

North American BioFortean Review

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*Man would not have attained the possible
unless time and again he had reached out for
the impossible.*

—Max Weber

BioFortean Note:*Fishes Fallen from the Sky*

The ichthyologist of the American Museum of Natural History, Dr. E. W. Gudger, in his most interesting paper "Rains of Fishes,"(1) has grouped together many astonishing accounts of fishes falling from the sky. I wish to add some data on my own experiences with this subject.

The Yukaghir, living on the Siberian tundra between the Kolyma and Alaseya rivers, told me that the sky, regarded by them as a beneficent deity, to supply men with food flings fishes to the earth. When fish appear in the lakes in great numbers, the Yukaghir say that they have fallen from heaven. They know well enough that fish develop from spawning, but they say that fish originally had been and continue to be sent by the deity. When asked how they knew fish fall from the sky, the Yukaghir asserted that they often found living pike (*Esox lucius*) and a river species of salmonidae, called cheer (*Coregonus nasutus*), in dry places. Evidently, said the Yukaghir, it followed that these fish in falling from heaven failed to reach the water. I explain this phenomenon in the following way: The majority of polar lakes are connected by small rivulets which the fish follow when passing from one lake to another for spawning. In the course of the passage the fish jump over obstructions formed by stones and grass hillocks. In the summer when the rivulets run completely dry in places, the migrating fish may find themselves caught on dry land.

I wish to refer to another phenomenon connected with the above belief of the Yukaghir. When some tundra lakes during a rough and snowless winter freeze to the bottom, the fish die and in the spring rise to the surface. But the lake-fauna recovers soon and new fishes appear. Without any doubt, this phenomenon may be explained by what is known as ana-biosis: some frozen fishes may come to life again after thawing, or by the appearance of new fishes from other lakes through the connecting rivulets. But the Yukaghir in such cases said that the new fishes fell from the sky.

I wish to mention here another phenomenon of this kind, although it has entirely different origin and causation. While spending the winter of 1909-1910 on Umnak Island of the Aleutian Chain I experienced volcanic shocks several times. Once I was awakened in the night by a particular subterranean noise and tremor of the earth; the floor of my log cabin shook. In the morning the shore was covered with a layer of stunned fish, sea-urchins and shellfish about two feet high and two feet wide, but in several days these were carried to the neighboring hills and eaten by gulls and ravens. The presence of shells of echini and mollusca on the hills may lead some traveler to the deceptive idea that the hills were formerly the sea bottom.

Waldemar Jochelson
New York, N. Y.

From: *Science*, December 21, 1923, LVIII(1512): 516.

1. *Natural History*, Journal of the A. M. of N. H., Vol. XXI, Nov.-Dec., 1921 No. 6, p. 637.

Letter to the Editor:

Dear Mr. Arment,

I recently came across your publication on the internet and downloaded and read all available .pdf's. Very interesting topic, cryptozoology, though not one I have had any interest in until recently reading your work.

I thought I might share with you something I observed, and also a report from a friend who experienced an odd event in the same location. I did not learn of his experience until recently, and for obvious reason he has told very few people about it. Nor have I told mine to other than close friends.

I should preface the report by saying that I have a university degree in forest management, so I have some background in science. From an objective and scientific point of view, there is little validity to what I will describe. Nonetheless, I hope you find it interesting, and perhaps you would like it for your files. My experience occurred in July or August of 1994.

I was for many years responsible for the forest management for the land belonging to a mining company in Tahawus, NY (Essex County). It is located north of Newcomb, at the base of the high peaks in the Adirondacks of NY. I can point you to maps and aerial photography available on the internet. The mine had closed down and so had the settlement, but they owned a large acreage with a mansion and several other dwellings used by the owner and guests.

One of my responsibilities was to look after a remote log cabin located at Lower Preston Pond, at the northern end of the property. This is a difficult location to reach, involving travel by boat and a several mile hike to carry in tools and supplies. The cabin was used by company guests, usually one or two parties for a week or two during the summer. It was one of my jobs to carry in supplies and get the cabin ready for habitation.

Finding that the cabin was short on propane, and a party due to arrive suddenly, I needed to have the local floatplane service fly in a few hundred-pound tanks. Usually they would wait for favorable winds to fly the tanks alone and leave them on the dock, but due to the imminent arrival of guests I pressured the pilot to fly in sooner and with unknown winds. The pond is difficult to take off from due to surrounding hills and a typical cross-wind that makes for a long lift-off. They don't like flying there.

We left headquarters at about 7 AM and found ourselves approaching the pond twenty minutes later. As we descended, the pilot commented on the problem with the lack of breeze and the glass-like surface of the pond. Depth perception becomes an issue, or rather the lack of it, since the pilots can't tell when to flare the plane for touchdown. The pilot was lamenting the fact that he hadn't brought a bleach bottle to throw out the window onto the water to give him something to focus on.

As we approached the pond from the north to examine the conditions, descending to several hundred feet, we saw something odd in the water. Perhaps a hundred feet from the western shore (midway down the pond), there was a sub-surface vertical column, slightly tapering from top to bottom, extending from just under the water to an unknown depth, but I would estimate fifteen feet or so. It was gray in color, but with noticeable silver tint and it shimmered slightly. Diameter at the widest point may have been two feet and it tapered to the top where it was less than a foot by my reckoning. I can't say that there was a head or a body, it was essentially a vertical item that appeared to move slightly, not at any speed, but enough that it appeared alive.

Had there been a small head, and had it been turned away from us, it is doubtful we would have seen it from our angle and altitude. This is speculation, of course.

We had this in sight for perhaps thirty seconds, and dropped the plane a bit to take a closer look — the last thing you want to do is hit a floating tree with a plane, and if it was a hazard we wanted to mark it so it could be removed. I triangulated a fix on the object so I could examine it by boat. We speculated on what it could be, it was unlike anything we'd seen — a veteran floatplane pilot and a woodsman having this discussion. We immediately

eliminated it as a vertical tree, and found ourselves considering a diving loon, leaving a wake of bubbles. Not that, it never diminished as bubbles would and no loon visible at the end of the trail. School of fish? Very odd configuration, and very few fish in the pond besides some brook trout which don't school. Were it minnows, they would have eventually widened their pattern and the perceived density would have changed, and again, I've never seen fish behave this way. We decided it was a very odd thing that we couldn't honestly identify. I suggested the neck of a creature, and that made the pilot very uncomfortable. I can't say it was a neck, but it seemed as likely to me as anything else we had considered. I believe it was a solid object, not anything composed of bubbles or school of fish, and I'm even more certain that it was not a vertical floating deadhead.

We banked around to the east to circle for a duplicated approach for landing, having decided to try it despite the conditions. We again approached from the north, and again saw the object, the top of which still remained just beneath the surface. There were no surface ripples, and the water is very clear. The object had moved slightly toward the center of the pond, and looked the same color and density as before. I have fished the pond a lot, and I believe the water depth where the object was to be about forty feet.

The water is very clear, and you can typically see bottom at over twenty feet. There are no weeds, this is a high altitude pond with very cold water, and from a plane it has a subtle blue color — it sits in a stone basin between the mountains and drops of rather sharply from shore. The bottom is muck, and to my knowledge the deepest point is about seventy feet. It is relatively devoid of aquatic life as is common with the higher ponds in the Adirondacks. It flows into Upper Preston, which is on State land, and from there into Duck Hole and to Long Lake, which is in the St. Lawrence watershed.

We landed the plane, and though I looked for the object from my window I saw nothing. After unloading, I took the aluminum boat out to the last known position and made widening circles for an hour while standing on the seat for a better view. I feel that were this a floating vertical tree that I would have found it. I never saw anything unusual from the boat.

Where this becomes slightly more interesting to those willing to consider unusual phenomena is when you consider the story of my friend as having possible connection to my sighting. I mentioned my unusual sighting to him recently, and I had no idea that he had ever been to Lower Preston. He is from the area, so he would know the location, and I mentioned it in conversation only because I thought he might find it odd as did I. Access to the property is difficult due to remote location and the fact that it is posted, so very few people have been there much less fished it. It turns out he had permission to fish the pond once because a relation of his was caretaker of the cabin at the time, about the early-mid 1980's.

The short version of his experience is that he and a woman were trolling for trout, rowing very slowly along the eastern shore. I think he indicated that he was within twenty feet of shore, and the water depth there might be about twelve feet, but certainly less than twenty feet.

Suddenly the stern of the twelve foot aluminum boat was dragged underneath the water, as though it were pulled down suddenly, and the water poured over the stern and sunk the boat. He is adamant that he didn't strike an underwater object — and they were barely moving — and that it was the stern that was suddenly pulled beneath the water. They had to swim to shore and had a miserable walk to the cabin through the woods in the late afternoon. There's a lot of cedar blowdown and thick understory of spruce.

The next day they went back with the other boat to retrieve their boat and gear, which had been lost in the sudden sinking. They found the boat, but the odd thing was that all their gear — camera, fishpoles, tacklebox, etc. — were set equidistantly apart arranged around a circle that had been swept clear on the bottom. He became very excited when he told me this, indicating "that something had done this deliberately for him to find." This disturbed him deeply.

I should add that I know this man well, and I consider him an experienced woodsman and reliable observer. He is quite articulate, so I feel I got a good description of events. He has hunted and trapped his entire life, and is a solid man in a pinch.

[Name on file; withheld by request.]

A Pre-Civil War Immature Bigfoot Report?

Gary S. Mangiacopra
Dwight G. Smith

“. . .There’s the contingent of serious book lovers, the collectors and book dealers who come to the sprawling event in search of something rare, unusual or noteworthy.”

—Newspaper reporter Patti Woods commenting on the 44th annual Pequot Library book sale that was offering more than 120,00 titles to the public

“The ends justify the means.”

—Niccolo Machiavelli (1469 – 1527), *The Prince* (1532)

One of the frustrating dilemmas that sometimes confronts a dedicated cryptozoology researcher is to find oneself in a situation where you have discovered an incredibly long-neglected cryptid account, only to realize that circumstances do not permit obtaining a copy. And, unless you can somehow manage to immediately procure a copy of the account then this newly discovered cryptid source will be lost again! So what do you do? You fall back upon the Machiavelli principle that “the end justifies the means.”

Just such a situation happened to GSM at the 44th annual Pequot Library book sale in Fairfield, Connecticut this July 25th. The sale must surely rank as one of the largest in southern New England if not the entire Northeast. It includes used books, videos, CD’s, vinyl records, maps, and miscellaneous papers. Once in a while in past years, the sale has proven a bonanza for finding obscure or hard-to-find copies of books and other publications for reference sources for our ever growing personal library of cryptozoology.

Announcements in local and regional newspapers (2, 3) noted that an extraordinary number of 120,000 items were to be offered for sale. Some of these included “special sales items” as leather-bound issues of the British magazine *Punch*; early editions of L. Frank Baum “OZ” series; a signed copy by E. B. White of *Charlotte’s Web*; and bound issues of the *Niles Register*, a Maryland newspaper published in the early years of the 19th century. The last was of particular attention as this was a crucial time period for Atlantic sea serpent sightings, contemporary accounts of which were routinely published in early American newspapers.

At the sale GSM quickly found the bound copies of *Niles Register* and determined to check all of them for any possible cryptid references that they might hold. Each of the bound issues contained an index of the topics that were published among in the newspaper for that year. A glance at the indexes revealed that the July-December 1839 volume contained two articles about sea serpents.

The first was a lengthy account about a sea-serpent sighted by Lt. Bubier on August 23rd at Deer Island, Boston Harbor, Massachusetts. The second account referred to “items” on page 245 but this page was missing, thereby leaving an enduring cryptozoology mystery.

A second look through the index revealed a cryptid account about “Wild Men. . .” which was sometimes a 19th century label for our modern Bigfoot or Sasquatch. Turning to that page revealed a news account describing a pre-Civil War Bigfoot sighting, all the more important because the account has long been lost from Bigfoot lore for well over a hundred years.

