

WONDERS

SEEKING THE TRUTH IN A UNIVERSE OF MYSTERIES

Vol. 7 No. 2

June 2002

Thunderbirds



**Taller-
hominids**



The Hidden Animals

**True
Giants**

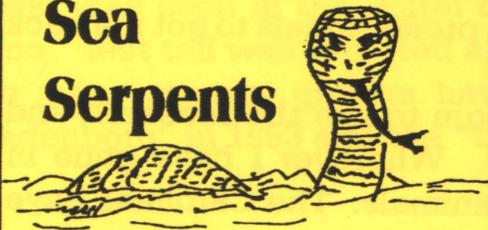


**Black
Panthers**



of the Carolinas

**Sea
Serpents**



Knobby



WONDERS

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BACK IN STRIDE

When I retired from my "day job" in June of 2001 I expected to be busy in the following months. I had no idea, however, that in the next 16 months I would move twice and break my arm along the way. Now, after a couple of surgeries, my arm is nearly back to normal.

Uprooting from Minnesota was difficult. My departure was only possible with the assistance of friends who helped me over that hurdle. A delayed consequence of that move was a break in my arm that fully manifested itself months later. I have had the assistance of the staffs of the Wilmington Orthopaedic Group, Cape Fear Memorial Hospital, the Coastal Rehabilitation Hospital and many other health professionals to get me back in stride.

With this issue of *Wonders* I can begin to use the research and planning that have gone into the past year. Wherever I have gone in America I have found a history of wonderful animals. The Carolinas have a wealth of them too.

The Hidden Animals of the Carolinas

BY MARK A HALL

The Southeastern United States of America has a history of unusual animals as varied as any in North America. We are considering here the creatures that appear in the news as "monsters" of one kind or another. They appear for a brief period and then fall back into obscurity as the more typical news takes over the airwaves and the printed columns of newspapers. There is a long record for the appearances and disappearances of such things.

Some might consider these things unique, especially those who chance to see something like it only once in their lifetime. However, we can often identify these things from their similarities to animals in the annals of cryptozoology. That is the field of inquiry that tries to make sense of the "hidden animals," or more properly the animals that hide from us, in the modern day. Such creatures are usually "living fossils" for they have a solid basis in the fossil records discovered for the recent and sometimes distant past. Some are simply persistent survivors in areas where they are not supposed to appear. Imagine a wolverine turning up in the Appalachian Mountains, for example. Some of these wonder animals will not have an obvious identity in the fossil record. Sea Serpents are always spectacular but they are not easily classified when no part of them is obtained for examination.

In North Carolina and in South Carolina unusual animals have been around for a long time. Mermaid Point in the heart of North Carolina got its name for the legendary mer-beings that people saw. In 1873 a mystery beast was seen in the laurel thickets of Madison County. A "wild man" nine feet tall was reported around 1910 in the mountains. A very few of the many strange critters have become famous, such as the "Beast of Bladenboro" in 1953 and the "Lizardman" of the Scape Ore Swamp in 1988.

Many people will wonder if it is possible for any large animals of an uncommon kind to be at large in the Carolinas today. So let us first examine the recent history of a large animal for which there is no doubt about its existence. It has turned up all over the Carolinas according to the residents of the two states, while the wildlife authorities say it does not. And after that discussion we will go on to the lesser known but equally elusive "monsters" of the Carolinas.

In the 1800s a native cat of the Carolinas, the mountain lion, stopped being commonly seen. This is a far cry from being extinct, but the cougar has been officially declared to be absent from the Carolinas since the nineteenth century. When asked to comment on the appearance of the "Beast of Bladenboro" in 1953, the officials at the North Carolina Museum of Natural History allowed that the last sighting of the panther in the state occurred at Highlands in the mountains in 1905. The last reports they could cite for the state's coastal region were in the 1880s. They may have been misquoted. According to Stanley Young and Edward Goldman's 1946 study *The Puma: Mysterious American Cat* what was seen in 1905 was the skin of a panther that was shot around 1886! Those authors agree that the cat disappeared in the Carolinas early.

However, people keep reporting this big cat in the Carolinas. When North Carolina's *The State Magazine* printed in 1980 that the state's last cougar was one killed near Grandfather Mountain in 1930s by CCC workers, they got letters from people who had seen the cats since then. Those reports were from the mountainous Blue Ridge province at the western end of the state. B.F. Craddock of Stoneville had just seen one along the Blue Ridge Parkway near Orchard Gap. A.A. Siler of Franklin had seen one early one morning in 1963. He wrote, "It was a tawny color, had a big head, and stood, I reckon, about three feet high." It was moving from one laurel thicket to another between Franklin and Robbinsville. Joe D. Kinard of Greer, South Carolina, and his wife encountered one while hiking 15 miles west of Franklin. They didn't speak up at the time because "we felt no one would believe us."

The Great Smoky Mountains National Park has hardly been without reports of the cats in the 1900s. Reports from 1938 to 1967 are listed in *Mammals of Great Smoky Mountains National Park* by Alicia and Donald Linzey (University of Tenn. Press, 1971). On 7 August 1975 the Associated Press spread across the country the news that four park employees had

seen a cougar on July 23. The park superintendent, Gilbert Calhoun, said, "We've gotten reports for years of people seeing panthers in the park and hearing them scream, but this is the first time we've received a documented report." The four observers also found panther tracks both large and small.

In the Piedmont region of North Carolina cougars have also been reported. They have been seen around the wooded peaks of the Uwharrie National Forest. In May of 1998 a big cat was seen by two people driving on a forest road there. Charles Frago of the *Greensboro News Record* talked with Megan Martoglio, a Forest Service biologist, in 1999. She had talked with area residents who had seen mountain lions. She said, "They are afraid to say anything because people will say they're crazy." A couple of years before she had found a track that appeared to be that of a cougar in the Badin Lake area. Not long before a friend of hers had told of seeing a lion in that area while riding a horse.

In the Coastal Plain of North Carolina numerous sightings of the cats have been recorded by Charles Humphreys. They are in his book *Panthers of the Coastal Plain* published in 1994 and in a later addendum. He confined his efforts to an area within 40 miles of his home in Wilmington. Through interviews in the early 1990s reported in his book he found records for 60 large tan cats seen over the previous fifty years.

In South Carolina Herbert Ravenel Sass (1884-1958) requested in a nature column in the *Charleston News and Courier* that people tell him of any cougar sightings. He published those accounts and put them into an article in the *Saturday Evening Post* for 13 March 1954. Cats were sighted near Ellore and along the lower Santee River. The animals are still claimed to be found in the state, such as at the Carolina Sandhills National Wildlife Refuge in Chesterfield County.

A study of mountain lion sightings in North Carolina was undertaken by David S. Lee of the State Museum of Natural History and Ben Sanders of the U.S. Forest Service. They looked at nearly 300 reports for the state. Lee characterized 75 percent of them as "recent" in his discussion of them in *Wildlife in North Carolina* for July 1977. He noted a correlation with the health of deer populations. When the deer herds expanded the cat reports became more numerous. He observed:

We are seeing definite patterns in the reports that suggest the possibility of small, permanent populations in several areas of the state

Later he wrote: "Objectively, in light of the almost complete lack of hard data, I am not convinced that this cat occurs here." And . . . "Subjectively, however, I suspect they are with us." Well, no one can ever say you are proven wrong when you are squarely on both sides of an issue.

