

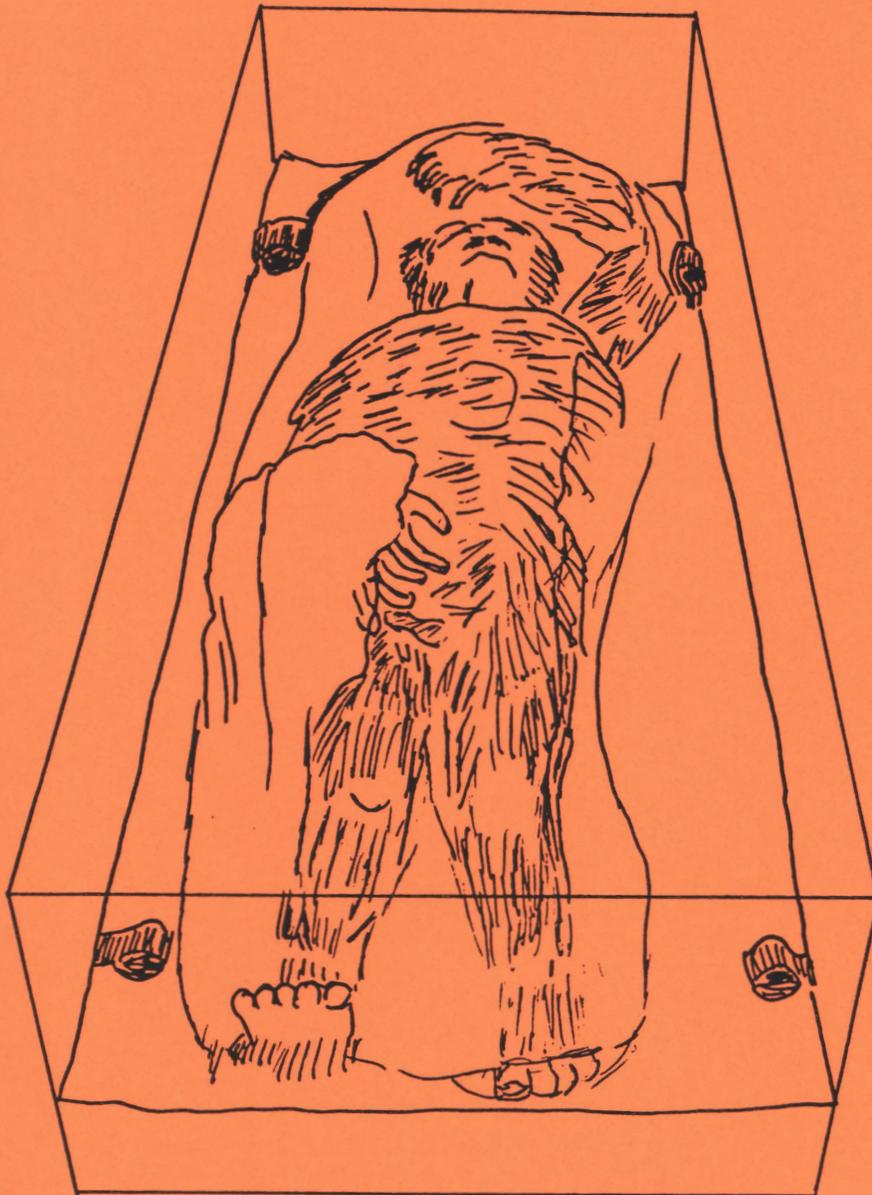
WONDERS

Seeking the Truth in a Universe of Mysteries

Vol. 3 No. 3

September 1994

The Minnesota Iceman



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A quarterly from M.A.H.P/Box 3153/Butler Station/Minneapolis MN 55403

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VOL. 3 NO. 3

(Whole No. 11) September 1994

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Published four times a year (March, June, September, December) by:
Mark A. Hall Publications
P.O. Box 3153, Butler Station
Minneapolis MN 55403 USA

Individual copies: US\$3 plus \$1 postage/handling for the USA, Canada, and Mexico. Subscriptions in the USA, Canada, and Mexico: \$14.50 for four issues.

Other foreign rates: US\$20.00 for 4 issues. Single copies by air: \$5.50.



FOUND AND LOST

- THE MYSTERY OF THE MINNESOTA ICEMAN

by Mark A. Hall

On 11 August 1994 I found myself in Burbank, California, as a guest of Cosgrove-Meurer Productions. They produce "Unsolved Mysteries," an NBC television network series that has been on the air for seven years. Their people had contacted me about events that happened 25 years earlier. A segment of the premiere show of their seventh season was going to tell the story of the "Minnesota Iceman." As familiar as the major events in that story were to me, I was to learn some surprising pieces of the story in the next few days. The following is my summary of the events surrounding the discovery and loss of the controversial "Iceman."

The "Iceman" was the subject of international news in 1969. In the long view of history it will probably prove to have been worthy of such notoriety. This thing appeared to be a hairy body in a block of ice. For a year and a half it was exhibited to the American public in the Midwest. It is possible this exhibit showed the mortal remains of one of those primate relatives of mankind that have yet to be acknowledged as still living. It certainly looked like a "wildman" of the kind that people have been describing for decades -- and by a thinner record, for centuries -- on the major continents of the globe.

It appeared to have died a violent death and to have been preserved temporarily in ice. It was carefully described by only two men with scientific training. They each wrote long descriptions of what they could see and photograph. Its caretaker would not allow them to open the refrigerated glass coffin in which it was exhibited. Once its existence was publicized, the object disappeared never to be seen again. The controversy went on for months afterward as the caretaker came forward with a model of the original exhibit and continued to make the rounds of state fairs and shopping malls with the model.

The staff of "Unsolved Mysteries" had heard about the Minnesota Iceman in 1994 and wanted to tell its story. When they asked fortune author Loren E. Coleman about it, he mentioned my name. When the Iceman was big news I had been in touch with some of the principal parties involved and I had photographs of the controversial exhibit. I knew much of its history and the uncertainties that surrounded it.

In May of 1994 I was visited in Minnesota by Dan Gomez, one of the directors for the production company. We discussed the entire story as best I knew it. In August the company flew four people to Burbank to be interviewed on camera. Those who have seen the ultimate television segment (broadcast on 25 September 1994) will know that the four were myself, Terry Cullen, Bob Czaplewski, and Dave Rvard. The exhibitor of the Iceman, Frank Hansen, declined to be interviewed. Bernard Heuvelmans, who had carefully observed the Iceman in the company of Ivan T. Sanderson in 1968, also declined to participate. Sanderson had died of cancer in 1973.

