

NORTH AMERICAN
BioFortean Review

O. C. Marsh

THE GREAT SEA-SERPENT.

Good questions have a legitimacy of their own. They add to our understanding even before we can come up with an answer—and sometimes we glean insights precisely because we can't supply an answer. In such cases the significance of the knotty question derives not from cutting the knot, but instead from the annoying fact that no analytic knife seems adequate to the task.

—Avigdor Bonchek

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BioFortean History: The Patagonian “Plesiosaur” Expedition of 1922

Report Plesiosaurus Found Alive; Likened to Crocodile With Swan Neck

Buenos Aires, March 6 (Associated Press).—Belief that a plesiosaurian monster, an amphibian of the Mesozoic period generally believed to exist only in fossil form, is still alive in Patagonia was expressed today by Professor Clementi Onelli, Director of the Buenos Aires Zoological Gardens. He announced that he had received credible reports that such a monster had been seen in a lake in the territory of Chubut, near the Andes.

Professor Onelli made public a letter from an Englishman named Sheffield, saying that while hunting in the Andes he discovered a trail of flattened vegetation near a lake, indicating the track of an animal of enormous weight. Later, Mr. Sheffield said, he saw in the middle of the lake an animal with a colossal neck in shape like that of a swan, whose movements in the water indicated that the body was shaped like that of a crocodile. He said that harpoons would be necessary to capture the monster.

This evidence, Professor Onelli said, confirmed two previous reports that such an animal had been seen alive in the last year in the same region, where various scientific expeditions have made rich finds of animals of geological ages. He said that an expedition from Argentina or some other country ought to be sent to capture the animal.

New York Times, March 7, 1922

Hint ‘Plesiosaurus’ Was a Huge Turtle Dr. Lucas and Washington Scientists Scoff at Tale of Finding Monster in Patagonia

Dr. F. A. Lucas, director of the Museum of Natural History, does not credit the report that a plesiosaurus, an amphibian of the Mesozoic period, generally believed to exist only in fossil form, has been seen alive in Patagonia.

“It is very unlikely that a plesiosaurus has been seen,” said Dr. Lucas yesterday. “It is possible that something has been seen, but not a plesiosaurus. It has been my experience that the nearer one goes to the source of such reports the less people seem to know about them. Nobody seems to know just how these wild reports start. Not long ago a report was circulate that a glyptodon, a genus of large extinct mammals of the order edentata, related to the armadillos, had been seen in New Zealand.

“As nearly as I can recall, no fossil remains of plesiosaurs have been found in South America, but I know of no reason why they should not exist there. The most recent remains found in this country date from the Cretaceous period. It is barely possible that the animal seen was a large fresh-water turtle or a crocodile, though Patagonia is far south for a crocodile.”

Washington, March 7.—Professor Gilmore of the National Museum and N. Hollister of the National

Zoological Park said today that they were of the opinion that such animals as plesiosaurs vanished from the earth long ago.

“The last positive evidence of such creatures running at large,” said Professor Gilmore, “dates back some 10,000,000 years. So far as scientists are aware, no such animal has been seen since that period. I would not hesitate in advising that the subject be dismissed.”

New York Times, March 8, 1922

Expedition to Hunt Live Plesiosaurus
Argentine Scientists Will Explore Andean Wilds for Mesozoic Monster.
Think Reptile Giant Lives
But It May Be a Smaller Descendant of a Prehistoric Mammoth

Buenos Aires, March 8 (Associated Press).—Notwithstanding the scepticism of American scientists over the reported existence of a plesiosaurus in the Territory of Chubut, near the Andes Mountains, Professor Clementi Onelli, Director of the Zoological Gardens here, said today that an Argentina expedition would start next week to hunt the beast.

The expedition will be headed by José Cinagi, Superintendent of the Zoological Gardens, and Emilio Frey, an Argentine engineer who was a member of the Argentine-Chile Boundary Commission, which twenty years ago explored the region where the animal is reported to have been seen. Professor Onelli said today that a number of public spirited citizens of Argentina had contributed sufficient funds to finance the expedition. He told the Associated Press that he did not mean to convey the absurd idea that the strange swan-necked animal reported to have been seen had lived continuously since the Plesiosaurian epoch, but that he did place credence in the probability of the existence of a large mammiferous amphibian descended from the plesiosaurs, which retained the fundamental characteristics, though probably was smaller than the reptilian giants of that epoch. He thought it probable the animal reported to have been seen would measure four meters in length.

“If there is one such animal alive, there are undoubtedly two or more,” said Professor Onelli, who is the author of a textbook on palaeontology used in the Argentine colleges, and other scientific works. “Martin Sheffield, who wrote me that he saw the animal in a lake in the region called Esquel, is my friend and trustworthy. He is not scientific, but I have not the least doubt that he has seen a large and strange animal with a swan-like neck swimming in the lake, as he asserts.

“Sheffield is an American, not an Englishman, who has been prospecting and hunting in that region for some years. Since the publication of my announcement, I have received a report that a similar beast was seen in 1913 by an Englishman in a lake in a territory of Santa Cruz, further south. This is new evidence, which I am investigating.

“These reports tend to confirm two previous reports of the existence in Patagonia of animals unknown to moderns—one by the Norwegian scientist Waag, in 1898, who saw the fresh footprints of a huge animal near the river in the territory of Santa Cruz, the other from settlers a few years later

in the territory of Neuquen, near the River Alumine, who gave circumstantial evidence of the presence of a huge beast in their neighborhood.”

Professor Onelli exhibited a herbivorous spoor still in good state of preservation: which, he said, was found in Southern Patagonia by Francisco Mareno, a member of the Argentine-Chile Boundary Commission, and which could be accounted for only by the existence of some huge animal.

The expedition starting next week will probably take ten days to reach its destination. A gasoline engine will be taken along for a launch, which the Welsh settlers have agreed to build for hunting the beast on the lake.

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Buenos Aires, March 8.—Hitherto the plesiosaurus has existed only in fossil form, according to textbooks, and most scientists doubt that such a villainous-looking beast could have kept itself hidden for all these centuries. Though there have been periodic reports for thirty years of some gigantic amphibian strolling around the lake region on the Southern Andes, several scientific expeditions, including one sent out by the Laplata Museum, failed to find any trace of it. The Laplata expedition included Professors Nordeskjolk, Cavendish and Pritchard.

Professor Onelli first heard of the mysterious animal twenty-six years ago when he was camping in the region, where natives reported frequent noises resembling a cart rumbling over boulders. They said that when they investigated they saw an enormous black shadow swimming away. They told the professor that the creature craned its long neck several times and then disappeared.

Prospectors about twenty years ago found the skeleton of an enormous creature on the Chilean frontier. At almost the same time another party found farther south the hide, bones and other remains of a gigantic animal which had died recently. But no one has been reported yet to have seen the animal alive in the daylight. The reports so far have been confined to a black shadow in the moonlit gloom of the lakes.

New York Times, March 9, 1922

Seeing Things in Patagonia

Professor F. B. Loomis of Amherst, who was in Patagonia in 1911 looking for vertebrate fauna in Upper Cretaceous and Tertiary deposits, scouts the story that a plesiosaurian monster is still in the flesh in that country. Yet when he was exploring he heard tales of a horrific survivor, though from no responsible person. The Patagonian cowboy is fond of liquor, and in his cups may sometimes talk of great wingless birds or the pyrotherium. In the lonely spaces and lava-strewn wastes where grotesque outcroppings look so much like Pleistocene creatures, the imaginative native might see anything.

Professor Loomis says that about 1910 the Englishman H. Hesketh Prichard, who once braved Darkest Haiti from Samana Bay to Port au Prince, had completed a futile search for a live mylodon. This enormous ground sloth disappeared about 500,000 years ago, according to Professor Loomis. He suspects that the plesiosaur reported by Professor Onelli of Buenos Aires was an anaconda swimming high.

There is still unshakable belief in the existence of animal survivals in the South American continent. The eleventh edition of the Britannica, discoursing of the arctotherium, states that it would not be surprising if it were still in existence, "for footprints, which have been attributed to it, have been observed on the borders of the Rivers Tamango and Pista, which run through the eastern foothills of the Cordillera" (in Patagonia). The late Sir Arthur Pearson spent \$10,000 on the Prichard expedition, and got nothing for his money but a book that was not so sprightly as Lady Florence Dixie's "Across Patagonia."

It is not quite like the case of the treasure buried on Pacific isles or sunk in galleons. Patagonia was once inhabited by monsters with long necks, half seal, half horse, with flappers that propelled them through the water. The imagination that has faith in their continued existence at least produces well equipped expeditions of curious and jovial scientists lit up by the spirit of adventure. No pessimist ever went hunting for a mylodon or an arctotherium.

New York Times, March 11, 1922

Sailor Says Monster Stories are True; Saw One Years Ago

Philadelphia, March 11.—The plesiosauran monster, seen in Patagonia, according to reports from the Buenos Aires Zoological Garden, is not a myth, snake or a turtle, in the belief of Lieutenant Commander O. Bevilaqua, now at the Philadelphia navy yard. The naval officer said today that he had seen a strange and monstrous animal off the coast of Patagonia sixteen years ago that resembled descriptions of the one reported to have been seen recently by an Englishman named Sheffield in the same locality.

Lieutenant Commander Bevilaqua, who is commander of the United States Steamship Kaweah, said that during the 1906 while in the Straits of Magellan about 500 yards off the coast of Patagonia he saw the monster one afternoon while on watch.

"The visibility was high and I do not believe I could have been mistaken," he said. "I was scanning the skyline toward the shore and I heard a splash and saw a huge ice-covered boulder splash into the sea from the high rocky shore. A moment later a large animal appeared at the point from which the boulder had dropped and looked out toward me.

"The head was like that of a horse and the neck was fully 30 feet long. It was not a turtle, because turtles do not have necks of that length. I am equally sure that it was not a snake because snakes do not live in the ice and snow."

Lancaster (PA) Intelligencer, March 11, 1922
(Also noted, *New York Times*, March 12, 1922)

Don't Worry the Plesiosaurus, Let It Roam, Protest of the Buenos Aires Humane Society

Buenos Aires, March 12 (Associated Press).—A protest against the killing or capture of the plesiosaurian monster which is reported to have been seen in an Andean lake in Patagonia has been made to the Ministry of the Interior by the “Sociedad Protectora de los Animales,” which corresponds to the American Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

The society urges that if such an antediluvian creature exists it be allowed to roam its native heath unmolested. Invoking law No. 2,786, dealing with cruelty to animals, the society demands that the expedition, when proposes to bring back the animal or dead to the Buenos Aires Zoo be prohibited.

The protest is voiced in a letter by Dr. Albarracin, head of the society, who calls on the Ministry to instruct the Governor of Chubut, a territory in the southern part of Argentina, occupying part of the tableland of Patagonia, to investigate the truth of the report, and if that is established, “to do what is necessary in fulfillment of said law to prevent the hunting or capture of it [the reported plesiosaurus] in any form, leaving it in peace, by reason of its being a valuable specimen which ought to enjoy full liberty and be allowed to reproduce itself.”

Dr. Albarracin says that, like the penguin, a plesiosaurus would probably die if brought North, by reason of the change of climate, and adds:

“If scientists want to study the creature, let them do it in a humane way in its habitat while it is enjoying full liberty.”

Meanwhile, Professor Onelli, who first announced the reported existence of the animal, says that the expedition will start at the end of the week, provided additional funds are forthcoming.

New York Times, March 13, 1922

Andean ‘Plesiosaurus’ May Be an Armadillo or Modern Megatherium, Onelli Thinks

Buenos Aires, March 15 (Associated Press).—It was not a plesiosaurus that was seen swimming in an Andean lake recently, but probably a descendant either of the horny plated glyptodon or of the megatherium, in the opinion of Professor Onelli, Director of the Buenos Aires Zoo. Responding to inquiries as to when the expedition for the capture of the supposed plesiosaurus would start, Professor Onelli said:

“Plesiosaurus is a pseudonym the newspapers have given it and which has stuck, but I believe it is a huge animal of the edentate family, of which ancient remains—not fossil, mark you—were found in Patagonia in 1897, and one of which was fired upon and hit by the explorer Ramon Lista in 1890 without hurting it.

He explained that, while the plesiosaurus dated back 10,000,000 years, the edentates, such as the glyptodon and megatherium, belonged to the Quaternary era of only 1,000,000 years ago. He said that from 1890 to the present time there had been twelve places in Patagonia, between latitudes 38

and 52, at which mysterious creatures had been reported. These he believes constitute a few survivors of the genus which existed in the Pleistocene period.

Professor Onelli said he had been obliged to postpone the departure of the expedition for another week, as a total of 7,000 pesos was needed, of which 3,000 were yet lacking to finance it. While a motion picture concern had offered to pay the entire expenses of the expedition in return for the exclusive right to film the capture of the animal, Professor Onelli preferred that it be financed by popular subscription.

He exhibited more than 100 letters from persons desiring to join the expedition. Among the writers was one who recommended himself as a hunter for Spanish royalty and another who had invented a new type of dynamite with which to blow up the monster.

The glyptodon was a creature resembling the armadillo, which attained the size of an ox. It had strong limbs, with short, broad feet.

The megatherium was a gigantic sloth-like edentate, from eighteen to twenty feet in length. It had a short neck, heavy body and powerful tail and hind legs. With its strong, prehensile tongue it tore from trees and shrubs the leaves and twig upon it subsisted.

New York Times, March 16, 1922

Plesiosaurus Hunt Is On Argentine Expedition Goes to Seek Mysterious Monster.

Buenos Aires, March 23.—The expedition organized under the auspices of the Buenos Aires Zoological Garden to search for the mysterious monster reported to have been seen in an Andean lake departed for Patagonia tonight.

The explorers are determined to learn if such an animal exists as was described recently by Martin Sheffield, an American prospector, whether it is a plesiosaurus, a glyptodon or a megatherium.

Amilio Frey, an Argentine civil engineer, is the head of the expedition, which comprises several photographers. Newspaper men accompany the party.

New York Times, March 24, 1922

Elephant Rifles For Plesiosaurus Argentine Expedition Off for Patagonia—Equipped With Lassos, Too. Dr. Lucas Not Optimistic Says Roosevelt Relic on Which Explorers Build Hopes Belonged to a Brybobacrius.

Buenos Aires, March 23 (Associated Press).—Elaborate arrangements for the capture or destruction of the anachronistic creature reported to have been seen in an Andean lake have been made by the

expedition which left here tonight (Thursday) for Patagonia under the auspices of the Buenos Aires Zoological Garden.

The members of the party are all well armed, carrying elephant rifles and lassos. A quantity of explosives is also being taken with which to mine the lake and thus scare out the monster—be it plesiosaurus, glyptodon or megatherium, as variously reported.

