

# WONDERS

Seeking the Truth in a Universe of Mysteries

Vol.1 No.2

June 1992

## TRUE GIANTS



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# WONDERS

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## EDITORIAL

### Another Source

Welcome to WONDERS, another source of information for you in this age when we need all the help we can get. Today our potential to learn is great yet our motivation to learn is meager. Mysteries of long standing are ignored or treated lightly in the modern course of business. The business of science and the business of industry have no use for mysteries. There is no money in them. Most of the rest of the population is waiting for readers of television news to tell them what is important. Mysteries are not on their agenda either. Mysteries don't give interviews.

Some people would have you think that there is a lot of money to be made selling the public on mysteries. What happens is that this market is saturated with trash making fast bucks for a few. Also those same people, who claim to debunk mysteries, are putting out their own trash. They ignore many mysteries, give shallow and biased treatments to others, and spend a lot of time telling us that, in effect, the moon is not made of green cheese.

In WONDERS we will dare to examine subjects that are worthy of your time and attention. Yes...hoaxes, mistakes, false leads, and a lack of quick resolutions will be encountered along the way. If these topics were easy to comprehend there would be university chairs devoted to them already. We will do our best to sort the mysteries before us and direct you to sources that will help you understand your world.

You should be told two things at the outset: (1) Empower yourself to decide what the truth is. We all have the same brain and have had it for at least one hundred thousand years. You decide what is important. (2) You can make a difference in this world, whoever you are, if you choose to do so. Take one mystery and pursue it yourself. A world that was there all the time will then open up to you. The world truly has more wonders than we can imagine.

For examples of these mysteries, you are invited to read on.

## TRUE GIANTS

(OR, GIGANTOPITHECUS IS ALIVE AND TALLER THAN YOU THINK)

by Mark A. Hall

The subject of giants needs a good airing. To a pygmy, a person of medium stature might appear to be a giant. To people of medium height anyone taller than their own height might appear to be a giant. Speculations on the catch-all subject of Bigfoot usually portray them as giants in comparison to human beings, with Bigfoot heights ranging from seven to ten feet. But we have all heard of giants of hoary folklore, true giants that towered above all other living things. They were compared to trees twenty feet high. These are the giants I am going to tell you about.

True giants come to us from European folklore, from the time before history was set down with certainty. Dietrich von Bern is one figure who battled and defeated a giant as part of his colorful life.[1] Other giants are known for their part in less distinguished folktales and for their associations with ancient places. These giants are remembered as strong but oafish louts who expired more than anything from stupidity. They have been pictured in recent centuries as enlarged human beings, dressed in human clothing. We should try to put aside this pictorial convention of enlarged humans, for I think it is an erroneous view fostered -- quite understandably -- by artists who never saw a true giant.

The American Indians have also told us of true giants. The Ojibway, for example, called them Misabe and gave that name also to a mountain in a range of hills because it was a giant in comparison to other hills.[2] The hills were known as the Misabe Range before they were dismantled for iron ore. The Indians had other names for these creatures as tall as pine trees. They were Ice Giants to some. The coming of an Ice Giant was foretold in an Indian camp by the swaying of a cooking pot over the fire.[3] A quaint superstition, you might say, until you consider that the footfalls of a true giant might cause tremors in the ground that would be detectable in the fashion described. You may have heard of other true giants elsewhere in the world as well, for they have been told of in many places.

A litany of giants in folklore would not impress some, however, who will remember reading as I do that there is a strict limit on the possible height of the human frame. I wish I could produce and cite that very article, but this was something I read about thirty years ago. We know now that people do not exceed nine feet of height in the modern day. They do reach heights a few inches less than that. The historical claims of greater heights for human beings are unproven and probably are false. Height is easily exaggerated and people over seven feet tall continue to make false claims easily. It is very likely that the limit on the human frame that I recall being argued is a correct one. Try to enlarge a human being above ten feet of height and you will have an unworkable structure of bone, body mass, and muscle. So true giants are not tall human beings.

What then are true giants? I think they are living primates that have been evolving upon this planet over a period of at least 6 million years, for that figure is the age of their earliest

fossils. They are gigantic, ranging in height when mature from fifteen feet to twenty feet. (I am spelling out these figures so that no one need suspect a typographical error.) They function successfully because they have evolved their own body structure over a long period of evolution. This body structure is almost entirely unknown to us so to argue against its feasibility would be premature. Clearly it is unlike the human frame or it would not function. What little is known of these creatures you will read here.

Some people will want to say that I believe in giants. I do not and I do not want you to believe in giants either. This is not a matter of faith as is religion where one believes without proof. This is a matter of judgment made upon the evidence that already exists.

Four categories of evidence support the presence of giants as living beings that have survived into the modern day, despite their own limitations and the enmity of mankind. The many traditions of enormous, fearsome, and often "cannibal" giants is one body of evidence to consider. The physical aspect of these particular traditional giants is often left to the imagination of the listener, the reader, or the artists rendering the story as it is passed along through centuries of time. The other categories of evidence suggest that there exists a consistent appearance for true giants.

Secondly, some people have sighted giants and have given us descriptions of what they observed. A third category of evidence are tracks of a size and shape to have been left by giants. They were found where traditional giants could remain and where people have reported them. And, finally, there are fossil remains to show the origin of true giants. The first description of these fossils attributed them to Gigantopithecus, or "Giant Ape." A later opinion suggested they belonged to Gigantanthropus, or "Giant Man." I think the latter opinion will one day prove to be the more accurate one. We will look at these categories in reverse order, starting with the fossils that are the foundation for the presence of true giants in our world.

Between 16 and 10 million years ago a group of primates, the Eurasian Dryopithecines, had evolved. Among them was a man-sized ape-like creature designated Dryopithecus indicus which appears to have survived to give rise to the Yeti legend of the Himalayas. That is, that part of the legend specified by myself and others [see 4]. It had a much larger relative, known to us as Gigantopithecus. This giant is known only from jawbones and teeth.[5] Remains of other parts of the body have not survived.

The best way to grasp the tremendous size of these creatures may be to compare the fossil jawbone with a modern human jawbone, as shown here in Figure 1 (see the opposite page).

Reconstructions of this animal have depicted it as an over-sized gorilla. One recent model of it showed it when upright at a height of 10 feet.[6] I think that mock-up is too short. This animal was upright most of the time and was unlike a gorilla in most respects. I think it has reached the heights attributed to the true giants.