I had heard of Terry Cullen who was the person who brought the

exhibit to the attention of Sanderson. Czaplewski and Rvard were friends of Cullen who had visited the original Iceman exhibit in 1967 or in 1968. The evening of my arrival in Burbank I was to hear for the first time the extraordinary story that Terry Cullen had to tell. He and Bob Czaplewski came over to my room at the Holiday Inn Suites and we sat for a long time reminiscing about the early history of the Iceman.

Terry Cullen told me he was a fan of sideshow exhibitions. He was curious to see what they were and how they might have been created. This interest caused him, at the age of 17 in 1967, to plunk down the admission price to see the "Siberskoye Creature." That was the billing on the sign on the front of the trailer of Frank Hansen. Hansen first took his display on the road in 1967. When he showed up in the Milwaukee area Terry Cullen was there. As Cullen looked at the exhibit closely he thought he was seeing something different than any ordinary sideshow artwork.

He went back again and again. During 1967 and 1968 he saw the exhibit and the exhibitors, Frank Hansen and his wife, many times. He saw it in Wisconsin and elsewhere, such as the Minnesota State Fair. He was so persistent that, he says, Hansen became leery of him. Cullen made every effort he could to study the thing in ice closely. He found that the ice changed, seeming to melt down close to the object at times. He said Hansen had to hose the ice block with water to replenish the ice cover.

Cullen and others noticed a rank odor that sometimes came off the exhibit. Cullen identified this as the characteristic smell of the decomposing flesh of a warm-blooded animal. He pointed out that this smell is distinctly different in the case of cold-blooded animals. Terry Cullen, I should make clear, has pursued a career as a professional herpetologist. He does veterinary work and maintains his own collection of animals. He later showed me photographs of some of them.

Bob Czaplewski was also 17 in 1967 and was able to confirm much of what Cullen was telling me about the unusual exhibit. Czaplewski went on to a career in zookeeping.

Some of the reasons for Cullen's avid interest in the Iceman exhibit were that he could see:

plant matter in the teeth,
shed skins of ekto-parasites (lice) on the skin,
and unique dentition showing in the mouth where a lip was curled back.

A dentist advised Cullen that the dentition he described appeared to be functional. Unfortunately any records Cullen had made of the exhibit have been lost in the intervening years.

Cullen did his best as a young man of 17 and 18 years to get professional anthropologists to look at the exhibit in 1967 and 1968. He mentioned to me the names of men whom he had asked to go and look at the exhibit. They had all declined. One of them said since his specialty was not in physical anthropology his view of it would not have any importance.

One time only was Cullen able to get an anthropologist to actually

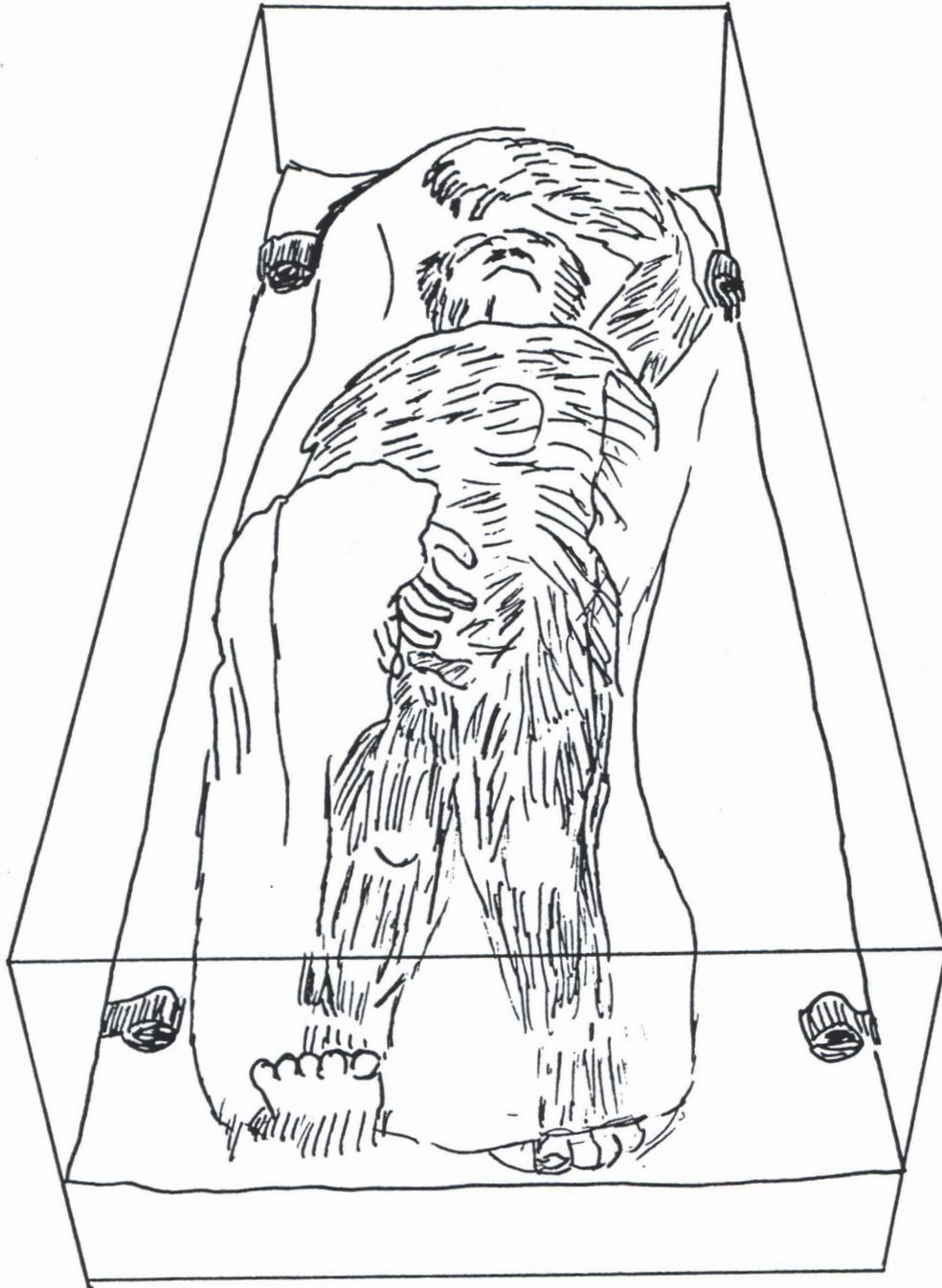


Fig. 1. The "Minnesota Iceman" is shown as it appeared in 1968 to Sanderson and Heuvelmans. This drawing is based upon their sketches and photographs. It was frozen in a block of ice that had been shaved down around the higher contours of the body.

look at the thing. The exhibit at the time was at the Minnesota State Fair. Cullen called the University of Minnesota. He was passed from one person to another until he got to talk to someone who said he would go look. The unfortunate fact in this episode is that Cullen never got the name of the anthropologist.