The Zoo's taxidermist is taking along embalming materials for use in case the beast is killed. Another item of the outfit is a gasoline motor with which to propel the boat to be constructed on the shores of the lake.

The expedition will proceed by rail to Neuquen, thence by camions to Barileche and from there on horses into the territory of Chubut, where the lake is situated, fifty miles from a settlement called "18 de Octubre."

Professor Onelli, Director of the Zoo, who organized the expedition, has directed that if it fails to find the animal after six weeks' search the party shall proceed to other parts of Patagonia. He said to the correspondent:

"I am laughed at, but I am convinced that some large, strange animals exist in Patagonia. When Theodore Roosevelt visited Argentina he was presented with a fragment of hide picked up in Patagonia with long hair still attached to it. The hide was a half inch thick and curiously reinforced beneath the surface with tiny rods of bones. It must have belonged to some huge animal recently alive. What was it?"

The hide, the bone and the hank of hair upon whose existence South American scientists partly base their belief that a prehistoric monster still frolics in a Patagonian lake now reposes in the American Museum of Natural History, according to a statement made to The Associated Press yesterday by Professor F. A. Lucas. The fragment was presented to the late Theodore Roosevelt in the course of his South American explorations undertaken after he left the White House.

The relic in Professor Lucas's care is a small piece of wrinkled hide, about half an inch thick, with a substructure of closely woven bony cartilage, and a thin lock of hair clinging to it. It is Professor Onelli's theory that the animal to which this hide belonged must have died comparatively recently.

New York Times, March 25, 1922

The Andean Monster Quest.

Professor Onelli, as Director of the Buenos Aires Zoo, should be heard with respect when he pronounces the mysterious creature lately reported as bathing in an Andean lake in Patagonia a bona fide descendant of the horny-plated glyptodon; in other words, a gigantic amphibious beast resembling the armadillo, which should have been dead, according to the paleontologists, a great many centuries ago. An alternative conjecture of the professor is the megatherium, or sloth-like edentate, which belonged to the Quaternary era 1,000,000 years ago. As the so-called giant armadillo of our own day, a denizen of the forests of Surinam and of the Brazilian jungle, is only three feet long, the

excitement of the scientific world can be imagined if Professor Onelli should find a glyptodon survivor. What would Dr. Hornaday not give to add such a curiosity to his collection?

In the beds of the Morrison formation, Upper Jurassic of Central Wyoming, the skeleton of a carnivorous dinosaur (allosaurus) was discovered nearly complete not long ago. Near it was also found the tail part of the skeleton of a giant herbivorous dinosaur (Brontosaurus marsh), ten of whose caudal vertebrae bore marks and grooves that fitted teeth in the jaw of the carnivorous dinosaur. The conclusion was that the latter had been feeding upon the great herbivorous dinosaur when both of them perished in some convulsion of nature. Here was a tragedy a million years or more old. Under the direction of President Henry Fairfield Osborn the remains of both were restored and mounted. Nothing could be more gruesome, more nightmarish, than this monster with its lizard head, long bulky body, immense back legs and reptilian tail. If a live descendant were reported in a Wyoming lake, the case would correspond to the story of the Andean observer—or romancer.

It is hard to stand up against Professor Onelli's testimony that one Ramon Lista, an explorer, fired upon a huge animal of the edentate family in Patagonia about 1890. It was hit but not injured, any more than a war tank would have been. The prospect of bringing a descendant of the horny-plated glyptodon out to civilization is wonderfully attractive. Still, it is well to remember that A. Henry Savage Landor in "Across Unknown South America" reported no glyptodon survivors. He does warn readers not to believe in snakes 100 feet long discovered by inexperienced explorers.

New York Times, March 27, 1922

Plesiosaurus Hunts Halts. Puzzle Over Whether an Official Order Prohibits It.

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Buenos Aires, April 14.—The plesiosaurus hunt is daily becoming more and more like a button-whose-got-the-button problem. First was the question whether such an animal existed, then whether the expedition should hunt it in the northern or southern part of Patagonia, since it was reported that the plesiosaurus was seen in both sections simultaneously.

Now the question before the national Cabinet is whether the Governor of the Territory of Chubut has issued an edict prohibiting hunting, fishing or trapping for the monster. The newspaper correspondents with the expedition and Curator Onelli of the Buenos Aires Zoo say that the edict was issued. The Governor, upon his arrival in Buenos Aires yesterday, said it was not issued. In the meanwhile two Cabinet Ministers are arguing whether the edict, if issued, should be allowed to interfere with the hunt for the plesiosaurus if it exists.

The expedition of scientists and near-scientists is enjoying a holiday, encamped in the beautiful lake region known as the Argentine Switzerland at the expense of school teachers, letter carriers and other wage earners who donated the funds which made the expedition possible.

New York Times, April 15, 1922

Found No Plesiosaur; Hunters Coming Back
Dynamite Fruitlessly Exploded in Lake
Where Monster Was Said to Have Been Seen.

Cholila, Territory of Chubut, April 25 (Associated Press).—The plesiosaurus reported to have been seen by Martin Sheffield, if it ever existed, appears to have fled to parts unknown.

The expedition recently sent out from Buenos Aires under the leadership of Emilio Frey has been unable to find the animal after many nights of watching and hunting around the lake near Esquel, where Sheffield said he had seen such a monster.

As a last resort, Frey exploded eleven cartridges of dynamite in the lake last Sunday, hoping thus to force the supposititious prehistoric animal to the surface. This effort was without result, and the expedition is returning empty-handed.

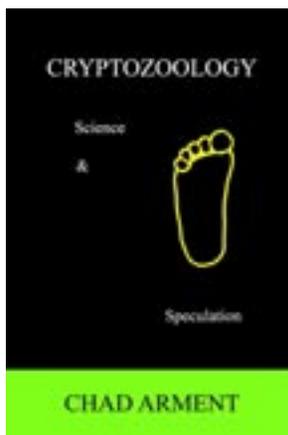
New York Times, April 26, 1922

Plesiosaurus Hunt Ends
Expedition Decides to Return,
but Will Try Again Next Year.

Buenos Aires, April 29.—Search for the plesiosaurus in the wilds of Patagonia having proved fruitless, the expedition which set out from Buenos Aires has decided to return. This is ... known in despatches from Bariloche which are confirmed by Professor Clementi Onelli, Director of the Buenos Aires Zoological Gardens, who explains, however, that the return of the expedition is necessary on account of the approaching Winter.

Hope has not been given up of finding the monster, reported to have been seen in an Andean lake, and he plans to send another searching expedition in the Summer of next year.

New York Times, April 30, 1922



Cryptozoology: Science & Speculation
Chad Arment
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Book Review: *The Locals*

Reviewed by Ron Schaffner

The Locals: A Contemporary Investigation of the Bigfoot/Sasquatch Phenomenon

Thom Powell, 2003

Hancock House

ISBN 0-88839-552-3

The Bigfoot phenomena is one aspect of Cryptozoology that remains cyclic in nature. Many older reports continue to be discussed time after time without any closure. So, it stands to reason that books on the subject have continued the same path. The only difference being that authors tend to put their own slant on the subject.

The Locals takes a different approach to the mystery by supplying the reader with recent information. Thom Powell, an ex-curator with the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization has compiled reports from the BFRO's database (<http://www.bfro.net>) along with his own investigations to add a fresh tone of data into the phenomena.

This reviewer has also spent time with the BFRO. I got to know Thom on a professional basis and corresponded with him on a weekly basis. His tireless work was well known before his book was published. He is very dedicated to his research, specifically in Clackamas County, Oregon. Thom is a science teacher and has applied his own research of Bigfoot reports in an attempt to teach his students scientific methodology.

The Locals takes the reader down the path of how Bigfoot investigators work in the field. Powell talks about the sciences used in research. He brings the reader up to speed on how the phenomenon has spread through the Internet. Perhaps the strength of the book is the chapters regarding Thom's fieldwork and some of the high profile cases of the BFRO.

But, as the old adage goes, there are always two sides to the story. Since I am familiar with some of the BFRO cases discussed, I question the merits of a few. One case in particular is found in Chapter 4 (Easy Pickin's) where January 2000 reports that engulfed Leflore County, Oklahoma, never proved that Bigfoot creatures were roaming about the region. There are many questions I have concerning photographs, leading of witnesses and speculation that was offered as evidence.

As I previously mentioned, Thom discusses some of his own personal experiences, such as in Chapter 5 entitled Dance Hall Days. These investigations evolved from a Washington family who claimed frequent visits by Bigfoots at their rural home. Powell had been interested in setting up cameras and web cams to capture these creatures and here was an opportunity to do so. Unfortunately, he was never able to photograph anything of substance. He has detailed some interesting anecdotes regarding this case. Given Thom's credibility in the field, I feel he is telling the truth and is reporting on what he believes are true encounters, but he's unable to produce the hard evidence that is needed in a field of study that is lacking such a thing.

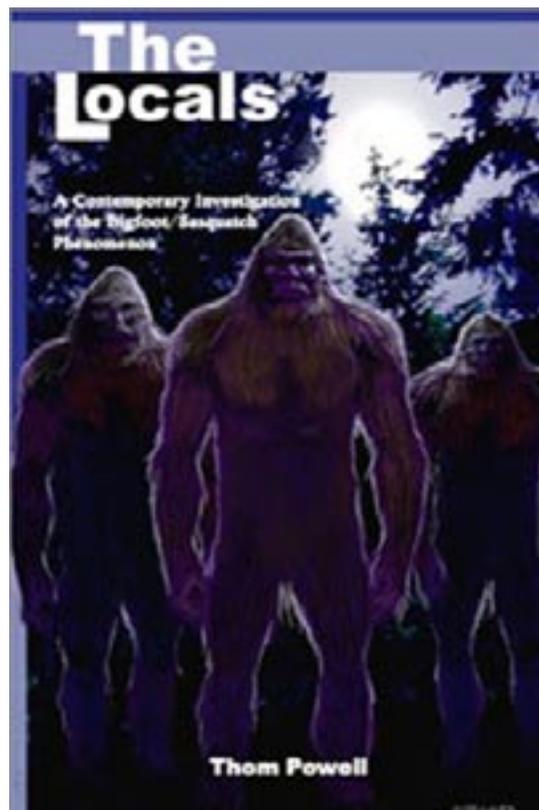
Throughout the book, Powell attempts to explain a pattern of Sasquatch behavior based on reports that were submitted to the BFRO database. He alludes to a possible paranormal connection towards

the end. It is my opinion that he is at his weakest here. It becomes difficult to test any hypothesis based on reports submitted to an on-line database, let alone any report received by conventional means, such as newspaper accounts. For example, he stresses drive-by reports as an indication that Bigfoots have a type of sociological structure that initiates various ritual rites. He conjecture that these creatures play games with their human adversaries.

The phenomenon is based on anecdotal reports to bolster a contention that Bigfoot exists. Other than the questionable Skookum cast physical evidence, footprint finds, video and hair analysis, researchers depend on eyewitness accounts to set forth various theories. It must be noted that testimony of this type is high fallible

Even though this reviewer finds the usual flaws in such an endeavor, I believe it is a must read for the Bigfoot enthusiast and skeptic. It's a fresh look into the phenomenon with recent material for consumption and thought. Credit must be given to Mr. Powell for setting forth some new ideas in a field of study that tends to be so cyclic with the same reports being evaluated to the same tune. This work is something worth reading just be see another author's slant and taste.

The Locals can be found at large bookstores and through web-based outlets. It is modestly priced at \$19.95 US/ \$24.95 Canada. With the holidays approaching, you may want to consider this book for your friends and family who have shown an interest in such subjects.



Notes on modern short cryptofiction

Chad Arment

For several years, I anthologized a number of early cryptofiction short stories in PDF ebooks. More so than novels, or even novellas, I believe short stories are remarkably capable of illustrating man's reaction to the unknown and unfamiliar. Humor, drama, mystery, adventure, and tragedy all play out as encounters with cryptozoological creatures are pondered by the writers. Quite often, the authors are well-known, even while the stories are sometimes hard to find.

For my epubublishing efforts, with a few exceptions, I stuck to stories that were pre-1920s. Personally, I consider those stories to be classic cryptofiction. The 1920s and 1930s saw a boom in adventure-style cryptofiction which was usually published in the multitude of pulp-style magazines. I would suggest that modern cryptofiction began soon after this transitional period, when we see more thoughtful stories being written without relying just on action-adventure plots to keep the reader's interest.

As it is not currently feasible for me to anthologize modern cryptofiction, I present the following as a good representation of such. I'll briefly describe elements within the story, hopefully without spoiling the details for cryptofiction fans. Most of these have been reprinted in various fantasy, science fiction, or horror anthologies. The original publication dates are based on different sources, and may not be accurate, as I have seen discrepancies with a few stories.

I would, of course, be interested in hearing about other stories which fit the subject.

1920s-1930s: The Transitional Years
(Noting just a few stories to illustrate.)

1925 *The Ocean Leech* Frank Belknap Long

Traditional adventure-style story, but an interesting sea creature—similar to a cephalopod but with a few twists. Long is well-known for his stories relating to the Lovecraft mythos, but started out writing for *Weird Tales* with this type of story. In *The Early Long*, he states, "It was overwritten, of course, and far too melodramatic. But I like it better, I think, than the ten or twelve other stories in similar vein which I wrote during those years, and which were published, elsewhere, not all of them in the horror-fantasy-genre."

1932 *Mive* Carl Jacobi

Jacobi wrote numerous stories, most famously *The Monkey's Paw*. A short-cut through Carling's Marsh, locally called the Mive, leads to an encounter with a strange lepidopteran. What follows is a fascinating twist — and a caution against touching the unknown.

1937 *Fire in the Galley Stove* Captain William Outerson

This oft-reprinted story suggests a hypothetical answer to the question of ghost ships, those vessels (most famously the *Mary Celeste*) which are found drifting without crew or passengers, looking as though they disappeared in a hurry.

1940s-Present:: Modern Cryptofiction

1941 *Incident on a Lake* John Collier

Mr. Beaseley has inherited money and intends to travel, to his shrewish wife's dismay. She isn't about to let him traipse the world enjoying himself. A Portuguese guide takes them to the Amazon to look for a lake monster, but Mrs. Beaseley's attempts to ruin the trip end up in a different result altogether. Collier's tale was influenced by the 1922 Patagonian "plesiosaur" expedition.

1942 or 1943 *They Bite* Anthony Boucher

An interesting war-time drama involving strange little desert creatures. Not your typical adventure story, a spy finds himself in over his head in the southwestern desert. Good use of native lore and fleshed-out (on paper, anyway) creatures.