Both the Dryopithecine forms cited here appear to have spread into North America. People see true giants and the Yeti.[7] Standard objections to this are (1) no fossil remains found there and (2) the difficulty of such migrations. The answers are (1) that there

are no fossil remains on official record for many rare inhabitants of the New World. Nevertheless, they are there. And (2) migrations of life into the New World were not the arduous journey through Arctic latitudes so often pictured for us by conservative scientists. The geologically recent past involved shifts of the Earth's crust that permitted travel by land bridge at lesser latitudes. This hypothesis has been discussed elsewhere by myself and others.[8]

As far as we know observations of true giants in modern times have not been frequent. We cannot be sure how often they might be seen. If, in your headlights one night, you saw a figure 20 feet high cross the road in front of you, how many people would you tell? Probably no one.

They are around in many parts of the world but to survive at all they remain shy of human beings. It is no accident that (1) the detailed observations of these giants view them from a distance and (2) the two that I can cite are both from the Pacific Northwest in North America.

First of all, the surviving giants no longer confront human beings if that can be avoided. In rare instances of prolonged visual contact they have kept a distance from their observers. Secondly, in the Pacific Northwest there has been an unparalleled effort to collect accounts of hairy beings of all kinds. If comparable efforts were made elsewhere, we would be likely to learn of similar matter-of-fact and detailed sightings of true giants.

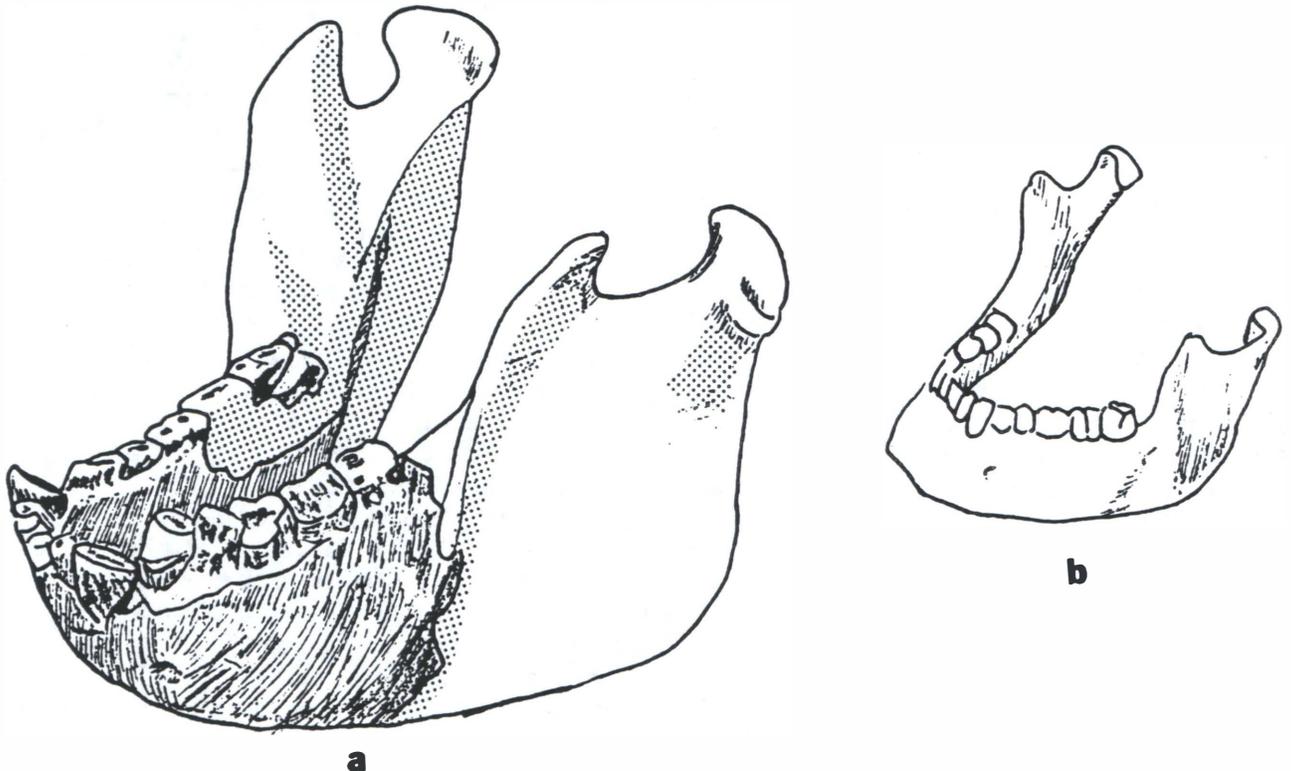


Fig.1. Gigantopithecus jawbone (a) and a modern human jawbone (b) to the same scale. The rear part of a is hypothetical. After Simons and Ettl, "Gigantopithecus," *Scientific American* 222(1): 80-81.

The North American accounts were brought together in John Green's *Year of the Sasquatch*, first published in 1970.[9] The first tells of two prospectors in British Columbia who encountered something in the last week of June 1965. At an elevation of 4,000 feet northwest of Pitt Lake they came upon tracks in snow -- impressions "as flat as plywood" -- that by their estimate measured 24 inches long and 12 inches wide.

The two men followed the tracks and eventually observed a figure like an enormous man watching them from a hillside with a small lake between them. The giant was covered all over with reddish-brown hair. The hair was longer on the head, thinner on the arms. It appeared to have no neck and possessed flat facial features. The hands were described as the size and shape of canoe paddles. It remained in view while they made estimates of its height against nearby trees. One guessed 10 to 12 feet, the other 12 to 14 feet, possibly 15 feet. It watched them, moving only slightly. Eventually they left the area. When they came back later, it was gone.

Green's second account of true giants tells of another lengthy observation by construction workers at Big Horn Dam west of Nordegg, Alberta. A hairy figure was in sight for a half an hour on August 23, 1969. It moved about while observed by up to five people before it walked away into the trees. Sizing its height by the trees in that location they realized it had to be at least 12 feet, possibly 15 feet, in height.[10]

Before unwarranted assumptions about the body and the mass of true giants are made, the many unknowns should be stressed. We don't know how much of the impressive size of true giants is only the hairy exterior and what the body beneath the hair is like. We don't know how efficient this body is, how graceful or awkward they are, what ills they are prone to, and how active they can be or how inactive they must be in any one day. The unanswered questions about them are legion: the extent of their culture, their speech and language if any, even the specifics of their diet.

I will say something here about their diet. The reputation as "cannibals" (meaning here that they ate humans) should not cloud our perceptions of their diet. To support their size the giants are probably omnivorous, meaning they eat plants and animals. The teeth of *Gigantopithecus* are considered to have been adapted to graminivorous feeding, grinding roots and grass stems.[11] The suggestion here is that they also added meat to their diet, if not at an early date, then certainly in recent centuries.

