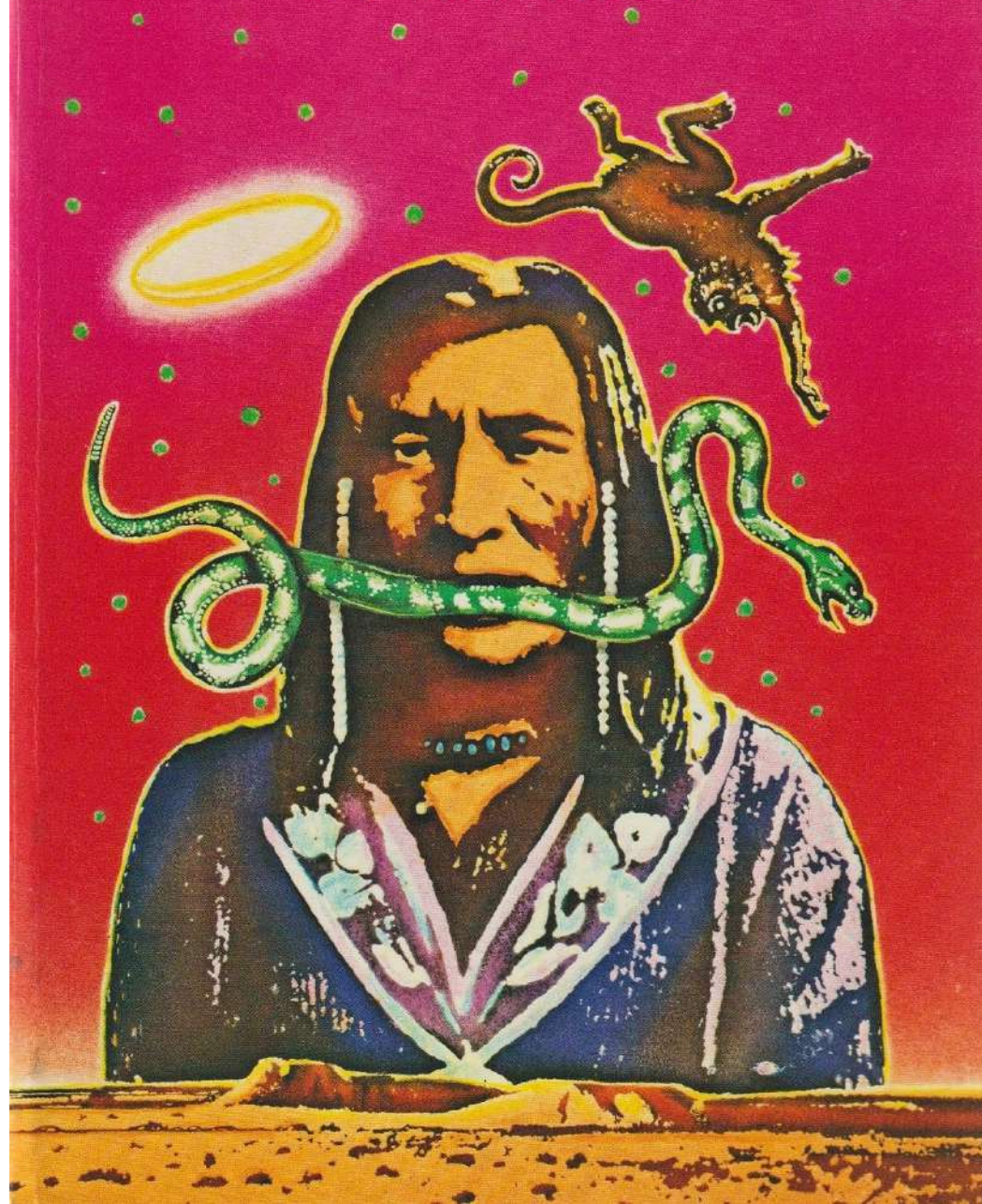


WEIRD AMERICA

A Guide to Places of Mystery
in the United States

JIM BRANDON



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First Edition

We live in the most wonderful of lands; and one of the most wonderful things in it is that we as Americans find so little to wonder at. Other civilized nations take pride in knowing their points of natural and historic interest; but when we have pointed to our marvelous growth in population and wealth, we are very largely done, and hasten abroad in quest of sights not a tenth part so wonderful as a thousand wonders we have at home and never dream of. . . . Let me tell you briefly then of a few of the strange corners of our country which I have found—which I hope you will some day be interested to see for yourselves.

Charles F. Lummis

Some Strange Corners of Our Country

New York, 1898, pp. 7-8

A NOTE TO THE READER

There are many utilitarian mileage calculators and road-sign guides for those who only want to roll down the freeway with the least effort to the next tourist attraction. But this is a field manual for "shunpikers," as beaters of the backcountry used to be called. It is a handbook for a subject that can absorb as much physical and intellectual involvement as the seeker wishes to commit. For this is a subject very much in a state of becoming. These listings are far more likely to lead to something like a shell mound hidden in the odorous mangroves and mosquito clouds of Florida—where there are sci-fi archaeological possibilities and many sightings of Bigfoot—than to a herded tour at some plasticky place with a jammed parking lot and toilet facilities.

In fact, only a minority of these offbeat places are formal displays that are set up to receive the general public. More often, sites are on private property and nominally closed to the curious. However, enterprising people soon learned that bona fide researchers, if their purpose is serious and their manner considerate, can usually gain access to most things. The key words are persistence and plausibility.

The study of anomalous phenomena was pioneered by an unusual American of this century by the name of Charles Fort. Without digging into textbooks of philosophy, I can't think of a more important recent figure in the whole field of epistemology, or the methods and limits of knowledge, than he. Many of those who have heard of Fort think of a mischievous chap with little more in mind than twitting "the experts" with all of the damned facts that orthodox authorities couldn't or wouldn't fit into their several pigeonholes of rationalistic "truth."

But far from being a mere anti-intellectual, as his critics charged, Fort felt that modern science has become a humdrum and bureaucratic affair more concerned with dispensing academic patronage and huge sums of research money than with trying to account for erratic phenomena that could not easily be tailored into the materialistic, clockwork universe of its own devising.

One of my main interests in making this compilation was to try to find areas across the country where anomalous phenomena—even if only an above-average percentage of them—seemed to concentrate. I have the feel-

ing that this geodetic aspect, heretofore neglected, is vastly important: to borrow a phrase from Bulwer-Lytton's *A Strange Story*, ". . . as keys to masked doors in the ramparts of nature. . . ." For data that seemed to fit no such pattern visible to me, I am always fond of the old Persian saying that the master carpet maker does not undo the pupil's mistakes, but weaves them into a greater pattern so that the overall design becomes far richer. Mayhap this is also true of the grand design of Nature; maybe the "freakish" and "unimportant exceptions" are necessary to a conception of the world far more grand than the one conducted by institutional knowledge.

In any case, I believe that the explorer of the para-, infra-, hyper-, or supernormal will wish to get beyond old-style, uncertainty-riddled laboratory inquiry as quickly as possible. Hence my listings of allegedly haunted houses, of ghost lights, of places where unexpected things have fallen from the skies, of sites frequented by unidentified flying, flapping, and furry objects over the years.

There is no money back guarantee that anyone going to these places will see a spook, will-o'-the-wisp, flying saucer, or tumbling geode within the first 10 minutes of arrival. But perhaps there is a certain aura or spirit of place—obviously there is *something* special about these sites—on which we should concentrate our long-dormant powers of total perception. Castaneda's Don Juan called such places *sitios*, or places of power, and suggested that every person of knowledge had to be familiar with them.

I have often wondered if it was entirely by chance that the colorful English magus Aleister Crowley selected the shores of Scotland's Loch Ness as a site for his first experiments in ritual magick, as he called it, and for occasional rest-ups thereafter. Of course there was nothing new in this: A wonderworker of an opposing religious outlook, the legendary Saint Columba, also spent some time at the Loch in the sixth century. What he did there, aside from viewing the "monster," is not recorded, but his visit must imply at least a recognition of whatever power it was that Crowley thought *he* was linking up with. In any event, adepts and mystics from Tibet to Mexico have always retreated to specially gifted places when they sought the inexpressible, ineffable direct experience of knowledge. And certain indications lead me to believe that modern science, in its most precocious periphery, may be moving in the same direction, as indeed it must.

I was inspired to do this book by my good friends Paul and his late brother Ronald Willis, founders of the International Fortean Organization. I had been thinking about a guide to unusual sites in Europe, but the Willises made the obvious point that there are as many if not more interesting places right here "to home." And Paul was kind enough to lend me his extensive library and data bank for starters.

I began looking for geographical correlations in unorthodox phenomena after a conversation with another friend, who was at that time mining gold in Colorado. Discussing the occasional gas problems that can make mining dangerous, he casually observed that the carbon monoxide gas seems to be at its worst underground at times when there are hurricanes in the southeastern states. Regularly.

Well, if there is anything to this piece of synchronism, or simultaneity—and I have no reason to doubt my very intelligent friend's powers of observation—we are certainly missing something if we fail to seek the link. But even if we do not find one, it may dawn on a significant number of people someday that the humblest falling rock from a clear sky, the dowdiest stuffed bird once "apported" live and singing into a locked iron cage, the wackiest "UFO" making 90-degree turns at Mach X have simply staggering implications for our very old and tired notions of time, matter, and energy.

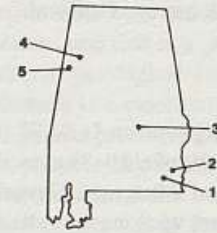
Although I have made no secret in this book of my differences with established archaeology, there is one attitude with which I must reluctantly agree: Vandalism and sheer "wear" are becoming a problem at many ancient sites. I don't accept any scientific elitism that would forbid these places to all but the bureaucratically approved; but there is no doubt that some are depreciating too fast, and in such instances I have adopted the standard archaeological practice of leaving the road directions rather general. I guess the theory is that this will screen out those who are less serious and more likely to be careless. But I have not omitted any locations (as some antiquarians have indignantly demanded) simply because they are believed to be "endangered."

Although every effort within reasonable limits of time and expense has been made to verify each listing, it is possible that inaccuracies have crept in. We welcome any corrections, and of course any new material, that our readers may care to offer. Simply address it to *Weird America*, E. P. Dutton, 2 Park Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10016.

—J.B.

June 1977

ALABAMA



DALE COUNTY (1)

(Abt. 1 mi. NW of Newton, at bridge of S.R. 134.) A shallow hole on private land along the west bank of the Choctawatchee River has for many years refused to remain filled, no matter how much dirt is dumped into it. This may be what geology calls a sinkhole, without really being able to explain the phenomenon, or it may have something to do with a local tradition that the subsidence began when a rascal named Bill Sketo was hanged on the spot, and cursed it forevermore, in the late nineteenth century. Unexplained apertures into whatever sort of world lies below the ground are found in a few other spots: for example, Kingston, New York, and Tacoma, Washington.

HENRY COUNTY (2)

(12 mi. S of Abbeville on U.S. 431, and a quarter-mile E on unnumbered road 1 mi. N of Tumbleton.) This spot is remarkable for its scads of worked and unworked flint. About 20 acres comprising several moundlike heaps are covered with thousands of tons of the quartz, in some places at least five feet deep. Archaeologists have been baffled as to how, or why, the aborigines would have worked up so much flint, and how they brought it in without a fleet of dump trucks from the nearest quarry source, which is many miles away.

LAMAR COUNTY (3)

A mystery light has been reported sporadically since the 1890s. It is located in a rural area near the Mississippi State line, about two miles northwest of Molloy, Alabama. Molloy is 25 miles northeast of Columbus, Mississippi, on S.R. 12.

MONTGOMERY (4)

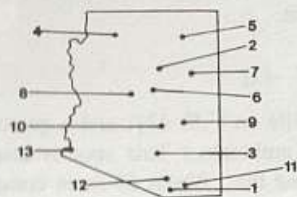
On November 21, 1898, large batches of fibers fell over the city. It was in strands and occasional lumps several inches square. The *Montgomery Advertiser* described it as resembling asbestos, but also as luminescent. The

Monthly Weather Review, however, insisted that it was "cobwebs" from flying spiders, a trusty old explanation in falls of fibrous matter. For more on this "angel hair," see Monterey, California.

WINFIELD (5)

(Abt. 85 mi. NW of Birmingham on U.S. 78; cemetery is on Musgrove Chapel Rd., 7 mi. SE of Winfield.) The tombstone of one Robert L. Musgrove in the cemetery of Musgrove Chapel Methodist Church is an eight-foot shaft that now bears what legend calls the image of a woman in a bridal gown. Musgrove was a railroad engineer who died in a collision with another train in 1904. For a long time after his death, his fiancée supposedly made visits to the grave. By the 1960s, the silhouette was sufficiently plain on the stone to be seen from the road. Another image-bearing tombstone exists in Bucksport, Maine. Frankly, neither is particularly impressive in terms of the realism that most viewers would perhaps expect. But then maybe "spirit artists" tend toward abstraction.

ARIZONA



CRITTENDEN (1)

(Abt. 50 mi. SE of Tucson, in NE Santa Cruz County; now abandoned.) In 1891, a good many newspapers in the West carried a story that, if true, could have stupendous implications for archaeology and anthropology. Workmen digging a basement here were said to have found a large clay sarcophagus eight feet below ground. The container was opened to reveal a mummy case that had once held a body more than 12 feet tall. Carving on the case indicated that the man had had six toes, like some other giant remains reportedly found in North America. The body had long hair and wore a bird-shaped headdress. But the bones had been buried so long that they had turned to dust.

The tale—for that is all it amounts to at present—was first published in the *Deseret Weekly* of Salt Lake City (issue of March 14, 1891). I have not been able to track down any local point of origin or any surviving record of the alleged discovery, even with the inestimable help of Lori Davisson of the Arizona Historical Society, one of the sharpest of researchers. Ap-

parently there was a highly reprehensible practice by some newspapers of that era, on slow days around the copy desk, of dreaming up such yarns for use as column fillers. Also, it must be noted that the *Deseret Weekly* was of definite Mormon orientation, and that is a group that has been regarded with virtual paranoia by the archaeological establishment. I do not share the suspicion that every Mormon is a closet artifact hoaxer whose sole object in life is to befuddle dignified professors, but I mention this so as not to be accused of omitting a possible key element.

I would perhaps not have mentioned this case at all were it an isolated instance. But it is only one of the vexed though enormously important brood of "giants in the earth" that we will be reviewing. Exploits of an extinct race of giant men loom large in the legends of widely diverse Indian tribes, as they do in many other mythologies, such as the *Hymiskvitha* poems of the *Eddas*, and many biblical and Greek tales.

What it all means, I don't pretend to know. My hunch is that the truth lies somewhere between blarneying journalists and nay-saying scientists. But, even if such remains never were found and only represent the madness of crowds anxious for irrational marvels, this in itself could be significant to psychology.

Sizable iron meteorites, the largest weighing 632 pounds and 1,514 pounds, have been found in the Santa Rita Mountains in nearby Iron Valley. They are believed to have fallen around the year 1660. Of course, the odds against one meteorite striking any given point of the earth's surface, not to speak of multiple strikes, are very large.

FLAGSTAFF AREA (2)

Meteor Crater, 28 miles east on I-40, is the largest one on earth of a supposed meteoritic origin. From a distance, it appears to be only a dull, flat-topped butte. But the unexpected bowl-like interior, as deep as a 50-story building, draws gasps of astonishment. The rimtop diameter is more than 4,000 feet, and the footpath measures three miles. Despite contrary evidence, it is still officially labeled an "impact crater" and is said to have been formed when a cluster of meteorites struck, between 1,000 and 50,000 years ago.

On the other hand, the Navaho have a legend that one of their sky gods streaked down as a flaming serpent one day long ago and blasted out this bowl more or less as a token of his passing. Whatever it was, the force threw out something like 400 million tons of rock, including limestone blocks weighing upward of 5,000 tons. Theoretically, the main mass of the meteorite should have buried itself under the present crater. But test drillings have been sunk as far as 1,020 feet, and nothing has been found.

A number of what appear to be meteoritic fragments are found about two

miles away at Cañon Diablo, including a variety dubbed "meteoritic stone" by geologist William Barringer. In a considerable understatement, he observed: "That a small stony meteorite should have fallen on almost exactly the same spot on this earth's surface as the great Cañon Diablo iron meteorite fell many centuries ago is certainly a most remarkable coincidence . . ."—which is true, although Arizona has been a veritable magnet for large meteorites. An 85-pound chunk was found at Weaver, 130 miles from here. A 960-pounder lay at Peach Springs, 140 miles away. The Tucson meteorites, as we have mentioned, fell in the Santa Ritas about 200 miles south of here. One can only wonder what the probabilities are against this sort of thing—or, to look at it positively, what there might be to attract them here.

This entire northern Arizona plateau is of the utmost interest to the anomalist. Even official science, in a rare lapse from the proximate to the ultimate, talks of this as one of the most ancient areas on earth, believing that these lands show how earth looked in the distant past shortly after the crust was formed. To the east 100 miles is the Petrified Forest with its acres of transmutations of trees and other biologicals of 160 million years ago. Just north of that is Painted Desert, a polychromatic museum of volcanic ash that somehow or other made other ancient trees turn all colors. Northwest is Grand Canyon, where the sedimentary layers have been cut through like a chocolate-marble cake to expose the granite below. Geology says this was done by "erosion," but common sense asks why erosion was such a big thing here and not in a thousand and one other places where there are large, fast-moving rivers. No doubt "selective erosion" has been a handy phrase of all work, but the idea itself now seems seriously eroded.

Many Europeans, from De Toqueville to D. H. Lawrence, have expressed awe and a touch of apprehension at what they saw as a pervasive aura of gigantism in America. Lawrence particularly indulged dark fancies on the dire implications of this powerful southwestern landscape for the old European world view. And indeed the classic axiom of *Mensura omnium rerum homo*—man is the measure of all things—does seem to fail here, among whatever grandiose but mysterious process is at work.

FLORENCE AREA (3)

Casa Grande Ruins National Monument (Abt. 13 mi. SW of Florence, off Ariz. 387.) The main ruin is a sort of ground pueblo believed to have been built around A.D. 1000 by the Hohokam Indians, but then deserted by them prior to about the fifteenth century, for reasons unknown. Recently, scientists involved in the old study that has been dusted off and redubbed "archaeoastronomy" have taken quite a fancy to Casa Grande. Astronomer Robert D. Hicks III, of the University of Arizona, theorizes that the "Big House" is not a mere dwelling but a sophisticated observa-

tory. Sightings were made through the numerous windows and smaller apertures in the walls, he says, noting that the openings are still "astronomically significant" by the ancient "alternate doorjamb" method of naked-eye seeing.

Hicks thinks that the Indians' main purposes were the calculating of solstices, equinoxes, and eclipses for their rituals. Of great interest is the evidence that this may have been but one in a chain of pre-Columbian observatories headquartered at the famous circular Caracol Observatory, still existing as one of the best-known Mayan ruins in the Yucatán. Caracol and Casa Grande have the same alignments with sun and moon, Hicks says, in addition to having certain nonastronomical factors in common. Some other possible links in the ancient observatory chain: Pueblo Bonito at Chaco Canyon National Monument, New Mexico; certain structures at Mesa Verde National Park, Colorado; Cahokia Mounds State Park, Illinois; and numerous sites in Mexico.

Casa Grande has also been the subject of much "occult" speculation, along the following lines: It is thought to be one of the fabled Seven Cities of Cibola that were sought for gold and the waters of youth by the early Spaniards; it is one candidate for the equally elusive Aztlán, originating place of the Aztecs before they conquered Mexico; or, it was the headquarters of an Indian esoteric order with certain similarities to modern fraternal societies.

And indeed, visitors to the Casa Grande Ruins museum can see excavated objects displaying such symbols as the swastika and what looks a lot like the square and compass of modern Freemasonry. On one wall of the Big House is inscribed the "concentric square" symbol that has been identified as the labyrinth emblem of ancient Crete. According to anthropologist Harold Sterling Gladwin's *Men Out of Asia*, this Minoan motif dates from 200 B.C. and could only have been introduced here by explorers from the Mediterranean.

Too, there are those who find it more than coincidental that the site of the ruins is almost exactly on the thirty-third degree of north latitude, a line selected by the Scottish Rite of Freemasonry, with its 33 degrees of initiation, for its first American headquarters in Charleston, South Carolina.

Cochran Ghost Town (Abt. 20 air mi. NE of Florence, along the Gila River.) Five well-preserved and strikingly huge domed structures stand in a row on a hillside near here. Of mortarless granitic stone, they are 32 feet high and 72 feet around. Each has a doorway three feet wide and six feet high, and a three- by five-foot opening in the top rear of the dome. One "beehive," as they are known locally, has recently been made into living quarters, with rude furnishings, possibly for use by cowboys or prospectors.

Some suggest that the domes were built by the early Spaniards. Another

story links them with an ancient Indian tribe that had migrated from Central America. One exotic belief is that they were built as lead smelters by the Phoenicians, who supposedly arrived here around 1500 B.C. and at the same time founded what later became the city of Phoenix. Perhaps in reaction to these ideas, there are those nonromantics who have rather dogmatically ascribed the beehives to mining operations, claiming that they were built recently to make charcoal for the nearby Silver Bell Mine when it was worked in the 1880s.

While it is possible, even probable, that they were used in this way, more careful historians are not certain that this was their origin. Dr. Ronald Ives of Northern Arizona University, writing in the *Journal of Arizona History*, points out that "no available documentary sources throw any light on the history of the ovens." In a footnote, Ives says of the "Phoenician theory": "A considerable amount of evidence suggests either one or more pre-Columbian visits to the area by Europeans, or the existence of a diligent group of hoaxers."

There are other beehive kilns at Death Valley, California; near Ely, Nevada; Frisco, Utah; Boise, Idaho; and near Grants Pass, Oregon. In New England are numerous "beehive caves" where the same internal structure has been achieved by hollowing out rock.

The site is only a few minutes north of the thirty-third parallel. A half-mile south of Cochran is San Gregorio Taumaturgo mineral spring, which is believed by Indians to have potent magical properties. The U.S. Geological Survey has designated this as an area of pronounced geomagnetic anomaly.

It is no wonder the beehives are not well known: Even the best overland route to Cochran can be a punishingly difficult one, and only all-terrain vehicles can count on getting through, the year round. The best route from Florence is to take the county road east toward Kelvin. About 18 miles past the state prison is an outcropping called The Rocks. Here, take the gravelled road north 12 miles to Cochran. The beehives overlook the west side of the Gila River about a mile southwest of the ghost town.

HAVASUPAI CANYON (4)

(Near Grand Canyon South Rim, 90 mi. NW of Flagstaff; permission of the Havasupai Tourist Enterprise, Supai, Ariz. 86435, is necessary for entry. Inquire in advance for best access route.) This is the site of a friezelike band of rock carvings that are full of riddles. Among others, there is an apparent likeness of a carnivorous, dinosaurlike creature—presumably *Tyrannosaurus rex*—that no human eye should have seen, since according to standard chronology, dinosaurs vanished at least 20 million years before human beings appeared.

Aside from the putative dinosaur, other extinct animals such as the North

American rhinoceros are more clearly visible. One figure is undoubtedly an elephantidae, possibly a mammoth, and seems to be fighting with a humanoid who, if drawn to scale, would have to be about 10 feet tall. Dating of the glyphs has been practically impossible, but their 20-foot height above the canyon floor is interesting, leading to speculation that they must have been made when the creek bed was much higher, an inestimable amount of time ago (or else by giant artists!).

The only ways to reach the figures today are either to be let down with a rope from above or through the use of long ladders. The pictographs were made by chipping through a black scale called desert varnish on the surface of the red sandstone. This oxide is extremely slow to form, but it has already layered over the pictographs. Again, a sign of an age so vast as to make the chronologies of the "Bering Strait boys" seem paltry.

HOPI INDIAN RESERVATION (5)

(Abt. 125 mi. NE of Flagstaff via U.S. 89 and S.R. 264.) It is no exaggeration to call this the Tibet of America. The elevation is not so great, of course, and it is a lot hotter. But there is much the same "top-of-the-world" feeling on these several razor-backed mesas, much of the same powerhouse aura of endless cyclical ritual that there must have been in the old "magic kingdom" of Asia. The people here are equally steeped in mysticism, equally convinced that their activities play a crucial role in the creation and maintenance of the world. Hopi lore has many points in common with the Tantric Buddhist, with the difference that it takes a highly apocalyptic view of modern times.

The Hopi look on the present era as a time of total corruption, with materialism, licentious behavior, and destruction of nature running rampant. But their extraordinary mythology long ago prepared them for this and laid guidelines that they are to follow in keeping the world on an even keel when the white man's jerry-built structures come tottering down. Their mission is to wait for the coming from the East of the "True White Brother." This Quetzalcoatl-like figure is to carry the missing portion of a sacred inscribed stone that the Hopi have faithfully guarded in a secret place.

Some of their beliefs concerning the symbolic aspects of this White Brother have provoked a certain controversy. The Hopi believe that the True White Brother will return only when world evil has reached a certain critical point. Allied with him will be powerful leaders, chief among them the ruler who uses the *meha* flower or swastika symbol of the four great forces of nature. The swastika people will join with the people of the rising sun. Weaving in and out in a manner not completely defined are the forces of the Red Ruler. All these elements will spark off three great struggles, the first of which will cause the temporary routing of the swastika-sun pow-

ers. The outcome of the third battle is unknown, but on it depends the continued existence of the world.

According to Hopi traditions, the entire Southwest is alive with magic places. Whole books could be written on these, and it would be futile to list only one or two spots where certain fragments of rituals are performed. Frank Waters's *Book of the Hopi* is a recent and commendable account that describes all principal rituals and lists a large number of sites where other activities are carried out.

Waters notes sadly that *powaka* (sorcery) is widespread among the Hopi today. The Indians, he says, are ridden by fears that neighbors and family members might be bent on harming them, and the results are "prime causes in the breaking down of Hopi ceremonialism and social structure." However, if so, the same pattern is developing among many other tribes, such as the Navaho and the Yaqui and others of Mexico. All of these peoples are equally given to conjuration and probably always have been, to judge by reports from early white contacts.

Some of the feats attributed to the sorcerers are truly astounding, but equally amazing things happen during the ongoing round of yearly religious rituals. One of the most dramatic, the *Chu'tiva* snake dance, when live rattlesnakes are extensively handled and held in the mouths of dancers, with seldom a bite and never any deaths, can still be seen in late summer by visitors. On odd-numbered years it is held at Walpi, and at other villages on even-numbered years. Information on exact place and date must be obtained from either the Hopi Indian Agency, Keams Canyon, or at Tribal Headquarters, New Oraibi, Arizona.

If their tradition is factually correct, the Hopi must be of great interest to Forteanes. They claim that, during their legendary period of wanderings throughout the continent, they were ordered by the Great Spirit to leave "many footprints, rock writings, and ruins" as a reminder to the several scattered clans of their original unity. They have even claimed such structures as Serpent Mound in Ohio.

MONTEZUMA CASTLE NATIONAL MONUMENT (6)

(29 mi. S of Flagstaff on I-17. Follow signs.) George Hunt Williamson, a "flying saucer" apostle of the 1950s, believed this site was one of the "Secret Places of the Lion" where a previous "Lemurian" civilization had had its shrines. He included these among the storied Seven Cities of Cibola that were sought by the Spaniards, and claimed that the archives of lost Lemuria—a rival of Atlantis for sunken continent honors—were graven on imperishable "telonium" metal and hidden in nearby caves. Also concealed here are the North American versions of the Egyptian pyramids. They are either under the ground or disguised as ordinary mountains—he hadn't quite made up his mind which.

UFO entities, said Williamson, frequented these sites and communicated with the Indians long before the coming of the white man, a tradition that can perhaps be derived to some extent from Hopi and Navaho legends, depending on how one translates these Indians' flexible god-concept of the *Kachinas*.

PETRIFIED FOREST NATIONAL PARK (7)

(18 mi. SE of Holbrook, along U.S. 180. Follow local signs.) The phenomenon of petrification is one of the strangest of earth processes with which geology has tried to grapple mechanistically. The official version is that it occurs by a process in which objects are suddenly splashed into mud, which somehow kept them from decaying for however long a time (say, a few tens of millions of years) was necessary for each huge and fiendishly complex organic molecule to be exactly replaced by infinitely simpler inorganic molecules. Then, when this was complete, the surrounding mud, which was now itself turned to stone, was leached away by that amazing handyman of geological scenarios, selective erosion. But not a fragment of the petrified structure was eroded, leaving the trees and dinosaur dung that we see before us right back where they were, only now made of rock.

My own humble contribution is to question the exceptions. I have seen a petrified wasp's nest in Arizona that was found lying in sand near a cave entrance. Maybe it was a hoax; if so, it was a masterpiece. But it was definitely mineralized and not wasp paper. And then of course there are those pesky petrified people who have been found all over the ruins of volcanic Pompeii, lying just as they fell when they fled the Vesuvian *Dies Irae*. Stoned they were, but where were the mud and the million years? But let me skip the incidentals and get down to cases: Why do so many pieces of officially certified petrified wood—such as those in our illustration—look as if they had been sawed off square at some point in the process? Does selective erosion carry a chain saw too?

Fortunately, a small vanguard of more open-minded scientists are avoiding the rather egoistic compulsion to "explain" such riddles with contrived theories that have a direct counterpart in the old Rube Goldberg cartoons of pointless and ludicrous contraptions. Some are even reexamining the catastrophist principle first suggested by the great French naturalist Georges Cuvier a century and a half ago. His main object was to account for the obvious cases of sudden mass fossilization that have occurred at various times in earth history, such as the elevated marine fossil beds that are found at high altitudes in the Alps and elsewhere.

Catastrophism has been shunned by orthodox science as a virtual conditioned reflex since the days long ago when the idea seemed to give a toehold to fundamentalist religious opponents anxious to shore up biblical

flood ideas. The official uniformitarian dogma has suited the purposes of old-line biology too, because without a vast scenario of uneventful time, simplistic Darwinian evolutionary theory falls apart.

A little closer to Holbrook, on July 19, 1912, a terrific explosion stunned the community, and one of the largest falls of rocks ever recorded clattered down from a clear sky. The *American Journal of Science* related that about 14,000 stones were collected, some of which were very small. About a month later, on August 18, there was another concussion, followed by what some said was an earthquake. (If 1912 sounds like a meaninglessly long time ago, it must be remembered that 50 or 60 years is but an instant in geophysical time.)

PRESCOTT (8)

Is this area a UFO "window"? Although saucer scorekeepers rank it below such places as Dayton, Ohio, Chicago, Los Angeles, and various other spots in number of sightings, Prescott has for long been a Mecca for a certain kind of UFO enthusiast. One of these claimed that this city is on a circle of ground sacred to the Hopi Indians. And this chap (who was not an Indian) did have peculiarly impressive credentials: On more than one occasion he apparently was able to "call down" into Prescott skies what were certainly unidentified flying objects.

His name was Paul Solem and his day of glory came on August 7, 1970, although he held similar sessions before that. A number of skeptical news reporters assembled in a backyard at 741 Sixth Street that evening. Joe Kraus, managing editor of the *Prescott Courier*, described in the following morning's paper what he had seen:

It looked like a star—almost. It rose in the sky, stopped, hovered, wavered to one side and then continued across the sky repeating the maneuvers. It was a long ways away, but we thought it changed colors from a white to a reddish orange and then to a purplish blue and then a reddish white. And then it was gone. A flying saucer? Yes, if we could believe our eyes.

Solem attempted an encore on Easter Sunday 1971, but it was a worse fiasco than if a concert pianist had suddenly forgotten his notes. Two TV crews, droves of newsmen, and 1,500 spectators gathered near town and waited hours in vain: Solem's friend, "Captain Paul II" of the Venus saucer corps, completely failed to keep his promised appointment.

Among the other prominent UFOacles who have held forth in Prescott are an all-star cast of early day "contactees," including George Adamski (who said the saucerians had told him to come here) and George W. Van Tassel. The third of these "three Georges," George Hunt Williamson, was a Prescott native. He involved himself in some of the most original activi-

ties among a decidedly uncommon group of people. One of his developments was a sort of intragalactic radio that supposedly brought in transmissions from the star Sirius, which as he explained in his book *Other Tongues, Other Flesh* was the home of the good guys among the saucer pilots (the bad guys are from Orion). After producing several such strange but oddly compelling books that out-Dänikened von Däniken many years earlier, Williamson mysteriously disappeared and has not been heard from since.

SALT RIVER CANYON (9)

(On U.S. 60 abt. 120 mi. NE of Phoenix.) A brilliant explosion shattered the sky, followed by what looked like falling wreckage, at 4:30 A.M., September 9, 1970. Federal aeronautics officials said a motorist saw the blast over this canyon. He was about 12 miles from the canyon floor and reported the falling object. A search of the area found nothing and no planes turned up missing. Authorities pondered the matter and eventually suggested it might have been a "bolide"—something that goes bang but leaves no remains. But any Indians that might have seen it probably just assumed that it was one of their *Kachinas* coming down from the sky as the flaming feathered serpent, to bury himself in the earth, as such gods are wont to do.

SUPERSTITION MOUNTAINS (10)

Forty miles due east from the neon-vinyl motels and nighteries of Phoenix's Van Buren Street is a sort of heart of darkness. The name "mountains" is only one of the deceptions of this spiky huddle of volcanic extrusions raking up from the floor of the hostile desert. Old-timers in the area can tell you more: little white clouds that suddenly materialize and follow the wanderer; freak gales that spring up while you are inching along some narrow rock ledge; and all sorts of psycho-atmospheric effects, in the best Castaneda tradition, that die away immediately you leave some apparently sensitive area.

Longtime seekers of the dazzling treasures believed hidden here—of course there are treasures: half a dozen of them, including the Lost Dutchman—swear that there are certain caves and rocks that simply cannot be photographed. And then there is the whole question of Indians. Some claim that they have never seen an Indian in the area; others are equally sure they have seen many—all pygmies.

The Indians themselves are pretty well agreed that the Superstitions are the abode of the supreme evil forces of the Southwest. The Pima and Maricopa steer a wide course around the mountains, thinking that entering them means immediate death or diabolical possession. The Apache do not avoid the entire area, but only certain secret places that they too regard as hideously evil. Students of the little-known Apache folklore believe that

the chief medicine place is a secret cave, possibly on the peak known as Geronimo's Head. Another possible spot is Needle Canyon, near Weaver's Needle.

Apache spokesmen have recently revealed this much: that the tribe believes it is in a special relationship with the "Mountain Spirits," a secret society of strange beings who do special work. For the Apache, these Sacred Mountains are a sort of gateway to the hereafter through which the souls of their dead must pass, and it is the function of the Mountain Spirits to guide them. The Indians help by protecting the area from white desecration.

It is a local maxim that many people who first go into the mountains are not the same when they come out. This may have been the case with an eccentric German immigrant of the nineteenth century named Jacob Waltz, although this "Dutchman" does seem to have hit pay dirt of sufficient richness that generations of treasure seekers have swarmed over these rocks looking for his lost gold mine. For those who tire of that, there are at least three other major treasures and as many minor ones: Geronimo's Treasure, the Jesuit Treasure, and the Peralta Treasure, or treasures.

The latter is also the link to the most forbidding part of the Superstitions' evil repute. Part of the Peralta story is that members of that prominent Sonoran family discovered fabulous lodes here in 1830, but were wiped out with their crews by the Apache in 1848. Estimates of the number killed vary from 68 to 400. In this century alone there have been 36 known deaths and disappearances, 27 of which occurred over the last four decades. Three of these were apparent suicides, four were slayings that were tried in court, and a few more may have been accidental. But, as author Curt Gentry points out in *The Killer Mountains*, this still leaves a huge number of unexplained deaths for such a sparsely occupied area.

One of the creepier aspects of this is the method of a number of these murders: decapitation. Head-choppings began in 1896 with the killing of a slightly deranged but harmless mountain man named Elisha Reavis (no relation of the famous swindler). Up to my last report, in the early 1970s, a half-dozen other beheadings had occurred. In recent years, says Gentry, unexplained deaths and disappearances have been increasing. He closes with the observation: "There is something important in this particular area. What?" (Superstition Park, at Apache Junction, is the best jumping-off place for neophytes interested in exploring the Superstitions. Inquire first on logistics and hazards before making any forays.)

TOMBSTONE (11)

On February 24, 1897, an explosion came rollicking down from the sky, and a fragment of a meteor fell, according to the *Monthly Weather Review*.

About 10 miles west of this notorious mining town, along the east bank of the San Pedro River, is the crumbling ruin of Brunckow's cabin, a place

that probably has been the focus of more concentrated violence over the years than any in Tombstone itself. Besides innumerable murders—17 officially known; many more suspected—the spot is widely believed to be jinxed by one or more evil presences. A "curse" is supposed to strike down anyone who owns or tries to work the property. In fact, it is considered quite a test of one's mettle even to camp out here overnight.

Frederick Brunckow was a German-born mining engineer who developed the now-abandoned mine that opens near the tumbledown adobe hulk of the cabin. Local legend suggests that whatever is wrong here emanates from the mine. Misty figures have been seen drifting at night between the mine shaft and the cabin. Brunckow himself was the first to be killed here, and something or other drove away everyone else who tried to work the rich gold lode.

TUCSON (12)

At a place called Nine Mile Waterhole (6.5 mi. NW of Tucson on Silverbell Rd.), Charles E. Manier found a large lead cross while knocking about one day in 1924. The cross was buried in an embankment where the roadway had been cut through. Nearby were five large cylindrical brick ruins, of unknown age and reminiscent of the five "beehive" kilns at the Silver Bell Mine near Florence, Arizona. A further coincidence is the Silverbell name of the road running through this bluff on the west side of the Santa Cruz River. It was here that 30 of the most peculiar archaeological objects ever found in North America were dug up.

The first, cross-shaped item had two halves bound together with rivets. When separated, they were found to be covered with dense lines of inscriptions, primarily in Latin but of an oddly confused style and with a smattering of Hebrew characters. There were also numerous religious and mystical symbols, among them the square and compass and other emblems of Freemasonry. One cross has nothing but a line drawing of what can only be a dinosaur. In fact, most of the objects are of a decidedly bizarre character, with much more of the flavor of certain arcane cults of the Near East than of any sort of mainstream Roman culture.

This is particularly true of one of the lead crosses, which has a long snake coiled around it, an arrow-point top, and a number of engraved Hebrew letters and indecipherable symbols. That such an artifact would have been made by ordinary Romans seems highly doubtful. Of course, in another sense this sheer uncouthness is a strong point in favor of authenticity: The unusual combination of Hebraic-Latin-esoteric elements hardly seems like one that would occur to the teen-aged boy of Mexican-Catholic culture who some archaeologists claim was the "forger" and deep-burier of the artifacts.

By July of 1925, a front-page report in *The New York Times* had touched off a swivet of controversy in the antiquarian world, with numerous au-

thorities—particularly those who had had nothing to do with the investigation nor come anywhere near Arizona—joining intemperately in denouncing the articles as fakes. But, since Manier and his colleague Thomas Bent had thoughtfully brought professional scientists of unimpeachable credentials into their diggings, it was impossible to impute dishonesty to them.