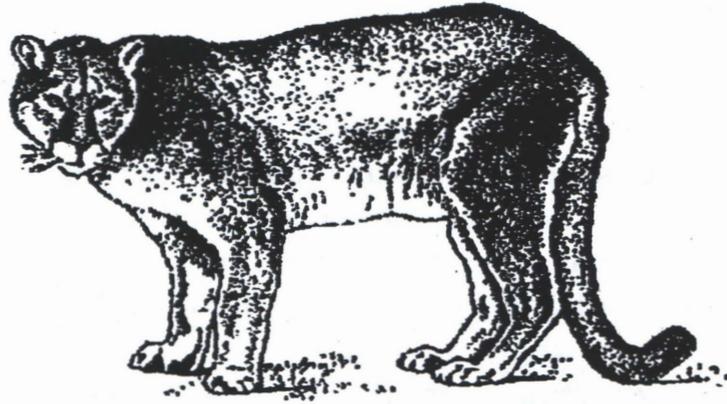
Another important consideration to the survival of cougars and the very unusual wildlife to be described later is the presence in the Carolinas of river swamps. They have been described by Charles Wharton of Georgia State University in *The Southern River Swamp: A Multiple-Use Environment* (1970). He noted: "The river swamp is the last environment in the Southeast providing an accessible wilderness experience for a large part of our rural and urban population. Most swamps are probably thousands of years old. Many have sustained an extinct Pleistocene fauna and today form the last refuge of America's rarest animal life." And more specifically, "Today, America's rarest animals, such as the cougar, red-wolf, and ivory bill woodpecker find their last stronghold there. The river swamps, if intact, form natural corridors for the movement of life forms which, when wiped out in one area, may repopulate from another. The stable and more equithermal swamplands have allowed some Coastal Plain life to penetrate deeply into alien Piedmont habitats and have permitted northern species to exist in the Coastal Plain."

David Lee pointed out that hunting the cats is prohibited by law. He wrote that "a photograph of a panther or the carcass of a road kill would serve as positive proof." Also: "Clear casts or photographs of tracks, with accompanying measurements of the stride and other details, scats, hair samples, photographs and descriptions of kills, and possibly recordings of screams or other vocalizations, would provide us with the hard evidence needed."

What he did not include is that this kind of evidence already exists, but it is still not enough. Stewart Hardison, writing in *Wildlife in North Carolina* for January 1976, informed us that zoologist Fred Barkalow has found two hair samples collected in the state that turned out to be from cougars. The first was found on the Pee Dee River near Badin Lake. It came from a fence where a mountain lion had been reported. The second was found on an oak tree on the Catawba River near Lake Norman.

According to Hardison, Barkalow "strongly suspects they are migrants from the Carolina lowlands or even Florida."

We have many sightings of mountain lions in the Carolinas and



**Great
Smoky
Mountains
National Park**

NORTH CAROLINA

**Badin
Lake**

Raleigh

Franklin

Uwharrie

National Forest

**Robbins
ville**

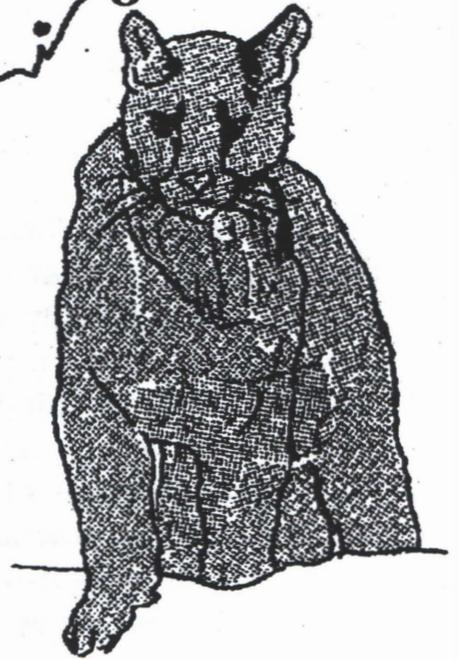
**SOUTH
CAROLINA**

Wilmington

Columbia

Elloree

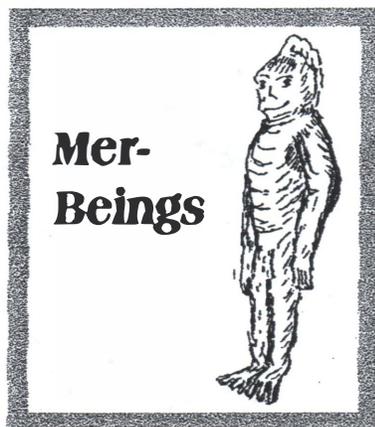
**Santee
River**



Map 1. Mountain Lions in the Carolinas

evidence called conclusive by scientists. The authorities will not declare the presence of panthers in the state. Their presence is a can of worms no one wants to open. No biologist wants to go out on a limb among his peers in the Eastern USA where the party line is "No native cougars." No one wants to wrestle with the issues of public safety if the presence of big cats is no longer denied. No one wants to needlessly endanger Carolina wildlife that does not present a clear danger to Carolinians.

There are other large animals also afoot in these states. We have a record of sightings for them also. However, no salaried employees have spent time seeking sighting reports, gathering physical evidence, making analyses, and publishing about them. But that neglect does not mean the reports are fictitious, are meaningless, or cannot be explained. Let us now consider what some of those animals are.



The premiere "monster" in the minds of Carolinians these days will be the "Lizardman" that was a news sensation in 1988. The creature broke into the news in July of that year and remained a topic of discussion for weeks. There was a lot of excitement around Bishopville in South Carolina's Lee County. Something scaly in appearance and about seven feet tall was leaving large three-toed footprints. One young man was even pursued by the thing in the area of Scape Ore Swamp around 2 a.m on June 29th. His story kicked off the whole Lizardman adventure.

Seventeen-year-old Christopher Davis was changing a tire on his 1976 Toyota Celica when he first saw the thing. He told UPI:

I had finished changing the tire and was putting the things in the trunk. The moonlight was out. I turned around and saw a

red-eyed devil. He was about 30 yards from me, in the field. When he would run his arms would swing. I ran to the driver's side and got in. When I was sitting in the car, I saw him from the neck down. I pulled off and after about two yards, he jumped on the roof. I saw hands, rough-looking black-fingernailed hands. After he jumped up on the car, he grunted.

The thing fell off the car but chased after the vehicle which reached speeds up to 40 mph while the creature kept up. Davis said he then realized this was not just someone in a monster outfit. He reached his family's home where he blew his car horn and ran inside, leaving the car running. His father, Tommy Davis, recalled how he came in all upset and told his family he had seen something seven feet tall, with red eyes, and three fingers on each hand.

Other episodes in the area soon followed and were reported to law enforcement authorities. Two men drawing water at a spring were chased away by a large man-like creature. One of them was George Hollomon I. A couple reported that something had pulled the chrome off their car. All these events became public knowledge starting on July 19, 1988. A monster hunt ensued.

UPI reported on July 21 that 75 hunters were prowling the edge of Scape Ore Swamp looking for Lizardman. Sheriff Liston Truesdale was quoted as saying, "Last night it looked like a football game out there. They had a fire going and (set up) campers." Wildlife authorities expressed concern...for the local alligators then protected as an endangered species. John Evans, a state spokesman, said, "If they kill alligators, we will be on them like a chicken on a June bug." To help along the excitement a radio station in Columbia was offering a million-dollar-reward for the capture of Lizardman. Monster T-shirts and caps went on sale in Bishopville.

A week later UPI reported that bloodhounds were brought in from the State Law Enforcement Division. They might have been defeated by a rainstorm that wiped out the scent of the creature. The searchers did find tracks which Hugh Nunn described: "They had three toes and dug down into the ground in 6-foot strides... I can't even say this with a straight face."

On July 24 a state trooper and a Lee County deputy checked out the report by four teenagers that something tall with glowing eyes crossed the road in front of them southwest of Bishopville. Mike Hodge and Wayne

Atkinson checked out the site and then patrolled near the swamp. They found some large tracks measuring fourteen inches and seven inches wide. They followed the tracks for 400 yards. Then they drove down a road and returned about five minutes later to find fresh tracks that crossed in their own tire marks. Casts were made of these tracks. (See Fig. 1.)