Since the asking price of this volume was \$25 GSM elected to copy the article rather than buy the book. So, if it were not for the “Machiavelli principle” this pre-Civil War Bigfoot

encounter would have faded into darkness again. The following is a verbatim transcribed record of the newspaper account (6):

“It is stated in the Michigan City, Indiana *Gazette* of the 4th instant as a current and generally believed report, that a wild child or lad, is now running among the sand hills round and in the vicinity of Fish Lake. It is reported to be about 4 feet height, and covered with a light coat of chestnut colored hair. It runs with a great velocity and when pursued, as has often been the case, it sets up the most frightful and hideous yells and seems to make efforts at speaking. It has been seen during the summer months running along the lake shore, apparently in search of fish and frogs, and appears to fond of the critters, for it will plunge into Fish Lake, and swim with great velocity all the time whining most piteously.”

We analyzed several aspects of this 1839 “Wild Child” report to evaluate its veracity and authenticity. First, we were concerned with the location of Fish Lake where multiple appearances of the Wild Child had been recorded. Unfortunately we were unable to locate Fish Lake on any contemporary map of Indiana. Possibly the name has been changed in the many intervening decades since 1839 or perhaps it has gradually filled in and no longer exists. Or perhaps it is too small to justify placing on a map of that state.

As the original account was published in the Michigan City newspaper, this would indicate that the sightings probably occurred in the upper northwest corner of Indiana. The general locale for this sighting might be La Porte, Porter, St. Joseph, Stark, or Marshall counties. The fact that the Wild Child was seen amongst the sand dunes strongly suggests that this lake is but a bay or wetland of Lake Michigan which has a number of sand dunes along its southern extremity.

The date of the earliest and latest Wild Child sightings strongly suggests that it was first seen in the summer months — earliest during the month of July, with the latest, considering how fast news was able to travel from Indiana to Maryland, (where the *Niles Register* was published), in October or late November.

The height was estimated at about 4 feet which is generally less than half the height usually attributed to Bigfoot specimen surviving on its own resources. One can conjecture that this was an immature individual either lost or driven away from its protective family grouping.

The Wild Child was described as being covered with hair of a “chestnut color. This hairiness applies not at all to a child but very like a Bigfoot. This also suggests that the Wild Child was neither a Native American Indian or a feral human being that had reverted to the wild as seen in the street children of Brazil’s largest cities and elsewhere in South America. Its noted predilection for fish and frogs may simply reflect how easily the latter are caught during summer months when they would no doubt be abundant around the lake, its shoreline and associated wetlands.

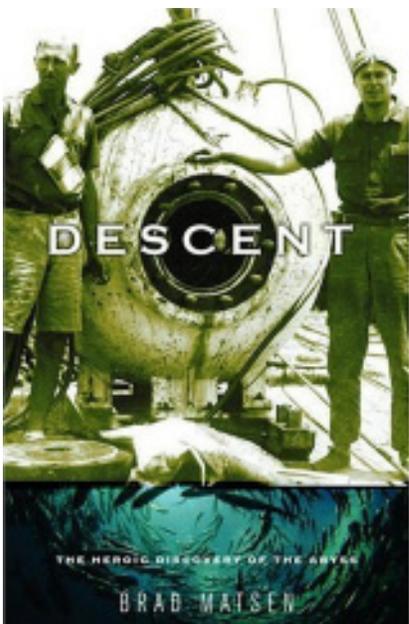
Physically, the Wild Child was described as being capable of running and swimming at great speed as well as producing frightful and hideous screams and yells. From a distance of nearly 200 years these physical characteristics do not readily lend themselves to reliable interpretation. After all, human children of all ages today can be similar described on occasion.

The information contained in the newspaper article is too scanty to conclude, with finality, that this account is describing an immature Bigfoot although it is always tempting to arrive at this conclusion. Accounts of wild children or essentially feral children from this frontier era in history occasionally occur in many cultures. It is interesting to speculate that such accounts may also have formed the basis for the tales developed less than a hundred years later by Rudyard Kipling and Edgar Rice Burroughs, both of which were later to write novels that centered about children of the wild.

References:

- 1) Patti Woods, Fund-raiser Goes High Tech, *Connecticut Bridgeport Post*, July 21 2005, Page A3, Column 1-4.
- 2) Patti Woods, Teachers to Take Advantage Of Pequot Library Book Sale, *Ibid.* Page A3, Column 1-4.
- 3) Meg Barone, Book Lovers Come From Miles For Book Sale At Pequot Library., *Ibid.* July 23, 2005., Page A12, Column 1-3.
- 4) Anonymous., Lt. Bubier sea-serpent., *Niles National Register*, Baltimore Maryland., Early September weekly issue, 1839., Page 192, Column 2-3.
- 5) Anonymous., Wild Child., *Ibid.*, December 21, 1839., Page 272, Column 6 (last item in column bottom).

Recent Books

*Descent: The Heroic Discovery of the Abyss*

Brad Matsen

2005, Pantheon, ISBN 0375422587

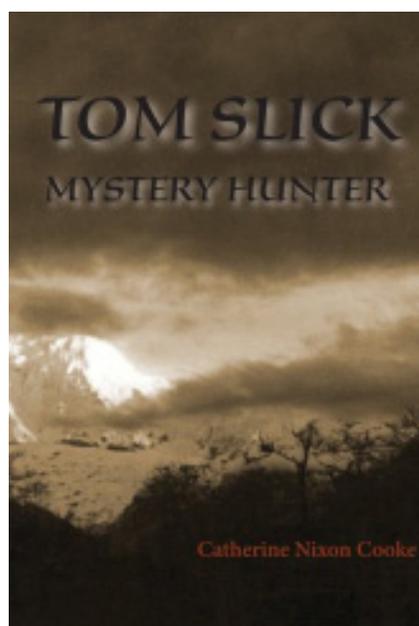
An interesting examination of the attempts to explore the deep sea by naturalist William Beebe and adventurer-funder Otis Barton. As much about their unusual relationship (certainly no friendship), as it is about the mechanical requirements of undersea research. Included, of course, is discussion of the controversy over Beebe's sightings of strange, and unconfirmed, species of fish.

Tom Slick: Mystery Hunter

Catherine Nixon Cooke

2005, First Paraview, ISBN 0976498626

This biography of Tom Slick, perhaps brief, is nonetheless effective. (Slick's life itself was brief, but certainly filled with adventure.) The author is Slick's niece, providing a fascinating perspective of his life and varied research interests. Of cryptozoological interest is a chapter on his Yeti investigations.



Canada's Headless Valley Revisited:
Troglodytes, Bigfoot, Mystery Bears, and Dire Wolves

Gary A. Mangiacopra
Dwight G. Smith

"Thrilling, Titillating, Astounding – That was the disposable drama found in pulp magazines during the first half of the 20th century. . . they experienced their Golden Age during the 1930's and met their demise in the 1950's."

—*Collectables* Column, 14 July 2001

"People are still infatuated with Headless Valley in the 21st century. Legends die hard!"

—Mark A. Hall, cryptozoologist, 1 June 2005

One of the less heralded but still important tasks of modern cryptozoologists is the continuing quest to locate forgotten but historically important early cryptozoology accounts that were published in obscure and now long defunct journals and magazines. These neglected writings were penned by early cryptozoology workers of decades ago are of enduring interest. Many of these early cryptozoologists were true "pioneers" who pondered the mysteries they encountered and were willing to invest their personal time to seek out publications that would print their observations.

Some of the more interesting accounts that we have uncovered concern an exchange of letters and views that were published in the pages of the pulp magazine *Adventure* and concerned the controversy about Canada's Headless Valley, a controversy which continues to the present.

NABR readers who are unfamiliar with the controversial details about Canada's "Headless Valley" (the official name of the valley is Nahanni Valley) should consult Frank Graves' article "The Valley Without a Head" (2). In his article, Graves relates details stemming from his onsite investigation including a number of bizarre accounts that were privately told to him local residents of that wild and untouched region of North America.

The Headless Valley controversy apparently began in 1947 when renown researcher and prolific writer, Ivan Sanderson commented on the fate of a number of prospectors that had entered the valley, either never to return or later to be found minus their heads. Sanderson put forth the somewhat radical proposal that the deaths and disappearances could be attributed to the persistence of a small population of the Dire Wolf, thought extinct since the end of the last Ice Age. (3).

Several years later, the Canadian Dr. Bruce S. Wright, responded to Sanderson's suggestion with a lengthy reply on the information that he had gathered about British Columbia's "troglodytes"—hairy man-monsters that he called "Sasquatch." Dr. Wright chose the pulp magazine *Adventure* as a suitable outlet in which to disseminate his information to the public.

Born in 1912 in Canada's Quebec City, Dr. Wright obtained a degree in forestry and secured a position in the Dominion Forest Service. (4). During World War II he formed and commanded the Canadian Navy's Sea Reconnaissance Unit, which was the basis for his 1968 book entitled *The Frogmen Of Burma*. After the war, Wright continued graduate studies in wildlife management, becoming director of the Northwestern Wildlife Station at the University of New Brunswick. His prolific writing career began in 1938 and continued until his death. In both articles and books Dr. Wright wrote about wildlife topics. His efforts to conserve wildlife brought formal recognition after his death in 1975 when the Bruce S. Wright

Nature Preserve was name after him. Although most of Wright's writings were based on his work as a professional scientists, he also wrote several of the earliest essays about cryptozoology mysteries from a Canadian perspective including:

- 1959 – Canadian Pumas and Black Panther Sightings.
- 1960s – Survival of the West Indian Monk Seal.
- 1967 – The Lusca of the Bahamas.
- 1969 – Bigfoot and Sasquatch.
- 1971 - Bigfoot and Sasquatch.
- 1972 – Survival of Eastern Panthers.

The lively exchange and interchange of information actually involved several players in the Headless Valley story. The correspondence began when Mr. Philip H. Godsell, *Adventure* magazine's expert on the Yukon, British Columbia, and Northwest Territories wrote an article on "Headless Valley", which appeared in the "Ask Adventure" column of that magazine. Godsell suggested that troglodytes, or cavemen might possibly be living in the wilds. Dr. Wright sent the following article to *Adventure* magazine which is herein reprinted verbatim as follows:

I enjoyed very much reading your reply to Mr. D.W. Hatch's enquiry regarding "Headless Valley" in the December issue of *Adventure* magazine. I have been engaged for the past four years in a study of wildlife in the extreme northeastern corner of the continent and I have spent some time in Labrador and Ungava as well as Eastern Quebec and Newfoundland. In my travels there I have come across a queer tale which I find has been in part published by Elliot Merrick in his book entitled *True North*, published by Charles Scribner's Son's, New York, 1933. I had read Merrick's book before I went north and at North West River, Labrador, I met some of the people in the story. Merrick describes a considerable disturbance around the settlement of Traverspine, at the mouth of the Hamilton River, around 1913. Two large but unknown animals had been observed in the immediate vicinity of the small settlement for two consecutive winters and people were very frightened of them. The tracks of these animals were described by Merrick as 12 inches long, narrow at the heel and forking at the front into two broad, round-ended toes. Sometimes its footprints were so deep that it might have weighed up to 500 pounds or so. It was reported to rip the bark off trees and uproot rotten logs as though looking for grubs and other invertebrates.

I asked about it at Goose Bay and North West River in June 1947 and I was told there are many track reports and few things about it was its coat, for it appeared to be a cross between a polar bear and a black bear. The Indians called it "medicine bear" and continued to maintain that they had never seen a creature like it, that it had unquestionably owed its origin to the spirit of some "bad" Indian!

Later I had similar experiences amongst the Beaver Indians at Fort St. John and amongst the Ojibways of Northern Ontario, and attributed if to there imaginations and some to heredity subconscious recollection of spring raiding and scalping parties in the earlier days. I think most other traders have had similar experiences, but I can assure you that to the Indians the alarm is very real, since it will send a whole camp into a state of hysteria for weeks, with individuals who are prepared to swear that they have seen the "Weetigo" in various forms, the result undoubtedly of an overwrought imagination or hallucination of some kind.

The hairy giants that are said to exist in the interior of British Columbia are known as "Sasquatch" and there periodically appears in the press the assertion of white trappers that they have actually seen one of these troglodytes or whatever they supposed to be. I recall a lively correspondence on the subject in *Coast Newspaper* ten years or more ago; also an article by V.C. Tench in *Liberty* (Canadian Edition), about

that time, in which he endeavored to prove (to his satisfaction) the actual existence of these hairy man-monsters. In fact, if I remember correctly, I think he quoted one of the British Columbian Indian Agents to maintain his belief in their existence. So far as I'm concerned I've heard of them, not only in British Columbia, but in the Yukon and western part of the North West Territories, but only as images conjured up by Indian legend and imagination. In fact, I referred to them in the letter I wrote *Adventure* magazine in reply to Mr. D.W. Hatch's inquiry about the so-called "Headless Valley."