The television recreation of the event accurately depicted the scene that Cullen described to me. Cullen kept his distance because he felt Hansen might be concerned about someone Cullen brought to see it. After looking at the exhibit the anthropologist would say almost nothing to Cullen except, "It's amazing. Thank you." Cullen was left frustrated and no further ahead than before.

Czaplewski and Cullen both told me that the Iceman exhibit appeared to be hugely successful for Hansen in the year and a half that it was shown. The price of admission went from 25 cents to 35 cents to 50 cents, and still the people lined up to see it.

When I asked why Hansen would allow Sanderson and Heuvelmans to make the examination that they did Cullen told me he had paved the way for them. He had implied to Hansen that he could somehow make "a fortune" by allowing them to make blood studies and so on.

It was out of desperation, Cullen said, that he finally contacted Ivan T. Sanderson. Sanderson did not have a sterling reputation with the anthropological community. Quite simply this was because he had literally "written the book" on the survival of different kinds of "wildmen" around the world. The book was **Abominable Snowmen: Legend Come to Life**[1] published in 1961. The kind of response that this book received can be seen in the remark of one reviewer. H. R. Hays complained that "the author's tendency to rail repeatedly against the closed minds of zoologists becomes an irritating mannerism." [2] On the other hand, Carleton Coon concluded his review with his hope "that the experts will not be moved to withdraw even farther behind the shelter of their microscopes." [3] Terry Cullen seems to have found them doing just that.

Fate would have it that in December of 1968 Ivan Sanderson was being visited for the first time ever by a long-time correspondent, Bernard Heuvelmans. The Belgian zoologist was also famous for having written on the same subject, such as in **On the Track of Unknown Animals**. [4] The two men responded to the knowledge of this peculiar exhibit by driving half-way across the country to see it. They did not know what they would see when they made this commitment. Both of them had always preached that this is the kind of effort that should be made to learn -- true or false -- what something odd truly might be.

These two saw the exhibit at its winter quarters in Minnesota. Later they entered into fruitless negotiations to purchase the exhibit. Eventually each of them published a lengthy description of what they saw, Sanderson in **Genus** [5] and Heuvelmans in the **Bulletin of the Royal Institute of the Natural Sciences of Belgium**. [6] Other popular articles appeared and newspapers covered the story extensively from 23 March through early May of 1969. Frank Hansen canceled his previously scheduled tour and committed to a new tour with what he declared to be a model of the original.

This much of the story is what eventually appeared on the segment of "Unsolved Mysteries." Given the limits of a quarter-hour segment

of television time, the producers told their story fairly well in outline. I have to disagree with some of the specifics as will be evident in this description.

The producers concentrated on Terry Cullen's story and justifiably so. As I thought after my talk with Cullen and Czaplewski and as I said to Cullen the next day, the story is really his to tell now. Sanderson wrote all that he could on the subject and is beyond caring about it now. Heuvelmans put all that he wanted to say on the subject in a book published in French in 1974, *L'Homme de Neanderthal Est Toujours Vivant*. [7] This book is slated to be translated into English and re-issued within a few years, so Heuvelmans is satisfied. Hansen declined to say anything further on the subject.

On 12 August 1994 the television production company filmed its interviews, with Dan Gomez as the director. Stuart Alpert was the field producer, in charge of bringing together the subjects, crew, equipment, etc. in the same place at the right time. Judy Storch, who did the research for this segment, stopped by during the afternoon.

As expected three of us made brief appearances in the final product, while Terry Cullen was shown telling his story. Most of the time of the segment was taken up with recreations of events, which is the standard formula for "Unsolved Mysteries." The day after the interviews filming began on the recreations. At the invitation of the production company the four of us all spent at least part of the day watching them at work. A set was created at a remote site on the edge of Los Angeles County. Tents were set up to resemble a carnival. Actors, extras, and the crew labored that day for about ten hours during a heat wave. I was there for five hours.

The program when aired told with recreations the story of Cullen's interest, the visit by an anthropologist, the examination by Sanderson and Heuvelmans, the curiosity of law enforcement after attention had been drawn to the exhibit, and one alleged source of the exhibit.

The program has again raised curiosity about the once-notorious Iceman. I have been asked to tell more of the story. Many questions about the Iceman exhibit cannot be answered with certainty. What was it? Was it once living? Who owned it? Where did it come from? Where did it end up? From what I have learned I can only present hypothetical answers to these questions. I will attempt to do so after reviewing the publicity and events that went on into 1969.

The remainder of the Iceman story does more to create confusion than it does to clarify the fundamental questions about it. Some of this confusion is certainly deliberate. However, these events should be gone over because they are part of the record. They have been and will be brought up when the validity of the Iceman is discussed.

At this point in time I am convinced that you are likely to get a somewhat different version of events depending on whom you ask. Heuvelmans gives his own answers in his book. Those views will doubtless be aired in the future.

Terry Cullen did not want to speculate on the origins or true identity of the Iceman for lack of any certain facts. He did feel that the exhibit was Hansen's to do with whatever he wished. He was critical of Sanderson and Heuvelmans for failing to negotiate the ownership of the exhibit. As portrayed in the television segment,

Hansen had long maintained that the exhibit was owned by someone else. As far as he was concerned in early 1969 it was returned into the possession of that owner.

Where Terry Cullen's story ends, Ivan Sanderson's story begins. And so does my own participation in events surrounding the Iceman. Coincidentally on 1 December 1968 a news report from Wisconsin came to my attention. A party of deer hunters observed a seven-foot-tall hairy creature near Fremont. I wrote to Sanderson to tell him about it. This episode did not involve the Iceman but simply evolved parallel to the Iceman story because Sanderson and Heuvelmans chose to stop in Wisconsin on their way back from Hansen's home in Minnesota.

