

1

00:00:00,638 --> 00:00:18,271

This series presents information based in part on theory and conjecture.

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00:00:18,271 --> 00:00:22,789

The producer's purpose is to suggest some possible explanations, but not necessarily

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00:00:22,789 --> 00:00:29,787

the only ones to the mysteries we will examine.

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00:00:29,787 --> 00:00:37,904

On a sunny day in July 1977, Aaron Neely was waterskiing with Ed Fletcher and his daughter

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00:00:37,904 --> 00:00:40,782

in Canada's Lake Okanagan.

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00:00:40,782 --> 00:00:45,780

As shown in this reenactment, Aaron was an expert and had skied these waters many times.

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00:00:45,780 --> 00:00:49,779

Neither Ed nor his daughter was alarmed when Aaron took a spill.

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00:00:49,779 --> 00:00:53,777

But they were when she started screaming.

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00:01:19,767 --> 00:01:28,764

Safely in the boat, young Aaron told a terrifying story of coming face to face with a huge serpent-like monster.

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00:01:50,755 --> 00:01:56,753

Aaron was not the first person to see such a creature in Lake Okanagan, nor the last.

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00:02:03,750 --> 00:02:08,748

Many believe that a mysterious monster lives in the depths of Loch Ness in Scotland.

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00:02:08,748 --> 00:02:15,745

This ancient ruin marks the spot where St. Colombo first sighted the creature in 565 AD.

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00:02:15,745 --> 00:02:21,743

Loch Ness, however, is not the only place where forbidding monsters are reported to dwell.

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00:02:21,743 --> 00:02:29,740

In British Columbia, Lake Okanagan is reputed to be the home of a giant water creature similar to the one in Loch Ness.

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00:02:29,740 --> 00:02:34,738

Both lakes are remarkably alike, lying at almost the same latitude.

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00:02:34,738 --> 00:02:38,737

Both are long and narrow, having areas of great depth.

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00:02:38,737 --> 00:02:42,735

Both were formed by cataclysmic shifts of the Earth's crust.

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00:02:42,735 --> 00:02:47,733

They have similar temperatures and contain almost identical types of fish.

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00:02:49,732 --> 00:02:53,731

This is a famous picture claimed to be a Loch Ness monster.

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00:02:53,731 --> 00:02:58,729

The head bears a striking resemblance to that of a prehistoric creature.

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00:02:58,729 --> 00:03:04,726

Reports of beasts of immense length indicate that creatures like these may still exist.

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00:03:04,726 --> 00:03:10,724

But how could it be possible for them to survive undetected for millions of years?

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00:03:10,724 --> 00:03:15,722

If such creatures unknown to science do indeed exist, what could they be?

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00:03:15,722 --> 00:03:21,720

Fish, mammal, reptile, or some species long thought to be extinct?

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00:03:21,720 --> 00:03:26,718

40 years ago, the scientific world was stunned by the discovery of a sila canth,

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00:03:26,718 --> 00:03:30,716

a fish believed to have been extinct for 60 million years.

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00:03:30,716 --> 00:03:35,714

Not only was it very much alive, but many times larger than any of its ancestors.

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00:03:36,714 --> 00:03:40,712

If such a discovery happened once, could it not happen again?

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00:03:40,712 --> 00:03:47,710

On the surface, Lake Okanagan presents a scene of calm beauty, but this view can change in a moment.

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00:03:47,710 --> 00:03:52,708

Winds rise seemingly from nowhere, whipping the lake into a fury.

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00:03:52,708 --> 00:03:55,707

Can it be that below this changeable surface,

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00:03:55,707 --> 00:03:59,705

dwells a creature rivaling the famous Loch Ness monster?

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00:04:00,705 --> 00:04:07,702

The Okanagan Indians have lived near the shores of the lake for centuries, long before the white man.

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00:04:07,702 --> 00:04:15,699

Like all Indians, they hold a deep reverence for nature, believing that all of creation is part of the plan of the Great Spirit.

