

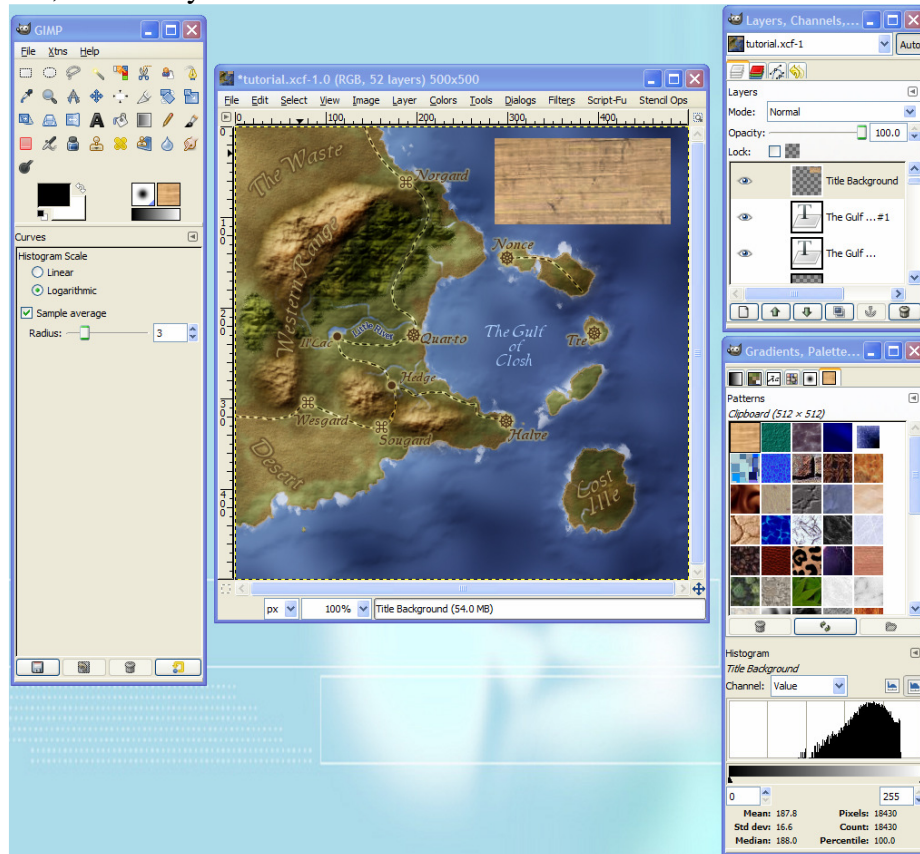
Using GIMP to Create an Artistic Regional RPG Map

A tutorial by “RobA” for the Cartographer’s Guild (www.cartographersguild.com).