Terry Cullen telephoned Ivan Sanderson on 12 December and set in motion events that would make the Iceman world-famous. Heuvelmans and Sanderson had corresponded for years, but the two had never met until the Belgian scientist visited Sanderson in New Jersey in 1968. The two decided to drive halfway across the country to examine the Iceman after Sanderson had made a preliminary enquiry through acquaintances in the Midwest. Their stop in Wisconsin is described in an article Sanderson wrote for *Argosy* Magazine in April of 1969.[8] Hunters and other local citizens had chanced to see some unusual things in October and November in swampy areas of east-central Wisconsin. Subsequent to their visit the publicity for the Wisconsin sightings continued on into January, which included press coverage and television interviews.[9]

On 16-18 December the two men were at the Hansen farm in southeastern Minnesota. The trailer used for the exhibit was parked in the open, as can be seen in a photograph in Heuvelmans' book.[10] It was not parked in a barn as depicted in the television program. This is significant because we should appreciate the conditions under which they were permitted to examine the Iceman. The refrigerated coffin was inside a narrow and unheated trailer, parked in the open in the month of December. Here they sketched, photographed, and made estimates of size on the object as best they could while the coffin remained unopened. (See Fig. 1.)

The Iceman appeared to be a corpse. It was not human. It possessed characteristics in size, structure, and overall appearance that indicated it was a "wildman" of the kind people have seen both dead and alive repeatedly in historical records. This was the first to be preserved, even if only temporarily in ice.

The two long descriptions already referred to above contain detailed observations about the ice block and its contents. Sanderson began his description with this cautionary note:

Any conclusions that follow amount, frankly, to little more than speculation because the specimen could not be handled and had to be viewed from no closer than a foot at best, through four sheets of plate glass and a varying amount of clear, frosted, or totally opaque ice. The whole exercise is therefore equivalent to describing an unknown form of any animal fixed in a solid block of plastic -- such as is used to encase demonstration specimens -- but with more than half the exposed surfaces identifiable only as a shadow under opacity.[11]

When living the body might have been around six feet tall. It had a thick hair covering except for areas such as the face, hands, and right foot. Two-thirds of the mouth was concealed beneath opaque ice.

Terry Cullen told me that he had a much better look at the mouth and other parts of the body because the ice would melt down close to the body surface and Hansen would periodically replenish the ice cover. Cullen thought Sanderson and Heuvelmans had exaggerated the size of the hands and feet. The two differed considerably on the width of the right foot, which was positioned so the toes pointed upward. Sanderson gave a measurement of $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches for the width. Only the Yetis and True Giants have such a wide foot.[12] This specimen would not have been either of those types because the foot and other features do not match them. Heuvelmans gives a width of 8 inches for the same foot, while noting that the length could not be measured due to its disappearance into the depth of the ice block.[13] I asked Cullen how he would rate their descriptions overall. He thought the two were "moderately accurate."

They noticed the smell of decomposition when the heat of a photographic light caused a pane of glass on the coffin to crack. Also they observed some discoloration of the toes on the right foot that suggested it was in fact rotting.

The head was tipped backward so that its upper parts could not be viewed. The Iceman appeared to have been shot through the head and in the chest. The left arm was broken and frozen in a position around and above the head.

The condition of the ice enclosing the Iceman was studied later in Heuvelmans' photographs. Geologist Jack A. Ullrich of Westport, CT, observed that layers of ice had accumulated first at the freezing coils in the tank and grew to the body in the ice. These indicated that the corpse -- if such it was -- was artificially frozen in place.[14]

Hansen told them he had been exhibiting the Iceman since 3 May 1967. He first said he had bought the ice block and its contents from a curio dealer in Hong Kong. Prior to that it had been found floating in the ocean by Japanese whalers. Alternatively, as Sanderson notes, the original finders were said later to be a vessel of Russian seal hunters off the coast of Siberia. (Hence the billing as the "Siberskoye Creature.") Later still he told the two investigators that "it was a member of the California film industry who had discovered it during a trip to the East looking for locations and properties for his films." [15]

Sanderson and Heuvelmans returned east after their coarse examination of the Iceman. On the evening of Christmas Day of 1968 Ivan Sanderson appeared on The Tonight Show, a popular television program at the time. The guest-host was a singer, Jack Jones. The conversation that night, I was told later, was scripted by Sanderson so that he could introduce the existence of the Iceman without saying much about it. Here is how the exchange went:

Jack Jones: My next guest is Ivan Sanderson, currently Science Editor for *Argosy* Magazine. Ivan is a zoologist, writer, and animal collector. Ivan has been criticized in recent years for his insistence

that the animal generally called the Abominable Snowman exists and exists particularly in North America. That's why we would like to question him about it tonight. I have been told you were just out in the Midwest. Right?

Ivan Sanderson: That's correct, yes.

JJ: And I understand you went to see an actual corpse.

IS: Yes. I did.

JJ: Was it for real?

IS: It was, yes, definitely. Speaking as a scientist, it was.

JJ: Can you elaborate a little bit on that?

IS: I was out there on behalf of a magazine, *Argosy*, which I work for. And as a reporter we have a certain ethical standard and I was asked by the owners and caretakers of this object not to publicize the matter in any way or to discuss it or describe it until they gave their permission. Having given that assurance, I'm awfully sorry but I simply cannot speak any further on the subject.

JJ: Well, don't forget, folks, you didn't hear it here first.

IS: I will say that it's for true and I have been thirty years looking for concrete evidence of these things and it exists.

They went on to discuss the recent events in Wisconsin and the international interest in reports of "wildmen" generally.

After that there was silence on the subject of the Iceman until March of 1969. Heuvelmans sold his photographs, a drawing, and his story to *The Guardian* in Europe. A flood of news stories followed. The *Guardian* story appeared in North America on 19 March under the title "Does Neanderthal Lurk in Canada?"[16] The following day the Minneapolis, Minnesota, *Star* printed a staff-written article discussing Hansen and his exhibit.[17] Sanderson's name did not appear in these early articles. The Iceman continued to be news through July. The story of the Iceman has popped up in books and newspapers ever since, and it will probably continue to do so.

Heuvelmans wrote a long article for a South African publication, *Personality*, published in Bloemfontein.[18] In it he wrote that he broke the story to try to influence public opinion, so that the Iceman could be obtained and preserved. He argued, "Every day that passes the specimen decomposes a little more." Heuvelmans wrote that, while Sanderson had made a promise not to publish on it, he had been careful to make no such promise.