The modern appearances of true giants are distinguished most often by the unique tracks they leave. At the Pitt Lake sighting the observers saw tracks of enormous size. Those tracks showed only four toes. Such tracks have been dismissed by people convinced that they know how "genuine Bigfoot tracks" should look. I also think large five-toed tracks exist that can be attributed to tall creatures loosely labeled as "Bigfoot." [12] True giants are something different and their tracks typically show only four toes.

There is an old saying that "the map is not the same thing as the land it shows." We should keep in mind also that "the track is not the foot." An impression left in a medium of sand, soil, snow, etc. does not show us the structure of the foot. It is merely a disturbance made by the motion of the foot. Impressions can be

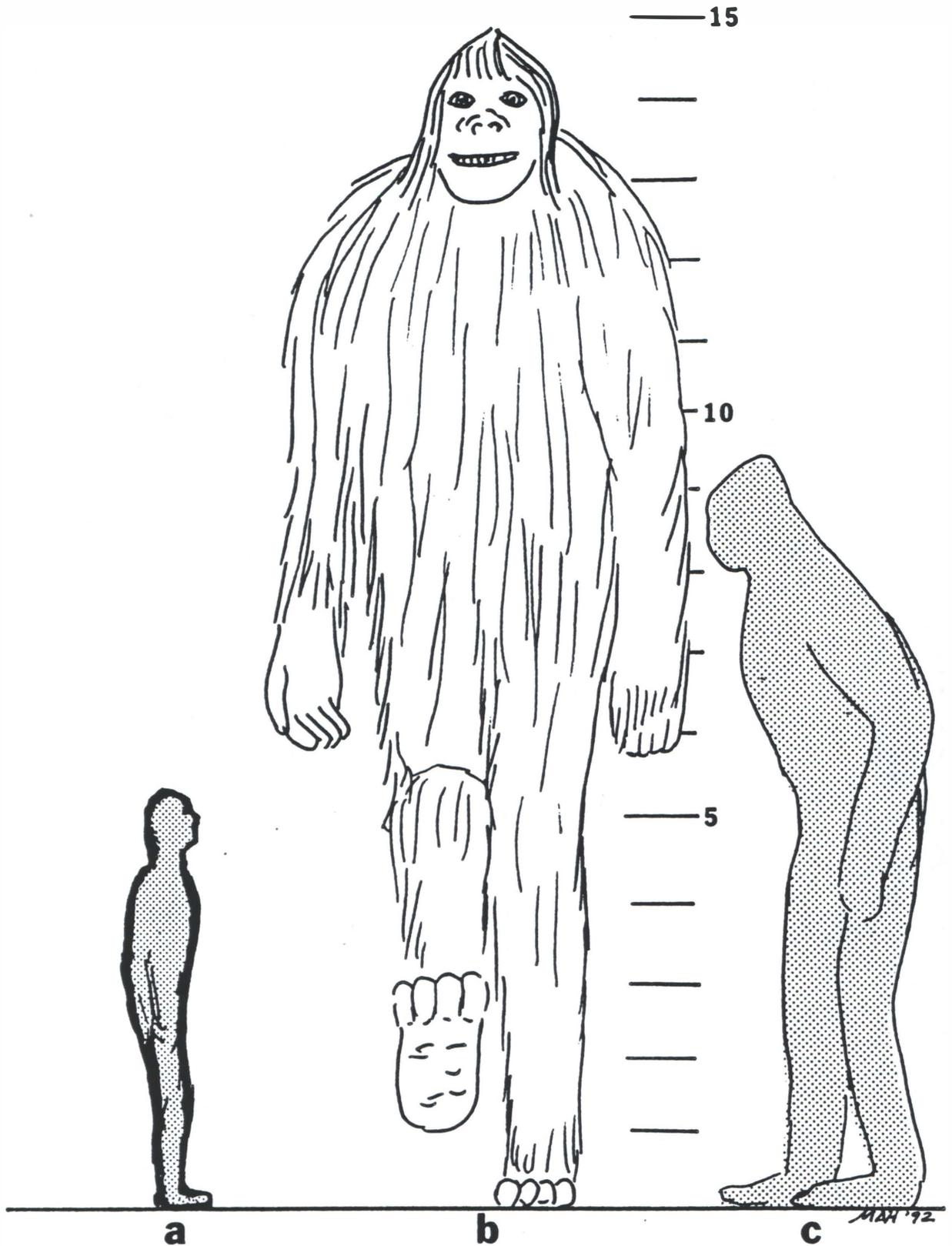


Fig.2. Relative sizes of a  $5\frac{1}{2}$ -foot human being (a), a true giant 15 feet tall (b), and a hypothetical creature  $9\frac{1}{2}$  feet tall (c).

