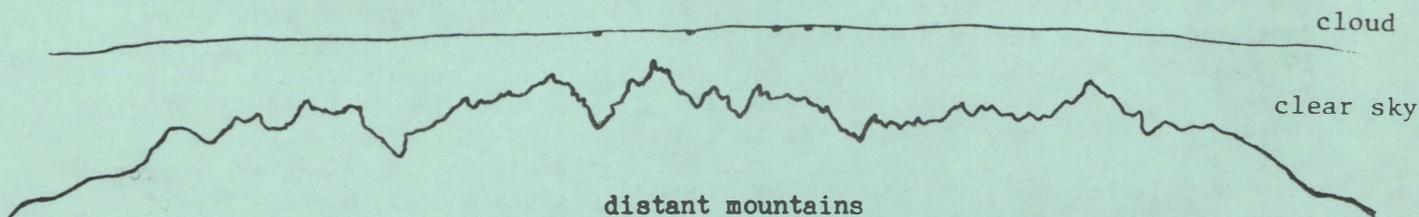


In the Mountains

This past summer, the editor of this journal travelled west to Alberta for a much-needed vacation. While out west, a few side trips were taken to a few sites of ufological interest.

Priddis, Alberta, was one of these; a small, almost nonexistent town in a valley southwest of Calgary, known as a good "UFO lookout" by local residents. This apparently began as a result of a major UFO incident in 1974, when on October 13 of that year, a woman reported a domed disc hovering 100 feet above the ground near her home. After the woman and her children watched it for a few minutes, it flew quickly off to the west with a loud roar. RCMP called to the site observed three starlike objects through the woman's telescope, one of which was apparently the retreating object. Since then, others have observed nocturnal lights in the area, as well as a few reports of car-chasings.

During the editor's vigil at the site, no discs presented themselves to view. However, a very curious phenomena was seen by several observers, editor included. The time of observation was a period between ten and eleven o'clock in July, in the Turner Valley at Priddis. Looking westward to the mountains, the twilight enabled us to discern the slightly-lighter sky. Some stars were visible at this time. Cityglow was visible in the east.



Four or five white lights were seen on the interface between the sky and the clouds. The uncertainty of number was the result of their winking on and off intermittently. The lights were stationary despite their winking, and did not move from their perch on the mountain, though the phi phenomenon presented some illusion of motion. The lights were at the limit of naked-eye visibility, and low-power field glasses did little to resolve the lights into discernable objects.

In all likelihood, the lights were reflections of distant ground lights, though the precise methods and angles are not readily obvious. One member of the observing group who had observed at the location before, said that the lights were identical to what he and others had seen. These lights conform easily to the description by the RCMP officer through the telescope. As with most notable sightings, however, there is a complication. The original witness was scheduled to appear on television, but was absent from her home for the interview time. As the story goes, she has not returned, and has vanished from the face of the earth. The editor did not pursue the matter. After all, he was on vacation.

And now, Velikovsky!

While in Lethbridge, the editor met Dr. E.R. Milton, an extremely well-informed Velikovskian, with an enormous collection of literature and material on the subject of catastrophism and alternate evolution. He has written papers for both of the journals Kronos and the former Pensee. He is a professional astronomer, and manages to also sneak a bit of Velikovsky theory into his university course program. He and the editor traded ideas and thoughts for a few hours, finding that they had a common amusement: Carl Sagan. Sagan has gone on nationwide TV many times, and has ridiculed UFO's and Velikovsky's theories, often in the same breath. (Of course, there, the connection between the two "pseudosciences" ends, unless you want to throw in a tenuous link with Atlantis. Many outspoken skeptics would be outraged if they were informed that they themselves were the only solidly-defined link between the "pseudosciences".) At any rate, Dr. Milton raised a few interesting points, including one about recent research on the Foucault pendulum. According to him, over long periods of time, the pendulum varies from predicted behaviour, determined by early experimenters. This led to a discussion of gravity and inertia, all quite logical and scientific. This was the editor's first real encounter with a Velikovskian, and it left him quite impressed with the whole controversy.

As a further note on the catastrophism theme, a recent issue of Nature (16 August 1979, p.536) described an apparent fossil record of a second Earth moon, named Selena; and so it goes.

