largest settlements—they impose too high a burden on local resources to exist in smaller communities. If universities are indicated, use the following table to suggest what's taught:

Table 1: University Types	
Die Roll (d12)	*University Curriculum*
1 – 8	Liberal Arts (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, music theory, grammar, logic, and rhetoric)
9 – 11	Faculties (law, medicine, or theology)
12	Class speciality ("wizards' school," bardic college, etc.)

FORTIFICATIONS

The number and type of fortifications in the region depend on the region's size and how many years the population have been building such constructions. The Generator provides a roster of castles, keeps, and towers, where they are located (settled or wilderness areas), and the current disposition of each (active or abandoned). Active fortifica-

tions are manned and tend to serve their original purpose (see below), while abandoned fortifications may be in ruins or inhabited by squatters, but in any event no longer fulfil the function for which they were constructed. It is important to note that these fortifications are free-standing and independent of those that may protect towns and cities.

Towers

These are multi-storey constructions of timber or stone, typically square, but possibly round if local masonry is sufficiently advanced. The least expensive sort of fortification, towers have from 3-6 (1d4+2) floors, which may extend both above and below ground. Most are free-standing, but some are protected by a walled enclosure that contains outbuildings (e.g., stables, smithy, and storage); the typical tower houses a garrison of 1d4 men-at-arms per floor. Active towers are used for observation (i.e., watch towers), signalling, or to ward strategic locations (a mountain pass, a river ford, or a road leading to the wilderness).

Those not so employed, may be inhabited by petty lords or reclusive types—wizards absorbed in their studies come to mind, though a tower might be headquarters to a self-styled bandit prince, a recently enfeoffed noble taming the wilderness, or a monastic order. Naturally, tales will abound of ruined wilderness towers rich with treasures and magic, but guarded by fearsome beasts and necromancers; whether these are merely embellishments is up to the GM, but the Generator helps you flesh these out if desired.

Keeps

Keeps are larger and stronger than towers, made of timber or stone, and form the fortified centre of a defensive compound. Keeps comprised of 4-7 (1d4+3) stories extending above and below ground and sheltered the local ruler (often a baron or higher), his family, and his retainers (including 3-8 (1d6+2) men-at-arms per floor).

Some keeps were built atop hills, making assaults against them difficult, while others were simply surrounded by walls or similar defensive structures (e.g., gullies or water-filled moats). Integral towers often fortified the keep's corners and were accessible from within; these provided enfilading fire and strengthened the keep's structural integrity. Where masonry technology allowed it, keeps were round to better deflect attacks by battering rams or catapult missiles. Rooftops could include crenelations to protect defenders as they fired ranged weapons at attackers.

Owing to their size, keeps housed more men, stored more supplies, and defended more soldiers than smaller towers. As a result, keeps could hold out longer during a siege and for that reason, keeps were built to cast a protective shadow across major settlements.

Castles

It is not entirely inaccurate to describe castles as large defensive complexes dominated by a heavily fortified keep. Indeed, castles grew as networked walls and towers wound a defensive web around the central keep, forming separate areas that could channel attackers to be dispatched with relative ease by defenders (5-12 (1d8+4) per floor).

Castles employed the concept of mutual defence, in which each part of the structure thwarted assault against the others. Thus, walls were supported by flanking towers, towers were built to cover walls with fire, and the central keep—generally considered the last defensive refuge—could be captured only after every intervening defensive layer had been penetrated. However, castles also fulfilled offensive purposes by providing a stronghold from which a lord could launch attacks and retreat to safety; in such a way, castles were built (or captured) as key components in conquering and holding territory.

A castle's strategic value placed great responsibility on the resident (usually an Earl or higher); in the rare case of an abandoned site, the castle is probably ruined to any further use, having been razed by an overzealous attacker, cursed, or perhaps "haunted."

Settlement Size and Populations

After you've determined the number and type of settlements in your region, you can focus on individual villages, towns, and cities, populating each with rulers, officers, clergy, freeholders, and citizens. The Generator determines population breakdowns based on a single population number, and it also gives you some guidelines on how many buildings all these folk need to live and work.

Inputs

The Generator takes one value to populate a settlement:

➤ Population: The number of inhabitants who call the settlement home

POPULATION

This is the number of people who live in the settlement. You can select a basic settlement type from the drop-down menu, which fills in a default population figure. You can also enter your own population number if none of the defaults really describe the settlement you're detailing.

A good guideline for customised values can be obtained from the Regional Population and Distribution results given above, which provide an average population for each settlement type. Note that these are *averages,* so most settlements will shelter more or fewer persons than indicated.

Settlement Results

After supplying a population figure, the Generator spits out settlement details:

➤ Area: The physical area of the settlement
➤ Population Overview: The settlement's number of nobles, officers, clergy, freeholders, citizens, and hirelings
➤ Population Breakdown: A detailed roster of each population segment shown in the overview
➤ Settlement Buildings: The number mansions, churches, business, municipal buildings, and homes in the settlement

AREA

The physical land occupied by the settlement, given in square miles and acres (if you need to get that detailed). This figure is the subject of some debate, so we'll explain our logic and tell you how to change it if the figures don't seem to fit your campaign.