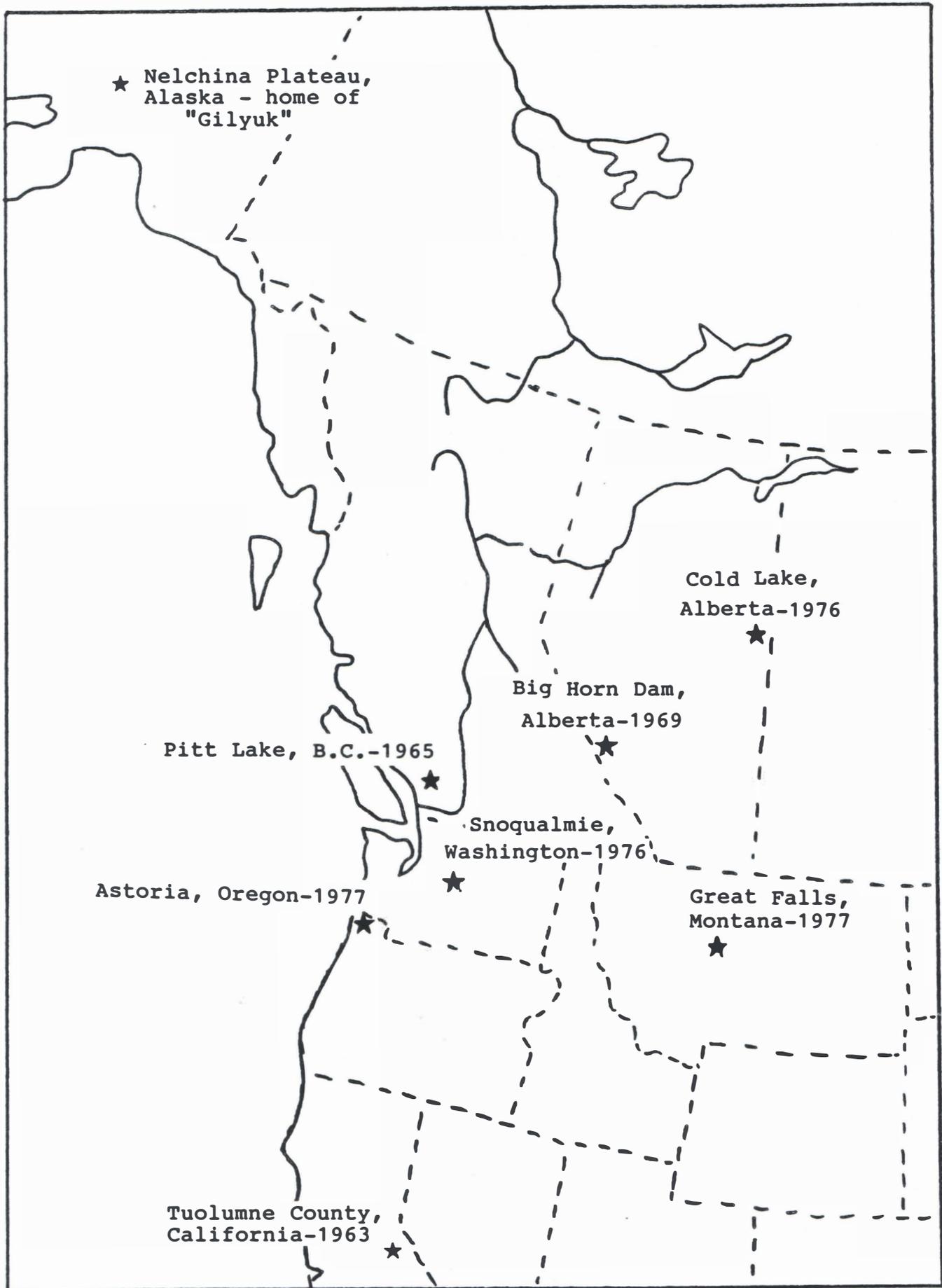


Fig.3. Locations where true giants may have put in an appearance.

incomplete, as when running or walking on tip-toes. Four-toed tracks are still another case altogether. The impression is showing us the result of the evolution of the primate foot to carry the size of true giants. The foot is flat and broad, and has only four apparent toes of similar size. In width it is one-half of the total length of the foot. The fifth toe is vestigial and no longer shows in tracks.

The same tendency toward a broad foot with fewer digits is apparent in the Yeti track (Fig. 4c). The squat but bulky creature I associate with Dryopithecine origins[13] has a broad track that has nearly evolved to the appearance of having only three toes. This is because three of the toes have become so small and bunched that they appear to be almost one toe. There was early confusion about the number of toes on this type of track when it was first described in Asia.

Occurrences of true giant tracks have included Cold Lake, Alberta (10 X 21) in June 1976, Snoqualmie, Washington (8 X 17) in January 1976, and outside Astoria, Oregon (7.5 X 17) in December 1977. In 1977 five campers outside Great Falls, Montana, were chased by a hairy creature 15 feet tall. Their description was similar to the one from Pitt Lake. Many other reports from California to British Columbia suggest true giants because of heights of ten feet and more and because of the characteristics of the tracks.

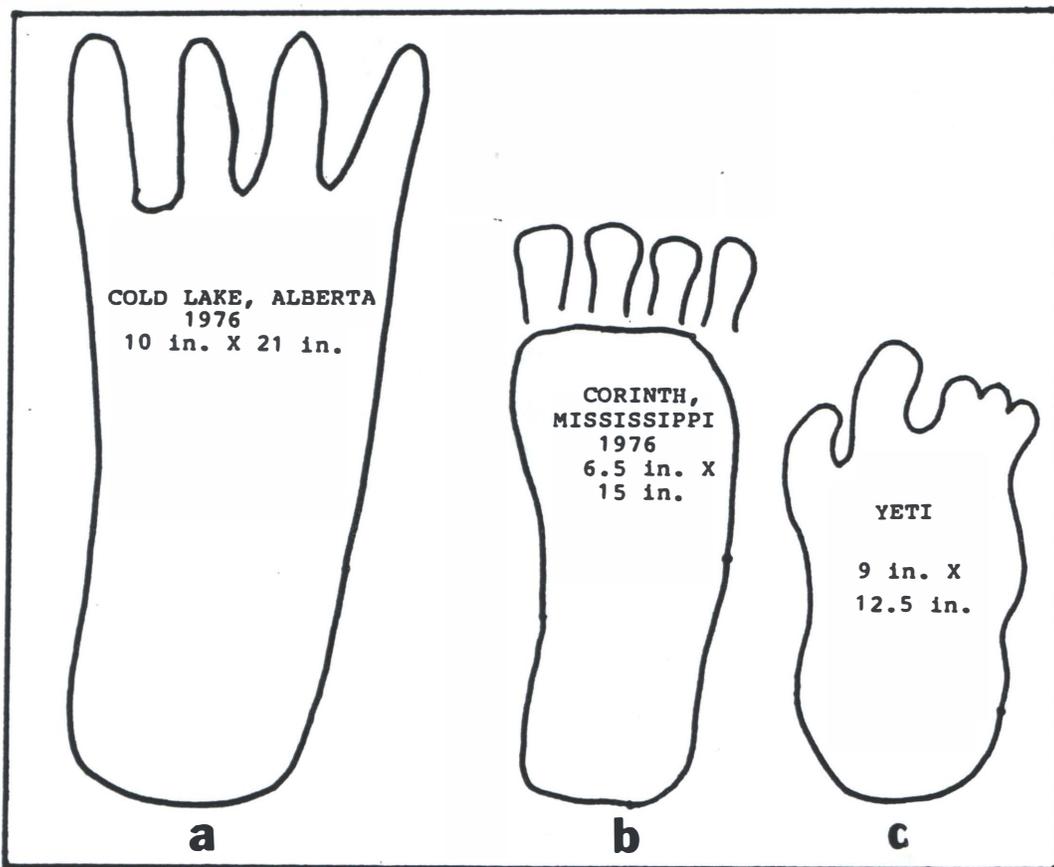


Fig.4. The four-toed tracks of true giants (a, b) and the track of the Yeti (c), which shows similar evolutionary adjustments.

A graph of the widths and the lengths of these tracks shows a consistent average slope line running from a point of 3.5 X 9 inches to the point of 12 X 24 inches.

