

Land's End in 1999

The spectacle disappointed no one. On February 26, 1979, the sun was indeed obscured by the moon, right on time and in the right spot. I happened to be one of a group of scientists and eclipse chasers (and other interested individuals) out at Hecla Island at the Gull Harbour Resort. Some were from the Jet Propulsion Laboratory in California, some from amateur astronomy groups in Pennsylvania and some from Montana. Counted among the group were also Dr. and Mrs. J. Allen Hynek and part of their family, whom I was fortunate enough to speak with for a few minutes during the weekend. I managed to even take a few photographs of the event, including some spectacular shots of the total eclipse with my Kodak Instamatic. The image was a full two millimeters wide on the print! I'm going to have to buy a better camera one of these days, possibly in time for the next eclipse I'll be going to. Yes, I do want to try seeing another one, but definitely not the next one next year in Kenya, nor the next in Mongolia. Mexico in 1991 is a definite maybe, but barring that, I will go to extreme lengths to make it to Land's End in 1999. I saw clearly how easily it is to become an eclipse chaser; at the closing banquet at Hecla, the talk wasn't about the fantastic event that had taken place earlier in the day, but on how many at the banquet had not yet booked for Kenya.

In SGJ #2. I mentioned that I was impressed by James Oberg's recent writings on UFO's, including those in OMNI. A few people mentioned to me that they were surprised by my apparent endorsement of his works, and wondered whether I was becoming one of "them". Well, fear not, for I will remain one of "us". However, I must say that just because Oberg may throw a monkey wrench into the strong beliefs that are firmly entrenched in many UFO buffs' minds, does not mean that he is automatically a bad guy. In the same way, I admire both Menzel's and Klass' efforts at critiquing articles and statements about UFO's that have been made, something that is in short supply in many ways. Oberg, of course, has been wrong on several occasions, but he is doing a better-than-average job of examining the UFO problem with common sense.

Along approximately the same lines, I was quite pleased to read Eugene Garfield's review of OMNI magazine in Current Contents - Life Sciences (V. 22, #11, 12 Mar. 1979, pp.6+). It is interesting to note that OMNI, along with its articles on UFO's by James Oberg, is now being indexed; not only in Current Contents, but also the Science Citation Index, which is now going to have many more entries under the heading "UFO".

No new UFO cases have been received by me for investigation within the past few months, although I suspect, as usual, that sightings are being made, but are going unreported. This is unfortunate, since it is much better to look into "fresh" cases, but the data from cases several months old can still be useful in many ways.

The Teulon cattle mutilation that I mentioned in #2 seems to be nothing more

mysterious than a good case of bloat disease. Since a UFO had not been observed, the case, in my opinion, should not be considered as having anything to do with the phenomenon, given the evidence and facts of the incident. However, it was a perfect setting for a cattle mutilation/UFO case, with not only major transmission lines through the area, but also microwave circuits, swampy land, gravel pits and Indian burial sites.

I have added another group of items to my "miscellaneous" folder, this time somewhat out of the ordinary. In August of 1978, the country of Grenada issued a souvenir sheet plus three other stamps featuring UFO's as their main theme. I managed to purchase these with difficulty in Winnipeg, but the end result was worth the effort. The stamps show various reported UFO shapes and configurations, ranging from an old German drawing of an unusual light in the sky to George Adamski's craft (a poor choice, if you ask me). The sheet depicts the UN building in New York, with a flying saucer hovering in the background. These, I feel are going to be scarce for UFO material collectors, simply because of their content, but are certainly a unique addition to any collection on the subject.

UN-Con II, the second Winnipeg Science Fiction Society convention, has been postponed, and will not be held in May as had been planned. At this time, no date has been set, as several items must be cleared up before the convention can be re-planned. However, on April 27th, at the Manitoba Planetarium, the Winnipeg School Division No. 3 will be holding its annual symposium for Junior High students. This year, the theme is "Science Fiction", and it seems that the symposium will be taking on the appearance of an SF con. In addition to the slide shows, SF skits, workshops and videotape presentations, the symposium will also have a few robots buzzing around, and none other than myself as a keynote speaker, on the topic of "Science Fiction and UFO's". I'll mention such things as the Shaver Mystery, the Hollow Earth and "I Remember Lemuria", and review novels and short stories that have appeared over the years. Included in these will be Hans Santesson's collection, "Flying Saucers in Fact and Fiction", as well as Arthur C. Clarke's story with a flying saucer in the title, the precise one escaping me just now.

Sometime this year, I hope to complete an article or paper on the Michalak case, one that has caused much discussion in several circles. There is a great deal of evidence which seems to indicate without doubt that the case was a hoax, but on the other hand, there is also some which seems undeniably strong bearing on the actuality of the incident. The twelve years which have elapsed since the incident have seen a relatively large amount put into print on the case, and much data has been presented out of context and with little supporting documentation. I don't expect to overcome the entire mess, but at least set a few things right.