1948 *Podolo* L. P. Hartley

Friends explore an island on the Italian coast and meet with a stray cat. Angela's attempt to rescue it, and put it out of its misery, leads to an encounter with a wild man. Poor Angela.

1951 *The Fog Horn* Ray Bradbury

This story inspired the 1953 movie, *Beast from 20,000 Fathoms*. As a lighthouse foghorn calls out over the ocean, something from the ocean deep rises up to call back. Poor lighthouse.

1953 *The Other Tiger* Arthur C. Clarke

Not your typical cryptofiction. A discussion of the multiple-worlds theory is prelude to an encounter with what isn't your typical tiger.

1960 *Creature of the Snows* William Sambrot

Here we note what is probably the first of the modern yeti stories. A quest to capture a creature leads to trouble. A bit more common in fiction than Bigfoot or other wild men, yeti encounters allow writers to include the visual landscape of the Himalayas.

1963 *The Stone Monster* A. M. Lightner

Another story from Tibet. Not the first to question whether one should shoot an unknown creature for science, but not a bad story.

1964 *In the Footsteps of the Abominable Snowman* Josef Nesvadba

This is a long, rambling translation of a Czech short story. Not particularly interesting from a story perspective, but worth a look for serious cryptofiction collectors.

1967 *The Quest for Blank Claveringi* Patricia Highsmith

This story has been reprinted a few times. It's a humorous horror tale, involving a zoologist's search for a rumored island with a population of giant snails.

1969 *Longtooth* Edgar Pangborn

A strange hairy man-like creature has taken up residence in the deep woods of Maine. This is one of the first stories to bring "gorilla kidnaps woman" folklore to the Bigfoot story.

1969 *An Adventure in the Yolla Bolly Middle Eel Wilderness* Vance Aandahl

Another Bigfoot is looking for a mate. And, she's found one... A twist on the traditional kidnap motif, and one which is distinctly for mature readers only. Interestingly, the concept of Bigfoot is given as a giant human who considers us to be pygmies.

1975 *They Only Come Out at Night* Randy Medoff

This is a Lovecraft Mythos story, connecting the Yeti to Ithaqua.

1976 *Children of the Forest* David Drake

This European wild man story elicits the feeling of a grown-up fairy tale while raising the question of what really defines a beast. Drake is an excellent storyteller, and has a good feel for historical tales (notable also in his quasi-cryptofiction story, *The Barrow Troll*, 1975).

1980 *The Ugly Chickens* Howard Waldrop

This is my favorite cryptofiction tale. A graduate student searches for evidence that the "ugly chickens" once raised by a Tennessee family might still be alive.

Rescue From The Past #4:
The Long-Lasting Influential Letters of a 19th Century Sea-Serpent Supporter:
Searles Valentine Wood, Junior.
Part I: Prelude To The Classic 1892 Tome The Great Sea-Serpent.

Dr. Dwight G. Smith* and Gary S. Mangiacopra**

“Once a boulder starts rolling...
there is no way to stop it.”
— Anonymous.

There are always unexpected, far-reaching implications which, when someone simply writes upon a topic that casually interested them, may have ramifications that last for decades. Such a situation arose to 19th century amateur naturalist, Searles Valentine Wood, Junior, when he wrote two lengthy, but groundbreaking, letters-to-the-editor for the British science publication, NATURE, on one of the subjects of his personal interest, the Sea-Serpent.

Unfortunately, after the passage of nearly a century-and-a-half of time, there is almost no background information available on the life of S. V. Wood, Jr. Like many men of science of the 19th century, they were well-known to their contemporaries, but today their names draw a complete blank. Ironically, more of Wood’s father’s background is known than of his son. For on the month his son was publishing his first investigative letter on the sea-serpent in NATURE, there was an announcement in this same science journal noting the death of Searles Valentine Wood (senior).[1] This column-and-a-half length obituary did offer indirect clues to the background information of his son, Wood, Jr., that we can deduce.

S. V. Wood, Senior was born circa 1798 and died circa 1 November 1880, at an age in excess of 82 years. Wood senior, whose professional life was in the legal profession, was by interest a veteran amateur explorer of the English Pliocene deposits identifying and describing marine fossils. Between the years of 1859-1877, the senior Wood published his descriptions of the Eocene Bivalves. Additional fossil discoveries resulted in a supplement to be published by him between 1871-1873. Included in this publication was a memoir on the strata from which the fossils were obtained, written by his son, Wood, junior. This would indicate that Wood Jr. was in his late 40s of age.

This age is corroborated in a statement made by Wood Jr. in two 1878 letters, in which he stated that in 1860 he made an argument to the British Geological Society[2, 3], indicating that he had to be at least 30+ years of age at the time.

Thus, by the time Wood Jr. was in his 50’s, he took to pen and published his first investigative letter on the subject of the sea-serpent. He admitted he had first become aware of the subject when he was a teenager when he read in the English press of the 1848 sea-serpent sighting by the

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British vessel, the *Daedalus*. This interest was invigorated further still in 1879, when a female relative of his, by chance, told him of a recent sea-serpent sighting seen by her ship's officers. Wood presented his years of investigation into this subject as a lengthy three column long letter that was published in a November, 1880 issue of the prestigious science publication, NATURE:[4]

"In August 1848 H.M.S. Daedalus encountered off St. Helena a marine animal, of which a representation appeared in the Illustrated News of the latter part of that year. It is thirty-two years since I saw this figure, but I recollect that it was one of a blunt-nosed animal with a neck carried about four feet above the water, which was so long as to present the appearance of a serpent; and I remember that Prof. Owen, in combating at the time the idea that this was a sea-serpent, pointed out that the position of the gape in relation to the eye, as shown in the figure in the Illustrated News, was that of a mammal, and not that of a reptile; in consequence of which he argued that the animal seen was probably only a leonine seal, whose track through the water gave an illusionary impression of great length. This idea, however, seemed to me untenable in the face of the representation in the Illustrated News; but it was obvious that to afford the buoyancy necessary for the support above the water of so long a neck estimated on that occasion as sixty feet, though only the part near the head was actually out of the water, the submerged portion of the animal could not have had the shape of a serpent.

Two or three years after this, on reading the description of Zeuglodon cetoides, from the Tertiary (probably Upper Eocene) formations of Alabama, it struck me that the animal seen from the Daedalus may have been a descendent of the order to which Zeuglodon belonged; and I have ever since watched with interest for reports of the "great sea-serpent."

Three years ago the following appeared in the newspapers:

"Borough of Liverpool, in the County Palarine of Lancaster to wit.

"We the undersigned, captain, officers, and crew of the barque Pauline (of London) of Liverpool, in the county of Lancaster, in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, do solemnly and sincerely declared that on July 8, 1875, in lat. 50°3'S., long. 35°W., we observed three large sperm-whales, and one of them was gripped round the body with two turns of what appeared to be a huge serpent. The head and tail appeared to have a length beyond the coils of about 30 feet, and its girth 8 or 9 feet. The serpent whirled its victim round and round for about fifteen minutes, and then suddenly dragged the whale to the bottom head first.

"GEORGE DREVAR, Master

"HORATIO THOMPSON

"JOHN HENDERSON LANDELLS

"OWEN BAKER

"WILLIAM LEWARN

“Again, on July 13, a similar serpent was seen about 200 yards off, shooting itself along the surface, head and neck being out of the water several feet. This was seen only by the captain and one ordinary seaman, whose signatures are affixed.

“GEORGE DREVAR, Master.”

“A few moments after it was seen elevated some sixty feet perpendicularly in the air by the chief officer and the following able seamen, whose signature are also affixed —

“HORATIO THOMPSON

“WILLIAM LEWARN

“And we make this solemn declaration, &c.

“Severally declared and subscribed at Liverpool aforesaid, the 10th day of January, 1877, before

“T. S. RAFFLES, J. P. for Liverpool.”

The locality here specified was about thirty miles off the northern coast of Brazil.

In this account I thought that I recognized the grip of the whale by the long neck of the attacking animal, the appearance being confounded into the double coil of a serpent by the distance and motion of the objects; but in face of the general ridicule which has been attached to this subject, and being without any assurance that the declaration so purporting to be made was genuine, I did not venture to ventilate my long-cherished idea. A relative of mine, however, just returned from India, chancing to say that two of the officers of the steamer in which she went out had on the previous voyage witnesses an immense animal rear its neck thirty feet out of the water, and that a sketch of the object had been instantly made, and on reaching port sent to the Graphic, I obtained the number of that paper for July 19, 1879, and I inclose a tracing of the figures in it, which are accompanied by the following statement in the Graphic:

“The accompanying engraving is a fac-simile of a sketch sent to us by Capt. Davison, of the steamship Kiuskin maru, and is inserted as a specimen of the curious drawings which are frequently forwarded to us for insertion in the pages of this journal. Capt. Davison’s statement, which is countersigned by his chief officer, Mr. McKechnie, is as follows: — ‘Saturday, April 5, at 11.15 a.m., Cape Satano distant about nine miles, the chief officer and myself observed a whale jump clear out of the sea, about a quarter of a mile away. Shortly after it leaped out again, when I saw that there was something attached to it. Got

glasses, and on the next leap distinctly saw something holding on to the belly of the whale. The latter gave one more spring clear of the water, and myself and chief then observed what appeared to be a large creature of the snake species rear itself about thirty feet out of the water. It appeared to be about the thickness of a junk's mast, and after standing about ten seconds in an erect position, it descended into the water, the upper end going first. With my glasses I made out the color of the beast to resemble that of a pilot fish.'"

As I have not been able to find any description of the skeleton of the Zeuglodon, I venture to draw attention to the subject through your columns, in the hope that among your many readers in America, this letter may attract the notice of some one who will tell us whether what is known of the osseous structure of Zeuglodon cetoides is or is not consistent with the representation in the Graphic. The remains of this cetacean, supposed to be extinct, indicate, according to Sir Charles Lyell, that it was at least seventy feet in length, while its great double-fanged but knife-edged molars show that it was carnivorous; and as we are not so far removed from the period of the Alabama Tertiaries as to render it improbable that members of what must once have been a great order of carnivorous cetaceas, totally distinct from the orders of cetacea hitherto known as living, may still survive, I have braved the ridiculed attaching to this subject so far as to invite attention to it.

The second of the two figures in the Graphic shows the long-necked animal to possess the cetacean tail, and its head there seems to have been turned from the observer, so that the underside of it, only is presented. The first figure shows that the whale had been seized on its flank by the powerful bite of its aggressor, and that to escape from this it had thrown itself out of the water. Having succeeded in this object the second figure shows the aggressor rearing its head and neck out of the water to discover the direction which its prey had taken, in order that it discover the direction which its prey had taken, in order that it might follow it up; and so far from the charge of curious drawing made by the editor of the Graphic being justified, the representation of the whale can be at once recognized as fairly correct; while that of the tail; of the unknown animal (which probably prompted this charge), so far from being curious, forms an important piece of evidence as' showing the animal in question to be cetacean.

Searles V. Wood, Jun.

Martlesham, near Woodbridge, September 27

P. S. - Since sending to you the above I have again seen my relative, and find that the cut in the Graphic of July 19, 1879, middle and upper divisions are respectively represented by the Coralline and Red Crags of England; and with these "Sables inférieurs" the so-called Miocene of Malta in which Zeuglodon is associated with Carcharodon, is probably coeval. Dr. Gibbes (Jour. Acad. Nat. Sc., ad. ser., vol. i, p. 143), figures and describes teeth of the Antwerp

species of *Carcharodon* from both the Eocene of South Carolina and the Miocene of Alabama. These various references bring the Zeuglodonts, with their *Carcharodon* associates, down to a late geological period, during which they co-existed with Delphinian prey; and of this prey the whale in the woodcut (which looks like a *Grampus*) seems in example.

It is most likely that Bishop Pontoppidan, a copy of the English (1755) edition of whose work I possess, concocted his two figures (one of which is that of a huge snake undulating on the waves, and the other that of a serpent-like animal with pectoral flappers or fins, resting almost on the surface of the sea, with head and tail erect out of the water like the letter U, and spouting water or steam from its mouth in a single column, from accounts given him by Norwegian seamen, some of whom had seen the animal in the position in which it was observed from the *Daedalus*, and others in that in which it is represented in the cut as seen from the *Kiushiu-maru*; for in the long narrative which he gives of the descriptions received from observers at numerous times, some of these agree with the one, and some with the other is not that of the instance observed from the steamer in which she came home, which was the *City of Washington*, but of a separate instance which occurred to another ship. I have not been able yet to procure the Graphic containing the figure of the animal seen from the *City of Washington*, but she tells me that it was pasted up in the saloon, and represented only the head and long neck of the animal, which was raised to a great height out of the water, and near to the ship; and had been drawn for the Graphic by a lady passenger immediately after the occurrence. These repeated and independent notices of the same long-necked animal are, however, the more confirmatory of its existence.

I find that Prof. Owen, in his article on Paleontology in the *Encyclopedia Britannica* (vol. xvii. p. 166). in giving a description of *Zeuglodon cetoides*, says that "the skull is very long and narrow and its nostril single," that Dr. Harlan obtained the teeth on which, correcting Harlan's reptilian reference of them, he founded the order *Zeuglodontia*, from the Miocene of Malta; and that the teeth discovered by Grateloup in the Miocene beds of the Gironde and Herault, and ascribed by him also to a reptile under the name of *Squalodon*, along with those of the shark with huge teeth, *Carcharodon megalodon*, and of numerous cetaceans assigned to orders all still living, and of which some, such as *Delphinus*, belong to living genera, occur in the "Sables inférieurs" of Antwerp; which, though long called Miocene are by M. Vandenbroeck regarded as older Pliocene, and as the base of that series of deposits of which both of the Bishop's figures represent only preposterous conceptions of his own.

[The animal seen from the Osborne and figured in the Graphic of June 30, 1877, as the "Sea-serpent," is quite a different thing from the one in question, and may have been a manatee.]

Wood had taken the position that the sea-serpent identification was those of an assumed extinct serpentine shape whale, the zeuglodon. He suggested that its descendants had somehow escaped extinction and survived in the present day seas and whose appearance was proclaimed as "the sea-serpent."