Eventually, the doubters carried the day with an explanation that has been taken as final in archaeological circles ever since: The articles were found in good faith by Manier and Bent, but had been planted beforehand by hoaxers, either the ubiquitous Mormons seeking to buttress their doctrines or by a young Mexican boy named Vicente Odohui who had lived in the area and was darkly rumored to have had books of classical literature and an interest in treasure yarns.

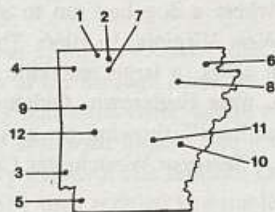
Today, the Roman relics have become taboo among the few older archaeologists who even still remember them. Thomas Bent apparently retained ownership of the land and the artifacts, which he kept in a bank vault, until his death in 1971. I have not been able to learn their present whereabouts, as Bent's survivors—mindful of the long years of fraud accusations and bedevilment by weirdos that befell Mr. Bent—seem simply to want to forget the whole thing. One can only hope that they do not disappear forever into that oblivion that swallows up so many anomalous articles. (For other "Roman" relics, *see* Jeffress, Virginia.)

YUMA (13)

Somewhere within a 40-mile radius to the southeast and south of here is a lost Spanish mission that has the curious habit of hiding under desert sands for years at a time, then coming up suddenly for air. There is also the inevitable large horde of gold buried nearby. The Mission of the Four Evangelists may be in Arizona, but is thought more likely to be in Mexico, on the shores of a brackish lake called Laguna Prieta. The trouble is that no one has seen Laguna Prieta in recent years either. In general, lake and mission are believed to be somewhere between Tinajas Altas spring on the U.S. side and the Sonoran town of El Doctor.

The cause of the disappearances is said to be the phenomenon called "walking dunes," found between the Yuma Desert and the adjoining Gran Desierto of Mexico. These knolls and gullies of sand constantly change their shapes in the restless breezes. Inside each, like the particle inside a pearl, is some solid object, such as a rock or desert plant or—since the hills sometimes reach heights of 300 feet—possibly even a lost mission. Occasionally, these cores are blown clear before being covered again. The last time this happened was in 1970 when a student aviator from Los Angeles named Masa Nakagawa strayed off course and noticed a belfry sticking up from the sand dunes. On landing at Tucson, he mentioned his sighting, but no one at the airport knew or cared anything about a lost mission.

ARKANSAS



BERRYVILLE (1)

(40 air mi. NE of Fayetteville.) Eight miles southwest of here, on private land between the Prescott farm and Brushy Creek, a rock outcropping holds a neatly formed rectangular doorway about 4 feet high and 18 inches wide. Behind the opening is a meandering passage that leads to a small, circular chamber. The structure is apparently man-made and of great age. It has been dismissed as "a Spanish mine" or a treasure chamber, but the low ceiling height would seem to militate against that. Spanish conquistadors were probably somewhat shorter than the modern American average, but not that short.

BOONE COUNTY (2)

Devil's Hole Cave (65 air mi. NE of Fayetteville; 3 mi. NW of Myrtle on S.R. 43, near village of Self.) Deciding to find out what was causing all the commotion down in the cave, E. J. Rhodes, owner of the land containing its mouth, descended by a rope to a ledge 200 feet below ground. The shaft was too tight to penetrate farther. Later, several men probed the cave with a long rope. They tied a flatiron on it and let it down into the hole. At 200 feet, the iron struck something—evidently the ledge discovered earlier by Rhodes. A vicious hissing rose out of the hole, as if from some large, angry animal.

The men pulled up the rope and found that the handle of the iron had been bent, and was even thought by some to show teeth marks. A large stone was then lowered with the rope. Again the angry sibilance, and when the rope was drawn up the stone was gone, with the rope neatly bitten off. This is a twice-told tale around Boone County. Local people call the Devil's Cave entity the "Gowrow" and believe it to be a gigantic, man-eating lizard. Stories of it have circulated since the turn of the century.

DE QUEEN (3)

(60 mi. NW of Texarkana, on U.S. 59 and 71.) A mystery creature visited the De Queen Wood Products Company plant in the late 1960s, and left

footprints in the gravel outside the plant's kiln, at the rear. The large, catlike prints turned a circle and a half, and then abruptly ended. Similar tracks were found where a dog had run to attack a glowing-eyed "monster" near Salem, West Virginia, in 1966. The dog was never seen again.

In the summer of 1949, a large crocodile was killed in a creek a few miles west of here, near Eagletown, Oklahoma. This was one of many such "erratic crocodilians" showing up at improbable places across the country at the time. (See also Westchester County, New York.)

FAYETTEVILLE (4)

This vicinity has been a lively one, and we will have to select only a few of the more colorful happenings. On May 27, 1973, a river "monster" surfaced near the White River Bridge (10 miles west of Fayetteville, near Wedington Store, in Benton County). It seemed to have a thing about fishing gear, or the people wielding it. Two women reported that the creature thrust its head four feet out of the water under the bridge, bit one fishing pole in two, submerged, reemerged as if on an afterthought, and bit the propeller off their boat's motor.

"It" was said to be green and black with long black hair parted in the middle and glowing yellow eyes. The fisherpersons believe that it lives underwater in a hole in the bridge pier. It is often seen in spring and summer, and is one of several that seem to inhabit the long White River valley of this state. (See also Newport, Arkansas.)

A rather spectacular aerial flashing and booming display attracted general public notice one evening in the fall of 1970. A silver disk was visible over Fayetteville before the orange-colored flashes occurred. Calls to police came from as far away as Cassville, Missouri, 50 miles north.

Five miles north of Fayetteville, on the night of September 6, 1969, a "weird-looking" prowler peeked in a window at the home of Mrs. Barbara Robinson, 612 West Allen Avenue, at about 11 p.m. Police speculated that anyone doing that would have had to be at least seven feet tall, because of the structure of the house. We might not have included this item if there hadn't been such a high quirk quotient around the area. It could, after all, have been merely a tall prowler—or a human fly. Or possibly "Springheels Jack": on whom, see Mattoon, Illinois; Louisville, Kentucky; Houston, Texas; and Chehalis, Washington. The confronting of women by peculiar humanoids—often in bedroom situations—is very ordinary in the spectrum of "monster" and unidentified flying object activity, as we shall see.

FOUKE (5)

(16 mi. SE of Texarkana on U.S. 71.) The last week of April 1971 Bobby Ford, then aged 25, moved his family into a house in the Jonesville area.

After a few days, he said he wouldn't stay another night. He was treated for scratches and shock after being attacked by what he described as "a large, hairy creature."

He recalled that his wife was lying on a couch after midnight, May 2, when a great paw made a pass at her through a hole in the window screen. His wife screamed and Bobby and three other adults ran outside. Near a wood behind the house, Ford saw what looked like a man about six feet tall, covered with hair and very massive. His brother, Douglas, fired a gun at it and it lurched away. Bobby then notified Constable Ernest Walraven, who searched the area.

About an hour later, the creature kicked in the back door of the house. At a second gunshot, it vanished. But as Bobby Ford walked outside the house, the thing grabbed him from the darkness, pulling him to the ground. Next morning sheriff's officers found several large footprints typical of the usual spoor of Bigfoot.

The Ford experience was the inspiration for the popular motion picture *The Legend of Boggy Creek*, and clearly exemplifies what we sometimes call the "Beauty and the Beast" syndrome. As we cite further appearances of improbable, Godzilla-like creatures—even aquatic and flying zanies—it will become obvious that they have a very appreciative eye for young human females. But curiously, they often seem to get their jollies in a "swinging" sense, when women are in masculine company.

There were more sightings in late 1973, during the time of the nationwide monster "flap," most of them occurring on or near U.S. 71, and particularly at the crossroads of S.R. 134, south of town. There have been others around a snake-infested thicket along the creek west of town. As long ago as 1856, a Bigfoot-like creature roamed Caddo County, Louisiana, just south of Miller County, where Fouke is located. Local history claims it attacked and maimed one of a group of men pursuing it.

GREENE COUNTY (6)

One of the first Bigfoot encounters recorded by whites in America comes from this area. On May 9, 1851, the *Memphis Enquirer* (as quoted by the *New Orleans Picayune*, May 16, 1851), reported that a tall, hairy, and retiring entity had "long been known traditionally in St. Francis, Greene, and Poinsett counties. Arkansas sportsmen and hunters having described him so long as 17 years since." Furthermore, the thing was pursuing a terrified herd of cattle, according to an eyewitness, a Greene County hunter named Hamilton:

They soon discovered as the animals fled by them that they were followed by an animal bearing the unmistakable likeness of humanity. He was of gigantic stature, the body being covered with hair and the

head with long locks that fairly enveloped the neck and shoulders. The Wild Man, after looking at them deliberately for a short time, turned and ran away with great speed, leaping 12 to 14 feet at one time.

This sighting is certainly of interest in the present day of increasingly flagrant but still unexplained killings of livestock. In a number of recent cases, Bigfoot-like weirdies have been seen in the general area before or after a mutilation.

At Crowley's Ridge, eight miles southwest of Paragould, and two miles north of the town of Finch, a stone statue with features that have been described as part Egyptoid, part Mongoloid, was found in 1921. It lay 10 feet deep in one of the many gravel pits on this line of hills. Nicknamed "King Crowley," the four-foot sculpture had a valentine-shaped symbol of copper inlaid on its chest. Gold eyeballs and copper earplugs similar in shape to thumbtacks were attached to holes in the stone. Along with the statue were a gold ring, a small coffer made of volcanic pumice, and many carvings of men, astronomical symbols, and animals.

The finder, a man named Rowlands, revealed that he had been led to dig in the gravel pit by a dream. This was instantly seized upon by antiquarians as evidence of impropriety. Although the material was displayed at the Arkansas Natural History Museum, Little Rock, experts at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington were skeptical. Finally, 15 years after samples had been sent to them, they declared in 1942 that "King Crowley" and everything dug up with it were fakes.

Although the Smithsonian report did concede that "many unexplained items have been found in the Ozark Region," the upshot was that the Crowley Ridge discoveries were not acquired by the museum for its permanent collection and were sold off for a song to private purchasers. No one knows where the articles are today. King Crowley is thought to have been shipped to California.

MARBLE FALLS (7)

(10 mi. N of Jasper on S.R. 7.) Paleozoic palm trees, tapirs, saber-toothed tigers, rhinoceroses, and other tropical biology have been found in the large Willcockson fossil beds nearby, although they really are not supposed to be anywhere this far north. There are those who wonder if this oddity is not another indication of the old bugaboo of conventional geobiology: some sort of giant catastrophe that suddenly rearranged the scenery on a worldwide scale. It may have been a drastic polar shift, a great flood, a close brush with a comet, or even some bizarre teleportation of one area into another. *Quién sabe?*

NEWPORT (8)

(40 mi. SW of Jonesboro.) The White River Monster, probably the only "critter" anywhere to be legitimized by legislative act, has been centering its appearances near here in recent years. In the late summer of 1971, a number of people observed a monster they described as "long as three or four pickup trucks" and with a gray, "peeling" skin. It came complete with all the traditional fairy-tale dragon trimmings, including a horn projecting from its forehead and a spiny backbone ridge. It had a habit of splashing angrily, and very conspicuously, in the water as boaters zipped away.

Although sightings have been made almost everywhere along the large White River system, which runs through much of the eastern half of the state, many appearances have occurred around small, secluded Towhead Island, about six miles south of Newport. What gives these a shade more tangibility than other lake and river monster reports we have collected from around the country is that the whatever-it-is here also apparently walks on land. Many 14- by 8-inch prints with three claw marks have been found among the brush on Towhead.

The Arkansas legislature, whether in a spirit of ecological enlightenment or of puckish promotionalism, created in 1973 the "White River Monster Sanctuary and Retreat," where it is illegal to "molest, kill, trample, or harm any monsters found in the area." We can only hope that the monster doesn't do the same to any people.

OZARK (9)

(30 mi. NE of Ft. Smith on I-40.) The railroad telegraph operator here one day in November of 1880 clicked out on the line some highly obstreperous goings on with stones in the neighborhood. Not only were pebbles raining from the sky, but as if to greet them, thousands of bigger rocks were worming their way out of the ground. Ozark is about 50 miles southeast of the Fortean hotspot of Fayetteville. See Death Valley National Monument, California, and Kingston, New York.

ST. FRANCIS COUNTY

See Memphis, Tennessee.

STUTTGART (10)

On the afternoon of November 30, 1973, frozen mallard ducks fell upon the town. There was no estimate of the total but several were completely ice-encrusted, and hail also fell. How the birds could have stayed aloft for the time necessary to freeze them was not immediately clear.

WOODSON (11)

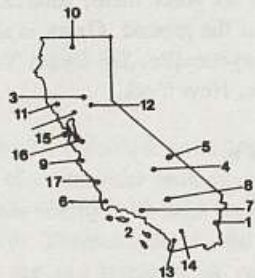
(16 mi. S of Little Rock, along Arkansas River.) I am told that one of the prehistoric mounds in the group here has been heard occasionally to give off ringing sounds, "as if it was hollow," when vehicles were driven around it or the ground was struck with a heavy object. Test probings indicate, however, that the mound is as solid as any.

YELL COUNTY (12)

The Aikman Mounds, in a remote area near Bluffton in the southwest corner of the county, midway between Ft. Smith and Hot Springs, have been found to contain huge numbers of human skulls. Washington University, St. Louis, and the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, sent teams to excavate here in the late 1920s. They found that many of the skulls had been crushed, and this has led to speculation that their owners might have been clubbed to death in a great prehistoric battle. There were also large quantities of bracelets, rings, and animal bones unearthed.

Another such mass grave was uncovered by a Professor Edwin Walters closer to Ft. Smith in 1898. In a 30-acre area, he found huge numbers of skeletons, many of which had crushed skulls or spearheads lying among the ribs. The battle, if that is what it was, has been estimated as occurring about 8,000 years ago and must have caused the deaths of about 100,000 persons. This would make it one of the greatest battles of all history and certainly one of the most intense. The Civil War battle of Gettysburg, by contrast, took place over a much larger area and ended in the deaths of some 7,058 men.

What did these people find in an area that, even now, has a "middle-of-nowhere" atmosphere, that could have brought together armies large even by modern standards to die in hand-to-hand combat?

CALIFORNIA**BLYTHE (1)**

On a pebble-strewn plateau in the Mule Mountains 10 miles southwest of here is a horseshoe-shaped arrangement of 10 circular impressions, each three feet in diameter. Flanking the 10 prints are two straight rows of similar three-foot impressions, 10 impressions to the row. (One is reminded some-

what of the Masonic "point within the circle" and its two parallel lines.) Near these are 10 large rock piles. Thin sheets of rusted steel and iron are scattered within the patterns.

Indians formerly were active on the plateau, but no one has ever got any explanation of the site from them. Near the prints is a perfectly preserved dance circle believed to be at least several hundred years old. Tank treads, or what look like them, are also visible on the plateau.

The latest archaeological expedition to visit the area, from the Museum of Man, San Diego, behaved rather curiously afterward. At first, Dr. Emma Lou Davis, the head of the expedition, told a Texas newspaper that "We don't know the age of the prints, who made them, or why." She declared that she intended to ask Washington for information. But when the International Fortean Organization wrote her later to see what she had found out, the letter was returned with a handwritten note: "Tracks were remains of recent U.S. Army desert maneuvers. No comment. E. L. Davis."

This area is controlled by the U.S. Bureau of Land Management and is presently restricted from public access, although probably not rigorously patrolled.

CHANNEL ISLANDS (2)

San Miguel (55 mi. SW of Santa Barbara.) Most of the eight Channel Islands have a rather drab character, serving mainly for occasional Hollywood location filming or for venturesome boaters from the mainland to explore on weekends. But San Miguel is different: This nine- by five-mile windswept triangle has had a far more fateful past. One could begin with the supposed discoverer of California himself, Juan Rodríguez Cabrillo. A perennial legend tells of his landing at the island in October of 1542. He named it La Posesión, and according to the story, broke his arm while exploring it. The injury produced gangrene, and Cabrillo's crew is said to have brought him back from Monterey to La Posesión, of all places, where he died and was buried.

The Santa Barbara Channel between these islands and the mainland has been a sort of Bermuda Triangle West, with many ships coming to grief here over the years. San Miguel often seems to act as a sort of battering ram in this process. One of the earliest casualties was a Spanish galleon from Manila that carried more than \$2 million in gold. It went down along the western tip of the island and no doubt is still there, off Point Bennett, where the constant smashing of the waves against the rocks have frustrated divers and prevented salvage boats from working overhead.

Some psychic sensitives have claimed that San Miguel is afflicted by "spiritual residues" from unknown prehistoric peoples. Archaeologists, professional and amateur, have ransacked the place for the legendary grave of Cabrillo, but although they did not find it, they did dig up other skele-

tons. These were not the bones of Indians as we know them, and far predate any known Spanish explorations. More recently, the skeleton of a young woman was found on the ground near Crook Point. The leg bones wore nylon stockings. Identification was impossible, as was conjecture as to how she had reached such a spot.

One of the many "jinx" legends about San Miguel is that any male who tries to live here will come to a bad end. One who risked—and reaffirmed—the tradition was a man named Captain Waters. He built a place here in the 1890s, but before long turned up missing. In 1928, a New York socialite named Herbert C. Lester suddenly said good-bye to all that and moved here with his wife, assuming the title of King of San Miguel. Two children were born to the couple during their 14-year stay, and the "King" built an odd, triangular-shaped house out of timbers salvaged from shipwrecks. But in 1942 Lester was informed that his kingdom had been designated a U.S. Navy bombing range and that he would have to move back to the civilization he hated. On June 19, 1942, at age 54, the despondent King of San Miguel shot himself. His sorrowing wife and daughters buried him on an area known as Devil's Knoll, at the west end of Cuyler Harbor, and sailed for Santa Barbara. The triangular castle still stands, a sort of memorial to another victim of this dubious place.

Santa Catalina About 10 miles north of here, midway to San Pedro Harbor, is a marine "death valley." The area is about 4,000 feet deep. According to a report by Dr. Eugene La Fond, director of the Marine Environment Division of the Navy Electronics Laboratory, San Diego, all forms of ocean life die upon entering the valley. "The bottom was covered by a brownish-gray carpet of dead organic matter," La Fond said after he and two other biologists toured the area in the research submarine *Deepstar*. "Absolutely nothing was alive. There was no trace of oxygen."

CHICO (3)

A shower of rocks "fell from the clouds" onto the roof of a warehouse in mid-March 1922. People working in the building reported that the mysterious bombardments had been occurring periodically for some time. When the town marshal and a committee of newsmen arrived to examine the corrugated iron roof, the rocks again came clattering down with great pandemonium. Miriam Allen de Ford, one of Charles Fort's associates, went to Chico for a firsthand investigation. She learned that, from time to time, rocks had fallen on the same spot for about nine months. The event occurred again while she was there, and Miss Ford found that the falling stones were warm to the touch. She saw one large rock fall, hit the warehouse roof, and bounce off on the railroad siding alongside. But when she went over to pick it up, she could not find it.

Police were convinced that persons unknown were using some sort of

catapult to hurl the rocks into the air from a safe distance, although they had searched the entire area for blocks around, and a professor from a local college declared that most of the rocks were too heavy to have been thrown any distance by ordinary mechanical means.

This town, which lies in the earthquake belt of California, has had many other odd events. On September 2, 1878, *The New York Times* reported that a large number of catfish and perch fell from a cloudless sky, covering several acres. There have been mysterious detonations from on high, and a few on the ground, such as when an object described as "hard material" and weighing *several tons* was reported by the *Monthly Weather Review* to have fallen in March of 1885.

COSO MOUNTAINS (4)

About 12 miles east-southeast of Olancho, near the top of a nameless 4,300-foot peak towering above the dry bed of Owens Lake, three rock hunters found a modest-looking stone that has proved to be fraught with intriguing possibilities. The piece when first picked up on February 13, 1961, was thought to be a geode, although it had an incrustation of fossil shells and fragments. When the object was cut in half, it almost ruined a new diamond sawblade. There was no cavity in the brownish rock, but rather a perfectly circular section of hard white ceramic material with a two-millimeter shaft of bright metal in the center. Part of this strange core left a hexagonal cavity in the rock shell that was removed from it.

Although it has come to be called the Coso Geode, it is not a true geode because the outer crust is of hardened clay, mixed with biological elements. Also in the crust were two nonmagnetic objects resembling a nail and washer. Quite obviously, the thing in the center is a simple sparkplug, and X rays have shown all of the features of an early type of steel, porcelain, and copper plug that was used on gasoline engines until about the Second World War. On the other hand, one geologist reportedly has dated the outer core at about 500,000 years, because of its fossil inclusions.

It is true that there are in the area a number of abandoned mines, or what are presumed to be mines, although there are no records that they ever were worked by whites. One shaft is less than two miles from where the artifact lay, and a possible assumption might be that the plug was from old mine machinery. However, the usual processes that would form a clay concretion of this type would seem to be absent from the arid, rocky mountaintop.

Short of completely dismantling the "sparkplug of the gods," which its owners thus far have not allowed, its exact identity must remain conjectural. But, even if the Coso Geode is a sparkplug, if it is not a product of modern technology, it must surely rank as one of the most important archaeological finds.

In chapter nine of the *Book of the Damned*, Fort mentions numerous

other cases of small manufactured objects enshrined in stone that, by rights, should be untold ages old. One of these was a cut iron nail, found also in California in a chunk of gold-bearing quartz.

DEATH VALLEY NATIONAL MONUMENT (5)

Indian riddles, teleporting rocks, unidentified flying objects, Charles Manson—this area has long had a lot more going for it than merely the lowest elevation and the highest temperatures.

One of the earliest landings of the post-World War Two type of UFO took place here on August 19, 1949. Jim and Coral Lorenzen of the Aerial Phenomena Research Organization reported in their book *Flying Saucer Occupants* the case of two prospectors who witnessed the apparent crash-landing of a saucer. Two manikins jumped out and the grizzled miners chased them, but soon lost the skittering twosome in the sands. Flustered, the prospectors hurried back to the original site where—guess what?—the UFO had also disappeared.

In nearby Titus Canyon, petroglyphs and inscriptions have been scratched in the walls by unknown prehistoric hands. Some experts think the graffiti may have been made by people who lived here long before the Indians we know of, because extant Indians know nothing of the glyphs and indeed regard them with superstitious awe.

Piute legends tell of a city beneath Death Valley that they call Shin-av. Tom Wilson, an Indian guide in the 1920s, claimed that his grandfather had rediscovered the place by wandering into a miles-long labyrinth of caves beneath the valley floor. Eventually the Indian came to an underworld city where the people spoke an incomprehensible language and wore clothing made of leather. Wilson told this story after a prospector named White claimed he had fallen through the floor of an abandoned mine at Wingate Pass and into an unknown tunnel. White followed this into a series of rooms, where he found hundreds of leather-clad humanoid mummies. Gold bars were stacked like bricks and piled in bins.

White claimed he had explored the caverns on three occasions, on one of which his wife accompanied him and on another his partner, Fred Thomason. However, neither White nor Thomason nor Tom Wilson was able to relocate the opening to the cavern when they tried to take a group of archaeologists on a tour of the place. Wilson did, however, find a shaft into the stone that no one had seen before. It ended blindly.

During his lifetime, there was endless speculation on the source of wealth enjoyed by Walter Scott, an eccentric local character who built the "castle" and racetrack still located at the far north end of the valley. Those who knew him claimed that, when funds were running low, Death Valley Scotty would check out for a few days of wandering in the nearby Grapevine Mountains, bringing back suspiciously refined-looking gold that he claimed he had prospected.

Devil's Hole (In the northeast extension of Death Valley, lying in Nevada.) If convicted murder cultist Charles Manson is to be believed, this malefic-looking tarn in the rocky floor of Death Valley must be one of the strangest of strange places. Manson, who had a long involvement with some of California's more sinister esoteric cults, soon gravitated to Death Valley. He somewhere picked up a fascination with the darker symbolical implications of this place, along with an amazing knowledge of its lore.

He seems to have combined this with a crude version of a Hopi Indian legend called the Emergence from the Third World, explaining how that tribe had left a large underground land to dwell on earth's surface. For good measure, the diminutive guru stirred in the idea of the "Bottomless Pit" mentioned in chapter nine of the *Book of Revelation*.

The resulting notion, with which he apparently became obsessed, was that he too must find such a "hole in the world" through which one could slip into some other level of existence. Although he and his "family" of followers looked into other possibilities here, they seem to have settled on this uninviting pit full of brackish, hot water and the darting phantoms of its own unique species of blind pupfish.

As their activities fell increasingly afoul of the law, the Manson gang devoted more attention to the possibility of disappearing through the Devil's Hole to a hideout in the mysterious realm to which it supposedly led. They might have spared themselves the trouble if they had known that a couple of skin divers had been killed not long before in trying to reach the bottom of this sump, having been overwhelmed by the heat. But nothing worked out right, and Charlie Manson's world came unstuck before he could work out the logistics of slipping behind this liquid looking glass.

(Devil's Hole itself is now officially closed to the public. Inquire at Rhyolite, off Nevada S.R. 58, for directions to the area.)

Racetrack Playa In a secluded valley of the Cottonwood Mountains at the northwest edge of Death Valley is a dry lake bed where stones ranging from pebbles to 600-pound boulders are performing a secretive rock 'n' roll. No one has ever seen them move and no one knows what makes them move. But the furrows they plow in the sunbaked soil, and the records kept by scientists and park officials show that there is definitely some as yet unfathomed process at work.

The furrows range in width from a couple of inches to 12 feet and from negligible depth to an inch or more. Lengths range from 34 feet to 1,200 feet. Some trails are straight or gracefully curved; others irregular. A few make complete loops. Many of the furrows are extensively weathered. The moving rocks range from pebbles of one cubic inch to boulders weighing hundreds of pounds.

The only scientific theories advanced thus far are variants on the "erratic winds" idea: Hurricane-force gusts blowing across the lake bed when there is a frozen film of rainwater on it make it slippery enough that the rocks

can move. Detracting from this idea, however, is the fact that many of the rocks make angular, zigzagging trails. Some that were close together at one time have since moved in opposing directions.

The racetrack can be reached by a 25-mile dirt road south from Ubehebe Crater. A more scenic route comes in over Hunter Mountain from the Saline Valley Road about 28 miles west. However, inquiry at the National Monument office is strongly recommended beforehand because of highly changeable road conditions.

Other rambling rocks are reported at McKittrick, Kern County, California; Bonnie Clair and Nelson, Nevada; and at Laguna Chapala, Baja California, Mexico.

LOMPOC RANCHO (6)

(Abt. 60 mi. NW of Santa Barbara on S.R. 1.) Soldiers digging a pit for storage of powder in 1833 broke through a layer of gravel and found a 12-foot human skeleton, surrounded by carved shells, stone axes, and blocks of porphyry covered with unintelligible symbols. The skull had a double row of teeth on upper and lower jaws. According to the only surviving report on the incident, the authorities ordered the remains reburied in a secret location when superstitious natives began to be troubled by what they regarded as a bad omen. So possibly the archaeologically priceless material is still somewhere in this area, perhaps not too deeply buried.

LOS ANGELES METROPOLITAN AREA (7)

Devil's Gate Reservoir (In NW Pasadena, btw. Flintridge and La Vina.) When Donald Lee Baker and Brenda Howell vanished on the morning of August 5, 1956, it was the beginning of a mystifying and still unsolved wave of child disappearances in the vicinity of this prominent geological feature of the Los Angeles Basin. On March 23, 1957, eight-year-old Tommy Bowman turned a corner on a forest trail just ahead of six family members—and completely vanished. Bruce Kremen, also aged eight, disappeared on July 13, 1960, near a YMCA camp above Devil's Gate. In every case, huge search parties combed this reservoir and the adjacent area on the south slopes of the San Gabriels for days, but not the slightest trace of the missing children was ever found.

The Devil's Gate itself is a narrow, S-shaped rocky defile, perhaps 50 feet deep, at the funnellike convergence of the large mountain runoff field. In former times, furious floods used to roar down into the area, swirl through the gate, and flow from there out into the channel of the Arroyo Seco, which the rest of the year lives up to its name—"dry arroyo." Rainy season floods are no longer a problem, because of the big dam and catch basin installed now just a couple of hundred feet north of the Devil's Gate.

Historically, certain groups associated with the "black arts" have shown considerable interest in this area. Some time after 1915, a chapter of the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (Order of Oriental Templars), a secret society headed by the famous Aleister Crowley, was organized in Pasadena. Its address was a house at 1003 South Orange Grove Avenue, a short distance east of a narrow spot in the Arroyo Seco called Busch Gardens. The founder of this "Agape Lodge" of the OTO was one Wilfred T. Smith, Crowley's man in Vancouver, Canada. As part of his activities in California, Smith also traveled down the coast and erected a stone temple in the then remote woods at Palomar Mountain in San Diego County, where the California Institute of Technology, Pasadena, many years later built the famous astrophysical observatory.

Smith's successor as head of the California OTO was an eminent young Caltech professor and rocket scientist named John Whiteside Parsons, who was a cofounder of both the famous Jet Propulsion Laboratory and of the Aerojet Corporation, the centers that did most of the pioneering research for the present U.S. space program. As the OTO chapter grew, Parsons moved the headquarters a few doors down the street to a building on the grounds of the old F. G. Cruikshank mansion at 1071 South Orange Grove Avenue (both of these Orange Grove houses have now been torn down and replaced with large apartment structures). Parsons had another house—also on the edge of the Arroyo Seco, overlooking the famous Rose Bowl Stadium—at 424 Arroyo Terrace, which is still standing.

It was at the Cruikshank OTO lodge, which doubled as a clandestine explosives research laboratory, that John Parsons met his mysterious demise on June 17, 1952. The cause of death is officially listed as a blast due to the mishandling of mercury fulminate, but professional scientists expressed doubt that Parsons, who was considered one of the world's leading chemical explosives authorities, would have been capable of such an amateurish blunder. Perhaps predictably, rumors have long been afloat in occult circles that the real culprit was a "demonic" entity from a ritual magic working that Parsons supposedly allowed to get out of control.

The OTO membership is said to have included many prominent Angelenos, ranging from financiers and professional people to film industry luminaries. Even so, the group attracted the attentions of the authorities on more than one occasion—once when a teen-aged youth complained to Pasadena police that he had been homosexually raped at an OTO meeting. I am told by students of the L.A. cult scene that some of these peculiar rituals were performed at secret sites in the Arroyo Seco, some of them near Devil's Gate.

Foothills Boulevard (S.R. 118) passes almost directly over Devil's Gate and a good view can be had of it from the bridge. It is also possible to hike into the formation by entering the Pasadena Municipal Golf Course at the refreshment stand on Amy Street and walking north along the concrete

flood channel. However, this foray should be avoided at any time that there is water standing in the Devil's Gate Reservoir, since there is always the danger that a spillway could be opened before one could get out of the narrow "gate" area.

Long Beach Ice chunks weighing upward of 50 pounds fell in the 1400 and 1500 blocks of American Avenue on July 4, 1953. Two autos in a car lot were struck and damaged and many bystanders were scared, although no person was hit. Since some of the chunks were vaguely conical, it was suggested they had fallen off an airplane. But it would have been impossible for such a heavily iced plane to stay in the air, and in any case the ice would not have managed to fall in the same area over such a long interval.

In late 1960, a five-foot crocodile weighing 60 pounds apparently fell into the backyard of the Marion Tucker home, 2525 Quincy Avenue. At least that is the only explanation the Tuckers had when they found the surly creature there one day after hearing a heavy thump and a loud grunt.

Los Nietos Hundreds of pounds of shredded flesh fell on what was then the J. Hudson ranch on August 1, 1869. In three minutes time, two acres were covered with wafer-thin flakes up to four inches in width. The flesh was bloody and apparently fresh when it fell, but seemed to become putrid very quickly. The pieces had fine black bristles on one edge. The sky was clear and the sun shining. No buzzards are mentioned by witnesses (explainers usually suggest "buzzard puke" in falls of this nature). The editor of the *Los Angeles News* observed in his issue of August 3, 1869: "That the meat fell, we cannot doubt. Even the parsons of the neighborhood are willing to vouch for that. Where it comes from we cannot even conjecture."

Orange County

Bolsa Chica State Park (On S.R. 1 abt. 3 mi. NW of Huntington Beach.) Among the more interesting American archaeological artifacts are the so-called cog stones of the Topanga Culture. These disks have uniform grooves, cusps, cups, or sprocket-tooth formations around their edges. Their diameter ranges from under two inches to six inches, with thicknesses up to two inches.

California cog stones are found only within an area roughly congruent with the present Los Angeles Basin, plus the west half of San Diego County and the Channel Islands. Far and away most of them come from 8,000-year-old levels in this Bolsa Chica coastal area. No one has any firm idea as to what they might have been used for, and some of the experts who have studied them have been astounded at the great technical finesse that is obvious in their manufacture.

Some have rounded, "cookie cutter" cogs on their outer edges. Others have hemispherical dents sunk in around the rim. These features are regular

and precisely spaced. About one in six disks is perforated by a single hole through the center, and it is these holes that are most baffling. Few are simple, straight-through bores: There are conical holes, narrower on one side than the other; holes with elliptical sides; and double-conical holes, where the center of the hole is either wider or narrower than the entry holes at the sides. At least one specimen has a perfectly square perforation. Such workmanship would be difficult to perform, even with modern machine tools. And oddly, the cog stones are found in sites containing other artifacts that are among the crudest in North America; but the cog stones only occur at levels distinctly below this other debris.

Irvine Ranch Peters Canyon for years has been believed to be haunted by the shade of Mrs. Irvine, long-dead widow of the founder of this great spread. The canyon and its usually dry wash run from behind the old Irvine ranch house site several miles up into the Loma Ridge foothills, ending in Peters Canyon Reservoir. Alongside it runs Peters Canyon Road, but this is a private road belonging to the ranch and access is now controlled at both ends. At the time I explored the area a few years ago, there were no restrictions—except, apparently, on the ghost, which did not put in an appearance. However, there are many people who will tell you that the canyon not too far northeast of the ranch site is home to a gigantic white owl that has often accosted persons entering the area at night. Others say they aren't certain that the vague, huge form flying up in the darkness at their approach is an owl.

Anyway, those wishing to visit the area should turn off the Santa Ana Freeway (I-5) on Myford Road, about two and one-half miles southeast of the Newport Freeway interchange in Tustin. Then proceed a mile northeast on Culver Road to Irvine Boulevard. Peters Canyon Road will be a few hundred yards to the left of the Irvine Ranch buildings and the canyon the same distance to the right.

San Bernardino Area (4.5 mi. S of San Bernardino Fwy., I-10, on Riverside Ave.) Just north of the Riverside Avenue bridge over the Santa Ana River, in an unincorporated area near Colton, is a spot where a number of bizarre confrontations with passing automobiles have been staged by a sort of resident bridge troll. The screwiest of all occurred to Charles Wetzel of Riverside, on the night of November 8, 1958. As he neared the bridge, a vaguely scarecrowlike oddity with "a round head, like something out of Halloween," jumped in front of the car. "It wasn't human," Wetzel recalled. "It had longer arms than anything I'd ever seen. When it saw me in the car it reached all the way back to the windshield and began clawing at me. It didn't have any ears. The face was all round. The eyes were shining like something fluorescent, and it had a protuberant mouth. It was scaly, like leaves."

Wetzel picked up the .22 pistol he carried with him and floored the accelerator. He thought the thing "gurgled" as it fell back from the leaping car, and he heard "something hit the pan under the car." There were long scratches on the hood of the vehicle, but police found nothing at the site. However, the next night, another gangling, black dingbat leaped out of the bushes and did its thing with another motorist. Similar incidents have recurred sporadically.

MOJAVE DESERT AREA (8)

Baker I am told that a desertcomber some years ago discovered a buried city several hours hike from a point 60 miles north of here around the Amargosa or Nopah mountains. He had stopped his Jeep at a jumble of boulders across the trail. From there a pass, possibly made by animals, led over crags and bluffs into a sandy valley, where dunes covered some of the houses. There were supposed to be 30 of these, arranged like a planned community. The explorer believed they definitely were not miners' shacks. The structures were of wood, with massive, hand-hewn room timbers, even though there were no trees visible in any direction.

He claimed to have found heavy wood tables set as if for meals to be served. There were such human touches as brass candlesticks, bits of cloth, a picture frame on a wall—with no picture. There were no signs of violence or of human remains. No record of any such settlement exists. Unfortunately, the fellow never revealed the exact location of the place—if it exists at all outside imagination. Checking it out might make an interesting target for "desert ratting" in these parts.

Giant Rock Airport (Several mi. N of S.R. 62 on S.R. 247, and abt. 1 mi. E, near SW corner of Twentynine Palms Marine Corps Base.) Although not the official title of the establishment, this name is better known in the area than "College of Universal Wisdom" when directions are asked, as they probably will have to be, considering a chronic lack of road signs. In any case, when the large white observatorylike dome of the "Integratron" comes into view, zero in on it.

The proprietor of this striking, fenced-in conversation piece, with its large flanking power units and radar-antenna-like appurtenances, is George W. Van Tassel, a vigorous man with a slight resemblance to former President Gerald Ford. "Van," as he is called by his worldwide circle of admirers, is perhaps the last of the post-World War Two flying saucer contactees. His book, *I Rode a Flying Saucer*, achieved somewhat less renown than did the writings of his late friends and namesakes, George Adamski and George Hunt Williamson. But, in the circle of UFO buffs who still adopt what has been called the "hardware" or spaceship theory and look for extraterrestrial intervention to solve various world problems, Van Tassel retains a devoted following.

A man with an undeniable ability to anticipate popular trends, Van Tassel long ago was printing articles in his magazine, *Proceedings*, on the now-faddish topic of "pyramid power." He also is a friend of an inventor named Hieronimus, whose "Hieronimus Machine" is only now moving into public awareness. It must be some kind of synchronicity that this man's first name is also George. Van Tassel's own Buck Rogers creation, the 40-foot-domed Integratron, is described as a high-powered generator of "bioelectrical energies." When the device is finally completed, it will be used to complete rejuvenation, antigravity, and time-travel experiments already under way, according to the developer.

Those wishing to confer with George W. Van Tassel are requested first to write for an appointment, care of the Ministry of Universal Wisdom, P.O. Box 458, Yucca Valley, Calif. 92284. Or he may be telephoned, and his number can be found in the San Bernardino area directory.

Joshua Tree National Monument Cap Rock, a hundred-foot mound of quartzite with a huge beretlike boulder perched precariously on its apex, has become a big cult site for showbiz types and hangers-on from L.A. An artist named Bernie Leadon has been widely quoted, Castaneda-style: "Joshua Tree is everybody's power spot." The mystique of the place was enormously enhanced after September 19, 1973, when the body of country-western star Gram Parsons was burned alongside Cap Rock in a macabre cremation ceremony staged by certain of his friends, apparently as part of a whoever-goes-first pact. Parsons died at age 26 on September 19 while on a retreat of sorts in the Joshua Tree Motel in the town of that name. Although the official cause of death was given as heart failure, it is widely believed among those who knew him that Parsons had OD'd on morphine.

The body was removed to Los Angeles for return to Parsons's parents in New Orleans. As the coffin waited on a freight ramp at Los Angeles International Airport, two of Gram's buddies drove up and loaded it into an aged hearse, as unsuspecting police looked on. The driver, Philip Clark Kaufman, was a chap who had once produced a record album titled *Lie* for one Charles Manson. Kaufman and his helper were arrested a week after the cremation, but were released when it was found that there are no laws in California pertaining to body snatching or burning. The flaming corpse was discovered at Joshua Tree at night when campers reported to officials that "a log was burning near the monument." The site is marked with a plaque.