Settlements are classified as either rural or urban. Rural settlements rely heavily on agriculture and need more physical land as a result. Urban settlements have less need for farming: Their size and commercial capabilities make it more efficient for them to *buy* food than to grow it (creating, incidentally, a marketplace for produce grown on rural settlements). The reason we distinguish between rural and urban settlements is because they possess different acreage to population ratios, or the amount of land needed to support a single individual.

Rural settlements required a minimum of 1.25 cultivated acres per person, (available resources, land quality, and climate severity could vary this figure). Urban settlements, on the other hand, support a much higher population density: about 60 people per acre. Urban folk require the same amount of food as rural people, but because they're not producing it themselves, the settlement's land requirements are smaller.

All this leads the Generator to assume that any population of more than 3,000 people is urban. If this figure doesn't sound right, there are a couple of constants you can change.

First is the people-to-acre ratio, which indicates how many acres it takes to support one person. In rural settlements, values vary according to land quality, climate, crop type and yield, and the availability of other food sources (e.g., a lake with abundant fishing or a forest with lots of game). In urban settlements, 60 people per acre seems to be a fairly consistent number. In either case, though, different sources provide different numbers, so pick a value from a source you trust and stick with it.

You might also want to adjust the threshold at which a settlement shifts from rural to urban.[1] We chose 3,000 because that's the default size we assigned to an "average town;" when you jump up to "large town," you cross the threshold. That said, 3,000 is more than just a dart in the wall, and it's certainly more than a matter of semantics: When a population grew this big, the settlement was well on its way to becoming a commercial fixture, attracting freeholders, and relying less on its own agriculture.

POPULATION OVERVIEW

This section gives you the raw numbers in the settlement, by "type," shown below:

➤ Nobles: The size of the ruling family's household, as well as any additional gentry in the settlement

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1 If you want to tinker with any of these numbers, you'll need to download the Generator and edit the `pop_function.js` script. The function that handles settlement area is named `cityCalc()` (lines 182-205), and the usual caveats about making edits apply: make a backup before you start playing, and do so at your own risk!

➢ Officers: Municipal and law enforcement agents (city watch, town militia, minor bureaucrats, administrators, etc.)

➢ Clergy: The total number of clerics and priests of all sects within the settlement

➢ Freeholders: The number of artisans, craftsmen, and "skilled" workers in the community

➢ Citizens: Normal folks; "unskilled" workers

➢ Hirelings: The number of citizens available for hire by PCs as retainers, henchmen, and guides

Note that when any of the "Recalculate" buttons are used, these numbers update automatically.

POPULATION BREAKDOWN

The Population Breakdown provides a detailed roster of each population's composition, based on the Population Overview above. These values are calculated automatically by the Generator, but you may "Recalculate" these values with the buttons to the right of each sub-category.

The presence and number of each individual is based on the settlement's overall population size, and the frequency of each is noted parenthetically in the descriptions that follow. For example, an armourer is noted with (1/1500), indicating that it takes about 1,500 people to support a single armourer. The Generator uses this value to determine if any armourers exist in the settlement, and if so, how many.

For example, in a settlement of 600, there is a 40% chance of one armourer (600 / 1,500 = 0.4). In a community of 2,100, the chance rises to 140%, meaning that there is definitely one armourer, plus a 40% chance of a second. In this case, there are one or two armourers present (clicking the Recalculate button bears this out).

Ruling House

A settlement's ruling house is that of the noble who holds the community in fief. Always assume at least one noble member of the ruling house, regardless of population. For convenience, base his rank on the settlement's size: village (baronet or knight), town (viscount or baron), city (count or earl). In addition to the single noble indicated, the household is rounded out as follows:

➢ Relatives (1d6): In addition to the noble ruler, his household may include a spouse, children, nephews, nieces, uncles, aunts, or cousins

➢ Servants (1/2 nobles): These are domestic types and include houseboys, valets, or maidservants

➢ House Guard (1/3 nobles): A personal "garrison" of bodyguards, armed retainers, or squires

➢ Sergeant (1/6 house guard): This veteran commands the household troops

Noble Households

The settlement might include other noble houses in addition the ruler's. Despite the name, these are not always nobles in the literal sense and could represent, at the GM's option, landed gentry, rich merchants, guildmasters, or other people of fame, influence, and wealth.

➢ Additional Noble Houses (1/450): The number of "noble" households in the settlement, in addition to the ruling house

➢ Population (3-10/house): Each household includes a family, support staff, and possibly house guards; the GM is free to assign these roles as desired

Settlement Officers

In addition to the ruling noble, there are several officers charged with the day-to-day operations in the settlement. There is, at most, only one of each major officer in a settlement. However, these are assisted by a staff of what we generically refer to as "law enforcement agents." The local lord typically draws officers from the citizenry, and while the positions don't often earn a salary, officers are forgiven any labour obligations in exchange for service.