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00:04:15,699 --> 00:04:22,696

The Indians of Okanagan both respect and fear their lake. Many of their legends are built around it.

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00:04:23,696 --> 00:04:30,693

These legends are passed down around the campfires from generation to generation.

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00:04:40,689 --> 00:04:47,686

You know, Lake Okanagan is like a living, sacred thing.

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00:04:48,686 --> 00:05:00,681

In an hour or two hours, this lake can be a raging, raging body of water and very dangerous.

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00:05:03,680 --> 00:05:09,678

In this lake, we have the Haka'edq.

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00:05:10,677 --> 00:05:24,672

It's a serpent that lives in the water and has been told to me by my great-great grandfather and told to him by his ancestors.

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00:05:24,672 --> 00:05:34,668

In early times, according to legend, no Indian would attempt to cross Lake Okanagan without first offering a small animal to the lake monster.

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00:05:34,668 --> 00:05:41,665

There are stories of those who failed to make such offerings and whose horses were sucked under by a mysterious force.

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00:05:41,665 --> 00:05:45,664

Stories of canoes wrecked and scattered on the rocks.

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00:05:48,663 --> 00:05:57,659

The Indians' offering can be viewed as a spiritual act of sacrifice or as the pragmatic act of appeasing a hungry monster.

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00:06:05,656 --> 00:06:16,652

At the Kelowna Museum near Lake Okanagan, we talked with curator Ursula Sirtees, who has devoted years to the study of the local Indian culture.

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00:06:16,652 --> 00:06:24,649

Niharate lived about midway down Okanagan Lake in a little cavern underneath Squally Point.

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00:06:24,649 --> 00:06:32,646

And Ogopogo, or Niharate, was a creature that had to be appeased whenever the occasion arose.

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00:06:33,645 --> 00:06:38,643

Many people have cast some doubts as to whether Ogopogo was really there.

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00:06:38,643 --> 00:06:54,637

But the Indian people have for years known about Ogopogo, and we have learned over a long period of time that Indian legends, for the most part, have a very substantial amount of fact and truth in them.

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00:06:54,637 --> 00:06:58,636

Mary Moon is the author of Ogopogo, The Okanagan Mystery.

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00:06:58,636 --> 00:07:07,632

I first came up into this lake country in 1972 as assistant editor of a magazine to write seven or eight stories about this area.

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00:07:07,632 --> 00:07:15,629

And everywhere I went up and down the valley, they kept saying this funny word, Ogopogo, Ogopogo.

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00:07:15,629 --> 00:07:17,628

And I said, what's an Ogopogo?

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00:07:17,628 --> 00:07:19,627

And they said, oh, there's a snake in the lake.

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00:07:19,627 --> 00:07:21,627

And I said, what?

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00:07:21,627 --> 00:07:24,625

They said, there's a snake in the lake.

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00:07:24,625 --> 00:07:26,625

And I said, please tell me about it.

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00:07:26,625 --> 00:07:35,621

And they rounded up half a dozen people, seven or eight people, of stunning respectability and great enthusiasm and great sincerity.

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00:07:35,621 --> 00:07:38,620

And they told me their stories and they all hung together.

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00:07:38,620 --> 00:07:40,619

We launched our boat in Peachland.

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00:07:40,619 --> 00:07:43,618

Harry and Betty Steins have often cruised these waters.

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00:07:43,618 --> 00:07:48,616

About one third of the way across we noticed a commotion in the water to our right.

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00:07:48,616 --> 00:07:51,615

And we turned our boat in that direction.

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00:07:51,615 --> 00:08:01,611

When we got near this area, we noticed this huge creature emerge from the water and was swimming in an earthly direction.

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00:08:01,611 --> 00:08:03,610

When I looked at it, I was just scared to death.

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00:08:03,610 --> 00:08:05,609

It looked so huge.

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00:08:05,609 --> 00:08:10,608

And I remember in particular the fins on the top of it, the bone structures.