Ivan Sanderson told me that the first he knew of all of this was when he received an angry phone call from Frank Hansen. Attempts to negotiate a purchase of the exhibit came to an end at this point. According to press accounts at the end of March, Hansen said the original exhibit had been removed by the anonymous owner.[19] At the same time Sheriff George Fort in Winona, Minnesota, described for the press his visit to Hansen's farm in late February. He had gone at the request of "an official agency." He may have meant the Federal Bureau of Investigation or the Smithsonian Institution, both of which were involved behind the scenes after Sanderson contacted Dr. John Napier at the Smithsonian about the need to obtain the Iceman.

Here is how Sheriff Fort described his visit:

The first time I went to the farm Mr. Hansen was not home but his wife let me look at the exhibit. The heavy glass covering the box in which it lay in ice was discolored and I could only see about down to the waist. In some ways its looked like an ape -- I think maybe the long hair gave that impression. Yet the nose looked almost human and I was struck by how the fingers resembled those of a human.[20]

The sheriff was also quoted as saying it looked "quite human." The same press story said Hansen later visited his office and told him it was not human.

In late April Hansen put on display for the press "a fabricated illusion." Except for the photographs taken by Heuvelmans in 1968, all the photos that are supposed to show the "Iceman" date from April 1969 and after. They do not show the "Iceman" but instead show a model that Hansen has displayed after April 1969.

Hansen canceled his commitments to display the Iceman and arranged new dates and places to exhibit his model. The first date and place was the Midway Shopping Center in St. Paul, Minnesota, on 5 May 1969. I was there to see the exhibit. I met Frank Hansen and his wife. I requested permission to photograph his exhibit and did so.

When Ivan Sanderson saw those pictures he was able to say that the model was quite different from the Iceman. When a copy of Heuvelmans' paper in the Belgian journal became available to me in July I could see what he meant. It was similar but it was not the same thing. Sanderson released a popular article on the Iceman in *Argosy* Magazine in the May 1969 issue.[21] Only one of the photos in it was of sufficient quality to give a clear view of the Iceman.

Hansen took his model on a tour of Midwestern states. In July he got some press attention again. When returning from Canada at the border in North Dakota he was stopped briefly. A call to his U.S. Senator eased his passage back into the country. The fuss at the border was quite unnecessary because the model is of no interest to anyone. The chance to see the Iceman had long passed. Hansen was quite candid about replacing the original with a model.

The new exhibit did not do well. Despite the publicity for the mystery, people wanted to see the real thing, not what was openly declared to be a fabrication. Within two years Hansen was farming his exhibit out to car dealers and the like, unattended with only a tape recording and signs to tell the viewers about it.

Journalists who haven't done their homework have continued to write about the exhibit as if were the same thing described in the popular *Argosy* article. Most have not and will not read the long technical descriptions that define the real Iceman.

Some have wanted to say that Hansen merely altered the original exhibit to make it look different. That was not Sanderson's view or mine having compared what I saw with Heuvelmans many photographs. Sanderson wrote: "This new model went on public exhibit in May of this year. It was photographed with the permission of the caretaker, and the photographs clearly demonstrate that it is not the original specimen examined by us -- and in a number of readily discernible details." [22]

The claims to have made models of this thing mushroomed in 1969 to the point where Sanderson wrote in October of 1970:

We received five reports on the construction of such "specimens" by model-makers; most notably by the Hollywood, old-time professional John Chambers. This was published in a respected trade journal entitled **Hollywood Studio Magazine**, for June 1970. This article included photographs of Mr. Chambers constructing his model. This looks like a magnificent example of the model-makers art but, although almost in the pose of Frank Hansen's original corpse, has no possible likeness to, or connection with, it.[23]

The Smithsonian dropped its interest in the Iceman upon the basis that a model of such a thing had been made in April of 1967.[24] Naturally this claim was of great interest to Terry Cullen who wanted to know if someone had made the thing he saw in 1967 and 1968. He pursued the claim. He told me he could not track down the factual verification by the Smithsonian that such a model had been made. When he tried to do so he was referred from one person to another with no result. He said, "It just evaporated."

More than one model may well have been made based upon the original Iceman. Hansen has said that he did commission two of them. One of the them was discarded as inadequate.

The unsubstantiated claims made during and after the major publicity for the Iceman would make a study in people's eagerness to jump onto what they see as a bandwagon. By way of **Argosy Magazine** Ivan Sanderson received at least two manuscripts from people who claimed to have shot the Iceman. I read them both and on the face of them they were ridiculous. Meanwhile a group of Bigfoot-seekers in the Pacific Northwest were being entertained by another party of people who were essentially telling an "I-shot-the-Iceman" story.

In July of 1970 an article appeared in **Saga Magazine** written by Frank Hansen that was titled "I Shot the Ape-Man Creature of Whiteface." [24] It was illustrated with pictures of the model. In it another origin of the Iceman is given, an unlikely tale of shooting it in the fall and collecting the body the next spring! According to Sanderson the author was unable to sell this piece but persuaded the magazine editors to publish it in return for some copies of the magazine. It was intended to divert attention from the actual owner and the true origin of the Iceman.

Another diversion often mentioned by detractors of the Iceman is a story in a weekly trashpaper published in June of 1969. Such a story only demonstrates that we have a free press in this country.

We do not have a factual basis for the origin of the Minnesota Iceman. Nevertheless, it did come from somewhere. The time has come for me to give my own views -- hypothetical though they must be -- on what it may have been, where it came from, what happened to it, and why it came to be on exhibit at shopping malls.

What was it?

Heuvelmans has come out clearly in favor of the creature being

a survivor of Neanderthal Man. In his book in French he likens it to traditions of Neanderthal-like primates described as living in Asia. He favors an origin for it having been shot in Vietnam.[25] He has compared it to the wildmen known as the *ksy-gihik* in Central Asia and as the *kaptar* in the region of the Caucasus.[26]

Sanderson writes that his personal opinion on its identity is "not formulated." [27] He comes out squarely opposed to Heuvelmans' view, writing that "it most certainly should not be assigned to the Neanderthal race or complex." [28]

I am well aware that John Napier writes that "the characteristics of the Iceman seemed to me then -- as now -- to combine the worst features of apes and man and none of the best features which make these two groups extremely successful primates in their respective environments." [29] I have not been bothered by this observation because we are not considering one of nature's successes, but instead one of the least successful of the many experiments in primates which I have discussed elsewhere. [30].

It would help us to know if the Iceman was a mature individual of its type, but here too we are faced with contradictory viewpoints. Sanderson noted "some folds and wrinkle lines around the mouth just below the cheeks. These are absolutely human, and are like those seen in a heavy-jowled, older white man." [31] On the other hand, Cullen is shown on the television broadcast giving his view that the object resembled an adolescent male.