Actually I've met several hard-headed newspapermen who honestly believed in the existence of a scattering of living troglodytes in the mountains of British Columbia, and they have discussed the matter with me in all seriousness. But I've seen too much of the red man and come into contact with too many of his superstitious beliefs to place much credence in the story. As for the creatures in Labrador, this might well be a surviving remnant of the Labrador Grizzly. Personally, my guess is it was a bear of some kind, as all of the evidence points to that, even to the tracks, for at times bears seem to have a "heel". Furthermore, once such a story becomes current in the wilderness it travels swiftly and there are never wanting imaginative natives (or whites especially the "bush" variety) who will swear they've actually seen either the tracks or the creature itself. The first two incidents mention here I reported in my first book "Arctic Trader".

Wright's reply published in *Adventure* magazine was really a compilation of several letters that he had written to Godsell. Though the date of Wright's letter was not given by Holland, he had inscribed "do not recall date this magazine, about end of Word War II" on a tear sheet of the article. Wright had told how, in June 1947, he was in Goose Bay, Labrador and that he had spent 4 years in this region, suggesting that his letter can probably be dated around 1951. Wright was also well aware of the troglodyte controversy that had cropped up in British Columbia. This coincides with C.V. Tench's article discussing the possible existence of such hairy man-monsters.

By consulting Eberhart's classic reference tome, *Monsters* (5) we find that Tench's article was titled "The Wild Giants Of British Columbia," and saw publication on 22 November 1941 (6). By ten years to this date, we again find that the probable 1951 publication date for Wright's letter about troglodytes.

The letter shows that Wright was familiar with the Canadian troglodyte or Sasquatch controversy at least as early as 1941, and probably even earlier. Wright was skeptical about the existence of a population of primitive apes or humans living in the mountains of British Columbia. By the late 1960s, however, Wright again started writing articles about Bigfoot. Wright remained skeptical about the existence of a giant ape named Bigfoot, preferring instead to believe that the reports might actually be sightings of a mystery bear species which he thought could be a Labrador Grizzly, long thought to be extinct.

There is one final mystery pertaining to Dr. Wright and his beliefs about Bigfoot. Considering that the circulation of the pulp magazines in general were drastically decreasing, and *Adventure* had a paid readership of 100,000 at tops, how did Dr. Wright, a Canadian national, become acquainted with this American pulp, and why was he such a regular reader? Did he realize, as a scientist interested in reports of unknown wildlife, that this was a rich source of information that he could draw upon that other researchers of his field had been ignoring? Had Wright realize the importance of this particular pulp magazine as a source of data? Whichever the case, we now must acknowledge and thank Wright for his early cryptozoological contributions.

Frustration is always an apt word common for serious writers about these mysterious animals. For example, Dr. Wright's letter was rescued from decades of neglect by fellow cryptozoology researcher Mark A. Hall who had an apprenticeship for Ivan Sanderson during the last years of the life of this great naturalist (7). It took another 3 decades before a copy

was passed on to Gary Mangiacopra who, even though he was well versed in the pulp magazines, was not aware of the existence of the pulp *Adventure* magazine and its predilection to publish offbeat and unusual stories of enduring interest to cryptozoologists. As Mark Hall noted, “with these pages we can see that these obscure old pulps could be a gold mine for articles and letters on topics like Headless Valley. But what library has copies of *Adventure* magazine or any of the contemporary pulps, for that matter? (7).

Therefore, we are asking the assistances of NABR readers about procuring any and every copy of these old pulp magazines that might contain articles of interest to cryptozoologists like us. Such efforts will help us “rescue from the past” these rare and important historical accounts that may help solve our numerous cryptozoological mysteries. Please send information or copies to:

Gary S. Mangiacopra
7 Arlmont Street
Milford, Connecticut 06460 USA

Listing and Chronology, Headless Valley

For a century of time, the Nahanni region in the Northwest Yukon Territory of Canada, has acquired an extreme ill reputation of being a locale where the lone intruder who wanders into this region either may suffer the horrendous fate of mysteriously disappearing leaving no trace behind. .or his body being discovered with its head missing!

And like all such still remote regions, title are based on equal parts of local legends and undisputed cold hard facts which can only be separated by the determined efforts of researchers who wish to establish the correct truth. Perhaps clarification and separation can begin with a chronological listing of the known events of Headless Valley.

At the present time, it can be firmly established that at least two-dozen persons have lost lives in this remote and still pristine, wilderness area in the past century. Some, perhaps all of these deaths or disappearances can be associated with their active pursuit of trapping or gold prospecting. Unquestionably, gold has been found in this region, and the legends of lost gold mines there is actually based on those individuals who did find gold and were able to reach settlements to tell their tales and show their findings.

The number of “headless” bodies found by rescuers is very small compared to the number that has been widely suggested in the popular literature. While some deaths can be attributed to accidents, misadventures, or ill preparedness to survive in such an extremely cold harsh environment. .some are unquestionable deliberate murder on the part of persons or persons unknown!

The following chronological time-line of deaths and disappearances may both amuse the reader and also help researchers. The authors are always searching for information about this and other cryptozoological topics and invite the readers of these articles to contact Gary Mangiacopra to relay any information such as background information, for example, about any of the victims named in these accounts.

Chronology of Deaths and Disappearances Associated with Headless Valley

- | | |
|------|---|
| 1886 | Canadian gold hunter Charles McLeod born near Fort Norman, Northwest Territory, Canada. Older brothers Frank and William. |
| 1903 | Charles McLeod at age 17 was an experienced trapper and guide. Learned prospecting from his older brothers. |

1904 Summer	Charles McLeod accompanied brothers to Nahanni Valley, gold found in flat river territory. Near disaster occurs to entire group, gold lost, all barely survived trip.
1905 End of June	William and Frank McLeod prepare to return to Nahanni region; Charles unable to accompany them, instead a young Scotsman, Robert Weir, and engineer by profession, would be out of region by fall.
1905 Late October	Four months pass without further communication; Charles McLeod seeks help from Northwest Mounted Police. Expedition formed to search for missing men, but due to extreme cold and heavy snow, search was abandoned.
1906 Spring	Charles McLeod and Northwest Mounted Police renewed search. Found remains of campsite and bodies of William and Frank. Both bodies had heads neatly decapitated, not the work of wild animals. Body of Robert Weir never located. Gold-laced quartz found on murdered men indicated a rich vein had been discovered.
1909	Man's Skeleton found in Nahanni. Authorities conclude it was the remains of Robert Weir and proposed all three of McLeod expedition had starved to death and bears had decapitated them. Charles McLeod refused to believe that Weir was actually dead.
1915 September 28	Gold hunters Olaf Bredvic, Poole Field, and Bill Atkinson find headless skeleton of prospector Martin Jorgensen, 70 miles upriver from McLeod brothers old camp.
1917	Unnamed male gold seeker loses life; details not known.
1921	Former soldier John O'Brien and partner enter Nahanni Valley that winter to hunt and prospect.
1922 January 27	O'Brien left cabin to inspect traps, body was discovered 6 weeks later frozen; unstated if he was headless or not.
1926	Prospector "Yukon" Fisher's bones discovered near a creek.
1928 – 1940	Prospectors Andy Hays and an O'Brien meet a similar fate; details unknown.
1929	Prospectors Hay, Gilroy, and Angus Hall enter region. Hall remained alone to search for gold, never seen or heard from again. Two other unnamed men lost the same year.
1931	Sourdough Phillip Powers enters Nahanni Valley.
1932	Mounties Duncan C. Martin and William Edwards search for Powers with an outboard motor canoe; they encounter Poole Field and Albert Faille who join search. They find Powers' burnt cabin and remains of several bones with the skull sepa-

	rated. Unable to determine if murdered or simply burned alive while asleep.
1936	Bill Epler Of Winnipeg and Joe Muholland of Minnesota meet similar fate; details not known
1940	A man named Holmberg found dead; details not known.
1942	Charles McLeod returns to Headless Valley and finds small copper strike and gold.
1945 December	Northern Ontario miner, 41 year-old Ernest Savard last seen in December, at Christmas, buying supplies before returning to valley.
1946 March	55 year old prospector John Patterson enters region. In September was to meet his partner Frank Henderson at rendezvous spot of Watson Lake, Yukon Territory, on the Alaskan Highway. Never arrives.
1946 September 10 th	Mounties started search for missing Yakima, Washington, resident, James A. Watts, age 29, his wife, and her brother. Unknown if found or listed as lost.
1947 January	Three men, including a 29 year old woodsman, Walter J. Tully, report finding a body in a sleeping bag believed to be Savard. Head was almost severed from the body.
1948 Spring	Gold hunter Lewis Shebbach enters region.
1949 Summer	Shebbach found dead of starvation at mouth of Caribou Creek on Flat River. Body was discovered by Gus Kraus and established that all of Shebbach's cartridges were expended. Bones had been gnawed and dragged by bears, wolves, and "every other damned thing that could chew."
1950 June	Charles McLeod and sons Cecil, Frank, and Ivan, make final trip into Nahanni. Find pacer gold and copper, unable to locate brother's gold mine.
1960	Unnamed prospectors enter valley, never seen again.
1972 – 2005	Region established as the Nahanni National Park Reserve. Presently a rugged tourist destination for those willing to risk the hardships and financial costs to traverse this still wild and dangerous river system.

Acknowledgements:

Many thanks are given to fellow cryptozoology researcher Mark A. Hall of Wilmington, North Carolina, for providing copies of pages of *Adventure* magazines from his personal files.

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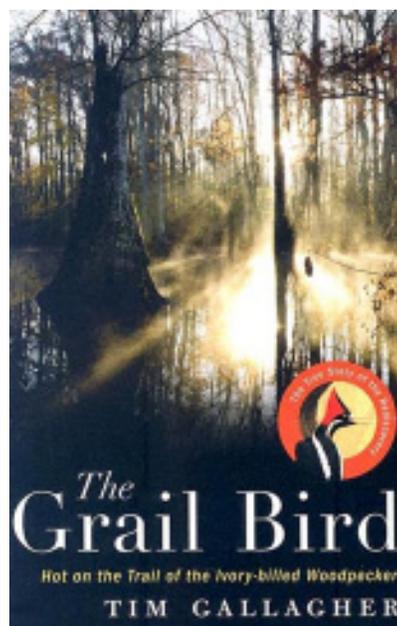
Book Review: Chad Arment*The Grail Bird: Hot on the Trail of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker*

Tim Gallagher

2005, Houghton Mifflin, ISBN 0618456937

Certainly, this is one of the best, if not the best, cryptozoology book of 2005. Not merely because of its subject, but because, while at the same time it seeks to move away from the “Bigfoot chasers,” it chronicles the very same path of discovery that would befall any other cryptozoological species: initial sightings and fuzzy photos (p. 120); overconfidence by skeptics in “normal” search methodologies (p. 124); poor search methodologies leading to poor conclusions (pp. 125, 129); personality clashes (p. 177); overreliance on generalizations of a species despite varying habitats (p. 229), witness reluctance due to skeptical dismissal, etc.

Certainly, cryptozoology has an image problem, which isn’t helped by investigators using unreliable data to form inadequate conclusions. But, we are going to continue to see the methodological nature of cryptozoology being used more and more as wildlife scientists recognize that significant new species are worth more than a line on a local area checklist. Note, for example, the use of a suspected new or rediscovered small carnivore in Borneo by the WWF to elicit support for conservation efforts. Of course, cryptozoology in this case might be better defined a “hidden methodology,” as most wildlife scientists will use the methodology unaware of its wider significance. That, I believe, should be the mission of cryptozoology this next decade—promoting itself as a legitimate search methodology for new species. As it succeeds, it will provide a firmer foundation for hunting mystery animals.



Forgotton Cryptofiction Serials: The Adventures of Brigadier Donald Ffellowes

Gary S. Mangiacopra
Dwight G. Smith

“I was not aware, young man, that I had
told any tales.”