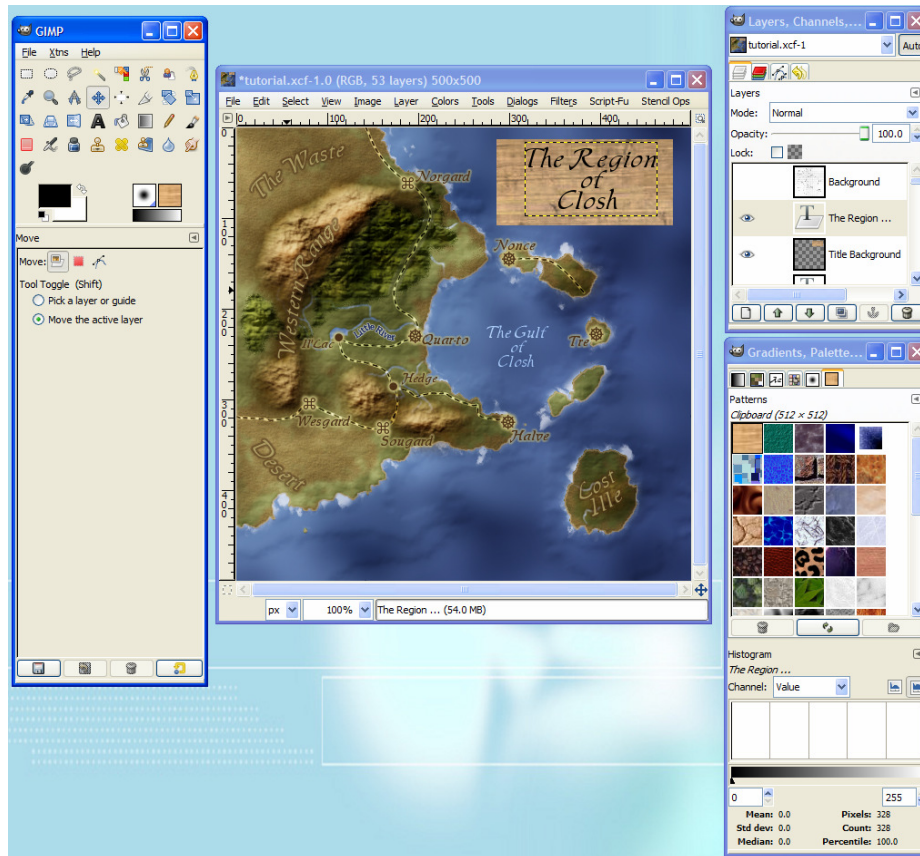
Part 4

Post 18: Titles and Legend

Now come a title and a legend. These will be set on a paper-like background fitting the feel of the map. First the title. Create a new transparent layer named “Title Background”. Select a rectangular selection, and fill it with a suitable texture. Use one downloaded, or create your own.



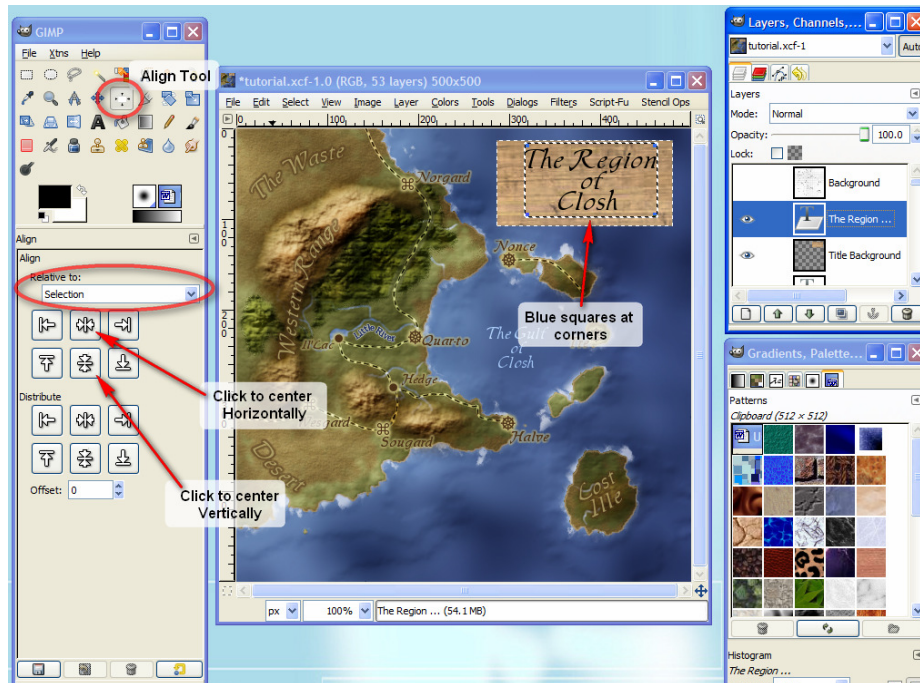
Using the Text Tool, add your title above this in any color desired.