Palm Springs Mrs. Ruth Stevens was driving along a road here on April 16, 1969, when a wheel with a thick tire dropped onto the hood of her car, leaving a one-foot dent. She reported this to authorities, but no plane missing a wheel turned up at any airport in the area, nor was there word of landing problems by an aircraft in such a potentially disastrous condition.

Storm Jade Mine Near the south boundary of Joshua Tree National Monument is what is perhaps the oldest abandoned mine in North America. It is believed to be a jade mine that, in the absence of other likely contenders, was worked by Toltecs or Mayans. The mineral of the mine is said to compare closely with the jade of tribute ornaments found in ancient Central American temples. Dating of the latest workings here is estimated at around 1500 B.C. The mine is located east of the Interstate 10 entrance road in the park, along Black Eagle Mine Road. It is privately owned and normally closed. Secure information at the Cottonwood Springs Visitors Center in the park.

MONTEREY (9)

A large "smoking" object plunged into the bay at 5:50 P.M. on March 22, 1971, as witnessed by Mr. and Mrs. Ted Baldwin of Marina. Aviation authorities reported no aircraft missing, but two boats and a plane searched the bay overnight anyway, finding no debris out of the ordinary. Six months later, on October 4, 1971, Monterey and environs were presented with a sprinkling of fine, translucent fibers. Strands were found on bushes, trees, telephone wires, and the event was widely reported in the national media, as if it were something that had never happened before.

INFO Journal, the magazine of the International Fortean Organization, carried an eyewitness description of the "angel hair" fall. The observer said two or three "spaceships" appeared over the bay at about 8 A.M. Both looked translucent to her—"like a jellyfish"—and seemed to quiver gelatinlike in the air. They left floating fibers behind in a magnificent floating cascade when they suddenly shot away in a broad circle over the bay. From her description, it seems that the material was generated around the objects' outer rims, much as cotton candy is spun by the whirling contraption that makes it.

A biologist asked by reporters came up with the stock scientific explanation for fibrous falls: "probably airborne spiders." Charles Fort correctly noted that falls of such material usually occur in October, for some reason. This would seem a bit late for migrating arachnids in most areas.

Because of the unusually good description of the origin of this "angel hair," and of the peculiar, jellylike appearance of the UFOs involved, I suspect a relationship between skyfall fibers and what are rather incongruously known as "gelatinous meteors." Even though Walter Scott and many of the great English poets of earlier times often referred to "star jelly," we are all indebted to the industrious Fortean compiler William Corliss for digging out the material and incorporating it in his invaluable *Sourcebooks*.

Folklore is full of references to this jelly, indicating that our forefathers had noticed the link between starlike unidentified flyers and proteinous resi-

dues left behind on the ground. Shepherds in rustic areas of England called this jelly *Pwdre Ser*, the rot or excrement of the stars. And, unharmoniously with gracious poetic metaphors, it has also been found in our own day as quasi-living "blobs" (see Dallas-Ft. Worth, Texas) and as a sinister residue around mutilated animal carcasses (San Luis Valley, Colorado).

In Santa Cruz, on the north end of Monterey Bay, a new and unknown variety of fish was caught in large numbers after the passing of a "comet" in 1874. The Santa Cruz *Sentinel* for July 14 of that year said the fish appeared at Moss Landing, "owing to the near approach of the new comet, or some other cause . . ." The same thing happened again in early February of 1890: "The fishes belong to a species altogether unknown here," said a Monterey onlooker.

And in the summer of 1925, a strange "animal," a vaguely reptilian something, 50 feet long and two feet thick, with a fish-finned tail and head rather like that of a duck-billed dinosaur, washed ashore two miles north of Santa Cruz. Scientists stayed away in droves, but many local residents drove up to see it, according to the May issue of *What's Doing*, a Monterey newspaper of the time. The paper published a picture of the creature that had been taken by Mrs. Morgan Taylor of Piedmont, California.

About 10 miles northeast of Santa Cruz, in the Santa Cruz Mountains a couple of miles east of S.R. 17, is an area of marked geomagnetic disturbance, which no doubt has something to do with all of these peculiarities. This area produces the gravity and light distortions seen at the Oregon Vortex and similar places, but is not known to the public. However, certain cults are familiar with it and have used the spot for performance of animal (and reportedly occasional human) "snuff" sacrifices.

MT. SHASTA (10)

I must admit that the stories one hears about this area sound a little, well, hokey. But our rules of evidence are a bit looser than those of a monograph in microbiology or spherical trigonometry, so I suppose we can at least look at the tales—symptomatically, if nothing else. The hero of the commonest Shasta story is an astronomer named Edgar Lucien Larkin, who has been safely dead since 1924.

While vacationing near Mt. Shasta, he is said to have put up his portable telescope and accidentally trained it on the side of this extinct volcano. Larkin did a double take when he saw a gold-domed marble building and long-robed figures walking among the pines, the whole bathed in a bluish light. The astronomer said he'd never heard the legends of a colony from "lost Lemuria," which have long been told here, but he soon found that certain people in Weed, 10 miles to the west, had many other strange tales

of white-robed types, oft glimpsed at eve, and which could not be photographed.

There is also talk of strange forces that prevent the curious from approaching too near an area in almost inaccessible country on the east slope of Shasta. And there are things like the "bank of fog" that was once seen stopping a forest fire on a line beyond which trees weren't singed. Professor Larkin supposedly organized an expedition to investigate all this, but bad weather turned it back—a fog perhaps?—before it reached any golden domes.

Whatever the corporeal status of any Lemurians in the vicinity, there certainly is no shortage of uncanny light shows. Train crews on the Shasta Limited, which used to wend its way through rugged country around the base of the peak, have corroborated the "blue light" effect, as have many residents. But there have been more material manifestations: odd-colored snowfalls have been reported periodically around Shasta, the first recorded one occurring in 1881, when red snow fell in September.

In early April of 1953, green snow fell near Dana, 10 miles south of the mountain. Those who found it said it was "sort of luminous," glowing in the dark like radium or phosphorus. Those who touched it got itchy hands, as is often the case with material residues from UFO phenomena. The Weather Bureau acknowledged that the odd colors were authentic and not a hallucination, but said they were probably caused by fallout from atomic tests presumed to be under way in Nevada. This would have required a disastrously high radiation level, however, and in any case was indignantly denied by the Atomic Energy Commission.

As if to complete the weird panoply, there have also been abundant sightings of Bigfoot, or Sasquatch as it is more commonly known in this part of the country. At Tulelake, about 50 miles northeast of the mountain, the Indians talked of the creature (which they call Matah Kagmi) as long ago as the 1890s. The Indian magazine *Many Smokes* (Fourth Quarter 1968) has an article on early encounters with the beasts.

NAPA (11)

I almost hate to write it, but it seems that this area was blanketed with a shower of candy in the fall of 1857. Stones, trees, and houses were coated. Children and pets soon attested that the substance was indeed rock candy. Naturalists, as they styled themselves in those days, hastened to assure the inquiring editor of the *Napa Republican* that the stuff was "nothing more than the exudations of some insect." But, for once an editor scoffed at a wooden-legged explanation; it was, he said, "a mere theory to excuse their ignorance of Nature's wondrous working." In mid-April 1958, a pile of large, jagged chunks of ice fell in the yard of Leo Kozłowski. There were no planes in the area, and the ice was too sheetlike to have been hail.

PORTOLA (12)

A redwood log found near here at Oroville Dam has been determined to be more than 10 million years old and is still sufficiently intact to be capable of combustion. Crews from the California Department of Water Resources found it embedded in a 30-foot depth of rock, along with fern leaves. The mystery is what preserved it all that time. The log is on display at the Lake Oroville Visitor's Center.

SAN DIEGO (13)

Museum of Man, Balboa Park A 22-foot mounted specimen of the extremely rare oarfish has been displayed here. The 600-pound creature washed ashore some years ago, having apparently gone astray from its normal habitat thousands of feet deep in the oceans. With its ribbon-shaped back fin and two antennalike spikes on a reptilelike head, the oarfish may be the origin of many sea-serpent reports. Oddly, two such creatures were seen dead or floundering on California beaches in 1955.

Point Loma A geological abnormality exists on the tip of this high bluff that juts down from the north to close off gemlike San Diego Bay from the Pacific. Along the wave-sculpted terrace that forms the point, hundreds of lava and metamorphic "traveled boulders" are exposed at low tide. Scores of others are eroding out of the sparse soil atop the point, with one of the largest—weighing about 50 tons—lying 300 feet from the lighthouse at the south tip.

The enigma is how all of these rocks did their traveling, particularly the ones up topside, 350 feet above mean tide. The nearest source for such rock is North Coronado Island, some 18 miles southwest in the Pacific. "Erratics" like these are usually shrugged off in geology texts as a by-product of glaciation, although they also exist in nonglaciated areas like this.

Allan O. Kelley, a sharp critic of consensus geology, writes: "This fact is one of the most carefully guarded skeletons in the geological closet, for the only rational explanation is catastrophic ocean flooding, and this is anathema to the orthodox, uniformitarian geologist who always associates oceanic flooding with the biblical Deluge and his old enemies, the fundamental religionists." He adds that there are many other such rocks in San Diego County, particularly at Alpine, 20 miles east of the city, where there is a 30-acre deposit at an elevation of 1,500 feet above sea level.

The Whaley Museum Located in the Old Town area of the city near the intersection of U.S. 101 and Interstate 8, is a very well-known haunted house in these parts. There are supposed to be at least four ghosts in the

offing: a man, woman, baby, and a spotted dog. There are also heavy footsteps in an upstairs room, cold drafts, cooking odors, music, and other comforts of a spectral home.

SAN DIEGO COUNTY, NORTH-CENTRAL AREA (14)

Deadman's Hole (On S.R. 79 NW of Warner Springs and 2 mi. SE of Holcomb Village.) This site about six miles east of Palomar Mountain in the rugged outback area of the county has not lived up to its macabre name for some time, perhaps because no one has recently tried to live there. But its history does offer the collector of "monster" lore a tale of some powerful entity that has physically attacked and killed human beings.

The first victim was an unidentified man who was found murdered in 1858. In 1870, a Frenchman was slain inside a cabin he had just built in the Hole. In June of 1887, a prospector named David Blair set up camp; he was soon discovered under a bush with fatal neck injuries that were described as knife wounds. Six months later, a young woman named Belita Melinda was found dead about 200 feet from where Blair's body had lain. Some reports said she had been strangled; others that the body was "horribly mutilated."

The place marked on maps as Deadman's Hole is a hollow bisected by S.R. 79. Two natural springs that have been described as among the most excellent in California are located here, and it was near one or the other of these that several of the slain persons were found. But the area also includes two adjacent ravines, Bear and Dark canyons. In the first of these, the last native bear in San Diego County, or what now is said to have been a bear, was killed. But Dark Canyon, a gloomy and brush-choked place with steep, craggy walls, has been the scene of the most mysterious events of Deadman's Hole.

In March of 1888, after the rash of deaths, two hunters from Julian named Edward Dean and Charles Fox went to the canyon and said they had clashed with "an immense unwieldy animal, that from a rear view resembled a bear, [which] was making rapid strides through a narrow defile. Its legs were a hard substance like that of the foot of a dog [hog? J.B.]." The hunters said they found a cave full of animal and human bones. Before long, they were charged by the creature, and claimed they had shot it down.

At this point, the story gets rubbery, suggesting either a hoax or an early-day cover-up of some sort. Patrick Householder, a San Diego historian whose unpublished research I have been able to examine, says that the hunters reportedly hauled the creature to either Julian or San Diego, where it was exhibited on April 1. But the next day's issue of the *San Diego Union* had a rather ill-natured story dismissing its own previous day's sensational reportage as an April Fool joke and ridiculing those who had in

good faith gone to the police station to examine the animal. And that was the last media mention of the Thing of Deadman's Hole. Although no one has been killed in the Hole lately (that we know of), my informants tell me that there are still rumors of "bad vibes" here among local outdoorsmen. Indians strictly avoid the area.

Palomar Mountain Flying saucer chronicler George Adamski commuted for years between here and Prescott, Arizona. His rather pious "Venusian" saucer believers might have been surprised at his earliest days here, though: Many of them do not know that Adamski originally came to what he called "the magic mountain" to set up a guru HQ for his Tibetan cult. His much-photographed saucerian visitors came as fallout from his yogic activities, while his wife managed a small hamburger stand halfway up the hill.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA (15)

Unidentified flying objects of one form or another have been around a long time in North America. Although the current "saucer"-style, streamlined entities may have appeared in colonial New England and even in a rural area at Denison, Texas, on January 25, 1878, for some reason reports of the first recorded great wave of sightings, in 1896, described something else. Thousands of people that year saw rather improbable-looking "airships," much like something from the then barely imaginable futurist fantasies of Jules Verne. It appears that this flotilla of wacky apparitions that wafted across the country simulating lighter-than-air craft may have appeared first around San Francisco Bay.

One of the earliest of these was seen over Oakland on the evening of November 22, 1896. The strange display began, witnesses said, with a brilliant flash of light that unfolded with an odd slowness over the bay. The aircraft then lumbered into view, 300 feet off the ground. Charles H. Ellis, a local businessman, recalled that "it hovered over us and looked like a giant bird with four pods with rotor devices on them." Another, William Rodda, said: "It was uncanny. I thought it might have been a big balloon with lights, but some intelligence was controlling the device. I think it landed in San Francisco Bay." From here, the airship seems to have gone to Sacramento, and after that, reports of sightings spread rapidly eastward.

San Francisco Bay and environs are far and away the nation's capital for booms, blams, and other things that go bang in the night, and day. In May of 1951, the Solano and Contra Costa area in the northeast section were shaken by enigmatic blasts off and on for two weeks. Windowpanes shivered, pictures dropped from walls, and dishes slid from shelves. On June

15, another mystery blast and tremor occurred, this time separating the causeway connecting Mare Island naval installation to the mainland.

In the summer of 1959, sky blasts occurred over a three-day period at the same time as they were walloping a 200-mile area between Amarillo, Texas, and Roswell, New Mexico. The San Francisco area blasts, besides doing their usual number on plastic, chandeliers, and crockery, were also blamed for opening the door to a bank vault, triggering fire alarms, and setting off sprinkler systems.

On the night of August 18, 1962, a rumbling that sounded like a flight of heavy airplanes came from somewhere in the sky. Navy officials at Alameda Naval Air Station denied responsibility. A theory that the noises were thunderclaps fizzled when it was pointed out that the evening had been clear, with virtually no breeze.

On October 22, 1971, detonations centering apparently on Daly City but audible over a 50-mile radius, awakened thousands of residents in the middle of the night and damaged many homes. The air force insisted that none of its planes had caused sonic booms; but some unreconstructed UFO "hardware boys" were nodding wisely: They have always believed that mystery booms are caused by flying saucers with their invisibility switched on and breaking the sound barrier.

San Francisco City

Church of Satan "High Priest" Anton Szandor LaVey says he found a 13-room Victorian house at 6114 California Street by chance, after he had started his unusual church. It was by his account quite a stroke of luck—not to speak of a whopping coincidence—that the place had been used as a bordello and ritual magic center in the nineteenth century by Mary Ellen "Mammy" Pleasant. She was Frisco's longtime madame in chief and a voodoo priestess with strong links to the famous voodoo queen of New Orleans, Marie Laveau. Pleasant was smuggled out of Louisiana, where her Abolitionist activities had got her in trouble in 1860, by agents of the colorful San Francisco financier, William C. Ralston.

All these things were going on in profusion a hundred years ago, with the first Satanist organization secretly comprising the leaders of a local bluestocking vigilante group set up to control vice on the Barbary Coast.

So, *plus ça change . . .*

Golden Gate Area A couple of miles northwest of LaVey's black house on California Street, in the winter of 1942, the *Kennison*, a navy destroyer, was heading in toward the Golden Gate after patrolling for Japanese submarines off the coast. A heavy fog had come up abruptly and the *Kennison* throttled down to a crawl, with foghorn blaring. Suddenly the fantail lookout, Torpedoman Jack Cornelius, yelled on the "bitchbox" for everyone to

look aft. He and a man on the aft gundeck named Tripod both reported that the *Kennison* had narrowly been missed by a huge, derelict two-masted sailboat that had reeled across within a few yards of the destroyer's stern. It had been in sight for a half-minute, but the radar men had seen no indication of anything.

Nob Hill Anyone walking along California Street farther east, between Powell and Jones streets, who sees a happy-looking girl flouncing along in a filmy white dress about a century out of fashion shouldn't think too much of it. Even if she seems to walk right through people, or things can sort of be seen through her. It's only the often-seen Nob Hill Ghost, who in spook lore is supposed to be the spirit of one Flora Sommerton. The daughter of wealthy parents, she was being pressured to marry an unappealing suitor, so on the day of her society debut, in 1876, she lit out for parts unknown, taking with her the striking white tulle gown that had been ordered from Paris for the occasion.

The Sommerton disappearance became a nationwide sensation, with her parents posting a reward of \$250,000. But the money lay unclaimed in a bank for years, even after the death of the father in 1906. Her mother finally called off the search in 1916. According to ghost-chaser James Reynolds, the fugitive Flora was finally identified—after her death—in 1926. She had been working as a housekeeper in a hotel in Butte, Montana. The white dress was found among her effects.

Southern Peninsula

Broadmoor (On the coast, 1 mi. S of San Francisco County line, off S.R. 35.) On October 26, 1956, Mrs. Faye Swanson found the body of a small monkey in her backyard at 723 Stoneyford Drive. It obviously had fallen out of the sky and struck her clothesline with sufficient force to splinter a solid, four-inch-square post. There was a suggestion that the animal might have fallen out of an airliner, but San Francisco International Airport checked and found that no known airliners had been transporting any such passengers that night. Nevertheless, there were some who stoutly maintained that this had to be a monkey being flown in from the Orient for use in making polio vaccine. The *San Francisco Chronicle* reporter who investigated the strange event and rhetorically asked, "Who's throwing monkeys at the earth?" snorted "a likely story" at that explanation. Broadmoor is a short distance west of the 1971 Daly City boom area.

East Palo Alto Whether they are still there I do not know, but a tiny church here called the Miracle Revival Fellowship Church has experienced a phenomenon that has been happening with increasing frequency around the country. Starting in July of 1973, translucent crosslike figures have ap-

peared in the window glass of the one-room building. The crosses appear toward evening in the six opaque windows, and news accounts claim that disinterested parties who have examined them have found no evidence of imposture. Unfortunately, I do not have the exact address of the place.

San Mateo On March 25, 1966, Mrs. Lorraine Nuckels and her family were terrified by a bomblike report followed by the crash of a one-foot cube of ice through the roof of their house. Investigating police officers found baseball-sized ice pieces circling the house outside in a 150-foot ring. No airplanes were seen or heard.

Stanford University In the Archives Reading Room of the university library repose the "Stanford Apports," a group of articles that have long been famous among the small number of people who investigate the phenomena of psychokinesis or teleportation. The apports were there at last inquiry, that is, stored in three cardboard boxes and four file folders. However, the history of these now fading and rather forlorn dried flowers, stuffed birds, books, and other things from the nineteenth century has not been an untroubled one, from the time they first squeezed through some invisible matter/energy aperture and plopped down inside a sealed iron cage at the behest of a sweating young spirit medium.

The apports were produced by a certain Charles Bailey in the basement of the Leland Stanford mansion on Nob Hill, San Francisco. The sessions continued over a long time, and were by-products of a determined effort by Mrs. Stanford to contact her son, Leland Junior, who had died young. The goal apparently was never attained, and when the Stanfords founded the famous university more or less as a memorial to the son, the apports ended up on display in the museum.

However, with the passing of the elders Stanfords, the articles were removed and museum spokesmen took to answering queries by denying that Senator and Mrs. Stanford had ever trifled with such things. Although their peculiar origin must seem virtually miraculous even (or especially) to the most case-hardened materialist, the feeling appears rather to have been one of embarrassment. It was not until an article by Robert B. Johnson exposed the situation in *INFO Journal*, magazine of the International Fortean Organization, in 1974, that the policy seems to have been reversed. The apports—some of them—once again appeared out of limbo and became available for examination by serious researchers. Possibly they had reapported.

Medium Bailey had worked under rigidly controlled conditions when producing the apports, having himself first body-searched for anything concealed, then handcuffed and tied in the chair inside the steel cage with the door locked after the cage itself had been thoroughly inspected by members of the audience—which often included distinguished scientists. The apported objects then eventually began to appear inside the cage, usually falling from some unseen point in the air.

The whole question of apports, like objects falling from a clear sky, is another of those phenomena that have been going on for a long time, denied, derided, but most often ignored, since the mere possibility sets at naught all traditional conceptions of "matter." I like Ivan Sanderson's comment: "We've got sound through matter, and sight through matter, why not matter through matter? Matter is more than 99 percent holes anyway, and anyone can squirt a jet of water from a hose through a chicken wire fence."

The original list of Stanford Apports was very long, including more than 300 live singing birds, some of which were stuffed and have survived in ratty condition. There were seeds, bulbs, small trees, snakes, turtles and fish, arrows, Bibles, ancient Tibetan manuscripts, a Zulu bracelet, even a Hawaiian grass hula skirt. In short, it was a cornucopia of bric-a-brac of the day, some exotic but most quite ordinary.

Library officials are not certain how long the articles will be made available for public examination, since their number is dwindling and most are deteriorating. So, those who would like to examine these things that apparently have gone through a process usually consigned to the realm of science fiction should act quickly.

Few among the thousands of people bustling about this prestigious school these days probably are aware of the extensive network of tunnels that once branched out beneath the south end of the Stanford campus. I put that in the past tense because Stanford officials have emphatically informed me that all of the passageways have long since been filled in. Of course, most large university campuses have utility tunnels of one kind or another, but the Stanford tunnels predated the acquisition of the land by Leland Stanford in 1890.

They are supposed to have been built by a strange fellow pseudonym'd Peter Coutts who bought the 1,400-acre Matadero Rancho in the 1870s. He is now believed to have been a Frenchman named Paulin Caperon who was a retainer of the exiled Empress Eugénie, widow of Napoleon III. On arrival here, Coutts began the construction of a large estate, for which many buildings were planned but only one—and the tunnel complex—was begun.

No one knows how many underground passages there were, but six is the usual estimate. I am told that all were at the south end of the property, near what are today called Pine Hill, Frenchman's Hill, and Matadero Creek. Of those still on record, one opened on the north side of Pine Hill and ran to a dam near the present Ryan Laboratory on Stanford Avenue. Another began on the west side of Matadero Creek and ran to an unknown destination. A third ran from the water tower on Old Page Mill Road to a point along the creek. Not surprisingly, the usual explanation is that the tunnels were intended for water supply, but there are suspicions that they are (or were) unnecessarily large and rambling for that. Maybe the *gen-*

tilhomme was only fixing up amusements for Eugénie, who was known to be inordinately fond of clandestine and conspiratorial activities.

East Bay Area

Berkeley The Mystery Walls of the Berkeley and Oakland hills can make a fascinating target for some easy-access hiking and nontechnical climbing. For brevity, I must limit myself here to one set of "walls": the parts remaining in the Tilden Regional Park, just northeast of the University of California campus. Although sections of the structures were cleared away in the installation of the Botanical Gardens in the park, there are still enough remaining to be impressive. (Since I can't feasibly give printed directions for finding them among the steep cliffs and heavy undergrowth, an inquiry at the park office on Wildcat Canyon Drive might be the best starting point.)

The walls at one time rambled for an estimated seven miles in this San Pablo Ridge. They are chiefly located around Vollmer and Grizzly peaks, in a gulch on the south slope of Mt. Baldy, and overlooking Redwood Canyon on the south side of Round Top. Another complex lies 25 miles south of here in the Santa Clara County hills east of Milpitas and are much easier seen since they run across open grasslands.

The structures consist of loose piles of rocks strung along in straight, curved, intersecting, and sometimes even parallel lines. Many of the rocks weigh hundreds of pounds, with a few approaching perhaps a ton. The height averages around three feet, with a ground-level width of four feet. Some of the boulders are embedded more than a foot in the soil, and this together with weathering and lichen-covering suggests considerable age. Professional scientists are disinterested, having decided long ago that they are Indian game traps or livestock corrals, even though no game or range cattle would hesitate in bounding right over them if pursued. Also, they are too peculiarly placed and far too extensive to compare with known Indian game traps in the Great Plains area.

Lafayette The East Bay Regional Park has a place where hundreds of newts cross the road each day. A sign has been put up: "Caution! Newts Xing." The animal is a rare, five-inch white amphibian and is valuable in the fields of anesthesiology and animal navigation research. In their report in *INFO Journal*, Ron and Paul Willis muse upon what Karel Capek, Czech author of the science fiction novel *War with the Newts*, would have made of this case.

Mt. Diablo (5 air mi. NE of Danville exit on I-680.) At the Black Diamond Coalmine here in 1873, miners found a large, live frog embedded in a limestone layer they had just blasted. The cavity exactly fitted the animal

and the rock even bore the imprint of its skin texture. When freed, the frog lived only a day, evidently blind and able to move only one leg. Charles Fort cataloged many "toad in the hole" reports—including some that fell inside hailstones on Dubuque, Iowa, in June of 1882.

Monte del Diablo, as it was known to the Spaniards, was swathed in legends of the marvelous from early times. Some of its aura of mysterious grandeur probably stems from its dramatic location alone in a broad plain, where it is one of the most conspicuous landmarks in the state and forms the geodetic center for the official land plotting system of central California.

To the Indians of the area, it was the home of the Puy, or devil, and their tribal sorcerers claimed to be agents of the mountain's spirits. General Mariano G. Vallejo, in a history of the area written in 1850, told of encounters with a strange apparition when the Spanish were battling the Bolgones Indians in 1806. A skirmish was in progress in the hollow along the west side of Mt. Diablo when a manlike figure decorated with exotic plumage and "making divers movements" suddenly appeared among the combatants. The Indians were victorious and the "diablo" disappeared somewhere on the mountain. The figure came back at the same time every day, and it was not until some months later that the Indians were subdued.

Northeast Bay Area

Benicia (Near Vallejo on Sacramento River.) Troops at the U.S. Army base then located here were startled one day in July 1851 when blood and thin slices of fresh meat showered down on the parade ground. The post surgeon was quoted by the *San Francisco Herald* (issue of July 24, 1851) to the effect that the meat was neatly sliced into pieces about one-eighth-inch thick. Just as with the meat that fell on Los Nietos, California, in 1869, there was a rim of short bristles around some of the pieces. This is the general area of the 1951 mystery sky blasts.

At Richmond, a cast-iron object about twice the size of a military hand grenade fell through the garage roof at 600 Key Boulevard, on July 31, 1957. Albert T. Haynes found it embedded in the cab of his truck next morning. The object was tear-shaped, weighed about five pounds, and had a brass screw in the center and a minute hole in the tail end. Experts told reporters that it was "probably an airliner antenna weight," a common explanation in falls of manufactured objects, even though it is a hoary anachronism as far as airliners are concerned.

SAN JOSE (16)

Sometime in June of 1869, San Francisco newspapers reported the fall of fleshlike organic matter over Santa Clara County. A similar fall occurred at

Los Nietos, Los Angeles County, in August of that year. Apparently, the San Jose area is also one of geomagnetic anomaly. Some savants believe there is a correlation between magnetic disturbances and oddball phenomena. Whether that would also apply to the two rather garish human novelties located in San Jose, is anybody's guess.

The Rosicrucians. The pseudo-Egyptian buildings of this large publishing and mailing operation, at Rosicrucian Park in the downtown area, are probably less familiar to its communicants than are its magazine advertisements. For half a century, AMORC (Ancient and Mystical Order Rosae Crucis) has been one of the most persistent advertisers in pulp periodicals in the English-speaking world. The "age-old wisdom" that these ads promise is almost entirely doled out by mail, to a large and presumably growing audience.

Founder H. Spencer Lewis, a skilled businessman, would probably have been pleased to see the way things have prospered. For years he had to endure the slings and arrows of two rival claimants to Rosicrucian dignities, R. Swinburne Clymer of Pennsylvania (see Quakertown, Pennsylvania) and Aleister Crowley of England. The latter was mainly miffed that Lewis had been given a charter to operate the *Ordo Templi Orientis* (OTO) fraternity in North America by its then German proprietors, a territory the Great Beast considered a part of his own overlordship in the English-speaking world.

Crowley, who was in many ways a brilliant scholar and writer, lost no opportunity to ridicule Lewis's decidedly modest intellectual attainments, jeering at his "elementary blunders in Latin" and foolish claims of scholastic eminence. Clymer operated self-styled Rosicrucian groups of his own and seemed to have been more the jealous homegrown competitor. His line of attack was to reiterate constantly that the Lewis outfit had grown out of a "sex magic" chapter chartered by the Berlin OTO in 1916. Whether Lewis ever practiced or advocated sexual magic seems doubtful, but it does appear that certain of Crowley's OTO material was still being used by AMORC until fairly recently (for example, the "Rose Cross" from *Equinox* III) in its literature.

The Winchester Mystery House (525 South Winchester.) Costing millions of dollars over a 40-year period, this unique edifice complex once covered nine acres, contained 160 rooms, 47 fireplaces, 9 kitchens, 10,000 windows, and 2,000 doors. Although it was partially dismantled at the death of its builder, the house still has hundreds of trapdoors, blind stairways, windows and doors opening on blank walls, peepholes, secret panels and passageways. It was the locale for the filming of Conan Doyle's *Hound of the Baskervilles*, and the late Harry Houdini spent a night here hoping to see a ghost from the supposedly large retinue.

The place was built by Sarah Winchester, the lonely and fragile widow of firearms heir William Wirt Winchester. She believed that her husband and only daughter, who had suffered untimely deaths, had been the victims of the vengeful spirits of men who had been slain by Winchester rifles. A medium suggested that she build a never-to-be-completed house in order to baffle and keep at bay the hostile spirits, most of whom she took to be Indian. The theory was that the evil forces would only be able to attach themselves to a completed structure.

In 1884, Mrs. Winchester traveled here from New England. Purchasing what was then a magnificent, 30-acre estate, she set up a high iron fence to keep snoopers away. Inside it was a towering hedge that was cared for by seven Japanese gardeners. Caravans of the finest building materials began rolling to the site from local freightyards. Sounds of hammering and voices of workers echoed through the days and nights, with 24 workmen—never more nor less—always on the job. An estimated 500 rooms were built, most of them later torn out and replaced. There were three elevators and five different heating systems; solid gold fixtures and rare stained glass were used in copious quantities.

By the turn of the century the structure soared eight stories high and resembled a village. There was an isolated bell tower with no way to get to the bell, corridors that shrank in width from feet to inches, stairs that rose and fell like roller coasters, with treads only an inch apart. The reason for such features was to guard the approaches to Mrs. Winchester's secret séance room, located above the main kitchen.

The number 13 appeared to have been some sort of key to this supreme example of California kookery. After Mrs. Winchester's death, the place was carefully examined and found to contain 13 symbolism everywhere: The windows had 13 panes, the walls of rooms 13 panels, chandeliers 13 globes, floor panels groups of 13, and so forth. The structure was strung with miles of copper wire connecting early-day intercoms and other electrical gadgets the uses of which are still a mystery.

SAN LUIS OBISPO (17)

Early in February of 1952, well-drillers found artesian water on a ranch near here at a depth of 580 feet. But at the same time, fish two and one-half inches long with small spikes on their backs began gushing up with the water and fell flopping to the ground. A biologist at California State Polytechnic College knew of no "underground streams" in the area. The fish were identified as sticklebacks by Dr. Earl S. Herald, curator of aquatic biology at San Francisco's Steinhart Aquarium, who said there had been similar incidents earlier in California: 1870—unidentified fish from a well in San Jose; 1874—thousands of young freshwater trout from a 143-foot well at Port Hueneme, near Ventura; 1884—sticklebacks from a 191-foot well

at San Bernardino; 1951—five squawfish from a 543-foot well in Lincoln. (For other well-drilling surprises, *see* Boise, Idaho; Peoria County, Illinois; and Norfolk, Virginia.)

On December 30, 1946, a woman named Ella Young saw a batlike something flying at dusk over Morro Bay. "On the golden sky it looked very black," she recalled. "It came forward head on and had a batlike appearance, owing to the curvature of its wings. I am not sure if there were motions at the extreme tip of the wings. But the strange machine seemed to stand still for several minutes, and its form was very distinct. Suddenly, it either lowered itself toward the horizon, or the bank of cloud mist made an upward movement—maybe both movements occurred—for the machine passed behind the cloud and did not reappear. Immediately afterward, a great flush of color spread over the sea."

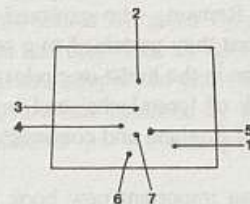
UKIAH (18)

(Abt. 130 mi. N of San Francisco on U.S. 101.) The slow and dreamlike but potentially disastrous driftings of the north and south poles as Terra spins on its way through the heavens are constantly monitored by a little-known program of the U.S. Coast and Geodetic Survey. Using an elderly telescope of modest power but great accuracy, daily readings are made here and at the other U.S. polar shift observatory in Gaithersburg, Maryland. The findings are Teletyped for interpretation to Japan, just as they were all through World War Two. There are three other stations, in Italy, Russia, and Japan, and all note the comparative positions of the same 18 pairs of stars. They all lie at 39 degrees, 8 minutes north latitude.

In each 14-month period, the north pole meanders counterclockwise through a 72-foot square, roughly the size of a baseball diamond. Since 1900, the area has been moving toward Greenland at more than six inches a year, and some scientists think this may have a connection with earthquakes. Of course, if a major polar shift were to occur in a short period, it would wreak unparalleled catastrophes, not the least of which might be the generation of huge tidal waves that could sweep over lower-lying areas before the oceans adjusted to the new global direction of rotation.

This observatory was built in 1899 in a 2.5-acre site in the middle of vineyards. Today a housing development completely surrounds the home of the observer in charge and the observatory in the backyard.

COLORADO



APISHAPA RIVER CANYON (1)

(45 air mi. SE of Pueblo.) There is a wide network of totally enigmatic stone structures scattered around southern Colorado and northern New Mexico. No one seems to know who built them or why. This immediate area, at the border of Las Animas and Pueblo counties, contains several of the remains, perched high atop certain cliffs and promontories. Six of the sites here have been explored, although others are known to exist. The structures are in pairs, with the more complex or elaborate one always on the southeast or east side of the Apishapa River. The simpler of the two is across the river and higher than the other, with good sight lines into the surrounding area.

Although no two sites are exactly alike, all consist mainly of circles or ellipsoidal lines of sandstone slabs. The circles are not high, the average being about 30 inches above the ground. The slabs are from eight to 10 inches thick, and most are severely weathered. One of the more elaborate locations is the first one reached at the mouth of Apishapa Canyon. The major site of this pair is on the plateau at the east side of the river, looking out over the prairie to the north. On a cliff below it is an extensive panel of petroglyphs. The compound itself consists of several circles, some of them concentric, with the largest a bit over 20 feet in outside diameter, and containing a seven-foot concentric circle. Surrounding the complex is a four-sided wall with an opening in the west side. The minor one of this pair, across the river, consists of two noncontiguous circles. A line along the centers of these circles runs parallel with the Apishapa River far below.

The second pair of sites is more than a mile farther into Apishapa Canyon, and the third pair is about four miles still farther southwest, at the place where South Canyon runs in from the west and intersects Apishapa Canyon. Other sites have been reported several miles farther along the Apishapa and to the east in the Timpas River area.

The third pair is notable for the much larger stone elements used. The complex consists of a row of six roughly circular structures arranged in three groups side by side. Each circle has an upright stone pillar in its center, four of which are still standing. At the east end of the area containing them is a sort of underground entryway made by roofing over a cleft in the

rock platform. The entire assemblage is about 60 feet long. As with other sites, petroglyphs and inferior flint artifacts have been found.

Archaeologist E. B. Renaud, who explored these places a number of times, was convinced that they pertained to a solar-phallic cult because of the presence of monoliths in the midst or circles. "These lithic circles," he wrote, "make one think of 'cromlechs' and 'menhirs' of Brittany and of megalithic monuments of England and continental Europe, but on a smaller scale."

The Sirius Mystery, an important new book by Robert K. G. Temple, explores the role of the star Sirius in the mystical and religious affairs of the earliest civilizations of the Mideast and Mediterranean. In his fifth chapter, on the geodetic locations of the various oracle shrines of the ancient world, Temple points out that these places were arranged along nine bands of latitude, from 31°30' N through 39°30' N. These Apishapa sites lie at about 37°30', and hence would be in a line with the Greek cult sites of Delos and Miletus, which were sacred to the moon and the goddess Artemis, according to Temple. It would be fascinating to see what similar significance, if any, could be worked out for these anonymous and probably far more ancient American sites.

The other ancient stone complexes found in south-central Colorado are at:

- Cañon City: west of Penrose in Eight Mile Creek valley; and 15 miles northwest of Cañon City on steep mountain peaks along Wilson Creek;
- Las Animas: 13 miles south and 6 miles west, in the Purgatoire River valley; and at five other minor locations south of Arkansas River valley in Bent and Las Animas counties;
- Monarch Pass area (*see separate entry*);
- Pueblo area (*see separate entry*);
- Saguache area (*see San Luis Valley*);
- Walsenburg area: northeast along Cucharas River, three miles south of its junction with the Huerfano River near Pueblo County line.

ECHO LAKE (2)

(Abt. 30 air mi. W of Denver.) UFO watchers have long been mystified by an apparent involvement of the Gypsies on the fringes of the phenomenon. This cropped up "in spades" near here in the summer of 1976. Michael Lusignan, a 38-year-old patent examiner from Washington, D.C., became lost on a hiking trail. Although never far away, he was not found by a 40-man search party that beat the bushes for several days. Finally, on June 13, two motorcyclists saw Lusignan in the small canyon about 650 feet below the Juniper Pass Lookout, a mile east of here on S.R. 103. He said that on

the second day of his wanderings (a Wednesday, which has often been claimed to be the likeliest day for such matters) he was making his camp for the night when he "was joined by some Gypsy people in a group. There were about 15 of them and they were all ages. They could have been American Indians, too." These people did not respond to his questions, ousted him from his camp, and had vanished by the next morning. They traveled in "rectangle machines . . . a strange cloud formation with lights."

FLORISSANT (3)

(32 mi. NW of Colorado Springs on U.S. 24.) Flies embedded in amber are often found around here. Theories explaining the formation of amber in causal terms are dubious enough, but attempts to account for the perfectly preserved insects mired therein are even more tenuous. As Alexander Pope observed, "The things, we know, are neither rich nor rare, / But wonder how the devil they got there."

MONARCH PASS (4)

(20 mi. W of Salida on U.S. 50.) On a mountaintop about four miles west of the ghost town of Monarch, near the headwaters of the South Arkansas River, ancient stoneworks somewhat resembling those at Apishapa Canyon meander between two rocky peaks about a quarter-mile apart. Atop each point are "enclosure" structures made by leaning together slabs of granite that are so ancient that in many places they have disintegrated. The altitude is about 11,000 feet, suggesting that the array must not have been intended for defense, since the range could be crossed more easily at many other points. Wildlife is almost nonexistent, ruling out the hackneyed "game trap" explanation often tacked onto mystery walls.