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00:08:10,608 --> 00:08:15,606

You know, it was just so really stood out, the white bone structure.

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00:08:15,606 --> 00:08:17,605

And I said, oh, it's got fins, you know.

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00:08:17,605 --> 00:08:20,604

And I said, Harry, let's not go any closer.

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00:08:20,604 --> 00:08:22,603

It just made tip the boat over.

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00:08:22,603 --> 00:08:24,602

It was so big.

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00:08:24,602 --> 00:08:29,600

We've been holidaying in this area for the past 30 years with our family.

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00:08:29,600 --> 00:08:33,599

We've heard of Ogopogo, but we never believed in it.

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00:08:33,599 --> 00:08:38,597

But Betty and I are real believers now that there's a huge creature in this lake.

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00:08:38,597 --> 00:08:40,596

Jeffrey Sherwin remembers.

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00:08:40,596 --> 00:08:42,595

It was a calm day just like it is today.

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00:08:42,595 --> 00:08:46,594

We were fishing on the lake, my son David, myself and his two friends.

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00:08:46,594 --> 00:08:50,592

Parallel to the shore, we were trolling when one of the boys shouted,

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00:08:50,592 --> 00:08:52,591

look at that funny looking wave.

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00:08:52,591 --> 00:08:57,589

I turned and looked at the strangest looking thing I'd ever seen in my life.

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00:08:57,589 --> 00:09:01,588

I saw two humps sticking out of the water, heading for shore.

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00:09:01,588 --> 00:09:08,585

We watched it for a full three minutes as the object, whatever it was, reached the shore.

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00:09:08,585 --> 00:09:10,584

It was five feet short of the shore.

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00:09:10,584 --> 00:09:13,583

I expected to see it walk up out of the water when the whole thing sank.

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00:09:13,583 --> 00:09:16,582

I don't know what it was, but I think I saw Ogopogo.

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00:09:16,582 --> 00:09:19,581

I've been ridiculed about this many times since,

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00:09:19,581 --> 00:09:24,579

but I'll tell you right now there's no way that I'd make a liar out of my son and his friends.

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00:09:24,579 --> 00:09:25,578

The first time I've seen it.

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00:09:25,578 --> 00:09:27,578

And Fletcher and his daughter Jill.

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00:09:27,578 --> 00:09:36,574

Jill and I were idling out in the bay there, and we were all about two blocks from the shore.

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00:09:36,574 --> 00:09:41,572

And all of a sudden this huge man came up in front of us.

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00:09:41,572 --> 00:09:45,571

We shut the boat off, and by the time that the boat had stopped,

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00:09:45,571 --> 00:09:50,569

we had almost coasted up to within reaching distance of it.

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00:09:50,569 --> 00:09:55,567

And that particular day we chased Ogopogo for about an hour and a half,

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00:09:55,567 --> 00:09:59,565

and out of an hour and a half we got five pitchers.

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00:09:59,565 --> 00:10:03,564

We saw it just around 50 feet out, just one hump.

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00:10:03,564 --> 00:10:04,563

There was just one hump there.

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00:10:04,563 --> 00:10:10,561

I guess it would have been around three feet high, and it was dark.

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00:10:10,561 --> 00:10:17,558

And one of the reasons we believe that we've seen it so many times is because of the boat.

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00:10:17,558 --> 00:10:25,555

The boat has an electrical current developed by the motor going through into the rudder.

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00:10:25,555 --> 00:10:30,553

And this creates what they call electrolysis.

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00:10:30,553 --> 00:10:36,551

And electrolysis is a high amperage which attracts marine life.

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00:10:36,551 --> 00:10:41,549

And the first year that we went out we thought we were chasing Ogopogo,

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00:10:41,549 --> 00:10:46,547

but we find that Ogopogo is attracted to the boat, and it's following us.

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00:10:46,547 --> 00:10:50,545

We've seen Ogopogo 40 or 50 times.