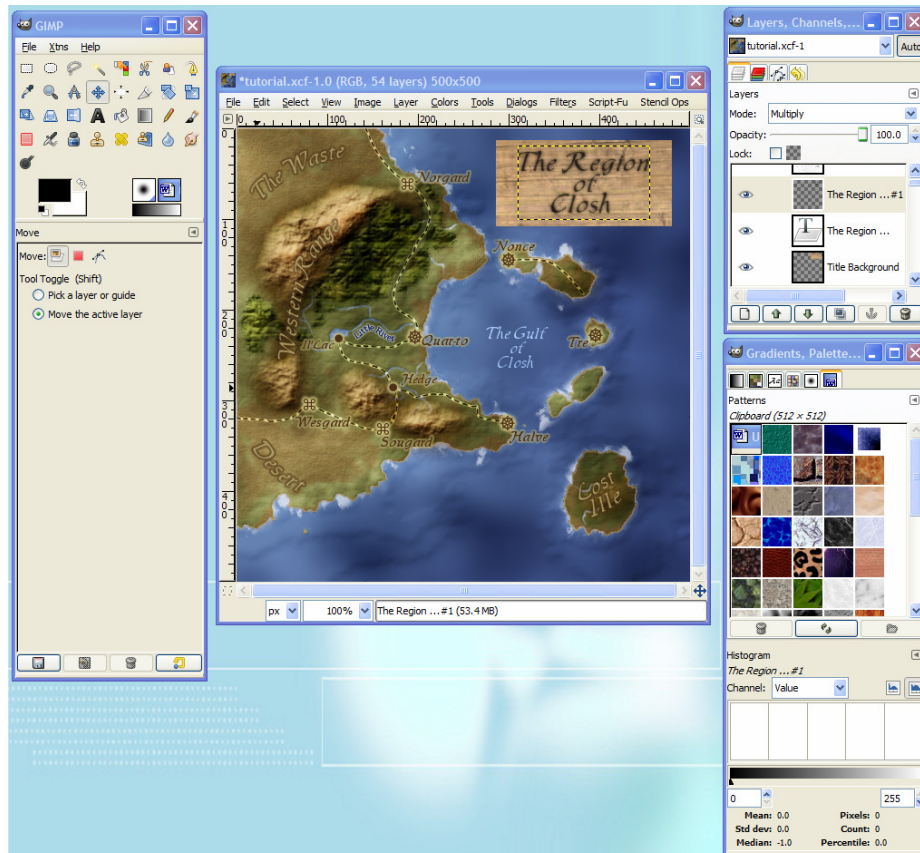
Here the new Align tool GIMP 2.4 provides will be handy to align the title text entered in the center of the title background.

Right click on the title background and choose “Alpha to Selection” to select just the rectangle we had filled with texture. Click on the Title layer, and choose the Align Tool. Using the Align tool is fairly straightforward. First, choose what to align to. In this case make it Relative to “Selection” (as the current selection is the Title Background rectangle). The Align Tool looks like a hand with a pointing finger when over the image. Click on the title text, and it will get boxed with a marching-ant marquis that has blue corners. Now back in the Align Tool pane, click on the two buttons to center horizontally and vertically.

The text should now be centered on the background.