—Brigadier Donald Ffellowes to a young
New York Men’s Club member (*A
Father’s Tale*).

One of the pleasures that comes across the path of serious cyptozoologists that dare to seek tangible evidence about unknown animals of our mysterious world is to discover a fictional character who encounters fictional cryptids. These tangled tales of fictional cryptozoology do much to stimulate and perhaps illuminate the popularity of this subject with the general public. Cryptofiction also provides occasional insights into how the public views or at least thinks about the likelihood that some cryptids might actually exist in virtual nature of the everyday world.

One of the better examples of cryptofiction writers is Sterling Edmond Lanier, who conjectured a series of cryptofiction tales about one British Brigadier Donald Ffellowes.

Lanier chronicles the crypto adventures of Brigadier Ffellowes through a series of twelve fascinating and well-plotted stories dealing with either cryptozoology or occult themes, all published over a decade-and-a-half from the late 1960’s to the early 1980’s.

While many of his early stories were reasonable reads, Lanier succeeded in achieving a minor niche in the science-fiction hall of fame by the creation of his Brigadier Ffellowes series. Now, more than a quarter-of-a-century later Sterling Lanier is still mostly an unknown name to even the typical science-fiction fans and collectors of old issues – let alone to the average cryptozoologist!

However, as co-writer Mangiacopra is that rare individual who is a combination of a science-fiction/ horror fan since being a pre-teen, buying and saving his science-fiction magazines as a teenager and becoming and still is a collector of obscure back issues of them, all combined with being an active cryptozoologist!

Thus, while scrounging through over 40 years of back issues of *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, Gary came across an article entitled: “His Only Safari.” Intrigued by the title, Gary scanned it’s pages and caught the mention of the Nandi Bear in the plotline. More reading revealed that it is a very good adventure tale with a strong cryptozoology component. Discovery of this long-lost cryptofiction tale led to a search for more tales by Sterling Lanier. It turned out that nearly all of his other stories in the *Fantasy and Science Fiction* collection incorporated crypto-facts or cryptofiction within the storyline. Since there is no present-day acknowledgement or mention of Lanier’s Ffellowes cryptfiction writings we investigated this fictional character, it’s writer, and the importance of it’s rightful place within—and relationship to—contemporary cryptofiction and cryptozoology lore.

Biographical Background of Sterling Edmond Lanier

Consulting both internet sources and science-fiction encyclopedias on writers and their stories reveals that there is scarce biographical information available pertaining to Lanier. [1, 2, 3, 4] The following is the complete compilation of available information on his personal background and achievements. Lanier was born on 18 December 1927 in New York City. His father was Berwick Bruce Lanier, a naval officer and attorney by profession and

his mother was Priscilla Thorne Taylor. Sterling Lanier attended Harvard University from which he graduates in 1951 with an A.B. in English. Following graduation, he enlisted and served two tours of duty in Korea. From 1953-58 he took graduate studies in Anthropology and Archaeology at the University of Pennsylvania.

On 3 September 1961 he married Martha Hanna Pelton. The couple had two children, Berwick Bruce born in 1965 and Kate Williams born in 1967. From 1958 to 1967 Sterling Lanier served in various editorial capacities at Chilton Books, Macrae-Smith Company, and the John C. Winston Company. Sometime around 1967 he became a full time author and sculptor. His interests include science fiction writing, environmental awareness and various outdoor activities such as bird watching, conservation, and sailing and skin-diving.

Commenting about his activities and life style, Lanier writes: "My main source of income is from miniature sculpture, mostly though not entirely using animal motifs. Some of my pieces are in a permanent collection at the Smithsonian. I am self-taught, no art schools or courses."

The Ffellowes Cryptofiction Series

Lanier certainly enjoyed his Ffellowes Series. In commenting on the origin of the series he wrote:

"In re Brigadier Ffellowes: the direct inspirations were Doyle's Brigadier Gerard and Holmes stories, also Hodgson's Carnacki, the Ghost Finder. I like stories with one central character, and I prefer the leisurely pace of M.R. James, Dunsany, and Blackwood's John Silence, which does indeed seem to date the stories. The idea of making the main character British, and hewing to the correct dialogue is an exercise. It fooled Authur C. Clarke, who thought I was British. Pure fun."

Sterling Lanier, like all writers who have created a main fictional character in a series of stories gave random hints on the background and personality of their creations among their tales. Like the legendary fictional character of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, and his lesser known creation, Professor George Edward Challenger, the archetypical cryptozoologist scientist that all writers since have tried to copy, readers can reconstruct the personal background history of their fictional heros. So we can do the same with Brigadier Ffellowes, although there are some contradictions about dates within the tales.

Brigadeer Ffellowes was an only son and British by birth born circa 1903, although the precise year was never specifically stated. References to Ffellowes having studied at Cambridge in 1921 [*And the voice of the Turtle*] and military experience in 1924 [*The Leftovers*] place his age in the early 20s in those years. His father was an army captain educated at Sandhurst who subsequently served under Brook of Sarawak, India and connected with the Second Rajput Rifles [*A Father's Tale*].

Following his graduation, Ffellowes took part in a number of military assignments that included covert spying operations in the Arabian peninsula in 1924, in Kenya with the Colonial Police in 1939, gathering intelligence behind enemy lines in Greece in the first years of World War II, in the North African and European Theater of Operations from 1945 until the end of the war. According to the story line, Ffellowes eventually attained the rank of Brigadier General of the Royal Army. Following retirement Ffellowes became a consultant for various paramilitary and political stints, for the Pentagon, for example, before becoming a resident of New York City.

Of interest to us is his membership in the Cro-Magnon Society, rumored to be the oldest secret society in the world. In his later years Ffellowes regularly frequented an unnamed New York City Men's Club. Here he relates stories of his past cryptozoology adventures to the other members of the club. That is, the members of this club serve as a convenient

sounding board on which to weave his tales. The exclusive men's club also serves as Ffellowes mail stop.

The chronological series of the Ffellowes adventures is related in 12 tales, all published in science fiction magazines. The first was published in 1968, the last in 1982.

1968 August	<i>Soldier Key</i>
1969 November	<i>The Kings of the Sea</i>
1969 March	<i>The Leftovers</i>
1969 August	<i>Fraternity Brother</i>
1969 November	<i>A Feminine Jurisdiction</i>
1970 February	<i>His Only Safari</i>
1970 July	<i>His Coat So Gay</i>
1972 October	<i>And the Voice of the Turtle</i>
1973 August	<i>Thinking of the Unthinkable</i>
1974 July	<i>A Father's Tale</i>
1976 December	<i>Ghost of a Crown</i>
1982 March	<i>Commander in the Mist</i>

Rating the Stories: Comparing Cryptozoological and Occult Themes

We present a brief synopsis and rating of the 12 stories in this series. We are particularly interested in evaluating them from a cryptozoological content. Therefore, our rating system is as follows:

- ***** Pure cryptozoological theme.
- **** Cryptozoological theme due to man or nature's interference.
- *** Strong cryptozoological theme, with touch of occult.
- ** Strong occult theme, with a touch of cryptozoological.
- * Pure occult theme.

- ***** 1) *Thinking of the Unthinkable*
- ***** 2) *The Leftovers*
- **** 3) *A Father's Tale*
- **** 4) *Soldier Key*
- **** 5) *And The Voice Of The Turtle*
- *** 6) *His Only Safari*
- *** 7) *The Kings of The Sea*
- ** 8) *His Coat So Gay*
- ** 9) *A Feminine Jurisdiction*
- ** 10) *Fraternity Brother*
- * 11) *Ghost of A Crown*
- * 12) *Commander in the Mist*

Soldier Key [5]

"But I don't eat lobster or crab. It came too close to being the other way round, you see?"
—Ffellowes to club members.

Story Synopsis: This 12,000 word story begins while Ffellowes is having lunch at the

men's club, the specialty of the day being stone crab on the menu. Ffellowes starts by explaining to the other members his reasons as to why he no longer eats seafood.

The story begins in 1934 while he is on a vacation from governmental duties. Ffellowes is sailing the Caribbean with his now deceased friend, Joe Chaplin, and a small crew of local natives. Hearing of a small, obscure, island with a bad reputation called Soldier Key, they decided to visit it. There Ffellowes and his companions discover the island's white inhabitants which turn out to be British descendents of the members of the sect, Church of the New Revelation. This sect worships an island god which is a gigantic hermit crab. The islanders pay homage to the gigantic submit religious rituals to the crab in the form of human sacra or whom the natives had forced to grow to such an enormous size, and of which they gave occasionally an artificial shell made by the sect members to protect it. This shell was made from smaller turtle shells, which they would catch. In their religious rituals, human sacrifices from the sect are fed to it. Ffellowes and his crew narrowly avoided sacrifice to this cryptid, resulting in a confrontation, in which they kill some 20 of the island residents. The giant crab god was not destroyed by Ffellowes, but the following year a hurricane swept the island, resulting in the surviving natives dispersing to the other local islands, ending this religious sect.

Comments: This is the first in the series that introduces Brigadier Ffellowes and the New York City Club. The central theme of the story focuses on a giant crab which is well told and reasonably exciting. As a cryptozoological feat this topic has only limited interest to most cryptozoologists. After all, giant versions of crabs, lobsters, clams and other marine life are hardly the stuff to excite most cryptozoologists used to hearing about or contemplating the existence of 400 foot long sea serpents or Loch Ness monsters. As a matter of fact, gigantic versions of everyday creatures are a rather common theme in movies and other media "thrillers" and the giant crustacean format is a cliché.

The Kings of the Sea [6]

"I have seen my bride."
—Baron Nyderstrom to Ffellowes.

Synopsis: This 8,000 word story is initiated during a discussion with the club members about magic. Ffellowes states that while vacationing in the small town of Smaaland on Sweden's coast, he is given a letter of introduction to Baron Nyderstrom, who owned an old country estate by the sea. He visits the Baron and enjoys his hospitality. Taking a brief swim along the sea coast Ffellowes encounters what is called a mer-being, a sort of mermaid or "Jormungandir's Children." The mer-being tries to drag Ffellowes into deeper waters to drown him but he is saved by the chance appearance of Baron Nyderstrom who has been searching for Ffellowes. Ffellowes is later told of the history of Baron's family, and how they first came to this locale from inner Asia as a race of wandering conquerors from circa 200 B.C. It transpires that the Baron's ancestor made a pact with these mer-beings after many of his tribe's people went missing. This pact was kept through the male line of each succeeding generation, only to be broken by the Baron's aunt, whom they later scared to death. As the story continues, the Baron tries to reseal the pact with the mer-beings, with the help of Ffellowes. The mer-beings accepts the Baron's offer and gives one of their own to be the Baron's bride.

Comments: The second in the series is a vast improvement over Lanier's introductory story of Ffellowes. The story skillfully combines ancient Norse legends of mer-beings and the terror-stricken responses and reactions of latter day witnesses of these strange and deadly sea creatures. The story is skillfully woven to a neat conclusion, and should be considered as one of the best of the Ffellowes stories.

The Leftovers [7]

“I rather fancy I’ve seen Paleozoic Man, and that’s quite enough of a leftover for me, thank you.”
— Ffellowes to club members.

Synopsis: This story runs about 4,500 words in length. In the story, the members of the men’s club get into a discussion about a national magazine that carried some color photographs of a giant, ape-like creature said to be living in the California mountains, no doubt reminiscent of modern day Bigfoot which Sterling Lanier must have known about.

Ffellowes soon joins the conversation and states that any such “leftovers” should be simply left alone. He then related a story concerning a similar creature that he encountered during his military involvement in the Hadramaut region, off the southern coast of the Arabian peninsula in 1924. While on a spying expedition there, he was forced to flee for his life with an Arab who was helping him to escape capture. While crossing the desert to rendezvous with the British Navy at the rescue point, the two men encounter mysterious, 7-foot tall, hairless beings, covered with minute blackish scales whom they are forced to fight. These creatures turn out to be a species of Paleozoic Man which had survived for millions of years in this remote region of the world.

Comments: Third in the series and second shortest in length, it reads more as a sort of “Lawrence of Arabia” tale, with the substitution of local, hostile Arabs by these Paleozoic fish-men as the enemy. Although basically a good read with a strong cryptozoological theme, the story should be considered as one of the minor Ffellowes tales, partly because of its shortness. Its presentation rating is **.