Giving credit where it is due, mention should be made of Roger Patterson, famous for briefly filming a tall hairy creature in 1967. He appears to have had some notion that something bigger and separate from "Bigfoot" was making tracks in the Northwest. His 1966 book included a designation of a 22-inch track as belonging to a "Giant Hairy Ape," though he did put five toes on the sketch. Nothing in the text of his book explained this distinction.[14]

Biologists would be happiest if I could tell you true giants were confined to one region, such as the mountains of the Pacific Northwest. That is a framework with which they are more comfortable. Such is often not the case with surviving wonders, and it is not the case here. Reports of extreme heights elsewhere are often necessarily given in terms of uncertainty. However, tracks with identical characteristics and especially the same number of toes are unmistakable indicators of the passage of true giants through other parts of North America. I choose the word "passage" with care because the giants are not necessarily occupying territories where their tracks are found. They appear to travel around for reasons of their own.

In my opinion, tree cover is the most important factor influencing the mobility of true giants in daylight. At night their mobility is naturally greater and they are likely to be more active.

Briefly, true giant tracks have been found in such locations as Saluda, South Carolina (7 X 14) in 1977, Fort Mill, South Carolina (5.75 X 12.25) in 1977, and Corinth, Mississippi (6.5 X 15) in 1976. In the tracks near Corinth a fourth toe did not always show clearly.

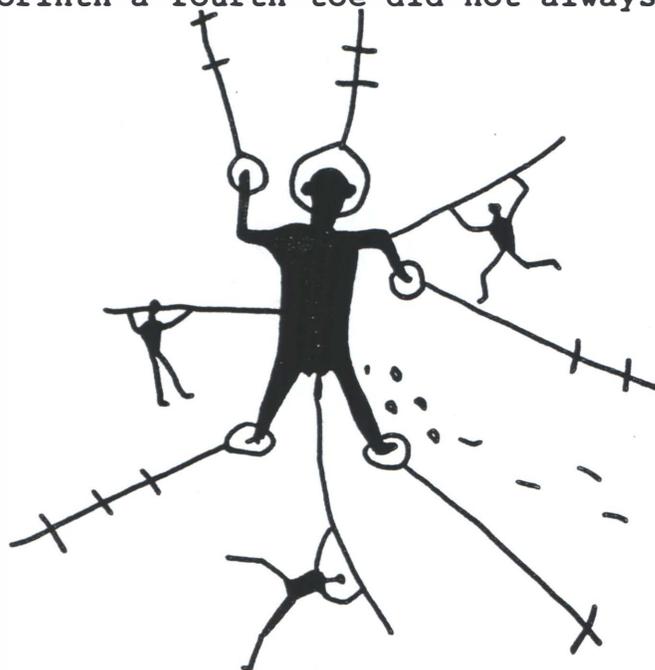


Fig.5. A drawing from the Chukhotka Peninsula in Siberia showing the capture of a giant. Redrawn from V. Pushkarev, "Bigfoot: Myth or Reality? - New Testimony," *Soviet Life*, March 1979 (270), p.55.

There are more tracks and sightings in eastern Canada and states like Pennsylvania to suggest that these reports are not isolated. They stand out simply because the track descriptions were clear and detailed. They showed the usual characteristics, including 4 toes.

Giant lore is the final category of evidence. Here we are looking at the world's knowledge of towering giants. Puny "giants" under 10 feet do not qualify.

Seventeenth century explorer Samuel de Chaplain has been ridiculed in some quarters for taking early notice of the Gougou, a giant feared by the Gaspe Indians. His account appears to be a faithful record of a fear that was probably justified.[15] Other names later recorded for this giant are Gugwes, Kookwes, and Strendu.[16]

In Quebec an eighteenth century surveyor named Joseph Laurent Normandin explained when he noted the Indian name of Giant River that:

These people have such a fear of giants that almost every day they believe that they see some of them. They affirm that an **atcheme** is an extra-ordinarily tall man and that he eats Indians.  
[17]

In Minnesota and Quebec the giant was known as Misabe[18] and in Massachusetts Maushope[19].

The recollections of hunter Russell Annabel about his youth spent in Alaska (ca. 1940) include knowledge of the true giants. He and hunter Tex Cobb heard "much about Gilyuk, the shaggy cannibal giant sometimes called The-Big-Man-With-The-Little-Hat." [20] Their personal knowledge of Gilyuk came after a summer spent on the Nelchina Plateau. They met a party of Indians headed by Chief Stickman. To the Indians Gilyuk had never been a legend but an animal as real as any other in the woods. The Indians showed the two hunters the sign of Gilyuk, a recently twisted birch sapling. It was four inches thick and ten feet tall before it was twisted and began to wilt. The Indians were afraid because, as Annabel wrote, "he was a shaggy giant who wore a little hat and ate men." (The "little hat" probably reflects the shape of the giant's head due to the extraordinary musculature necessary to work the massive jaw of Gigantopithecus.) The following night Chief Stickman went from his camp to a nearby lake and vanished. The only trace of him was a torn garment, the one he had worn. The Indians quickly left the area.

Elsewhere in the West true giants have been recorded simply as "giants" by Abercrombie and as "Big Man" by Learnard.[21] They were noted by anthropologist J.J. Honigmann as "the cannibalistic Big Man (Tenatco), who used no dwelling but sometimes dug a hole in the ground." [22] Other tales describe the same gigantic figure.

An indication of true giants can be found among the varied giant stories of the Eskimo. They had a caution against confusing the lucky find of an edible whale carcass with the sickness-causing carcass of a giant. If the carcass had a belt then it was a giant and shouldn't be eaten!

Elsewhere in the world true giants are numerous if not well-known. A few examples will suffice here to show the similarities.