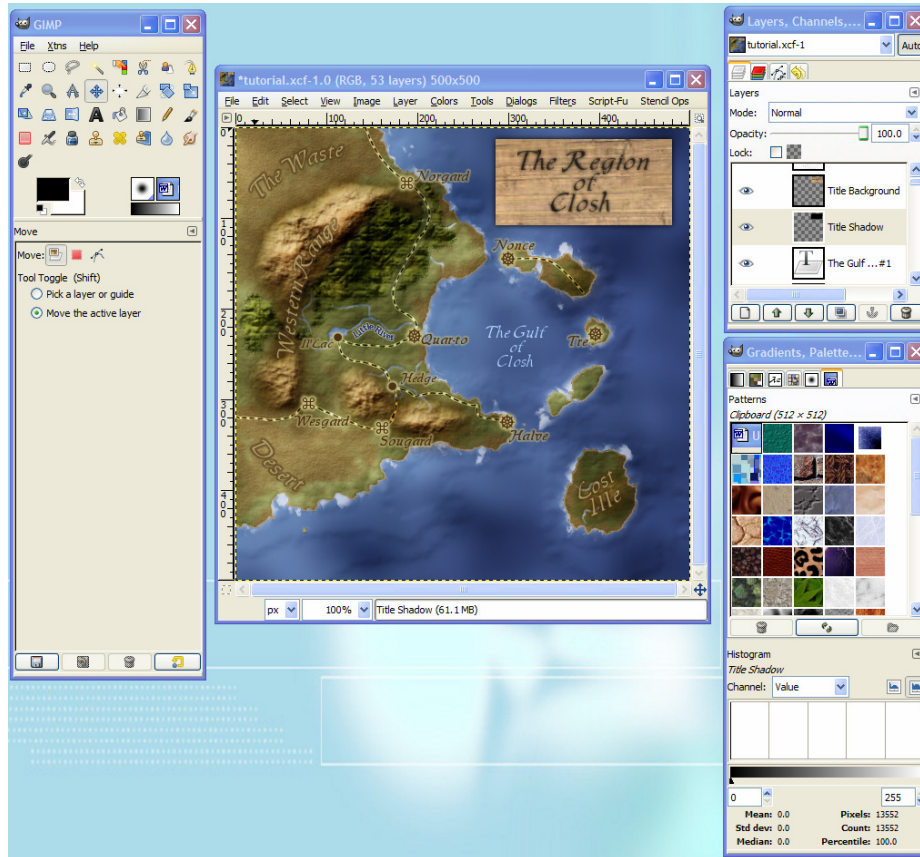
To make the Title blend with the paper a bit more, Duplicate the text layer, and blur the copy by 5-10 pixels, then play with the blend modes. Here the text is 50% opacity, normal blend mode and a blurred copy above it is set to multiply, 100%.



I want to apply some distortion to the title, so now will merge all three of these layers into one, then copy the merged layer and call it “Title Shadow”.

GIMP NOTE: When merging down several layers that have different blend modes applied, start merging them down from the bottom layer to maintain the final look.

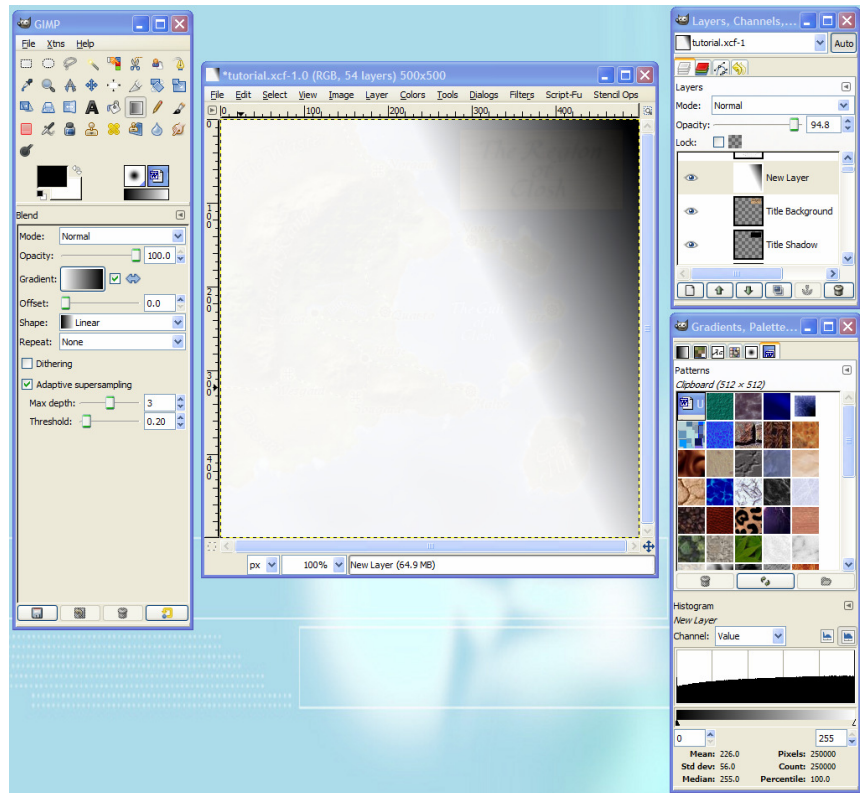
Lock the alpha, fill this “Title Shadow” layer with black, unlock the alpha and apply a 10 px. Gaussian blur.