Socioexobiology

The study of extraterrestrial life has come to be known as exobiology. A new research guide by Martin Sable (Exobiology: a Research Guide. Green Oak Press, 1978) on the subject includes nine sections directly relating to UFO's. Exobiological scientists no doubt strongly disagree with the inclusion of UFO's in such a bibliography, but the editor finds it quite justified for a very important reason. Even if we are to assume that UFO's do not in any way represent extraterrestrial spacecraft, there still is in existence a visible display of human reaction to the idea of contact. This, the sociological and psychological aspects of exobiology, is therefore plausibly termed socioexobiology, being the study of the impact of extraterrestrialism on society. This branch of the humanities, of course, will not realise its full potential until (or if no) actual contact is made. It is essentially tied in with metalaw, the laws of outer space as they will apply to extraterrestrial beings, already being seriously considered by the legal profession.

Socioexobiology can examine the reactions of persons who have claimed a UFO experience, as well as those who claim direct humanoid contact (the contactees, to a degree). Many astronomers argue that sentient life exists elsewhere in the universe; it seems reasonable to expect that contact may be made at some point in the future (or, alternatively, it may have been made already). The editor personally finds this path of study fascinating, and may pursue research into this field in the future.

Manipogo Revisited

It's been quite a while since anything has appeared in print about lake monsters in Manitoba. Technically, even though a lake monster is a UWO (Unidentified Underwater Object) and deserves some mention in a UFO publication, it is otherwise unrelated to ufology except through the categorical generalizing of Forteana. The editor is also interested, however, in Manitoba Forteana, so an examination of such phenomena is justified.

Recently, the scientific publication Science published a report by Dr. W.H. Lehn of the University of Manitoba, suggesting that many lake monster sightings may be due to atmospheric visual distortion of floating logs and small animals (Science, V.205, 13 July 1979, pp. 183-5.) The editor had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Lehn while he was being interviewed by a local radio station, and found out further information regarding his theory. It seems that his report is based on data published in a book by R.P. Mackal (The Monsters of Loch Ness, 1976), and works by various scientists on atmospheric refraction near the surface of water, published earlier in this century. Lehn found that many photographs of lake monsters easily compare with photographs of distant objects distorted to view. However, Lehn made it clear that he had not done any in-person investigation of the lake monster sightings. He did state that his research into this theory was in its infancy and that personal investigations were a definite possibility for further studies. His theory would work well with regard to objects viewed at an approximate distance of one kilometer, but would break down under a circumstance of a close encounter. (This, of course, shows another relationship to UFO's, namely the use of atmospheric distortion to explain the phenomena. Both phenomena illustrate the unfortunate fact that the human eye can be misled more easily than most people would like to believe, i.e. "seeing is not believing".)

Since Manitoba also has its own lake monster(s), it was suggested that research into Manipogo reports might be in order. Also, since a photograph of Manipogo is in existence, an effort to use the theory to explain the photo might also be helpful.

Unfortunately, attempts to obtain the original photograph were unsuccessful, so such an analysis cannot be performed as yet. A cursory examination of a copy of the photograph seemed to indicate that atmospheric distortion might not be suitable as an explanation. This would be because the prow of a boat is visible in the photo, lending a perspective which suggests that the "monster" is not far from from the boat (from which the witnesses were observing). However, it's hard to say. The photograph may have been fabricated, or the "monster" may have been. Or, the theory simply cannot explain it, and the sighting stands as an authentic lake monster report.

Dr. Lehn retains an open mind with regards to Manipogo. He believes its existence is unlikely, but feels that there is insufficient evidence to rule it out entirely.

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A VISIT BY SASQUATCH

Still on the local scene, a farm family near Steinbach, Manitoba, is experiencing Bigfoot visits. Their experiences began in June of this year, when they heard rustling noises in the bush near their home, accompanied by "terrible" odors. Then, on 12 July, 1979, a younger member of the family saw an 11 foot tall creature, covered with hair, tramping through the underbrush.

Large footprints were found and photographed by the RCMP, who believe the creature is a bear. In fact, a bear was shot and killed in the area in August, but the reports continue. The odor may have been attributable, said an RCMP spokesman, to a dead cow which was found nearby.

This is the first time a Sasquatch report has come out of the Steinbach area, with most coming either much further north or to the east near Beausejour. A local Sasquatch investigator told the editor that there are at least thirty-five credible Bigfoot sightings in Manitoba (only seven of which are in UFOROM files, alas).

This series of incidents may be due to several bears prowling the area, or even other animals usually in hiding. There has been a rash of skunks and rats in urban areas of cities in Manitoba as well, so this fact may play a role in some reports of bush-rustling.

Which brings me to the close of another issue. I would like to thank Mrs. Barbara Westcott for her assistance in typing this journal.

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