These ruins are within a few miles of the same latitude, between 38 and 39 degrees north, as similar mountaintop stone remains in Fayette and Kanawha counties, West Virginia. Serpent Mound, Ohio, and Cahokia Mound, Illinois—two of the chief mound structures in North America—are on the same approximate alignment. Two Old World shrines that lie along 38°30' N are at Delphi and Mt. Sipylus. Robert K. G. Temple speculates that these two places may have been sacred to the sun and to the tradition that mankind was created from stones at Delphi. (*See also Apishapa River Canyon, Colorado, and sites in other states mentioned above.*)

PUEBLO AREA (5)

Red Creek Road (From Pueblo, SW on Colo. 96; 4 mi. S on Red Creek Road to an unmarked arroyo.) There have been many monster sightings in this part of Pueblo County: Local youths refer to the resident "critter" as

the "Wazoey Man." Around May 15, 1973, two boys who were plinking with an air pistol in the arroyo one evening gradually became aware, in the fading light, of two huge red eyes. They looked like bicycle reflectors, and with a jolt of youthful ebullience, one of the boys took a shot at them. The next thing they knew, both youths had been picked up and dumped unceremoniously into a nearby ravine by some unseen force. A large wooden fencepost came out of the ground and struck one of them on the head. Thoroughly cowed, the pair scrambled for their truck—where they found that they had lost the ignition keys. They scampered back along the road, intending to hitchhike toward Beulah. But they found that, every time they headed west on the road, an entity that looked like a mobile haystack—and with the two huge red "eyes"—would materialize and herd them away from the canyon where they had begun their little misadventure.

Stone Enclosures Pueblo County has two large complexes of ancient stone structures like the ones we described in the Apishapa River Canyon area. One of these is not far from the Red Creek Road home of the Wazoey Man. It is located about four miles south of Goodpasture and a half-mile southeast of the Donnelly Ranch, on the north side of the St. Charles River. The other group is in the northwest corner of the county, on the east side of Turkey Creek Canyon, within the Ft. Carson Military Reservation. Two large upright boulders in the latter site look a lot like menhirs.

SAN LUIS VALLEY (6)

This area of south-central Colorado is of great interest to us Weird Americans. Screwball phenomena flitter on a continuum from the geological to the psychological to the "UFOlogical." Some of the most freewheeling geological speculation has been applied to this region. It has been suggested that this valley caps the south end of a vast, subterranean cataclysm, developing over millennia, which could end by tearing the continent in half. The north end of the agitation, some observers think, is under Yellowstone Park, Wyoming.

Great Sand Dunes National Monument (From Alamosa, 14 mi. E on U.S. 160, and abt. 20 mi. N, off S.R. 150.) This unaccountable desert has been called one of the strangest in the world. At 9,000 feet elevation, these 57 square miles of dunes are among the loftiest sand piles. Geologists are completely at variance as to what they are doing here in a mere 10- by 10-mile area, heaped up against 14,000-foot mountain peaks. There are even a couple of rivers disappearing in or near them: the Medano and San Luis.

In olden times, there were many tales of vanishing wagon trains, sheep flocks, and the like. Since about 1950, there have been scores of reports of UFOs taking off and disappearing into the sands. Nearby ranchers and

monument employees will privately admit to their share of sightings. There are even stories of a herd of "web-footed" wild horses living among the dunes, whose extra-wide hooves let them gallop across the wastes. Ivan Sanderson wondered why the sand grains are of "an extraordinary, slightly rosy shade of brown," even though they are mineralogically the same as the ordinary gray-black rocks of the mountains on their side of the valley.

Saguache (52 mi. NW of Alamosa on U.S. 285.) An ancient stone enclosure complex exists near here, 30-odd miles south of the Monarch Pass structures. It consists of 22 known circles crowded along the edge of a steep cliff. There is a spectacular view into the Sangre de Cristos to the east, and of the Great Sand Dunes and San Luis Valley to the southeast. Unfortunately, I cannot give the exact location because there has been damage to this site by vandals and ignoramuses seeking points or potsherds or goodness knows what.

Snippy Mutilation Case Three miles straight south of the Dunes border, along Sand Dunes Road, is a broad meadow of the Harry King Ranch. It was here that a saddle horse named Snippy was found dead in September of 1967. Somehow or other, his neck and head had been completely denuded of flesh. There was nothing left but clean bones, surrounded by a baleful ring of black jelly on the ground that soon sprouted mushrooms.

Although this was by no means the first unexplained animal mutilation, it did seem to touch off the nationwide outbreak of open-air animal killings that has been steadily increasing for a number of years. But, within the local context, the bizarre immolation of this horse was only one incident in a long series of UFO-related mysteries. Rather like the nineteenth-century Bell Witch episode in Tennessee, the phenomena here seemed to degenerate into a sort of paranormal psy-war against a particular individual. The weird saga of Snippy reached a sad climax in March of 1976 when the horse's owner, Mrs. Nellie Lewis, called it quits and took her own life.

It had not taken Mrs. Lewis long to realize that she herself had somehow been caught up in whatever malign process had destroyed her pet horse—and which some people were and are convinced is still at work in this area. As with so many people who run afoul of the UFO phenomenon in any direct way, she felt that her life had gone badly askew. Many people witnessed the freakish manifestations that centered on Mrs. Lewis. There were rumbles from underground, clockwork-regular overflights of "saucers," thumps on roofs where she was staying (even when she was traveling in other areas), electricity fluctuations, sounds of shattering glass.

Opinion in the community is still divided: The majority are skeptical that anything out of the ordinary really happened, as majorities usually are. However, even Ben Phillips, who was Alamosa County sheriff at the time of Snippy's death, concedes that UFOs had been reported constantly in the

King Ranch area for a number of years previous. Phillips himself does not believe in UFOs and doubts that they would have had anything to do with killing horses if they did exist. However, some people living in the adjacent Sangre de Cristos say the unexplainables are as busy as ever. These mountains are riddled with caves and "mines," and reportedly it is not at all unusual to see large, silvery objects of now-familiar outline sail grandly right into hillsides at certain points and disappear. Mt. Blanca is particularly favored with such activities. There is even an entity that is known as the "purple pup tent": It was seen perched on a nearby hillside the day Snippy was found, as if observing reactions. But when people went back, on second thought, for a look at the pup tent, it was gone.

As for the cause of Snippy's demise, examination of the case was badly botched by one of the national investigations committees on UFOs and all sorts of false reports are floating around. The final conclusion drawn by this amateur group was that either Mrs. Lewis or a hoaxer had sneaked into Snippy's pasture, rigged up a winch, and dipped the animal into a vat of acid four feet deep (to hold the stretched-out neck and head). As John Keel remarked after reviewing the case, "Somehow, it is easier to believe that 'little green men' did it."

In Alamosa, the Chamber of Commerce had on display for a while the skeleton of a horse labeled "Snippy," and sporting a neat bullet hole through its pelvis. The implication is that that was all there was to the case. Maybe there was some other horse named Snippy. But the bones of Mrs. Lewis's Appaloosa saddle pony decomposed "like shredded wheat," in the words of one investigator, soon after his death. Within a couple of months, they had completely crumbled away.

SILVER CLIFF (7)

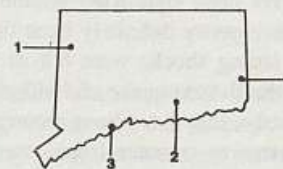
(From Pueblo, 52 mi. W on S.R. 96.) This hamlet of the West Mountain valley, itself pretty much a ghost town, has had a "ghost light" in a nearby cemetery since the 1880s. Located a mile south of town in a prairie area, the lights are described as a bluish glow shimmering over the tombstones. They have been seen by generations of residents, tourists, and journalists, and have been dignified recently by reports in *The New York Times* and the *National Geographic*.

A number of explanations have been proposed and discarded: reflections of city lights (but the mystery glow continued even when every light in Silver Cliff and nearby Westcliffe has been turned out); star reflections (the lights are brighter on cloudy nights); radioactivity (nothing abnormal found with Geiger counters); pranksters daubing luminous paint (they must be getting old and a bit tired of their prank by now, and luminous paint has never been found on the stones). As with other spook lights around the country, the lights move away in an intelligent manner if anyone tries to

approach them, and photographers have not been successful in getting their picture.

In August of 1976, a cow was found mutilated near a thorium mine outside Silver Cliff. This area is 30 air miles north of the field where Snippy was found.

CONNECTICUT



DUDLEYTOWN GHOST TOWN (1)

(Abt. 12 air mi. W of Torrington; from Cornwall Bridge, 2 mi. SW on U.S. 7; SE 1 mi. on S.R. 45; NE abt. 1 mi. on semipassable Dudleytown Rd. Local inquiry recommended.) Old hands around here have long talked of the "Curse of Dudleytown." This is supposed to be the cause of so many disasters dogging the heels of everyone who has tried to live on Dudleytown Hill almost since the first white settlers arrived in 1740. The commonest problem people seem to have encountered is going mad.

There are some who think that the jinx, if one there is, might go back to the Dudley name itself, certainly an ill-starred one in English history ever since sixteenth-century forebears began an ambitious but maladroit scheme to take over the English crown that cost many of them their own head instead. Three members of the family settled here and named the place in 1747, promptly getting off to a bad start when one of them—Abiel Dudley—went insane and had to be cared for by a custodian. The Curse supposedly wrought its evil right up to the last resident, when a medical professor from New York built a summer cottage here, but fled after his wife cracked up and committed suicide in 1910.

A local guide is almost indispensable to find anything at all in what now is little more than a scattering of rock-walled basements.

EAST HADDAM (2)

(From Hartford, 21 mi. SE on S.R. 2 to North Westchester; 10 mi. SW on S.R. 149.) The Indian name for this area was Mackimoodus (sometimes, Morhimmodus), meaning "place of noises," and now shortened to Moodus. As early as 1729, rumblings were noted by colonists in the vicinity of

Mt. Tom, which they understood to have been a place of "big medicine" where the Indians had carried out all sorts of ceremonials.

The way the noises are perceived is highly subjective. They are usually likened to small-arms fire, artillery, or thunder. One person compared them to the dropping of logs on the floor of a house. Although the sounds seem to most people to roll down from the north near Mt. Tom, one of the strangest aspects of the phenomenon is that they always seem to end near the person hearing them.

There have never been significant ground shocks around here, but the Moodus noises have pretty definitely been tied in with seismic activity. In the early 1800s, strong shocks were felt as far away as Boston and New York City. After the Boston quake of 1840, the Moodus noises abated for a while. More recently, they have been recurring every two or three years.

The activity seems to emanate from near a point known as Cave Hill, about six miles northwest, near Leesville, where there is a cavern that never has been penetrated to any great depth because of its bad air. There also is said to be an abandoned lead mine nearby, although it has been deserted for an extremely long time, since it has been talked of as vacant since the early 1800s. The Moodus noises have been registered on Williams College and Harvard University seismographs, leading most scientists to shrug them off as "some type of earthquake." Local residents point out that such a long succession of quakes would by now have caused considerable damage to older buildings, but none has been discovered.

The Reverend Henry Chapman, writing in the *American Journal of Science* in 1840, added a strange chapter to the Moodus saga. In the 1790s, he wrote, a European traveling under the name of Steele arrived at the village and boarded with a family named Knowlton. It was generally suspected that there was more to his visit than met the eye, since he spent so much time digging around the area late at night. Eventually Steele told Knowlton "that he had discovered the place of a fossil which he called a carbuncle, and that he should be able to procure it in a few days." He soon brought in a white, round object that looked like an ordinary stone. But that night, it began to glow so brightly that Knowlton's house took on the radiance and looked from far off as if it were on fire. Next morning, Chapman concludes, Steele took his stone and "enclosed it in sheet lead and departed for Europe, and has never since been heard of." The Philosopher's Stone in New England, or an unusually science-fictional folk tale?

MILFORD (3)

A previously unknown tunnel was unearthed during sewer construction on September 29, 1972. A spokesman for the J. F. Barrett Company of Devon said that a crew digging a ditch prior to the laying of pipe made the find on a portion of Edgemont Road near Hubbell Place. The tunnel was estimated to be more than 200 feet long, was made partially of stone "dry masonry"

with a brick arch, and was about 10 feet wide by 10 feet high. There was no estimate of its age, although the "Underground Railway" explanation was immediately offered, as is invariably the case with any otherwise unaccountable chamber above or under the ground. But it seems doubtful that runaway slaves would have needed such capacious tunnels—if they would have needed any tunnel connecting to nothing on either end and with no other means of access.

VOLUNTOWN (4)

Around Christmastime 1973 there was a series of thefts or disappearances of 24 collie dogs here. A dog warden said that seven or eight Rhode Island residents also had reported dogs stolen in the same period. Two weeks earlier, around December 10, a large number of collies were missing in the Middle West, in Dunn and St. Croix counties, Wisconsin.

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

For some reason, the leading anomaly in Washington and environs are spirit mediums and ghosts. At least one Washington ghost chaser, radio newsman John Alexander of station WMAL, is convinced that D.C. has perhaps the largest spectral population per capita of any major American city. He is fond of the *Washington Star's* editorial observation of April 18, 1891: "Washington is the greatest town for ghosts in this country. The city is dotted all over with haunted houses which remain unrented year after year on account of the spooks that are supposed to inhabit them . . ."

In his 1975 book, *Ghosts: Washington's Most Famous Ghost Stories*, Alexander remarks that the *Star's* comment held true into the 1920s and resulted in the tearing down of many old houses because residents felt them too oppressed by unwelcome presences. But it did little good: Alexander's research convinces him that the same ghost stories keep reappearing in a given neighborhood. Even though the old houses are gone and the contemporary mind is more skeptical, he notes that "we get the same stories now."

Here are a few of the bogey biggies:

U.S. Capitol Probably the best known of the D.C. phantom phalanx are those inhabiting the stately Capitol. There are three major ones, of which the most alarming to the many who have encountered it is by all odds the "Demon Cat." This is a large and ornery felid with a habit of confronting people late at night in the passageways of the lower levels. It jumps out in front of one like a big tomcat, but then expands like an inflatable toy to the size of a panther. Just as it seems about to spring, the confrontee either faints or the cat-astrophe jumps over his head and simultaneously evaporates.

Also residing in these labyrinthine basements is the shade of Major Pierre L'Enfant, architect of the city's street plan. He supposedly died in straitened circumstances, since he never was fully paid for his services, and his famished-looking ghost is said to appear and make fretful noises whenever any change in the streets is being considered. It must have been very busy lately.

In the Statuary Hall, adjoining the Rotunda area beneath the dome, the transparent apparition of President John Quincy Adams sometimes is seen pacing back and forth. It is also said to frequent the spot in the House chamber where Adams suffered a fatal stroke in February of 1848, while delivering an impassioned speech against slavery and the Mexican War.

The White House The Abraham Lincoln ghost gets top billing at 1600 Pennsylvania. Queen Wilhelmina of the Netherlands reportedly told President Franklin Roosevelt that she had answered a knock on the door of her room one evening and seen the ghost of Lincoln standing there. Lillian Rogers Parks, a longtime White House seamstress, recalled that FDR said he wasn't surprised, since his wife also had detected Lincoln's presence more than once. At a certain window in the Oval Room, Lincoln's ghost has appeared on a number of occasions to staff members. Mrs. Calvin Coolidge is supposed to have seen him there. Theodore Roosevelt said he often felt the Lincolnian presence, and a secretary who worked in the White House during the New Deal said she had seen Lincoln sitting on his former bed, pulling on his boots.

Presidents Truman and Hoover were less specific about their eerie experiences in the Executive Mansion. Mr. Truman admitted to having heard unaccountable knockings on doors and other noises in the night. Mr. Hoover said only that he had heard odd sounds, and that "many of them were fantastic."

Dolley Madison is supposed to have appeared when the second Mrs. Woodrow Wilson ordered gardeners to remove the familiar Rose Garden, which was originated by Dolley. The gardeners reported that a figure dressed in the elaborate fashion of the early nineteenth century had marched up to them and upbraided them severely for what they were about to do. They immediately abandoned the task and the Rose Garden remains

in its original location. (However, a little-known architectural feature was removed at about that time: This was the Egyptian-style ankh that is visible in old floorplans showing the walkway running west of the White House toward what is now the Executive Office Building.)

The Rose Room has been another spooky spot inside the building, and the bane of many White House domestics through the years. Seamstress Parks, who worked in the White House for three decades, recalled being driven out of the room one day while hemming a spread on the Andrew Jackson bed. An invisible but highly oppressive something congealed behind her, she writes, and she did not pause to diagnose it. In her 1961 memoir, *Thirty Years Backstairs in the White House*, Mrs. Parks noted that many other servants had had equally bad experiences near the Jackson bed.

Octagon House (1741 New York Avenue NW.) After the White House and the Capitol, this is perhaps the most prestigious of the many haunted buildings in the city. Aside from its unique architecture—which, however, is somewhat miscalled, as the building has six sides rather than eight—this three-story structure of the year 1800 is famous for its former inhabitants. President James and Dolley Madison were in residence for a time after the White House was destroyed by the British. Aaron Burr is supposed to have scaled the fence and penetrated, Don Juan-like, to her boudoir to "say good-bye to" Dolley, before setting out on his further adventures.

But the action these days centers on the two daughters of Colonel John Tayloe, bosom buddy of George Washington and builder of the place. The Tayloe girls had an unlucky penchant for toppling over the railing of the spiral staircase that runs from top to bottom of the house. Both of them are supposed to have died that way in fits of romantic agony during love affairs with suitors of whom papa did not approve. And then, as if in some final test of the laws of probability, a slave girl went over the same bannister and landed in the same place on the ground floor. Needless to say, that spot is reputed to be "the most haunted" of all the restless spots in this place.

The Tayloe girls reputedly appear from time to time in a haze of flickering light. The slave wanders through house and grounds screaming at night. Chandeliers have been seen swinging by themselves, and lights are often found turned on mysteriously at night, according to fairly recent reports in the Washington newspapers.

Perhaps the most intriguing aspect of the Octagon, however, are the many hidden doors and stairways that were built into it by Dr. John Thornton (also an architect of the U.S. Capitol, with its warren of cubbyholes, chambers, and catacombs). Although they are now supposed to be walled up, it is known that at least two tunnels once converged on the Octagon. One of these ran in the general direction of the White House, and the other toward the then nearby Potomac River. The house is owned by the Ameri-

can Institute of Architects, and the last I heard, tours of the place are still being given. Visitors are now told about the haunts only if they ask, and then the suggestion is made that the supposed ghosts have long since departed.

There are at least a dozen other historic buildings with ghosts in D.C. The full story is told in the books of John Alexander, ghostologist Hans Holzer, and others on sale in local bookstores.

The Octagon tunnels are a fairly well-established historical fact. But exactly where they went is no longer certain. Once when I was doing a magazine article on Washington's booming spirit medium industry, I was told by two different commercial seers of the ancient network of caverns that supposedly honeycombs the area. I have heard it claimed that these were "Atlantean"—but then so is everything else according to a certain kind of occult fancier. Others confide that the supposed tunnels were, or are, tied in with an underground cult of power-trippers who are plugged in on the highest levels of national authority. This is why the Brothers Berrigan announced that they had planned to kidnap Henry Kissinger "by way of the tunnels" during that unsuccessful caper of the late sixties.

Even George Washington, these rumors murmur, was affiliated with the tunnel crowd and this was the real reason why G.W. and his backstage backers railroaded through this third site for the national capital when we already had had New York and Philadelphia. Of course, there are steam tunnels between most of the federal buildings, and even an underground "railroad" on Capitol Hill. But, if there are any Atlantean workings below them, and below the newly dug subway too, then this is a deep subject indeed.

Scottish Rite Masonic Temple (16th and S. Streets NW.) While we cannot claim that so broadly based an organization as Freemasonry is in any general sense "weird," still, there is no doubt that the order does encompass in its traditions many elements that have come to be associated with the general field of the occult. Students of Masonry, among them most Masonic writers, generally concede that the Scottish Rite is by far the most steeped in esoteric lore, with many arcane traditions supposedly handed down from the ancient mystery schools. For this reason, the sumptuous Supreme Temple is an engrossing and out-of-the-ordinary place to take the tour. Among the displays here is a large collection of Masonic memorabilia of numerous prominent persons, including the small silk flag and "lodge jewel" carried with him to the moon by astronaut Edwin W. Aldrin, thirty-second degree Mason.

After such grandly historic fare, it almost seems a comedown to get back to the nitty-gritty of Foteana—but who can ignore a foot-long crocodilian waddling down Pennsylvania Avenue, and in December yet? (The year was

1962.) On December 4, 1933, one 46 inches long was caught near a sandbar on the Potomac River.



CASSADAGA (1)

(Abt. 22 mi. SW of Daytona Beach on I-4.) A major professional group of mediums, the National Spiritualist Association of Churches, has its southern headquarters here. The town is named for the lake and city in southwest New York State where the main center is located. The site is supposed to be a significant one in that it was discovered by some sort of oracular methods by representatives of the New York group.

COLLIER COUNTY (2)

Immokalee (30 air mi. NE of Naples.) For many years, old 'Glades hands have exchanged rumors of one or more rough rock pyramids, upward of 15 feet tall, that are supposed to stand in the tropical fastnesses between here and Hendry County to the east. I have never seen one myself and have never met anyone who has. But, no doubt the world is still "full of a lot of things."

Marco Island (25 mi. SE of Naples on U.S. 41 and S.R. 92.) The Caloosa Indians, whose origins and disappearance are still an enigma, have been investigated here. They are most commonly thought to have arrived in this area about 1500 B.C. They drifted away, returning about 500 B.C. and remaining until about A.D. 500. Where they went after that no one knows; conventional knowledge is that they were totally extinct by about 1700, supposedly victims of European diseases. The area is supposed to have had no Indians until the Seminole arrived in the 1800s.

In any case, there is evidence that the Caloosa were in the peninsula long before they "should" have been. State-supervised diggings here in the summer of 1971 suggest a Caloosa arrival time of thousands of years before the previously accepted chronology. And so, another Amerind dating bites the dust. It should be remembered that the Bering Straits dogma

was adamant, not too long ago, that the "Indians" could not have come over before 3500 B.C.

Archaeologist J. Manson Valentine suggests a Mayan origin for the Caloosa or that both the Caloosa and the Maya may have descended from the same root people. In defense of this idea, Valentine cites ceramics with "Mayan affinities" found near Vero Beach, and Mayan gold ceremonial objects found at the "sun circle" complex at Fort Center. He believes these artifacts show a much higher degree of social and artistic sophistication for the earliest Florida cultures than the later Caloosa and Quechua were able to maintain.

Naples Geologist Andrew Douglass, who described the ancient canal north of here in Charlotte Harbor, found an even larger digging across what is now a residential area of this city. As he described it in the 1880s, the canal ran a mile and a half "straight as an arrow" between Naples Bay and the Gulf. The location would appear to have been somewhere between present-day Eighth and Eleventh Avenues South. A rather monumental construction, it was 55 feet wide and in places 40 feet deep, as it sliced through sand banks and plateaus. The bottom of the canal was 12 feet across and had a trench four feet wide and two feet deep in its center. Douglass speculated on whether this latter feature was intended for the keels of boats. "It was a work of enormous labor," Douglass observed. "But the question is, what was the purpose, and who in this sparsely settled country could have undertaken it?"

FT. MYERS AREA (3)

Estero Bay A shell mound, known unofficially as Big Mound Key to distinguish it from Mound Key to the north in Charlotte Harbor, stands here. Archaeologist J. Manson Valentine maintains that this is the remnant of a pyramidlike structure that was once sacred to the mysterious Caloosa Indians. These people, he is quite certain, were descendants of a Mayan-type culture who may have come to Florida at a time when a land bridge still connected the peninsula with what is now the Yucatán. One of Valentine's chief evidences for this is that a major Mayan and Toltec legend tells of their origin in a once-great land that lay in the direction of the rising sun.

About 18 miles south of Ft. Myers Beach, and west of U.S. 41, is the Koreshan memorial. This commemorates a strange character named Cyrus Teed who founded the once-widespread group of this name (from Teed's own self-assumed name of Koresh). Teed was told by one of his "angels"—the celestial kind—that this was a magnetic spot, so he established a New Jerusalem here with a couple of hundred followers. He died in 1908 of injuries suffered in a tiff with the local sheriff. Before he expired, Teed promised his followers that he would rise again from the

grave. He was enshrined in a concrete tomb on Estero Island. A violent hurricane swept away the coffin in 1921. Teed's body was never found, and naturally his followers saw this as fulfillment of the master's prophecy.

Mound Key About 15 miles southwest of Punta Gorda, shrouded in mosquito-cloudy mangrove swamps jutting south into Charlotte Harbor, is a shell mound that has been the focus of endless arcane excitement over the years. Since the nineteenth century, fishermen have told of seeing the hulking form of the Skunk Ape (alias Bigfoot) sloshing across the shallow lagoons near the mound in the mists of dawn or dusk. Other explorers, particularly those who camp on the mound overnight, claim they have seen, heard, or smelled the creatures. Odd glows, fireballs, and even full-fledged UFOs have often been reported.

I don't know how many of them have been reading *Beowulf*, but many treasure buffs are convinced that the big hairies are guarding the boundless bullion that is supposed to be inside the mound. In that early English epic, of course, a dragon guards a treasure hidden in a mound, just like the chimera dispatched by Siegfried that was watching over das Rhinegold. On Mound Key, the flakier kind of treasure nuts have worked up such vibrant fantasies over the riches buried here and have made so many half-baked efforts to dig the place up, that the state has protected the mound as a historic site.

So far as I know, visiting Mound Key is still permitted, as long as nothing is molested. The best jumping-off place for that would be Placida, southeast of Venice 20 miles on S.R. 775. Boats can be launched or rented at a marina there. Unless one is extremely good at reading Geological Survey maps (Placida and Punta Gorda quadrangles), it would be advisable to hire a local guide—if one could be found who would go near the mound. On the whole, their reluctance may be understandable. Just as in the Superstition Mountains of Arizona, there seems to be something about the place that unhinges marginal characters, and there have been a number of ugly incidents here as gold-bonkers treasure seekers have got into disputes.

Pine Island Scattered around the little community of Pineland, toward the north end of this island, are the remains of some curious ancient constructions, including canals of unknown use or origin. The citrus ranch of Donald H. Randell, where Pineland Road ends at the beach, sits upon what must have been one of the larger aboriginal shell mounds anywhere, although most of it was bulldozed down a few years ago. Andrew Douglass, a geologist who visited in 1885, estimated that this rambling heap of oyster and conch shell covered an area upward of 10 acres, rising as high as 25 feet. East a few hundred feet is a sand mound 35 feet in height and 200 feet in base diameter.

Perhaps a quarter-mile due east of the sand mound, Douglass saw an

even larger sand mound with twin peaks. Between the two sand mounds, in a northwest-southeast direction, ran a canal 30 feet wide. It apparently extended about five miles across the entire island. Today, of course, most of this has been filled in by development, but a few hundred feet of the canal still exist on Randell's citrus ranch.

I am of the opinion that the whole subject of mounds has been sold very short by conventional wisdom, and this area offers some good examples. Unfortunately, I'll have to avoid the too-involved question of whether shell mounds were "probably only" or "nothing but" garbage piles for primitive kitchens. However, this area's mounds show a selectivity of refuse that seems a trifle narrow, even if we allow the anthropologists their pet theory of making ancient peoples live on top of those increasingly deep shell piles (which certainly must have smelled ripe in south Florida summers). As I say, oyster and conch shells make up the main mound here; but Col. Randell has other mounds nearby consisting almost entirely of scallop shells. Does this show that some neighboring tribe had a taste for an entirely different, though no doubt equally monotonous, cuisine?

The sand mounds are even stranger. Randell, who was educated as a geologist, tells me that the sand grains are strikingly homogeneous in size and smaller than the prevailing average size in the vicinity. Did someone sift them out? How these mounds were formed is another problem. A dune? But why just two, and why so conical? Heaped up by the Indians? If so, why?—and where are the holes that they dug: sand from?

Along the now-level ground where the main shell mound was bladed away, Randell can show you broad areas of charcoal-like dense black hardpan. This shows every indication of long exposure to intensely high temperatures. And what might have caused that? Well, the official explanation is the campfires where the "Indians" toasted their oysters (or scallops, as the case may have been).

Port Charlotte (Off U.S. 41, on S.R. 761.) In the north part of the town is the Little Salt Springs archaeological site. This hourglass-shaped, 200-foot-wide sinkhole set anthropologists and other ologists agog in 1972 when Dr. Carl Clausen, Florida's then chief marine archaeologist, found a human skull containing a large portion of its brain intact, and buried in a 5,000-year-old stratum. "It's extraordinary—almost unbelievable. I was really shaken," Clausen recalled. He thought first that the brain was a mineral formation or else some foreign growth inside the skull.

In 1959, a skull also containing an intact brain was found by a Colonel William Royal not far from here. Further digs in the sinkhole are being planned, or possibly have been made by now. There have been similar dramatic finds, including humans and elephants, in caverns of central Florida, just as there have been in many other caves around the country that we have cited. J. Manson Valentine interprets these as further evidence for a

catastrophist view of paleology. The victims, he says, must have been caught in a sudden flood of hot, mineralized water.

Punta Gorda On August 11, 1968, something lethal swept over a fishing vessel, killing five crewmen and sending another to the hospital in bad condition. It was officially diagnosed as "toxic fumes" supposedly emanating from a cargo of "trash" fish that was being unloaded at the Protein Products Company, a fertilizer plant. Later, hydrogen sulfide (rotten egg gas) was officially blamed, although the gas is rarely fatal because its unbearable odor usually prevents severe doses. (Maybe it was a guardian spirit of those "trash" fish who didn't approve what was being done with them.)

On September 3, 1969, a rain of golf balls bobbed down. Hundreds were bounding about in gutters, on the streets and sidewalks, particularly in the Punta Gorda Isles suburb. Lieutenant Clarence Walter of the police department investigated and had the unenviable job of suggesting that the balls must have fallen from the sky, since a check of local golf courses and country clubs turned up nothing except more golf balls. The mystery endured.

HOMESTEAD (4)

Coral Castle (just north of here on U.S. 1—28655 S. Federal Hwy.) The management of this tourist attraction estimates that about 1,100 tons of coral blocks made up the 20-foot surrounding walls and internal structures and carvings of this most unusual display. The legend is that it was all originally done as a monument to a lost girl friend by a Latvian recluse named Edward Leedskalnin, who came here in the 1920s and died in 1951. Most of the carved stone objects on display inside are crankish and more than a little puerile: the Three Bears Beds and Dinner Table, coral "rocking chairs" and baby cribs, and other impedimenta score a fat zilch in artistic merit and practicality. But I suppose the main question is, how did he do it? Although there is one candid picture of him working a block and tackle, "Ed L." was careful never to be seen doing physical labor on the place, and liked to drop hints and hand out opaque tracts upon mysterious forces. For these reasons, stories of "levitation," "pyramid power," and the like have got started, and no doubt will increase and multiply. I tend to favor the block and tackle, however.

JACKSONVILLE (5)

On February 2, 1969, hundreds of persons on the beach, including Police Chief James Alford, witnessed strange sounds coming from two clouds. Descriptions ranged from "like someone rattling cellophane" to "like someone walking on pebbles." Chief Alford ordered one of his men to

"follow that cloud!" Captain Harold Bryan did so, to the edge of the Atlantic where the cloud fooled him and disappeared. Listeners shrugged and started to go back into their homes when another cloud promptly repeated the performance. And Officer Bryan followed it to disappearance over the water. Officials at Mayport Naval Air Station had no explanation. A week later, the crackling clouds repeated their act over Miami, Florida.

On Wednesday, March 27, 1974, Antoine and Gerri Betz and their son Terry Matthews were inspecting some rural property outside Jacksonville when they discovered a shiny steel ball lying in the grass. They picked it up and took it to their home on Ft. George Island, where they found that the sphere had some unusual talents: It could chime in with a strummed guitar with metallic tones of its own; it would sometimes roll back toward a person who had rolled it away, and it would stop at the edge of a level surface such as a tabletop and begin "hunting" its way along without falling off. The U.S. Navy and a bevy of scientists have examined the eight-inch, 21.3-pound stainless steel orb, mostly without comment on its reported behavior. There have been explanations of it as a check valve from a paper pulp mill. But most journalists who have seen it have been satisfied that it was no ordinary chunk of steel.

There have been other strange gifts from the skies (if that is where the ball came from). Early in 1888, a 200-pound block of limestone fell in a farm field near Middleburg, 20 miles southwest of here. Afterward, it was exhibited at the Sub-Tropical Exposition, then going on at Jacksonville. However, the investigating expert denied that the stone had fallen from the sky—despite witnesses—for the apodictic reason that "there is no limestone in the sky; therefore this limestone did not fall from the sky."

LAKE OKEECHOBEE AREA (6)

The extensive fossil beds near here are one of the more thought-provoking archaeological conundrums in North America. Lying in a 40-foot layer of marl is a copious and diverse deposit of Pleistocene marine fauna interspersed at higher levels with dismembered bones of large creatures, presumably terrestrial mammals. The puzzler is that the molluscs and other marine forms belong to groups now found only in remote areas of the Pacific Ocean.

Florida's maverick archaeologist, J. Manson Valentine, is perhaps best known in connection with the much-publicized discoveries of enigmatic remains off the island of Bimini. He believes that the Okeechobee fossil pit is actually a former sea floor, laid down as late as 20,000 to 30,000 years ago. He takes this as evidence that something parlously like a worldwide flood may indeed have taken place in the not too distant past, a conceit that is still anathema to orthodox paleontology. Dr. Valentine suggests that this Pacific fauna might have been deposited in Florida by cataclysmic sea

waves rolling in at a time when there was no Isthmus of Panama to stop them.

LAKE WALES (7)

(51 mi. E of Tampa on S.R. 60.) This town has a supposed gravitation anomaly or optical illusion such that vehicles driving along a certain stretch of road in the northeast section seem to roll upward without assistance. When this reporter last visited the spot, in 1975, the antigravity did not seem to be working too well, and a number of tries could not make our car coast upward—or even seem to be coasting upward. However, a good many people claim to have experienced the phenomenon since the days when teams and wagons first noticed it. Possibly the effect has something to do with the attitude of the passengers—"you gotta wanna," or something, which is increasingly touted as a factor in paranormal phenomena of all kinds. To the best of our recollection, our attitude was simply wait and see.

THE KEYES (8)

Old Rhodes Key I am told that there is a rectangular shaft, 22 by 36 inches, bored neatly down in reef rock on the south shore of this island. Apparently it is pre-Columbian; there are no local records of anyone cutting or using it. There has been speculation that it might be analogous with the cylindrical boring, 30 feet across, that was discovered a few years ago near the mouth of the Miami River. After excavating that one to a depth of 60 feet without finding bottom, the engineers lost interest, filled in the hole, and completed building an apartment house over the site.

Sugarloaf Key The Perky Bat Tower was still standing during my last trip through here. Somewhat resembling a bladeless Dutch windmill, this weather-beaten cypress-wood structure was built as a novel, and unsuccessful, device to control the swarms of mosquitoes that made life a problem in the Keys during the days before insecticides. The active ingredient here was supposed to be hundreds of bats who would take up residence. A land developer named R. C. Perky had the thing erected in 1929, using a "secret formula" that had been used to build seven similar bat towers in central Texas. (There is another tower in the Tampa, Florida, suburb of Temple Terrace, just north of Busch Boulevard on the Hillsborough River.)

A mysterious lure was employed to attract the bats which was so malodorous that people exposed to it became violently ill. Evidently the bats didn't like it much better. The tower still stands, long after Perky's demise and the renaming of the island from Perky to Sugarloaf. But even though no bats ever stayed here, that has not deterred certain occultists from

explaining the *real* story: The tower is a secret shrine, they solemnly aver, of cultists who venerate the Mayan-Aztec death god, Camazotz, who took the form of a gigantic bat and was in the habit of snipping off the heads of his followers who displeased him.

OCALA (9)

In the Ocala Caverns, 8 miles south of town on the east side of U.S. 27/441, is an idol, anciently carved from local coquina limestone, that is said to have been found in the cave when the first white settlers came to the area. It is thought to have been carved by the Timucua, a people living here prior to the Seminole. The statue is somewhat larger than life, considerably eroded, and black with age. The expression is serene and dignified, and is quite comparable with those on idols common in Polynesia, Tahiti, and the Marquesas Islands. On the ground before the figure is a small, drum-shaped altar with a crude base. Back of the idol is another cult object commonly found in Polynesian religion: about 20 inches high and shaped like half a lemon.

The Timucua were first mentioned by Ponce de León in 1513. Little is known about them, and there is no indication of any special affinity with other Amerindian tribes. They were heavily tattooed, went largely unclothed, and practiced human sacrifice and at times cannibalism. What is known of their language also suggests a Pacific rather than American orientation. Offhand, these artifacts would seem to harmonize with the finding of a Pacific Basin fauna near Lake Okeechobee.

ST. AUGUSTINE (10)

I have always been a bit awed at how unerringly the Spaniards went to areas of geomagnetic anomaly—such as this one—in their early explorations. Another such site is the spot they selected as the first capital of colonial California, Monterey.

Also like the Monterey Bay area, St. Augustine had a “sea monster” episode. On December 1, 1896, a gigantic marine creature washed onto the beach nearby. It was 21 feet long, 7 feet wide, and 4.5 feet high, weighing an estimated 7 tons. But even so, its investigator, Dr. A. E. Verrill, believed it substantially incomplete. There were pronounced ridges on the carcass that seemed to be the stumps of tentacles, as if the thing had been a squid or octopuslike cephalopod. However, controversy over its identity began as soon as Verrill published, and still has not completely been settled. The first time around, Verrill inclined cautiously to the view that it might have been some weird form of giant octopus. But this stirred up such a menacing protest from higher-ups in the hierarchy that he backed down and decided it was only a mutilated whale.

TARPON SPRINGS (11)

Curious rock formations in the Anclote Keys, a few miles offshore, are reportedly identical with underwater structures found recently in the Bahamas near Andros, although they are not nearly so much talked of. Dr. J. Manson Valentine's discoveries and theories on the Bahama area seem to have been something of a godsend for a large group of writers intent on reconciling three perennially popular topics: the Bermuda Triangle, Lost Atlantis, and “Sleeping Prophet” Edgar Cayce, who allegedly predicted that the sunken continent would rise again in 1968.

Dr. Valentine's suggestions were rather more modest and were not limited to the Bermuda “Triangle” (which is actually a trapezoid, and doesn't have that much to do with Bermuda). He describes the Andros and Tarpon Springs remains as “obviously cut stone disks,” with an occasional hexagon eight inches in diameter, that may have been part of a network of cobbled rock boundary lines marking off very ancient sacred precincts of some kind. These boundaries seem to have run from land areas now obscured by brush toward large rock platforms submerged under three or four feet of water.