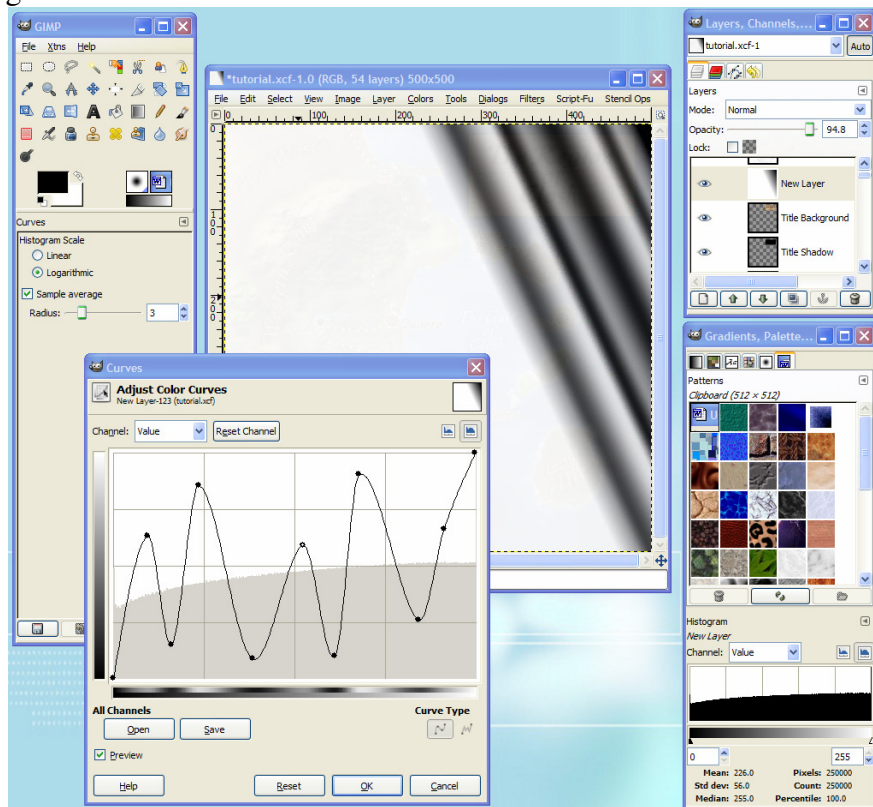
Post 19: Title Distortion

To distort the title, we will be using the displacement map filter again. First, a displacement map needs to be created.

