

# Ancient Astronauts

## Modern Mysteries

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### MOONSTONE MYSTERY

Thousands of years before the Indians settled in North America, another culture thrived here. They were primitive by modern standards but, like the early Egyptians, they were fine craftsmen and very industrious people. They mined copper, iron, lead, gold, and even coal. They drilled for oil. They were also great builders and dug canals and irrigation systems all over the continent. Remnants of their efforts still survive, including massive stone walls, roads, and earthen pyramids. They measured the seasons and the movement of the stars by erecting circular stone astronomical calculators similar to England's Stonehenge.

In those far-off days, huge mastodons still roamed North America. Our unknown predecessors carved artifacts from mastodon tusks and scratched pictures of the animals in cliff faces. They even left depictions of dinosaur-like creatures, resembling the fabled dragons of China and Great Britain. And, in the tradition of the Chinese and British dragon carvings, they usually drew a circle or disk in front of the creatures.

The disk was, in fact, a very significant part of that culture. Thousands upon thousands of tiny stone disks, carefully and laboriously carved by human hands, have been found at archaeological sites throughout the country. Most of them are less than 6 inches in diameter. Many look like miniature cogwheels, notched with such precision that they almost seem machinemade. A large quantity of these coggled stones have been found in the Bolsa Chica (Orange County) area of southern California in a strata of earth that has been calculated as 8,000 years old. Other disks have been found in the lower levels of the huge, man-made mounds of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys.

Scientists have failed to come up with a satisfactory explanation for these curious artifacts. Some have suggested they were used in games, like modern checkers. Others think they might have been used as money. They must have had some important purpose for the task of carving them was certainly arduous and time-consuming. Lacking a better term, archaeologists call them "Moonstones." They are a constant embarrassment to scientific theorists, so most of these moonstones are stored in museum basements. One set of moonstones found in New York State was doubly embarrassing. The disks are rimmed with a series of carefully spaced holes and were found in the lower layer of a mound which dated them as having been carved long before the first Europeans arrived.

When scientists studied the holes they were surprised to discover they had been made with a steel drill. Of course, the Indians didn't have steel drills.

### STONE SPHERES

The North American moonstones are dwarfed by the hundreds of stone spheres scattered in Central American jungles, especially in Costa Rica. Some are as big as 8 feet in diameter and weigh more than 16 tons. Others are only a few inches in diameter. All are perfectly formed spheres. No one knows who carved them, when, or why. Were they the bowling balls of giants? Did they have some religious significance? One thing is certain. It would take an enormous amount of effort to carve just one of these balls and grind it down to a perfect sphere. To do the job, the ball would have to be constantly rotated, and rotating a 16-ton block of stone would be no easy task. Some of these spheres have been found laid out in a measured geometric pattern on the jungle floor. How were they transported and moved into place?

One group of large spheres are laid out in a neat row aligned with magnetic north. Did the carvers have a magnetic compass?

Colonel Fawcett, the explorer who vanished while searching for a legendary lost city in the jungles of Brazil, studied native stories about stone spheres which glowed so brightly at night they were used as street lights.

Some of the spheres in Costa Rica are mounted on stone pedestals. If some magnetic anomaly caused them to glow at night they would probably light up a large area.

But can stones glow?

### MOREHEMOODUS

East Haddam, Conn., was the site of a very strange luminous rock story in the late 1700s, according to an article published in the *American Journal of Science* in 1840.

"About 50 years ago, a European by the name of Steele came into the place and boarded with the family of a Mr. Knowlton for a short period," Reverend Henry Chapman reported. "He was a man of intelligence, and supposed to be in disguise. He told Mr. Knowlton, in confidence, that he had discovered the place of a fossil which he called a caruncle, and that he should be able to procure it in a few days. Accordingly, he soon brought home a white round substance

resembling a stone in the light, but it became remarkably luminous in the dark. It was his practice to labor after his mineral in the night season. The night on which he procured it he secreted it in Mr. K.'s cellar, which was without windows, yet its illuminating power was so great that the house appeared to be on fire, and was seen at a great distance. The next morning he enclosed it in sheet lead, and departed for Europe, and has never since been heard of."