The presence and number of officers result from the settlement's level of law enforcement, noted by the drop-down menu on the Generator. Most settlements field "typical" law enforcement, in that they employ principle officers with minimal agents. Based on the settlement's attitude, the dangers of the surrounding environment, and the disposition of the local lord, law enforcement may range from lax to oppressive, and changing this value updates the tally of Settlement Officers.

➢ Reeve (base 80%): The reeve is the chief administrator of a settlement, responsible for delegating and overseeing day-to-day tasks that promote the settlement's ability to satisfy its financial obligations. The reeve presides over local councils, makes purchases on behalf of the settlement, collects rents, and levies fines. The citizen with the most land frequently holds this office, and he wields significant power, the post is not considered popular.

➢ Messor (base 75%): The messor is chiefly an agricultural administrator, charged with a settlement's pastureland, livestock, feed stores, and defence against trespass. Sometimes impolitely referred to as the "fence-warden," the messor's job is important in communities where livestock—both as feed animals and beasts of burden—impact food supply and farm work. Messors are called to distinguish boundaries between grazing areas, manage field use and crop rotation, oversee the harvest, and protect stores. In larger communities where agriculture is "outsourced," messors are still responsible for property lines, food stores, and commerce related to produce.

➢ Woodward (base 70%): The woodward, or warden, is

in charge of any forest or timberland in or near to the settlement. His primary responsibility is to prevent poaching in the lord's woodland, but also to cut and plant trees, manage game populations, and to maintain safety within and through the forests. Woodwards are especially useful to lords who like to hunt, though in larger settlements where most surrounding land is deforested, woodwards still work to keep the area clear of outlaws and the roads safe for passage.

➤ Constable (base 90%): Essentially the chief of police, the constable (or beadle) is responsible for keeping order, maintaining and overseeing the watch, protecting municipal property, collecting levied fines, and generally enforcing the lord's laws. The office is typically held by a warrior-type, but in larger settlements, the beadle may be more of a bureaucrat.

➤ Law Enforcement (1/150): As noted, these could be city watch, town guards, or some other "police" force. That said, few communities could afford to employ regular police (most maintained order by means of a tithing or some similar measure to enforce mutual accountability). For our purposes, law enforcement agents include any member of the population whose job is to assist the principle officers, and so might include lesser administrators, minor bureaucrats, secretaries, registrars, and other functionaries.

Settlement Clergy

Religion is an important element in low-fantasy societies, and even the smallest settlements support at least one shrine, temple, or church. Church hierarchies are divided along three lines: laity (the "normal" parishioner), clerics (monks, acolytes, and deacons), and priests (bishops, archdeacons, and cardinals). Exact titles vary according to religious traditions, but for our purposes (and ignoring the laity), the Generator determines the number of ordained clergy.

➤ Clerics (1/120): Lesser functionaries within the church, responsible for day-to-day duties, keeping records, serving as scribes, translating scripture, assisting the priests, and administering to the laity's general needs.

➤ Priests (1/30 clerics): High functionaries within the church, responsible for conducting ceremonies, assigning penance, instructing clerics, and representing the church in matters of interest.

Freeholders

These are free tenants who hold their land in exchange for barter, cash, or military service. Artisans, craftsman, and guildsmen pay their rents in the form of licenses to practice their trade, and yeomen pay in military service. Historically, there were free farmers who could pay their rents in cash instead of labour, but for convenience, the Generator categorises such folk as "citizens" (see below).

Freeholder families consist of 4.0 people, consisting of one or two parents and children who may not necessarily be apprentice workers in the freeholder's industry. The roles and responsibilities of individual freeholders are described in the next section.

Citizens

These are unfree tenants who hold their land in exchange for labour (e.g., farming, timbering, mining, etc.). Their lands and homes are owned by the local lord, to whom they pay rents via some form of work.

Some citizens possess skills and personalities that make them suitable as hirelings: henchmen, retainers, guides, and man servants. For game purposes, assume that hirelings may be employed by player characters.

Not all citizens are workers; the Generator creates households of 4.75 each. These include one or two parents and children of various (pre-marital) ages.

Settlement Buildings

The Generator calculates the number of structures required by the settlement's population. These are guidelines only, but provide a good starting point for GMs who need to map out a city, town, or village.

➤ Mansions (1/noble house): Multiple-storey structures for the ruling household and gentry. Examples include manor houses, walled estates, and fortified homes.

➤ Churches (1/16 clergy): Any church, temple, or shrine dedicated to the worship of a deity. The church may have land—known as a glebe—which is worked by clergy and laity alike to satisfy rents, perform penance, or in lieu of a cash tithe. Multiple churches may represent centres of worship for multiple deities or smaller shrines all dedicated to the same god.

➤ Businesses (1/Freeholder, +1/industry): Commercial property used by freeholders. Most freeholders live and

work in the same building, but some industries require separate constructions (such are noted with an asterisk (*) in the Freeholder list). Where this occurs, the freeholder lives in one building and works in the other.