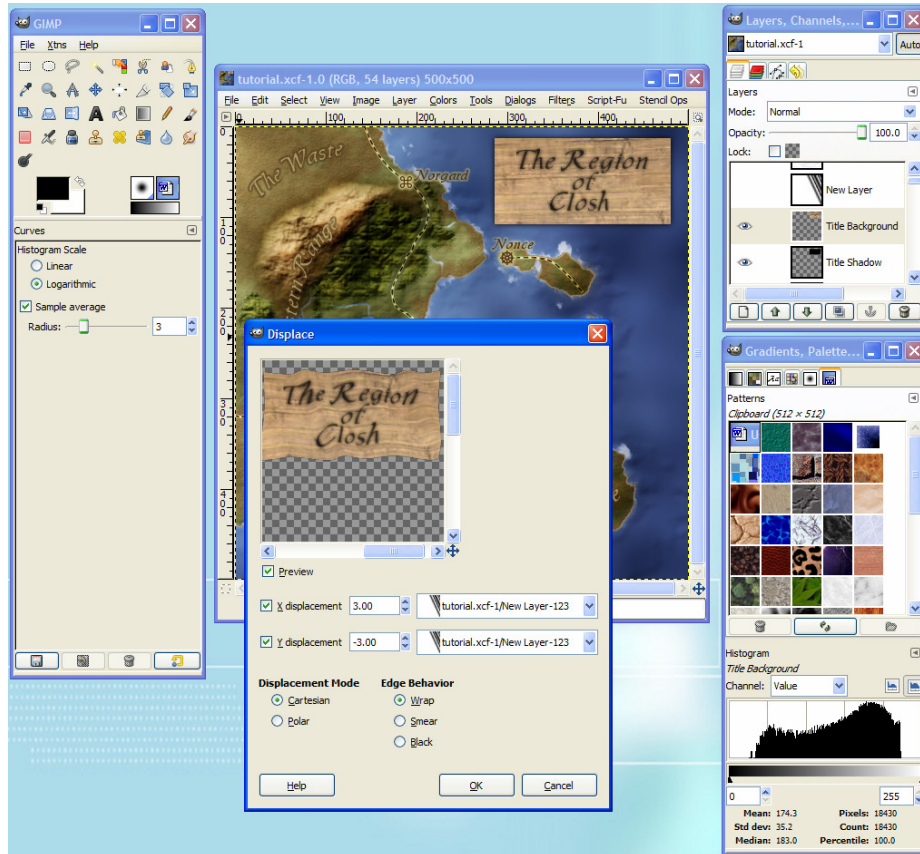
Create a new layer (it will be a throw-away so do not worry about naming it). Select the gradient tools with the default colour, and stroke a linear gradient diagonally across the area the title is. Here the opacity of the gradient's layer has been reduced slightly to see how it should line up.



Now open the curves dialog (**Colours->Curves**) and change the straight line to a squiggle. This will end up turning the single black to white gradient in to a whole bunch of smaller gradients.