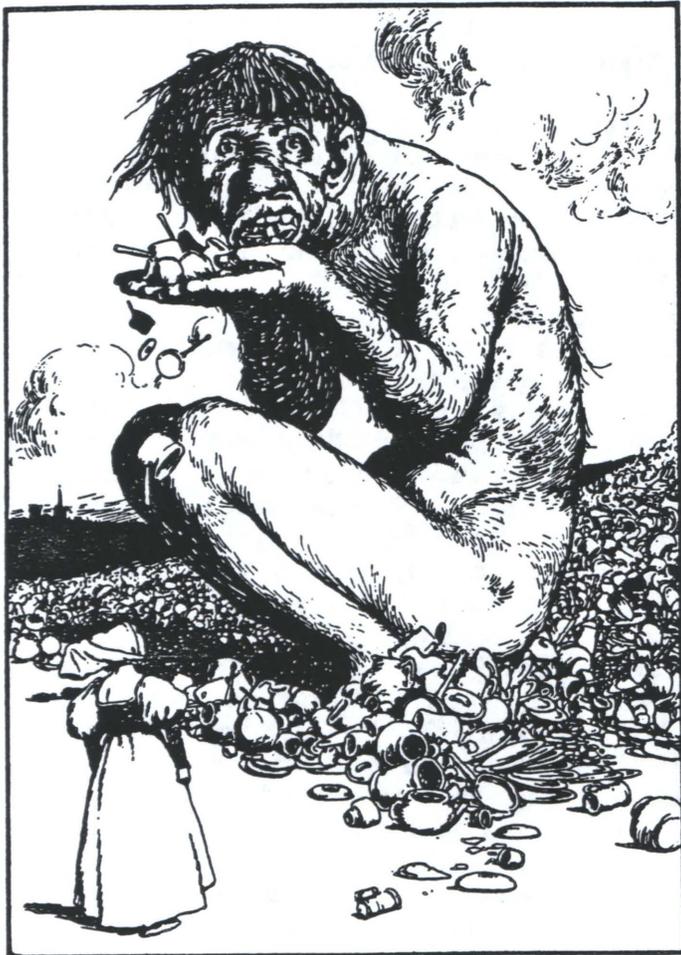
In Southeast Asia giants of heights up to 20 feet have been reported for the past sixty years. A photograph of a track was published by the **New Straits Times** for 12 February 1961 (shown here

on the cover, p.9). It was found in the province of Johore on the Malay Peninsula where giants have reportedly been seen. The foot had only four toes and measured 13 in. X 30 in.[23]

In the 1930s there were repeated instances of footprints reported from India. News from Calcutta on 19 July 1935 told of tracks 11 in. X 22 in. near Jalpaiguri. A woodcutter followed the prints. He collapsed and eventually died after catching sight of the track-maker. It was, he said, "gigantic and had a human appearance." On 20 June 1938 footprints with similar dimensions were reported in the same area by the London Daily Herald.[24]

Scotland's vague but much discussed Big Gray Man of Ben MacDhui may be evidence of true giants holding out on the British Isles, where they are otherwise remembered in a wealth of folklore. There was even a report of a giant footprint in 1959. Adam Young, a geologist, reported finding this print north of Ballachulish. It was in a patch of snow and measured 10 in. X 24 in. He could make out toes but how many was not reported at the time.[25]

While attempting to re-trace the semi-mythical voyage of Ulysses author Tim Severin came upon stories of true giants on the island



a



b

Fig.6. Artistic impressions of giants. (a) From *The Works of Mr. Francis Rabelais*, Illustrated by W. Heath Robinson, (London: Richard Clay, n.d.). (b) Cyclops From *Quaint Cuts in the Chap Book Style* by Joseph Crawhall.

of Crete. Looking for a basis for the tribe of giants that included the famous Cyclops, he learned from modern-day inhabitants of Crete their tradition of the *triamates*. They told him of giants that once lived on Crete.[26]

More than just stories of towering giants, continents around the world offer us parallels in similar tracks to support sightings.

How large could true giants grow? It should be noted that *Homo sapiens* exhibits a wide range of heights -- from Pygmies to the Masai people of Africa -- all in the same species. Perhaps true giants have known such extreme variations as well. Despite their present scarcity, they have been widely successful, surviving in different climates and circumstances around the globe.

A hint -- and it can only be a hint at this point in time -- exists for an extreme height among true giants. All the usual cautions apply. We haven't seen the tracks for ourselves...How distinct were they?..Were smaller tracks enlarged somehow?..Hoax?, etc.

Here is the hint. In December of 1963 a 21-year-old logger named John Whitt reported observing tracks in snow in Tuolumne County, California. They were, he said, 40 inches long and 22 inches wide. They were spaced 5 to 6 feet apart going uphill. He observed in them the impressions of only three toes.[27]

I have only two observations to make on this report. Firstly, when I extend my graph of the length/width of true giant tracks, at 40 inches of length on the graph the width is 21.25 inches, a close match. Secondly, after I graph the length of tracks against the reported heights and extend that in a straight line, where the length of the track is 40 inches the height of the track-maker would be just under 27 feet!

Cries of "Preposterous!...Impossible!" are the expected reaction to any proposal for the survival of true giants. But behind the "laughter curtain" the giants have continued to hold out against extinction and that may be their best protection from us. We should remember, though, that these giants have capabilities as well as limitations. The giants of today are the fittest of their species. They need not be the stupid giants that our ancestors defeated. Also, they do almost certainly have large primate brains. How large we do not yet know. To explain our success it is important to mention that size is not everything in brains. The organization of the brain is important. Also, it is a fact proven by our history that we humans work better together than any of the presumably big-brained man-like creatures -- true giants and others -- still reported to roam the woods and mountains.

What direct evidence is there to link *Gigantopithecus* with the four-toed tracks and the true giants of folklore? There is none. Without either a tooth from a true giant or the physical examination of a giant's corpse there will be none. My linking of the two is based upon a logical explanation of the tracks, sightings, and extensive giant lore. The alternatives -- reconstructing *Gigantopithecus* as an over-sized gorilla, discarding four-toed tracks as meaningless, dismissing giant lore as fabulous -- are to me less logical. Here Occam's razor works in my favor. The simplest explanation that takes into account all the circumstances is that "true giants" are surviving primates known from fossils. They are but one of the many surviving species of primates that hide from their

deadly competitor, mankind.

It is natural to think people must have seen these giants more often than we have a record to show. I would agree. But, again, if you saw one yourself, how many people would you tell?

#### NOTES

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### MAGAZINES

Some of us will remember the **ETM LOG** published out of Annapolis years ago. Another magazine has come along trying to fill the same niche, appealing to the needs of travelers and armchair explorers. **WORLD EXPLORER** is published twice yearly by the World Explorers Club, 403 Kemp St., Kempton, IL 60946 (phone 815-253-6300). Their masthead reads "Dedicated to the memories of Charles Fort, Ivan T. Sanderson, Sir Richard Burton, Col. Percy Fawcett, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle." The Spring-Summer 1992 issue of 64 pp. is on newsstands for \$4.95. Like the **ETM LOG** before it, the subject matter is invariably alluring. Unfortunately one article drags out the discredited Francois de Loys



photograph of a Spider-Monkey (at left) which he passed off as a mystery ape of South America. The stories of odd apes may be genuine but this photo shows a common Spider-Monkey (*Ateles*). The reproduction here is uncropped to point up the singular lack of any definite scale in this picture. The photographer claimed this creature was 5 feet tall. But he didn't put a human being or any intentional scale in this frame. The whistle was blown

on this fake by Ivan T. Sanderson in his book **Abominable Snowmen** (Chilton, 1961, pp.169-71). The wooden box the dead monkey has been placed on is a common shipping case for fuel cans. It would be 20.5 inches long, making the monkey an unremarkable size, about 27 inches.