➢ Municipal (1/10 officers and agents): These structures serve the settlement officers and law enforcement agents. Municipal buildings include town meeting halls, administrative offices, watch stations, garrisons, gaols

(rare), and barracks.

➢ Homes (1/4.75 citizens): Individual homes for the unfree citizenry. Most are simple, one-storey affairs, cheaply made, and rarely with more than 2-3 rooms. The average household is 4.75 citizens, though based on overall population density, physical constraints, and available resources, this can vary from settlement to settlement at the GM's discretion.

Freeholders

Freeholders hold their lands in exchange for rent paid in cash, in kind, or via military service. Unlike unfree tenants, freeholders are permitted to earn a wage and join a guild of similarly skilled freeholders.

Historically, freeholders established guilds to organise and empower just about every industry that required specialised skills, and most guilds held a monopoly on its respective trade. Monopolies were granted in exchange for license fees paid by the guild, which worked out well for the collecting lord, who saw guilds as a source of income.

Monopolies also worked out to guilds' benefit, because they limited competition and ensured a relative degree of quality control. They were also a good way to consolidate and protect trade knowledge, which was valuable leverage for a rising middle class. Finally, they were easy to maintain, given the low literacy rate among the population. As a result, trade secrets remained within the guild structure, passed from master to journeyman to apprentice.

Guilds vigorously protected their monopolies, and practising a trade without guild membership was punishable by fines. Still, there was occasional overlap between industries (for example, both chandlers and apothecaries might make soaps).

It was up to the guilds to resolve such conflicts and settle disputes, not only to protect their industrial rights and trade secrets, but also to maintain whatever license fees were due to the lord (because no lord was going to accept a lesser fee just because so-and-so guild decided to stop producing such-and-such a good).

Such tensions were less in rural communities, where the lower number of freeholders required some degree of overlap. In large settlements, however, where there was plenty of room for lots of freeholders, monopolies were strictly enforced.

Freeholders are listed with their population frequency.[2] If, as GM, you need to flesh out a particular freeholder, we've provided some likely traits for the average guildsman

in each industry. The first trait listed is possessed at a rank of 1d4; ranks for any other traits cited range from 0–3 (1d4-1). While traits are cited in Chimera RPG terms, they are easily adapted to other systems.

As a reminder, freeholders marked with an asterisk (*) require an industrial building separate from their home to conduct business.

Adventurer (1/3000)

These are personage NPCs who call the settlement home. Unless retired (and wealthy), they have regular jobs, either within a guild or as an employee of the lord. Adventurers are created as personage NPCs (CR/100) and are represented as follows:

➢ Fighter Type (d%: 01-70): In low-fantasy campaigns, fighter types form the majority of adventurers. When not exploring the countryside, these worthies may serve as caravan guards, bodyguards, watchmen, or instructors for local militia. Regardless, they are expected to defend the settlement in times of need.

➢ Rogue Type (d%: 71-90): Thievery is dangerous business in the close-knit confines of most low-fantasy settlements, and in smaller communities, there is little worth stealing anyway. In large settlements, rogues may consolidate to form a so-called "thieves guild," but it's more realistic to assume that these folk work at non-descript jobs to keep their clandestine skills secret. That said, some rogues may find employ among various nobles as spies, thugs, or even assassins.

➢ Wizard Type (d%: 91-99): Arcane magic tends to be anathema in most low-fantasy environments, so wizard types hide their magical skills and attempt to fit in as sages, apothecaries, librarians, and tutors.

➢ Other (d%: 00): These could be any "fringe" profession the GM wants to include. As with other adventurers, the individual takes steps to blend in with society and apply such skills as they may to the benefit of the community at large or the lord in particular.

Note that cleric types are not mentioned, having been included as part of the settlement's clergy.

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2 1/x, where x indicates population required to support the freeholder; these values are used by the Generator and may be changed if you're willing to edit the `pop_functions.js` script.

APOTHECARY (1/2800)

Apothecaries specialise in mixing raw, natural ingredients to create useful remedies for physical illness or specific industrial applications. In settlements where they exist, apothecaries probably make soaps, perfumes, and other cosmetic agents. When crafting remedies, they typically sell only to physicians, though they might have on hand several raw ingredients to be used for various purposes (including poisons). [Craft (apothecary), Knowledge (natural herbs and ingredients)]

ARMOURER* (1/1500)

These craftsmen specialise in making armour. Some are leatherworkers, who make protective devices of cloth and hide, while others are smiths who make chain and plate armour. The guild's market consists of the nobility, and it charges a premium for its services and expertise. [Craft (armourer)]

ARTIST (1/2000)

These freeholders practise some form of artistic expression (verse, music, painting, sculpture, etc.). They might be commissioned by noble patrons or contract with entertainers to stage productions or concerts. [Compose]

BUTCHER* (1/1100)