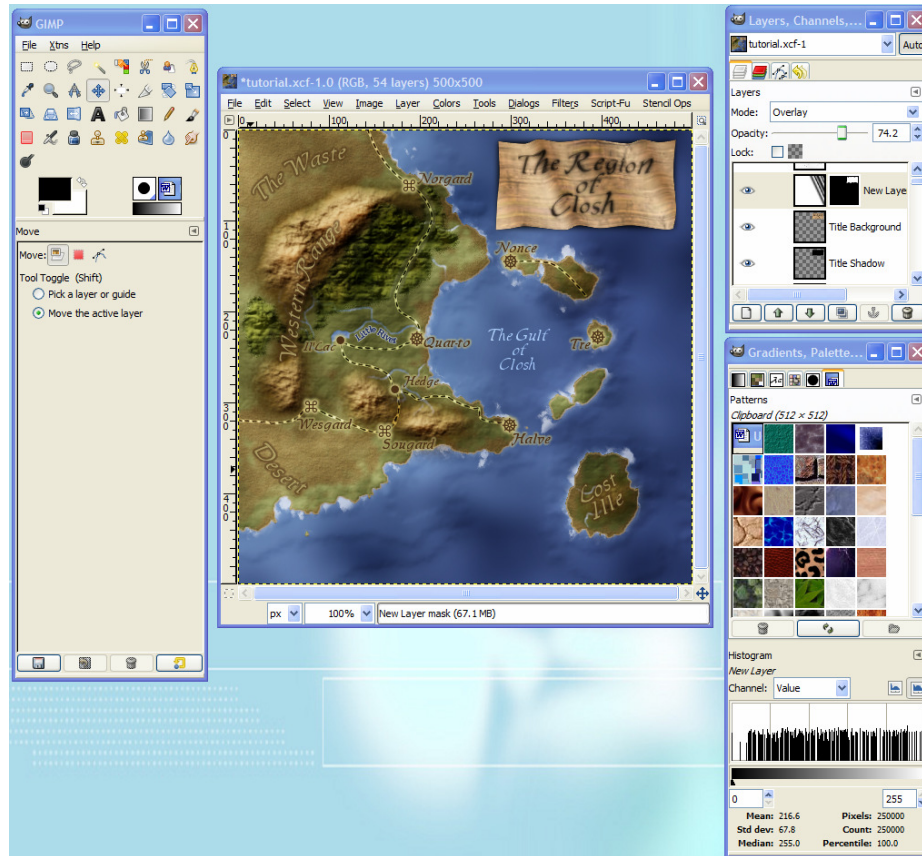


Turn off the visibility of this new layer. Now it can be used as a displacement map. Select the Title Background layer (left after merging down) and apply a displacement map filter (**Filters->Map->Displace**)



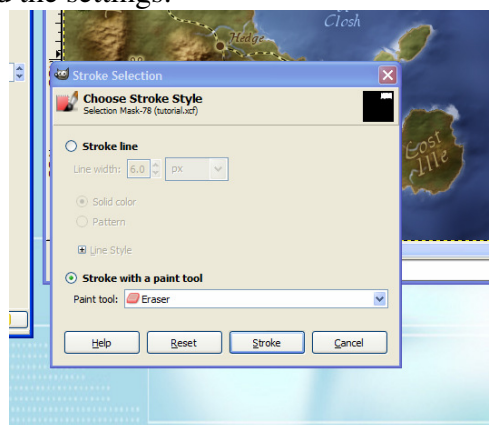
Now a few more things to liven up the distortion – (and I changed my mind here, we’ll keep the gradient layer I said was throw away before).

Right click on the Title Background layer and Alpha to Selection. Right-click on the gradient layer and add a layer mask, choosing “Selection”. Make the gradient layer visible, and change its mode to Overlay, adjusting the opacity down a bit.



Right-click on the Title Background layer again, and “Alpha to Selection”.

Now distress the outside by stroking the selection with the eraser tool, using a hard brush with jitter. Here I used the hard Circle (05) brush, scale of 1.0 and a jitter setting of 1.0. Then **Edit->Stroke Selection** and choose the eraser tool. I have brought the dialog up again to see the effect and the settings.



Lastly, shift the shadow selection over and down, and decrease the opacity. Additionally, I played a bit with the colour and saturation until I was happy with it.

Post 20: Finishing it up

Before starting the legend this is where the image was at:



Now repeat the same process used for the title for the legend. Here I decreased the distortions amounts so the smaller text would remain legible (though it did get a bit blurry).

I also didn't jot down the colour changes when making the Title colours, so I had to match the legend by eye, and didn't get it quite right.

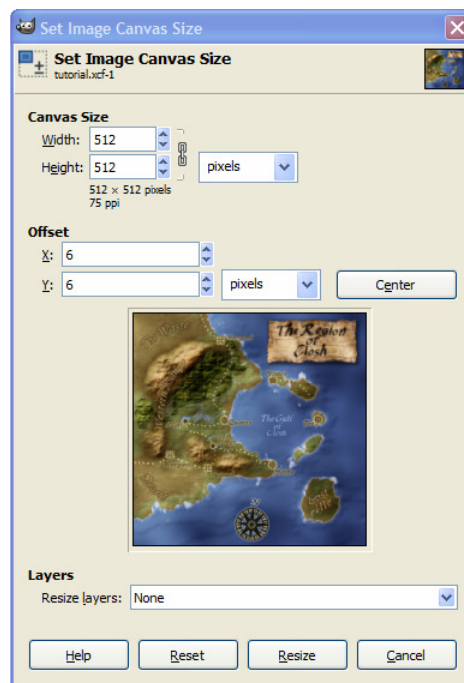


Since this map is small, and it is getting cluttered, the only thing I'll add is a compass rose.