I had hoped to have had ready for this issue the statistics for last year, but various things have forced me to postpone this again, possibly to the better, since there are some cases which I would like to reinvestigate to eliminate the insufficient status of some of them. One, involving a reported CE2 near a small town a considerable distance west of Winnipeg, concerned some marks which had been left on the ground, following the landing of a disc-shaped craft near a home. If the facts are as I have been given (and I see no reason to doubt them), this case may be a very good true UFO sighting involving physical evidence. So, when the snow clears...

There have been several reported meteorite falls in Manitoba recently, most of them investigated by the NRC. One, however is curious in that it produced a crater, or rather, what should have been a crater, following an object's fall into a field. An NRC investigator who travelled to the site stated that the elongated hole was not created by a meteorite or a chunk of satellite. And that leaves, er, um,...

I have been receiving Mr. X's Res Bureaux Bulletin for some time now, and avidly read his review of clippings and reports of UFO's in Canada. Manitoba, it appears, is totally dead with regards to UFO's, making me wonder. Why? Even the Winnipeg newspapers are almost totally without reference to the phenomenon. Is Manitoba incredibly Conservative; too Conservative to report UFO cases? It's obviously related to the population density in some ways, since much of Manitoba is very sparsely inhabited. However, southern Manitoba is rich Farming land, checkerboarded throughout. Does someone up there not want to be bothered with us?

Pages From the Past

One of the few incidents recorded by Charles Fort as having occurred in Manitoba is a "Shower of Black Ants", cited in the index of his collected works. The source is Scientific American, V. 72, June 22, 1895, p. 385, which cites its own source as the Winnipeg Free Press of an unspecified date. The account reads as follows:

"The warm, thunderous state of the atmosphere, Wednesday evening, presaged a heavy downpour of rain in the city and vicinity, but this expectation was not realized, and the rain passed off with a slight shower. Instead of the rain, a shower of another kind resulted, which is one of the most curious visitations in the history of the city. On the sidewalks, in the roads, upon the roofs, and the insides of the houses there was seen, yesterday, numbers of large black ants crawling about. They were found as plentiful in the outskirts of the city as on the main streets, and from the fact that some of these insects have wings while others have dropped or shed them, it is natural to conclude that they have migrated from some district to the south of the province, and have come to stay. They are large, black-bodied specimens, about the size of a wasp, and have the strong nip-pers of their race. They are not native of Manitoba, and are similar to the African ant."

It is hard to judge such a report, since it happened long ago. An entomologist that I showed the account to, simply said, "So?" Well, at least it's on record. Such insect falls, along with fish falls, rock falls, and other similar oddities, exist in relatively large numbers in the collection of Charles Fort, and science, as a rule, merely shrugs its shoulders and turns away. Explanations such as the objects' riding of the Jet Streams and/or freak waterspouts have been variously proposed, but apparently fall short in some cases. What, then?

And This Isn't Any Bull, Either

Tommy Blann of Texas has recently sent me information regarding cattle mutilation cases that are occurring in his neck of the woods. As I mentioned earlier in this issue, I judged the Taulon cattle case as not being a true mute case, and having the ear marks of a natural cause. However, this is not what is being found with the mute cases in the states, those being highly unusual to say the least. For example, here are excerpts from a story in the Torrance County Citizen, in Estrancia, New Mexico: "...(a) 200 pound, six-month-old Angus was found dead...Upon investigation, it was found that the ears had been cut from the animal, and that the scrotum had been cut, and the penis removed...On each side of the animal (about the middle of the rib cage) there was found a six-inch patch of circular hair missing. Preliminary indications were that the hair had not been pulled out, but rather that it had been 'rubbed off'. Within these patches were small lacerations...During an examination of the animal...the sherriff found the animal's neck to be broken, and a bloody area in the left shoulder region. The jugular had been punctured in two places. The larger hole was approximately four centimeters across, and the smaller puncture was approximately one and a half centimeters...According to the sherriff, there was no blood found in the heart, and little blood was found in the body of the dead animal. Acting on the recommendation of _____, the sheriff had the carcass and all the utensils used to dissect the animal burned." (1 Feb. 1979)

Now why can't something interesting like that happen in Manitoba?

The fact is, it probably has. Mute cases are apparently widespread, and the possibility of them occurring in Manitoba definitely exists. Indeed, I have heard rumors to the effect that "someone" was castrating bulls somewhere in western Manitoba. I have been unable to pin this down any further, however; in 1975, two JFO investigators who did check into the stories to some extent, found themselves running around in circles and getting nowhere. I may pick up the pieces and try again this summer.

Well, I'm once again running short of space, and so this issue must come to a close. You may have noticed The Swamp Gas Journal now has an ISSN number, and it is apparently being catalogued in the National Library. So, my publishing empire is born and on the books.

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