Freeholders who operate slaughterhouses; some might specialise in a particular type of meat (poultry, beef, pork, or game), and their primary market consists of nobles and salters. Low-fantasy populations are well aware of the dangers posed by rotting or rancid meat, though butchers were not above selling bad cuts if it meant making a profit. Some butchers may have knowledge of taxidermy. [Craft (butcher), Knowledge (taxidermy)]

CHANDLER (1/600)

Primarily responsible for manufacturing lamp oil, pitch, candles, and tallow. Chandlers might also make soaps and perfumes, though they do so at the risk of infringing on the apothecaries' monopoly. [Craft (chandler)]

CHARCOALER (1/400)

Charcoal is a valuable industrial fuel for armourers, glassworkers, smiths, potters, salters, weapon crafters, and chandlers (who use ash). The charcoalers guild pays for rights to take a certain amount of timber from the lord's forest. [Craft (charcoaler)]

COBBLER (1/150)

Everyone needs shoes, and cobblers are very common as a result. Some specialise in a particular type of footwear (e.g., riding boots). [Craft (cobbler)]

ENTERTAINER (1/1200)

Alternately known as bards, harpers, or skalds, these folk provide amusements to crowds, assemblies, and paying audiences. Each entertainer specialises in some artistic form (e.g., oratory, acting, musical instrument, acrobatics, juggling, etc.). In small communities, they are hired by the local lord to entertain important guests; in large communities, they may have their own theatre. [Perform (choose medium), Compose (choose medium)]

FORESTER (1/800)

A woodsman, who probably assisted the settlement's woodward (q.v.). Foresters report directly to the lord and do not belong to a guild. Each forester is responsible for a specific acreage of the lord's woods and keeps the area free of poachers, highwaymen, and outlaws, and also ensures that charcoalers and timberwrights remain within their rights. [Nature Sense, Track]

FURRIER (1/250)

Furriers trap small game and sell the pelts to tailors and nobles. The furriers guild is required to obey the settlement's woodwarden and foresters. To ensure profits, furriers are as concerned and responsive to poachers and outlaws as foresters. [Craft (furrier), Nature Sense, Track]

GLASSWORKER (1/950)

These freeholders craft glass vessels, but have a limited market because their wares are more expensive than clay crockery and pots. The guild's customer base consists of apothecaries and nobles. [Craft (glassworker)]

INNKEEPER (1/2000)

Historically, innkeepers grew out of a monopoly to brew ale, which didn't travel well and so was easily localised. In well-trafficked communities, local brews attract travellers, and innkeepers provide food and temporary shelter for non-residents. Where possible, innkeepers partner with ostlers so that travellers' mounts can be cared for and properly stabled during their stay. [Craft (innkeeper, brewer), Rumour]

JEWELLER (1/400)

These freeholders create jewellery from metal and precious stones. Some practise only with relatively mundane materials, while others craft truly beautiful (and expensive) adornments. Jewellers may possess knowledge of gemsmithing. [Craft (jeweler), Appraisal, Knowledge (gems)]

LITIGANT (1/800)

It would be an oversimplification to call these folks medieval lawyers, but they do act as advisors and advocates in

legal matters. Their job is to understand the law and properly apprise a client of his rights and obligations. In small communities, they may serve the lord directly and help administer the town council; in large settlements, they are called upon to unentangle disputes over property, money, and guild affairs. [Craft (litigant), Etiquette, Persuade]

LOCKSMITH (1/1800)

A locksmith is required to fashion locks for chests and doors. Some might be capable of incorporating traps; a locksmith's rank is added to the target number of any Burgle attempt made against one of his locks or traps. [Craft (locksmith), Burgle]

MASON (1/500)

Skilled masons understand how to cut, transport, fit, and finish stone. Masons are called upon to direct the construction of stone walls, towers, bridges, wells, and other stone structures, and may supervise labourers in a quarry. [Craft (mason), Knowledge (engineering)]

METALSMITH* (1/300)

Traditional smithies create and repair tools, farm implements, and other metal goods; weapons and armour are beyond the scope of such craftsmen, due to guild monopolies and the expense of such commodities. In large settlements, smiths might specialise as ironsmiths, tinsmiths, silversmiths, etc. [Craft (metalsmith), Repair]

MILLER/BAKER* (1/250)

Millers ground flour for bread, and most millers own ovens, in which a community's bread is baked. The industrial equipment required for mass milling makes it easy for millers to enforce their monopoly (though hand mills are occasionally found amongst the populace, leading to fines). Most guilds rented (or purchased) their own muscle-, wind-, or water-powered mills. [Craft (miller)]

OSTLER* (1/600)

Ostlers stable and care for mounts, but also engage in some husbandry and veterinary care. They may partner with innkeepers, if the latter's clientèle is large enough to promise steady income. In addition to roofed stables, ostlers often have access to a fenced common where they can run horses and train mounts. [Craft (ostler), Ride]

OUTFITTER (1/1500)

Outfitters sell all manner of odds-and-ends and serve as part "general store" and part pawn-broker. Despite the monopoly-driven climate of the guilds, outfitters are permitted to sell goods, provided they don't actually *manufacture* them, and as a result, an outfitter's goods are always obtained second-hand.