Wood would two months later publish a lengthy two column letter-to-the-editor sequel in this same journal, in which he was able to correct a few information errors that he had previously quoted in his November letter. In addition, he included two other 1879 sightings of the sea-serpent. As he noted:[5]

"In consequence of my letter in NATURE, vol. xxiii, p54, the sub-editor of the Graphic was kind enough to send me the number of that paper containing the engraving of the animal seen from the City of Baltimore (not City of Washington, as I had misunderstood), and which is that of April 19, 1879. The sketch from which this was taken was sent by Major H. W. J. Senior of the Bengal Staff Corps, with the following description, viz:—

"On January 28, 1879, at about 10 a.m., I was on the poop deck of the steamship City of Baltimore, in lat. 12°28' N. long. 43° 52' E. I observed a long black object abeam of the ship's stern on the starboard side, at a distance of about three-quarters of a mile, darting rapidly out of the water and splashing in again with a sound distinctly audible, and advancing nearer and nearer at a rapid pace. In a minute it had advanced to within half a mile, and was distinctly recognizable as the veritable 'sea-serpent.' I shouted out 'Sea-serpent! sea-serpent! call the captain!' Dr. C. Hall, the ship's surgeon, who was reading on deck, jumped up in time to see the monster, as did also Miss Greenfield, one of the passengers on board. By this time it was only about 500 yards off, and a little in the rear, owing to the vessel then steaming at the rate of about ten knots an hour in a westerly direction. On approaching the wake of the ship the serpent turned its course a little away, and was soon lost to view in the blaze of sunlight reflected on the waves of the sea. So rapid were its movements that when it approached the ship's wake I seized a telescope, but could not catch a view, as it darted rapidly out of the field of the glass before I could see it. I was thus prevented from ascertaining whether it had scales or not, but the best view of the monster obtainable when it was about three cables' length, that is about 500 yards distant, seemed to show that it was without scales. I cannot, however, speak with certainty. The head and neck, about two feet in diameter, rose out of the water to the height of about twenty or thirty feet, and the monster opened its jaws wide as it rose, and closed them again as it lowered its head and darted forward for a dive, reappearing almost immediately some hundred yards ahead. The body was not visible at all, and must have been some depth under water, as the disturbance on the surface was too slight to attract notice, although occasionally a splash was seen at some distance behind the head. The shape of the head was not unlike pictures of the dragon I have often seen, with a bulldog appearance of the forehead and eyebrow. When the monster had drawn its head sufficiently

out of the water it let itself drop, as it were, like a huge log of wood, prior to darting forward under the water. This motion caused a splash of about fifteen feet in height on either side of the neck, much in the shape of a pair of wings."

The italics in the foregoing and in the account of Capt. Cox are my own.

Fig. 1. — The Animal as seen from the City of Washington.

The engraving being a large one, of which the foreground is formed by the deck of the steamer, I have copied and send with this that portion of it which shows the animal; and in this it should be observed that besides the splash rising round the neck "like wings," the separate splash at some distance behind the head is also shown, the position of which corresponds to that where the cetacean tail occurs in the figure sent by the captain of the *Kiushiu-maru*, which accompanied my first letter. The foam around the neck, I think, may be due to the splash of the humeroid paddles which a cetacean should possess.

Fig. 2 - The animal as first seen from H.M.S. *Daedalus*.

The sub-editor of the *Graphic* has also been kind enough to obtain for me tracings from the three figures given in the *Illustrated News* of October 28, 1848, of the animal seen from the *Daedalus*. From two of these I have made the accompanying reductions to one-fourth (linear) of the originals; and the head portrayed in one of these (as seen when the animal passed close under the stern of the *Daedalus*) is evidently not reptilian, but mammalian; and it seems to bear out the "bulldog appearance of the forehead and eyebrow" which Major Senior describes in his case.

From the *Times* of September 24, 1879, I cut the following notice:—

"Capt. J. F. Cox, master of the British ship *Privateer*, which arrived at Delaware breakwater on the 9th inst. from London, says:— 'On the 5th ult., 100 miles west of Brest (France), weather fine and clear, at 5 p.m., as I was walking the quarterdeck, looking to windward, I saw something black rise out of the water about twenty feet, in shape like an immense snake about three feet in diameter. It was about 300 yards from the ship, coming towards us. It turned its head partly from us, and went down with a great splash, after staying up about five seconds, but rose again three times at intervals of ten seconds, until it had turned completely from us and was going from us with great speed, and making the water boil all round it. I could see its eyes and shape perfectly. It was like a great eel or snake, but as black as coal tar, and appeared to be making great exertions to get away from the ship. I have seen many kinds of fish in five different oceans, but was never favoured with a sight of the great sea-snake before.'"

In this account we have almost a duplicate of that of Major Senior in the dropping of the animal with a great splash into the water prior to its darting

forward under it; while the boiling of the water around, which is so inconsistent with the motion of a snake in water (which I have more than once seen) evidently resulted from the strokes of the cetacean tail, and possibly also from those of the paddles, as in the case witnessed by Major Senior. The black colour also is described in both cases.

Capt. Drevar, the stationary declaration of whom and of several of his crew I quoted in my former letter, has written to me, and sent me a printed account (which he says he has circulated) of the conflict which he witnessed, and of the subsequent appearance of the animal rearing its long neck out of the water. This is satisfactory as showing that the declaration I quoted was no hoax, as I feared it might have been; but Capt. Drevar rejects with disdain my suggestion that the animal he saw was not a serpent, though I pointed out to him that nothing having the form of a snake would possess in its submerged portion the buoyancy necessary to enable it to elevate so great a proportion of its length out of water.

Judging from the figures which accompany this and my previous letter, it appears to me that the external form of the animal must resemble the well-known Pleisosaur, if we imagine the hinder (femuroid) paddles of that Enaliosaurian to be absent, and a cetacean tail (which is their homologue), to be present in their stead. Since in the direction of the Porpoise the cetacean in external form so closely simulates the fish, so it may in another direction simulate this Mesozoic marine saurian, or the gigantic Elasmosaurus of the American Cretaceous formations, of which a nearly perfect skeleton is described by Prof. Cope as forty-five in length, the neck constituting twenty-two of this length.

Whether, through your circulation any light on this subject, so far as the character of the skeleton of *Zeuglodon cetoides* is concerned, may be forthcoming from American paleontologists remains to be seen; but there ought, I submit, to remain no longer with naturalists any doubt that a hitherto unknown group of carnivorous cetaceans, with necks of extraordinary length inhabit the ocean.

It seems to me also most probable that the conflicts which have been so often witnessed (and which Mr. Pascoe in his letter in *NATURE*, vol. xxiii, p. 35, says he himself twice witnessed), and referred to the Thresher, have been attacks by the animals in question upon whales.

Searles V. Wood
Martlesham near Woodbridge

It is unknown if Wood wrote further about his interest and theories to identify the sea-serpent after this date of 1881. Nor do we know of any other topics that he may have written about. Beyond this date of 1881, Wood's life is a blank.

Yet, Wood's two letters would have greater chain-reaction influence than he could ever consider when he wrote them. His 1880 NATURE letter would take on a secondary life of its own, by coming to the attention of 22-year-old Dutch zoology student, Antoon Cornelius Oudemans. This letter so influenced Oudemans about the topic of the sea-serpent that for the next 11 years he collected and contemplated reports of sea-serpent sightings, culminating in the 1892 publication of the first of the "modern" books on cryptozoology, *The Great Sea-Serpent*.

This book, itself, influenced others through many decades about this zoological mystery of the sea. And it all started with the teenage son of an amateur paleontologist who saw a sea-serpent article in the British Illustrated News in 1848!

The influence of Woods' letter is continued in Part 2, "What The Books Critics Wrote," about Dr. Antoon C. Oudemans' 1892 tome, *The Great Sea-Serpent*.

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- 1) J. W. J. Searles Valentine Wood, *Nature*. 11 November 1880, Volume XXIII, #576.
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- 3) Searles V. Wood, Jr. Zoological Geography — Didus and Didunculus, *Nature*. 18 July 1878, Volume XVIII, #455, p. 301.
- 4) Searles V. Wood, Jr. Order Zeuglodontia, Owen, *Nature*. 18 November 1880, Volume XXIII, #577, pp. 54-55.
- 5) Searles V. Wood (Jr.) Zeuglodontia, *Nature*. 10 February 1881, Volume XXIV, #593, pp. 338-339.

From the Past: Deaf and Blind Girl uses Nose to "Read" and Wrist to "Hear"

Chicago, Ill., April 28—(By International News Service).—Willetta Huggins, 17, an inmate of the Wisconsin School for the Blind, Janesville, Illinois, startled the members of the Chicago Medical Society at a meeting here yesterday, by a remarkable demonstration of development of hitherto dormant facilities. Were all plausibilities of fraud not defeated by diligent investigation, her demonstrations might have been branded a deception or a miracle.

Before five hundred members of that society, Miss Huggins, who is blind, and cannot hear — never could hear — placed her fingers upon the wrists of the men while they spoke and understood every word they said. She could understand their remarks and carry on a conversation with them.

Furthering astonishing the men assembled in the room, she rubbed her nose over the headlines of a newspaper and announced the words written there; she placed her fingers over the receiver of a telephone and carried on a conversation in that manner, understanding everything; photos on a newspaper couldn't "stump" her, for Miss Huggins could distinguish the ladies from the gentlemen on photographs, explaining "that she could read the white spaces."

Miss Huggins by her sense of touch could distinguish the denominations of paper money and her demonstrations have satisfied members of the Chicago Medical Society that she had developed every sense she possesses to such a degree that her loss of sight and hearing are not such a terrible loss after all.

— Lancaster (PA) *Daily Intelligencer*, April 28, 1922

Part Two: — What The Book Critics Wrote:

The Great Sea Serpent (1892):

The Groundbreaking First “Modern” Book of Dealing with and Analyzing Data Concerning the Sightings of Large, Unknown Marine Cryptids of the World’s Seas.

Dr. Dwight G. Smith* and Gary S. Mangiacopra**

“A critic’s life — is to criticize, regardless.”
— Anonymous.

Prelude to a Classic Tome—

For more than a century, one of the foremost influential — and ironically, one of the least read books on marine cryptozoology, *The Great Sea Serpent*, was authored by the Dutch scientist, Dr. Antoon Cornelis Oudemans (b. 12 November 1858 - d. 14 January 1943).

At the age of 34, Dr. Oudemans published in 1892 the accumulation of more than a decade of private research into the matter on the alleged existence of that 19th century zoological wonder — the Sea-Serpent. His massive tome of 592 pages contained 187 reported sightings of these marine cryptids up to the year of 1890.

Although several books prior to Oudemans’ 1892 publication had devoted chapters on the topic of the Sea-Serpent, either pro or con, Oudemans’ book was groundbreaking in that he postulated what the Sea-Serpent could be (an elongated-neck seal) (Fig. 1), and speculated about its possible behavior. In effect, Oudemans wrote the first “modern” cryptozoology book, which, in time, became the standard example of how future books on unknown animals should be researched and written by other investigators. And, although Oudemans in his lifetime conducted research and published on many diverse topics in zoology from the arachnids to the dodo[1], his legacy in the field of science for which his name is still vaguely remembered, is this sea-serpent book. This book for four decades after publication was requoted by other book writers on the topic of the sea-serpent as the expert in this field (as there was no one else!); and quoted extensively by the Sunday newspaper magazine section writers in conjunction with some then, current, sea-monster sighting, to support the eyewitnesses contention that they actually did see something unknown to science! Stressing that “the expert” Dr. A. C. Oudemans had postulated so many decades earlier!

It was not until 1930, that Commander Rupert T. Gould in his book, *The Case For The Sea Serpent*, became the second world-renown expert. Both Gould and Oudemans held this position until 1968, when Dr. Bernard Heuvelmans’ *The Wake Of The Sea-Serpent* saw publication, whereby he became the ultimate expert to be quoted.

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Though Oudemans' groundbreaking research was to instill a century-long influence in the budding field of cryptozoology, his 1892 book is still unknown to present day researchers because of its unavailability. Only a few actual hardbound copies are established to still exist in scattered science libraries, maritime museums, or the Library of Congress. However, Oudemans' book in its entirety has recently been published as an Ebook at Herper.com / ebooks / and is available on the internet web site.

Though presently considered a classic in its field among the definitive books of its genera, when it was originally published the critics of that era did not receive it well. Three book reviews were published by two of the leading British science journals of their day, providing an array of comments on this most controversial and contentious subject of the 19th century.

What the British Critics Wrote—

Four months following the publication of *The Great Sea Serpent*, the British science journal, *Natural Science*[2], in its monthly March 1893 edition gave a seething hostile dual review of Oudemans' book. An uncredited *Natural Science* journal editor prefixed this disclaimer over the reviews stating, "Of this work we give two reviews, the one by a naturalist, the other by a literary contributor." Both reviewers retained their anonymity by being credited only by their initials; P. C. M. for the naturalist; and L. B. P. for the literary contributor.

P. C. M. wrote harshly, downplaying Oudemans' conclusions about the Sea-Serpent:

"The author in his preface compares his work with that of Chladni on meteoric stones. Chladni, he says, opened the eyes of unbelievers by collecting and comparing all accounts of meteoric stones up to the nineteenth century. Meteoric stones were again found and were proved to be quite different from terrestrial stones. Unfortunately for the argument, remarkably few sea-serpents have been caught, and those few have proved to be not at all different from well-known objects.

We confess to have found Oudemans' book exceedingly dull reading. 379 pages are devoted to genuine or invented accounts of various appearances; 110 to explanations hitherto given. No doubt it is useful to have the literature of the subject compiled, but the author might have contented himself with a much greater compression of the interminable newspaper discussions, evidence on oath of sailors and fishermen, and so forth. We do not see that he advances at all beyond Mr. Hoyle's bright and short account of the sea-serpent in the "Encyclopaedia Britannica." A number of the records are pure myths; some others are due to mistaken observations of floating sea-weed; porpoises swimming in a row; basking sharks, and so forth. The persistent records from the Norwegian coasts are mostly probably explained by the existence of gigantic cuttle-fish; and there remains a residuum which quite possibly may be explained by the discovery of some new animal. Oudemans' own theory is given with a considerable amount of confidence, in some 50 pages towards the end of the book, and on

page 516 an ideal sketch of the animal is produced. It is a Pinnipede to be called *Megophias megophias* (Raf.), Oud.; and a phylogenetic table of its relations with other Pinnipedes, living and extinct, is given. It is very possible that a large Pinnipede may exist, but, on carefully going through the characters suggested for it by this author, it is difficult to see that he has been guided in his selection from reports by any sounder principle than relying on what appeared to suit his hypothesis, and rejecting or explaining away inconvenient ones. Further notice of this book I leave to a literary contributor."