**STARDATE** is a bimonthly publication of the McDonald Observatory, University of Texas at Austin (2601 University Rm 102, Austin, TX 78712). The May-June 1992 issue (\$3.00) contains "Where the big sky fell" about 3 astroblemes in Texas, the Sierra Madera, the Odessa Crater, and the Marquez Dome. Also it has an article on the 1054 AD supernova as reflected in North American Indian artwork.

To learn more about the USA's neighbor to the south I can recommend **MEXICO DESCONOCIDO** (that is, **Unknown Mexico**), a colorful monthly magazine of travel, natural history, anthropology, architecture, and art. A section of English translations of all articles appears at the back of each issue. The newsstand price is \$3.95. Make a habit to check out each issue if you can. You may not buy every issue, but it is a good source of information that is not either political or another natural disaster.

#### BOOKS OF NOTE

The modern fascination with dinosaurs has had a cheery effect for cryptozoologists, a proliferation of books on palaeontology. Books that would not have been sponsored in the past have come tumbling out the publishers' doors. I am happy to see them all. Some of them are surprising. There is a 192-page oversized book devoted to pterosaurs, for example. Presently it is being remaindered at about \$15.00. What a delight for people who think there might still be some living reptiles that fly. There are even sections on gliding reptiles (which get my vote to be the dragons of old), on bats, and on the evolution of birds. Look for **The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Pterosaurs: An Illustrated Natural History of the Flying Reptiles of the Mesozoic Era** by Peter Ellnhofer (NY: Crescent Books, 1991).

David Peters is responsible for another book presently on the remainder shelf, **A Gallery of Dinosaurs & Other Early Reptiles**. Was \$15, now about \$4. His previous book, **Giants of Land, Sea & Air - Past and Present** (1986), was great fun for showing the animals with human figures and all done to the same scale. It should not be missed by anyone. His **Gallery of Dinosaurs** is done in the same fashion, but its appeal is less because of its specialized theme. It was published by Knopf, 1989, 64 pages, oversized.

The list of remarkable state atlases from DeLorme Mapping continues to grow. You can reach them at PO Box 298, Freeport, ME 04032 - phone (207) 865-4171. They are steadily, state-by-state, creating handy and useful combinations of maps and a gazetteer based upon the USGS topographic maps. An atlas for Idaho has been published. North Carolina and Alaska are next. Here are some observations on prices and scales.

Prices: List prices have gone to \$14.95 for all atlases except the early ones done for Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. You still might see one at a lesser price.

Scales: Most of the states in this series so far have been done at a scale of 1:150,000 or about 2½ miles to an inch. Colorado was done at two different scales. Idaho was done entirely at 1:250,000 or 4 miles to an inch.

#### CURRENT EVENTS: Thunderbirds

When Thunderbirds are scarcely acknowledged to survive in North America, it is not surprising that they remain obscure in other parts of the world as well. The Griffons of Olaus Magnus carried off horses and people in Scandinavia, the Poua-kai was known to the Maori of

New Zealand to have traits identical to the Thunderbird, and so on. When news of such birds is so scarce, we are fortunate to have learned recently that giant birds are doing well in northern Norway.

We learn of them by way of Steve Newman's weekly newspaper column on the environment called "Earthweek." His column is syndicated by Chronicle Features and appears in such newspapers as the Milwaukee Journal and the Toronto Star. In early October of 1991 Newman reported that Lapp herders had formally complained to the Norwegian government that birds described as "huge eagles" had eaten 1300 of their reindeer in one year. Newman wrote:

The Oslo tabloid *Dagbladet* reported that officially only five eagles have been reported in the entire country, and suggested that if the eagles are as large as the herders claim, "they're going to have to start using an airport when they come in for a landing."

In other words, these birds sound like the Griffons Olaus Magnus wrote about in the sixteenth century. No one should be upset by the source of this news being a tabloid. A tabloid is not necessarily the same thing as a trashpaper, which is a recent phenomenon where false stories regularly appear. A tabloid is simply a small format newspaper giving condensed news, like the *N.Y. Daily News* and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. They have always had a reputation for featuring sensational stories, but that is different from making up stories as trashpapers do.

News of giant birds comes also from Puerto Rico, where their presence has been known in the past (see Hall, *Thunderbirds!*, p.76). Cruz Fidalgo and others who were shrimp-fishing on a river flowing out of the Yunque Mountains observed "this great huge thing, like a big bird....it looked like an eagle, with very beautiful golden feathers." Later a second bird like the first flew over them. Reported in Magdalena del Amo-Freixedo, "Current Happenings on Puerto Rico," *Flying Saucer Review* 36(4): 19 (Winter 1991).

I am grateful to Dr. Israel Torres, D.D.S., of El Paso, Texas for writing to me and for giving me permission to reprint here his important observations on the source of local folklore used in *On the Old West Coast* by Horace Bell (NY: Morrow, 1930) which was cited in my work *Thunderbirds!* (p.44). Bell wrote of his chief source that "some years ago I edited 'The Spiritual Conquest of California' from the manuscript of Don Guillermo Embustero y Mentiroso....the manuscript was placed in my hands by a lineal descendant of Don Guillermo now residing in Los Angeles..." Dr. Torres wrote me:

I believe the key to the veracity of the article is the name of the reporter: Don Guillermo Embustero y Mentiroso. The correct and appropriate translation would be Sir William Prevaricator and Equivocator. Normally, tall tales related by older Mexican folk will be prefaced by "according to Don Guillermo Embustero y Mentiroso, etc..."

As a youngster I recall sitting outside with the family on summer evenings, to escape the southwestern heat. Late in the evening, stories would normally turn to the supernatural, and tales would be related. Many is the time that I heard stories related to someone, by "Don Guillermo Embustero y Mentiroso."

In other words, someone was pulling Horace Bell's leg.