We are denied clarity in other indicators of type, such as the complete shape of the head and the dimensions and structure of a complete foot.

For 25 years I have avoided reaching a conclusion on what the Iceman would be even in my own private thoughts. I have to say now that Heuvelmans makes the best case. We have only sketchy perceptions of the many kinds of "wildmen," but what we do know at this time indicates the Iceman might have been what I would call the Shorter-Hominid, which is the *kaptar* and the like that most closely resemble Neanderthal Man.

A recent publication from China gives a description of a "wildman" that recalls the Iceman. A stockman in Fangxian County was forced to wrestle the creature for possession of his gun on 16 June 1974. Here is how he described it:

It opened its mouth wide, make a frightening face and showing its yellow teeth. They were similar to human's, but a bit wider.

It was not a bear. It looked like a human. Its hair hung down to its eyes, which were red, smaller than a human's, and round in shape. The nose was a bit higher on the face than a human nose, and its forehead protruded. Its mouth was wide, and it had a convex chest, thin legs, big buttocks, big hands, long fingers and curving fingernails, without tail. The legs were long, thick at the top and thin at the ankles. The feet were narrow at the heel and wide at the front. It stank. It was a male creature. [32]

We do not have to look to Asia to find living Shorter-Hominids. They seem to be responsible for sightings and tracks in North America as well. Most importantly, I would associate them with the traditions of the **Nakani** and "Bushmen" known in Alaska and western Canada. Loren Coleman and I drew a description of them from anthropological sources:

They are known to be active only during the summer months, when concealed by foliage. They spend winters underground, living on dried meat. The location of their subterranean houses is sometimes indicated by smoke issuing from a small hole in the ground. A **Nakani** habit of traveling in small groups is noted, though they are now seen as single individuals. [33]

Such sources do not record enough specifics to define the Shorter-Hominid. When one listens carefully to encounters with "Bushmen" as Frank Graves did when visiting Fort Simpson, the tracks and descriptions people report indicate cultured Neanderthal-like men. I have talked with Graves and seen his notes on what he learned there.

I have described the tracks of Shorter-hominids[34] and have in my files records of them in the West far to the south of the region of the **Nakani** traditions.

Where did the Iceman come from?

The most remarkable event in the history of a genuine Iceman is his death in circumstances where rapid preservation in ice was possible. The reported preservation of the damaged corpse and the blood that surrounded it all suggest a short time between death and immersion in the water. The Iceman is likely to have been encountered and killed in a place where a large freezer or cold storage facility was at hand. I am not persuaded by the suggestion that such a strong and untamed creature would be captured and moved, only to be shot later under such favorable circumstances.

The obligatory showman's patter describing its origin can be disregarded. We do not have to look to Asia for an origin at all. It seems more likely that it originated in the country in which we find it, the U.S.A. Even the putative owner's story given to caretaker Hansen about finding the thing in Hong Kong may have been an artful cover story to satisfy Hansen's curiosity.

Upon the evidence an armed human being encountered the living Iceman and shot him to death, either from misplaced or justified fear of him. When I look at the record of "wildmen" in the West in the period prior to the Iceman's appearance I have no trouble finding incidents where people were shooting at hairy wildmen.

At Wildwood, California, in January of 1966 two men saw a "Bigfoot" looking in their cabin window. One of them fired at it with a shotgun and thought he struck it.[35] In May of 1967 at the Dalles, Oregon, youths watched more than one "Sasquatch" around a freeway and a river. They shot at them several times and knocked one of them down.[36]

None of these incidents need be necessarily associated with the Iceman. They only demonstrate that people in the Western states were not reluctant to take shots at "wildmen" that were appearing at the

edge of their communities. Such a person may have discovered one night to their shock that they had wounded and then had to dispatch with more shots a thing that looked very human when given close examination.

Preserved for its uniqueness in an ice block, the object was obtained by a wealthy person living on the West Coast. The actions of the people involved in the Iceman episode are best explained to me by the existence of such an anonymous owner.

Frank Hansen was approached to exhibit it. He did so for a year and a half until it aroused too much interest. The owner reclaimed it, and Hansen was provided with a model to continue his livelihood and to confound a newly curious and much bigger audience.

I would not fault Sanderson and Heuvelmans for failing to obtain this specimen. I would say they had no chance at all to ever take possession of it honestly.

What happened to it?

It is likely that the rotting corpse of the famous Iceman was in early 1969 deposited into an unmarked and now forgotten grave by agents of the owner. Without kith or kin in a position to complain the body was not formally missed.

Many have hoped that one day a fortunate accident or an incident of the demise of a "wildman" would one day provide a corpse and confirm the existence of such relatives of humankind. The history of the Iceman, if accurate, is harmful to this expectation. Someone did shoot one. We have seen that this act became a dreadful secret. The corpse was understood to be unique and was preserved. But what to do with it then? The person who did the deed is likely to have felt at risk of prosecution for murder. There is no legal guaranty or support that would allow the guilty party to come forward openly with the evidence of the act.

I have argued for a different approach to confirming the presence of these "wildmen" in **The Yeti, Bigfoot & True Giants**.^[37] I would make the same argument in the total absence of the history of the Iceman, but its history serves only to encourage the need for a different approach than advocating the killing of even one "wildman."

Why was the Iceman put on display?

When Dan Gomez asked me why such a thing would not be properly studied if genuine, I had no answer. It appeared that the owner did not value it in the way many of us would. The only plausible reasoning for this act came to me later from Dan Gomez. When he visited with Frank Hansen following our discussion in May of 1994, he put this question to Hansen. What I can report is only hearsay, but Hansen's reported reply is the first and only good solution I have heard or read.

The true owner of the Iceman did want to be the one who presented the "missing link" that would undercut the truth of Biblical creation. The owner was interested in seeing people's reaction to the "missing link" and so allowed the Iceman to be displayed.

After the Iceman came to the attention of Sanderson and Heuvelmans it was tagged with the nickname of "Bozo," after a famous fictional clown. The fate of the Iceman has truly been a clownish role in the history of the twentieth century. He was shot and reduced to an icy corpse, whether in the prime of his life or in advanced age we will never know. He was passed around until he became an object of curious attention at state fairs and shopping malls, and the likes of the Chicago Stock Fair. He was spared only the literal experience of being a carnival sideshow. The symbolism of this entire episode will be appreciated only after his species is one day acknowledged in living form. Some day on other grounds we will be certain what this animal represents in the scheme of primate evolution.