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00:10:50,545 --> 00:10:56,543

At first glance, Ed Fletcher's pictures look like a wave,

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00:10:56,543 --> 00:11:03,540

but a closer look reveals something much more difficult to explain.

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00:11:03,540 --> 00:11:10,538

Intrigued by Ed Fletcher's pictures, our camera team decided to explore beneath the surface of Lake Okanagan

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00:11:10,538 --> 00:11:13,536

in search of the Ogopogo monster.

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00:11:13,536 --> 00:11:19,534

Cal Bevin in red scuba gear is a local diver who's made many attempts to find the monster.

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00:11:19,534 --> 00:11:22,533

He agreed to try again.

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00:11:22,533 --> 00:11:28,531

Our cameraman is Barry Herron, an expert underwater photographer.

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00:11:28,531 --> 00:11:35,528

As the lake is over 80 miles long, his chance of filming the monster is slim.

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00:11:35,528 --> 00:11:42,525

They decided to dive in the area where Ed Fletcher stated he had sighted Ogopogo many times.

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00:11:58,519 --> 00:12:04,517

It was near this spot that young Aaron Neely reported a face-to-face confrontation with the monster.

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00:12:13,513 --> 00:12:20,510

The heavy underwater camera and housing becomes buoyant and easy to handle below the surface.

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00:12:28,507 --> 00:12:33,505

The camera is also very close to the water.

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00:12:33,505 --> 00:12:38,503

The camera is also very close to the water.

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00:12:38,503 --> 00:12:43,501

The camera is also very close to the water.

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00:12:43,501 --> 00:12:48,500

Strangely, no fish were found in an area where they are known to feed,

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00:12:48,500 --> 00:12:52,498

and after a long and careful search, no monster.

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00:12:52,498 --> 00:12:55,497

At least none in this section of the lake.

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00:12:55,497 --> 00:13:00,495

In the summer of the year 2000, a public meeting was announced through the local press.

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00:13:00,495 --> 00:13:04,493

We were amazed by the number of people who related unusual sightings.

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00:13:04,493 --> 00:13:08,492

How many people have seen Ogopogo here?

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00:13:08,492 --> 00:13:12,490

How many people in this crowd have seen Ogopogo here?

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00:13:12,490 --> 00:13:17,488

It was a hot summer morning and the lake was just like a mirror.

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00:13:17,488 --> 00:13:22,486

When my mother and I saw it, it was between Trout Creek Point and Summerland.

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00:13:22,486 --> 00:13:27,484

The lake came up out of the water like a huge horse's head.

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00:13:27,484 --> 00:13:32,482

The back of it was quite calm, the lake was still there.

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00:13:32,482 --> 00:13:37,480

Then its head went down and the back of it just lashed like this.

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00:13:37,480 --> 00:13:41,479

I would estimate it would be about 35 feet long.

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00:13:41,479 --> 00:13:46,477

The whole thing I've seen, head and all, and boy, all at once he went down.

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00:13:46,477 --> 00:13:49,476

He must have seen me, went down on the waves, all.

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00:13:49,476 --> 00:13:53,474

He was in the middle of a boat, he's not here anymore, he's in Prince George.

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00:13:53,474 --> 00:13:57,473

He stopped behind me and he says, what did you see? I've just seen Ogopogo.

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00:13:57,473 --> 00:14:01,471

He says, gee, look at the waves in there. I says, yeah, I've just seen Ogopogo.

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00:14:01,471 --> 00:14:05,470

The whole thing, I says. He didn't believe me, he says, but oh, it must be true then.

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00:14:05,470 --> 00:14:09,468

So we says, let's go to the willow inn for coffee. We went down the willow inn and told everybody,

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00:14:09,468 --> 00:14:13,466

you're crazy, you're crazy, what have you been drinking? I says, no.

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00:14:13,466 --> 00:14:16,465

I says, I've just seen Ogoopogo, they didn't believe me.

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00:14:16,465 --> 00:14:21,463

People have seen something, but moving images reflected in the water can be deceiving.