The round stones that occur at Anclote are believed to be sun symbols used in ceremonies in very archaic times. Valentine—who has long been regarded by his archaeological colleagues as a rather daring man with a hypothesis—believes that some day a connection may be discovered between structures such as these and a great complex of square courts cut into bedrock that was recently excavated on the West Indian island of St. Lucia, which is thought to have been a cult center of the mysterious Arawak people. Their headquarters were in northern South America, but outposts covered the entire Caribbean, Bahamas, Florida, and Gulf coasts. Valentine believes that these Arawaks were not Indians but a blond race of bearded men akin to the Inca and early Polynesians—the “Carian” stock, according to Harold T. Wilkins. Catastrophic events triggered the dissolution of their far-flung empire, Valentine thinks.

WAKULLA AND LIBERTY COUNTIES (12)

The “Wakulla Volcano,” or the “Great Florida Mystery,” as it was called in late-1800s journalism, at one time attracted practically nationwide attention. The anomaly appeared as a thick, pillar-straight column of smoke over the woods by day, and as a searchlightlike shaft at night. Sometimes it could be seen as far away as Tallahassee, 30 miles northeast. I have heard that it still “happens” from time to time, but that it has not been doing so well lately for size and height, and so has not been remarked outside this dense coastal backwoods area.

The exact location never was pinpointed because, like most mystery

light and cloud effects, the "volcano" eluded anyone who set out in search of it. And searches were not made easier by the terrain, which then was virtually impenetrable swamp, and still offers heavy going. From accounts of people who have sought it, however, it seems that the phantom smoke column was located somewhere five miles north or south of a line between the towns of Medart and Sumatra, in the Apalachicola National Forest.



BALL GROUND (1)

(18 mi. N of Atlanta on S.R. 5.) Anyone who is interested in having his very own "fairy cross" should stop and see "Rock Man" Oscar Robertson, who runs a shop here. These are a natural mineral formation that have for a long time been regarded as a supreme good-luck talisman in the Southeast. Robertson will hand you a shovel and point you toward his rock yard, where you pay your money and you take your chance. For my main remarks on fairy crosses or staurolites, see Meadows of Dan, Virginia.

ELBERTON (2)

(Abt. 35 mi. NE of Athens on S.R. 72.) One day in mid-June of 1972, "Hut" Wallace was sitting on his front porch just before dawn when he noticed a "shining line" that seemed to extend up to the moon from the west front of his house. It stretched into the glow of dawn from the back. Nowhere could Wallace see anything holding the line up, so he called his old friend, *Atlanta Journal* reporter Herbert Wilcox, to witness the strange business. By the time Wilcox arrived, the sun had come up, but the line was still running up into the sky toward it, and shimmering in the early glow.

I find myself wondering what one of the metaphysical English poets would have done with that scene. Alchemists would have noted the implicit linking of sun and moon. Was the string from a kite, perhaps? "If so, it was the longest and fanciest kite string ever seen around these parts," Wilcox observed. Later, Eddie Boswell, Hut's son-in-law, climbed on the roof and pulled in many yards of the line. Strangely, there were two kinds of material: That pulled in from the west was fluffy and white-colored, while

the eastward line was narrower, hard-finished, and greenish. Both types were very tough. (See also Caldwell, New Jersey.)

FORT MOUNTAIN (3)

(6 mi. E. of Chatsworth on U.S. 76.) An easy, steplike path leads to the giant wall running 885 feet along the mountainside. The structure ranges from two to seven feet high, with an abundance of loose rock alongside that suggests it could have been higher once. Dotting the ground by its sides, at fairly regular intervals, are 29 pits, about large enough to hold a squatting man. Theories as to its purpose range from a "honeymoon haven" for Cherokee Indians to the usual "game trap" and "fortification" handles that tend to be assigned to rock structures puzzling to authorities.

Other ideas are that the wall may have been built by Hernando de Soto on his journey through Georgia in the fall of 1541. However, he was only in the area for a few weeks, and it is obvious that such a structure would have taken years to build at that time. Another suggestion is that Prince Madoc, a Welsh explorer whom official history refuses to countenance, may have erected it. He is believed by some to have brought 200 Welshmen across the Atlantic, landing in what is now Mobile Bay in 1170. They are then supposed to have been driven north and east by hostiles, finding refuge in these mountains, and building this "fort" to keep out the Cherokee. But no weapons (or any other artifacts) or skeletal remains have been found to indicate battles near the wall. This lack brings to mind the old Cherokee legend that the wall was built by a race of white people who worshiped the sun. This, according to the tale, is why the wall was aligned from east to west.

GRIFFIN (4)

(38 mi. SE of Atlanta, off U.S. 19/41.) A something described as a "golden egg" fell slowly onto the lawn of the Res Clanton house in the Orchard Hill area, September 10, 1973. Mr. Clanton said that the object "twisted" as it fell and that there was a sharp report and a cloud of smoke as it touched ground. The object had vanished but the soil stayed extremely hot for an unusually long time afterward. An agronomist from a local college recorded a temperature of 300 degrees Fahrenheit four hours later. There had been an extensive UFO "flap" in the southeastern states for a few weeks prior to this. Clanton's opinion was that the "egg" was "brimstone from heaven, to show folks they better straighten up fast."

SAVANNAH (5)

Marine flora and fauna 10 times normal size were reported near here in the Atlantic by the crew of the research submarine *Ben Franklin* in 1969.

Blackfish 30 feet long and medusa jellyfish with 30-foot tentacles were among the specimens sighted on a 1,200-mile exploration of the Gulf Stream. The craft cruised 650 feet underwater, between West Palm Beach, Florida, and Boston.



HAWAII

HAWAII ISLAND (1)

Mauna Kea A layer of ice that never melts has been discovered atop this extinct volcano in the middle of tropical Hawaii. Dr. Alfred Woodcock of the Hawaii Institute of Geophysics believes it may be fossil ice dating back to the Pleistocene age of 10,000 to 25,000 years ago. It is clear, bubble-free ice containing some embedded insects. "I've never heard of such ice on any Oceanic island," Woodcock has said, surmising that it must be "left over from the time when Mauna Kea was glaciated."

Questions were posed by the brothers Willis of the International Fortean Organization: What are tropical insects doing, not only near a glacier, but within its ice? How and when did a tropical island in the middle of one of the warmest oceans become glaciated?

Mauna Loa The Kilauea Crater on the side of the volcano is the traditional home of Madame Pele, one of the seven Hiiake sister goddesses of the original Polynesian inhabitants. Madame Pele is pictured in legend as a somewhat thin-skinned deity given to walking about in human guise cadging small favors and retreating sulkily to her crater to send down a lava eruption when she is refused, as she often is.

The goddess does not always appear in human form before a volcanic tantrum. Mystery light and poltergeist phenomena also occur, as they did along Saddle Road near Hilo shortly before the 1955 eruption of Kilauea. The Henry Macomber family were driving in their truck early on the morning of January 31 when the vehicle was rocked violently back and forth in a way not typical of wind gusts. After that, they saw typical "spook lights" floating about the highway. Later in the week, a group of government officials encountered the same lights at about the same spot. A taxi driver named Pedro Monzano was changing a tire along Saddle Road when his heavy tire wrench was picked up from the car's trunk and dropped at

his feet by an invisible helping hand. Monzano looked all around and, seeing no one, tightened up the tire as fast as he could and hightailed it out of there. Sure enough, the volcano erupted a short while later.

KAUAI ISLAND (2)

At Mana, on the westernmost tip of the island near Nohili Point, is Barking Sands Beach. Among the huge dunes here is one looking like a broad truncated cone. The sand at the top and on the landward slope of the dune is noisy—sometimes very much so. The slope of the dune at that point is 31 degrees, and the "noisy" spot lies about 60 feet above beach level. When dry, the sand can easily be disturbed so that it slides and rolls down its own incline. At this time the peculiar noises are made, which have been compared with the barking of dogs or the hum of large machinery.

H. Carrington Bolton, a nineteenth-century scientist who took quite an interest in "singing sands," visited the Barking Sands and noted that the sounds were sufficient to "spook" nearby horses. He heard the sounds as far away as 105 feet from the base of the dune. He observed also that "a vibration" could sometimes be felt in the hands or feet of the person moving the sand.

Bolton evolved a quick method for testing seashore sand for sonority: He placed some in a cloth bag big enough to divide the contents in two parts. These two quantities he then clapped together inside the bag—rather like bringing together the two halves of the critical mass of an atom bomb, one supposes.

Bolton reported other sonorous sands near Koloa, in the southeast part of this roughly circular island. Crossing to the islet of Niihau, a few miles west, he found still more at a place not on modern maps called Kaluakahu. The sands occurred on a 100-foot dune and at several spots along an 800-foot strip of beach.

These Hawaiian singing sands, Bolton said, are unique in important ways. He had found that there were two basic types of such sands around the world: those on arid hillsides such as in the Sinai Desert, and those on beaches, such as at Manchester, Massachusetts. Hillside sand gives off its noises when tumbling down a slope. Beach sand yields sounds when struck together or manipulated. But the Hawaiian sands sound off in both ways. (See also Manchester, Massachusetts; Churchill County, Nevada; and Lake Champlain, New York.)

Necker Island (300 mi. N of Kauai.) This uninhabited islet, measuring only 1,300 by 200 yards, is the site of an ancient shrine of unknown origin. There are 34 large, paved terraces, each with a well-preserved row of monoliths on a raised platform at one end. Other upright slabs are scattered by themselves. Nothing like this stonework is to be found in the main Hawai-

ian islands, and there are no traditions pertaining to Necker Island among the Hawaiians of today. Many small artifacts have been found here, including carved stone idols of a style dissimilar to Polynesian artifacts.

OAHU ISLAND (3)

There have been many reports through the years of ghostlike phenomena at the Hilton Hawaiian Village Hotel in Honolulu. In August of 1959, a young woman of "unearthly beauty" and wearing a red dress was supposed to have asked for help in finding a room. She disappeared while walking with an employee toward the room. As the *Honolulu Advertiser* observed in its issue of August 16, "Pele does that sort of thing," a reference to the traditional fire-volcano goddess of Hawaii Island. Other Hawaiian Village apparition stories tell of a hushed-up murder that supposedly occurred high in a tower room. Not surprisingly, this entire legend is indignantly denied by the Hilton management.

"Night Marchers" are well established in the lore of native Hawaiians, wending their way across the moonstruck countryside toward old *heiau* (temple or healing stone) sites. They often have been described as looking like animated clouds of faintly glowing dust. Sometimes the figures seem to carry lights.

The marchers chant unintelligible words described by some as resembling Old Hawaiian, and walk slowly to the thud of an invisible drum. They occur most often during "Nights of Kane," falling between the twenty-seventh and twenty-ninth of the month at the new moon. Anyone seeing such a spirit procession had better place himself downwind pronto so that his odor is not detected. If it is, he may hear the dread cry of "Oia!" (Kill him). But if the person has a relative among the spirits, the latter will usually intercede to save him.

Waialeale, a village on the north tip of Oahu, is often spoken of as a Night Marchers site. Stories tell of a spot on an old road a few hundred feet inland from the beach there where the processions crossed and which horses sometimes refused to pass over on the wrong kinds of night. Wa-hiawa, on S.R. 99 in the center of the island, is an area of *heiaus*, once much-frequented by native Hawaiians. Processions have been seen there. And probably few of the surfers skimming toward the beach at Waikiki are aware that far above them atop Diamond Head was one of the oldest and most renowned of these sacred sites, where some Hawaiians think the marchers still appear.

IDAHO



BEAR LAKE (1)

Stories of a lake monster have been told here since Indian times. The Shoshoni tribes believed that the creature resembled a serpent except for having 18-inch legs with which it sometimes crawled a short distance on the shore. They also had seen it spouting water upward from its mouth. The Shoshoni noted that the entity disappeared after the great blizzards of 1830 killed off most of the wild buffalo. But by July of 1860, sightings were again being reported, according to the *Deseret News* of Salt Lake City. Encounters have continued into recent years. Most have been in the Fish Haven and Swan Creek areas. There is a large cave network on the northwest side of the lake.

BOISE (2)

The Idaho State Historical Society, 610 North Julia Davis Drive, still possesses one of the very few surviving artifacts of the dozens we have listed that suggest a stupendous antiquity not merely for man in North America but for *Homo sapiens* itself. This is the tiny Nampa Image, named for the Idaho town where it was found on August 1, 1889. A brownish piece of baked clay only an inch and a half long, the image is clearly humanoid in form. Artistically insignificant—even ugly—it nevertheless rivets our attention for one reason: It is claimed to have been brought up from 300 feet below the ground.

The discoverer was a landowner and professional well-driller of Nampa named M. A. Kurtz. He and two crewmen were drilling through a layer of coarse sand when the image was pumped up by the machinery. Along with two crewmen, the discovery was witnessed by a Mr. Duffes, identified as a prominent Nampa citizen. The image was soon sent to scientists in the East for examination. Professor Albert A. Wright of Oberlin College found that it was half clay and half quartz in makeup and was not the work of a child or artistic novice. The broken-off right leg, he thought, was not a recent fracture. However, A. A. Wright said he "found nothing in the image to sustain the theory of its antiquity."

Next, a different Wright—Dr. G. Frederick Wright of the Boston Soci-

ety of Natural History—took a crack at the problem. Realizing that the crux of the matter was less in the image itself than in the circumstances of its discovery, he went to Idaho and carried out an extensive investigation. He questioned Kurtz thoroughly, secured testimonials to his good character, and carefully analyzed the operation of the drilling machinery. An important factor was Kurtz's claim that the steam-driven pump used for bringing up the drilling residues only worked in one direction and that, if the image had fallen or been dropped into the well hole from above, it would have been destroyed by the pump. Wright verified this. The conclusion he presented to the Boston Society was: "There is no ground to question the fact that this image came up in the sand pump from the depth reported."

Another Bostonian, Professor F. W. Putnam, declared that the cementing of quartz grains by iron molecules under the image's right arm was evidence of great age. Scientist H. W. Haynes regarded the figure as "a most important evidence of the great antiquity of man in America." But on the whole, those few specialists who bothered even to consider the Nampa Image airily rejected its authenticity, usually with overtones of indignation at what such a thing would mean to established ideas if accepted. They accused Kurtz—tacitly and directly—of being yet another of those seemingly honest folks all over the country who for some reason spend a great deal of time and energy hatching out clever schemes to stick egg on the faces of established experts. (For other well-drilling curiosities, *see* San Luis Obispo, California; Peoria County, Illinois; and Norfolk, Virginia.)

PAYETTE LAKE (3)

A lake monster has been fondly talked of around the town of McCall (107 mi. N of Boise on S.R. 55). Indian legends, as usual, are said to have mentioned it. But the modern rash of sightings appears to date from about the same time in the late 1940s as the nationwide "flying saucer" epoch. Interest perked up again in July of 1976, when five persons saw a disturbance in the lake about 350 yards offshore from Lightning Point.

Nick McGough, of Boise, said his group had seen a peculiar "ripple" in the water that was about 30 feet long and two feet high. This elevated hump of water glided along for about a minute and a half, then disappeared beneath the surface in a whirlpool. At no time did they see any of the more standard attributes of a "monster," however, according to McGough. (The "elevated water" effect is reminiscent of some of the phenomena reported from the miscalled Bermuda Triangle.)

Walter Bowling, who said he saw the Payette presence on July 4 of 1944, reported that it was about 35 feet long, had 16-inch camel-style humps along its back, and appeared to have a shell-like covering. Pauline Miller, a McCall businessperson, saw what looked like an inverted boat floating near the city dock one day in 1952. The head and tail were not

visible—as if submerged. The back looked "like wet rubber; it was black and slick." The thing, she said, "was as wide as a car is long." This time there were no camel humps, but "three or four indentations like ditches, and as it swam the water ran through these dents and over the back." (*See also* Lake Champlain, Vermont.)

In 1975, a number of cattle mutilations were discovered in the area of Hell's Canyon, about 35 miles northwest of Payette Lake, at the Oregon border. Sheriff Jim Hileman was of the opinion that "Devil cultists" might be behind it.

POCATELLO (4)

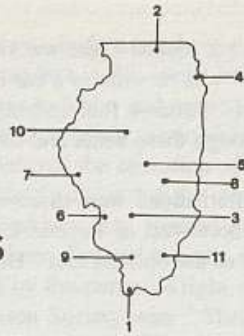
A 10-mile strip of accident-prone highway lies along Interstate 15, beginning about 12 miles southeast of here. State authorities have made extensive investigations along the level stretch of four-lane, between mileposts 47 and 57, at Inkom and McCammon, to find out why so many motorists have been having mishaps here in recent years. According to Idaho State Police Lieutenant Patrick J. Monaghan, these have been one-car crack-ups in which the driver lost control and went off the road. But survivors who have been interviewed recall only that they were driving along normally one minute and then scraping and bumping down off the road—often upside down—the next. Tire marks showed no sudden braking or swerves. Extensive testing ruled out physical impairments or drunkenness. The highway authorities added "rumble strips" to the roadway, ordered patrol cars to enforce strictly the 55-mile-an-hour speed limit, and even publicized warnings about the dangers in the area. For a time, accidents declined; but as of 1976, they were on a sharp upswing again.

About 20 miles northeast of the problem stretch of highway, around the town of Chesterfield, there was an apparent Bigfoot scare around January 14 of 1902. An eight-footer terrified a group of young people skating on a river near the John Gooch Ranch. It screeched and swung a club, chasing the skaters away.

SMITH'S FERRY (5)

(59 mi. N of Boise on S.R. 55.) On August 6, 1961, something came sizzling in from the sky and knocked the top off a tree near here. It sparked a small forest fire, which was quickly controlled. But after striking the top of the tree, 30 feet above the ground, the entity burned its way down through the trunk, leaving only a charred and hollowed shell standing. The mystery incendiary was never found.

ILLINOIS



CAIRO (1)

On April 10, 1970, a man driving on S.R. 3 alongside the Shawnee National Forest, just outside the village of Olive Branch, experienced sudden engine trouble. As he got out to investigate, a large, black "cat" leaped on him and knocked him down. The lights of an approaching truck frightened the beast off, after which the terrified man found that his car started again instantly. He drove on to Cairo and was given medical attention. The car-stalling trick is an oldie in UFO contact cases and often happens with creature sightings as well.

CALEDONIA (2)

(In Boone County, N of Belvidere.) "A monster bird . . . bigger than an airplane" put on an exhibition for a farm family near here on April 9, 1948. A truck driver near Freeport, 50 miles west, saw one on the same day. Next day, several more watched the birdie. "I thought it was a type of plane I had never seen before," said one, in the Overland area. "It was circling and banking in a way I had never seen a plane perform. I kept waiting for it to fall." Meanwhile, in Longview, Washington, on April 9, two witnesses were watching three "birdmen" hovering above the laundry plant where they worked.

CENTRALIA (3)

(Abt. 60 mi. E of East St. Louis.) Around March 1, 1971, a neighbor observed a strange animal skulking about the Howard Baldrige residence, just east of this town near S.R. 161. Baldrige said the creature resembled a sort of shrunken lion. It had a long tail, was yellow, and about twice the size of a large tomcat. It had very short legs and "a face like something on television," which certainly doesn't sound very good.

CHICAGO (4)

In *Psychic City*, one of his umpteen books on what he habitually describes as "other dimensions" subjects, writer Brad Steiger presents evidence that

Chicago is "far and away America's First City" in numbers of "psychic" practitioners, groupies, and would-be celebrities. Admittedly, this is a little hard to reconcile with the classic industrial hellhole depicted by Theodore Dreiser and James T. Farrell, but times do change. We tend to think offhand of Southern California as the occulture winner, hands down, but Steiger makes a pretty good case for this city as the champ.

A building at 30 East Division Street, in the Near North Side, is the headquarters for a complex of "magic"-oriented groups. They claim to perpetuate some of the classic, tradition-encrusted elements of continental European ritual, harkening back to such big guns as Eliphas Lèvi and J.-K. Huysmanns. They have combined these, they say, with Caribbean *Voudon*, and their "supreme power center" is supposed to be in Haiti. A number of groups operate from this building, ranging from the pseudo-Masonic "Ancient and Primitive Rite of Memphis-Misraim" to the Lovecraftian "Transyugothian Brotherhood of Shamans of the Orient." (H. P. Lovecraft was a complete rationalist who even scoffed at the kind of astrology that appears in the funny papers, but that has not stopped a lot of latter-day magi from drafting him for their pantheon of heroes.)

The parent organization here is called the *Ordo Templi Orientis Antiqua*, a neo-Crowleyan order with ties to a parent organization in England that perpetuates the work of that self-styled "Baphomet," although with only a trace of Crowley's peculiar insight, and none of his humor. The principal figure at 30 East Division seems to be a former social worker named Michael Bertiaux, who is now identified as "Voodoo-Gnostic Master of the Cult of La Couleuvre Noire."

The Newberry Library, 60 West Walton Street, is a private archive of rarities, including more than 84,000 items pertaining to the Aztec of ancient Mexico. So far as I know, this is the preeminent collection outside Mexico and includes some authentic manuscripts from this strange and forbidding culture that ranks with the ancient Egyptian in the profundity of its metaphysical preoccupation with death and the world beyond the normal.

Paranormalist Rich Crowe, who divides his time supervising the ghosts of Ireland and Chi-town, tells me that the odds of seeing a spook are greater here than anywhere. Crowe has a couple of dozen spots from which to choose for his popular motor coach "ghost tours," many of them cemeteries in the southwest corner of Greater Chicago. He notes that Archer Avenue, an old Indian trail way back when, seems for some reason to be a focus for odd things. Here are some major sites:

Bachelor Grove Cemetery (W of Crestwood suburb, in Rubio Woods Forest Preserve, btw. Cicero and Harlem aves., S of 143rd St. at Midlothian Tpk.) This now-abandoned and overgrown burial ground has problems. The tombstones have been totally disarranged—probably by

vandals or by "magick" cultists, who have been known to gather here—and there is a drifting blue light that floats over the place on crisp, clear nights.

A rarity in ghost lore is a sort of dream house along the dirt road leading to the cemetery. No house is known ever to have stood there, but this one occasionally appears on either side of the way, at different places. The description is always the same: wooden columns, a porch swing, and a faint light inside. No one has reported entering the place, but as Crowe says, maybe those who do don't come back out?

Holy Sepulchre Cemetery (1 mi. W of Cicero Ave., btw. 111th and 115th sts.) The grave of Mary Alice Quinn, beneath a marker with the name Reilly, has been noted to give off a strong smell of roses at times. The girl died at age 14 in 1935; she was known as a pious child with a gift for healing. The grave is fast becoming a shrine.

Resurrection Cemetery (7200 S. Archer Rd., Justice, Ill.) No American ghost collection is complete without a hitchhiker, and Chicago has at least one: Resurrection Mary, a girl whose fateful trip back from the dance occurred in 1931. She has hooked rides along Archer ever since, disappearing suddenly as her impromptu escort drives past the gates of this graveyard. True to the nationwide form, the story has her tricked out in a white gown, in which she was said to have been buried after that fatal auto accident long ago.

DECATUR (5)

In July of 1917, a 300-man posse spent several days searching Sangamon River area woods for "an African lion," as witnesses described it. A man picking flowers was knocked down and mauled by it; four people chugging west on the road to Springfield were attacked when the beast leaped 20 feet and smashed into the open car. (Crazy critters everywhere constantly show animosity or curiosity toward automobiles.) On June 25, 1965, a "big, black catlike animal" terrified a woman driving into her yard. Three days later, it grabbed and ate a sack lunch of three children on an outing in Lincoln Park.

Decatur's misfit menagerie has also been graced with a slather of random crocodiles. A croc was sighted in a bayou area of Lake Decatur on August 30, 1937. Three decades later, on October 24, 1966, a croc between four and six feet long was seen in a hot-water ditch entering the lake. Thirteen others about one foot long were caught. On June 26, 1967, a 10-incher was caught at 895 West Eldorado Street. And in early August 1971, a crocodilian was caught not far from Lake Decatur along the Sangamon River at Oakley.

EAST ST. LOUIS AREA (6)

Alton Some of the most remarkable sculpted rocks in the country, officially dubbed a random creation of erosion, run for a couple of miles along the Mississippi just northwest of here. I have always ranked these Balustrade Bluffs with the incredible paleo-preabstract-expressionist display of Cathedral Gorge, Nevada, and the "worm-eaten" Vazquez Rocks 50 miles north of Los Angeles. It's no wonder that first-time passersby here have trouble distinguishing this from some freakish human construction. All of this 80-foot-high row of colonnaded gray limestone is a Class-A geoanomaly, but there's no doubt that the Grand Staircase is the centerpiece. It looks exactly like that, except that the "steps" begin and end nowhere. Selective erosion, again.

At the foot of the Staircase is the Piasa Rock, and on it has been "restored" the painted rock carving that we show in our illustration. The present figure is based on one published in Germany by traveler Henry Lewis in 1839. Just to its left was a horned and bearded face that it is tempting to describe as Satanic. Lewis's drawing shows apparent Indian shamans grouped at the site in canoes and pointing to the devilish figure.

There is some question about the accuracy of these Lewis petroglyphs, compared with earlier and less dramatic ones drawn by Jacques Marquette. That explorer was told by the local Indians that "a demon haunted the river at this place." The Indians also told him of their Thunderbird traditions, believing that the great bird made his appearances before rain in answer to sorcerers' prayers. Archaeologist Stephen D. Peet, writing in the *American Antiquarian* in 1889, suggested that the Piasa Rock figure might be a representation of the local Thunderbird.

The April 9 and 10 overflights of the T-bird or bat-man or whatever it was in northern Illinois continued at Alton on April 24, 1948, when Colonel Walter F. Siegmund, U.S. Army, Retired, told reporters that he had seen "an enormous bird about the size of a small pursuit plane," as he talked with the head of the Western Military Academy. It was aviating at about 500 feet and was so big as to cast a shadow over two houses at once. Another local resident, E. M. Coleman, said: "I thought at first it was a glider. Then I saw it flap its wings. It would soar for a time and then flap. It appeared to be gray and black in color and was much larger than any bird I've ever seen." Several others, including two policemen, saw the thing near Alton.

On May 18, 1971, a "grayish-white substance getting bigger and bigger" was reported in the yard of a house in Wood River, a couple of miles south of Alton. Police said it looked like a mass of bread yeast gone bananas in the heat of the sun. Exactly two years later, a similar "blob" appeared near Dallas, Texas.

Belleville St. Clair County authorities occasionally warn residents to be on the lookout for something resembling a cougar and weighing in at 125 pounds. It was reported as recently as May of 1976 and was blamed in the deaths of three pet dogs. Cougars have been extinct in Illinois for decades.

Cahokia Mounds State Park (Midway btw. E. St. Louis and Collinsville, on U.S. 40 Business Rte.) Monk's Mound is the focus of the huge complex of earthen structures here. Its 16-acre base covers an area larger than the base of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. It was named for the Trappist monastery that was built atop it during the French occupation. Cahokia Mounds have recently been attracting attention as astronomers conjecture that parts of this 224-acre complex may have been an observatory linked in a chain of such pre-Columbian centers stretching all the way to the Yucatán.

Monk's Mound is the largest prehistoric structure in the present United States, exceeded in size only by Mexico's gigantic Pyramids of the Sun and Moon and the Cholula Pyramid. For that matter, the city around this temple center was the greatest of its time in North America, with metropolitan areas extending over the Mississippi bottomlands on both sides of the river. But the astounding fact is that we know virtually nothing about the people who built all this, including the nature of their language and why and where they disappeared. The Mexican character of the pyramidal remains, and their use as substructures for temples, do not fit at all with what oldfangled theory says should be in this part of the country. On the other hand, no authentic Mexican artifact has ever been found here, according to archaeology.

The astronomical speculation centers on a number of circular arrays of holes that have been found at Cahokia. The largest of these is Circle 2, which is 410 feet across and contains 48 holes that are believed to have been fitted with wood posts and used for sightings of solstices and equinoxes and the calculation of eclipses. Archaeoastronomer Warren L. Witty has done research that tends to equate the Cahokia post circle with Stonehenge and similar European structures. He dubs Cahokia "an American woodhenge."

This is a highly creditable development in the usually claustal field of archaeology. However, I believe that a matter of equal if not superior interest is the obvious fact of great paranormal activity in a very large area around Cahokia. Which of the two came first, the mounds or the oddities, I wouldn't know. But I have no doubt that the principle at work behind this and other such sites will become the biggest new intellectual topic of times to come.

Centerville A centaur, or something perilously like one, pranced and pirouetted near here in May of 1963. "It looked like a half-man, half-horse," marveled James McKinney of this city. Police received more than

50 other calls within a few days describing the visit of the neoclassical allusion.

KINDERHOOK (7)

The Kinderhook plates, which relate to Mormon controversies, reportedly were found in Pike County near this town on April 23, 1843. Joseph Smith and his followers had come to this area after vicissitudes in other states from New York to Iowa. Smith had a history of finding metal plates that supported his religious teachings (*see* Wayne County, New York). On the other hand, many other mysteriously inscribed artifacts have turned up around Weird America that Mormons undoubtedly had nothing to do with. The Kinderhook plates eventually ended in the care of the Chicago Historical Society. But, oddly enough, they turned up missing, apparently stolen from a St. Louis museum around the turn of the century.

MATTOON (8)

A "Springheels Jack" loped around the area in August of 1944, appearing at night at the bedroom windows of houses, in most cases those of women. Sometimes he sprayed a noxious gas inside. Sightings continued for at least a month. Some people reported various ailments and a general malaise after the gassings. For a bit of historical background of this entity, *see* Louisville, Kentucky.

MURPHYSBORO (9)

A Bigfoot was carrying out a little silly season of its own here during the hectic irruption of these things in many Eastern states in the summer and fall of 1973. It—or whatever force was behind it—usually "came on" with shattering screams and with long, whitish hair adrip with gobbets of sewer slime. The Grade-B horror trappings were, as is common with these things, for the benefit of various young couples getting together at remote parking places for private confabs.

Police tracked the big feet to an abandoned barn on the old Bullar farm one night. The dogs would go no farther; one, a usually aggressive German Shepherd named Reb, backed away at the door of the barn. His owner threw Reb into the dark interior, but the dog crawled back out, yelping. Fourteen police cars surrounded the structure with lights blazing but when the men finally entered, they found the building empty.

Ten miles from here, in Du Quoin, Illinois, several persons reported seeing a five-foot kangaroo bounding merrily through cornfields in July of 1975. Kevin Luthi admitted he had been hesitant to report his sighting at first, "because I thought everyone would think I was crazy." It was one of

many "kangaroo" sightings in Illinois in recent years, most of which have been in Chicago suburbs.

PEORIA COUNTY (10)

(Near Lawnridge, 20 mi. N of Peoria on S.R. 88.) A coinlike object with indecipherable patterns was pumped up from an artesian well boring in August of 1870. Jacob W. Moffit of Chillicothe spotted the relic in drill residues as the machine was working at a depth of 125 feet. The object was roughly the size and thickness of a U.S. quarter-dollar of the time. According to scientist William E. DuBois, who carefully examined it, the coin showed no sign of hammering and the patterns on it appeared to have been etched with chemicals rather than being engraved or stamped.

The oddest thing was the uniform thickness of the metal. DuBois felt that the piece must have passed through a rolling mill, and "there are other tokens of the machine shop," he wrote. These remarks were not intended to impute fraud on the part of Moffit, however. DuBois said of the facts as stated by the well-driller that "there is every reason to rely on their accuracy." But he still refused to accept that the relic was anything other than "artificial," which left him in a rather awkward position: "How it got into such a deep place, supposing it to be a bona fide discovery, which I cannot call in question, is a very perplexing point, and I gladly hand over the explanation to anyone willing to undertake it."

One who was very willing was a certain Professor Leslie. To him it was all tiresomely simple: The thing was "a fraud, perhaps of the sixteenth century, possibly Hispano-American or French-American origin"—which leaves plenty of elbow room, certainly. The inscription? Nothing but "an astrologic amulet" bearing the figures of Pisces and Leo and the date 1572. All of which may or may not be clear from our illustration of the medalion—made before it disappeared without a trace into the Smithsonian.

Leslie also grumbled that there was an enormous amount of such "practical joking" going on, mentioning the oil well areas where "all sorts of rubbish have been brought to the surface from considerable depths: nails, anthracite coal, California nuggets, butter of antimony, Lake Superior red hematite ore, &c."

On other rubbish brought up in well drillings, see San Luis Obispo, California; Boise, Idaho; and Norfolk, Virginia.

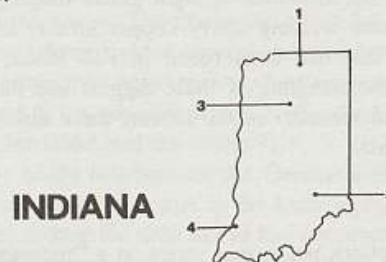
In November of 1950, a creature that reportedly roared like an African lion ate 42 pigs, 12 chickens, four calves, and four lambs—all in one night. Maybe it roared from "gasid indigestion."

WHITE COUNTY (11)

Henry McDaniel, who lives near Enfield, says he's seen the gray, hairy

whangdoodle twice. Several of his neighbors also had the pleasure. The creature stands upright, has pink reflective eyes bulging from an outsize head—and sports *three* legs. The first meeting with the triped occurred at 8:30 P.M. on April 25, 1972. McDaniel heard a scratching at the back door and on looking out a window, saw the critter waiting outside. Grabbing a shotgun, McDaniel yanked open the door and fired four rounds into it. The triped merely hissed and leaped away 75 feet in three great hops, disappearing down a railroad track (which is a favorite path for "creatures" the world over).

McDaniel recalled that he wasn't scared until he saw those pink goo-goo eyes shining at him. Next morning, the hysterical barking of his dogs woke him at 3 A.M. Looking out, he saw in the moonlight that the unwelcome guest was back, standing at the railroad track again. This time it did not approach the house, however. The family had first become aware of the alien being when they found tracks in a wood near the house. These were three to five inches across, with six toes and small, hooflike marks in the center.



BENTON (1)

(16 mi. SE of Elkhart on U.S. 33.) A very hostile "ghost" has long been believed to haunt a church cemetery just outside this town. The apparition is described as having a badly mangled or missing head, and terrorizes passersby at night by looming out of the shadows as a 10-foot phantasm swinging a club. A story has evolved that this is the spirit of an elderly recluse who was murdered by a gang of gold-seeking ruffians. But for me it has the look of a "head case": I have listed a number of other examples elsewhere of headless horrorsmen. Like Washington Irving's classic figure in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, these seem to be among the more aggressive of paranormal beings.

BREWERSVILLE (2)

(Jennings County, abt. 17 mi. SE of Columbus; near where S.R. 3 crosses the Sand River.) A stone mound, 71 feet in diameter and between three and five feet high, was excavated in 1879 and found to contain a number of skeletons, one of which was nine feet eight inches long. It wore a necklace

of mica and at its feet stood a rough human image made of burned clay with pieces of flint embedded in it. Weapons buried nearby were unlike those used by the Indians.

This digging was made under supervision of the Indiana state archaeologist and included guest scientists from Ohio and New York, as well as the neighborhood physician, Dr. Charles Green, and the owner of the property, a man named Robinson. The bones and artifacts were preserved by the Robinson family in a basket at a grain mill near the site, until a flood swept the mill away in 1937.

Helen Ochs, for many years the "unofficial historian" of Jennings County, ferreted out this story from old records. In the late nineteenth century, as she points out, scientists—some of them—were not afraid to say that the mound builders were a different people from the late Indians who apparently stamped them out. Today, official dogma is that Indians of the Hopewell and Adena "cultures" built the mounds. At Walkerton, 20 miles southwest of South Bend, a group of amateur archaeologists opened a mound in 1925 and unearthed the skeletons of eight giants ranging from eight to nine feet long. All were wearing heavy copper armor, like the famous "skeleton in armor" that had been found in Fall River, Massachusetts, in 1831. Through the bungling of these diggers and the total disinterest of the archaeological museum establishment, these discoveries have now been scattered and lost.

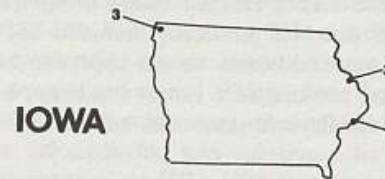
LOGANSPORT (3)

In 1835, there was a rather facetious newspaper series on a "monster" reported in nearby Lake Manitou. Some think it may have been a hoax on the part of *Logansport Telegraph* editor John Brown Dillon. There were, however, traditions of the Potawatomi Indians pertaining to something like what had been sighted. One citizen provided a sketch of the thing. Fortean usually take an extrahard second look at all anomalies that turn up neatly nullified as "hoaxes." What often happens is that people—particularly journalists—in good faith report an unusual thing, but then find that they have called down on themselves such outrage and ridicule from assorted institutional experts that they willingly participate in cover-ups of varying kinds. These usually take the form of jocose "second-day stories" explaining how the whole thing was a misconception, folks, based on such and such. Of course, there most certainly are hoaxes too, and this might well have been one of them.

VINCENNES (4)

In early April 1899, a fragment of a quartz boulder fell from the sky, called a "white meteorite" by witnesses. In December of 1946, a crocodilian of unreported size was killed at Mariah Creek near here. Since this is some

hundreds of miles too far north for their habitat, and December is not exactly the right time of year for them, we can only assume that this must have been another "crazy croc" like the ones at Decatur, Illinois, and southeast New York State.



DAVENPORT (1)

Jagged "pieces of ice" fell here on August 30, 1882, according to the *Monthly Weather Review*. This was about the same time as excavations of some of the most wonder-filled prehistoric mounds in North America were getting under way. The Davenport Mound excavated by the Reverend Mr. Gass and others yielded several stone tablets containing a wealth of symbols. Among the characters inscribed on them were the letters *O* and *F* and the figure 8 (or possibly it was VIII—there is confusion in the literature here). One tablet had the letters *T, F, T, O, W, N,* and *S* scattered over it, which is really odd because the Germanic letter *W* has only been used in comparatively recent times in the Latin alphabet.

Others among the slate stones had concentric circles between which were inscribed 12 signs that were presumed to be those of the zodiac. Archaeologist William S. Beebe asserted in a *Scientific American* article that these had much in common with signs on stones from Grave Creek Mound, West Virginia; from Piqua Mound, Ohio; and on the Pemberton Ax, found at that town in New Jersey.

Charles Harrison, president of the American Antiquarian Society, traveled to the mounds on hearing of what was being unearthed. He helped uncover many baffling stone tablets, inscribed with the "8" and with other characters resembling ancient Phoenician or Arabic, but not coherently arranged. (Such quasi-Phoenician inscriptions have been very widely found in North America: see listings for Los Lunas, New Mexico; Harrisburg, Pennsylvania; and Bradley County, Tennessee.) Where the objects are today is another mystery. I have not been able to discover the slightest trace of them.

DUBUQUE (2)

Hailstones and large hunks of ice fell here on June 16, 1882. According to the *Monthly Weather Review*, "The foreman of the Novelty Iron Works, of

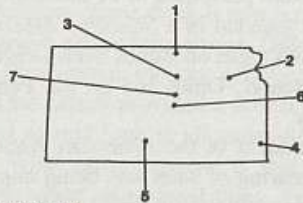
this city, states that in two large hailstones melted by him were found small living frogs." Fort remarks that peculiarities about the pieces of ice suggested that they had been "motionless or floating somewhere."