L. B. P., the anonymous literary contributor, gave his criticism of Oudemans' book slightly more favorable than the unnamed naturalists did. Nevertheless, as he noted:

The attitude of the nineteenth century, social as scientific, towards the unknown may be summed up by the remark made by a lady member of the upper ten concerning those less happily situated in the social scale — "I don't know them: they don't exist." In the face of this attitude Dr. Oudemans has presented the public with a treatise of no less than 592 pages on our old friend the sea-serpent. We are warned on the title-page that the little volume contains reports of 187 appearances, "including those of the appendix," but we are not told what the appendix of the serpent is, and there are no special reports on appearances of his tail. The author much deplores the fact that his illustrations are not due to the unlying kodac. Nevertheless, the reader does not lose by this little omission in the baggage of observant travellers. It has been the means of providing portraits of the sea-serpent such as we feel assured no camera yet invented could have produced. The most impressive of these is one compiled by Messrs. Renard, père et fils, who combinedly took observations one moonlight night during a voyage on the high seas in 1881. The result is the portrayal of a dragon worthy the sublimest efforts of Sir Augustus Harris. We fancy even our own patron saint would have quailed before it, unless, indeed, following the advice given by Dr. Oudemans, he had armed himself with "explosive balls and harpoons loaden with nitro-glycerine." This particular specimen possessed not only teeth, "sharp, enormous, and white," but a phosphorescent tongue and an eye that looked backwards. Probably that eye also winked, for Dr. Oudemans included both description and drawing under the heading of "Cheats and Hoaxes" — a section sternly dealt with at the beginning of the book. However, in the next chapter entitled "Would-be Sea Serpents," the illustrations are not to be outdone, in spirit and conception, by mere cheats and hoaxes, and in fig. 12, *Lineus longissimus*, Sow., we find something really worth looking at. Chapter iv. consists of reports and papers on the appearances of sea-serpents in various parts of the world. These are mostly compiled by naval officers, and a few — a very few — scientists. The Church, however, is not unrepresented, and we would not like to call in question the evidence of the Archbishop's illustration as the gem of the collection. The sea-serpent is depicted in the act of swallowing a sailor, and we can only charitably suggest that the original sketch was intended as a representation of Jonah's unfortunate experience. Among so much documentary evidence, it is difficult to discriminate critically. Even Milton is pressed into the

service, quotations being given in "Reports and Papers" from *Paradise Lost*, where the great leviathan is mentioned as being the special dread of the Norwegians (the coast of Norway being the favourite haunt of the monster according to the most reliable eye-witnesses). But why is Coleridge left out?

"Beyond the shadow of the ship,
I watched the water snakes.
They moved in tracks of shining white,
And when they reared the elfish light
Fell off in hoary flakes."

Later on, we come upon another picture of a sailor being cut off in his prime by the wily monster, and we pass on with considerable relief to Dr. Oudemans' "Conclusions," where, under the headings of "Harmlessness, Timidity, and Playfulness," we learn that the great sea-serpent is, after all, a mild creature, a conviction probably deduced from the fact that, if the great sea snake has ever shown his animosity to the unwary invaders of his haunts, no victim has, so far, survived to tell the tale.

It is sad, however, to find that Dr. Oudemans' great sea-serpent is, after all, only a monster sea-lion, and we don't know of his having done anything to justify Dr. Oudemans' calling him *Megophias megophias* (Raf.), Oud."

The British took further criticism revenge on the Dutchman several weeks later this same month, in the weekly publication, *Nature*, for March 30th. Echoing the critic's sedition, they downplayed Oudemans' massive publication accomplishment as their rival *Natural Science* had done earlier. But nearly a year previous, *Nature*, in its April 25th, 1892 issue, informed its readers via a short notice of the forthcoming publication of a book totally devoted to the sea-serpent. Setting the tone of their book review a year later:[3]

"DR. A. C. OUDEMANS, Director of the Zoological Gardens at the Hague, has for some years made the sea-serpent a subject of special study, and now he is about to issue a book in which he will present his conclusions. He states in a prospectus that he was attracted to the question by "an account of the appearance of a sea-serpent published in *NATURE* of November 8, 1880." As *NATURE* was not published on November 8, 1880, a good many people may be tempted to think that this reference (due, of course, to a slip of the pen or to a misprint) is very suitable to the nature of the animal to which it relates. Dr. Oudemans has placed side by side "all the accounts, tales, and reports of this great unknown animal," and has convinced himself that "though all the reports there runs only one red thread, that there must be one single animal species which has given rise to all the reports." The author has chosen to write in English, because it is a language "known to all navigators, as well as to all zoologists, and other men of education." The full title of the work will be, "The Great Sea-Serpent.

An Historical and Critical Treatise. With the Reports of 166 Appearances, the Supposition and Suggestions of Scientific and non-Scientific Persons, and the Author's Conclusions." There will be 82 illustrations."

The pre-publication criticism whoever this unsigned writer may have been, stressing that *Nature* was not published on November 8th for 1880, apparently did not bother to recheck what this "non-existing" source actually was. Although Oudemans did make a slight error in designating the correct date, his error was that a numerical one was not in front of the 8th — for the 18th! For the actual date of this *Nature* sea-serpent article was November 18th, 1880, and authored by Searles Valentine Wood, Junior.[4] Nevertheless, this notice had already established the tone of the review *Nature* would give next year by another writer who would not even sign his article even with his initials! As he stingily commented:[5]

In a large, well-printed volume, Dr. A. C. Oudemans, Jzn., publishes what he is pleased to call "an historical and critical treatise" about the "Great Sea-Serpent," with the reports of 187 appearances, the suppositions and suggestions of scientific and non-scientific persons, and the author's conclusions.

It is impossible, however, to treat this laborious work as a scientific treatise, nor will the author, we trust, be vexed with us when we add that it is the very last form of a work that we would have expected from the pen of the learned Director of the Zoological Gardens at the Hague, for when one gets by practise to know the utter worthlessness of descriptions given by even well-educated persons of often the most easily diagnosed forms of life — and surely experience of this nature must often have come across Dr. Oudemans' path — one cannot fail to regard as positively hopeless the reconciling of a mass of such crude observations as fill the pages of this book. The very trouble and no doubt anxiety caused by reading over such a pitiful series of records has to some extent affected the author, for he quotes as the motto for his volume the extremely sensible words of a very able biologist, whose chief fault it was not to leave a greater record of his wisdom for posterity, to the effect "That it is always unsafe to deny positively any phenomena that may be wholly or in part inexplicable," meaning thereby to deny a phenomena because it cannot be explained, and then in the immediately following preface he compares himself to Chladni, who took the trouble to collect all the accounts concerning observations of "meteoric stones," and showed the immense number of facts that he had found out about them. In this one word fact — fact — lies a great world of difference between Chladni's meteoric stones and Oudemans' sea-serpents. The meteoric stones could be seen and handled, the sea-serpents "are very shy, and it is not advisable to approach them with a steamboat." "Instantaneous photographs of the animal will alone convince zoologists, while all their reports and pencil drawings will be received with a shrug of the shoulders"; this latter sentence, which precedes the preface makes one shudder at the amount of "reports and pencil drawings" contained in the six hundred following pages.

And yet, perhaps, this work is not altogether without its value. From the middle of the sixteenth century — when Olaus Magnus wrote about “a very large serpent of a length of upwards of 200 feet and twenty feet in diameter, which lived in rocks and holes near the shore of Bergin” — until this very present hour all sorts and manners of gigantic forms have been reported about by sailors and others, and even pencil drawings of them have been made, and the collecting together and printing of such a series of records forms as strange a chapter of the science known by the people as has ever made its appearance.

There is but little necessity of insisting on the need of experience in seeing here one can describe what is seen, nor on the need of a power of describing what one correctly sees so that the description may be applicable, nor need one wonder that such powers of seeing and describing were not to be found united in the many seagoing worthies whose extraordinary narratives crowd the pages of this volume. But what are we to say about the capacity for belief to be found in the compiler of this work, who concludes his task by naming a form he has never seen, *Megophias megophias* Raf. Oud., and further thinks that a Phylogenetic table, which he gives, “will in a practical manner show the rank which, in my opinion, sea-serpents occupy in the system of nature.”?

This volume contains an account of the “literature” on the subject of sea-serpents; a detailed record of the various accounts and reports concerning observations of sea-serpents chronologically arranged and thoroughly discussed; and criticism on the papers written on the same subject; next the various explanations hitherto given, and lastly the author’s own conclusions — these he divides into “fables, fictions, exaggerations and errors,” and what he is pleased to call “facts.” Among the fictions he regards the belief that the sea-serpent “casts its skin, as common snakes do, and that it is born on land”; among the exaggerations that it has “a tail fully a hundred and fifty feet in length.”! among the errors “that there are two species of sea-serpents, or that there are several species of them all belonging to the same genus”; or that “it ever takes [mistakes] a boat for one of the other sex.”

As to the facts, which may be — it is well to note — “inferred from what is reported,” we find enumerated among them the external characters of the sea-serpent, its dimensions, form, and skin. Of its internal characters “it is not astonishing that we don’t know much,” yet it is clear “that if the animal opens its mouth there is an opportunity to learn something about its teeth, tongue, [c.],” and so we get a series of “inferred” facts about them. We have further details of its colours, sexual differences, a very full account of its “physiological characters,” some of its “psychical characters,” concluding with its enemies, its repose, its sleep, and its death.

Enough has been written to prove that this volume is not without a certain amount of interest. We have found it a rather troublesome task to read it

through, but to open its pages at random one is sure to be arrested by some startling phase of belief or by some marvellous narration, and the first half of the book very certainly deserves to be described as a conscientious compilation. It is written in most excellent English."

Yet, though Oudemans' book was criticized by the book reviewers of his day, it enjoys decades-long notoriety after other contemporary books of this decade were quickly forgotten. For it was literally, until the year of the Depression of 1930, the only comprehensive published source that any person of science had ever attempted to undertake to try and unravel this marine zoological mystery.

And yet, indirectly, Oudemans' book, only four years later, would become firmly entrenched as the cornerstone concerning one of Yale University's foremost scientists and his involvement with a home-town Sea-Serpent incident as revealed in Part 3!

References:

- 1) Antoon Cornelis Oudemans. *Dodo-Studien, Naar Aanleiding Van De Vondst Van Een Gevelsteen Met Dodo-Beeld Van 1561 Te Vere*. 1917, Amsterdam, Holland.
- 2) P. C. M., and L. B. P. Some New Books — The Great Sea-Serpent, *Natural Science*. March 1893, Volume 6, pp. 219-221.
- 3) Anonymous. Notices — Dr. A. C. Oudemans, *Nature*. 28 April 1892, Number 1174, Volume 45, p. 614.
- 4) Searles V. Wood, Jun. Order Zeuglodontia, Owen, *Nature*. 18 November 1880, pp. 54-55.
- 5) Anonymous. The Great Sea-Serpent, *Nature*. 30 March 1893, Number 1222, Vol. 47, pp. 506-507.



Fig. 72. — Sea-serpent, side view, drawn from the descriptions.

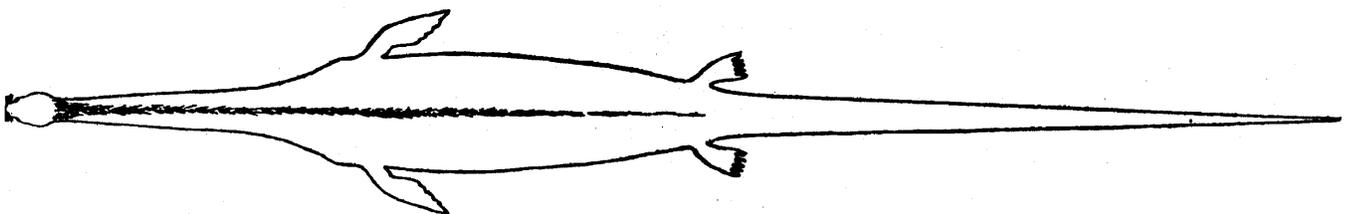


Fig. 73. — Sea-serpent, back view, outlines, drawn from the descriptions.

Fig. 1) Illustration from Oudemans' book on his proposed long-necked seal explanation to account for sea-serpent zoological classification.

Part Three: — Oudemans' Sea-Serpent Book
Yale University Mystery Expose! —
110 Year-Old Secret Finally Revealed!
Professor Othniel Charles Marsh — Silent Cryptozoologist!

Dr. Dwight G. Smith* and Gary S. Mangiacopra**

'You have the right to remain silent.
Anything you say can be used against
you in a court of law.'

— American police enforcement warning to arrested suspects.

The influence of Dr. A. C. Oudemans' book, *The Great Sea-Serpent*, although it was lost among the book critics of his day as outlined in Part 2, immediately reverberated privately among the leading men of science during the remaining years of the 1890s. It produced a "Code of Silence" regarding their interest on the sea-serpent; that among themselves they would discuss and heatedly debate this controversy — but beyond this intimate circle of scientific contacts, there was no public acknowledgment of their intellectual interest.

For this "Code of Silence" became enwrapped in a more than century-old mystery that took one of this article co-writers years to ultimately establish that one of America's foremost 19th century leading scientists had harbored an interest that he never revealed to the general public when he was alive — and only in death did it inadvertently become known — that he could have been described as a silent cryptozoologist!

Like all mysteries, there is a focal point from which arises the insignificant clues, taken together to reveal a startling secret. That focal point is the many libraries that comprise the Yale University campus, in New Haven, Connecticut. One of these, the Kline Science Library, has in its possession on an open book shelf, a century-old book that holds the key to this mystery. This mystery entails their famous and prestigious paleontologist, Professor Othniel Charles Marsh, (Fig. 1). Honored in his lifetime for his numerous dinosaur fossil discoveries, and recognized today for his pioneering efforts in the field of paleontology, he had a scientific interest that he never allowed to be made public!

This secret he took to his grave — a secret for which unknowingly after his death he did leave a clue for someone else to rediscover 76 years later because of the chance recognition of his name. A secret indirectly related to his paleontological discoveries with the bones of long-dead dinosaurs. Was it possible that the dead dinosaurs he was seeking had still living marine reptile kin which had escaped extinction and survived into the 1890s! His undisclosed secret — that he was interested in the controversy over the sea-serpent!

*Biology Department, Southern Connecticut State University, New Haven, Connecticut;

**Milford, Connecticut.

This personal secret would inadvertently hinder the wider acknowledgment of one of the most important Connecticut sea-serpent encounters of the 19th century that he took an interest in. But conversely, he did save this account to finally become known a century after it had happened!

Just who was Othniel Charles Marsh?

It is impossible to sum up the accomplishments of a scientist's life's work in a few paragraphs. The 1940 edition of the 500 page massive tome, "O. C. Marsh, Pioneer In Paleontology" [1] is still considered the definitive biography about him, showing both his virtues and his shortcomings.

The following timeline briefly chronicles the numerous highlights in Marsh's life:[2, 3]

1831 October 29 - Born in Lockport, New York.

1851-1856 - Entered Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts.

1856-1860 - Attended Yale College, New Haven, Connecticut; received B. A. degree.