I'll just grab one from a clipart collection... And at the last minute I decided I didn't like the legend, so I dumped it and moved the compass to where the legend was.

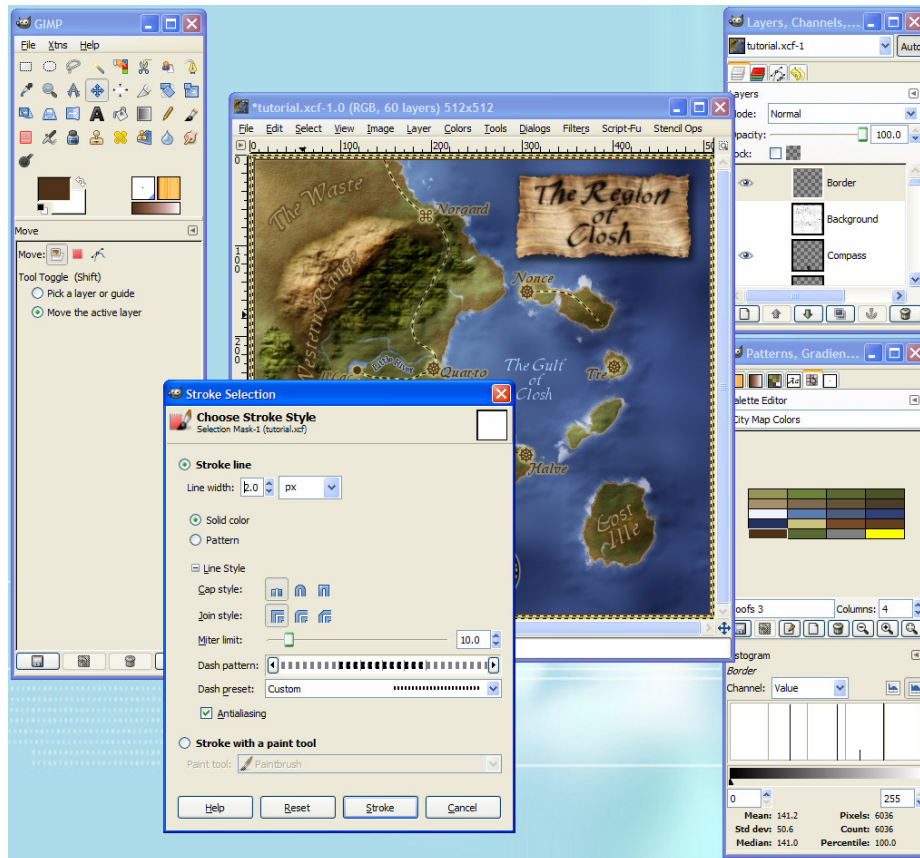


To finish it just needs a simple border. If there is detail near the edges you want to keep, just enlarge the canvas to get working space for the border. In this case let's add a six pixel border in the roof3 brown. **Image->Canvas Size** to get the dialog. The new canvas will be 512x512, and clicking the "Center" button puts the existing map in the middle. Leave the "Resize Layers" option as "None".



Create new transparent Layer called "Border" at the top. Select the whole image (**Select->All**) then shrink the selection (**Select->Shrink**) by 3 pixels (half the border). Select the desired color, and stroke the selection (**Edit->Stroke Selection**). Use a Stroke Like of 6 px, and make the dash preset is "Line". Now pretty it up by stroking a solid 3 px line with the Road colour. Picking an odd px size will give a nice blur to the line, as it interpolates the half pixel colouring. Lastly, I

went back to the Roof 3 colour, and stroked a third time, 2px, choosing the dash preset “Stipples”:



Post 21: In Conclusion

Here is the final map:



I hope this tutorial was beneficial, even if you do not use GIMP. If you have any comments, suggestions, or criticisms, please post in the forums at the Cartographers Guild, or PM there.

For more maps, check The Cartographers Guild at <http://www.cartographersguild.com/>

-Rob A>