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00:14:21,463 --> 00:14:25,462

Well, I, I grew grapes across the lake and I was sitting on my tractor,

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00:14:25,462 --> 00:14:30,460

cultivating my vineyard and I looked down in the water and there was a big black,

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00:14:30,460 --> 00:14:33,459

looked like a big black log about 50 or 60 feet long.

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00:14:33,459 --> 00:14:37,457

So I stopped the tractor and I thought, well, maybe I should go down there and cut that up

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00:14:37,457 --> 00:14:42,455

because I'm looking for some cedar posts. A few minutes later, some little waves started coming from my log

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00:14:42,455 --> 00:14:47,453

and I thought, well, that thing must be alive. And suddenly it started up,

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00:14:47,453 --> 00:14:54,451

made a huge circle and a terrific lashing of water and then two coils came out of the water

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00:14:54,451 --> 00:15:00,448

about four or five feet high and they were the most beautiful green you have ever seen.

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00:15:00,448 --> 00:15:06,446

We were part of a large group on a family picnic sort of thing in the summertime

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00:15:06,446 --> 00:15:11,444

and about six o'clock in the evening, the water was all quiet and calm, much as it is right now,

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00:15:11,444 --> 00:15:15,442

and all of a sudden it started to churn.

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00:15:15,442 --> 00:15:22,440

Yes, it was definitely something serpentine about this creature. It, it made its own wake behind it.

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00:15:22,440 --> 00:15:27,438

Waves from passing boats often take five minutes to reach the shore.

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00:15:27,438 --> 00:15:31,436

Could such waves appear to be large humps moving through the water?

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00:15:31,436 --> 00:15:38,433

They had three humps and it looked like the shadow of a tail at the back.

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00:15:38,433 --> 00:15:46,430

One day, our crew was the victim of a hoax. Someone with a sense of humor tied three tires together.

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00:15:46,430 --> 00:15:51,428

For a moment, the in search of camera team thought they'd seen Ogopogo.

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00:15:51,428 --> 00:15:57,426

Even allowing for optical illusions, there's much that is difficult to explain away in the many sightings.

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00:15:57,426 --> 00:16:03,424

One thing is certain, the sincerity of the people interviewed. Ed Fletcher, for example,

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00:16:03,424 --> 00:16:08,422

has spent a great deal of time and money continuing his own investigation.

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00:16:08,422 --> 00:16:16,419

Do I understand that you saw a creature in the lake that had texture something like the skin of the shark that swung past here?

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00:16:16,419 --> 00:16:19,418

Yes, very much similar. Very smooth and shiny.

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00:16:19,418 --> 00:16:21,417

No scales?

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00:16:21,417 --> 00:16:26,415

No, very similar to the shark and very similar to a whale skin.

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00:16:26,415 --> 00:16:29,414

Have you seen sharks and whales up close?

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00:16:29,414 --> 00:16:38,410

In an attempt to identify what he had seen, Ed met with Willard Baskham, director of the Southern California Coastal Waters Research Project.

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00:16:38,410 --> 00:16:46,407

Beside the tanks at a nearby museum, Fletcher compared the monster he had seen with some of the aquarium's underwater creatures.

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00:16:46,407 --> 00:16:47,407

Oh no, it swam this way.

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00:16:47,407 --> 00:16:48,406

Side to side.

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00:16:48,406 --> 00:17:00,402

This creature we saw didn't have fins. When it was swimming, it would show mounds in the water only because of the way it was swimming like a snake.

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00:17:00,402 --> 00:17:07,399

Ed learned that whales are capable of withstanding sudden and extreme changes of depths and pressures.

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00:17:07,399 --> 00:17:16,395

But whales are saltwater mammals, not likely to be found in a mountain lake.

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00:17:16,395 --> 00:17:20,394

Some believe Ogopogo to be a giant eel.

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00:17:20,394 --> 00:17:26,392

Eels are known to grow to lengths of 20 feet and they do inhabit freshwater lakes.