The chunks ranged from one to 17 inches in circumference, and on some of them were icicles a half-inch long. Fort snickered at the conventional, mechanist theory of hailstone formation—droplets of water being heaved up and down in freezing wind blasts aloft. He mentioned a thoughtful German scientist named Schwedoff who was practically drummed out of his profession for suggesting that some hailstones do not appear to be generated in this earth's atmosphere, because there simply would not be time enough for some of the heavy, multilayered stones that have been found to be formed in this way.

GITCHIE MANITOU (3)

(Abt. 6 mi. NW of Larchwood, btw. S.R. 9 and Big Sioux River valley.) This park is composed of the remains of a number of abstract mounds and boulder ground sculptures. Scattered among the mounds originally found here were a complex array of circles, ellipses, and connecting lines. At least two of the rock circles were 33.3 feet in diameter and apparently composed of 111 boulders each. When first explored, in the 1880s, most of the boulder circles were sunk deep beneath the surface of the soil, or in some cases completely covered, indicating great age. (See also Pipestone, Minnesota, and Codrington County, South Dakota.)

KANSAS



A MYSTERY MERIDIAN

Although Kansas perhaps lacks the sheer number of curiosities that we find, say, in the Southwest or Northeast, it is their clear patterning here that first made me aware of the tendency of oddities of the most diverse kinds to gather with birds of a feather. As the map will show, eggnarts here are overwhelmingly concentrated along a north-south axis between the ninety-seventh and ninety-eighth meridians of west longitude, give or take a few miles on either side. This band lies just a few miles east of the geographical center marker of the continental United States, near Lebanon, Kansas.

This Mystery Meridian, if I may, is not confined to Kansas, although my present information shows a strong "data cluster" here. The line extends

as far north as the Dakotas and an indefinite distance to the south. Perhaps L. Frank Baum had some of this in mind when he made central Kansas the jumping-off place for the fantasy journey of a little girl to the land of Oz.

MUTILATIONS

The 44 known cattle mutilations that occurred here during a four-month period of late 1973 and early 1974 are certainly the dubious highlight of Mystery Meridian phenomena in Kansas. Although there since have been other unexplained animal killings about the state, there is no mistaking the pattern for the first big rash—or should one say "slash."

The accompanying map substitutes for a place-by-place listing. Each animal victim of the 1973–1974 season appears here as a dot. Why U.S. 81 figures so prominently, I have no clue. However, it does follow the Mystery Meridian quite closely through several states. It will be noted that Ottawa County, home of the Rock City spheres and the Delphos "Wolfgirl," had the largest number of killings.

A peculiarity of the early Kansas mutilations is that almost all of them involved black cows, of the Angus and Black Hereford breeds. As in most other states, authorities have monotonously dismissed the strange killings as the work of predators or "cultists." Kansas Brands Commissioner Doyle Heft asserted in late December 1973 that "ninety-nine percent of the deaths in which sex organs have been removed from cattle in north-central Kansas occurred from natural causes." And, as elsewhere, local officials and cattlemen were incredulous and disgusted.

BELLEVILLE (1)

(On U.S. 81 abt. 50 mi. N of Salina.) On the night of March 28, 1897, this town was the hub of the "strange lights," as news reports described them, that had been traveling about the skies of Nebraska and Kansas. The great "airship" extravaganza that had begun in central California in November of 1896 had quickly drifted eastward and was bespangling Great Plains skies by December. The display looked to most of the hundreds who watched it here like a blindingly bright light drifting aimlessly overhead; others who peered at it through telescopes thought they could make out the lines of the fabled airship at the center of the glow. The thing was also seen that night at Concordia, 22 miles south of Belleville on the Mystery Meridian, and at the southeast part of the state around Atchison.

DELIA (2)

(Abt. 20 air mi. NW of Topeka.) On July 20, 1964, a bread-truck driver saw a five-foot "gorilla-type" creature. It was extremely hairy and walked

upright. That night, something killed 16 young hogs in the area by biting them vampire-style around the neck. A search for the culprit turned up no clues. (On neck-biters, *see also* Johnston County, North Carolina.)

OTTAWA COUNTY (3)

Delphos (Abt. 30 mi. NW of Salina off U.S. 81.) In the third week of July 1974, just as the cattle mutilation number was going into its surrealistic finale, this hamlet became host to a little girl with a difference. At least, the more charitable residents thought it might have been a girl. Others weren't so sure, thinking it was a wolf, monkey, or combination thereof. So a compromise evolved and the now-famous Delphos "Wolfgirl" was christened.

The entity had the size and general shape of a 10-year-old child, with light-colored, matted hair, and apparently wore filthy and tattered red clothing. Although it ran on all fours, it traveled extremely fast, according to some who claimed to have seen it. Children had first seen "Wolfie" eating from pet dishes. A brushy, vine-choked area at the northwest edge of town was its turf. A number of people informally beat the bushes there, and some said it had growled at them from the thickets. A man and a boy claimed to have been jumped on and scratched by it.

Eventually, Ottawa County Sheriff Leonard Simpson made an all-night canvass of the area, but had found no footprints by daybreak. Next evening, the searchers surrounded and entered an abandoned shed after the creature was reported inside. But, as with the similar anticlimax of the Murphysboro monster pursuit in Illinois the previous summer, there was nothing to be found.

On November 1 and 2, 1971, Delphos had been the scene of a UFO landing case that has become something of a classic in the circles that study such things. There has been speculation of a link with the later Wolfgirl, but obviously nothing of the kind could be proved. It was also reported that a band of flamboyant, old-style Gypsies were passing conspicuously through the area at the same time as the UFO touchdown. Gypsies, or personages resembling them, have often been associated with the saucer phenomenon. John Keel summarizes many cases in chapter nine of his 1971 book, *Our Haunted Planet*. (*See also* Echo Lake, Colorado.)

Rock City (4 mi. SW of Minneapolis and 1 mi. W of S.R. 106.) This is a group of about 200 unusual sandstones in two roughly curved rows about a quarter-mile in length, standing in the middle of a vacant prairie. Although all are severely weathered, it is quite clear that the rocks are much more uniformly spheroidal than could be expected in a random natural formation. Called "concretions" by geologists, these rocks ranging in size from eight to 27 feet across, are supposed to have been shaped by water-borne

calcium carbonate deposited between grains of sand, cementing them together. Then, along came that marvelous geological process known as selective erosion and somehow or other this array was, well, formed.

There are other rock formations similar to these in North Dakota at Mandan and along the Cannonball River. In southwest Costa Rica, an obscure rural area called Palmar has some even more exceptional giant spherical stones. They range in weight up to about 16 tons and are arranged in rows, circles, and triangles. One row points toward magnetic north. According to local residents, certain of those spheres glow brightly at night. I doubt if anyone has seen anything so exotic here in Middle America, however—yet.

PITTSBURG (4)

(25 mi. NW of Joplin, Mo.) This is an area ravaged by coal strip mining, in the extreme southeast corner of the state. Along U.S. 69, sharp parallel rows of broken gray rock stretch away, mile after mile, as if a gigantic cat had scratched his claws across the surface. Oddly enough, however, this moonraked area has some of the most abundant fishing in the Midwest. Bass, bluegills, perch and crappies, and extraordinarily delectable catfish suddenly became abundant. No one knows how they got here, since the pools left by mining are landlocked and filled only by runoff. But old-timers nod sagely and observe that "it rains fish in Kansas." And this has indeed been observed.

PRATT (5)

(Abt. 70 mi. W of Wichita on U.S. 54.) In September of 1970, chunks of white-hot metal weighing hundreds of pounds crashed to earth here. U.S. Air Force spokesmen suggested they were probably parts of a Russian satellite that broke up. Somewhat later, the air force added that it had predicted the decay of the supposed satellite along the path where the metal pieces were found. If so, however, no warning had been given beforehand.

RICE AND McPHERSON COUNTIES (6)

There are some enigmatic pre-Columbian remains located on the Mystery Meridian. Archaeologists call these "council circles," although they admit that there is no certainty they ever were used for any sort of councils. There are only five of these formations known to exist anywhere, and all of them are within an 18-mile area here in central Kansas.

A council circle consists of a low central mound area from 60 to 90 feet across and up to three feet high, surrounded by a shallow ditch or circle of

oblong depressions in the ground. The Rice County circles are located at three different sites:

- The Tobias site, eight miles north and five miles east of Lyons, Kansas, near the village of Galt;
- The Thompson site, a half-mile southeast of Tobias;
- The Hayes site, about one and a quarter miles farther southeastward.

All of these are located on the south side of the Little Arkansas River, which develops its permanent flow from large springs at and just above the Tobias site.

In McPherson County, 18 miles east and four miles north, is the Swenson site, lying a mile and a half south of the Smoky Hill River. Three miles east of this is the Paint Creek site, on the left bank of the stream of that name.

There are remains of villages near all of these sites. The only one that has been professionally excavated, Tobias, has been found to contain in its center mound four semicircular pits, which are all about 33 inches deep, although their widths and lengths vary. Within these pits, scientists were puzzled to find the ashes of what archaeologist Waldo R. Wedel has called "intense conflagration," which had been laboriously covered over with large numbers of sandstone boulders. (Recall that the Pine Island mound site in Florida has similar traces of unexplainable fire, as does the mysterious "fort" at Aztalan, Wisconsin; in Scotland and some other countries there are "vitrified forts" in which the rocks seem to have been literally melted.)

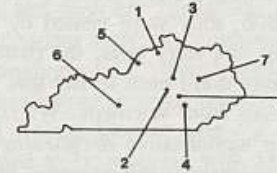
According to Wedel, no ceremonial aspects or paraphernalia have been found in the Tobias excavations. However, human bones were found in all of the pits dug out. Most of these were bones of children (or of smaller-than-normal people), with occasional badly broken skulls of more normal size, suggesting human sacrifice rituals.

Wedel found that the three Rice County sites are aligned on the horizon where sunrise occurs at winter and summer solstice. However, there is no hard evidence that Indians of this area had any interest in solstices. Astronomer Robert Hicks of the University of Arizona believes that these Wichita sites were part of a network of pre-Columbian observatories that was headquartered in the Yucatán.

SALINA (7)

A huge mass of ice weighing 80 pounds fell from the sky near here in August of 1882. It was packed in cold storage and shown as a curio for a long time thereafter.

KENTUCKY



BEDFORD (1)

(44 mi. NE of Louisville on U.S. 42.) A creature "not quite a dog, a panther, or a bear" attracted a lot of attention around here in June of 1962. A zoologist at Hanover College, Hanover, Indiana, could not identify its tracks. It was about six feet tall, walked on its "hind" legs, with arms reaching its knees, and was covered with black hair. In October 1975 elusive creatures said by residents to make deep-voiced "oinking" noises, like gigantic pigs, made their presence known in a remote wooded area along the Ohio River. Farmers reported strange carryings-on in cornfields.

HERRINGTON LAKE (2)

(26 mi. SW of Lexington on U.S. 27, and 4 mi. W on S.R. 152.) A lake "monster" with a piglike snout at one end and a curly tail at the other has been reported here quite recently. Professor Lawrence S. Thompson described the 15-foot being that he watched in the lake during the summer of 1972. He said its habitual surfacing time was in the early morning hours before motorboats started buzzing about. It frequents the quiet stretch of lake between Chenault Bridge and Wells Landing. Dr. Thompson had a hunch that the entity might have to do with the many caves surrounding the lake. He also noted that Constantine Rafinesque, an early French explorer of the Ohio River, had reported seeing strange creatures in this area. Thompson is a teacher of classics at the University of Kentucky, Lexington. (See also Lake Champlain, Vermont.)

LEXINGTON (3)

A sizable complex of tunnels is supposed to lie somewhere beneath this pleasant university city in the heart of Blue Grass country. G. W. Ranck relates in his 1872 *History of Lexington* that hunters from the pioneer settlement of Boonesborough in 1776 discovered rocks of "peculiar workmanship" with a tunnel behind them. Small at first, this portal eventually expanded to a sort of gallery, four feet wide and seven high, that inclined sharply down into the rock. The ramp led after a few hundred feet to a

chamber 300 feet long, 100 feet wide, and 18 feet high. Inside this lay idols; altars, and about 2,000 human mummies.

According to the legend, these catacombs were subsequently explored a number of times. In 1806, they were visited by Thomas Ashe, the Irish travel writer. Eventually, the story goes, the entrance was lost as the city grew overhead. I probably don't need to say that the catacomb part of the tale elicits scoffing denials from scientists. W. D. Funkhouser and W. S. Webb conceded in their authoritative *Archaeological Survey of Kentucky* that 'limestone caves and spring water passages in the rock are present beneath and in the vicinity of Lexington,' but, as for the mummy chamber: "The tale is probably nothing more than the figment of a well-developed imagination and there are absolutely no facts to support it." Apparently Funkhouser and Webb had not actually investigated the admitted caverns, however, but formed their opinion on the negative evidence of a lack of received facts. (On the subject of mummies in caves, see Mammoth Cave, Kentucky; Death Valley, California; and Lovelock, Nevada.)

LONDON (4)

The rattlesnake-and-poison cult has its apparent Kentucky headquarters at a rural church about three miles west of here near the village of Bernstadt. Snakes have been handled and strychnine imbibed for years by small, nominally Christian groups in these mountains sprawling over Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, North Carolina, and Georgia. The practices have claimed many victims, and there have been interventions by the authorities, but the strychnine rites, at least, are still going on so far as I know.

The groups hold a "national convention" in July of most years at Newport, Tennessee. I do not know whether outsiders are allowed these days to attend. The scriptural basis for these rituals is said to be Mark 16:18: "They shall take up serpents and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall in no wise hurt them." But I have often wondered if there is some subconscious reversion to ancient serpent-power rituals, such as those still practiced among certain Amerindians and in rural areas of the British Isles.

LOUISVILLE (5)

A tall and thin weirdo, agile as a monkey and with a long nose, pointed ears, and long fingers, appeared in this vicinity around July 28, 1880. He wore a sort of uniform, made of shiny fabric, and with a long cape and metallic helmet. On his chest under the cape was a large, bright light. His big thing seemed to be scaring people—particularly women—sometimes getting so familiar as to pull their clothing off. His favorite method of escape was by springing smoothly over high objects like haystacks or wagons, then vanishing on the other side, to the bewilderment of those brave enough to pursue him.

In short he—or it—was virtually an instant replay of the bugbear that has terrorized many people in rural England, as early as the 1830s. The *modus operandi* there was to confront a victim, usually an attractive young woman, open his cape, and flash his "light," at which time a blue ball of flame usually hit the individual in the face, although without serious injury. In the confusion, "Springheels Jack" then bounded over a haystack.

On July 29, 1880, the *Courier-Journal* reported that Louisville residents C. A. Youngman and Robert Flexner saw "a man surrounded by machinery which he seemed to be working with his hands" flying along at low altitude over the city. He had "wings or fans" on his back that he was flapping busily to stay aloft. (See also Mattoon, Illinois; New York, New York; Houston, Texas; and Chehalis, Washington.)

On March 7, 1911, at about 8 A.M., a total blackout occurred during a moderate rain and hailstorm. According to the *Monthly Weather Review*, terror spread throughout the city for a quarter hour or so, until the sun again appeared as if from behind a black curtain.

A Louisville historian named Reuben F. Durrett noticed how many legends there were among both Indians and whites about a band of "white Indians" that had once been in the area. One of the stories that tried to explain these was that of the Welshman, Prince Madoc, who had come up the Ohio River with a small band in the twelfth century and settled at the falls of the river near present-day Sand Island. Before long, hostilities with the Indians broke out, culminating in a great battle on the island and the extermination of the Welsh camp.

Although no artifacts survive to prove it, Durrett lists reports of skeletons dug up in the area sometime around 1900 that wore brass-plated armor bearing the symbols of the mermaid and harp, elements of the Welsh coat of arms. He also mentions a tombstone fragment that bore the date 1186. Apparently Sand Island has not been developed in any way and has not been archaeologically excavated. It would seem to be another of the many prime candidates for a revisionist antiquarian science to investigate.

MAMMOTH CAVE NATIONAL PARK (6)

(27 mi. NE of Bowling Green, and W of I-65 or S.R. 70.) The Mammoth Cave mummies, if that is what they are, have been a puzzle since the cave was first discovered in 1809. There have been many strange reports, practically all now unverifiable, of unusual preserved cadavers in and around the cave. One of these was found in 1920 on a ledge deep in the cavern; it was red-haired and less than three feet tall, so naturally it is now labeled a "child." Many of the remains were fragile and have not survived, but I know of at least one that can be seen. It is at the state Museum of Anthropology at Lexington.

Many anomalies are connected with caverns, and I do not believe that

our present science knows or cares enough about the world *à-bas*. Certainly Mammoth Cave, in size alone, is supernormal. Together with the Flint Ridge system, which has recently been found to connect with it, Mammoth is by far the longest known cave in the world, qualifying it as a major natural wonder. It may yet be found to link with still more of the smaller caves that perforate this entire area.

Present scientific opinion is that the Mammoth Cave interior is sufficiently dry to mummify organic tissues. I have that from Dr. Lathel F. Duffield, director of the Kentucky Museum of Anthropology, at Lexington. It's possible, but I rather doubt if anyone has conducted any actual mummification experiments. Dr. Duffield likewise assures me that the human footprints found molded here and there in the rock floor of the cave were accidentally stamped in when the rock was liquid mud. He did not say just how long this would have been, but I wonder if the rate of solidification of mud wouldn't call for more time than is comfortable for present theories on *Homo sapiens* arrival in North America.

In any case, this explanation for mystery footprints, as I point out in other instances, is a conventional one that leaves much to be desired. If the area was liquid mud, why are there only occasional perfectly formed footprints with no scuffs and scrapes and other accidental marks of walking? (See also Rockcastle County, Kentucky.)

OLYMPIA SPRINGS (7)

(47 air mi. E of Lexington, on S.R. 36.) On March 3, 1876, a shower of "meat" fell near the farmhouse of Allan Crouch, three miles south of here. Mrs. Crouch was outside, making soap, when tissue in the form of flat slices began to fall around her. The sky was perfectly clear at the time, she said. The Louisville *Commercial* newspaper and investigators from Transylvania College estimated that the shower had dropped "half a wagon-load of pieces of fresh meat, sliced into thin strips, some of it quite bloody, all of it strung out across two hillsides on the same farm in a band about 150 feet wide and 300 feet long." (See also Wilson County, Tennessee, and Los Nietos and San Jose, California.)

ROCKCASTLE COUNTY (8)

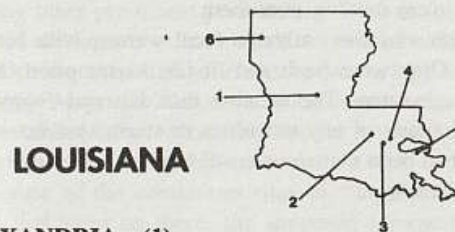
In January of 1938, geologist Wilbur G. Burroughs announced that he had found a series of 10 humanoid footprints molded in sandstone. They were located in the north end of the county, on the farm of O. Finnell, in an Upper Carboniferous rock formation. The age of this rock suggests that the origin of early man—who is not allowed to have been in North America, remember—would considerably predate accepted chronology.

Practically all other scientists were skeptical of Dr. Burroughs's find. Recently, Dr. Lathel Duffield, director of the Kentucky Museum of Anthropology, has told me that the prints are "petroglyphs" that were pecked into the rock by the Indians "for reasons unknown." Burroughs, on the other hand, believed that the tracks were "so human in appearance that they might have been made by one of the earliest ancestors of man." He found that left and right feet were distinctly imprinted and that arch structures were clearly visible. Whether his eyes were deceiving him and he was seeing more than was actually there, or whether the peckers in this case were unusually accomplished, we cannot know. In any case, the matter is probably academic now, since Dr. Duffield informs me that vandals have recently gone to the remote site of the prints and destroyed them all.

One curious aspect of these footprints is that the width across the toes, according to Burroughs, was about six inches, while the length was a more normal nine and one-half inches. (See also St. Louis, Missouri, and Meridian, Texas.)

In 1925, Burroughs explored a "fort" that he said was of Stone Age vintage, covering 320 acres atop a mountain near Berea. He described remnants of walls 1,200 feet long, observing that they would have resisted any but the most modern artillery.

In July of 1962, a Bigfoot-like critter that hunched on all fours in a sitting position hopped up to a double-dating foursome of young people parked in a car near Mt. Vernon. It was covered with hair, about man-sized, and growled as if disapproving of whatever was going on in the car—or perhaps in dissatisfaction at not being able to join in. This was about a month after the "monster" incident in Bedford, Kentucky.



ALEXANDRIA (1)

On at least one occasion that I know of, rain has fallen on a small area here about 100 feet square—and from a clear sky. At that time, the spot was on the roof of the house of Mrs. R. Babbington. There were many witnesses, including Adras LaBorde, editor of the *Alexandria Daily Town Talk*. In his issue that afternoon of November 11, 1958, LaBorde described with mys-

tification how the water had come pouring down from the blue. Lawn sprinklers, burst pipes, leaves of trees, and other obvious sources were all checked and ruled out.

BATON ROUGE (2)

In the summer of 1896, hundreds of dead birds, including ducks, catbirds, woodpeckers, and "many birds of strange plumage" fell in the streets from "a clear sky." The best that the explainers could do with this one was that "there had been a storm on the coast of Florida." Fort wondered why on a clear day the objects would have been dumped down in such a small spot so far away.

GONZALES (3)

(20 mi. SE of Baton Rouge on U.S. 61.) A ghost light was reported here in April of 1951, on the five-mile graveled road between here and the hamlet of Galvez. Sheriff Hickley Waguespack was among scores of witnesses as the blob of brilliance cavorted along the road and over nearby treetops. As with all other known mystery lights, it dodged out of the way of anyone who tried to approach it. Unfortunately, this is the only information I have on the supposed site.

MARKSVILLE (4)

(32 mi. SE of Alexandria on S.R. 1.) One of the largest and best-attested falls of fish occurred here on October 25, 1947. Between 7 and 8 A.M., the fish plopped into streets and yards. The president of the local bank, J. M. Barham, said he'd found hundreds between two and nine inches in length in his yard. Spots on Main Street had an average of one fish per square yard, and cars and trucks were running over them.

The fish were freshwater varieties native to local waters, with hickory shad the most common. They were fresh and fit for consumption, and a good many apparently were eaten. The weather that day was foggy and calm, and there were no reports of any tornadoes or storm systems in the vicinity. However, there had been numerous small twisters, or "devil dust-ers," in the area the day before.

NEW ORLEANS (5)

I am told that there is more voodoo practiced in Harlem or South Chicago these days than in the place where it all came from. There is no Marie Laveau now to peddle hexes, manage huge "Quadroon" bordellos, and stage monumental orgies every St. John's Eve (June 24) on Bayou St.

John. In fact, the Bayou itself is only a tepid adjunct to City Park now, and even the exact location of Marie's old "Wishing Spot," where anything you asked for would certainly come true, has been forgotten. (The best modern directions are to cross the Bayou on Esplanade Avenue Bridge and then walk a half-mile along the curving water's edge—whether north or south, no one knows—to an old tree trunk. Wish. Afterward, drop a quarter for offering into the knot hole in the trunk.)

Nevertheless, "the power" is evidently still in the air here. If we can believe some voodoo aficionados, that old black magic is the principal secret ingredient in NOLA's famous tourist-drawing mystique, with the Creole image merely a French provincial veneer. Even Dixieland jazz, and all that springs from it, is a sort of sublimated voodoo, they say.

You can still hear Dixieland bands occasionally in funeral and other processions, and if you happened to follow a cortege down Basin Street to the St. Louis Cemetery No. 1, you could visit the tomb marked "Laveau-Glapiion." Fresh flowers and maybe a spent candle would decorate it, placed there daily by admirers unknown but presumably legion. If you thought that scrawling an X with a pencil or felt tip on the surface of the monument would bring luck, you could add yours to the many marks smeared thereon. There are several other claimed graves, but this one is probably the most widely accepted.

Obviously, modern fans are not concerned with the historical problems in the Laveau legend: There were at least three of her, with the first Marie Laveau born around 1794, the second active in the 1880s, and the last flourishing in the 1920s. It was the first one who claimed that she had been visited, and kissed on the forehead, by the great Marquis de Lafayette when he toured the United States in the 1820s. It's possible. Because of her magic spells, her warehouses, and her citywide espionage network of domestic servants, Laveau was a kowtowed-to power-broker in the establishment here.

Many other prominent personalities from as far away as Europe and the Mideast are known to have made a point of calling on her when visiting New Orleans. And Lafayette was known to be interested in such occulta as Mesmer's Magnetic Masonry, which seems to have dealt with a European version of *kundalini*, which isn't too far from the *Couleuvre Noire* or Black Snake Power cultivated by voodoo.

Because of the continuous rites of "hoodoo" (the local variant of the word) that went on there, the supposed Laveau cottage at 1020 St. Ann Street, in the Vieux Carré, is believed still to carry strange reverberations. Of course, that would be nothing too far from the ordinary in the French Quarter. This city avowedly ranks high in number of houses popularly supposed to be haunted.

Those who have spent a night in the handsome home of General Pierre G. T. de Beauregard, 1113 Chartres Street, have often sworn that a ghostly

battle takes place around two o'clock in the morning. At that time, the shattered remnant of Beauregard's gray-clad Rebel army condenses among the opulent paneling and upholstery to fight again the closing moments of the Shiloh battle where the general was defeated.

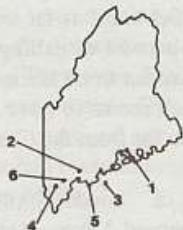
A house at 1140 Royal Street is supposed to lie under a spectral cloud. At this spot, before the Civil War, a society belle named Delphine Lalaurie used to come home early from brilliant dinner parties to torture and beat slaves and derelicts she kept chained to walls in the attic. Even now, superstitious passersby are convinced that they sometimes hear the screams of a young girl who once leaped to her death in the courtyard, or the rattling of those long-gone attic chains.

SHREVEPORT (6)

On July 12, 1961, crewmen were building a house at 2065 Lovers Lane. A thick cloud rolled overhead, and a shower of hard green peaches about the size of a golf ball pelted down. They hit only that house and the lawn around it, except for four that fell on the adjacent lot at 2062 Shadywood Lane, near the home of Mrs. John Goodwin. There was no cover in the area that could have concealed anyone throwing or shooting the fruit, and the peaches were falling from as high in the sky as the men could see. The Weather Bureau told newsmen that, while it was possible for a strong updraft to carry objects aloft in a thunderstorm, such conditions had not existed in the area that day.

On October 18, 1973, "angel hair" fell from a clear sky. The glistening fibers were reported from an area encompassed by Ruston, Springhill, and Shreveport. In some places it festooned trees and powerlines.

MAINE



BUCKSPORT (1)

(18 mi. S of Bangor on S.R. 15.) The obelisk tombstone of Colonel Jonathan Buck along U.S. 1 here, bears a vague, stockinglike outline on its white marble. Some observers have thought it merely an imperfection in the stone; others repeat a Hawthornesque tale from folklore to account for the odd blotch. It seems that Buck was the founder and moneybags of the

village and, during the witch trial mania of the seventeenth century, decided that his town must have a few witches too who needed smoking out. Selecting a suitable elderly female victim, Buck ordered the woman tortured and—failing a confession of wrongdoing—summarily executed. With her dying breath, the woman cursed the colonel and screeched that when Buck died, his tombstone would bear the print of her foot as a reminder that he had murdered an innocent woman. Sure enough, about two months after his death, Buck's grandiose monument had begun to acquire the faint outline of a woman's foot. Hasty refurbishing and eventual replacement fixed the stone for a while, but gradually the print reappeared. Or so one legend says.

MANCHESTER (2)

(3 mi. W of Augusta on U.S. 202.) On Scribner Hill Road about a mile past the turnoff of Prescott Road is Meeting House Cemetery. Surrounding the old and comparatively forgotten burial ground is a stone wall, and embedded in a corner of the wall, along the east side, is a large boulder. There is a deep indentation in the boulder, about 14 inches long, which some have taken for a footprint. It does have a slight such resemblance, especially along its left "end," which has a vaguely wavy or fluted outline, as if from five toes. But the rest of the shape leaves a bit to be desired as a foot outline, especially since it has another set of smaller "toes" at the opposite end.

MONHEGAN ISLAND (3)

(In the Atlantic, 15 mi. S of Port Clyde by ferry.) Cryptic rock carvings near this jagged, storm-lashed islet are yet another in the large number of "mysterious inscriptions" in North America that have been avoided by the majority of professional antiquarians. The runes are on Manana, a rocky outcropping adjacent to Monhegan, on the side where the two islands approach to form a harbor.

The markings are over a spring, and above the inscription, on a horizontal rock platform, are three holes bored a foot apart into the rock in triangular pattern. Each hole is about three inches in diameter and an inch deep. The inscription is about six inches tall and two feet long, with the line slanting downward. Many geologists dismiss the figures as unimportant. G. H. Stone wrote in 1885 that they are merely "a freak of surface erosion." But there are those who have wondered why, if that is the case, the process has not continued to work and expanded the characters beyond recognition. Since their discovery in 1808, they do not appear to have changed much, however.

Runic scholar Olaf Strandwold puzzled over the inscription for years,

coming up with a number of interpretations, most of which do not make much sense in Roman characters. His full transliteration runs AUNIR IUUG RUR HHH IUN IUL K. Finally, in desperation, he employed a "selective" process that eliminated about half of the strokes and curves to render: IK VAGLI LA SIAU ARA AR IUA IIU—"I, Veigle, lay seven years, year of Jesus 32" (A.D. 1031).

More recently, there has been debate among the few experts who have ventured into this highly "unsafe" field as to whether the Monhegan characters really were carved by Norsemen centuries before Columbus, or whether they may have even greater antiquity. Dr. Barry Fell, of the Epigraphic Society of Boston, has translated the inscription as an early-day signpost to Phoenician ships that might have traded here with the Indians. Celtic Ogam script of the Iberian peninsula is used, he said, and he translates it: "Long ships of Phoenicia. Cargo lots landing quay."

NEWFIELD (4)

(From Portland, 25 mi. SW on U.S. 202 to E. Waterloo; N 5 mi. on S.R. 5.) The Old Straw Place, built by Gideon Straw in 1787, is believed to be haunted by Gideon's daughter, Hannah, who died in 1826. If there really is such a ghost, it is perhaps understandable, since Hannah appears to have been buried in a corner of the kitchen floor. A metal grave marker measuring about five by two feet is cemented flat into the floor. In the basement, directly underneath, are large slabs of rock shaped like a coffin. The ghost apparently is rather forward: One man who owned the place for a while said something or other took to stroking him on the cheek with what felt like icy fingers as he lay in bed at night.

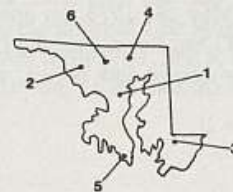
POPHAM BEACH STATE PARK (5)

(14 mi. S of Bath on S.R. 209.) About 22 miles west of Monhegan Island are located a number of runestones—some of which recently have been stolen. Runecist Alf Monge has translated one of them: "Henrikus sailed 34 days, 6 October 1123." Henrikus was a Norse bishop whom Viking partisans widely believe to have explored the northwest coast between 1114 and 1123.

SOUTH WINDHAM (6)

(7 mi. NW of Portland on U.S. 202.) A rocky bluff on private land here contains a flight of stairs, about 25 feet off the ground, beginning and ending nowhere.

MARYLAND



CROFTEN (1)

(Abt. 20 mi. S of Baltimore on S.R. 3.) An area being made into a parking lot in July of 1973 was found to be infested with small tunnels, about 20 inches wide. Some persons crawled into them and found them more extensive than they cared—or dared—to explore. There was conjecture that they may have been produced by some prehistoric miniman. But William Doepkins, an amateur archaeologist, found reason for believing that the array was the habitat of some unknown giant rodent, since he saw large tooth and claw marks on the side of one cave. No rodent remains of any kind, however, were found.

FREDERICK (2)

An area centering on the Gambrill State Park, eight miles northwest of here, has the distinction of harboring the only "critter" yet dignified by inclusion in *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. The "snallygaster," listed as possibly derived from the Dutch *schnelle geschter* ("quick spirits"), is defined as "a mythical nocturnal creature that is reported chiefly from rural Maryland, is reported to be part reptile and part bird, and is said to prey on poultry and children." Of course there are doubters: They say the snallygaster stories were a mere invention of moonshiners to scare intruders out of the backcountry.

I don't know how much moonshining has been going on lately, but the snallygaster or something suspiciously like it has still been staging periodic appearances—many of them just outside Baltimore:

- At Daniels, on the Patapsco River, in which the creature cleverly rolled down a hill and scared a group of young people parked there in a car;
- In the Randallstown area, winter of 1971, when bearlike but bipedal footprints were found in snow at an industrial site;
- At nearby Sykesville, in late May of 1973, where Tony Dorsey encountered "something" in a woods: "Something came charging at me and stopped. There was no sound, just a kind of thumping noise. And then

my light picked up two big glowing eyes the size of jumbo marbles, about seven feet off the ground." Sykesville police took a cast of a footprint that was 13 by 6 inches.

At this same time, on May 28, 1973, an anonymous caller reported to police that a luminous UFO had flown over the Liberty Dam and Reservoir and dropped or pushed out a large dark object, which landed with a splash below.

HEBRON (3)

(7 mi. NW of Salisbury off U.S. 50.) This Eastern Shore area has been favored with a mystery light in recent years. It has frequented a road known as Church Street Extended, and displays the quasi-intelligent behavior of other ghost lights we have cited. It easily eludes would-be pursuers, bounding coyly away when they try to surround it on foot, or barreling merrily along like the famous Roadrunner of the cartoons when they try to run it down with high-powered cars. When people stop to collect their wits, the light stops too, as if awaiting their next move.

PARKTON (4)

(30 mi. N of Baltimore on S.R. 45.) After a brilliant flash and a loud report from the sky, a shower of metal chunks clattered down near the William Belt farm along Walker Road on the night of August 11, 1965. Belt picked up quite a few of the cubically fragmented pieces. He tested them and found the metal "harder than any steel I've seen." Later, Belt reported that the National Aeronautics and Space Administration had examined the chunks and sent him a report indicating that the metal was not meteoritic.

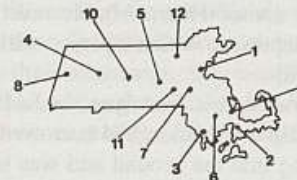
ST. MARY'S CITY (5)

(60 air mi. SE of Washington, D.C., on S.R. 5.) Several hundred ducks were found dead or near death here on January 25, 1969, and wildlife experts could agree on no explanation. The birds were found on the St. Mary's River, on the campus of St. Mary's College, and in the downtown area of this first capital of Maryland. The animals had widespread hemorrhages and multiple rib fractures, but it could not be determined how they got the injuries. Some guessed they may have flown into something or been in the water when an explosion occurred; however, V. D. Stotts of the Department of Game and Fish said it was highly unusual for ducks to strike objects in flight, and there were no reports of any explosions.

WESTMINSTER (6)

(31 mi. NW of Baltimore on U.S. 140.) Avondale, an eighteenth-century Georgian-style brick manor house on a rise near S.R. 31 west of the town, is reputed to be haunted by the ghost of Lee Master, the prosperous builder of the place. The house dates from 1740, and is in rather characteristic disrepair, with part of the first floor fallen into the basement.

MASSACHUSETTS



BOSTON METROPOLITAN AREA (1)

What must surely have been one of the earliest American exposures to unidentified flying objects occurred over Boston Harbor in March of 1639. Governor John Winthrop recorded in his *Journal* that large numbers of reputable citizens had sighted mystery lights. Five years later, on January 18, 1644, other lights about the size of the full moon were seen by many persons on the waterfront. Two of them were playing aerial tag with one another over Noddle's Island. A week later, the two lights appeared again, and one of them alone a week after that. In each of these cases, disembodied voices were heard booming out nonsensical commands.

In 1851, a blast was set off to break up rock at Meeting House Hill near the religious house operated by the Reverend Mr. Hall in Dorchester. An immense mass of rock was thrown out, and among the fragments lay a metallic vessel evidently torn in two by the blast. On putting the halves together, a bell-shaped urn was formed that measured four and one-half by six and one-half by two and one-half inches, with a thickness of about one-eighth inch.

The body was believed to be an alloy of zinc and silver. Around the sides were six floral figures inlaid with pure silver, and the whole showing a high degree of craftsmanship. The object had lain in pudding stone 15 feet below the surface and the *Scientific American* was satisfied that the matter had occurred as it was reported. It would be interesting to know where this stupendous artifact is today, but I have been able to learn nothing of it.

(For other early-day events around Boston—and there were many—I recommend consulting the index to Charles Fort's *Complete Books*.)

Lynn Dungeon Rock, located in the Lynn Woods Reservation at the northeast edge of the city, has an engrossing history. In the 1650s, the area began to attract the uneasy attention of colonists living nearby, who feared that it was a sanctuary for pirates. A band of men periodically sailed their boat up the Saugus River and then hiked into the woods. Their leader, one Thomas Veal, adopted the cave under this rock for his headquarters. But in the 1658 earthquake, according to legend, the cave was closed up and Veal entombed alive.

Treasure hunters have diligently sought the wealth that they convinced themselves Veal had buried in the cave. And the efforts begun in 1851 by an eccentric named Hiram Marble must be some sort of ultimate in the lengths, or depths, to which a person will go on the slim pretext of a rumor of buried gold.

By the time Marble was done, he had worked 13 years and spent all of his money. His excavation had burrowed to the astounding depth of a 13-story building into the ground and was seven feet square in cross section. He had installed stairs and would show the place for a small fee. One traveler who took the tour complained of the strong smell of sulfur 135 feet down. The cave mouth is still there in the woods, and so far as I know Marble's stairs and structures are still intact down yonder, although they may have been flooded by now. However, local authorities have closed the opening with a locked grating to keep children and animals out.

Manchester Back in 1880s, a scientist could still investigate a topic like the "singing sand beach of Manchester" and not provoke awkward silences or angry sneers in professional forums. In fact, H. Carrington Bolton, Ph.D., a chemist at Trinity College, Hartford, Connecticut, read a paper on the subject before the New York Academy of Science on March 10, 1884, and generated some lively and intelligent discussion among his colleagues. But no one else seems to have taken up the matter.

Bolton noticed that the sand of certain beaches, or parts of beaches, makes unusual sounds when walked on, pounded, or rubbed. The phenomenon is confined here to sand lying between the waterline and high-tide level. The sounding sand is near the surface; at a depth of a foot or more, the acoustic properties disappear—as they do in rainy weather. In other words, the phenomenon seems to depend somehow on the wetting and subsequent drying out of the sand, but Bolton found that the process cannot be replicated in the laboratory.

He and a colleague, Dr. A. A. Julien, studied all of the microscopic subtleties of sonorous sands from around the world, including chemical types, crystal structures, and thermal, physical, and electrostatic states. But they found few common factors. The best explanation that could be offered was that the noises were created by thin films of air adhering to the sand grains after the evaporation of moisture, which then were forced out noisily by the compression of handling.

However, as the researchers themselves admitted, the theory is weakened by at least three facts: (1) the acoustic properties are not confined to any one variety of sand, since calcareous, quartzitic, and feldspathic sands can all be sonorous; (2) sonorousness usually occurs in patches within a given beach, the sand of which is otherwise indistinguishable; (3) the property is lost when the sand is removed from its original location. (*See also* Hawaii; Churchill County, Nevada; and Lake Champlain, New York.)