The sad history of Bozo, the Iceman, demonstrates how unprepared we are to face the living forms of what is recorded otherwise only in books as a fossil record of our primate ancestors. I have written in *The Yeti, Bigfoot & True Giants* how there are numerous survivals from this record.

The likes of the Iceman have been shot before. But the bodies were always disposed of readily, usually by military units engaged in warfare with their own kind.

We have seen in the Iceman what happens when a specimen of this kind is finally preserved. We were tested by the demise of Bozo. As a species we were represented by all who came in contact with him. We failed the test. Among them the only three who saw the importance of the specimen were powerless to influence his fate. His destiny was to be valueless and to disappear entirely from within our midst. He ended his career as a public entertainment most probably in an unmarked grave.

One day decades into our future he will be cited with some astonishment by our posterity as a genuine article. Then perhaps some dignity will be restored to this unfortunate creature remembered now simply as Bozo, the Minnesota Iceman.

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THE WORKS OF ALPHEUS HYATT VERRILL (1871-1954)

by Mark A. Hall

We should seek out and make use of our cultural heritage, even if that past is hard to access. There is a vast collection of works by one man, Alpheus Hyatt Verrill (1871-1954), that is waiting to be mined for its curious knowledge by any and all of us. At this time I can pass along some guidance on the life's literary output of this naturalist, archaeologist, treasure hunter, and adventurer.

His name is one that pops up when wonders are discussed. He clearly had a curious and comprehensive mind. He wrote many volumes of non-fiction in the natural sciences and anthropology. He also produced fiction and science fiction. One of his most often remembered books that people mention to me is his **Bridge of Light**. Written in 1929 and published in a pulp magazine, it was re-issued in 1950 in hardcover. Panned in a review in the *New York Times*, it is today a delight to read. It is virtually a script for a movie in the genre of "Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark." The story tells the non-stop adventures of an archaeologist in pursuit of a spectacular quest.

This attention to Verrill is all the more noteworthy because this book and almost every one of his books are now out of print. Very few of his titles, such as **They Found Gold**, **The Strange Story of Our Earth**, and **America's Ancient Civilizations**, have been re-printed in recent years. To benefit from his observations on the curious and the unknown which are not found elsewhere you will have to seek his books in large libraries. These books are seldom seen in used bookstores having passed into private book collections.

To experience Verrill one might begin with **My Jungle Trails or Strange Customs, Manners and Beliefs**.

By way of example, the latter contains his experience with "talking drums." As he tells it:

When I was on an expedition in the jungles in northern South America, one of my Indian guides stepped from the trail and began to pound upon a huge, hollow mora tree. Curious, I asked him why he did it. He replied that he was "talking to his village" and informing the chief that we were coming. As his village was more than twenty miles distant, his statement seemed ridiculous. But I found I had much to learn about Indian wireless messages.

Upon arriving at the village Verrill found they were expected and preparations for their food and lodging were made. Verrill got his guide to show him a dead tree near the village, which was on top of hill above the surrounding forest. This tree was the receiving point of the message beaten on the mora tree. Verrill arranged to have someone strike that same mora tree in a particular way and at a certain time while Verrill was in place at the dead tree.

I stood beside the dead tree, ears tensed, but not really expecting to hear a sound. I actually jumped when suddenly the

dead tree commenced to emit sounds exactly as if someone were striking it with a stick. Just as clearly as though I had been standing beside Sam, I heard his blows as he hit the hollow mora tree many miles away.

Verrill was born in New Haven, CT, on 23 July 1871. His father was zoologist Addison Emery Verrill (1839-1926), who is remembered for his consideration of the strange sea carcass that washed up on a Florida beach in 1897. Some think it was the remains of a giant octopus.

The young Verrill studied with his father at Yale University. In 1899 he began a career of expeditions into Central America and South America. He studied Indian peoples and archaeological remains. It could be noted that his membership in the Mormon Church may have influenced his inclination to pursue certain exotic interests in the records of the Americas, but I doubt that his judgment and findings can be faulted for showing too much influence from that quarter.

From 1899-1920 he explored in Central America, especially Panama, and in the West Indies, Bermuda, and Guiana. He did intelligence work for the U.S.A. in 1917-18. Later expeditions were made in Peru, Bolivia, and Chile. More work was done in Central America in 1924-27. In 1926-28 he executed a series of oil paintings of South American and Central American Indians from life.

Verrill is credited with having invented the autochrome process (photography in natural colors) in 1902. Also he re-discovered the supposedly extinct *Solenodon paradoxus* on Santo Domingo in 1907.

In 1940 he established the Aniharka Experimental Gardens and Natural Science Museum at the site of the first settlement in Florida established by DeSoto. He lived out his life in Florida, engaging a shell business, going on treasure hunts, and continuing his writing.

He died at Chiefland, Florida, on 14 November 1954.

Verrill prepared an autobiographical manuscript (titled "Never a Dull Moment") which has never been published. The manuscript is in the hands of the Museum of the American Indian of the Heye Foundation.

He co-authored *America's Ancient Civilizations* with his second wife, Lida Ruth Verrill (1900-1972). She authored and self-published a history of Levy County, Florida (*Romantic and Historic Levy County - 1976*). She also prepared an manuscript on South American archaeology. Its working title was "Who Was the Bearded God?" She was unable to find a publisher for it.

The variety of Verrill's work can be seen in the following bibliographies. He authored books for boys, natural histories, popular books on American Indians, works on pirates and treasure, and regional histories. The second bibliography lists all of his non-fiction contributions to periodicals that have come to my attention. A third bibliography covers his works of science fiction.

Acknowledgments: I am grateful to A.H. Verrill's daughter, Mrs. Cabot (Rose) Allen of Chiefland, Florida, for assisting me with listing her father's books. I am grateful to Lowell Neilson, Ken Fletcher, and Uncle Hugo's Science Fiction Bookstore in Minneapolis for help when putting together a bibliography of Verrill's science fiction.

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Current Events: Big Cats Black and Tan

The two American big cats, the cougar (*Felis concolor*) and the lunkasoose (*Panthera atrox*), have remained in the news during the year that they were discussed in *Wonders* (March 1994). D'Vera Cohn, writing in the Washington (D.C.) *Post* (21 August 1994), tells us:

Maryland, Virginia, West Virginia wildlife officials don't dispute that some people have seen the sleek, tawny creatures [cougars] that purr like a tabby, weigh 200 pounds or more full-grown and can kill prey several times their size. The government's view, however, is that these animals probably are Western cougars once kept as pets and won't last in the wild.