Fraternity Brothers [8]

“How does one tell the last of the Cro-Magnon priest-kings that one strenuously objects to witnessing human sacrifice?”
—Ffellowes to club members.

Synopsis: This story is 6,000 words in length. It begins as a debate rages among the club members on the topic of the numerous secret societies that still exist in the world, and which one is the oldest among them. Ffellowes joins the discussion debate and proceeds to tell the members of a secrete society into which he was initiated while vacationing in the Spanish Pyrenees in the Spring of 1939.

Indulging his hobby of bird watching in the remote village of some 100 or so persons, he incurs the hostility of a police sergeant who had been sent to this remote area for some punishment. On a hiking trip in the mountains, Ffellowes prevents the police sergeant from killing a local boy. In retaliation, the sergeant shoots at him. For some reason (the weakest part of the story) Ffellowes passes out. He awakens to find himself in a vast underground cavern surrounded by a group of animal-masked persons. They are engaged in a ritual in which a knife is plunged into a bear-skin shape lying on a stone alter. The ritual concludes when the blood of the sacrifice is dripped on Ffellowes, thus making and marking him as a “fraternity brother.” Following the ritual, Ffellowes is released, unharmed. Later he learns that the police sergeant who tried to kill him has been reported missing by the locals. Ffellowes realizes that the vicious sergeant was used as a human sacrifice by the last of the Cro-Magnon priest-kings of the region and that he has become a member of the oldest surviving secret society in the world.

Comments: The fourth tale in this series must be placed on the ultimate bottom of the Ffellowes tales listings as the one with the weakest cryptozoological or occult plot. The

final revelation that the friendly Spanish villagers are actually descendents of Cro-Magnon man and still practicing their ancient rituals of human sacrifice does not come across as it should in the story.

A Feminine Jurisdiction [9]

“The Ancients, made it very plain, that of the Three Sisters,
Medusa was the only mortal.”

—Constantine Murusi to Ffellowes.

Synopsis: This story runs 9,000 words in length. The story begins with a spirited discussion by the club members on the merits of women and their position in the world. Ffellowes joins in the discussion with the comment that a continuous matriarchy of power tends to produce stability in a regime.

Ffellowes explains his position by his adventures gathering intelligence during the Nazi takeover of Greece in May of 1941. Ffellowes had been sent by military intelligence to establish a guerrilla network. As the Nazi forces advance swiftly into Greece Ffellowes is forced to flee. He and a fellow Greek national named Constantine Murusi find themselves shipwrecked on an unnamed small island among the Naxos, Ios and Amorgos Islands off the coast of Greece. The islands only inhabitants include a few peasants, a mysterious young woman, and a downed Waffen SS officer Freiherr Klaus von Bruch-Wiletzki who captures Ffellowes and his companion. Also on the island is a very old, strange, and far more mysterious woman. This unseen female rules the island and all of its inhabitants. The three conclude an “uneasy truce” as they are forced to make sense of what is happening on this strange island. The Waffen SS officer confronts this mysterious woman ruler, only to be turned into marble stone! Ffellowes and his companion use a rowboat to escape from the island, all the while being pursued by something with glowing eyes and long, wavy, snake-like objects that grow out of its head. What they encountered was Medusa, who was still ruling the island since the time of the ancient Greeks!

Comments: The story is a reasonably skillful incorporation of the Ancient Greek legend of the Medusa into a modern theme. While this theme tends towards the occult, it did incorporate elements of cryptozoology as well. Overall, the story is a good, fast moving and well-written story in the series.

His Only Safari [10]

“Reddish, matted fur, upright posture, great gnarled and
hunched shoulders, and surmounting them, I saw—Anubis!”

—Ffellowes to club members.

Synopsis: Like many of his later stories, this longer tale runs 9,000 words in length. The story begins with an incident at the club. The club bore, a Mr. Mason Williams, is displaying several trophies which he obtained while on a recent African safari (which he probably bought rather than shot, anyway). Ffellowes modestly affirms that he too, had once been on a safari and so the tale begins.

It turns out that in December of 1939, Ffellowes was assigned military intelligence duty in the African country of Kenya. There, he was to explore the Aberdares region in search of an Italian zoologist, Dr Guido Bruckheller, a suspected Axis agent thought to be plotting to start a native uprising against the local British colonial power. In Kenya, Ffellowes forms a safari of a few local white residents and a dozen natives to track Bruckheller down. The natives are instantly wary of the search area, long reputed to be a region haunted by jungle demons that kill and eat natives and their animals.

After much traveling they enter a mountainous region where one of the natives is mysteriously killed by “something.” After further searching, Bruckheller is found, half-dead, half mad, and desperately trying to escape from “something” that has killed and feasted upon his native bearers.

In response to Ffellowes questions, Bruckheller reveals that his original quest was to prove that the ancient Egyptians who built the pyramids had originally come from this region, but were forced to flee from “something” that was slaughtering their people. This “something” turned out to be an Egyptian god which they had feared and worshipped. All too soon, the members of Ffellowes safari become the hunted as they desperately try to survive the fog-covered night that has descended on them. As the natives warn Ffellowes of the fate that happens to all searchers for ancient Egyptian beings the face of Bruckheller changes into a flesh-eating being. Ffellowes flees but is overtaken, held hostage and attacked by the rapidly transforming Bruckheller. The safari members are forced to shoot Bruckheller in order to save Ffellowes. During this attack, other forest beings join in an attack but are held off by rifle fire.

The climax of the tale comes as Ffellowes finally sees one of these forest beings—which turns out to be an “Anubis” . . .human shaped, dog-faced creatures that were worshipped by the Ancient Egyptians.

Comments: The sixth of the series, it is the leading contender as one of the finest of the Ffellowes tales. Combining the ingredients of the African safari classic “Trader Horn” and the Egyptian myths into one, this story includes many crytozoological references to the Nandi Bear, Gandar Dowar’s Spotted Lion, the Lost Valley of Nahanni, Loch Ness Monster, and supposed living dinosaurs. The disorganized, rag-tag characters who comprise the safari are forced to become a cohesive group in order to fend for themselves. In this tale, the story, the characters, and the theme all seem to work together perfectly.

His Coat So Gray [11]

“Why this means that one of the oldest royal families in the world, far more ancient than King Arthur’s, say, is only recently extinct.”

—Young club member to Ffellowes.

Synopsis: The story runs a lengthy 12,000 words in length. Again, the story begins at the club. The club members are talking about some recent scandal involving an unnamed British duke who is going through bankruptcy and a third divorce, amidst considerable sordid scandals attributed to him. Once again edged on by Williams, the club snob whom we met in earlier tales, Ffellowes, tells of a “first family” whose scandal was never exposed to anyone.

The story begins circa 1932, while Ffellowes was serving as a junior military attaché in Washington, D.C. Ffellowes was invited to stay with Canlor Waldrons, head of one of America’s first families whose money and political power reached far prior to the American Revolution.

Arriving for a relaxing stay, Ffellowes takes a liking to Waldron’s young sister whose boyfriend had mysteriously disappeared a year earlier. Soon however, Ffellowes begins to suspect that something is not right between the family and their servants. Ffellowes is warned not to drink the wine by Waldron’s sister because it will “paralyze” him. It turns out that Ffellowes is to become a human sacrifice to the “Dead Horse” creature. It seems that the Waldron family members are the ruling elite of this very secret sect which requires human sacrifices to insure their continued power and wealth.

Ffellowes pretends to drink the wine, whereby he is placed on a horse by which the Dead Horse creature would arise and seek him out as a sacrifice. Well versed in horse riding, Ffellowes attempts to escape from Waldron estate only to realize that he is being

pursued by the sect members. He is saved by Waldron's sister, who is their high priestess, at the expense of her own life. Following this escapade, local families destroy the remaining members of the family, thus ending the sect and its annual sacrifices. Thus, the oldest royal family in the world has at long last been exterminated.

Comments: The series seventh and third longest in length, it is extremely strong in its plot line which deals with a royal family whose lineage extended backward in time beyond even the Celts of Britain. This plot has an overwhelmingly occultish theme instead of a cryozoological one which would account for the "Dead Horse" creature.

And The Voice Of The Turtle [12]

Synopsis: This story runs about 7,000 words in length. A club member has brought a scientist friend to give a lecture on reptiles. After his presentation, Ffellowes, asks if the scientist had ever heard of a researcher named Strudwick? The researcher responds that sure enough, he had done graduate work under him, but that he was an "odd chap."

Ffellowes informs the scientist that he had met Strudwick in September 1940, when military intelligence assigned him to look into the Japanese political influence on the Dutch Islands in the South China Seas. There, he was to seek out reptile expert Dr. Strudwick, and his wife, and find out what they were doing there and if they knew about anything happening on the islands.

Arriving at Pulau Tuntong, they find the Strudwicks. Ffellowes realizes that he knew Dr. Strudwick previously while at Cambridge in 1921. Almost immediately, the three companions hear a strange moaning sound coming from the island forest. Strudwick's rich, sheltered wife is driven near "jungle madness" and confesses that she wants to leave the island in order to get away from her husband's obsession with the strange turtles that he has discovered on this remote island.

A short time later, Ffellowes is later attacked and nearly pulled into the sea by something that had fingers. He escapes its clutches by shooting his pistol at whatever had clutched him. Afterwards, Ffellowes seeks out the Strudwicks, only to find a crowd of the strangely-shaped natives gathered around something hideous that is rising from a volcanic pool. The hideous creature turns out to be a turtle-like cryptid. Mrs. Strudwick's husband is about to sacrifice her about to appease this creature. Ffellowes rescues her in the nick of time and the two escape. They first return to Mrs Strudwick's home and burn her husband's research papers, after which both take a boat and successfully escape the island. Ffellowes provides an edited report to the Dutch authorities. It turns out that the turtle-like cryptids are mutations resulting from abnormally high radioactivity levels, no doubt caused by thermo-nuclear weapons tests that were so common in the South Pacific during this time period. Humans on the island that are exposed to this radioactivity are in the process of de-evolving into another and very different, turtle-like form.

Comments: The eight of the series, it is a well done tale of the South Seas, injected with the classic—though cliché—explanation of radiation turning the natives into turtle-like mutations. The story-line is much stronger than one would first suspect upon reading.

Thinking of the Unthinkable [13]

"In other words, chum, a single colossal tentacle."

—Ffellowes to club members.

Synopsis: At 4,000 words in length, this is one of the shorter tales in the series. A new member of the club proposes that they talk about the Loch Ness Monster. In response, Ffellowes describes personal experiences on the Loch.

The tale begins in the summer of 1943 while Ffellowes is on leave following a military operation in north Africa. Ffellowes is staying at a small inn near Inverness which is owned by an old Scot of a long and ancient lineage. The old Scot and Ffellowes stop at a small pub for a drink. There, they encountered a refugee Norwegian university geologist, Professor Randolph Hafstad. Under the influence of just a little too much to drink, Hafstad describes the strange geology of this part of the world and of deep underground corridors that connect Scotland and Scandinavia.

As the three of them stand on the shore of Loch Ness, gazing out at the murky waters of the lake, “something” rises out of the water and swiftly clutches the professor and dragging him into its depths. Ffellowes and the innkeeper stand in shocked disbelief. Ffellowes had seen a single colossal tentacle grab the professor and drag him into the lake. In other words, Nessie’s zoological identity turns out to be a gigantic cephalopod!

Comments: The series ninth, it is the shortest of the Ffellowes tales written, but has the unique distinction of utilizing the story elements with the purest cryptozoological theme. Though conveying in the minimum number of words a sense of dread when it came to just what was lying beneath the loch, there is a whopping punch when it comes to the closing paragraph and Nessie’s identity.

A Father’s Tale [14]

“Do not go there,” he choked out. “That is the land of
Not-men”
—Dying seaman to Verner.

Synopsis: During the hottest time of summer while some of the club members are complaining about the heat, one of them realizes that all of the tales of adventures that Ffellowes relates to them seem to take place in tropical regions of the world. Ffellowes agrees, and begins a second-hand tale that his father, Captain Ffellowes, had told him years before. The tale begins in the Fall of 1881, while Captain Ffellowes is cruising off the Sumatran coast of the East Indies.