## IN WEIRD KAMCHATKA

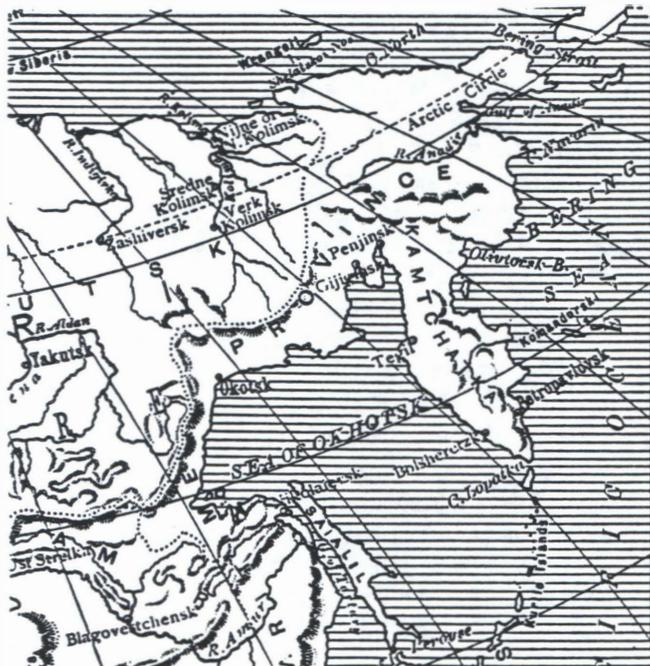
FROM THE LOG OF CAPTAIN QUINTON

PART 1

by Mark A. Hall

As we mark off the final years of the twentieth century the world of the previous century is beyond memory for people now living. The experiences and views of that time are left to us only in written records and photographs. The world of one hundred years ago was a rough and tumble era, a time of sailing ships and gold rushes taking people to the farthest points of the globe. It is the period, rightly or wrongly, that mankind felt the globe was explored and tamed. From the 1880s into the first decade of the next century Captain Robert Quinton sailed on and commanded ships amid ports all around the Pacific Ocean. He never failed to seek out the wonders of that world in his thirty years at sea. The book of his life is a log of sights seen and things only heard about.

Captain Quinton is our excuse to call again at the ports of the Pacific of a century ago. To see their sights through his eyes and, in addition, to put those sights in a modern perspective. Due to his curiosity his experiences are the kind any one of us might have had in those years. Here we visit that part of Asia he called "weird Kamchatka" and then one of the "ends of the Earth."



**Kamchat'ka:** a large peninsula of Southeastern Siberia, 850 miles long, and at its greatest width 250 miles broad; extending between the Sea of Kamchatka and the Sea of Okhotsk, and terminating in a long, narrow tongue forming Cape Lopatka. It is traversed from N. to S. by a range of volcanic mountains whose craters mostly are extinct, though Klinchevskaia, 16,152 feet high, was seen in full activity in 1854. The soil is generally stony, though there are fertile valleys, especially that along the river Kamchatka. But even here the land is unfit for agriculture on account of the severity of the climate. The winter lasts nine months, and frost is not rare in the summer; there are forests of birch and pine trees. The inhabitants, from 5,000 to 6,000, are Kamchadales, Koryaks, and Lamuts, who live by hunting and fishing. Bears, sables, foxes, otters, beavers, seals, and salmon abound. The only domestic animal is the dog, a peculiar species, large and strongly built. Russians made their first settlements in the country in the sixteenth century, and in 1855 it was incorporated with the Maritime Provinces. The principal town is Petropaulovski, on the east coast, in lat. 53° N., built on the shores of one of the finest natural harbors in the world. Karl von Ditmar, geologist, spent five years (1851-55) studying Kamchatka, and part i. of his work was published (1892) by the Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg. Revised by C. C. ADAMS.

In the North Pacific one enters a world of coasts and islands often shrouded in fog. There, between the Bering Sea and the Sea of Okhotsk, lies the Kamchatka Peninsula. When Robert Quinton's ship was 16 days out of Yokohama the fog cleared revealing three smoking volcanoes, the rugged cliffs, and numerous tiny waterfalls of the Kamchatka coast. They anchored opposite Petropavlovski in the nearly circular bay of Avatcha, to him the most beautiful bay he had seen.

He spent his time ashore hunting where he noted local customs. The people had an intense dislike of lizards of any kind. They saw them as "emissaries of Satan" and cut them to pieces on sight. He wrote: "These strangely superstitious people also believe that unseen powers are intensely malignant and spiteful. It is necessary to constantly placate their curses by sacrifices of great value."

The world of the Kamchatka is scarcely better known to us today than it was then. It is a wonder-world of geysers and volcanoes that is only now opening up to us. You can read about the latest knowledge of its Valley of Geysers (Dolina Geizerov) and about the Kronotsky Nature Preserve in T. Scott Bryan, "Valley of the Geysers," *Earth* 1(4):20-29 (July 1992) - published by Kalmbach Publishing, PO Box 1612, Waukesha, WI 53187. Volcanologists are now studying more closely its minimum of 30 active volcanoes. For an illustrated description of this study see Dave Pieri, "Planet Kamchatka," *The Planetary Report* 12(1):6-10 (Jan-Feb 1992).

The most famous cryptozoological mystery of Kamchatka is the giant bear that was first noted by the Swedish zoologist Stan Bergman in "Observations on the Kamchatkan Bear," *Journal of Mammalogy* 17: 115-120 (1936). In 1987 some noises were made in Moscow about pursuing this bear as a possible survival of *Arctodus*, an otherwise extinct bear. Nothing has been heard since.

From Avatcha Bay Quinton sailed around the southern tip of the peninsula and across the Sea of Okhotsk. A pilot took the ship up the Amur River to Nikolayevsk. From there Quinton hiked to a "monument cliff" near the village of Tir. At this site overlooking the Amur River was a collection of mankind's tributes to the mystery of this spot at the edge of the Asian continent. Here was a place that could only be called "one of the ends of the Earth."

On this site were (he wrote) "the ruins of a large temple and also several large stones which Russian authorities say were ancient altars of sacrifice. These sacrificial stones are nearly square, and the surface of each one slopes slightly downward toward the center, through which a groove an inch deep extends from side to side...." Also present were four monuments, each several feet high, for which Quinton gave details of their shape and the type of stone used to make them. Two of them had inscriptions on them. One was translated by a guide to read "The power of the great Youan Dynasty [that of Genghis Khan] extends everywhere." The other inscription was the mystic formula of the Far East: "Om Mani padme, houn."

The local people of the Gilyak tribe regarded the site as sacred and decorated it with poles and other artifacts. Quinton gives their sacrificial procedures in detail. They regularly sacrificed dogs -- their most valued possessions -- at this place, and once a year in January a bear was sacrificed to appease spirits.

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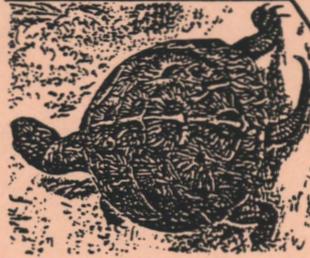
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