1861-1862 - Attended Sheffield Scientific School for continuation of graduate courses in natural sciences.

1862-1865 - Studied at universities of Berlin, Heidelberg, and Bresian.

1862-1899 - Publication of his first papers pertaining to geology and paleontology; total number in excess of 300.

1866-1899 - Appointed to the chair of professor of paleontology of Yale College; retained position for life.

1868 - First scientific excursion into the American West which revealed untapped fossil deposits.

1871-1873 - Lead Yale scientific expeditions for fossils in American West.

1875 - Resume regular expeditions for fossils in West after cessation of Indian outbreaks. On his behalf, secure better treatment for Indians under government control.

1878-1895 - Chosen vice-president of National Academy of Science; later became president.

1880 - Publish book, "Odontornithes" (birds without teeth).

1884 - Publish book, "Dinocerata."

1886 - University of Heidelberg confers degree of Ph.D to him; Harvard gives an LL.D.

1896 - Publish last book, "Dinosaurs of North America."

1898 January 1 - Transfer his six collections of scientific lore, to Yale College.

1898 - Election as member of the French Academy of Science; winner of Cuvier medal.

1899 - "Note on a Bridger Eocene Carnivore," last paper written and published by him.

1899 March 18 - After an illness of a week, dies of pneumonia at age of 68 at his New Haven home on 30 Prospect Street. Never married; leaves no surviving siblings. Final legacy was of discovering more than 1,000 new species of extinct vertebrates.

Establishing the Provenance that Marsh was actually a “Silent Cryptozoologist.”

In our assertion that Marsh was a “silent cryptozoologist,” what is the documentation that has survived for more than a century that establishes this claim that had been overlooked — or ignored — by other biographers on him?

The National Academy of Science member, Charles E. Beecher, in his memoir presentation upon the death of O. C. Marsh, listed 300+ published papers Marsh had written during his lifetime. However, none of them by title alone gives any indication that he deviated from the uncontroversial topic of paleontology, dealing with the fossilized remains of extinct animals. There is no reference that he had in any manner presented any thoughts or comments on the then foremost cryptozoological subject of his century — the existence of “the sea-serpent.”

Neither does the 1940 definitive bibliography of Marsh give further evidence that he had strayed out of his accepted field of paleontology into cryptozoology.

Though, the possibility must be considered that Marsh could have written articles on the sea-serpent controversy for the general public magazines or newspapers. However, no such articles have been found to sustain this possibility.

So where is the conclusive proof that Marsh was a cryptozoologist who remained silent during his lifetime on the possibility that extinct animals, of which he was digging up their bones, may not have been so extinct after all? And why did not someone else during the century after Marsh’s death, realize this unknown aspect of his life and present this case at a much earlier date than we have?



Fig. 1) — Photograph of Professor O. C. Marsh, taken circa late 1880s.

The exposé of this century-old Yale secret began in 1972, when co-author Mangiacopra (then an undergraduate student at nearby University of New Haven) was utilizing Yale's Kline Science Library. At that time, Yale University had a "semi-official" policy of allowing non-Yale students to use some of their libraries.

While going through the Kline's book shelves looking for background sources on Yale Professor Addison Emery Verrill's involvement with "Octopus giganteus Verrill," by chance, Mangiacopra came upon a book shelf that held a slim collection on sea-monsters and the Loch Ness Monster. Bernard Heuvelmans' classic and definitive tome, *In The Wake Of The Sea Serpent*, was there along with others. Next to this book was another, the "legendary and copies-don't exist anywhere" copy of Dr. A. C. Oudemans' *The Great Sea-Serpent*.^[4] Through writings of Willy Ley and Ivan Sanderson, both of whom had mentioned this 1892 book in their previous articles, Mangiacopra knew both of its reputation and historical importance.

Diverting time from research on Professor Verrill's giant 1896 Florida octopus to examine this still-surviving copy of Oudemans'; a chance realization of the situation ultimately added more to the history of sea-serpentism than Mangiacopra could have originally ever imagined, ultimately leading him into a life-long investigation into the subject.

While examining the inside title page, it was discovered that on the top, right hand corner of the book, was inscribed the neat, handwritten signature of the name O. C. Marsh (Fig. 2). This name was already familiar from prior mentions of this Yale professor and his search for dinosaur bones in the American West from articles by Willy Ley. This was an incredible discovery! But the immediate question arose, did this Marsh signature really indicate that he had personally owned this sea-serpent book? Or did he simply inscribe his name for someone else who owned it originally?

The first provenance was established: Marsh, by inscribing his name, had once actually handled this book. This, alone, was an unbelievably fantastic thrill! Knowing that you were actually holding a book that was once held by one of the most famous names in paleontology history. How many others would ever have such an opportunity? And to come across this by sheer chance!

Yet, this still did not resolve the second, and even more important, question: Was this book one from Marsh's own personal reference library?

The second provenance that supported that Marsh, in fact, did personally own Oudemans' book, occurred on page 21, in the lower left-hand corner (Fig. 3). There was an elongated octagon-border personalized bookmark with the enclosed words in big letters "O. C. Marsh," with smaller size letters "Yale College." Stamped on this page was conclusive proof to confirm the book had, indeed, come from Marsh's private library.

But oddly noted, there was a third provenance. On the outermost title page that contained the author's name and publication date, in the middle along the right hand border was an elongated oval, inbordered with the enclosed words "Yale University - MUSEUM - New

O. C. Marsh

in their power, many boats were fitted out from Cape Ann and other places in the neighbourhood of his haunts, armed with harpoons and other implements, and manned with persons used to the whale fishery, in hopes of getting near enough to him to fasten their harpoons in his side. Among others a Captain Rich (not Benjamin Rich), of Boston, took command of a party, which was fitted out at some expense, and went into the bay, where they cruised along shore two or three days without seeing the serpent. With a view, however, to keep the joke from themselves, they determined to throw or attempt to throw it upon others, though at the expense of truth! They spread a report that they had caught the serpent, or what had been taken for one, and that he was to be seen at a place mentioned in the advertisement."

"Thousands were flocking to see this wonder, when it was found to be no other than a large horse macquerel, which (though a great natural curiosity, weighing sometimes 600 or 700 pounds) very much disappointed those, who had been induced to visit it. Those who had declared their disbelief of the existence of the Sea-serpent amongst ourselves were delighted to find their opinions were confirmed, and gave themselves great credit for their judgment and discrimination. The report spread from Boston to New Orleans, that what had been thought by some persons to be a sea-serpent had proved to be a horse macquerel, and even those who had been believers now supposed that those who had reported that they had seen the serpent had either misrepresented or had been themselves deceived. As no report of the snake having been seen after the capture of the macquerel was made, during that year, Captain Rich had the laugh with him, until circumstances, which have transpired since, have borne rather against him. Thus much for the transactions of the past years."

The Lake Erie Serpent. — In Mr. RAPHINESQUE'S *Dissertation on Sea-Snakes*, we read (See *Phil. Mag.* Vol. LIV, 1819):

"It appears that our large lakes have huge serpents or fishes, as well as the sea. On the 3d. of July, 1817, one was seen in Lake Erie, three miles from land, by the crew of a schooner, which was 35 or 40 feet long, and one foot in diameter; its colour was a dark mahogany, nearly black. This account is very imperfect, and does not even notice if it had scales; therefore it

O. C. MARSH.
YALE COLLEGE.

THE GREAT SEA-SERPENT.

Fig. 2) — O. C. Marsh signature on inner title page of *The Great Sea-Serpent*.

Fig. 3) — O. C. Marsh personalized mid-1890s bookmark on page 21 of *The Great Sea-Serpent*.

Haven, Conn" (Fig. 4). This established that at some later date, this book was officially cataloged into the university's Museum archives. These two bookmarks contradicted each other, and at that time it was not understood why. Yale was classified as a college when the book was owned by Marsh; and was reclassified academically as a university at the time of the museum bookmark imprint. Where was the chain-of-ownership during these years of interim from college to university? Did someone acquire this book from Marsh and then at a later date give it back to Yale University?

Combined together, all three provenances more than established the fact that the book being examined had once been the private property of O. C. Marsh. Yet, this raised still another mystery. Did anyone else know about this book and its original owner, who was interested in the sea-serpent controversy?

But this still leaves another minor question: Just how did Marsh first learn about this book authored by such an obscure Dutch scientist; and how did he get a copy of the book as it was published in London, England? Did he receive this copy from someone else? Perhaps he read the two reviews in *Nature*, which would seem likely, and had taken the time and expense to order a copy from overseas? So strong was his interest in this subject that he had gone through such efforts. This may indicate that he was determined to get a copy — but why?

But there was an even more startling mystery about Marsh's book that literally came popping out among its pages! Falling from the open book to the library table top, was an old, yellowed folded-in-half newspaper clipping. Upon opening, this folded newspaper clipping revealed an incredible discovery: its title read "A 100 Foot Sea Serpent" [5]; with the subtitle "Seen By Over 200 Persons Off Lighthouse Point" (Fig. 5). Dated Monday, 20 July 1896, and coming from the local morning edition of the *New Haven Journal and Courier*, it related the information that at 5:30 p.m., over 200 people that Sunday afternoon were enjoying themselves at the beach near Lighthouse Point (Fig. 6), when 50 yards from shore, a huge, dark-colored creature was leisurely making its way towards the harbor mouth. A huge semi-coil, 4: feet in diameter, was seen rising from the water, followed by others of similar description. Some of the more venturesome eyewitnesses had put out in small boats to get a closer look, while the creature was undisturbed by the onlookers,

THE GREAT SEA-SERPENT.

AN HISTORICAL AND CRITICAL TREATISE.

WITH THE REPORTS OF 187 APPEARANCES (INCLUDING
THOSE OF THE APPENDIX), THE SUPPOSITIONS AND
SUGGESTIONS OF SCIENTIFIC AND
NON-SCIENTIFIC PERSONS, AND THE AUTHOR'S CONCLUSIONS.

WITH 82 ILLUSTRATIONS.

BY

A. C. OUDEMANS, JZN.,

DOCTOR OF ZOOLOGY AND BOTANY, MEMBER OF THE ZOOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF THE
NETHERLANDS, DIRECTOR OF THE ROYAL ZOOLOGICAL AND BOTANICAL
SOCIETY (ZOOLOGICAL GARDENS) AT THE HAGUE.

PUBLISHED BY THE AUTHOR, OCTOBER 1892.

LEIDEN,
E. J. BRILL,
Oude Rijn 33a.

LONDON,
LUZAC & Co.,
Great Russell Street 46.



Fig. 4) — Yale University Museum bookmark circa 1910.

Lighthouse Point Park
New Haven, CT
1993

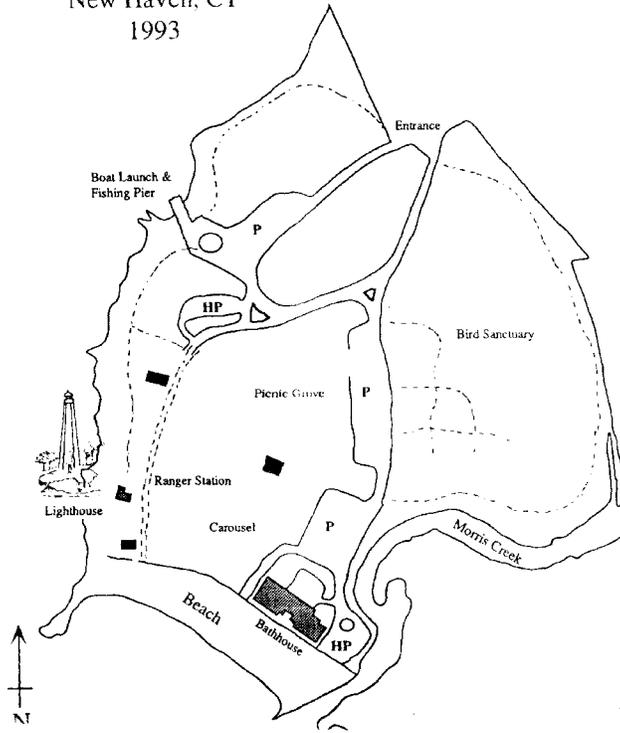


Fig. 5) — Area diagram of Lighthouse Point, New Haven, Connecticut, where 1896 Sea-Serpent was sighted from. [Map from park service.]

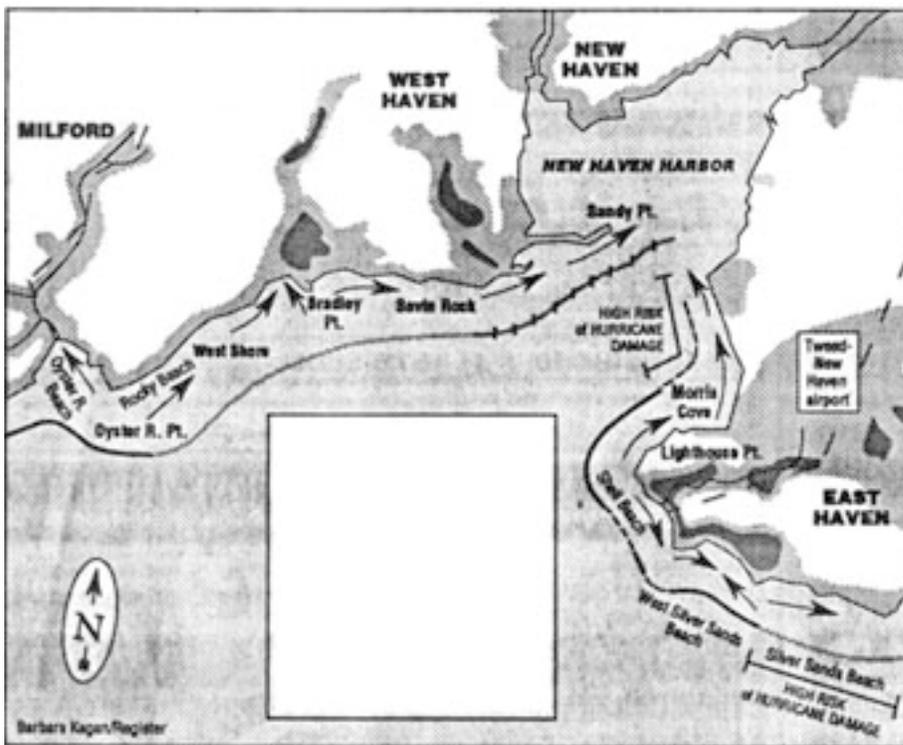


Fig. 6) — Connecticut shoreline diagram of New Haven Harbor, indicating where Lighthouse Point is and path the Sea-Serpent took leaving the area. [Map from news source.]

Journal and Courier.