They encountered a shipwrecked coastal vessel whose only survivor was a ranting British seaman, warning them about “Matilda Briggs.” The survivor is named Verner and begs Captain Ffellowes to sail to an isolated island where he must destroy the scientific works of the Dutchman, Cornelius Van Ouisthoven, long thought to be dead by the rest of the world. Upon their arrival Captain Ffellowes and his native crew find a small Bavarian village where they encounter a troop of human-sized rat-like creatures with hand-like paws clutching knives and tools, ready to fight them. The captain and his crew fight off the would-be attackers and continue to the town hall where they encounter an old, bearded gentleman, none other than Van Ouisthoven. Ffellowes is warned by Ouisthoven that the “Folks” as he calls them, are planning to escape the island on a ship called the “Matilda Briggs.” Although Ouisthoven had originally “created” these creatures, he now wants them destroyed and gives Captain Ffellowes a cache of arms. Ffellowes and his crew slaughter the creatures as they try to board the Matilda Briggs. Only a single creature survives the machine-gunning, clutching a young child’s book reader. Ouisthoven, himself shoots the last of his scientific creations, then turns the gun on himself after realizing how he endangered the entire human race, by what he had accomplished. Verner tells Ffellowes’ father and the Dutch naval officers that they must keep this scientific secret in order to prevent others from replicating Ouisthoven’s dangerous experiments. Thus, all official reports of what had occurred are buried in secret government archives. Ffellowes was only told this story by his aged father, and is only now telling this same story to others.

Comments: This is the tenth of the series and the second longest in length. The story line is reminiscent of a mixture of Joseph Conrad’s adventure tales and strongly influenced

by H. G. Wells' classic, "The Island of Dr. Moreau," in which a remote island holds unspeakable animal cyptids created by the experiments conducted by a determined single-minded scientist.

Ghost of a Crown [15]

"General Ffellowes!" he exploded. "I have never heard in my life a more preposterous farrago of fables!"

—Professor Elwyn Simmons to club members.

Synopsis: At 20,000 words this tale rates as the longest of the series. As the club members tell each other their favorite ghost stories, Ffellowes is lured into telling a similar tale that begins in the late 1920's, he was called to Cornwall, England.

A childhood friend has requested Ffellowes help in dealing his brother's obsessive archeological excavations around the ancient family estate. It is soon revealed that the brother has uncovered an old and dangerous cavern of the "Dark Prince" ghost that had been interred since the time before King Arthur. Ffellowes and his friend are overtaken and become controlled by some other worldly force that also wants to prevent the rise of the "Dark Prince." The two fight the mad brother and succeed in destroying him, afterwards they again bury cavern and it's contents.

Comments: The eleventh in the series, it shifts greatly in its departure from previous cryptozoological themes to a very strong occult story with well-plotted characters. It is a refreshing diversion from the usual topics previously covered by Lanier in this series.

Commander In The Mist [16]

"We too had heard the words of .the Commander in the Mist."

—Ffellowes long-time club member friend to all those nearby."

Synopsis: This 6,000 word story begins as club members debate the exploits of great military leaders. Ffellowes adds that during the last days of April, 1945, he and his platoon were sent on assignment to try and save the famous Lippizaners of the Spanish riding school of Vienna. While trying to discover the whereabouts of the Lippizaners horses, an old woman warns them to avoid a particular section of land along the Danube River. Despite the warning, they enter the region to find themselves entering the only area on earth where the Roman Empire still exists. Ffellowes and his younger officers encounter a surreal situation in which they meet ghostly Roman legions and their leader, Marcus Aurelius, still guarding this remaining segment of the once mighty Roman Empire after 2000 years.

Comments: This is the twelveth and last of the Ffellowes tales. This tale seems to be more like an after-thought story to conclude the Ffellowes series after a 14 year run by Sterling Lanier. The tale imparts the respect and honor that military men have towards one another, regardless of their nationality. After all, here are Ffellowes and his platoon— men of the present era—confronting Roman military men who are still, 2000 years later, carrying out orders to protect their beloved Roman empire—long since fallen from greatness. This sadness comes from knowing that even in death military men will carry on until the end of time, their orders, as men of honor do. All of the club members respect and understand this concept of honor.

Although an excellent tale with a good theme, the story line has limited cryptozoological appeal.

A Simplified Ffellowes Time Line:

1881 Fall	Captain Ffellowes (father) encounters human-size intelligent rats on Sumtran Island.
1924	Ffellowes fights 7-foot tall Paleozoic relic fish-men in Oman, Saudi Arabia.
Late 1920's, Late April	Helps childhood friend fight his brother's plan to raise "Dark Prince" ghost in Cornwall, England.
Circa 1932	Escapes the "Dead Horse" creature worshipped by the Waldron family near Washington, D.C.
1934	Fights a gigantic hermit crab that feeds upon human sacrifices of a religious sect on the Caribbean island, Soldier Key.
1938 Summer	Encounters undersea race of mer-people "Jormungandir's Children" on the coast of Smaaland, Sweden.
1939 Spring	Becomes fraternity brother of the last Cro-Magnon religious sect in the Spanish Pyrenees.
1939 Dec.	Joins safari to find Axis agent and discovers that they are being hunted by the Anubis, human-shaped dog-faced beings in the Aberdares region in Kenya.
1940 Sept.	Fights turtle-like human-mutants on Dutch island in the South China seas.
1941 May	Encounters and escapes from ancient Greek goddess, Medusa, on a small island among the Naxos, Ios and Amorgos, Greek islands.
1943 Summer	Sees a single, colossal disc-lined tentacle arising from Loch Ness, Scotland.
1945 April	His army platoon encounters Roman leader Marcus Aurelius' ghost, on the banks of the Danube.

Cryptofiction for Cryptozoologists

The Lanier "Brigadier Ffellowes" series that describe his various encounters with mysteries of the occult and the fortean, are, overall, a wonderful collection of enjoyable tales that have not become dated even though they were written four decades ago.

Unfortunately, Lanier's "Ffellowes" tales are mostly neglected in the realms of fictional cryptozoology. This may be in part due to the fact that Lanier published his Brigadier Ffellowes tales in *The Magazine of Fantasy and Science Fiction*, at a time when circulation averaged only 42,000 to 55,000 copies per month. After four decades, just how many of these magazine issues still exist anywhere? Aside from a few private collections, copies of these magazines have been discarded years ago now. Certainly, neither libraries nor microfilm archives include these long lost magazines.

However, the Ffellowes tales proved popular enough to be reprinted in book form, first in 1972, when several of the tales were published in "The Peculiar Exploits of Brigadier Ffellowes" and again in a later printing that included the complete run of stories in "The Curious Quest of Brigadier Ffellowes." [17] This 1986 edition had a limited press run of 1,200 copies, all of which were signed editions. Today, each copy commands a good price on the collectors market.

Sterling Lanier ended his science-fiction writing career in the mid-1980's for unknown reasons. Lanier's other science-fiction stories are now long forgotten or simply subsumed beneath the gigantic outpouring of science fiction tales that we have witnessed in the last half of the 20th century, a trend which continues to the present day. Still, Lanier has firmly

established a reputation as a science-fiction creator by his Ffellowes creation, leaving a legacy that other, more prolific, writers could only wish to achieve in their lifetime. We can only wonder, since the last of the Ffellowes tales were written two decades since, what other marvelous and dangerous adventures, Brigadier Ffellowes would have told his fellow club members in the fire-place warmed and safe confines of their New York City men's club? Alas, we shall never know.

The role of cryptofiction has never been formally investigated but it should make a rich research avenue for evaluation, not least of all for cryptozoologists. For example, how may current and past cryptozoologists were first stimulated to embark on their particular line or lines of cryptozoology research by cryptofiction stories such as those written by Sterling Lanier? Or possibly by the innumerable other writers that have developed stories incorporating animals or plants that border between the real and unreal, the possible or the probable? In a similar vein, how many readers have been stimulated by tales of the Loch Ness monster to read and research more about the Loch Ness Monster, or even the ecology, biology, and geology of the Loch and its geographic area? Even very young readers can take an interest in cryptozoology topics that enliven traditional tales.

For those disbelievers in process and causality, I (DGS) can relate this tale. At ten years of age I asked my mother to bring back a comic book about Indians on one of her trips to the military commissary. That afternoon she handed me a copy of C.S. Forester's book called "Beat to Quarters," which was the first book of the Captain Hornblower series. After complaining about the lack of Indians in the story I sat down to read it. By the end of that year (1954) I had read every one of the books in the series and started reading everything I could about the history of that era in particular and history in general. Surely many modern-day cryptozoologists can trace their own interest in cryptozoology tales and topics to such early encounters with the literature?

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Letter to the Editor:

My name is Trish E—. I am resident of New York State. Living now in Brewerton, NY, although I grew up in Bundyville, NY. In Bundyville 1946 there was a wild cat captured by a group of hunters. My great-grandfather was involved with this; and my grandmother remembers the day her dad came home going through his animal books furiously researching what kind of cat it could be. The wild cat's call was absolutely terrifying the article I have said. The article I have also goes on to say the wild cat seemed to be kin to the ocelot, but with bands like a tiger instead of spots. My grandmother has this article in her archives, and I have also found the article during my research. The date of the article I have is 1972 and a reprint of it in 1977. I have yet to find the original 1946 article. Grandmother says she didn't think there was one. I am still searching though. It was said that the neighborhood was scared for there lives once the animal was caught and cages. The cries it emitted scared everyone.

After 3 days in captivity it broke through the mink cage it was held in and was not seen again. However, the article dated 1972 was printed after one of the men that captured it heard it's cry while small game hunting at that time. He left the woods and all his equipment behind at the sound the wild cat's cry. Since finding the article again I have been trying to find what it could have been. That is when I came across the article in the *North American BioForteian Review* Volume II Number I from 2000. I was shocked to find that the description of the wild cat in the article matched the description given by those that saw the Bundyville wild cat. I would be interested in learning more about these wild cats, and thought it might interest you to find it roaming Upstate New York just miles from Lake Ontario. I can offer copies of the article I found in the *Oswego Valley News* Wednesday, December 6, 1972 upon your request. Thank you for your time.

[NABR Editor's Note: Trish kindly forwarded a pdf scan of the article in question. It is a bit too recent to completely reprint here, but the citation is:

Bartholomew, Barb. Dec. 6, 1972. Ghost of 'Bundyville Cat' returns 25 years later. *Oswego Valley News* (NY) 3rd Section (exact page not shown).

The essence of the 1946 story is that two mink farmers heard dogs barking at something in the woods. These Adirondack natives were surprised to find that the dogs had cornered an unusual feline. Firing a .22 at the cat's head, they dropped it, but apparently did little permanent damage. They took it back to the mink ranch and locked it in a 6'x2'x2' cage before it completely revived. Word spread fast, and during that evening over 100 people came to see it. Many others arrived over the next few days. No one could identify the cat. Unfortunately, the description given is vague. No specific measurements, other than being called a "big cat," and apparently filling the mink cage, and when screaming, "his mouth opened so that a milk bottle could fit inside easily, or in other words larger than a man's fist." Another man, upon seeing the cat, "went home to get his animal atlas in an effort to ascertain what sort of cat this was that no-one had ever seen before. Research was fruitless in finding an animal of it's description. [sic] He remembers that the closest kin seemed to be the oscelot, native of the southwest and old Mexico. But this 'cat,' as Leon describes it, had yellow and black rings around its body, very similar to a tiger, not spotted like the Oselot is." After a few days of viewing, the cat managed to push itself out of the cage and escaped. It bounded away "jumping at least six feet into the air and covering at least 15 to 20 feet with each leap." At this point, there's not enough of a description to definitively link this report to the "long-tailed bobcats" I've noted in NABR and *Cryptozoology: Science & Speculation*; but, this is certainly a case worthy of further investigation for researchers in New York.]

Jim Newman's Yarn: Or, A Sight of the Sea Serpent.

John C. Hutcheson

"Was you ever up the Niger, sir?"

"Why, of course not, Jim! you know that I've never been on the African station, or any other for that matter. But why do you ask the question?"

"Don't know 'xactly, sir. P'raps that blessed sea-fog reminds me of it, somehow or other—though there's little likeness, as far as that goes, between the west coast and Portsmouth, is there, sir?"