If the story is true, we can conjecture that the Americas may have once contained luminous stones and Colonel Fawcett's South American accounts may have contained some truth.

The Indians called the East Haddam, Conn., area *Morehemoodus*, meaning "place of noises." Strange explosions, like heavy cannon shots, have always haunted the place and are still heard there occasionally. Fortean researcher William R. Corliss has located a number of modern reports of this phenomenon, known locally as the Moodus Sounds. Scientists are at a loss to explain the noises.

### STONE WORKERS

While the natives of Costa Rica were grinding stone spheres and the Indians were carving thousands of tiny stone disks, other mysterious stone masons were hard at work all over the world. The Plain of Jars in Cambodia is a high plateau surrounded by mountains and gets its name from the huge stone jars strewn all around: over 1,000 of them. Some of these jars are 6 feet high, and some are big enough to hold 6 men. They are carved of limestone and granite, and they have always been there. The Cambodian people don't even have any myths to explain their existence. Why would anyone devote so much labor to carving such useless artifacts in such a remote and inaccessible place?

Our ancestors often engaged in seemingly pointless exercises. The Barren Islands off the coast of Scotland are covered with Menhirs (standing stones) and Stonehenge-like constructions. Similar structures can also be found deep in the Sahara Desert in Africa and high in the Andes Mountains of South America. They are even scattered among isolated Pacific islands, built of a kind of stone that cannot even be found on those islands.

When the first Europeans arrived in North America they found numerous man-made mounds, carefully built stone walls, and even stone towers. The Indians disavowed any

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knowledge of the builders (although a few southern tribes were still adding to some of the mounds). Some of these structures were clearly patterned after similar structures in the Middle East. Many were laid out with geometric precision so exact that they were clearly beyond the abilities of the Indians. The mounds were often surrounded by a low (2 or 3-foot-high) wall built in a perfect circle. Obviously such walls were worthless as fortifications . . . but that's what modern archaeologists call them.

As the Europeans drove the Indians back they also wantonly destroyed most of these ancient structures. Treasure hunters chopped up the great mounds, usually finding nothing but a few bones, pots, and beads. Settlers broke up the stone walls and buildings to use the stones for their own houses. Only a few hundred of the largest mounds were preserved, largely in the Ohio and Mississippi areas. The mounds of Mexico met a similar fate. A Christian church was built on

top of one of the largest ones. The largest of all, larger and older than the Great Pyramid of Egypt, is the step pyramid at Cuicuilco, Mexico. Archaeologists have found that the lower layers were covered with volcanic ash which could be dated, and they estimate that the pyramid was constructed at least 8,500 years ago! In other words, an advanced pyramid culture was hard at work in the Americas thousands of years before the Egyptian civilization began.

We know shamefully little about that culture because archaeologists can't fit it into their theories. They still maintain the myth that the Indians migrated to this continent from Asia across the Bering Straits. The Indians themselves have other explanations for their origin. The Cherokees claim they came from the east, across the Atlantic Ocean. The Hopis and other southwestern tribes believe they migrated north from Central and South America.

Scientists digging in New York State have unearthed artifacts that were obviously made by Eskimos. Eskimos in New York? How did they wander so far from their Arctic tundra? Or did they start from here and were

driven northwards by the invading mound builders?

## THE WANDERERS

The Indians were latecomers, probably migrating to North America a few thousand years ago, long after the pyramid builders and irrigation ditch diggers had faded from the scene. The men who flourished here after the Ice Age were another breed. They fought the mighty mastodons and slowly built a great culture in the wilderness, patterning it after ancient Chaldea and Babylonia, bringing with them the Druidic practices of Northern Europe as well. When the Egyptian civilization began to bloom, occasional travelers visited it and wove tales of a fabulous continent far across the sea. Intrigued, the Egyptians sent out ships to find it. But after traveling for weeks across empty ocean they turned back in dismay and reported that the great continent had obviously been swallowed up by the sea.

So the remains of fabled Atlantis sit in the basements of a thousand museums: boxes of fragments that don't fit accepted theories. Tiny stone disks with holes bored into them with steel drills. ★