THREE MONTHS, \$1.30; ONE MONTH, 50 CENTS; ONE WEEK, 13 CENTS; SINGLE COPIES, 3 CENTS.

Monday, July 20, 1896.

NEW ADVERTISEMENTS TO-DAY.
 Auction Sale—111 Orange St.—R. B. Mallory.
 Bicycle Watch Guards—J. H. G. Durant.
 Dinner Sets—Robinson & Co.
 Dinner Sets—Brown & Durban.
 Dull Times Busy—Ewen McIntyre & Co.
 Daily Chat—Malley, Neely & Co.
 Dockstader's Minstrels—At Savin Rock.
 Excursion to Newport—N. Y. N. H. & H. R. Co.
 Floor and Dock Point—Linsley & Lightbourn.
 For Sale—Farm—Box 11, North Haven, Conn.
 Glen Island—Steamer John H. Starin.
 Grand Shopping Emporium—E. M. Brown & Co.
 Honest Advertising—Howe & Stetson.
 Monday Prices—Wm. Frank & Co.
 Muslin Underwear—The Chas. Monson Co.
 One Tells Another—Home Furnishing Co.
 Pretty Gifts—Kirby, Jeweler.
 To New York—Starin's Transportation Line.
 To Yellowstone Park—Raymond & Whitcomb.
 "Tough-On-Fires"—Linsley & Lightbourn.
 Wanted—Board and Room—G., This Office.
 Wanted—Girl—319 Orange street.
 Wanted—Situation—Woolsey Street.
 Wanted—Situation—21 Clark street.
 Wanted—Position—H., This Office.
 Wanted—Situation—F., This Office.
 Wanted—Situation—151 Willow Street.
 Wanted—Situation—M., This Office.

Notice to Subscribers.

If you are leaving the city for a few days, or longer, send us your address and we will mail your paper regularly to you without extra cost. Address changed as often as desired.

WEATHER RECORD.

AGRICULTURAL DEPARTMENT,
 OFFICE OF THE CHIEF
 OF THE WEATHER BUREAU,

WASHINGTON, D. C., July 19, 1896, 9 p. m.

Forecast for Monday—New England and western New York: Threatening weather, with possible light showers Monday afternoon, southerly to southwesterly winds.

**Local Weather Report,
 FOR JULY 19, 1896.**

	7:40 A.M.	7:40 P.M.
Barometer.....	30.40	30.39
Temperature.....	69	68
Rel. Humidity.....	79	70
Wind Direction.....	N	S
Wind Velocity.....	1	15
Weather.....	Clear	Cloudy

Mean temperature, 64.
 Max. temperature, 71.
 Min. temperature, 55.
 Precipitation, 0 inches.
 Max. velocity of wind, 15-S.
 Accumulated excess or daily mean temperature since January 1, '81 decrees: or an average daily excess of .4 decrees.
 Total deficiency in precipitation since January 1, 5.42 inches.

U. G. MEYERS, Observer.
 Note.—A minus sign (—) prefixed to thermometer readings indicates temperature below zero.
 A "1" in connection with rainfall indicates a trace of rainfall too small to measure.
 Snow is melted and resulting depth of water not known.

LOCAL NEWS.

Brief Mention.

High water to-day at 6:40 p. m.
 Buy a new house—R. E. Baldwin.
 Loans and Insurance, Chas. Wilson & Co.
 Morris Cove lots, E. M. Clark, 42 Church.
 Mr. and Mrs. E. S. Mersick will sail for Europe shortly to be absent about two months.
 A big excursion comes to Savin Rock to-morrow from points on the Air Line division of the Consolidated railroad.
 George B. Hurd, principal of the Winchester school, with his family, are occupying their cottage on Clifton

A 100 FOOT SEA SERPENT

SEEN BY OVER 200 PERSONS OFF LIGHTHOUSE POINT

At 5:30 Yesterday Afternoon—Great Excitement at the Point for a Short Time—Seen by Responsible Persons—Passed Close to Several Pleasure Boats—Said to Have Been Fourteen Feet in Circumference—Headed For Deep Water.

Have you seen the sea serpent? If you have not, there are lots of people who say they have, and, what is more, it was only yesterday afternoon, Sunday afternoon, mind you, when, owing to the stringent liquor laws, no bogus serpents are likely to be seen in this vicinity.

This latest seen monster of the deep was viewed by fully two hundred people at about 5:30 yesterday afternoon just off Lighthouse Point. At that hour the beach at the Point was covered with people and everything was passing off quietly, as becomes a New England Sunday, when suddenly, only about fifty yards from the shore, a strange commotion was observed in the water. On closer inspection this proved to be caused by the movements of a huge dark-colored creature which was leisurely taking its way towards the mouth of the harbor.

At once all was excitement and the crowds flocked down to the water's edge to get a look at what was at first thought might be a whale or a shark, but soon a huge seral-coil fully four and a half feet in diameter was seen to rise from the water to the height of several feet, and soon another coil as then others, and it gradually descended upon the people that they were looking upon one of the rarest of curiosities—the sea serpent.

When this fact became evident some of the more timid ones made haste to put a little more distance between themselves and the water, but some of the more venturesome ones put out in small boats to get a closer look at the monster. It—we can think of no better word to describe the creature—seemed not in the least affected by all the excitement it was causing, but kept on at the same slow pace, passing quite close to several steamers and small pleasure craft, none of which seemed to desire a very close acquaintanceship, as there were no rifles aboard. Some of the boats even veered off to get out of the monster's way.

By this time a good survey of the huge serpent had been obtained by the crowds of onlookers, and some of the most reliable of these estimate that the leviathan must have been fully 100 feet in length and nearly fourteen feet in circumference. The monster seemed to be making its way by a sort of sinuous motion, much the same as worms make in traveling on the ground, large curves of the body appearing above the water at frequent intervals, but during all this time the head was under water and invisible. When last seen the serpent, for such it was to all appearances, was making for deeper water off the lighthouse.

That this was a real sea serpent is attested to by hundreds of people who saw it both from the shore and from boats, among those who assert that it was surely a sea serpent being Adolph Bachman, a student in the medical school of Tulane university in New Orleans, who is studying in this city this summer, and who boards at 66 Wallace street.

Fig. 7) — Photocopy of the *New Haven Journal and Courier* article of 20 July 1896 that Marsh had saved and placed in his copy of *The Great Sea-Serpent*, to be rediscovered nearly eighty years later.

This incident is unique in sea-serpentism lore because all possible weather conditions data at the time of the sighting was also given in the column next to the sea-serpent news item.

as it swam at the same slow pace, passing quite close to several steamers and small pleasure craft. Some boats veered off to get out of its way. From the description given, it had a circumference of 14 feet and was making a sort of sinuous motion; with large curves of the body appearing above the water at frequent intervals — but keeping its head under water all the time. When last observed, it was making for deeper water off the lighthouse.

Only one specific eyewitness name among the 200 was given: Adolph Bachman, a student in the medical school of Tulane University of New Orleans, who was studying in New Haven that summer and was residing at 66 Wallace Street.

This was a fantastic revelation from this 76-year-old newspaper clipping; that the city where Yale College was located, in whose halls had walked some of America's finest scientists of that era, literally had a sea-serpent appear in its very own harbor! And yet this 1896 incident remained unknown! Later microfilm examination of the then rival city's evening *New Haven Register*, made no mention of the Lighthouse Point sea-serpent. Nor were inquiries to the New Haven Yacht Club any more successful, as their records for this decade were long lost, in the event that any of their 1896 members has seen this marine monster and wrote an account of it down.

Marsh, apparently that Monday morning, had torn out the *Journal and Courier* newspaper column on their local sea-serpent encounter, and left it among his book pages. Unfortunately, the specific book pages that this clipping was between was unknown. This raises still another question: was Marsh comparing the Lighthouse Point sea-serpent description against other sea-serpent descriptions that Oudemans had listed in his book? Trying to establish a comparison to determine just what this marine cryptid could be? And did Marsh ever write to Dr. Oudemans himself, in Holland, informing one scientist to another, of what had happened nearby?

This still leaves unanswered the final mystery: Just why did Marsh leave this newspaper clipping in his sea-serpent book? Why didn't he bother to file it more professionally among his archives? Was it nonchalantly just left in the book as just a minor trivial item he came across that had amused him that Monday morning of July 20th?

Was he planning to perhaps mention this sighting in a forthcoming article? Did he undertake any further investigation to obtain additional information from the more than 200 eyewitnesses? One of these, Bachman, was named in the newspaper. If he did, are any of his notes still surviving among his personal records? Or did he just tear out the clipping, consult Oudemans' book for similar cases, and then forget about it? This seems to be what he did.

And incredibly, just how, for eight decades, did this newspaper clipping manage to remain among the pages of Marsh's book without getting lost? Did it mean that during the following decades, no one else bothered to open and consult Marsh's copy of this 1892 classic? Was there such a total lack of readers' interest at Yale University on the possible existence of the sea-serpent?

Regardless, Marsh fortunately did leave this clipping to be rediscovered by someone who immediately realized the significance of its historical importance pertaining to the sea-serpent. The 1896 Lighthouse Point incident was unique among the annals of sea-serpentism

because of the sheer number of eyewitnesses involved (200). Not wishing to “conscript” this newspaper clipping — after all, it had survived 80 years of being left undisturbed — photocopies were made at the Kline library.

Unfortunately, due to the lack of cash in his pocket, Mangiacopra did not copy the book’s three pages, proving Marsh’s original ownership. Attempting shortly thereafter to try and re-enter the Kline library to copy the complete text of Oudemans’ classic work, his entry was barred by warning notices that “any non-Yale students or personnel using the library would be considered trespassing and be subjected to arrest”! Not wishing to tempt fate, no attempt was made to reenter the library.

And there the matter rested in 1972. A previously unknown sea-serpent incident was rescued from its obscurity stuffed between the pages of a book on this topic, of all places! But without a photocopy of Marsh’s personal copy of *The Great Sea-Serpent*, the notion that he was definitely interested in — but remained silent about — the sea-serpent could not be substantiated. This was a Catch-22 situation that would, luckily, be resolved finally — after a 20 years wait!

The Best Comes for He that Waits

During the two decades interim, additional chance readings of articles pertaining to O. C. Marsh confirm our original suspicions. Marsh never mentioned his interest in the sea-serpent. He kept his interest silent from at least 1892 (when the book was published) to 1899 (when he died). His interest had probably been present prior to 1892, as the topic of the sea-serpent graced the pages of some of the most prestigious science journals of this era.

Apparently, Marsh’s book was obtained prior to his death when he donated to Yale College in January 1898, numerous items to be preserved in the then being built Peabody Museum. Oudemans’ book apparently was one such item from his private library that was among the transfer. However, the Peabody Museum itself was not to be completed until 1901, in connection with Yale’s bicentennial celebration. Thus, when the Peabody Museum was completed, and the Marsh’s archives were being cataloged by them, the college had already become credited as a university, thus noted with the bookmark imprint stated previously. This would indicate circa 1901 or later.

The book itself would reside in the old Peabody Museum itself for only 2 1/2 decades, as in the 1920s, this museum was torn down and today’s present new Peabody Museum was constructed. Ultimately, the book ended up (as of 1992) in the Kline Science Library.

Final Comments and Delayed Tribute to this Silent Cryptozoologist.

We can only guess why O. C. Marsh — one of America’s foremost scientists — remained silent about his interest (either pro or con) about the sea-serpent. Was it because of his fear of scientific ridicule for becoming entrenched in this subject, as the respectability of this topic at the time of Oudemans’ book publication was already declining into one of scorn?

Was he aware of the hostile criticism that book reviewers had previously given to Oudemans' book only a few years before when Oudemans' book came out in 1892? Did he convey his interest to his fellow Yale contemporaries? In 1952, writer A. Hyatt Verrill [6] wrote, "that many leading scientists have openly and sometimes quite forcefully expressed their belief in the existence of the so-called sea serpent" — and gave eight specific names — one of whom was a contemporary of Marsh at Yale, Professor Addison Emery Verrill! Verrill would achieve fame for establishing the scientific reality of the mythical Kraken as being the giant squid — and also achieve infamy regarding the giant octopus of Florida fiasco. Yet, there is no known scientific or general paper Verrill wrote regarding his interest on the sea-serpent. Here was a second Yale "silent cryptozoologist" who never let his interest become known aside from a select "inner circle" and his own son, A. Hyatt. So Marsh was not alone on this "Code of Silence" among these American men of science. Perhaps it was something of a personal pursuit that was just discussed among them and not for the general public.

And did Marsh harbor his own private thoughts that, maybe, there were still surviving descendants in the world's seas of those fossils he and his crew were digging up in the American West? Did he feel he had to choose to devote his efforts on his fossil discoveries for the world to benefit from, rather than the open-ended debate about the sea-serpent?

There is an irony on the part of Marsh when he decided to remain a "silent cryptozoologist." Posthumously, Marsh, in ways he could never imagine, did make a significant contribution towards the investigation of sea-serpentism. In leaving his lifetime archives for others to utilize, he left his personal copy of *The Great Sea-Serpent* for Yale — along with that torn newspaper clipping he inserted that Monday morning nearly a century ago. This clipping would be discovered by Mangiacopra and act as a catalyst to begin his life-long interest into the investigation of marine cryptozoology. Without Marsh, the cryptozoologists of the world would be far poorer in the number of previously forgotten sea-serpent encounters because of Mangiacopra's efforts. That is another scientific legacy with which Marsh can now be attributed.

It is understandable why, Marsh, when alive, had to remain a "silent cryptozoologist." But now, more than a century after his death, a long-delayed tribute can be given to him — that among his numerous achievements and accomplishments — he was truly a cryptozoologist too!

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The Valley Without a Head

The persistent legend of a valley littered with decapitated human corpses is actually a lot weirder than a mere graveyard of sourdoughs.

Frank Graves

As told to Ivan T. Sanderson*

Starting when I was a kid in junior high, I became ever more bugged by the story of what some writer way back in the 30s named “Headless Valley.” My first introduction to this crazy story was in some pulp mag and what impressed me was that it was listed as a fact article and just a fiction tale. It avoided giving the exact location of this horrifying place except to say that it was in western Canada and way up by the Arctic circle. Neither my parents, who were very well read, nor my teachers, nor any library in Philadelphia where I lived, could tell me anything about the place. But over the years I kept stumbling across stories about it.

I am a mechanic by trade, specializing in auto and truck testing, but in 1962 I took on a second job as I wanted to put aside enough cash to take a year off to travel — anywhere as long as I could see for myself what life is all about outside a modern city. This job was as a stock-boy in the publishing house of Chilton Books, in downtown Philly. One of the first books I had to tote around was your *Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life*, which I read while baby-sitting with the xerox machine. The subject had always interested me anyway but I found in it the first exact reference to the location of this valley, which you gave as the Nahanni in the Canadian Northwest Territories.