"I don't suppose there is," I said; "but what puts the Niger, of all places in the world, in your head at the present moment?"

"Ah, that'd tell a tale, sir," he answered, cocking his left eye in a knowing manner, and giving the quid in his mouth a turn. "Ah, that'd tell a tale, sir!"

Jim Newman, an old man-of-war's man—now retired from the navy, and who eked out his pension by letting boats for hire to summer visitors—was leaning against an old coal barge that formed his "office," drawn up high and dry on the beach, midway between Southsea Castle and Portsmouth Harbour, and gazing out steadily across the channel of the Solent, to the Isle of Wight beyond. He and I were old friends of long standing, and I was never so happy as when I could persuade him—albeit it did not need much persuasion—to open the storehouse of his memory, and spin a yarn about his old experiences afloat in the whilom wooden walls of England, when crack frigates were the rage instead of screw steamers with armour-plates. We had been talking of all sorts of service gossip—the war, the weather, what not—when he suddenly asked me the question about the great African river that has given poor Sambo "a local habitation and a name."

Although the gushing tears of April had hardly washed away the traces of the wild March winds, the weather had suddenly become almost tropical in its heat. There was not the slightest breath of air stirring, and the sea lay lazily asleep, only throbbing now and then with a faint spasmodic motion, which barely stirred the shingle on the shore, much less plashed on the beach; while a thick, heavy white mist was steadily creeping up from the sea, shutting out, first the island, and then the roadstead at Spithead from view, and overlapping the whole landscape in thick woolly folds, moist yet warm. Jim had said that the sea-fog, coming as it did, was a sign of heat, and that we should have a regular old-fashioned hot summer, unlike those of recent years.

"Ah, sir," he repeated, "I could tell a tale about that deadly Niger river, and the Gaboon, and the whole treacherous coast, if I liked, from Lagos down to the Congo—ay, I could! It was that 'ere sea-fog that put Afriker into my head, Master Charles; I know that blessed white mist, a-rising up like a curtain, well, I do! The 'white man's shroud,' the n— used to call it—and many a poor beggar it has sarved to shroud, too, in that killing climate, con-found it!"

"Well, Jim, tell us about the Niger to begin with," said I, so as to bring him up to the scratch without delay; for, when Jim once got on the moralising or sentimental tack, he generally ended by getting angry with everybody and everything around him; and when he got angry, there was an end to his stories for that day at least.

"All right, your honour," said the old fellow, calming down at once into his usual serenity again, and giving his quid another shift as he braced himself well up against the old barge, on the half-deck of which I was seated with my legs dangling down—"All right, your honour! If it's a yarn you're after, why I had best weigh anchor at once and make an offing, or else we shan't be able to see a handspike afore us!"

"Heave ahead, Jim!" said I impatiently; "you are as long as a three-decker in getting under way!"

From: John C. Hutcheson, 1910, *Tom Finch's Monkey*

With this encouragement, he cleared his throat with his customary hoarse, choking sort of cough, like an old raven, and commenced his narrative without any further demur.

“It’s more’n twenty years now since I left the service—ay, thirty years would be more like it; and almost my very last cruise was on the West African station. I had four years of it, and I recollect it well; for, before I left the blessed, murdering coast, with its poisonous lagoons covered with thick green slime, and sickly smells, and burning sands, I seed a sight there that I shall never forget as long as I live, and which would make me recklect Afrikey well enough if nothing else would!”

“That’s right, Jim, fire away!” said I, settling myself comfortably on my seat to enjoy the yarn. “What was it that you saw?”

“Steady! Let her go easy, your honour; I’m a-coming to that soon enough. It was in the old Amphitrite I was at the time—she’s broken-up and burnt for firewood long ago, poor old thing!—and we was a-lying in the Bight of Benin, alongside of a slaver which we had captured the day before off Whydah. She was a Brazilian schooner with nearly five hundred wretched creatures on board, so closely packed that you could not find space enough to put your foot fairly on her deck in any place. The slaves had only been a night on board her; but the stench was so awful, from so many unfortunate n— being squeezed so tightly together like herrings in a barrel, and under a hot sun too, that we were longing to send the schooner away to Sierra Leone, and get rid of the horrid smell, which was worse than the swamps ashore! Well, I was in the morning watch after we had towed in the slaver to the Bights, having carried away her foremast with a round shot in making her bring to, and was just going forward to turn in as the next watch came on deck, when who should hail me but my mate, Gil Saul, coming in from the bowsprit, where he had been on the look-out—it was him as was my pardner here when I first started as a shore hand in letting out boats, but he lost the number of his mess long ago like our old ship the Amphitrite.

“As he came up to me his face was as white as your shirt, and he was trembling all over as if he was going to have a fit of the fever and ague.

“‘Lor’, Gil Saul,’ sez I, ‘what’s come over you, mate? are you going on the sick list, or what?’

“‘Hush, Jim,’ sez he, quite terror-stricken. ‘Don’t speak like that; I’ve seen a ghost, and I knows I shall be a dead man afore the day’s out!’

“With that I burst into a larf.

“‘Bless your eyes, Gil,’ sez I, ‘tell that to the marines, my bo!’ you can’t get over me on that tack. You won’t find any respectable ghosts leaving dear old England for the sake of this dirty, sweltering west coast, which no Christian would come to from choice, let alone a ghost!’

“‘But, Jim,’ he sez, leaning his hand on my arm to detain me as I was going down below, ‘this wasn’t a h’English ghost as I sees just now. It was the most outlandish foreign reptile you ever see. A long, big, black snake like a crocodile, only twice the length of the old corvette; with a head like a bird, and eyes as big and fiery as our side-lights. It was a terrible creature, Jim, and its eyes flamed out like lightning, and it snorted like a horse as it swam by the ship. I’ve had a warning, old shipmate, and I’ll be a dead man before to-morrow morning, I know!’

“The poor chap shook with fright as he spoke, though he was as brave a man as we had aboard; so I knew that he had been drinking and was in a state of delirium tremendibus, or else he was sickening for the African fever, which those who once have never forget. I therefore tried to pacify him and explain away his fancy.

“‘That’s a good un, Gil Saul,’ I sez. ‘Don’t you let none of the other hands hear what you’ve told me, that you’ve seen the great sea sarpint, or you’ll never get the end of it.’

“Gil got angry at this, forgetting his fright in his passion at my doubting his word like.

“‘But it was the sea sarpint, I tells you, or its own brother if it wasn’t. Didn’t I see it with my own eyes, and I was as wide awake as you are, and not caulking?’

“‘The sea sarpint!’ I repeated scornfully, laughing again in a way that made Gil wild. ‘Who ever heard tell of such a thing, except in a Yankee yarn?’

“And why shouldn’t there be a big snake in the sea the same as there are big snakes on land like the Bow constreetar, as is read of in books of history, Jim Newman? Some folks are so cocksure, that they won’t believe nothing but what they sees for themselves. I wonder who at home, now, would credit that there are some monkeys here in Afrikey that are bigger than a man and walk upright; and you yourself, Jim, have told me that when you were in Australy you seed rabbits that were more than ten foot high when they stood on their hind-legs, and that could jump a hundred yards at one leap.’

“So I have, Gil Saul,’ sez I, a bit nettled at what he said, and the way he said it, ‘and what I says I stick to. I have seen at Port Philip kangaroos, which are just like big rabbits with upright ears, as big as I’ve said; and I’ve seen ’em, too, jump more than twice the distance any horse could.’

“And why then,’ sez he, argumentifying on to me like a shot, ‘and why then shouldn’t there be such a thing as the sea sarpint?’

“This flummuxed me a bit, for I couldn’t find an answer handy, so I axed him another question to get out of my quandary.

“But why, Gil, did you say you had seed a ghost, when it was a sarpint?’

“This time he was bothered for a moment.

“Because, Jim,’ sez he, after a while, ‘it appeared so awful to me when I saw it coming out of the white mist with its glaring red eyes and terrible beak. It was a ghost I feels, if it wasn’t the sea sarpint; and whether or no it bodes no good to the man wot sees it, I know. I’m a doomed man.’

“I couldn’t shake him from that belief, though I thought the whole thing was fancy on his part, and I turned into my hammock soon after we got below, without a thought more about the matter—it didn’t stop my caul, I know. But, ah! that was only in the early morning. Before the day was done, as Gil had said, that conversation was recalled to me in a terrible way—ah, a terrible way!” the old sailor repeated impressively, taking off his tarpaulin hat, and wiping his forehead with his handkerchief, as if the recollection of the past awed him even now. He looked so serious that I could not laugh, inclined as I was to ridicule any such story as that of the fabled sea serpent, which one looks for periodically as a transatlantic myth to crop up in dull seasons in the columns of American newspapers.

“And did you see it too?” I asked; “and Gil Saul’s prophecy turns out true?”

“You shall hear,” he answered gravely; “I’m not spinning a yarn, as you call it, Master Charles; I’m telling you the truth.”

“Go on, Jim,” said I, to reassure him. “I’m listening, all attention.”

“At eight bells that day, another man-of-war come in, bringing an empty slaver she had taken before she had shipped her cargo. In this vessel we were able to separate some of the poor wretches packed on board our Brazilian schooner, and so send them comfortably on to Sierra Leone, which was what we were waiting to do, as I’ve told you already; and now being free to go cruising again, we hove up anchor and made our way down the coast to watch for another slaver which we had heard news of by the man-o’-war that came in to relieve us.

“We had a spanking breeze all day, for a wonder, as it generally fails at noon; but towards the evening, when we had made some eighty miles or so from the Bights, it fell suddenly dead calm, as if the wind had been shut off slap without warning. It was bright before, but the moment the calm came a thick white mist rose around the vessel, just like that which came just now from seaward, and has hidden the island and Spithead from view; you see how it’s reminded me now of the west coast and the Niger river, Master Charles, don’t you?”

“Ay,” said I, “Jim, I see what you were driving at.”

“Those thick mists,” he continued, “always rise on the shores of Afrikey in the early mornings—just as there was a thick one when Gil had seen his ghost, as he said—and they comes up again when the sun sets; but you never sees ’em when the sun’s a-shining bright as it was that arternoon. It was the rummiest weather I ever see. By and by, the mist lifted a bit, and then there were clumps of fog dancing about on the surface of the sea, which

was oily and calm, just like patches of trees on a lawn. Sometimes these fog curtains would come down and settle round the ship, so that you couldn't see to the t'other side of the deck for a minute, and they brought a fearful bad smell with them, the very smell of the lagoons ashore with a dash of the n— aboard the slave schooner, only a thousand times worse, and we miles and miles away from the land. It was most unaccountable, and most uncomfortable. I couldn't make it out at all.

"Jest as I was a-puzzling my brains as to the reason of these fog banks and the stench they brought with them, Gil Saul came on deck too, and sheered up alongside of me as I was looking out over the side. His face was a worse sight than the morning; for, instead of his looking white, the colour of his skin was grey and ashy, like the face of a corpse. It alarmed me so that I cried out at once—

"Go down below, Gil! Go down and report yourself to the doctor!"

"No," sez he, "it ain't the doctor an will cure me, Jim; I feel it coming over me again as I felt this morning. I shall see that sarpint or ghost again, I feel sure."

"What with his face and his words, and the bad smell from the fog, I confess I began to feel queer myself—not frightened exactly—but I'd have much rather have been on Southsea common in the broad daylight than where I was at that moment, I can tell you."

"Did you see anything, Jim?" I asked the old sailor at this juncture.

"I seed nothing, Master Charles, as yet but I felt something, I can't tell what or how to explain; it was a sort of all-overish feeling, as if something was a-walking over my grave, as folks say, summat uncanny, I do assure you.

"The captain and the first lieutenant was on the quarter-deck, the latter with his telescope to his eye a-gazing at something forward apparently, that he was trying to discern amongst the clumps of fog. I was nigh them, and being to leeward could hear what they said.

"The first lieutenant, I hears him, turns to the captain over his shoulder speaking like, and sez he—

"Captain Manter, I can't make it out exactly, but it's most curious;" and then turning to me, he sez, "Newman, go down to my steward and ax him to give you my night-glass."