As August passed spotty reports of what could have been Lizardman were made. In a field near Elliott on August 12; crossing a road near the swamp on August 26. An Army colonel made that last report to Sheriff Truesdale.

Elsewhere in the South people began speaking up about having seen strange tracks and even Lizardmen. Someone living outside of Charlotte said he had seen them for years, but he wanted his name and location kept out of the news. Dean Poucher in Beaufort County, South Carolina, said he had seen tracks 17 inches long on Old Island 18 years earlier. He added that people had seen tracks and heard sounds in the marshes for years.

As far away as Pass Christian, Mississippi, 10-year-old Jeremy DeCoito re-told his story of seeing the same kind of Lizardman when he was five years old.

So what's up with Lizardmen in the Carolinas? Mermaid Point is found In Chatham County where the Deep and the Haw Rivers combine to form the Cape Fear River. John Alexander Oates (1870-?) gave this origin for the name in *The Story of Fayetteville* (1950).

Tradition says that in ages long gone, mermaids, tiring of the sameness of the Atlantic, would swim up the Cape Fear, battle their way through Smiley's Falls above Erwin and the Great Falls at Buckhorn to relax on the white sands of the point. There they would sing mermaidish songs while they washed the sea salt from their tresses. Many travelers weaving their way homeward at night swear they have heard the murmuring sounds of the mermaid's singing.

Consider this incident told by J. N. Blevins in *The State Magazine* in 1967. He was reminiscing with people in northeastern North Carolina about things that had happened from Dismal Swamp down to Hyde County:

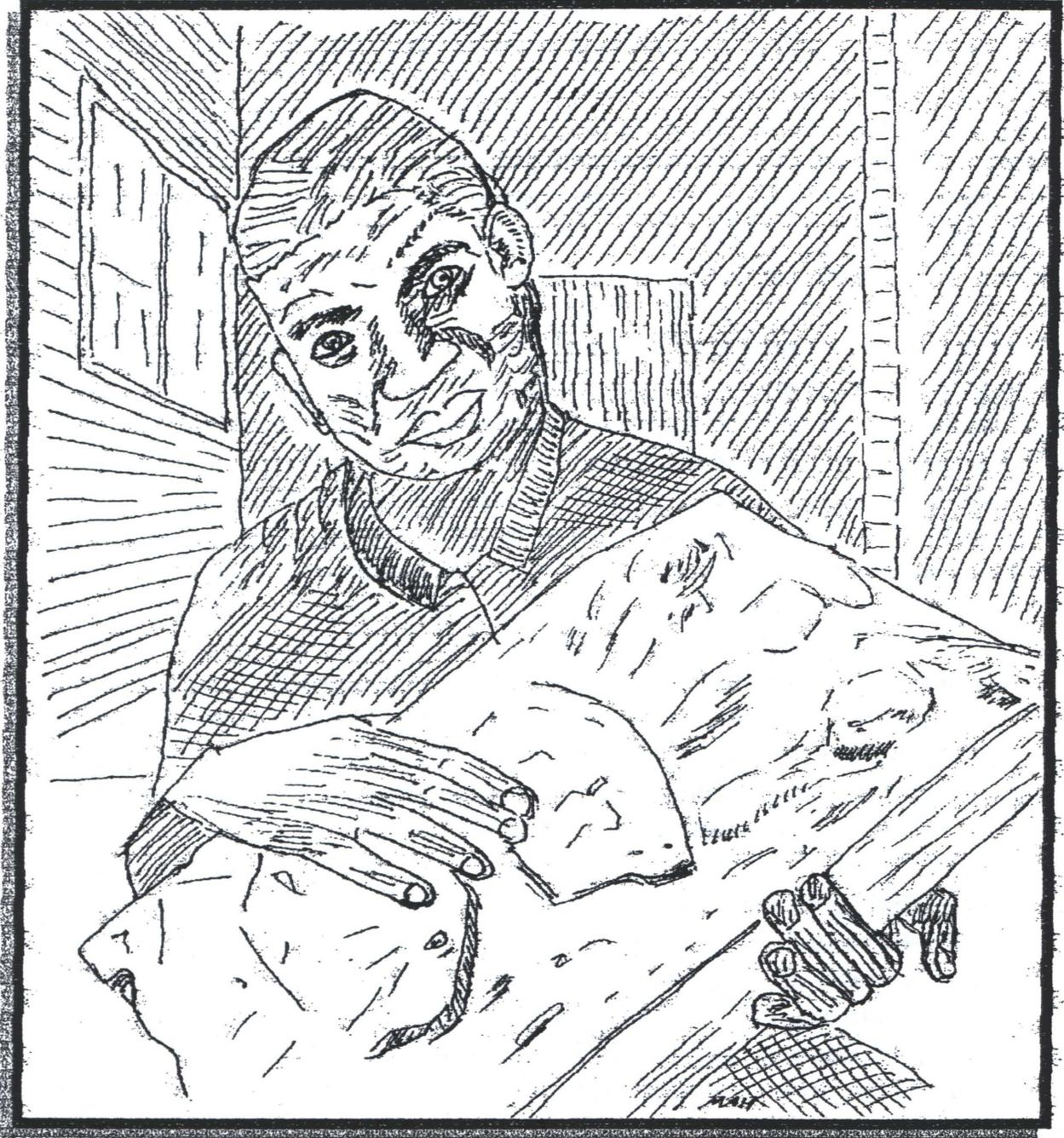


Fig. 1. Christopher Davis in 1988 holds the cast of a track suspected of belonging to the so-called "Lizardman" of Lee County, South Carolina. The track measured fourteen inches long and seven inches wide. After a *Houston Chronicle* photograph by Larry Reese, 31 July 1988,

All of them had heard about John Patrick, and the man-like creature he caught in his fish net one night at about the point where the Pamlico Sound backs up into Long Shoal Bay. They all agreed that John Patrick was known to be a truthful and honest man, and that he started to pull up his net and something crawled up the side of his boat, and he beat it off of the boat with a paddle, and never went fishing again in Long Shoal Bay. They all agreed it was supposed to be a man-like creature.

Blevins offered his own solution to this incident. He thought it might have been a frog-man from a Russian submarine. Such speculations are not unusual when people are trying to explain away mysteries. Another ready suggestion has been that such things come from outer space by way of UFOs. Some of this was done during the Lizardman excitement. But North America, in common with much of the rest of the world, has a long record of Mer-beings (both merman and mermaids) described by the American Indians and glimpsed in recent years. I discussed them in "A Primer on Mermaids" published in *Wonders* Volume 6.

The reference by Christopher Davis to the creature as "a devil" recalls the historic record from two centuries ago in North Carolina when frequent sightings of "the Devil" were reported. These were contained in the autobiography of the Rev. William Glendinning published in Philadelphia in 1795. In this rare book he reports seeing the Devil when he was visiting and preaching in Granville and Halifax Counties of North Carolina starting in 1785. The devilish encounters were passed along by William S. Powell in *The State Magazine* in 1956.