Successful outfitters are good traders and do a brisk business with folk who can't afford buying directly from a guild craftsman (even if quality isn't always up to par). [Bluff, Persuade]

PHYSICIAN (1/600)

Doctors of medicine who administer to wounds and care for the sick. Low-fantasy medicine is of questionable science, and not all physicians apply the same treatments to the same maladies: some specialise in herbal remedies, others consider sickness to be the result of demons, and still others are truly innovative.

Disease could run rampant in medieval cities, and patients were more likely to die from infection than from actual injuries. Despite the disparity of effective treatments, physicians are welcome additions to any settlement. [Craft (physician), Knowledge (herbal remedies), Heal]
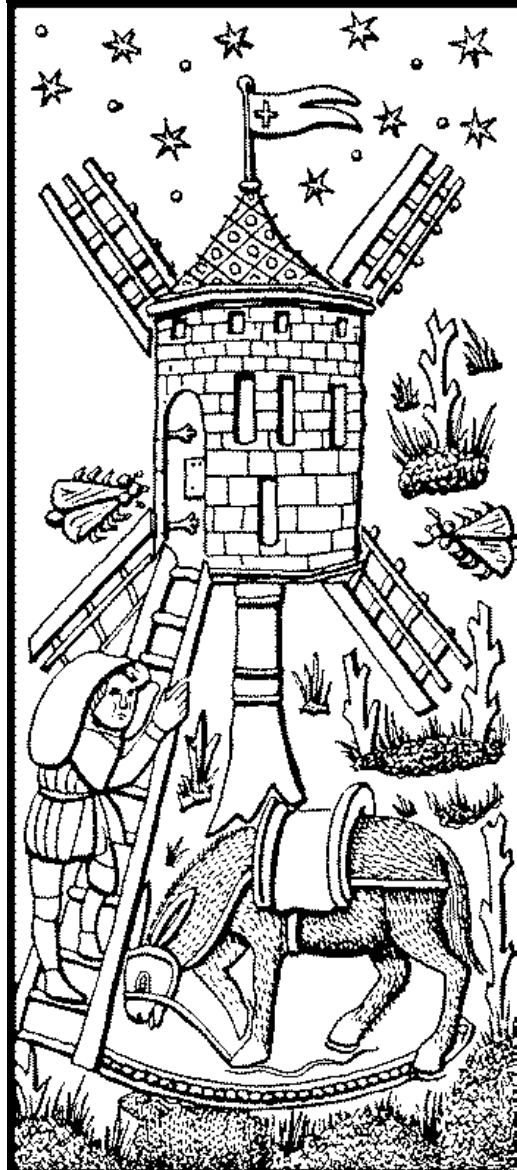
POTTER (1/450)

Potters create crockery, cups, urns, jars, tiles, and other useful items from clay, which is cheaper than glass. [Craft (potter)]

ROOFER (1/1800)

These freeholders build and repair roofs for structures. The easiest material they can work is thatch, but some roofers are skilled with tile or slate as well. [Craft (roofer)]

ROPEMAKER (1/1800)

Just about every industry has a need for rope (especially masons, shipwrights, teamsters, and timberwrights). Ropemakers create rope, nets, and rigging from raw materials, usually plant fibres. [Craft (ropemaker)]

SAGE/HERALD (1/1800)

The professors of their day, sages and heralds are people of specialised knowledge. In small communities, they serve as tutors for nobility; in large communities, they may administer to libraries or teach at university. Proper heralds are versed in history, though sages might possess knowledge of nearly any field imaginable. [Knowledge (choose two fields), Language (choose 1 foreign language)]

SALTER* (1/600)

The salters guild preserves food by various means (immersion in brine, smoking, or salting). Some make cheese, but most preserve meats. [Craft (salter)]

SCRIBE (1/2000)

Scribes are common in large, commercial settlements, where they prepare official documents. In areas were the literacy rate is low, scribes are an all-too-scarce necessity, and their knowledge allows them to serve in legal, contractual, guild, and diplomatic circles. [Craft (scribe), Language (choose 1 foreign language)]

SHIPWRIGHT* (1/2400)

Common only in coastal, lakeside, or river-based communities, shipwrights make boats for fishing and transport. [Craft (shipwright), Knowledge (seamanship)]

TAILOR (1/250)

Tailors make clothes, from rough work-a-day tunics to expensive finery. Guildsmen use raw materials (like wool and cotton) and have knowledge of dyes, textile quality, and mending. Some may also clean fabrics. [Craft (tailor)]

TANNER* (1/1200)

Hideworkers make of leather items from animal hides. A skilled tanner can also shear sheep, butcher meat, and trap game, so long as there aren't any competing guilds to take on these tasks. [Craft (tanner), Craft (butcher)]

TAVERNER (1/450)