Since you were an editor at Chilton at the time, you will remember that five of us came to you to seek advice on this year-off trip that we were planning; and of course I led off with Headless Valley. [Note. — To make a really rather long story as proverbially short as possible, let me just say that all Frank’s companions dropped out for one valid reason or another — as almost invariably happens in plans such as his — but he joined up with another gang I had been helping, out in Minnesota, led by one Michael Eliseuson and who were also aiming for the Nahanni. Frank took over the transport and got them up to the Mackenzie River in a fourth-hand school bus; and thence, by a specially built boat, up the Liard River and then on into the Nahanni. He also got them all out and in one piece, which was quite a feat in itself! I.T.S.]

The stories about this “Headless Valley” were really weird. It was the number one legend of the northlands, and had as its background, stories of tropical growth, hot springs, head-hunting mountain men, caves, pre-historic monsters, wailing winds and lost gold mines.

* The exact provenance of this article is unknown, but it appears to have been published sometime in the early 1960s.

Actual fact certifies the hot springs, the wailing winds, and some persons or animals who delight in lopping off prospectors' heads. As for the pre-historic monsters, Indians have returned from the Nahanni country with fairly accurate drawings of mammoths burned on raw hide. The more recent history began some sixty years ago when the two MacLeod brothers of Fort Simpson were found dead in the valley, reportedly decapitated. Even then the Indians shunned the place because of its "mammoth grizzlies" and "evil spirits wailing in the canyons."

Canadian police records show that Joe Mulholland of Minnesota, Bill Espler of Winnipeg, Phil Powers and the MacLeod brothers of Ft. Simpson, Martin Jorgenson, Yukon Fischer, Annie LaFerte, Ed. O'Brien, Edwin Hall, Andy Hays, an unidentified prospector and Ernest Savard had perished in the strange valley since 1910. In 1945 the body of Savard was found in his sleeping bag, head nearly severed from his shoulders. Savard had previously brought rich ore samples out of the valley. In 1946 prospector John Patterson disappeared in the valley. His partner, Frank Henderson, was to have met him there, but never found him. Two fellows told an even wilder one back in 1948. They said that some years before they had been chased into a cave by a Mastodon though they insisted it had enormous spirally curved tusks and very long dark hair so that it sounded much more like a Mammoth! I remember thinking when I read that one that people have great imaginations; I was to learn just how lousy imagination can be when compared to reality.

I must explain that my purpose in going on that first trip was not just for adventure or to 'explore.' I had always planned to have a serious-minded objective, and I had looked around for something I could tackle that did not entail hauling great piles of equipment in with me before I knew what sort of environment I was going to encounter; especially as I had never been in any wilderness area before. Perhaps you'll laugh when I tell you that I had always had an interest in plant life, so I went to Dr. William C. Steere, Director of the New York Botanical Gardens, to seek advice. I did not know, when I did, that he was the leading expert on arctic and subarctic plants and especially the little ones — that you call "lowly plants" — such as lichens, fungi, mosses, and what are called liverworts. These had always seemed to me to be "fun," so I planned to collect them. [Frank brought back a rather fine collection that is still being classified and described under Dr. Steere's direction. I.T.S.]

Only later did I come to realize that it was this somewhat unglamorous pursuit that opened the local doors to me. You see, there are not only indigenous Indians in the area but a number of long-resident white families as well; and transients or comparative transients like resident priests, Hudson's Bay Company agents, trappers, prospectors, and even some geologists and surveyors. Most of these prove to be a confounded nuisance to the authorities and a pest to the residents, while the Indians take their traditionally dim view of all palefaces. Then also, there have been several so-called "expeditions" to the valley, starting back in the early 30s; and almost all of these have been pretty wild. The earlier ones came looking for lost gold mines and so on; the latter-day ones arrived announcing their intention of catching a Sasquatch, or Bigfoot, or what those who don't know what they are talking about call a Yeti or "Abominable Snowman"! None of these intrepid explorers and hunters had the foggiest notion what the terrain was like, what equipment to take, or even how to get there. Most of them failed even to get into the lower end of the valley; and almost all of those who did, had

to be hauled out physically. Even the old sourdoughs and surveyors met such rough going that they often had to give up or stay and (yes, literally) be decapitated. And if the records are true, this is a fact. When the locals opened up to me a bit, they told me really hilarious stories about some of these unprofessional 'northmen'; how they had got plain scared of the world up this river, and how they had just given up and crawled back as best they could to the settlement at South Nahanni, where the North and South Nahanni rivers junction with the Liard that runs east to the Mackenzie. (Incidentally, the South Nahanni River flows south from the north!)

This is the place where there are numerous hot springs that are ice-free all winter and in which the Amerinds bathe regularly. Like many volcanic thermal springs they are encrusted with crystalline and amorphous deposits of sulphur, but they also support most marvellous beds and rim-fringes of algae and some extraordinary fungus growths. It was water piped from these hot springs to a greenhouse built by one of the Catholic Missions years ago that gave rise to the story — almost a legend — of bananas growing up there, because somebody did ship some banana-stools up from Florida and they thrived in the intensely hot, though short, summer sun, and then through the long winter under artificial light and in the high temperature and moisture content of the air induced by these hot springs.

At first I took the stories of the old-timers about these scared trappers and prospectors as being nothing much more than the sort of snide accounts that permanent residents of far out of the way places relate about the behavior of outsiders. But this attitude of mine seems to have gotten under the skins of the locals, and the resident Amerinds, and even those other Indians who wander in from the outlands from time to time. It then dawned on me that I was giving offense by not believing what they told me, so I sort of indicated that I did want to believe what they said but that I had thought they had just been pulling my leg as a greenhorn from outside. That did it.

They led me to a number of places where I was shown burned-out shacks and, what impressed me most, was that I personally found the remains of some very old rifles and other things of the utmost value to such people as hunters and prospectors in these overgrown camps. Later, I talked with members of the Canadian Mounties who now patrol the NWT regularly by air, and they confirmed the long string of disappearances of experienced prospectors and trappers in this area. Also, they told me that the decapitations reported were actually on the police blotters!

As a result of all of this I was led to another discovery: namely, that there are a heck of a lot of Indian Bands, or seemingly whole small tribes, up north of the place called South Nahanni. This is a positively vast country composed of three roughly parallel mountain ranges running from northwest to southwest, called (from the west) the Selwyn Mountains, the Backbone Range, and the Canyon Range of the Mackenzie Mountains complex. The Nahanni runs down from the north between the two former and originates somewhere around the southern slopes of the 7500-ft high mountain called Mt. Christie, which is at 64° North. Nobody has ever reached the head of this river on land and because of the heavily forested and terrifyingly steep gorges that chop this country up, no clear map has become available

from aerial surveying. And, as a matter of actual fact, the most part of it has never been surveyed. Thus, the Nahanni is “headless” in more ways than one.

The Indians and their (presumed) “relatives” who live in and around South Nahanni, keep just turning up around the Liard River. Nobody can talk to the “outlanders,” but they don’t show any surprise at passing aircraft. They are intrigued by motorboats, and they offer anything, even their young women, in trade for metal knives. They don’t seem to possess anything store-bought. The Canadian authorities don’t know who they are or where they come from. And this brought up another fascinating ‘discover.’

Several people — and notably a highly educated white man who has lived in the valley most of his life — remarked to me quite casually one day that enormous airplanes quite often came down from the north and sometimes fly so low in good weather that he could read their large markings even without his binoculars. Besides numbers, they bear “names” or identifications in the Cyrillic alphabet. Some of these he had tried to copy down, and on showing them to another educated old-timer who had also seen these planes for some years, he learned that a priest from Ontario had had them translated, and that they were Russian, and standard markings for certain series of overfly planes known to the Canadian authorities. I have asked around, but I never heard of such planes being spotted anywhere else; so why are the Russians so all-fired interested in this crazy valley? And crazy it is, and in all kinds of ways as I later found out.

First off, there is a really great waterfall about a hundred miles up the river, called Virginia Falls. This is the stopping point for the greenhorn invaders, and the starting point for the real explorers. Yet, the trip up the river even to that point is rough going. We were luck in that, when our boat sank in one set of rapids, we saved all ourselves and most of our gear. Most greenhorns lose one or the other, or both. I got above the falls because I wanted to collect those plants, and also because I had heard of a cave that one old fellow had told me somebody else had penetrated for no less than nine miles! I don’t know if this is true, but an Indian showed me the entrance to several caves, and any one of them could have gone on into those mountains forever. I had no lights or proper caving equipment so I did not try my luck. And it was at about this point that I got sidetracked once again.

One of the Indians who was sort of guiding me, but only because he and his family were headed the way I wanted to go, became very much interested in my search for funny little plants, and then proceeded not only to tell me about but led me to and pointed out what seemed to be an endless lot of plants that his people use for medical purposes. I had heard of the subarctic peoples having discovered things like aspirin in the bark of certain willows centuries ago, and I had heard an awful lot of tales about our North American Indians being old-time herbalists, but I was quite stunned by the number of such medicinal plants that this man showed me, and by the equally endless list of the alleged uses that he said his people made of them. And then another thing happened.

I needed some game for food, and the whole area literally crawls with both game birds and mammals. However, once again, a greenhorn can wander about in the woods for months

without seeing much more than an out-of-range grouse, so I asked another of my Indian companions to lead me to some game as quickly as possible, and I told him I would just follow him and shut up. I even gave him my gun so that we might get some meat as quickly as possible. We made several successful forays up side valleys and canyons during the days while we moved up river, and we got our food quite fast. But then one misty day we set off up a canyon that the Indian said he did not know personally but which was “not lucky.” And in truth we did not spot a living thing in three hours; so we started back down to the river. Then suddenly my pal stopped, and pointed down at the soft wet ground in a little clearing and actually gave one of those grunts that movie-makers love to have their “Red Indians” make. He was a bit rattled and so was I, for there, most clearly marked in the mud, were three footprints of what appeared to be a barefoot man who would have had to take a shoe with an internal measurement of at least sixteen inches! My friend gave this thing a name, but I never really did catch up with that as we went down that valley at no dog-trot, I can tell you.

Later, when the locals had finally decided that I was neither a nut nor some kind of government agent, they really opened up on this business of the “old-time hairy woodsmen.” They’d never heard of California’s so-called Bigfoot, or B.C.’s Sasquatch, or even of the Yeti or Abominable Snowmen of Asia; and they were quite amazed and not a little sceptical when I told them what other people had said about these. In fact, they obviously didn’t believe it any more than I originally had believed their stories about decapitated prospectors in their country. To them — and this went for the white-men even more than the reticent Indians — their “big-footed-ones” were just perfectly natural, normal people, but living a more “primitive” life than they did. Their whole attitude was, very simply, “What do you mean? Fakes?”

I didn’t want to bring this up, but you know it was in a way this business of what you call ABSMs that really started me on that trip; and let me tell you [And Frank got quite hot about this. Ed.] I never believed one single word of your book, and least of all about the Canadian NWT. But that’s the way it happened, and I have to tell you this because it makes what comes next a bit easier.

While out hunting for food one morning with an Indian friend who was a pretty fair woodsman, I ran into another real horror. These were definitely bear tracks but if I told you their size — and I measured them with my collecting tape — you would just laugh at me. They were bear tracks all right, and the Indian said that they were made by giant brown bears that, as far as I could make out from his pacing things off between trees, would make any Kodiak Brown look like a Black Bear pup.

Then, three days later we were out not too far from the river, and my friend went ahead with one of his dogs that he had brought along, since we wanted only a few birds to eat. They saw something over a bank down in a thick patch of pine woods. I waited up the rise in open stuff with bushes. This Indian was a pretty good tracker and moved without making a sound, but his dog was not a ‘hunter.’ So, when I heard a noise and saw some brush moving about at the edge of the trees, I thought it was the dog coming back, and I did not raise my gun.

But then an enormous white thing that I at first thought must be a Polar bear just sort of wandered out of the trees. It wasn't a bear; it looked more like a gigantic dog. It stood straight up on rather long legs, more like a dog or a wolf. I had seen plenty of wolves and some of them are enormous enough up there; but this thing was twenty times the size of any wolf I had ever heard of. By a sort of reflex action I fired at it — and it was less than twenty paces away and only partly screened by little bushes. I hit it with two barrels of ball-shot. It didn't even jump, but turned away from me, and just walked back into the forest. I reloaded and fired again, and I know I hit it in the rear, but it just kept on walking. Shortly afterwards, my Indian friend bobbed up, asking what I had got. I didn't know what to say for a bit but, when I told him, we did another of our famous disappearing acts, and this time we loaded the boats and pushed off up river — real fast.

I tell you, weirdies and mysteries just keep coming in that fabulous country. Super-giant bear tracks, and wolves the size of giant bears were bad enough but — and don't get me wrong — if the ravens and eagles I saw every day were really the size I estimated they were, we'd have had every zoo keeper in the world in an uproar. But then, I didn't shoot any, and so I never measured one of either. And you know how silly one can be about estimating size at a distance.

Most unfortunately I never got far enough to see what is to me the most fantastic story of all about this "headless valley." This is the "frozen lake." Now, they have snow and ice up there all their long winter, and up in the mountains it never melts; but, down in the valleys that far south, the rivers run free from June, and the lakes are completely ice-free. However, everybody there told me that there is a large lake up near the headwaters of the Nahanni that never melts. It is in a ten-mile-wide basin between steep mountains, and its surface is said to be absolutely smooth, bright blue, crystalline ice. But what is much more incredible — and it will remain incredible to me until I see it personally — is that it is alleged that the whole of that valley is permanently frozen! By this I mean that there is a dense forest of spruce all around it and up the slopes of the mountains on each side, and all the trees are clothed in pure ice, just like after an ice-storm down our way. But this ice never melts. One old Indian told me that he had been there, and that he had found little animals also encased in clear ice along the shores of the lake. What is this? And I ask the geologists. Could it be true; and, if so, how come? Of course, this bit may well be nothing more than a pipe-dream but, having seen that dog-thing, and those human-like foot-tracks, and the bear tracks and the caves, I'm not saying anything more for now.

I'm going back again — this year, and on my own. If other whitemen can live there the year round, and year after year, I can; even if I am a city boy. I've been there, and I know; and I've asked the friends I made up there for a job and I've told them I am going to stay all winter; and if I make the grade and don't get in their hair, I just might ask to be allowed to stay on. People are always going off to Africa, or South America, or the Antarctic. I don't get it. Here is this fabulous place right in our own backyard and it's full of all the damned 'adventure' anybody could ask — plus a lifetime of wondrous things to look into, and decent people, clean air, and a real chance to discover something worthwhile.