Except for one instance where a voice is attributed to the thing when it was said to be standing outside a window, the silent appearances of the thing seen by Rev. Glendinning could be appearances of a mer-being of the kind seen in 1988 and elsewhere in modern times. The behavior of observing people at a distance recorded two hundred years ago has been reported in modern times for mer-beings. Here is what Rev. Glendinning experienced beginning when he opened his door in response to a loud rap and came to face to face with the thing for the first time:

It was black as any coal – his eyes and mouth as red as blood, and long white teeth gnashing together. I shut the door, and in

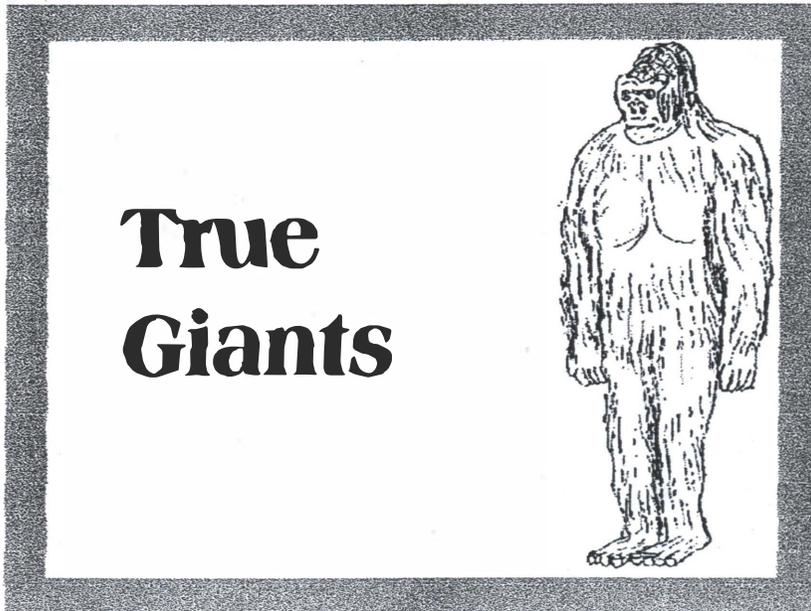
a little time he went off, and some person then observed that they never heard it blow or rain harder.

For some weeks Lucifer would appear two or three times a week, in the course of that winter; either in the evening, or before the family went to bed. . . .

One day as I was in the fields...when Lucifer appeared in view at a distance from us. He made toward us, then turned toward the spring branch and disappeared. It was about noon when he appeared, and the first time I ever saw him in daylight. He appeared upward of five feet high, round the top of his head there seemed a ridge; some distance under the top of his head there seemed a bulk like a body, but bigger than any person; about 15 or 18 inches from the ground there appeared something like legs, and under them, feet; but no arms or thighs. The whole as black as any coal; only his mouth and eyes as red as blood. When he moved it was like an armful of chains rattling together. Several of the family were present – they declared they saw it, and said they never beheld the like in their life.

Frequently during the summer, in the year 1786, and for near two years after, he would appear. For the most part, he made his appearance in the fore-part of the day. He would often stand in the orchard, near my cabin, and shoot out of his head something like a horn, about six or eight inches high, above the top of his head.

The curious features of a ridge on the top of the head and the appearance of lacking arms (but not necessarily lacking them) are traits attributed to mer-beings. This historical curiosity might be one effort to categorize the otherwise inexplicable appearances of a mer-being. If such things have a modern reality, they will be back in the news one day.



While the presence of Mermen and Mermaids in the Carolinas might seem like enough of such things, we have only just begun. We are seeing the results of millions of years of primate evolution that launched many man-like creatures into the world. They appear in the Carolinas in the same natural process that has dispersed animals of all kinds and primates such as humans. Human beings are the most successful at the expense of many competitors who have been pushed into mountains, swamps, and deserts to strive for their existence. I have already published two books on this subject (*The Yeti, Bigfoot & True Giants* - second edition, 1997 and *Living Fossils* - 1999) and more are in the works.

The name of "Bigfoot" has become so famous that many people have been eager to see "Bigfoot" and eager to think they have discovered "Bigfoot" in their state. A close examination of the facts, however, shows that the hairy creature seen in the Patterson-Gimlin film made in California in 1967 is native to a mountainous region from California to Alaska. They seldom venture out of the forested, steep mountains to which they are well-adapted. If they are to be "Bigfoot" then other creatures exist that are also large and hairy, but they are different in every other way. The hundreds of pages in my books and articles make this case. So, while we are unlikely to find "Bigfoot" in the Carolinas, there are such beings as True Giants and, as described later, the Taller-hominids that are easily mistaken for "Bigfoot"

and have been given that label by many people.

In the mountains of western North Carolina the largest primates among this group are the True Giants. The Cherokee Indians have given us a record of them by way of James Mooney in *Myths of the Cherokee*. The Cherokee knew them as "The Slant-Eyed People" (Tsunil' Kalu'). They were twice as big as a common Indian.

They began to be noted in the 1700s by people arriving from Europe. The *Boston Gazette* in July of 1793 printed this communication from Charleston, South Carolina, of May 17, 1793.

A Gentleman on the South Fork of the Saluda river in a letter of the 23rd sends his correspondent in this city the following description on the Bald Mountains in the Western Territories. This animal is between twelve and fifteen feet high, and in shape resembling a human being, except the head, which is in equal proportion to its body and drawn in somewhat like a terrapin [in other words, no neck], its feet are like those of a negroe, and about two feet long, and hairy, which is of a dark dun colour; its eyes are exceedingly large, and open and shut up and down its face, the hair of its head is about six inches long, stands straight like a negroe's, its nose is what is called Roman. These animals are bold, and have lately attempted to kill several persons – in which attempt some of them have been shot. Their principal resort is on the Bald Mountain, where they lay in wait for travellers – but some have been seen in this part of the country. The inhabitants call it Yahoo; the Indians, however, give it the name of Chickly Cudly.

Scott McNabb, of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization, noted when reporting this find that "ke-cleah kud-leah" in the Cherokee language would mean "hairy man/thing."

Also on record is the killing of one these creatures, but that took place in Georgia in 1829. I reprinted that item and discussed it in *Wonders Vol.4*.

Bill Sharpe has told the story of the "Wildman of Yancey County" in *The State Magazine* in 1960 and elsewhere:

About fifty years ago a giant "wild man" appeared in an isolated section of Yancey County, not far from Burnsville. He apparently was first spotted by a young man who was milking a cow. He said the giant, about nine feet tall, nude, and "hairy all over," demanded milk.

Sharpe goes on to tell how this report sparked a later hoax by a Burnsville blacksmith who made some phoney feet and used them to put large tracks in snow causing a stir. The fear of the track-maker went on for three months. But this joke does not take away from the fact that the initial report was not a hoax. It only inspired someone to later create a hoax.