Taverners are similar to innkeepers and may be members of the local brewers guild. Unlike innkeepers, taverners are not equipped to provide overnight accommodations (converting common rooms to sleeping areas is considered an infringement on the innkeepers guild monopoly). [Craft (taverner), Rumour]

TEAMSTER (1/1400)

Teamsters, or drovers, transport goods from one place to another. They often contract with guilds to run wagon trains and caravans, and their geographic knowledge is often better than that of the comparatively provincial population. Naturally, they are staples of a settlement's economy, and their guild enjoys better than average influence. [Craft (teamster), Knowledge (local area), Ride]

TIMBERWRIGHT* (1/700)

Professional loggers who extract timber from the lord's woods and create lumber for use in building and woodcraft. The guild serves a secondary purpose by clearing wooded areas for settlement, farming, and pastureland. [Craft (timberwright)]

TINKER (1/800)

A tinkerer is a sort of handyman who repairs small, mundane items (like dented pots and shards of crockery or a broken lantern). Some may sell small, second-hand wares much like an outfitter.

Tinkers operate somewhat at the peril of organised guilds, but because they don't manufacture their own wares, the low prices they charge for repairs are not considered a viable threat to guild monopoly (and, in truth, many tinkers form partnerships with guilds for raw materials or repairs beyond the tinker's skill or capacity). [Repair]

VINTNER (1/900)

Vintners make wine or distil spirits. Most convert fruits from the lord's orchards into alcoholic beverages, but some have their own vineyards. Vintners sell the bulk of their wares to the lord or other nobility, but some portions may be destined for other locales, enabling potentially lucrative trade agreements. [Craft (vintner)]

WEAPONCRAFTER* (1/1000)

These craftsmen specialise in weapon-making and include bowyers and swordsmiths. Guilds often contracted to outfit a lord's house guard and perhaps the city watch (if such existed).

Weapons are a commodity, expensive, and legally sold only to nobles (or those designated by nobles). As a result, arms are generally unobtainable by the general population. This suits the nobility because it prevent the "rabble" from bearing arms, but it allows the guild to charge a premium for their wares. [Craft (weaponcrafter)]

WEAVER (1/600)

Weavers make non-clothing items out of fabric: rugs, banners, tapestries, blankets, etc. [Craft (weaver)]

Woodcrafter (1/300)

Woodcrafters work wood on various scales, crafting tools and furniture (carpenter), containers (cooper), carts and wagons (wainwright), or buildings and sheds. Woodcrafters might form partnerships with timberwrights or retain a license to cut their own wood from the lord's forests. [Craft (woodcrafter)]

Yeoman (1/450)

A yeoman pays his rents in military service, and he is obliged to accompany the lord whenever the lord must answer a call to arms. Despite his non-noble status, a yeoman is permitted to bear arms.

During peacetime, the yeoman works his land like the rest of the population but assists in the settlement's defence, and possibly captains a portion of the local militia (historical evidence of this practice is questionable). When not called to war, a yeoman is permitted a scutage, which is a cash payment in lieu of military service. [Melee Weapons, Missile Weapons]

Chimera RPG Conventions

Formatting the Generator's output into something useful for your game is a matter of personal taste and your game's style. For Chimera, it goes something like this.

Settlement Overview

The settlement format used in the Chimera RPG is not unlike a "stat block" that might describe NPCs or monsters. The benefit is that it captures the Generator's output, but does not require the GM to provide full details. During play, you can reference the Settlement Overview and flesh out only what you need.

Name, Type, Tech, and Alignment

Start with the settlement's name and type (small village, average town, large city, etc.). The settlement's technology level (TL), assuming low-fantasy, is probably TL 3. However, some realms (or big cities) might support TL 4; conversely, there may be "pockets" of TL 2 or even TL 1.

You may also include the settlement's general alignment tendencies (Lawful, Neutral, or Chaotic). Community alignment is strongly affected by the ruler's own disposition and the influence of predominate religions.

Population and Buildings

Note the settlement's population and its area in square miles (and acres, if desired). The Generator gives the *minimum* cultivated area, and the settlement probably occupies more actual land. It's also helpful to indicate the number of buildings, broken out into the ruler's home (manor house, tower, keep, etc.), mansions (for nobles), churches, businesses (for freeholders), municipal (for officers), and residential homes (for everyone else).

Commerce

This is the maximum dollar amount of any single commercial item generally available for purchase. The larger the community, the more valuable the goods and services obtainable, and this figure is useful when PCs need to buy gear and other commodities. More expensive items *might* be available, though not on the open market.

You may also wish to indicate any resources or exports of note: armour, foodstuffs, furs, gems, glass or pottery, jewellery, leather, metalwork, mounts or livestock, ore, potables (ale, wine, spirits), stonework, textiles, timber, weapons (of any type), or woodcraft.