Medford On June 14, 1972, a four-foot eel was tugged out of the water pipe of an apartment house where residents complained of low water pressure. Two others showed up later. Water Department officials said the fish would have had to swim 100 miles from Quabbin Reservoir, and that while eels do swim thousands of miles in their migrations, they usually do not do so through water mains. Whether this case might relate to the funny things that happen around Quabbin Reservoir is another of those imponderables.

Melrose The night before the severe New England hurricane of 1954, there was a terrific explosion in the sky, cause unknown. It would seem to be another example of the event continuum at work, which is a fancy way of saying that much if not all weather and atmospheric phenomena appear to be related in some way.

Nahant Island A "sea serpent" (not an eel, I hope) was observed by hundreds at Long Beach, Red Rock, and in Massachusetts Bay in the year 1819. It was estimated to be in excess of 40 feet long, had a flat head, and was of chocolate-brown color. In 1871, a similar creature appeared about 25 miles northeast, off Cape Ann. A number of prominent citizens living there gave evidence in a report published by the Linnaean Society of Boston.

Quincy There have been occasional critter problems at St. Mary's Cemetery, in the west part of the city. A doodad with short legs and dragging tail has occasionally been reported scaring passersby at night. One man confronted by it on November 16, 1964, said it was "sleeky" looking, like a seal or (sorry) eel, and made "shrill, sipping noises." Other reports said it frequented a stream that borders the graveyard, which would be "par" for strange creatures: They almost always occur in close proximity to running water.

Sudbury At 2 P.M. on October 22, 1973, a woman was startled to see sparkling fibers gathering on wires and autumn leaves, and when she looked upward saw a shiny globular object disappearing in the clear sky to the west. Collecting some samples of the strands that continued to drift down for about half an hour, she sealed the material in a jar and stored it in her refrigerator. She said it was "sticky" and became entangled when dis-

turbed, resembling thick spiderweb. In time, the fibers shrank away or evaporated. Analysis at the University of Massachusetts confirmed that this was not spiderweb, but could not determine what it was. (*See also Monterey, California.*)

BOURNE (2)

(50 mi. SE of Boston in NE arm of Buzzard's Bay.) The Aptuxcet Stone, displayed in the reconstructed Aptuxcet Trading Post, is one of the last of the remaining Norse runestones in the area. At one time there were many, but most have now been stolen or destroyed. Those who accept the possibility of pre-Columbian arrivals by Europeans usually date these stones around A.D. 1000. Establishment archaeology, if it must think about them at all, invariably dismisses them as fakes.

FALL RIVER (3)

In 1831, the skeleton of a male wearing heavy metal plates was dug up at the corner of what is now Fifth and Hartley streets. The metal appeared to be copper or bronze, and after some debate, the skeleton was taken to be that of a Viking. Henry W. Longfellow wrote his poem "The Skeleton in Armor" on the basis of the discovery, recounting the story of a Viking who built a "bower" for his lady fair. (*See Newport, Rhode Island.*) In 1843, the skeleton was destroyed in the great fire that swept over Fall River (along with Lizzie Borden, this town has definitely had its share of quirks). By the 1880s, experts at Harvard's Peabody Museum decided that the metal objects were of brass and that this made them English and hence of recent origin.

The case against a pre-Columbian intruder was considered closed when anthropologist C. C. Willoughby found, in 1938, that the burial had been that of a Wampanoag Indian, which was a neat piece of deduction to make on a skeleton that had been nonexistent for 95 years. I believe the matter rests there today. Some of the metal objects are still in the Peabody Museum at Harvard, at last report.

The only contribution I can make is to marvel at an extreme display of isolationism by those who are trying to keep this strictly a New England/European affair. There have been many discoveries elsewhere in the country of skeletons clad in copper armor or vestments.

Dighton Rock (Abt. 10 mi. N of Fall River, on east side of Assonet Bay near the mouth of the Taunton River.) At the moment, the Portuguese are the favorites in what has been called the "Dighton Rock Derby." A long-running scholarly Scrabble game has debated the real meaning of the bewildering jumble of strange symbols incised on the 7- by 11-foot face of

this waist-high, reddish-brown rock. Partisans of Miguel Cortereal, a Portuguese explorer, believe that Dighton Rock supports a claim that their hero reached Newfoundland in 1502.

Cotton Mather, the famous theologian, described the rock in 1690 and made a drawing of the figures. With the exception of some modern graffiti, they are pretty much the same today. So, if it was a hoax of some kind, it is an extremely old one and should almost be interesting in its own right. But the balance of opinion seems to be that the figures are genuine, although of unknown age and origin.

Since colonial times, scholars have churned out theories on the Dighton glyphs. Suggested authors include the ancient Egyptians, Phoenicians, Persians, Romans, Japanese, Chinese, Norse, American Indians, pirates, Portuguese, the Devil, and Jesus Christ.

One of the first decoding attempts was by Antoine Court de Gébelin, a prestigious Freemason and author of important books on esoteric symbolism. He seems to have made a special trip to America to view some of the astounding ancient artifacts then being turned up in mounds and other excavations, many of which bore symbols identified today with Freemasonry. Court felt that the Dighton carvings were made by sailors from ancient Carthage. In 1837, the Danish scholar Karl Christian Rafn published a study linking the marks with the Leif Ericson voyage to the New World around the year 1000.

The Cortereal theory was first advanced by Professor E. B. Delabarre. Bolstering this idea of a Portuguese incursion here are the crosses, identical with those used by the Order of Christ of Portugal, that are found among the inscriptions. These also have strong similarity to the Maltese-like cross of the enigmatic Knights Templar, which some think appeared on the sails of Christopher Columbus.

Delabarre seems to have hit on the Cortereal idea when he saw the number 1511 in the inscription. Knowing that the Cortereals were supposed to have been abroad in that year, he took another look and saw none other than the name Miguel Cortereal. Needless to say, not everyone else has been able to find all of these things. And there are those who remember that, in his earlier scornful debunkings of all other interpretations, Delabarre had repeatedly emphasized that Dighton Rock is "indecipherable" and that anyone can find anything in it.

GOSHEN (4)

(13 mi. NW of Northampton on S.R. 9.) Installed deep in the side of a hill just west of the Goshen Cemetery is a sophisticated masonry structure. It is known locally as Counterfeiters' Den, from an old tale that counterfeiters were apprehended a few miles southwest of the spot.

The complex was discovered during a hunt for a rabbit that had dived

into a burrow near the top of the shaft. At that time, the top of the vertical tunnel was completely disguised with bushes, several inches of sod, and a covering of stone flags. This shaft is about 15 feet deep and three and one-half feet in diameter. There are branching horizontals, one of which is level with the bottom and the other, running the opposite way, is about three feet higher.

The bottom tunnel leads eastward, is about two feet wide by two and a half high, and has stone sidewalls with flat flagstones spanning the top. The west lateral runs about 75 feet to a point where it has caved in. The upper one has collapsed about 15 feet from the vertical shaft. Engineers have marveled at the enormous labor that must have gone into this strange project, because of the small-diameter borings into dense clay hardpan from a narrow right-angled shaft, and because of the great difficulty of assembling stone lintel vaulting from within.

Some historians have suggested that the tunnel was a shelter from colonial Indian attacks. But none occurred here, and it simply doesn't seem practical for such a use. It's also been called a dried-out well, except for the lateral tunnels, which would have been most hard to build had there been any depth of groundwater here originally. And inevitably, it has been ascribed to the archaeological catchall of the Underground Railroad, although there is no apparent connection to any structures or houses in the area.

Most of those who have given any serious thought to the Counterfeiters Den realize that nothing of this scope could have been built since colonial times without all the old-time settlers knowing of it and telling their descendants of it. But no one knew anything of it when it was discovered in the late 1800s.

LEICESTER (5)

(2 mi. W of Worcester on S.R. 9.) There was a shower of frogs and toads on September 7, 1954. They fell mainly along Paxton Avenue, from Leicester Center to the Paxton city line. An expert said they "probably came from an overflowing pond" without specifying where the incontinent pond was. But in any case, that explanation sagged when it was found that the batrachians were also hopping around on rooftops and in rain gutters.

MIDDLEBORO (6)

At Assawompsett Pond, three miles south of here, a small rock carving in the shape of an inverted *T*, with a very wide crossbar, has been seen from time to time when the water level is low. Some have interpreted this as a picture of a single-masted sailboat, and it has been dated as around 2,000 years old, since the usual theory is that the oceans were much lower then than now. There are many other pictographs on the same submerged rocks.

On the shore not far away is a large aboriginal ceremonial site consisting of seven "lodges" with accompanying hearths, pits, possible crematory sites, and burial deposits, some of which contain incinerated human bone. Radiocarbon dating has placed the time of origin at around 2340 B.C.

MILLIS (7)

(8 mi. SW of Norwood.) South End Pond near here is surrounded by the remains of trenches in the form of a triangle seven or so miles in circumference. In the middle are seven hillocks. The site is believed to have had great religious importance to the Indians, for they waged a number of bitter attacks upon white settlers in the 1670s to protect the area from intrusion.

PITTSFIELD (8)

In February of 1958, people eating in the Bridge Lunch restaurant might have coughed on their coffee one day to see an old-time steam train with a half-dozen coaches go clattering by on the track outside. The café is near the Union Depot, and the train has been seen on the stretch of track between North Street Bridge and the Junction. Railroad officials have denied that they have operated any steam on the line for many years. I am told that there have been other sightings since, although I've not had the pleasure myself. (See also Albany, New York, and Warsaw, North Carolina.)

PLYMOUTH (9)

In Rocky Nook Point, a medieval-style ax is displayed at the Howland House. It was excavated some years ago near here, from a level far too deep for it to have been of colonial origin—unless it was deliberately buried by colonist hoaxers hoping to dupe later experts.

QUABBIN RESERVOIR AREA (10)

Amherst. What there is to attract them we'll probably never know, but there certainly have been an excess of enigmatic events and structures around this area. The phenomena got going with a bang on August 13, 1819, when there was a flash of light, a sky-blast, and the discovery of a bowl-shaped whatsis on a lawn. Fort writes that this was the yard of a Professor Dewey, who described the new arrival as eight inches across and one inch thick, buff in color, covered with a velvety "nap" like some kind of cloth, and full of a stinking pulp that turned blood-red and liquefied on exposure to the air. The *American Journal of Science* detailed a series of chemical experiments of the day that were performed on it, without really learning anything.

There were several sequels. A Professor Edward Hitchcock took up the

matter, intent on dismissing the substances as "nostoc" algae, which Fort labels "one of the oldest exclusionists' conventions." Hitchcock recorded that "years later," another object like the 1819 one was found at "nearly the same place," with two more following it the same evening. Unfortunately, although nostoc is no doubt a highly flexible substance, its color is greenish, it has no special odor, and it is not known to arrive in a flash of light and dissolve redly on exposure to air.

Hardwick (5 mi. E of Quabbin on S.R. 32A.) Along Thresher Road just off S.R. 32A—appropriately—is a line of 32 "marking stones." They start near the old Newcomb farm, now owned by the Hardwick Rod and Gun Club, and run for about one-third mile toward Deer Spring. Each of the slablike stones has a number from 1 through 32 chiseled on its face (although at least one has been stolen since they were discovered in 1970). In addition to the numbers, there were small holes drilled into the tops of the slabs. Many of the stones are overgrown with moss; some are knocked over, possibly by undergrowing tree roots. They seem fairly evenly distributed along the roadway, although they are at varying distances along the sides, with some hidden among bushes.

The artifacts are so mystifying that there have been practically no scholarly guessing games going on to explain them. The only one that I have encountered was by Worcester journalist Harvey Rayner who, in 1972, wrote: "Some wonder whether the stones were tied to some fraternal or religious rites. The holes in the tops are about right for candles, which might support the rites theory. The number—32—ties in with the highest degree in Masonry, another possibility." Not, however, much of a probability since no Masonic body that I know of performs any degree rituals in the open air. And there are 33 degrees in the Scottish Rite, rather than 32.

Pelham (2 mi. W of Quabbin on U.S. 202.) One of New England's many "beehive caves" is near here. It is located close to a private cemetery belonging to the Smith family on their rural property situated just off Packardville Road. The cavern is reached by descending what looks like a mere hole in the ground. Its interior is shaped like a conical igloo, somewhat larger than the beehive at Mt. Mineral (following), but having the same type of rounded-stone, mortarless masonry. It too has the characteristic flat lintel stone over the entrance portal.

Some authorities believe that this stone-working style is similar to that of beehive caves and domes built by Culdee monks of Ireland and Scotland centuries ago. Although these in Massachusetts are not overlage, there would be room for a normal-sized person today to sit inside them. Practically speaking, however, they would seem to me better suited to people about three feet tall—or shorter.

A gaggle of theories as to their use have been offered, ranging from

"steam baths for Indians" to cells where fugitive Irish monks practiced alchemy, to the inevitable "colonial root cellars." While it is true that they are usually found near abandoned farmsites, the beehive structures are so awkwardly situated that the colonists would have had a deuce of a time getting at their produce.

There are many such structures and variants on the idea scattered around North America. In Massachusetts, they are also found not far north of here near Leverett and Shutesbury. Large, freestanding stone beehives occur in Ohio and Virginia and several western states. (See Florence, Arizona, for what are by far the most striking structures of the latter type.)

Ware (4 mi. SE of Quabbin on S.R. 9.) Two sizable crocodilians appeared in the Dismal Swamp area outside this town in 1922. The big one, that got away, was estimated to have been between six and eight feet long. Another one two feet long was captured. About 10 miles away and 15 years later, on June 6, 1937, two crocs 18 and 15 inches long, respectively, were nabbed. They had appeared suddenly in the middle of the Franconia Golf Course near Palmer, a few miles southwest.

Misplaced crocodilians popping up at the unlikeliest times and places are almost a distinct specialty among Fortean data snippers, since there are so many well-attested incidents on record, and since conventional, laboratory-bound herpetologists scoff at the notion. The stock-in-trade newspaper and popular-science explanation, that they are all "escaped or discarded pets," does not hold up in most cases. For example, Fort recorded incidents of "crazy crocs" falling straight out of the skies, on two occasions in Charleston, South Carolina.

Wendell About 12 miles north of Pelham, dug into a hill called Mt. Mineral, is a more accessible beehive cave. The site was at one point open to inspection, more or less as a tourist attraction. (Inquire locally for location instructions.) Although it is a little smaller even than the Pelham cave, it does have some more interesting features. Near it is a well-known mineral spring, and this has led to some conjecture that the beehives might have been built as "cure houses" by the Indians. Also in the area is a primitive monolith with a carving that suggests a monk, or something like one, seated inside a beehive. Some informed opinion has held that the glyph was made at least 900 years ago. The few archaeologists who have been coaxed into commenting have branded the stele as "unverifiable" or "probable hoax."

UPTON (11)

(12 mi. SE of Worcester on S.R. 140.) On private property here is a freestanding stone beehive structure, although this one might more accurately

be called an "igloo" because of its 14-foot entryway. Since the entrance lintel is only four feet high, it rather makes one wonder if the old legends about "little people" among the Indians of this area might not have some relevance. Archaeologists rubber-stamp such structures as "colonial root cellars," which certainly may be true in some cases, but not for all of the dozens of unknown stony crypts that pepper the New England landscape.

WESTFORD (12)

(10 mi. SW of Lowell, off I-495.) On Prospect Hill, about 20 feet east of Tyngsboro Road and a half-mile north of the library at Westford Center, a rocky ledge bears an unusual combination of holes, lines, and discolorations. With a lot of squinting and the sun at the right angle, you might be able to make out the upper torso of a "Scottish knight," wearing a mailed cap and holding a huge broadsword before him. At least, that is what a good many partisans of pre-Columbian explorations by Europeans claim. In fact, they are quite specific: The figure represents Prince Henry Sinclair, a Scottish noble who arrived here in 1398. Antiquarians wave the whole thing away as a mere Indian "dot-pecking" of a tomahawk that happened to be installed on a particularly freakish-looking chunk of rock.

The overall pattern is five and a half feet high and consists mainly of small punch-holes, a technique of outlining used also on some Norse runestones. The supposed sword, or at least the hilt and pommel, are rendered this way, with the "blade" usually helped out a little by whoever is publishing the figure. Many other figures, from falcons to Masonic emblems, have been seen in the rock by generations of interpreters.

MICHIGAN



ARCADIAN COPPER MINE (1)

(Keweenaw County and Isle Royale National Park on the Upper Peninsula.) To the best of my knowledge, this is the only place in the world with a large lode of native copper, that is, the pure metal in nuggets and chunks. A long time ago somebody found that out and dug about 5,000 small pit mines here, extending for more than 100 miles along Lake Superior's south shore. In fact, every copper mine now functioning in this area has been found to have been worked in prehistoric times.

The copper undoubtedly was exploited by a highly organized civilization: Many aspects of the engineering of the early mines are quite remarkable. And yet, no indications of settlement, no human or animal bones, and no burials have been found here. There are no indications that the Indians knew or cared anything about the place.

It has been estimated that 100 million to 500 million pounds of copper may have been extracted here in ancient times. But even the lower figure represents a far greater quantity than primitive America could in all probability have absorbed. There are only a few indications of copper use by North American aborigines. As we have seen, some mounds and other burials have contained copper artifacts, including "armor" found on skeletons at Walkerton, Indiana, and Fall River, Massachusetts.

The brothers Willis once asked in their magazine, *INFO Journal*, whether it is possible that sailors from the ancient Near East might have crossed the Atlantic 5,000 or so years ago and sailed up the Great Lakes to mine here. At least one archaeologist, Dr. Eiler L. Henrickson of Carleton College in Minnesota, has expressed the same idea and begun an investigation to resolve the matter. Charles Fort, however, raised otherworldly possibilities. After pointing out the difficulty of accepting an Indian origin for the workings, Fort wrote: "I think that we've had visitors: that they have come here for copper, for instance."

Despite the evident lack of habitations at the mines, some artifacts have been found here. In the remote southwest corner of North Carolina, in the town of Marble, a private museum owns some of the strange sculptures that came from the Arcadian Copper Mines. I have no picture of them, but they have been compared to such semiabstract subjects as spacemen—or even Bigfeet.

LUDINGTON (2)

For years there have been rumors and reports of persons vanishing under unknown circumstances in the waters of Lake Michigan near this resort community. Local officials have written the disappearances off as accidental drownings or suicides, although not a single body ever has been found. One police representative is quoted speculating that "strong lake currents sweep the bodies away, and the water is just too cold to encourage skin divers to search for the corpses." There are some who posit the existence of a sort of "Lake Michigan Triangle," based on the surprising number of ships that have come to grief in those waters over the years, and Ludington is often spoken of as one of the three points. (Why these things always have to be "triangles" escapes me.)

MACKINAC ISLAND (3)

Indians believed the Sugar Loaf, a 50-foot-high conical rock in the center of the isle, to be the wigwam of the mighty turtle god of this area. It was

regarded as one of the great shrines of "medicine" in North America and offerings were always made here by Indian voyagers passing through the area. Sorcerers also lavished attention on the place and may have had a loose-knit organization that headquartered here.

MONROE (4)

(Abt. 30 mi. SW of Detroit on I-75.) There have been freakish, UFO-related goings-on around southeast Michigan since the 1890s. In recent years, saucer and creature sightings have increased dramatically since construction of the Enrico Fermi atomic power plant in a swamp near Lake Erie. On lonely Mentel Road, cutting through marshes and woods, monster rumors were particularly rife in 1969. A woman and her daughter reported that one tried to grab the girl as they were driving in their car. There were reports of frogs suddenly falling silent of a summer night, followed by crashing sounds and great hulking shapes seen lurching through the underbrush. A 15-year-old girl saw something "big and black and terrible" under a backyard apple tree by moonlight.

In early August of that year, practically everyone on Mentel Road between Fix and Nardeau roads spoke of having seen the Bigfoot at least once. The correlation with the atomic power plant fits with theories of paranormalists who suspect that many strange phenomena may be a sort of semifocused protest by the unconscious biosphere at humanity's increasing disruptions of the harmonious life of all.

OAKLAND COUNTY (5)

(Includes northwest suburbs of Greater Detroit.) A big rash, or gnash, of misplaced crocodilians occurred in southeast New York State in the 1920s and 1930s. At about the time that the New York session was ending, in 1938, a croclike animal 22 inches long was caught on the banks of the Huron River, southwest of Detroit. But the action began in earnest in this lake-peppered country 40 miles farther north, in 1953. Since that time, at least a dozen of the large, vicious beasts have been seen, caught, or killed in the general vicinity. The biggest one, upward of six feet long, slithered around in Island Lake, but was never caught (many of these specimens vanish as mysteriously as they appear).

An 18-incher with apparent political interests was grabbed up by the tail in the state capitol building at Lansing in June of 1968. And the latest occurrence that I have word of—a three-footer—was just east of Detroit in Windsor, Ontario, in September of 1970.

This is really a startling frequency for an anomalous event. I don't know anything about figuring probabilities, but the odds against this sort of thing must have a lot of zeroes behind them. Unhappily, I have no better insights

on what it all means: There is a temptation to burrow into books and see what the crocodile meant to the ancients, but that will have to be resisted for now.

PENFIELD (6)

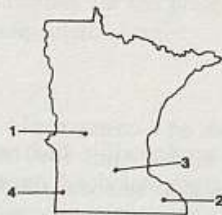
(7 mi. NE of Battlecreek on a county road.) Farmer George Parks told the *Detroit Evening News* in mid-April 1897 that he had observed "a very bright object that appeared to be about 100 feet from the earth and swiftly approaching." Humming as it flew over, the object dropped practically at Parks's feet "a large wheel made of aluminum, about three feet in diameter, and turbine in shape." This was right in the middle of the wave of screwball flying contraptions that were seen all over the country in the late 1890s.

SISTER LAKES (7)

A Bigfoot with a vengeance—its tracks measured five inches across and a full 18 inches long—stomped about here during the period following June 9, 1964. It was described as about nine feet tall with a leathery, humanoid face. Gordon Brown, an itinerant berry picker from Georgia, was the first to see it. He said that he had glimpsed it once before, in 1963, but had feared ridicule. The same day, Mrs. John Utrup reported that she had stepped into her backyard to investigate a noise, when she heard "great thundering feet" pounding in her direction and felt "the ground trembling" as our friend approached to scare her.

Ground-shaking is an old talent of Bigfeet of all sizes. It may have something to do with the fact that their tracks are often impressed far deeper into hard ground than their weight could justify. Next day, June 10, the shaggy thing appeared and made baby-crying noises—another common trait. On June 11, Joyce Smith and Patsy and Gail Clayton, all aged 13, were walking on a lonely road in Silver Creek Township when the Superfoot honored them with a rare daytime appearance. They ran away, and it luckily did not pursue.

MINNESOTA



ALEXANDRIA (1)

Prominently displayed here is yet another of those inscribed objects that had the dismal fortune to have been found in America, where the dogma is "No non-Indians before Columbus." If it had been found in Carthage or Samarkand, it no doubt would have been welcomed and given prominent display in many a museum. The Kensington Runestone is a 202-pound graywacke measuring 31 by 16 by 6 inches. Some have said it resembles a standard Viking ballast stone. It was found 18 miles southwest of here on a farm in Solem Township, outside Kensington. Farmer Olaf Ohman discovered it tangled in the roots of a 40-year-old aspen tree on November 8, 1898. Since the area was only then being pioneered, the clear implication is that the stone had been carved before whites settled the area.

The first complete translation of the runes was made by Hjalmar Holand, a student at the University of Wisconsin, in 1907. According to him, it is the longest runic inscription on stone that has ever been found:

*8 Goths and 22 Norwegians on
exploration journey from
Vineland round about the west We
had camp by [a lake with] 2 skerries 1
days journey north from this stone
We were [out] and fished one day After
we came home [found] 10 red
with blood and dead AV[e] M[aria]
Save [us] from evil*

Along the edge of the stone is the following:

*Have 10 of [our party] by the sea to look
after our ships 14-days-journey
from this island year 1362*

No one has ever successfully contested Holand's translation: He proved a formidable adversary in a decades-long series of scholarly forays against his beloved stone. A few lingering doubts are cherished by a good many savants, however, over the alleged use of certain obscure runes and vocab-

ulary that were not a part of the everyday language of fourteenth-century Norwegian Vikings. Another problem is the use of the word *hawet*, meaning a salt sea and not a lake, where the ships supposedly were left, a two weeks journey away. As this would make the idea of an expedition to the Upper Midwest untenable if taken literally, apologists tend to render the word as "lake" and assume that Superior or Hudson's Bay were meant, and that the carvers simply hadn't bothered to distinguish salt and fresh water.

Frederick J. Pohl, the dean of pre-Columbian explorations historians, begins a chapter on the runestone with the observation that a suitable motto for the entire affair might be: "Human nature revealed in the search for truth." I certainly hope not. There must be few sorer commentaries on the procedures and personalities through which we acquire our triple-distilled "truth" than this one. The story of the Kensington Runestone to date is one of intemperate outbursts, monumental mud-flinging, and outright lying by some amazingly high-placed pedagogues. One only wonders why they are so desperate to discredit a mere chiseled rock.

Farmer Ohman, who is usually accused of masterminding the evil scheme, got little for his pains. When young Holand first approached him to buy the stone, Ohman asked ten dollars for it. The student could only afford five, so the unprincipled faker and putter-on of *semper vigilantis* academicians simply gave the stone to him. Nor were the often very ugly academic and journalistic aspersions on Ohman's character exactly a personal triumph. But then perhaps that is the wages of hoaxing sin.

CHATFIELD (2)

(16 mi. SE of Rochester on U.S. 52.) It gets a bit tiresome, and it might tax the credulity of the reader, to unroll yet another story of mounds containing gigantic skeletons. But that is exactly what I must do here because few states are the source of a greater concentration of amazing reports. The only explanation I can figure out is that either the 1880s were a time of some strange long-bones mass psychosis from Indiana to California—or else there really was/is an exceptionally tall race of people interred in many mounds.

The Minnesota discoveries were reported in early numbers of the *Minnesota Geological Survey*, and in many stories in local and statewide newspapers, such as the *St. Paul Pioneer* and *St. Paul Globe*.

At Chatfield, we read of the excavation of a half-dozen skeletons of enormous size. Likewise at Clearwater, Minnesota, seven gigantic skeletons were uncovered in mounds. They reportedly were buried head down, and their skulls had receding foreheads and complete double dentition (which was found also on giant skeletons unearthed at Lompoc Rancho, California).

At LaCrescent, in the LaCrosse, Wisconsin, vicinity, mounds yielded giant skillets and huge bones. Near Dresbach, five miles north, mounds dug up in the expansion of a brickyard contained the bones of people who must have been more than eight feet tall. Similar remains were turned up at Moose Lake, Pine City, and Warren. According to the St. Paul *Pioneer*, the Warren mound yielded not only 10 gigantic human skeletons, but skeletons of dogs and horses. The latter is a mind-blower: Officially, there were no horses in North America until the arrival of the Spanish explorers. (All those huge herds of wild mustangs seen by pioneers, and the fleet ponies Indians used to wipe out their wagon trains had sprung up in a couple of hundred years. Right?)

Doubters, of course, need only shake their heads and ask to see some of these strange bones, then. And if Minnesota were all, we could join in the head-shaking and get on to more important things. As it happens, though, there have been so many other discoveries around the country that one is hard put not to become cynical. When we arrive at Lovelock, Nevada, we will see how the authorities have shunned contact with recently found long bones like original sin, with the result that all but a paltry few specimens have been lost, as will always happen with such remains if they are not institutionalized. So, for anyone now to demand hard evidence seems to be a bit of a "Catch 22" situation.

HUTCHINSON (3)

(Abt. 50 mi. W of Minneapolis on S.R. 7.) The McLeod County Museum has a human curiosity: the mummified body of a man of small stature, of which the head seems inordinately large. The figure looks like and usually is assumed to be an Indian, but next to nothing is known about the body, which is kept in a glass-faced coffin that I am told has not been opened for decades. In the upper lip and in the shin of one leg are embedded bronze pellets about the size of BB buckshot. One story told about the remain is that it was prepared from an Indian killed during an uprising in 1862, and then mummified by an unknown itinerant undertaker who had somehow learned that exotic art.

PIPESTONE NATIONAL MONUMENT (4)

(Abt. 45 mi. SE of Sioux Falls, S. Dak.) The smooth, soft, pinkish stone dug here and the 30 pits from which it comes have always been revered as a great magic place by Indians. The material has been used since time out of hand in making ceremonial pipes, or calumets. There are many legends to explain its significance, one of which is that the stone was formed from the flesh of esteemed ancestors and that the smoke from it carries messages to the gods. Many Indians say that they have the feeling of being "in church" when digging and working in the pits.

At one time, tribes from all over North America convened to trade or fight over the pipestone. Today, upward of 200,000 visitors each year watch Indians quarry the sacred stone and fashion pipes and other symbolic objects from it. Also in the area is a natural stone face called the Oracle, which certain Indians used to revere as a source of prophecies to their wise men. Behind the visitor center are 13 rocks on which prehistoric petroglyphs have been carved.

About 15 miles east of Pipestone, in the west end of Murray County, is a once-extensive series of ground effigies, formed of stones. The main figure still recognizable is a bison; with it are a cairn, small circles, and what are usually described as "pavements." About 40 miles south of Pipestone is the large complex of abstract ground figures at Gitchie Manitou, Iowa.

MISSISSIPPI



PASCAGOULA (1)

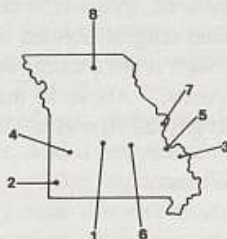
(On U.S. 90, btw. Biloxi and Mobile, Ala.) Although this quiet Gulf Coast community was "put on the map" by the reported UFO abduction of shipyard workers Charles Hickson and Calvin Parker on October 11, 1973, there have been other happenings around here. A number of creeks and rivers come together into the baylike Pascagoula River, where the two men were fishing on a steel pier along the east side, a couple of hundred feet north of the U.S. 90 bridge. One of the rivers outletting here is the Singing River, and the name means just that: For as long as anyone can remember, various haunting, semimusical sounds have been heard around the stream. Nowadays, the singing spot is supposed to be in the bay about two blocks from the Jackson County Courthouse. The sounds are said to be heard best during twilight hours at midsummer.

About a month after the Hickson-Parker affair, on November 6, there was another run-in with a strange craft by two men. These also were fishermen, and the craft was a USO—unidentified submerged object. Two brothers named Ryan called the local Coast Guard station at about 9 p.m. and reported strange activity in the Pascagoula near the Coast Guard station at the Gulf. Coast Guardsmen Charles Crews and Alan Nations went out in a launch and soon verified the Ryans' claim.

In their official report, Crews and Nations described the shiny metal object, three feet long and four inches wide, that had been moving about just

below the surface, with a bright amber light attached. The fishermen and the Coast Guard ship both chased the object around for a while, but it easily eluded them. Nuclear shipbuilding has been going on in this area for a number of years, and of course there has been a striking worldwide correlation between atom-related industries and the weird kingdom since the atomic age began during World War II.

MISSOURI



LAKE OF THE OZARKS (1)

(Abt. 45 mi. SW of Jefferson City on U.S. 54.) Tradition says that a gigantic animal with a 20-foot snaky neck and a long red tongue has been known to raise its green-scaled head from the waters and glare banefully at humans with its "one great eye, like a punch bowl of green fire." Beside all that, it also reputedly had a row of knobs the size of basketballs (why are size comparisons always couched in sporting terms, I wonder?) along its backbone. In short, "the Camden County sea serpent."

A search party supposedly went out but couldn't find anything. Local people are convinced that it was there: One fisherman said it was "a-churnin' up the water like a goddam' steamboat." However, all this happened back in 1935, and I do not know what might have recently transpired.

There are untold miles of caves around and perhaps under Lake of the Ozarks. About 15 miles south is Decaturville Dome, a geological freak show with upturned rocks around its edges, much fragmentation in the center, and mineralized zones containing lead and iron materials. The geological origin is unknown.

NEOSHO (2)

(16 mi. S of Joplin on U.S. 71.) The Hornet Ghost Light, located a few miles northwest of here in a rural area near the ex-town of Hornet, is one of the very few consistently performing mystery lights at this time in the United States. This evidently intelligent blob of brilliance has been carrying on its peculiar antics since at least the 1880s and has been seen by countless thousands of people over the years. Getting to it is a little tricky, and as with practically all of the nonsites with which I am dealing in this book, I strongly recommend local inquiry for directions and conditions.

The jumping-off place is Neosho, which takes a commercial interest in the phenomenon and publishes some freebie brochures and maps. Generally, from Neosho one takes S.R. 86 northwest to Racine, and beyond it a ways to C.R. BB. Go west on BB about four miles, crossing S.R. 43, to a T-crossroad; north two miles from here to the second unmarked road, and then west. The light frequents an area beginning a quarter-mile along this road.

It appears any time after sunset to just before dawn, looking rather dim at first, then flaring as if indignantly into a blaze too bright to look at. It is normally about the size of a baseball and may sometimes come searing down the road like a tracer round toward the cringing onlooker, suddenly halting as if yanked at the end of a long rope. Other times it (or a companion or two) will sway gently in the "pendulum movement" often reported of UFOs—which in a way this certainly is. Like other ghost lights, it avoids anyone who approaches it, and if pressed will simply go out and reappear at a proper distance.

Longtime residents of the area tell some stories indicating that the light, or one like it, sometimes involves itself in their affairs. Chester McMinn, a farmer near Quapaw, Oklahoma, recalled having it appear over his fields at night, as if to light the scene for his work. Others claim to have seen it investigating the interiors of automobiles, one of which it set afire. At least one person insists that he has seen the figure of an old woman walking along a road, with the light where her head should have been.

A more harrowing incident is related by Louise Graham, of the Neosho area. She was riding home in a school bus from a carnival at Quapaw, when the light suddenly swooped up and perched on the rear window of the bus as if it wished to enter. The passengers were badly frightened, and the driver was temporarily blinded and had to stop the vehicle. As he did so, the light drifted away.

It is of great interest to me that this area is shot through with abandoned mines. Local tradition holds that the light first began its career in 1886, causing great panic and the abandonment of some farms, as it ranged over hill and dale. I wouldn't know if there is any relation, but it appears that the Quapaw Indians had long used the area for a powwow ground before white settlers arrived.

The entity has been investigated by countless individuals and groups of all levels of scientific prowess. Perhaps the most elaborate study was conducted in 1946 by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps spent some little time in the area and reportedly ran numerous geophysical tests, including exploration of the "mines" underneath. The engineers also searched for natural gases, "fox fire," atmospheric electricity, radiation, and mirages. They checked an idea—very commonly advanced by explainers—that car headlights from various nearby roads might be involved. But if there was any discovery of the cause, it was never officially reported.

Headlight mirage theories of various rather tortured kinds are still vehemently advanced by those who are made nervous by anything running around loose without a positivist explanation. Lights from U.S. 66 are the usual assigned source. But, as so often happens, the explainers are willing to distort the history of the phenomenon to make their theories work out. The Hornet Light has been holding forth here since long before there were any cars.

Mystery lights are one segment on the odd phenomena continuum where seemingly natural occurrences overlap an area that we have been accustomed to consign to the occult or spiritual. Eyewitness reports on the famous Bell Witch episode in nineteenth-century Tennessee often remarked that, when the "witch" manifested out of doors at night, there were a flurry of lights like candles or lamps flitting across the field. And the similarities of the Hornet Light to UFO behavior are obvious, particularly in the investigating and pursuit of automobiles.

PERRYVILLE (3)

(65 air mi. SE of St. Louis.) The famous Avon Diatremes are another of Missouri's many structures whose geological origins are disputed. These are dikes or "pipes" of once-molten rock in an area with many faults or cracks. Theoretically, only a powerful explosion of some kind is now believed capable of breaking thick rock strata, permitting molten igneous matter to rise 1,200 feet to the surface as it has here. That's one concept, anyway.

ST. CLAIR COUNTY (4)

(Abt. 115 mi. SE of Kansas City on S.R. 13.) The Weaubleau Creek Disturbance, on private land a few miles north of Collins, features geological "piercement" structures in which large blocks of older rocks have been thrust upward like pistons through overlying layers of younger material. At least that is the prevailing interpretation for the geotectonic irregularities displayed here. But skeptics claim that this is like trying to force straws into brick walls without the speed of a tornado. The problem with present hypotheses is that the force necessary to bring about these results is unknown.

A sometime mystery light has been reported on farm property about five miles southwest of Collins. Known as the El Dorado Light, this is not a well-accepted one in the immediate area, meaning probably that its frequency of appearance is low (or that the property owner doesn't want to be bugged by visitors). It has also been called a hoax, by a civic spokesman from El Dorado Springs in 1976.

STE. GENEVIEVE (5)

A house at 1 North Street was reported some years ago by its then owners, the Jules Valle family, to be haunted. Mr. Valle said he had seen "three old men" wearing old-fashioned clothing passing through his bedroom at night on various occasions. Their spectral quality was emphasized by their having no lower appendages visible, which is a common trait of phantasms of all kinds (except Bigfoot!). However, Valle said the trio seemed friendly enough, and kept smiling and nodding to him.

STEELVILLE (6)

(On S.R. 8, abt. 75 air mi. SW of St. Louis.) Ten miles south of here and about three miles northwest of Cherryville is the Crooked Creek Disturbance, a roughly circular geological anomaly. Deep drilling has shown that the crater is filled with broken rock, the result presumably of another mystery explosion of the kind posited to have formed Missouri's several other geo-freaks.

ST. LOUIS METROPOLITAN AREA (7)

There are indications that present-day St. Louis may, at some pre-Columbian time, have been almost as big an urban center as it is now, the whole presumably tied in with the temple site at Cahokia, across the Mississippi to the east. Extending to the southwest, in Jefferson and Washington counties, Missouri, are large concentrations of those abstract, often quite strange carvings lumped together by our antiquarians as "Indian petroglyphs." More careful researchers have recorded that most Indians hold such rock carvings in awe and know no more about them than white experts. Washington State Park, in northeast Washington County, is one of America's major petroglyph sites.

Mystery footprints seem to have been almost as pervasive an emblem of Weird America as the numerous "footprints of the Buddha" that are proudly shown in so many Oriental lands. Ours differ in at least two ways, however: They have no swastikas and other mystic symbols embedded in them, and our learned ones deny that they signify anything. They were either "pecked" into rock by "Indians" or accidentally tracked into mud, which then accidentally hardened into rock. Nothing more to them than that.

We've already referred to the rock footprints of Mammoth Cave and Rockcastle County, Kentucky. The St. Louis area had a few also, as described in 1822 in the *American Journal of Science* by the noted ethnologist Henry R. Schoolcraft. He had studied a pair of these that had been quarried out of limestone deep in the ground near Herculaneum, in Jeffer-

son County, 25 miles south of St. Louis. This pair were not perfectly distinct, and Schoolcraft thought they may have been made by feet wearing moccasins. However, an amazingly clear pair of side-by-side footprints, 10½ inches long, were found in another quarry northeast of St. Louis and just across the Mississippi from the important Alton, Illinois, anomaly area.