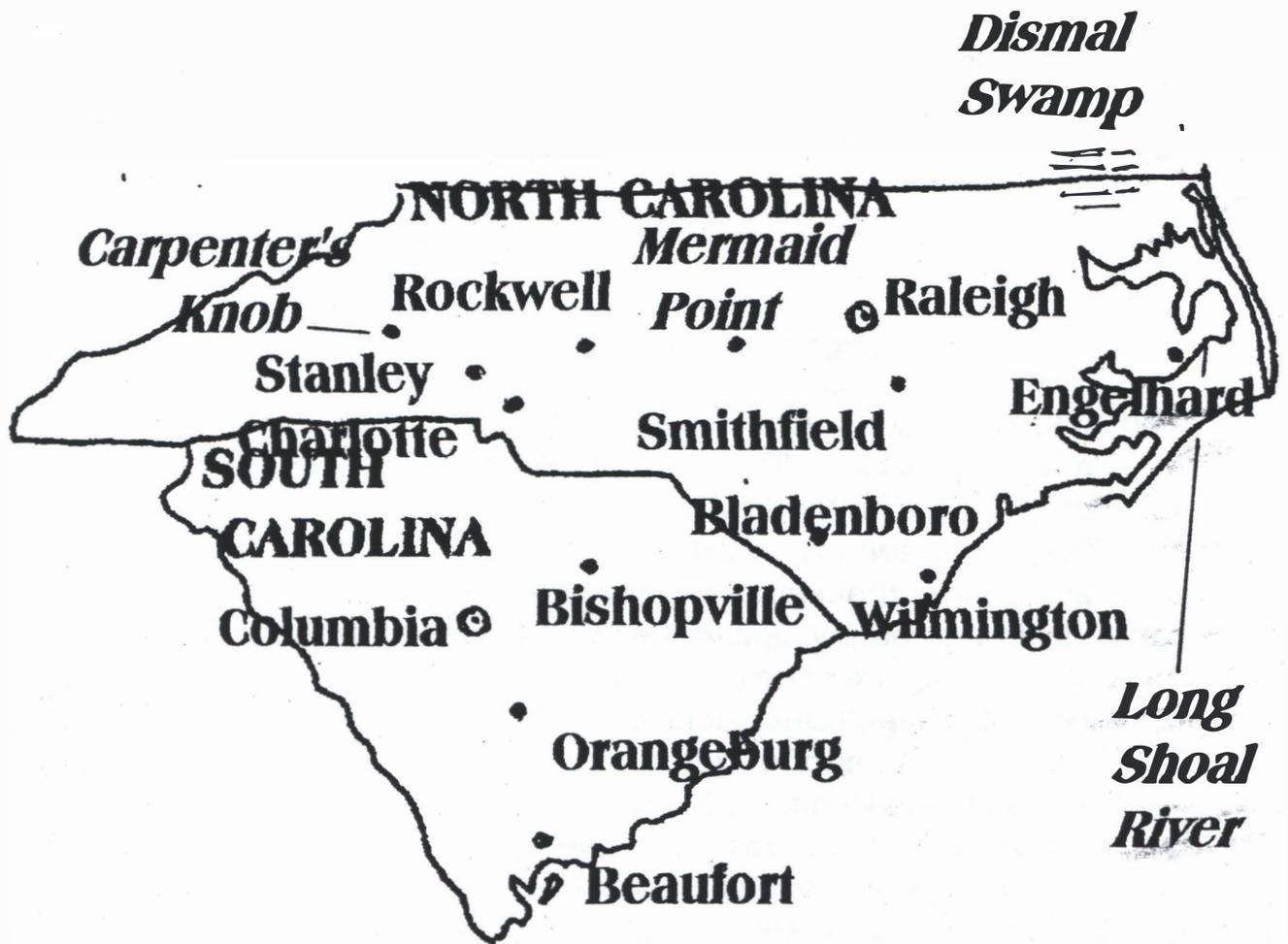
Across the Carolinas in recent years there have been some track reports and sightings of large, hairy things that might have been the activity of True Giants. Without a thorough investigation it can be hard to put an identity to many reports.

One of the best recent reports of a True Giant in the Southeast came from just over the border into Georgia in Richmond County near Augusta. An encounter took place in the early afternoon of a day in late November or early December of 1979. It was reported in 1999 to the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization.

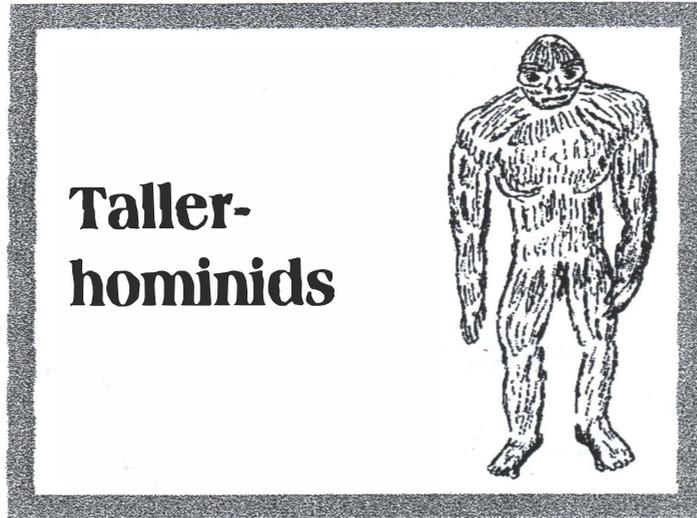
Walking in a ravine in the middle of Fort Gordon, the witness came upon a man-ape some ten to ten and a half feet tall. Nearby he later found a footprint that measured 22 inches long and 9 inches wide. These traits put this creature in the True Giant category. His detailed description of what he saw also fit what others have told of them. The witness backed away from it and was happy not to have been followed by it.

Such reports are not unique to the Southeastern states. True Giants have a long history across North America and in much of the rest of the world. It is not a popular thing to be seeing something so huge, however, and the history that exists has been slow to emerge when the sighters are reluctant to talk.

The identity of the True Giant is clear to those who examine the fossil record of primates. Only one creature has reached such dimensions. That is the fossil known as *Gigantopithecus*. The original appearance of this primate has been disputed because the only remains so far preserved have been teeth and jawbones. Other remains have been alleged to have been dug up but they were lost. One day its true form will be recognized and its recent presence in the mountains of the Carolinas will be acknowledged.



Map. 2. Locations in the Carolinas



The most stealthy of the man-like creatures appearing in the Carolinas are the Taller-hominids. They were once a truly-tribal group of accomplished people with their own culture. They wore clothing and made weapons. They contended with the other tribal peoples that came early to the New World tens of thousands of years ago. Now they are disbanded as it were after losing in competition to the others. In the Carolinas, as in much of North America, they are seen one at a time or only their tracks are found though they conceal even their tracks much of the time.

The best description of a Taller-hominid in the Carolinas is the one given by Brenda Polk of Concord, North Carolina. She was living in Stanly County in November of 1994 when she saw something beside the road in her headlights. She gave Andrew Haworth of the Orangeburg (S.C.) *Times and Democrat* these details about when she stopped her car to look at a hairy man with a face that reminded her of an Alaskan husky: " He was fully male – he had male genitals. He was real muscle-bound, he had slim hips, but huge thighs. The hair was 4 to 5 inches long on his arms and silver. I'd say he was well over 7 feet tall." You can read more of her encounter at the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization website at www.bfro.net.

In the summer of 1964 United Press International reported another monster hunt in North Carolina. A dispatch from Smithfield in Johnston County gave these details.

Hundreds of farmers armed with sticks, stones and flashlights scoured the dark woods for the monster of Dean's Old Mill. The

Johnston County sheriff's office, fearful lest one of the 300 to 400 searchers might be taken for the monster, ordered all guns left at home.

The sheriff's department, discounting the "monster" theory, was investigating at least 10 sightings of what officers believed to be a large, perhaps mentally ill, man. Farmers in the area reported finding two hogs, a goat and a cow killed and partially eaten. Witnesses say the "monster" is about 7 feet tall, weighs about 250 pounds, has footprints 16 inches long and a distorted countenance.

Most of the sightings were in the Dean's Old Mill area, four miles east of here. Residents of the area searched for the monster with guns one night with no mishaps. So many searchers showed up the next night the highway patrol had to send an officer to handle the traffic.

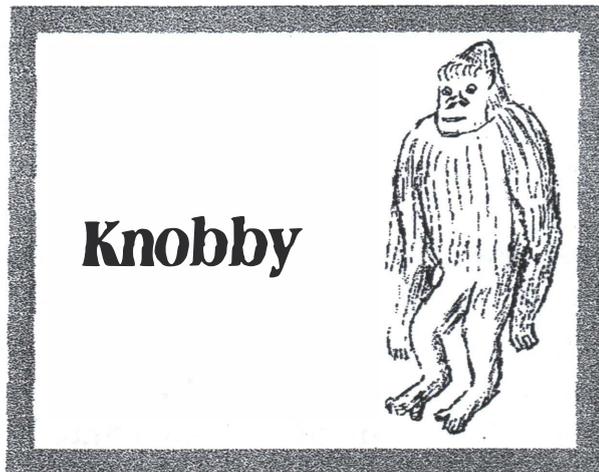
The *Gastonia Gazette* of Feb. 18, 1977 reported that hunters had found an unusual track near Stanley in Gaston Co. It was 14.5 in. long and 4.5 in. wide. It appeared to be a shod foot of the size, dimensions, and shape of the Taller-hominid foot that shows in unshod tracks found elsewhere.