Table 2: Settlement Commerce		
Settlement Type	*Average Population*	*Commercial Limit ($)*
Small thorp	10	$5
Average thorp	30	$10
Large thorp	50	$20
Small village	100	$25
Average village	300	$50
Large village	500	$100
Small town	1,000	$125
Average town	3,000	$250
Large town	5,000	$500
Small city	10,000	$1,250
Average city	15,000	$2,500
Large city	30,000	$5,000

Leadership

The identity of the ruling landholder, including his household (relatives, servants, and house guard). Settlement rulers are almost always personage NPCs, and you should provide at least a skill level and class, if not full stats (CR/100, 145).

Officers

The identity of the four principal officers (if present) and the number of law enforcement agents. You may wish to break out agents by role (e.g., town watch, bureaucrats, clerks, etc.).

Clergy

The number of clerics and priests in the settlement, broken out by religion

FREEHOLDERS

The number and type of freeholders in the community. These represent the goods and services available in the settlement—if it isn't here, the settlement has to import it, probably via (ir)regular merchant caravans.

CITIZENS

The number of hirelings and labourers in the settlement. You can use the total number of citizens in the community, but that does not necessarily reflect the active workforce. If this number is what you're after, divide the number of citizens by 1.50 to get a relatively accurate tally of actual workers.

PROMINENT RESIDENTS

Use this space to note any exceptional residents; these could be potential enemies, allies, patrons, or protagonists of the PCs. Instead of full stats, it's enough to indicate the resident's skill level, class, and identifying notes (e.g., alignment, outstanding traits, etc.).

The Village of Lydon

Here's an example called Lydon, a smallish village formatted in the Chimera RPG style.

BACKGROUND

Lydon is a growing village of 412, held in fief by Lord Bayfield, a knight of the realm. Bayfield lives in a fortified manor house and pays rents to his liege through a combination of cash and military service.

Lyndon would be an average farming community if it weren't for the fact that it borders a forest in which the ruins of a necromancer's tower stand. This feature attracts a fair number of adventurers, and Lyndon is marginally more "cosmopolitan" as a result. This gives the village a commercial edge (treat as Large village on Table 2) and makes the settlement's law enforcement above average.

AREA AND POPULATION

In the Generator, we enter a population of "412" and select "zealous" from the Law Enforcement drop-down menu. We learn that Lydon occupies at least a little over half a square mile, which translates to about 330 acres.

A quick look at the Population Overview gives us 12 nobles, 8 officers, 3 clergy, 25 freeholders, 362 citizens, and 2 hirelings. Your numbers may vary, but it's important to note that the figures add up to your total population (in this case, 412).

The Generator has also determined that there are 92 buildings in the community: 2 mansions, 1 church, 32 businesses, 1 municipal building, and 56 homes.

POPULATION BREAKDOWN

According to the Generator, the House of Bayfield numbers six: 3 relatives (let's say Lord Bayfield, his wife, and 1 daughter), 1 servant, and 2 house guard. There's also a second noble household of six. Given Lydon's size, this is probably not an actual noble house; we'll call it a rich merchant family for now.

The Generator supplies us with each of the four principal officers, plus an additional four law enforcement agents. We'll assume 3 town watch and 1 administrative assistant to the village reeve.

Lyndon's clergy consists of 3 priests. Because the Generator gave us only 1 church, it makes sense to assume that these fellows belong to the same religious order (a Lawful church common in the realm).

The freeholder breakdown gives us a broad scope of business (noted in the stat block below). Again, your numbers will vary, but in our example, the Generator gave us 2 metalsmiths, so we'll build off that a bit.

Let's say that metalwork is Lyndon's chief export (initially we might have said timber, since the village is close to a forest, but the Generator didn't give us any timberwrights—perhaps the forest is avoided because of the necromancer's ruined tower?). We'll go a step further and assume the rich merchant makes his money in the metalworking industry—maybe he runs caravans that import raw ore and export finished goods. As GM, you don't have to work out all the details, but you can draw some logical conclusions from the Generator's output.

SETTLEMENT OVERVIEW

Given the above, Lyndon's Overview looks like this:

Lyndon (small village; TL 3; AL Lawful)

Population: 412 (min. 0.52 sq. miles/329.6 acres)

Buildings: 1 manor house, 1 mansion, 1 church, 32 businesses, 1 municipal, 56 homes

Commerce: $100; metalwork

Leadership: Lord Bayfield (Skilled Noble (Lawful); wife, 1 daughter; 1 servant; 2 men-at-arms)

Officers: 8 (Reeve, Messor, Woodsman, Constable; 3 town watch, 1 reeve's assistant)

Clergy: 3 (3 clerics, Lawful religion of the realm)

Freeholders: 25 (1 artist, 1 chandler, 1 charcoaler, 3 cobblers, 1 furrier, 1 jeweller, 1 innkeeper, 1 locksmith, 1 mason, 2 metalsmiths, 2 millers, 1 outfitter, 1 salter, 1 tailor, 1 tanner, 1 tavern, 1 tinker, 1 weaponcrafter, 1 weaver, 1 woodcrafter, 1 yeoman)

Citizens: 364 (2 hirelings, 243 labourers)

Prominent Residents: Edlon Pennell (Skilled Merchant (Neutral); metalworking industry)