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00:17:26,392 --> 00:17:33,389

One theory states that eunuch eels with little or no sex drive do not participate in the mating migration,

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00:17:33,389 --> 00:17:38,387

but remain feeding on the bottom of lakes and grow to enormous size.

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00:17:38,387 --> 00:17:44,385

Could Ogopogo be one of these?

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00:17:44,385 --> 00:17:50,382

As their first attempt was inconclusive, our divers decide to try again.

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00:17:50,382 --> 00:18:06,376

This time off Squally Point where Indian legends tell of a cave-like home of the lake monster.

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00:18:06,376 --> 00:18:19,371

As the divers descended, the water grew painfully cold.

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00:18:19,371 --> 00:18:30,367

Amid the rocks, our divers found many cavernous openings, but no signs of Ogopogo living in any of them.

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00:18:30,367 --> 00:18:36,364

Unable to capture the monster on film, our searchers had one more contact to make.

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00:18:36,364 --> 00:18:45,361

The author is of Beneath the Depths, Arlene Gall, who owns the only known motion picture footage reputed to be of Ogopogo.

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00:18:45,361 --> 00:18:56,357

The most conclusive evidence that I personally feel that we have on the Ogopogo is the fold-in film.

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00:18:56,357 --> 00:19:13,350

The fold-in film actually shows a large, animate object, servicing, submerging, and propelling itself through the waters at a very high speed.

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00:19:13,350 --> 00:19:23,346

There is very little doubt in my mind that there is a creature, or creatures, of massive size beneath the depths of Okanagan Lake.

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00:19:23,346 --> 00:19:37,341

We optically enlarge the film, and on close examination there was indeed a large object moving through the water, as shown by the white foam.

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00:19:37,341 --> 00:19:42,339

Professor Willard Bascom comments on the conditions necessary for the development of a monster.

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00:19:42,339 --> 00:19:49,336

One of the difficult problems is that this is in a fairly small lake, which is only 90 miles long and 2 or 3 miles wide,

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00:19:49,336 --> 00:19:57,333

and it just doesn't seem likely that you could have developed any animal quite so large in the relatively short time available

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00:19:57,333 --> 00:20:02,331

since that lake was frozen no solid during the ice ages. It just seems very unlikely to me.

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00:20:02,331 --> 00:20:08,329

I do believe that in the open ocean there are probably lots of very large animals that are so rarely seen by man.

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00:20:08,329 --> 00:20:15,326

There are some sea monsters, if you will, of animals of a certain kind which are much larger than any others like that that have ever been seen.

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00:20:15,326 --> 00:20:23,323

All animals have certain problems of getting oxygen and of feeding and of living through the winter time and of mating and raising young and all the other things,

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00:20:23,323 --> 00:20:28,321

and all of those things still need to be described about this particular creature, whatever it may be.

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00:20:28,321 --> 00:20:37,317

But there's no question there are very large animals in the sea which are only rarely seen, so anything might be a sea monster but grew to a very unusual size.

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00:20:39,317 --> 00:20:49,313

The persistent question remains, what is it so many reliable witnesses say they've seen in the lake? Could so many people be wrong?

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00:20:53,311 --> 00:21:02,308

Whether the creature is something known or unknown, it's difficult to ignore these pictures and the large number of sightings of a creature scientists cannot explain.

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00:21:02,308 --> 00:21:08,305

What it is we still don't know. Perhaps someday a scientific expedition will tell us.

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00:21:08,305 --> 00:21:17,302

In the meantime, the Folden film provides us with the most conclusive evidence that something very large lives in Lake Okanagan.

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00:21:19,301 --> 00:21:24,299

So what's the secret for winning any battle? The element of surprise.

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00:21:25,299 --> 00:21:32,296

The bouncing bomb was a handy way for a plane to hit the hull and sink a ship in one hit, and there's plenty more where that came from.

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00:21:32,296 --> 00:21:37,294

Check out Greatest Raids, all this week at 9 on the History Channel.