A partial skeleton of a Taller-hominid was excavated in Greenland in 1926. It is likely to have gotten there because the Norse colonists in the 12th century were on record as taking in some of the trolls they encountered in the New World. But this evidence has not been recognized for its true value. The only advocate for its importance died, and the bones have been filed away erroneously as a pathological anomaly. They are neglected to this day. They indicate the Taller-hominid is similar to the remains of "Archaic *Homo sapiens*" that have been found in the Old World.

The periodic bulldozing of North America by ice in the Pleistocene will make it difficult to sort out the prehistory of the place with any certainty. The New World of thirty thousand years ago must have been a busy place where the major competitors were the Taller-hominids, the Neandertal Men who were adapted to a cold environment, and the Kennewick People who are known to us from the oldest skeletons identified in the New World. These last were physically identical to the Ainu of Japan. They seem to have populated the New World early and are likely to have contended with the other two groups for control of much of the territory. Thousands of years later the American Indians showed up from Asia and defeated the

Kennewick People. Based on skeletal finds this replacement may have been completed around eight thousand years ago in North America and seven thousand years ago in South America. So thoroughly did they defeat them that the only recognized survivors of the Kennewick People are the Ainu of northern Japan.

But the remnants of the tribe of Taller-hominids have survived. Perhaps there are groupings of them in the Western mountains, but elsewhere they are reported singly or in small family groups. As I have noted here, they do turn up in the Carolinas.



If South Carolinians feel any special pride in their possession of the famous "Lizardman," North Carolinians can respond with their own famous entity. "Knobby" was the news sensation of 1979. From January to March he was the talk of North Carolina. Here you are likely to read for the first time what Cleveland County's "Knobby" really was.

The record shows that Minnie Cook was the first to report the thing. She saw it in the woods near her home on Dec. 21, 1978. She said, "These old eyes are 88 years old, but I saw it. That's all there is to it. I can't name it and I don't want to see it again, but I saw it. It wasn't a bear. I've seen many a bear in my time, and I know one when I see one. And this wasn't one."

The Associated Press put together this description of it:

Witnesses say the animal is covered with black fur, has a flat face like an ape and varies from standing on all fours to walking

on its hind legs. Witnesses estimate it to be over six feet tall.

The nickname for this creature came from Carpenter's Knob at the top of Cleveland County. As more people came forward with sightings, the hunters and "Knobby" t-shirts soon appeared. One of Minnie Cook's neighbors had seen Knobby calmly munching on vegetation. He never seemed to be threatening anyone, but his appearance scared people.

In mid-January of 1979 the weather was icy and discouraged the hunters. But then Kay Price and her two younger sisters came upon him between Cesar and Polkville. One of the girls screamed, and then all three got a look at Knobby. Eighteen-year-old Gaye Smith showed her mettle by getting out of the car and running toward the creature! So she got a good look at it. "I was too close, to tell the truth," she told Robert L. Williams, whose account of this event appeared in the *Charlotte News* for Jan. 18, 1979. "He was kind of pink-faced," she noted. Other features: he had wide nostrils; a shiny chest that was very broad, a narrow waist, and large thighs. "He looked more like a gorilla than anything else," she added.

There are hints that Knobby might have relatives in the Carolinas, but their appearances have not been frequently reported. An earlier hint of such an ape appeared in the Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore. Notice of a hog-stealing "waumpaus" at Roanoke Island was taken in the *Raleigh Daily News* in October of 1930. (The word "waumpaus" is one of those all-purpose words that has been applied to cats, fish, and unknown beasts.) It was described as walking upright most of the time with a hog in its arms. And "it screams much like radio soprano, and runs the scale downward to bullfrog bass; has a track like a dog; but as large as a horse's footprints. Some people say they have tracked it for miles back to its lair in a swamp just beyond the graveyard in the poorhouse oldfield."

In South Carolina pilots flying off the coast of Beaufort County have reported seeing "gorillas" on the islands in the area. While this is vague because no one has asked them for details, such things hint at this ape.

A large ape of this kind has been more frequently reported from the Mississippi River bottomlands. The Choctaw Indians of a century ago told ethnographer David Bushnell about the *Kashehotapalo*. Its name meant "the scream of a woman" and was given for its shrieks in the swamps of Louisiana. While rare, these apes have been around for a long time. They are a "living fossil," a hardy survivor that is a lot smarter than any gorilla.

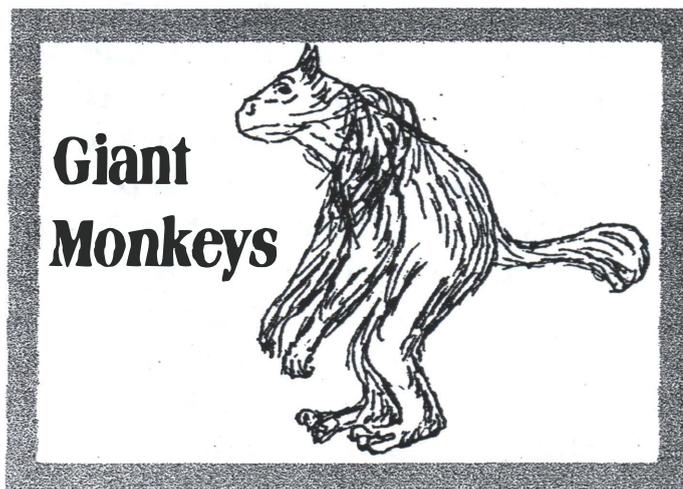
Sometimes the hairy man-like object of a monster hunt is too vaguely described to distinguish which large primate is involved. The "Beast of Rockwell" is a case where too few particulars have been made available. In 1964 a hunt took place in Rowan County, North Carolina. Jerry Bledsoe of the *Charlotte Observer* recalled it in 1978. He was getting his start in journalism at the time in Kannapolis and joined in the hunt. The object of the hunt had been seen for years in a swampy area along a creek near Rockwell. People called it the "Woolly Booger." As Bledsoe recalled it:

The Woolly Booger was an ape-like creature, standing 8-10 feet tall, with webbed hands and feet, saucer-sized eyes that glowed orange in the night, and matted black fur. He had a scream, one witness told me, like a giant hoot owl.

After a 500-pound steer was discovered dismembered in a pasture, reports of the monster began to circulate again. Two men from China Grove reported encountering the Woolly Booger on a dark road one night.

One man claimed he fired both barrels of a 12-gauge shotgun at the beast at close range, and it only caused the creature to flinch. The men fled in a pickup truck, and until they got past 40 mph the beast was gaining on them, they said.

So far everyone seems to agree that the top speed of monsters in North Carolina is forty miles per hour.



The next beast has a record that goes back to 1873 when it was encountered in the mountains of Madison County. The Jonesboro (Tenn.)

Flag and Advertiser carried this report that year.