This is the "party line" sounded around the East to explain away and silence modern sighters of these cats. Having suffered past calls for sobriety tests and eye examinations, we are now blithely told that the cats just have to be "escaped pets" though no shred of support is offered to validate this blarney.

Black cats are seen too, writes Cohn. She cites Paul Schroyer seeing three cats "jet black like a panther" at Friendsville, Maryland. His daughter videotaped them. The party line: "fishers." Our alternative: consider *Panthera atrox*.

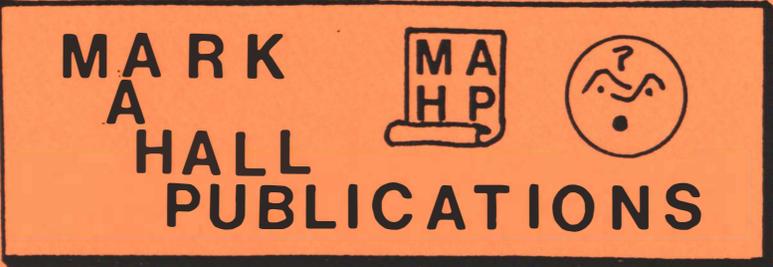
In Wisconsin the black and the tan cats have been seen also. Ron Schara, writing, in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* (1 January 1995), reports the total is 119 sightings in northern Wisconsin from 1991 to 1993. According to the state DNR the black cats "might have been jaguars or leopards that escaped from captivity or were released." Schara writes:

Ray Canfield, 78, of Spooner and his nephew Gary Canfield, 48, of Trego said they saw a 40- to 50-pound black cat with a long tail sitting on rocks on a corner of Ray Canfield's lot last summer. "I was really surprised. I thought it was impossible," he said. "But it couldn't have been a [house] cat because it was too big."

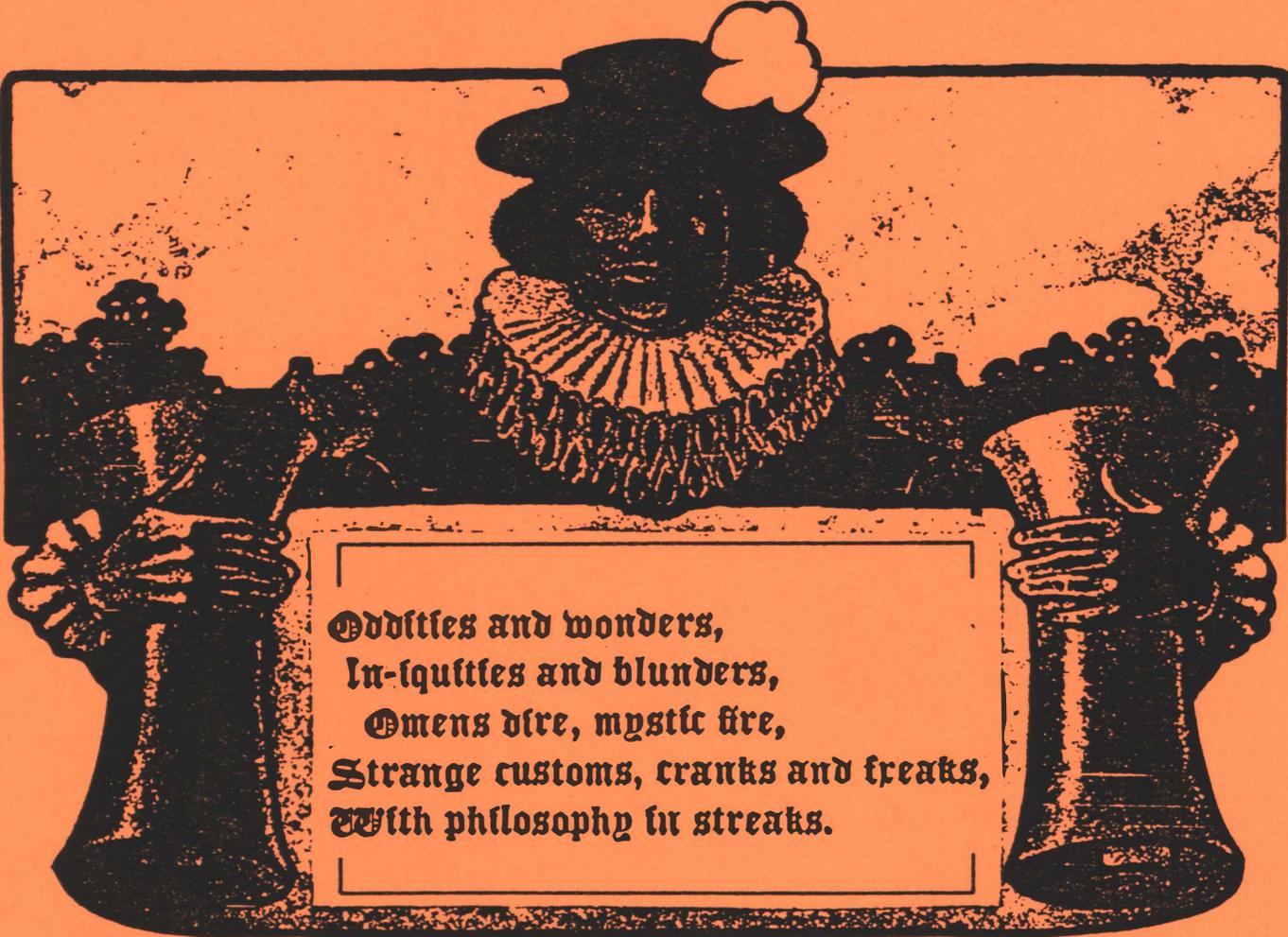
Vermont continues to a source of news, probably because the cats are there and someone cares to write about them. John Lazenby has written "The Cat is Back" in *Vermont Life* for Winter 1994. On 2 April 1994 three cats were seen in Craftsbury in northeastern Vermont. This caused a search for tracks and scat. A scat sample was analyzed and found to contain the hairs of *Felis concolor*. Writes Lazenby:

Instantly the Vermont catamount landscape changed. Other sightings in the area fit a more coherent pattern: two spotted kittens seen in Craftsbury in May of 1992, and adult and two younger animals seen 10 miles away in Elmore State Park in August of 1993, other sightings in the Northeast Kingdom, and, indeed, around the state.

As my earlier discussions suggested, neither of these two felines ever left to "come back." Our neglect of them is slowly eroding.



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