"I went down and fetched the glass and handed it to him, he giving me t'other one to hold; and he claps the night-glass to his eye.

"By Jove, Captain Manter," sez he presently, "I was right, it is the greatest marine monster I ever saw!"

"Pooh!" says the captain, taking the glass from him and looking himself. "It's only a waterspout, they come sometimes along with this appearance of the sea!" But presently I heard him mutter something under his voice to the lieutenant, and then he said aloud, "It is best to be prepared;" and a moment after that he gave an order, and the boatswain piped up and we beat to quarters. It was very strange that, wasn't it? And so every man on board thought.

"A very faint breeze was springing up again, and I was on the weather side of the ship, which was towards the land from which the wind came, when suddenly Gil Saul, who was in the same battery and captain of my crew, grips my arm tight. "It's coming! it's coming!" he said right in my ear, and then the same horrible foul smell wafted right over the ship again, and a noise was heard just as if a herd of wild horses were sucking up water together.

"At this moment the fog lifted for a bit, and we could see clear for about a couple of miles to windward, where the captain and first lieutenant and all the hands had their eyes fixed as if expecting something.

"By George! you could have knocked me down with a feather, I tell you! I never saw such a sight in my life, and may I never see such another again! There, with his head well out of the water, shaped like a big bird, and higher in the air than the main truck of the ship, was a gigantic reptile like a sarpint, only bigger than you ever dreamt of. He was wriggling through the water at a fearful rate, and going nearly the same course as ourselves, with a wake behind him bigger than a line-of-battle ship with paddle-wheels, and his length—judging by what I saw of him—was about half a mile at least, not mentioning what part of his body was below the water; while he must have been broader across than the largest sperm whale, for he showed good five feet of freeboard.

“The captain and first lieutenant were flabbergasted, I could see; but Captain Manter was as brave an officer as ever stepped, and he pulled himself together in a minute, as the fog, which had only lifted for a minute, came down again shutting out everything from view so that we could not see a yard from the side. ‘Don’t be alarmed, my men,’ he sings out in his cheery voice, so that every hand could hear him, ‘it’s only a waterspout that is magnified by the fog; and as it gets nearer we’ll give it the starboard broadside to clear it up and burst it.’

“‘Ay! ay!’ sez the men with a cheer, while the smell grew more awful and the snorting gushing sound we had heard before so loud that it was quite deafening, just immediately after the captain spoke, when it had stopped awhile.

“As for poor Gil, he had never lost the grip of my arm since we sighted the reptile, although he had the lanyard of his gun in his right hand all the same.

“‘Fire!’ sez the captain; and, in a moment, the whole starboard broadside was fired off, point blank across the water, in a line with the deck, as Captain Manter had ordered us to depress the guns, the old *Amphitrite* rocking to her keel with the explosion.

“Well, sir, as true as I’m standing here a-talking to you, at the very instant the guns belched out their fire and smoke, and the cannon-balls with which they were loaded, there was a most treemenjus roar and a dash of water alongside the ship, and the waves came over us as if we were on a lee shore; and then, as the men stood appalled at the things going on around them, which was what no mortal ever seed before, Gil clasped my arm more tightly, loosening his right hand from the lanyard of the gun which he had now fired, and shrieked out, ‘There! there!’

“Master Charles, it were awful! A long heavy body seemed to be reared up high in the air right athwart the vessel, and plunged far away in the sea to leeward; and, as the body passed over our heads, I looked up with Gil, and saw the fearful fiery eyes of the biggest snake that ever crawled on the earth, though this was flying in the air, and round his hideous head, that had a long beak like a bird, was a curious fringe or frill all yellowish green, just like what a lizard puffs out under his throat when in a rage. I could see no more, for the thing was over us and gone a mile or more to leeward in a wink of the eye, the fog drifting after it and hiding it from sight. Besides which, I was occupied with Gil, who had sank down on the deck in a dead swoon.

“Whatever it was, the thing carried away our main topmast with the yards, and everything clean from the caps as if it had been shot away, and there wasn’t a trace of them floating in the sea around, as we could see.

“‘A close thing that!’ said the captain, after the shock was over, speaking to the lieutenant, although all hands could hear him, for it was as still as possible now. ‘A close thing, Mr. Freemantle. I’ve known a waterspout do even more damage than this; so let us be thankful!’

“And then all hands were piped to clear the wreck, and make the ship snug; for we had some bad weather afterwards, and had to put into Sierra Leone to refit.

“Gil was in a swoon for a long time after; and then he took the fever bad, and only recovered by the skin of his teeth; but he never forgot what he had seen, nor I either, nor any of the hands, though we never talked about it. We knew we had seen something unearthly; even the captain and Lieutenant Freemantle, though they put down the damage to a waterspout for fear of alarming the men, knew differently, as we did. We had seen the great sea sarpint, if anybody had, every man-jack of us aboard! It was a warning, too, as poor Gil Saul had declared; for, strange to say, except himself and me, not a soul as was on board the *Amphitrite* when the reptile overhauled us, lived to see Old England again. The bones of all the others were left to bleach on the burning sands of the east coast of Africa, which has killed ten thousand more of our own countrymen with its deadly climate than we have saved slaves from slavery!”

“But, Jim,” said I, as the old sailor paused at the end of his yarn. “Do you think it was really the sea serpent? Might it not have been a waterspout, or a bit of floating wreck, which you saw in the fog?”

Jim Newman got grumpy at once, at the bare insinuation of such a thing.

“Waterspouts and bits of wreck,” said he sarcastically, “generally travel at the rate of twenty miles an hour when there is no wind to move them along, and a dead calm, don’t they? Waterspouts and bits of wreck smell like polecats when you’re a hundred miles from land, don’t they? Waterspouts and bits of wreck roar like a million wild bulls, and snort and swish as they go through the water like a thousand express trains going through a tunnel, don’t they?”

I was silenced by Jim’s sarcasm, and humbly begged his pardon for doubting the veracity of his eyesight.

“Besides, Master Charles,” he urged, when he had once more been restored to his usual equanimity; “besides, you must remember that nearly in the same parts, and about the same time—in the beginning of the month of August, 1848—the sea sarpint, as people who have never seen it are so fond of joking of, was seen by the captain and crew of HMS *Daedalus* and the event was put down in the ship’s log, and reported officially to the Admiralty. I suppose you won’t go for to doubt the statement which was made by a captain in the navy, a gentleman, and a man of honour, and supported by the evidence of the lieutenant of the watch, the master, a midshipman, the quartermaster, boatswain’s mate, and the man at the wheel—the rest of the ship’s company being below at the time?”

“No, Jim,” said I, “that’s straight enough.”

“We was in latitude 5 degrees 30 minutes north, and longitude about 3 degrees east,” continued the old sailor, “when we saw it on the 1st of August, 1848, and they in latitude 24 degrees 44 minutes south, and longitude 9 degrees 22 minutes east, when they saw it on the 6th of the same month; so the curious reptile—for reptile he was—must have put the steam on when he left us!”

“Stirred up, probably, by your starboard broadside?” said I.

“Jest so,” went on Jim. “But, he steered just in the direction to meet them when he went off from us, keeping a southward and eastward course; and I daresay, if he liked, he could have made a hundred knots an hour as easy as we could sail ten on a bowline with a stiff breeze.”

“And so you really have seen the great sea serpent?” said I, when the old man-of-war’s man had shifted his quid once more, thus implying that he had finished.

“Not a doubt of it, sir; and by the same token he was as long as from here to the Spit Buoy, and as broad as one of them circular forts out there.”

“That’s a very good yarn, Jim,” said I; “but do you mean to say that you saw the monster with your own eyes, Jim, as well as all the rest of you?”

“I saw him, I tell you, Master Charles, as plain as I see you now; and as true as I am standing by your side the sarpint jumped right over the Amphitrite when Gil Saul and I was a-looking up, and carried away our maintopmast and everything belonging to it!”

“Well, it must have been wonderful, Jim,” said I.

“Ay, ay, sir,” said he, “but you’d ha’ thought it a precious sight more wonderful if you had chanced to see it, like me!”

I may add, that, shortly afterwards, I really took the trouble to overhaul a pile of the local papers to see whether Jim’s account of the report made by the captain of the *Daedalus* to the Lords of the Admiralty was substantially true; and, strange to say, I discovered amongst the numbers of the Hampshire *Telegraph* for the year 1848, the following copy of a letter forwarded by Captain McQubae to the admiral in command at Devonport dockyard at the date mentioned:—

“Her Majesty’s Ship *Daedalus*

“Hamoaze, October 11th, 1848.

“Sir,—In reply to your letter of this day’s date, requiring information as to the truth of a statement published in the *Globe* newspaper, of a sea serpent of extraordinary dimensions having been seen from her Majesty’s ship

Daedalus, under my command, on her passage from the East Indies, I have the honour to acquaint you, for the information of my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty, that at five o'clock, PM, on the 6th of August last, in latitude 24 degrees 44 minutes south, and longitude 9 degrees 22 minutes east, the weather dark and cloudy, wind fresh from the North West, with a long ocean swell from the South West, the ship on the port tack heading North East by North, something very unusual was seen by Mr. Sartons, midshipman, rapidly approaching the ship from before the beam. The circumstance was immediately reported by him to the officer of the watch, Lieutenant Edgar Drummond, with whom and Mr. William Barrett, the master, I was at the time walking the quarter-deck. The ship's company were at supper.

"On our attention being called to the object it was discovered to be an enormous serpent, with head and shoulders kept about four feet constantly above the surface of the sea, and as nearly as we could approximate by comparing it with the length of what our main-topsail-yard would show in the water, there was at the very least sixty feet of the animal à fleur d'eau, no portion of which was, to our perception, used in propelling it through the water, either by vertical or horizontal undulation. It passed rapidly, but so close under our lee quarter that had it been a man of my acquaintance I should have easily recognised his features with the naked eye; and it did not, either in approaching the ship or after it had passed our wake, deviate in the slightest degree from its course to the South West, which it held on at the pace of from twelve to fifteen miles per hour, apparently on some determined purpose.

"The diameter of the serpent was about fifteen or sixteen inches behind the head, which was, without any doubt, that of a snake, and never, during the twenty minutes that it continued in sight of our glasses once below the surface of the water; its colour a dark brown, with yellowish white about the throat. It had no fins, but something like the mane of a horse, or rather a bunch of sea-weed, washed about its back. It was seen by the quartermaster, the boatswain's mate, and the man at the wheel, in addition to myself and officers above-mentioned.

"I am having a drawing of the serpent made from a sketch taken immediately after it was seen, which I hope to have ready for transmission to my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty by to-morrow's posts.

"I have, etcetera,

"Peter McQubae, Captain.

"To Admiral Sir WH Gage, GCH, Devonport."

Consequently, having this testimony, which was amply verified by the other witnesses at the time, I see no reason to doubt the truth of Jim Newman's yarn about *The Great Sea Serpent!*

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A Final Note

This issue of the *North American BioFortean Review* is also the final issue, though not the last of my involvement in publishing cryptozoological material. There are, as many other crypto-newsletter editors discovered, inherent difficulties in putting out a regular publication. (Especially when you have many other projects on your plate.) Rather than fight to stay the same, it is time to transform the medium.

I have been discussing the possibility of a more serious publication (one that allows for peer-review by qualified biologists and others) with a few other researchers. While we are still in preliminary stages, we believe this would help fill a void in cryptozoological scholarship. We plan to create a rapid-publication web journal, so that articles do not sit around after final acceptance, languishing until a full issue can be arranged. It will be flexible enough to include media reviews, letters to the editor regarding new data useful to cryptozoological research, historical reviews, and field research notes.

As soon as this project reaches the final stages, information will be posted at StrangeArk.com, and the StrangeArk email news list via YahooGroups. Queries on the project can also be sent to me, at Herper@verizon.net.

As far as NABR goes, I've enjoyed putting it out, and hope that it has served some useful purpose to the cryptozoological community. For now, back issues will continue to be available at the StrangeArk website. I will also be publishing several books this year of interest to cryptozoology, including works by several other authors. Information on those will eventually be found at CoachwhipBooks.com.

So, thanks to my former co-editors, Brad LaGrange and Craig Heinselman, and to the writers who have contributed to NABR. I hope to see even more published investigations into mystery animals in the future.

— Chad Arment

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