A gentleman recently from the Shelton Laurel District of North Carolina, some forty miles from this place, informs us that the people in that "densely thicketed" country are greatly excited in regard to the appearance, upon several different occasions, and in several different places, of a huge mountain monster, the species of which is unknown. Mr. George Anderson, one of the gentlemen residing in the laurel country, being one of the persons who saw the monster, also furnishes us with the following description of it:

"I was out in the jungle hunting up some lost hogs, when all of a sudden there came into my path a beast, the appearance of which, I must confess, caused me to quake for the first time in many years. Aside from its strange and unusual appearance, the unearthly yell it uttered on perceiving, which reverberated and reverberated through the forest was enough to shake the senses of the most daring adventurer. The animal was some hundred yards distant from me and appeared to be a huge black bear with mane and head like a lion, but horns like an elk upon it. Its tail was long and bushy, with dark and light rings around it to its very extremity. Its eyes gleamed like a panther's and its size was that of an ordinary ox, but somewhat longer.. Just previous to making its appearance I had shot my gun off at a squirrel, and felt little prepared to meet such a ferocious beast without any weapon of defense. I immediately set about reloading my rifle, but had scarcely begun when it started toward me. I retreated in as good order as possible, and must say I did some good running – not looking back until I had reached an open spot, when I found the animal had disappeared in the laurel thicket. This no story, Mr. Editor, gotten up to scare naughty children. I am not the only one who has seen the monster. Several have seen it since I did; and, as sheep and calves are lately missing, it is presumed to be a carnivorous brute. Many have fortified their homes to prevent a night attack from the strange monster, the like of which has never been seen

in the mountains before. Some think it has escaped from some rambling menagerie, while others superstitiously think it is sent to warn the people of some great approaching danger.”

This was reprinted in the St. Paul (Minnesota) *Daily Press* for Feb. 28, 1873 under the headline of “A Strange Monster.”

The bushy tail of this beast helps to identify this bear-lion-panther mix as the Giant Monkey that has been reported elsewhere in North America many times and with greater clarity. I wrote about this native beast in *Wonders* Vol. 6. It is another animal in the annals of cryptozoology.

“But what about those ‘horns like an elk’?” you will ask. Let us examine this odd feature in the account. Over the years people have reported the primates we have been considering as wearing articles of clothing that have obviously been found or been stolen from human beings. So if a creature were reported wearing a coonskin cap or other headgear it would be obvious to us that it was a borrowed item. It happens that in the mountains of North Carolina is one place where men have been known to adorn themselves with antlers. The professional hunters along the French Broad River in the 1800s used to amuse themselves with weekly “lying camps” presided over by Jim Fisher who dressed up in antlers and a cape. Miriam J. Shillingsburg discussed the life of the hunters in *The State Magazine* in 1982. Here is an illustration of Jim Fisher.

Fig. 2.

Jim Fisher
wearing antlers and
a deerskin cape.
From *Harpers* for
May of 1870.



My suggestion is that the animal seen might have worn such antlers in imitation of the people in Madison County who adopted this garb at that time in history.

There are a few other reports indicating the presence of this unusual

animal in North Carolina in modern times.

The American Indians have told of this creature also. Again we have to credit David Bushnell for recording a century ago what the Choctaw Indians had to say about these Giant Monkeys as native American fauna. They were woods-dwellers the Indians called Nalusa Falaya, or The Long Evil Being. Because some contemporary Indians have given a different definition for this name, someone has insisted that those who apply this name to the Giant Monkeys must be wrong. So I will take from Bushnell's record the very words he took down as the Indian view of the creature. They appeared in the *American Anthropologist*, n.s. vol. 12 (1910).

The Nalusa Falaya somewhat resembles man. It is of about the size of a man and walks upright, but its face is shriveled, its eyes are very small and it has quite long, pointed ears. Its nose is likewise long. It lives in the densest woods, near swamps, away from the habitations of men. In some respects it resembles Kashehotapalo.

Often when hunters are in the woods, far from their homes, late in the day when the shadows have grown long beneath the pine trees, a Nalusa Falaya will come forth. Getting quite near a hunter it will call in a voice resembling that of a man. And some hunters, when they turn and see the Nalusa Falaya, are so affected that they fall to the ground and even become unconscious.



One of the early records of Little People resulted from a visit paid by two Englishmen in the 1650s to the Tuscarora Indians in North Carolina.

Their efforts to explore the country were cut short when their interpreter became sick and the Tuscaroras advised them that the Cacores would make the journey dangerous. Douglas Rights relates this incident in *The American Indian in North Carolina* (Winston-Salem: Blair, 1957). The Cacores were a "great nation" that was at war with the Tuscaroras. Rights quotes this description of the Cacores: "a very little people in stature, not exceeding youths of thirteen or fourteen years, but extremely valiant and fierce in fight, and above belief swift in retirement and flight, whereby they resist the puissance of this potent, rich, and numerous people." He added his own observation: "It is interesting to note that in lower Randolph County on Cedar Creek, within Shoccoree territory, several graves were disturbed by waters of a freshet in 1929, revealing skeletal remains of Indians of small stature whose teeth indicated that they were past middle age."

Rights thinks the Cacores may have been the Shoccoree Indians (also called Shakori, Saxapahaw), but the presence of graves in what was once their territory does not make the remains Shoccoree. And there is nothing anywhere else that suggests the Shoccoree were small or fierce. In fact, the opposite is said of them (such as "a feeble tribe").

More likely we are hearing of the same breed as the stock the Cherokee have called the "Little People of the Smokies." Ted Smiley of the *Smoky Mountain Times* in Bryson City discussed them after a tunnel was uncovered.

When an ancient tunnel of undetermined length was uncovered recently near Robbinsville, N.C., first speculation was that it had been dug by Cherokee Indians to escape forced evacuation to the lands beyond the Mississippi. Now area experts are not so sure. Several believe firmly that the tunnel is a relic of the days before the Cherokees, dug by the legendary Little People of the Great Smokies. The tunnel was discovered when workmen started digging a water pipeline ditch at Old Fort Hill, which overlooks Robbinsville. The exit has not yet been found. It is about 36 inches in diameter, and is bored through clay. . . .

The Cherokee's legends say that when the Indians came here they found a race of small men with light skin, beards, large eyes and blond, curling hair. . . . Previously known are the tiny

tunnels bored into the mountains near Franklin. Obviously man-made, they are much too small for people of average size to enter.

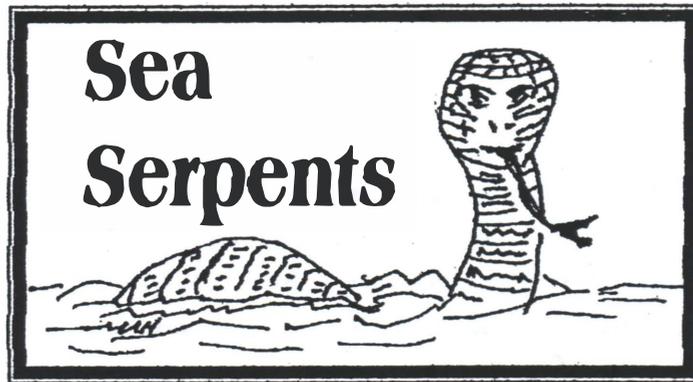
The subject of "Little People" in the modern day has all the credibility of talking about fairies, so most people will hesitate to associate with them. Fairies are what they were called when Duke University's Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore took note of them. A story from Cornelius in the 1920s told of three young teens who saw two little people: "They say that the fairies were very white and dressed in white; that they were about three feet high, held hands, and moved before them very fast, disappearing in a woods."



North Carolina was once home to the Thunderbird when the Cherokee Indians roamed freely in the mountains. James Mooney in *Myths of the Cherokee* preserved their stories of the Great Mythic Hawk, or Tlanuwa. In the Great Lakes and Northwest the bird was known as the Thunderbird because it migrated north each spring when the thunderstorms returned. The Cherokee probably had to suffer the depredations of these giant birds the year round.

The famous "balds" in the mountains by one account were used as lookouts to track the movements of the birds. By this means a nest on Whiteside Mountain was discovered, and a giant bird ultimately killed.

In the twentieth century these giant birds with wingspans as much as twenty feet were reported along the Appalachians and on the Allegheny Plateau from West Virginia to New York and as far north as Quebec, as told in my book *Thunderbirds*. If they are still seen in the mountains of North Carolina today no one has been talking about them in recent years.



In the middle of the nineteenth century there were reports of sea serpents off Cape Hatteras. One monster was estimated to be 125 to 150 feet long. Lop off 25% for the usual overestimation of such things and you still have a formidable water monster. Its head was held well out of the water and was compared to that of a rattlesnake.

Sailors, ship-owners, people sending cargo up and down the coast, and land lubbers taking passage on those routes became increasingly fearful of running into this monster and ending up in a wreck on the Diamond Shoals off the cape.

One of the reports that has survived from those days is the view of a giant serpent obtained in 1854 by the passengers and crew of the steamer *William Seabrook* in the Savannah River. It was also reported by Captain Rollins of the *Isabel* at the mouth of the river.

Another incident was reported in 1850 and passed along by Bernard Heuvelmans in his *In the Wake of the Sea-Serpents* (NY: Hill and Wang, 1968):

On 15 March 1850, according to the *Christian Mercury*, a 150-foot sea serpent was seen in Port Royal Sound in South Carolina. It swam up Broad River and was stranded at the mouth of Skull Creek near Beaufort, after having been mercilessly pursued for miles with rifle-fire and cannons – and presumably with an atomic disintegrator-gun, since the body was never examined.

Heuvelmans thought the Port Royal Sound account was a hoax.

In the summer of that same year the *Belle of Bermuda* set sail from New York with Captain Uriah Jenkins in charge. He had announced his

intention to linger off Cape Hatteras until he had met the Great Sea Serpent. He undertook this task with a carefully chosen crew.

As Earl Dean told this sea story in *The State Magazine* in 1950, the ship returned weeks later and the seamen claimed to one and all that the menace of the sea serpent had been removed. No piker, Captain Jenkins said he had killed a serpent 225-feet long. Earl Dean gave the Captain's account:

When 18 or 20 miles at Sea off Diamond Shoals, the sea serpent was sighted in the distance, swimming along slowly and apparently unaware of the vessel that kept drawing closer and closer. Men lined the side of the ship, armed with powerful rifles. Taking aim at close range, they opened fired and sent a death-dealing volley of lead into the hideous creature's long neck.

More bullets and two cannon shots finished off this unwary serpent. Captain Jenkins soon retired in comfort. His hand-picked crew also appeared to have come into a lot of many after this feat. Traffic along the Carolina coast was said to have returned to normal after Captain Jenkins' claim was trumpeted. Of all the sea serpent tales ever printed in recent centuries this one is most clearly a hoax.

At the end of 1947 sea serpents were still around. On December 30, 1947 Captain John Fordan and the Grace Liner *Santa Clara* had an encounter with one. The ship was off North Carolina, 118 miles east of Cape Lookout. It was the Captain's impression that his ship struck the creature and either cut it in two or badly injured it.

The full length of the snake-like monster was estimated to be in the neighborhood of 45 feet. The ship's chief officer and third officer got a good look at it. The Captain entered it into his logbook and later gave a full account of it. He noted:

From the time the monster was first sighted until it disappeared in the distance astern it was thrashing about as though in agony. The Monster's skin was dark brown, slick and smooth. There were no fins, hair or protuberances on the head, neck, or visible parts of the body.



When J. N. Blevins was hearing from people in northeastern North Carolina, as mentioned on page 42, Robert Schmitt spoke up and here is what he had to say:

People more than likely would call you a liar if you told them that there was black panthers around Engelhard. I know a hunter that had thirteen dogs killed by one before the hunters could get back through the thick stuff to the place where the dogs had the thing at bay. My daddy was going to work one morning and one was on the highway, right in front of the car, and he said it was a big one.

When everyone was chasing Knobby in Cleveland County, the county game warden, Lewis Barts, told Joe DePriest of the *Shelby Star*, "All they ever see up there [at Carpenter's Knob] is black panthers. I've never had a report of a mountain lion."

These big black cats turn up all over. When Charles Humphreys did his interviews in the early 1990s looking for cougars around Wilmington, about half the sightings he collected were big black cats. He put them into his book *Panthers of the Coastal Plain* under the impression that they just had to be cougars of a different color. But biologists rightly point out that melanism is almost unknown among cougars.

The answer is the presence in the Carolinas of a second large cat. It gets as big as a cougar, but it has a different ancestry, leaves different tracks, and exhibits different behavior. It is a survivor from the Pleistocene; its fossils have been given the name *Panthera atrox*. This cat was

responsible for the monster hunt of 1953 that unsuccessfully sought "The Beast of Bladenboro." That entire story was told by me in *Wonders* Vol. 7 No. 1. A long discussion of this animal's survival in much of North America has been reprinted in *Best of Wonders Volumes 1-3*.

Whenever people take the time to make the kind of intensive study that was made by Charles Humphreys – such as has been done in Pennsylvania and several other Eastern states – black panther reports turn up in large numbers. That kind of cat has been around a long time and remains unrecognized by professional biologists just as they cannot come to grips with the survival of the Eastern cougar.

Here is how David S. Lee summed up the reports of black panthers when he discussed cougars in *Wildlife in North Carolina*: "Many of these sightings of black cats can be accounted for by the poor light conditions which prevailed when the observations were made. Nevertheless, we have several accounts of 'black panthers' observed by reputable and/or multiple witnesses at close range in good light."

Stewart Hardison cast the whole issue as a legend while using the same argument: "While legend has it that some mountain lions are pure black, experts generally concede that no such color phasing exists - or has yet to be proven. This 'black panther' legend is a persistent one, however, and perhaps originated in pre-colonial times when most sightings occurred in gloomy light under the shading canopy of virgin timber."

Anthropologists will tell you that professional people can maintain within their own group a folklore that they are unaware of. That is what we are seeing here. Black panthers will remain an unknown animal as long as professional biologists mutually support their denial of the presence of this kind of cat. The solution is simple: *Panthera atrox* is a natural part of the North American environment.

Some people have a knee-jerk reaction to reports of hidden animals. They are in a comfort zone with the status quo. They will tell you there are no fossils to support the presence of such animals. They won't admit that professional scientists have fumbled away telling finds like the skull found in Greenland in 1926. There are other finds I have written about – lost in museum collections. You could point out that we don't have fossils for all the living things of this world and that they might turn up one day. You will get a blank stare or be dismissed as a dreamer.

The deniers of hidden animals will insist that everyday hunters or bird watchers would have detected these things. The monster hunts of the 1800s and the 1900s have demonstrated how elusive these animals can be. We are the ones who don't know what we are doing. They do. They have been surviving for thousands of years despite the presence of the wily human being. Perhaps we are no longer as wily as our distant ancestors were.

We don't know more about these creatures because we don't listen to each other and learn from the experience of others. There is a laughter curtain that everyone knows about and fears.

There seems to be an underestimation of the intelligence of the creatures we still won't "recognize." They know their world better than any of us. And some of them even know our world fairly well from their own perspective. Of course, sea serpents are not necessarily very bright. But they have a large ocean to play in.

We might try to appreciate the natural world around us. The swamps and the river swamps shelter wildlife such as the Eastern cougar. They seem to be sheltering a lot of other things as well.

To get an idea of where these wetlands are you will need to consult the topographic maps of the U.S. Geological Survey or state atlases like *North Carolina Atlas and Gazetteer* (1992) and *South Carolina Atlas and Gazetteer* (1998) published by DeLorme Mapping (Freeport, Maine). There are some detailed maps available on CD-ROM as well.

I am surprised at how much I have had to omit in this discussion as my space has run out. I will have to bring them up at another time in future treatments of hidden animals. I am always learning more about the environment and about the history and place of these strange animals in that natural world. And I am certain there will be more monsters and more monster hunts in the Carolinas for many years to come.

Learn more about North America's mystery animals on the webpages of Mark A. Hall Publications. Bulletins, updates, and links to informative pages such as Bigfoot Profiles, Thunderbird and Bighoot, and Mystery Profiles can be found at <http://home.att.net/~mark.hall.wonders/>