Schoolcraft described the stone of both these sets as "secondary formation of the elder Floetz range." His opinion was that the "extreme naturalism" of the clear pair virtually ruled out their being carvings. Further, he doubted that the Indians had either the realistic art conventions or the kind of fine steel tools necessary to render such anatomically graphic footprints. Nor was scientist Schoolcraft particularly impressed with the perennial "mud" theory: These prints, of left and right feet, were arranged side by side in a rather formal way. But if they were merely accidental tracks in mud, he asked, where were the other tracks leading to them? And how could mud have solidified so suddenly as to preserve anything as transitory as footprints, anyway?

Just as they have east of the river, aerial abnormalities have been notable around St. Louis. Charles Fort records a bomblike blast that jolted the area on October 8, 1857. This was followed by visual effects described variously as lightning flashes or as luminous entities sounding a lot like modern UFO expressions. What interested Fort was that a slight shock had been felt four hours before the concussion, preceded by one three days previous. (Contemporary experts are only now noticing that earthquakes are not strictly a geological disruption, but occur in conjunction with atmospheric disturbances.) "Exploding meteorites" was the official explanation at the time, but Fort commented: "How could detonating meteors so repeat in one small local sky, and nowhere else, if this earth be a moving body?"

The 1948 "Big Bird" sightings that were so prevalent east of the river seem to have staged a trial run here in January. James Trares, then aged 12, excitedly informed his mother one day that "there's a bird outside as big as a B-29," which in those days was as big as they came. This was in the suburb of Glendale.

By late April, a number of people were seeing something up there in the wild blue yonder. A physician named Kristine Dolezal watched the thing on April 26. A group of instructors at the Mississippi School of Aeronautics observed "an awfully big bird" at 1,200 feet on the twenty-seventh. A salesman named Harry Bradford complained, "I've seen it three times in the last four days and that's too much tomfoolery for a man of fifty to take."

On April 30, Charles Dunn, an inspector for U.S. Steel Company, saw it "flapping its wings and moving quite fast at about 3,000 feet altitude, and it appeared to be illuminated by a dull glow. It looked about the size of a Piper Cub plane but there was no engine sound and it was not a plane."

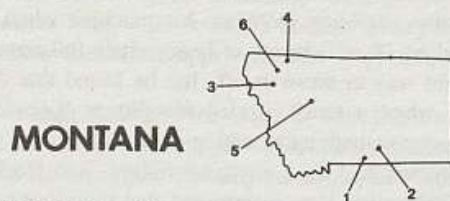
By 1959, things were getting downright dangerous. On May 15 of that year, an area under construction on Crestvale Avenue in the Rock Hill suburb was the target of the next demonstration from on high. Bulldozer operator Wallace Baker was rumbling along on his machine when there was a deafening clang and an 18-inch length of heavy chain fell across the hood. Baker's first thought was to throw it off, but he found that the 13 links were "white hot" when a touch sizzled his gloves. Looking up quickly, he saw only a vague something streaking away high in the sky.

None of the other workmen had seen anything falling, and Rock Hill Police Chief Marshall Whitecotton later determined that the close-by factory of McDonnell Aircraft had had no experimental plane in the air at the time. Whether anyone checked for airliners or ordinary aircraft, I do not know. Any evaluation of origins should also consider whether heavy log chain is used in short lengths on airplanes these days, as well as the extreme heat of the object.

This freaky flying circus struck again May 26, 1970. Mrs. Elida Kent, living on S.R. CC near Festus (and only a couple of miles south of Schoolcraft's footprint site at Herculanum), heard an explosion and saw a "red-hot cylindrical object" about two inches long in the grass outside her house. The article remained smoking hot for 15 minutes and then became heavily charred, as Mrs. Kent nervously looked on. She neither saw nor heard aircraft at the time. Deputy Sheriff Arch McKee took the object in charge and found that it had a leadlike interior. It was turned over to the St. Louis Planetarium, and that was the last that anyone heard of it.

SULLIVAN COUNTY (8)

In 1879, the *American Antiquarian* reported that a farmer in this north-central area had plowed up an ancient ritual mask in a field. At least, that's the label that was stuck on it, although I've noticed that, whereas a filing clerk gets dirty looks for stuffing too many papers into the "miscellaneous" file, antiquarians for years have been tucking away discoveries they don't understand under "ritual" or "ceremonial." The artifact was examined by one Hannibal Fox of Milan, who said it seemed to be an alloy of silver and iron that had been poured into a mold of a human face. It is doubtful that the Indians knew or cared about such technology. I do not know where the object is now, but I've made some inquiries, and am waiting for answers.



BEARCREEK (1)

(55 air mi. SW of Billings; abt. 3 mi. SE of Red Lodge on S.R. 308.) A humanlike tooth in which the enamel was represented by carbon and the roots by iron was found in a low level of the Bearcreek Mutual Coal Mine early in November of 1926. Archaeologist J. C. F. Siegfriedt made the discovery, and local dentists verified that the tooth exactly resembled a human second lower molar, according to reports in the *Carbon County News* for November 11, 1926. Dr. Siegfriedt estimated that the age of the coal level was 10 million or more years, having been laid down in the Eocene series. The "man" who grew the tooth would therefore have lived considerably in advance of both Neanderthal and Java types. Siegfriedt reported that he had carefully preserved the mineral matrix that had molded itself around the tooth. Established scientists were disinterested, however, and at this writing I have been unable to find any record of what happened to the items.

CROW INDIAN RESERVATION (2)

(Starts 5 mi. SE of Billings.) Along both sides of the road between Pryor and East Pryor are three humanoid ground figures, made up of lines of rocks. Near each of them is a cairn of boulders. There is a difference of opinion among scientists on whether Indians built these: Some claim they are "shame monuments" intended to warn tribal women of the risks of infidelity. Others, especially earlier researchers, seem not to have been told such things by the Indians. There are indications that cairns among the effigies were focuses for offerings by someone or other, since digs have shown them to be rich in stone carvings, glass beads, and animal bones. Present Indians have no such practices.

At the Blackfeet Indian Reservation, near Glacier National Park at the Canadian border, there was formerly an intriguing ground figure on a spot called Landslide Butte. In it were a 45-foot circle with a 12-foot circle on one side and three lines of rocks on the other. The common acceptance is that this represents a human, based mainly on what present Indians say, claiming that it is a construction by a man "long ago" who wanted to me-

morialize himself. However, some scientists have had reservations about the figure's anthropomorphism, chiefly because of the three "legs."

The totally unlikelike circular form and the lack of arms seem relevant also, as is the fact that representational human figures are quite common among the dozens of such ground effigies in the Great Plains. The illustration shows this Blackfeet effigy, together with a clearly human depiction from Cluny, Alberta, in Canada. Another three-legger occurs a short way west of Bozeman, Montana. Some experts believe that this latter is "phallic," but I suspect that when the Indians—or whoever made them—wanted to show something with three legs, that is what they did.

What that something might have been is of course as open to one person's conjecture as another's. A UFO enthusiast might say that they represent one of those often three-legged manifestations with as much right as someone else who opines that they show "men."

FLATHEAD LAKE (3)

(Starts 9 mi. SE of Kalispell, E of U.S. 93.) The Kootenay Indians are supposed to have legends about a lake "monster" coming up through the ice as the tribe was crossing the lake to their wintering area. The story is similar to accounts of an alleged saurian creature in Sweden's deepest lake, Storsjön. Since the 1960s, most sightings at Flathead have been reported at the south end of the lake, near the town of Polson. The creature is described as about 25 feet in length, black in color, and swimming with an undulating motion. It moves fast enough that it throws up a two-foot headwave.

Paul Fugleberg, editor of the *Flathead Courier*, maintains a dossier of reports and has offered a reward for the first photo of the being. However, Mr. Fugleberg informs me that, as of late 1976, there have been no sightings for several years. He himself does not claim to have seen the monster, "but many folks whose word I don't doubt for a minute have seen 'something strange.'"

GLACIER NATIONAL PARK (4)

And a strange entity has been talked of in Waterton Lake, which straddles the Canadian border at the north-central end of the park. In his book "Things," Ivan Sanderson discussed reports of the 1960s describing a creature between 35 and 40 feet long, which undulated (up and down) along the surface, and having a head with "two horns or tentacles." However, I have it from Mr. Charles B. Sigler, chief park ranger at Glacier in 1976, that the ranger in whose district Waterton Lake lies "has never heard of a monster in the lake. There are large mackinaw and rainbow trout, but none that we know of the size of a monster."

GREAT FALLS (5)

A certain spot along Interstate Highway 15 between here and Vaughn has lately been frequented by Bigfeet. On two occasions in 1976 alone, motorists passing the knoll that lies parallel to the freeway about five miles northwest of Great Falls have seen a large, hair-covered figure standing or walking by the road. The first incident was on February 22 when 29-year-old Leonard Hegele spotted two of the creatures striding along into an adjacent field at 10 A.M. Hegele grabbed a pistol and pursued the hirsute pair on foot, but halted when they turned and faced him. At the same time, Hegele told sheriff's authorities, he had seen a gray, oval object hovering about 100 feet over the beasts.

The second incident occurred July 28, when a woman on her way to work in Great Falls at 5:30 A.M. saw a Bigfoot between seven and eight feet tall standing on the north side of the road at about the same place as the Hegele sighting. She stopped beside the road, and as she did so the creature began walking west. That same day, an earthquake rated at 7.9 on the Richter scale jolted central Montana.

Since August of 1974, the five-county area immediately adjacent to Great Falls has been experiencing a dizzying flurry of unappealing activities. Fortunately, there has been an unusually enterprising lawman on hand to keep track of the events. In a recent book, *Mystery Stalks the Prairie*, Sheriff's Captain Keith Wolverton has observed a telltale sequence:

First there was the rash of cattle mutilations, then the many sightings of unidentified helicopters, followed by numerous UFO sightings and—more recently—the reports of people who saw one or more strange hairy creatures that walked upright like a man.

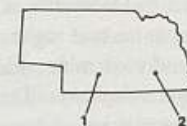
Along with the Interstate 15 site, another area where mutilations, UFO manifestations, and Bigfootery have occurred is an isolated strip of road called Bootlegger Trail, running just north of Great Falls. One of the few sites not in the Great Falls area is on a mountain just south of Butte, in federal forest lands of Silver Bow County.

The site is located 75 yards up the mountainside from a turnoff on the Forest Service road that runs south from Butte. A ring of rocks 61 feet in diameter enclosed a sort of natural pit, with a fire hole at the center, surrounded by an 18-inch circle of smaller stones. A large flat rock within the array had the following inscription daubed on it with paint: "ISIS favor us! Mother of moon (,) lover of goodness." Other rocks bore various other esoteric names and symbols. Isis, of course, was an ancient Egyptian deity whose animal symbol was a cow lying in a boat.

WHITEFISH (6)

(25 mi. N of Flathead Lake.) On November 17, 1975, there was a large UFO display. A V-shaped formation as big as the proverbial "football field," flew over the town. The craft appeared to be joined by long hoses, and tails flew behind the last two saucers as they noiselessly crossed the area at about 300 yards elevation. This occurred at a time of great UFO activity in Montana, and numerous animal mutilations of the kind concentrated around Great Falls.

NEBRASKA



COZAD (1)

(45 mi. SE of North Platte on U.S. 30.) Back in late 1975, information from an investigation report by Special Agent Donald E. Flickinger of the U.S. Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, was "leaked" to the press. Based on interviews by Flickinger with convicts Albert Kenneth Bankston and Dan Dugan, then serving time in federal prisons, the report indicated that "Satanic cultists" were responsible for the wave of cattle mutilations then creating excitement in western states.

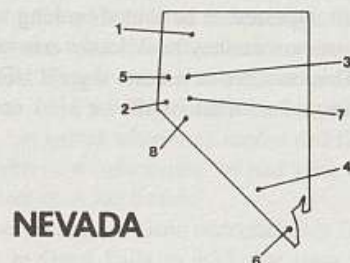
A gravel pit and small lake east of this town figure with sinister prominence in Flickinger's 12-page summary, which consists largely of a list of names of alleged participants in Satanic rites around the western states. Flickinger's convict informants told him that death cultists have met here since the summer of 1969. In that year, four teen-aged campers at the lake were killed by the group and their bodies mutilated ritualistically.

Cozad authorities reportedly confirmed that the area has been used frequently by "occult" groups and that various ceremonies have been held by them. Since then, I understand that local officials have searched the gravel pit and lake, but have found no human remains.

YORK (2)

(On U.S. 81, just N of I-80.) Beginning in December of 1896 and reaching a peak in February of 1897, the "great phantom airship" moved into the Midwest. Some of the first Nebraska sightings occurred over York, which is on the "Midcontinent Mystery Meridian." York is also a name of great

importance in the western mystery tradition, starting with the English shire of that name, and perpetuated now in the so-called York Rite of Freemasonry.



NEVADA

BLACK ROCK MOUNTAINS (1)

(75 mi. NW of Winnemucca.) In December of 1965, a California prospector named Richard E. York spent a bad night at Black Rock. He had gone to investigate an ancient abandoned mine, somewhere at the edge of the desert in the foothills of these mountains. During his second night at the mine, a stranger brandishing a pickax advanced upon his camp. The individual was old and had a long white beard. He was oddly dressed, with a beaver hat and a frock coat, as if he "wasn't from this century," as York put it. York greeted the fellow, but suddenly had to dodge the swishing pickax. He ran for his Jeep and as he roared away, the heavy ax glanced off the side of the vehicle. Old miners here have heard of the so-called Black Rock Boogie Man, but this was the first time in 30 years that the specter had been seen. (This is the most exact information I have at the moment, but I have been wondering if the period mightn't be closer to 28 years—a very common interval in "monsteriana" of all kinds.)

CARSON CITY (2)

In the summer of 1882, a quarrying excavation in the yard of the Nevada State Prison began to uncover a welter of ancient footprints molded into sandstone at a geological level of the Upper Pliocene. Among many different tracks "resembling" those of elephants, horses, wolves, and birds were six groups of humanlike footprints with alternate left and right shapes.

Each print was between 18 and 20 inches long and around eight inches wide. The straddle or distance between the line of left and right rows of tracks was about 18 inches. Scientist O. C. Marsh, who wrote up the discovery in the *American Journal of Science*, felt that the size of the prints and their straddle ruled out their being of human origin. He was sure that they had been made by a "large Sloth" which, however, would have had

to practice the strange habit of waddling so that "the hind feet covered the impressions of those in front," in the words of Dr. Marsh.

A possible reason why our illustration looks like a sandal-print is that the exact surface on which the track was made was not cut through by the quarriers. Of course, we can't completely rule out the wearing of a sandal, either—can we?

LOVELOCK (3)

(80 mi. NE of Reno on I-80.) In 1911, one of the most tantalizing mysteries of this mysterious West, with possible links to many of the other riddles we have considered, began to unfold in an obscure cave near here. The first of a large number of giant human skeletons unlike those of any known Indians were discovered by guano miners. Today, so far as I can determine, none of the complete skeletons survive, although some bones and artifacts are owned by a private museum at Winnemucca, Nevada.

If the records and observations of mining engineer and amateur archaeologist John T. Reid are reliable, this must have been one of the most unfortunate examples yet of scientific pussyfooting around "hot potato" discoveries that would threaten established dogmas of human history in North America.

Lovelock Cave is located about 10 miles southwest of here on the Humboldt Sink. A guano mining operation began to uncover mummified, red-haired remains when it had dug down about four feet. The local Piute Indians had long talked of such a people and the bloody struggle their ancestors had waged against them, but their legends were not taken seriously until physical evidence began to be found.

In fact, so fierce was the Piute hatred of these redheads, and so desperate did their fight against them become, according to their traditions, that a joint campaign was organized with many other intermountain Indian tribes who were normally at odds with each other, to exterminate the Si-Te-Cahs, as the Piutes called the lanky redheads. This went on for years, with huge casualties on both sides, until finally what was left of the Si-Te-Cahs were driven back to where they had come from, in the Pit River area near Shasta Lake and Mt. Shasta, California.

When the large bones and mummies—from six and a half to more than eight feet in length—began to be unearthed engineer Reid immediately contacted a number of big-gun anthropological departments, such as the Smithsonian and the University of Pennsylvania, and offered them the chance to retrieve bones and artifacts as they were shaken off the screens of the guano sifting machine. But everyone shied away until, about a year after most of the bones had been discarded by the busy miners, a non-professional observer was sent by the University of California.

He and another chap who came later from New York poked about desul-

torily. Local people who helped these gentlemen were puzzled that they studiously avoided the whole matter of bones, concentrating on picking over fragments of basketry and pottery shards. In fact, in at least one case the New York guy insisted on immediately reburying an entire giant skeleton that was turned up. To complete the charade, nothing whatever was published on the findings of the pair until a small article came out in California in 1929, a full 17 years after their visit.

At some point, John T. Reid began to get a bit suspicious and started documenting the entire long-bones matter as best he could. His memoirs and the many testimonials he gathered from reputable local people—and his speculations on what the giant men were really “up to” here—are in the Nevada Historical Society library today and make extremely absorbing reading.

Other bones and artifacts continued to turn up. In February and June of 1931, skeletons were found in the Humboldt lake bed near the cave. The first of these was eight and one-half feet long and appeared to have been wrapped in a gum-covered fabric somewhat after the Egyptian manner. The second was almost 10 feet long, according to the *Lovelock Review-Miner's* article of June 19, 1931. On September 29, 1939, the *Review-Miner* reported the discovery of a seven-foot-seven-inch skeleton on the Friedman Ranch near that town.

Some Indians told Reid that they had encountered, but hadn't disturbed, petrified bodies of the peculiar giants lying in the open in a wilderness area south of Lovelock Cave. One of the most fascinating objects attributed by the Indians to these people is a stone pyramid in New York Canyon near Job's Peak on the east side of the East Humboldt Range, 25 miles southeast of Lovelock in Churchill County. Unfortunately, this has been somewhat disarranged by earthquakes in recent decades.

Eventually, in the face of the obvious reluctance of the scientific establishment to involve itself in the matter, makeshift displays of the more striking discoveries were set up in Lovelock and other towns. It was at one of these, in a shed in Lovelock, that fire destroyed a wealth of invaluable material, including skeletons, intricate carvings (some of them apparently on marine shells), and articles laboriously made of colored feathers.

What little remains of the Si-Te-Cah discoveries may be seen at the museum of Clarence “Pike” Stoker, 533 East Second Street, Winnemucca. The articles include a skull, other bones, and miscellaneous artifacts, and they are shown “during the summer months, by appointment,” Pike informs me. There are also some baskets and beads—but no bones—from the cave on display at the museum of the Nevada State Historical Society, 1650 North Virginia Street, Reno. The official position there is that the cave people were the *ancestors* of the Piute. (The Indians get a kick out of that one.) There is no mention of their abnormal skeletons, however.

If ever there was an area ripe for serious reexamination this must be it.

Because of the long series of battles, there should still be many bodies of the giants shallowly buried. The best places to look would probably be around the Carson Sink, and particularly near Pelican Island and the southwest shore of that dry lake. A gravel pit near Perth, a few miles southwest of Lovelock along the railroad, has yielded mummies and artifacts. The Indians maintain that there also are caves in the vicinity of Pyramid Lake Reservation, about 55 miles west of here, that still contain bodies and articles.

MERCURY (4)

This dot on the map has been a key headquarters for Atomic Energy Commission underground tests, at the Nellis Air Force Range and Nuclear Testing Site. Oddly enough, the town has also been mentioned, by outerlimits researcher John Keel, as the site of a peculiar part of the John Kennedy assassination conspiracy. A Canadian businessman, Richard Giesbrecht, said he had heard two men discussing the assassination in an airport restaurant. One of them apparently was the suspected conspirator David Ferrie, who himself died after the killing of President Kennedy.

Giesbrecht reported what he had overheard to the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Later, he said, the FBI called him back and told him to forget the matter because “it's too big. . . . We can't protect you.” What Giesbrecht had overheard was Ferrie saying, “Now we're getting all the money we need from Mercury, Nevada.”

PYRAMID LAKE (5)

(Abt. 30 mi. NE of Reno along S.R. 34.) If caves and long-ago Indian battlegrounds around this lake contain giant, redheaded skeletons (*see* Lovelock, Nevada), it would befit another legend about the place. For, the local Piute Indians in whose reservation the lake lies believe that the footprints of some sort of monster can be seen in the lake bottom in clear weather. White residents nearby tend to minimize the idea . . . but most of them decline to swim or boat in Pyramid Lake.

SEARCHLIGHT AREA (6)

Grapevine Canyon (Along Colorado River, abt. 28 mi. N of Needles, Calif.) One of the “thousand and one nights” of prospector lore is the story that a Chinese junk was once dug out of placer gold levels in the Sacramento Valley of California. As yet I have been unable to document that one. But another much more tangible piece of suspected western Orientalia is the cliff in this canyon, a short distance in from the river. The

rock is covered with petroglyphs bearing a strong similarity to ancient Chinese.

Orientalist Jonathan Endicott Gardner examined the inscriptions in the 1930s and affirmed that, whatever their origin, the marks had a stronger resemblance to ancient Chinese characters found in China than do modern-day pictographs now in use there. The suspicion that they may have been a modern imposture is nullified by their thick coating of the extremely slow-forming "desert varnish" of iron and manganese oxides. However, they're probably not older than the last interglacial epoch of the Pleistocene.

Recently there has been a revival of interest in the idea that certain ancient Chinese manuscripts may describe voyages to what is now North America. The *Shan Hai Kang* (Classic of Mountains and Seas), written by a certain Yu in about 2250 B.C., has been called the world's oldest geography book. Yu was an emperor-presumptive of China who claimed to have made a sort of grand tour across "the Great Eastern Sea" to a fabulous land that some have taken to be the southwestern area of North America. Somewhat later, in the fifth century A.D., a Buddhist monk named Fu Sang sketched out a similar odyssey. But most Orientalists, to be sure, smile at the idea that these are anything more than Munchausenist allegorical fables—just as they pooh-poo Gardner's ideas on the petroglyphs.

Nelson (20 mi. N of Searchlight on U.S. 95 and S.R. 60.) Two gold mines in the Eldorado Mountains near this ghost town were the scene of so much triple-distilled horror and homicide in the past century that they have long been avoided by miners, despite the fact that their rich lodes were barely scratched. Some people around here are convinced that the mines lie under some sort of curse, which some theorize might relate to the fact that the area once was a sacred one to the Piute Indians.

The older of the two mines is the Techatticup, first opened by the Spaniards in the eighteenth century. The working of the mine—which was found to contain a vein of nearly pure gold—stirred up such extraordinary fury in the Piute that the Spaniards finally gave up on it after bloody battles and hundreds of casualties stretching over a century. By the mid-nineteenth century, the Indians were no longer a problem and white miners were once again working the area.

A second mine adjoining the Techatticup was opened and named the Queen City. Before long, the Queen City was purchased by mine baron George R. Hearst of San Francisco (the father of the newspaper baron), who for some unexplained reason shut the mine down and never operated it. The story of the ensuing murders is too complex to detail here, but basically it seemed to involve a struggle for control of the mines by a rival individual, or possibly a group, from San Francisco.

A San Franciscan named John Nash eliminated an unknown but large number of rival miners by stabbing, poisoning, gunfire, and any other con-

venient means. He even attempted at one point to move in on Hearst's unworked property, before he himself ended up floating in the Colorado River.

Whether or not there is any relation with the disturbed aura around the mines, I am told that a dry lake bed outside Nelson has a set of rocks that occasionally move under their own power. (See also Death Valley National Monument, California.)

SINGING SAND MOUNTAIN (7)

(Churchill County, abt. 18 mi. SE of Fallon on U.S. 50, and N 3 mi. on gravel road.) This is another of the "musical sands" anomalies of the kind I have noted in Hawaii and Massachusetts. Individual perceptions of these sounds vary, but most people observe that the sand has a sort of musical crunch when trod upon. If wind or jostling start a slide, the sound is likened to the roaring of a jet engine.

On the other hand, some people say that they hear nothing out of the ordinary. Next time I am in the area, I am going to try Dr. Bolton's experiments of removing samples of the sand from where it lies to see if it retains its musical talents. (For a method of checking this, see Kauai Island, Hawaii.)

This area is badly faulted and considered seismically dangerous. Thus, the appearance of a pure sand hill here all by itself seems highly analogous with the freak dune array in the geologically troubled San Luis Valley of Colorado.

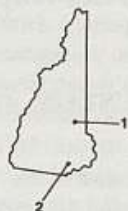
The accepted explanation for this formation seems labored: Since the mountain consists of abnormally uniform and fine grains of quartzite, mechanists have said that it must have been carried here by prevailing winds from Carson Lake to the west. The heavier grains supposedly dropped off along the way without heaping themselves into dunes, while the finest ones suddenly left the wind's embrace at this very precise place. About 30 miles northwest is the supremely important area near Lovelock where so many human riddles abound. (On another fine-grained dune, see Ft. Myers, Florida.)

WALKER LAKE (8)

(Starts 5 mi. N of Hawthorne, along U.S. 95.) There were Indian legends of a man-eating monster in this lake, although it was supposed to eat only whites, by agreement with the Redmen. As recently as April of 1956, a couple from Babbitt, Nevada, claimed to have seen the creature swimming with the speed of a high-powered motorboat and performing aquabatics that seemed to be for their entertainment as they drove by on shore. They reported that the beast swam straight at them at great speed for about a

hundred yards, then whipped to the left and dived. They thought it was around 50 feet long.

NEW HAMPSHIRE



MOUNT SHAW (1)

(Abt. 5 mi. SW of Ossipee, in Carroll County.) There is an apparent sacrificial stone on top of the hill that is virtually identical to the one at Mystery Hill, downstate. There are those who believe that this was the site used by the English "magician," Aleister Crowley, for the New Hampshire magical retreat of 1918 that he mentions in his *Confessions*. He gives the name of the spot as Lake Pasquany, but there is no such place in the state and the assumption is that he meant Lake Winnepesaukee, which is near here.

NORTH SALEM (2)

(From Manchester, abt. 18 mi. SE on S.R. 28 to Salem; 5 mi. NE on S.R. 111.) Comparisons are always difficult, but I suppose if I had to point to the three or four sites that are the most perplexing and have the strongest aura of uncanny import in Weird America, this would be one of them. Mystery Hill has been called an American Stonehenge, the ruins of the Irland-it-Mikla of Norse saga, and a few other semifabulous things.

Included among the fixtures are such puzzlers as a great stone table that some have taken for a sacrificial slab; the apparent sighting devices of an ancient equinox observatory; and a deep "well" where quartz crystals that wouldn't occur naturally have been found.

The main complex of twisting, elbowing, and overlapping stone structures sprawls over almost an acre on the top of Pattee's Hill, a 245-foot eminence about 25 miles from the Atlantic in this now increasingly urbanized area. The complex may be at least partly built up from a natural cave system in the hill; in any case, archaeological strata go down a long way into the hilltop and I don't believe that any digs have hit bottom yet. The material used is stone, ranging in size up to 20-ton monoliths and bearing marks that do not seem to have been made by modern metal tools.

The complex is a bit much for a root cellar, so it has been dismissed as a sort of "folly" or spare-time construction project by the farmer named

Jonathan Pattee who lived here in the 1820s. Most archaeologists have satisfied themselves that Pattee was "an eccentric" and now seldom waste time thinking about the place.

The centerpiece seems to be a rocky mound containing a T-shaped cavern. This has internal structures that have been compared with a hearth and chimney, and a "couch," all sculpted from rock. From the couch, a pipe-like orifice ascends to open below a great, grooved stone table in the air above. This table weighs about four and one-half tons, and the top surface easily holds an adult human being, fully stretched out.

Around its edges runs a deep channel, and naturally this has led to conjecture that the platter may have been used for human sacrifice, with the grooves set up to catch the blood. The tube from the crypt below is often called a "speaking tube" because, as might be expected, voices coming through it sound sort of spooky. But, if there is anything to the blood sacrifice theory, perhaps the tube could have been a blood channel to some sort of hierophant below. Such practices were common in a number of historic mystery cults.

Another intriguing feature near the east end of the complex is a shaft, about 18 feet deep, with stone walls that are curved on three sides and flat on the fourth. From the bottom of this pit, remarkable clusters of quartz crystals have been recovered that, I am told, do not occur naturally anywhere within 100 miles of here. Possibly some anthropological descriptions of the use of quartz "power crystals" by Indian sorcerers might shed light here, although there are no indications that Indians per se ever had anything to do with this place.

There are many other constructs spread over 30 acres on the hilltop, most of them resembling the dolmens and domed "beehive" houses that are found so commonly in Irish and Scottish megalithic sites. Inscriptions on some of these are much like some of the symbols used by the Phoenicians. Among them are many carved figures of the labrys or double ax, and since this figure is often associated with such early civilizations as the Cretan, there are those who have suspected a Mediterranean link with Mystery Hill.

William B. Goodwin, an amateur archaeologist of Hartford, Connecticut, was the main advocate of the idea that Mystery Hill was the remnant of Irland-it-Mikla, or Great Ireland, of Norse exploration sagas. He thought it had been built by Irish Culdee monks, who possibly fled the Norse across the Atlantic after the ninth century. Subsequent research has undermined this idea, without offering any viable alternatives. In the 1950s, amateur archaeologist Frank Glynn discovered pottery shards that seem unrelated to any known Amerind ceramics. He further called attention to a white pine tree growing through one of the walls that was found to have a tree-ring age of at least 30 years prior to the birth of farmer Pattee in 1796.

This was important because the position of most professional experts is

that this entire complex was built by Pattee and "his five sons" as a sort of crankish Saturday-afternoon tinker project. The line of official thinking is full of amusing conceits. For example, archaeologists seem to have cast about widely for an innocuous purpose for the grooved, man-sized slab: The usual explanation one hears is that this was Pattee's "cider press" or "soap-making stone." Recently, however, these hypotheses have taken a bit of a setback, since it has been established that Pattee did not have five sons, but four daughters and one son. He must have either hired the stonework done or cajoled a lot of volunteer help from his neighbors. In any case, the entire debate has become academic, since recent radiocarbon datings have proved the site to have been in existence by at least 1690, or about 10 years before the first known white settlers.

The Mystery Hill complex as a whole is jarringly out of character with any known American aboriginal constructions, because no Indian culture yet found on this continent possessed a specifically Megalithic building style. The workings here are most similar to structures found among late Neolithic farming communities of Western Europe that had come under influence of the so-called Megalithic Missionaries.

Between 5000 and 3500 B.C., these practitioners of massive stone masonry spread their doctrine from the Mediterranean to the outer islands of Scotland. If this theory is correct, then, Mystery Hill might indeed be an American Stonehenge, since that world-famous monument is believed to spring from this Megalithic grand style, as did the tomb gateways of Britain and Ireland, and the famed Lion Gate at Mycenae.

Finally, there are distinct calendrical aspects. On the stone now named the "Winter Solstice Monolith," the rays of the setting sun stream in a direct line across the center of the supposed Sacrificial Table on the first day of winter, December 21. Similar standing stones at various other spots in the walls of the main site are being investigated for astronomical alignments at other times.

At Raymond and Kingston, New Hampshire, about 15 miles to the north and northeast, there are smaller stone structures resembling the one at Mystery Hill. At Acworth, some 60 miles northwest of here, in Sullivan County, three stone beehive cells stand on a hilltop. It seems highly unlikely that all these were built by skylarking farmers.

NEW JERSEY



CALDWELL (1)

(Abt. 8 mi. NW of Newark on Bloomfield Ave.) Chronicling mysterious human disappearances, Charles Fort once wrote—only half-jokingly—"I believe that we are fished for." I do not know if he had collected any previous "fishlines of the gods" incidents, but the case that occurred here in 1970 was such a delightful classic and was so preposterously ignored by all orthodox men of knowledge that I'm sure the old boy would have loved it.

Two "silvery threads" converged in the general area of Forest and Hillside avenues. One of them ended about 150 feet above the A. P. Smith house, 85 Forest Avenue; the other hung over a swimming pool not far away. Ivan T. Sanderson estimated that the lines ran upward at 30 to 50 degrees from horizontal, and in different directions of the compass. They remained tight and stationary for about a month, Sanderson observed, and seemed undisturbed by several bad electrical storms and high winds. This clearly ruled out their being attached to a renegade kite or balloon.

Finally, on the afternoon of Monday, August 31, 1970, Mrs. Smith heard "a loud thunderclap," which she attributed to a jet breaking the sound barrier, and shortly afterward saw that some of the string had dropped to the ground. Mr. and Mrs. Smith hauled down quite a lot of the stuff (which still somehow hung suspended in the sky) until its angle dropped so low that it snagged on tall trees.

The "skyline" over the swimming pool dropped at the same time and was pulled down for almost an hour by some young people, until they grew tired of the task and had acquired a pile big enough to fill a 55-gallon oil drum. In both cases, the line raveled up as soon as it came to earth just as if it had come off a small spool. It was described as translucent and quite stiff, like a fiber from a plastic broom.

Sanderson had the material analyzed by the DuPont chemical people, who reported that it was like a "Type 6 Nylon caprolactan, or possibly Copolymer Type 6 or 66." It was not, DuPont said, of their manufacture, although it closely resembled their "lead line" for fishing tackle. Sanderson turned another sample over to a Dr. Vargas, analytical chemist at Rhode Island University. Vargas confirmed DuPont's identification, and

added that the material was originally tubelike or hollow in cross section. To his amazement, however, Vargas noted that the cavity became filled with some other solid substance after he had stored it for a time in a vacuum chamber. This substance "defied analysis," he reported to Sanderson.

If ever there was a case showing some fundamental flaw in our official methods of acquiring "knowledge" about the material world, this would be a strong candidate. For scientists to ignore fleeting reports of long bones found in the middle of some desert might be one thing; but there is no excuse of short notice here: The skylines hung suspended near perhaps the largest urban concentration of rationalistic talent in the world for a month. But aside from Sanderson and a few other Fortean and "fringe area" investigators, nobody took the slightest notice. (See also Elberton, Georgia.)

CAMDEN (2)

The phantom sniper of Glassboro struck again around here between November of 1927 and February 1928. Fort notes that its specialty was windows of houses and car windshields. On February 8, 1928, stockbroker William Turnbull, a prominent citizen of Collingswood, was sitting at the window of his house when he suddenly was sprayed with glass specks. The window had been perforated by many tiny holes, but no projectiles were found. Turnbull recalled that an unknown automobile had pulled up in front of his house a few minutes earlier.

FREEWOOD ACRES (3)

(7 mi. N of Lakewood on U.S. 9.) This small community of central New Jersey is home to a virtually unknown colony of Mongolian Kalmucks who are followers of Tibetan Buddhism. There are reports that some of the stringy-bearded elders are adepts of the legendary Bon wizardry of Tibet and can perform wondrous feats.

In the town are four Buddhist temples and a lamasery, standing next door to an onion-domed Russian Orthodox church. More than 100,000 of the Kalmucks lived in eastern Russian territories until the Bolshevik Revolution, with which they had vigorous differences. A number fled Russia then, and a second wave were driven out after Stalin's onslaught against them for allegedly collaborating with the Germans during World War Two.

Religiously, these people venerate the Dalai Lama, who is seen as a god-king, even though he has long been living in exile in India. The spiritual leader here is Geyche Wangal, an elderly monk who has been translating major Tibetan Buddhist classics into English and recently has published *The Door to Liberation*, a book on Tibetan theology with a foreword by the Dalai Lama. Living at the lamasery today are several Kalmuck and Tibetan priests, along with occasional Americans studying this unique variety of Buddhism.

Centering on Howell Township, four miles north of Freewood Acres, a series of eerie, crackling booms shook buildings and panicked animals over a two-county area, in June and again on September 22 and 25, 1974. The air force categorically denied that aircraft could have caused sonic booms. The sessions went on for two hours at a time. Buildings, utility poles, and trees were "visibly shaken" as the journalists say, but oddly, no seismograph registered any earth tremors.

GLASSBORO (4)

(20 mi. S of Camden on S.R. 41/47.) A phantom sniper, using a gun that made no noise and seemingly nonexistent bullets, carried on here in early February of 1916. The Charles F. Repp house seemed to be the favored recipient of the fusillades. Fort notes that there were breaking glass sounds and occasional holes appearing in windowpanes. But nothing other than glass seemed to be affected (synchronously with the name of the town, perhaps), and no projectiles of any kind were ever found.

On September 4, 1964, a highly publicized UFO incident occurred near here in the vicinity of Lake Oberst. Red flashes in the sky and a spherical glowing object had previously been seen in the neighborhood for several days. On September 4, two persons saw the radiant entity come to earth for a few minutes. After it flew off, they found a crater about three feet across and 18 inches deep where it had alighted. This was at a time when the air force was still ham-handedly denouncing and discrediting sightings, and until fairly recently the Glassboro landing was thought to have been exposed as a hoax, admitted to in a highly dubious "confession" by a local student. The case has been reexamined, however, and generally rehabilitated as a legitimate sighting.

HACKENSACK MEADOWS (5)

Charles Fort was the first to notice the "crazy croc" syndrome, a specialty currently being kept up by creatures expert Loren Coleman. Fort recorded a 31-inch "alligator" that was killed here on September 19, 1929.

HAMMONTON (6)

(30 mi. SE of Camden off Atlantic City Expwy.) This entire area of south-central Jersey is one with countless strange happenings. Although within easy distance of great metropolises to the north and west, the Pine Barrens region around here is full of toughly impenetrable and still virtually uncharted knots of wilderness.

The Folsom Swamp, a few miles south of Hammonton along the Great Egg Harbor River, is one of the denser chunks of bog, quagmire, and woods this side of Georgia's Okefenokee. On December 5, 1931, many

residents were alarmed to see an "aviator in a parachute" falling from what appeared to be a burning aircraft. A well-meaning search party beat the bushes for some time, but found nothing. There have been many sightings of the semimythic "Thunderbird" hereabouts, which recently seems to have been busiest in West Virginia and Texas.

Now that Bigfoot is becoming almost as durable a media property as King Kong, it might be of interest to note that the "Jersey Devil" is one of the oldest regularly appearing "critters" in America, having been around long before monsters and prodigies of all kinds began to be noticed widely in these post-World-War-Two UFO boom times. The "Devil" has been solidly installed in Down Jersey folklore since the eighteenth century, and it seems that the town of Leeds Point (about 22 air miles southeast of here, near U.S. 9, on Great Bay) has had the main concentration of reports and rumors. As a *New York Times* article of August 6, 1930, pointed out, sightings have often occurred in August and September around cranberry bogs between Leeds Point and Mays Landing. The creature is described as a rather griffinlike feathered fox—sometimes winged—with a cry similar to the hoot of an owl. It leaves hooflike prints and has been known to chase cars. It has traditionally been linked to farm animal mutilations and vanishments.

A band of monster sightings also runs to the northwestward, between the Mullica and Great Egg Harbor rivers, toward Camden. Five students camping near Lake Atsion on the Mullica (about nine miles northeast of Hamonton) in 1960 were badly scared by shrieking in the night. Earlier that day they had found 11-inch, birdlike tracks near their camp. By 1966, quite a large number of dog disappearances were reported in that part of Burlington County. Fort mentions "Devil" sightings as far west as the Woodbury and Swedesboro areas, near the Delaware River.

MORRISTOWN (7)

(18 mi. W of Newark on S.R. 510.) The Morristown National Historical Park, a couple of miles southwest of town, has been a favorite "necking" area for years. It should not be too surprising to learn, therefore, that it has acquired some very interested voyeurs. Numerous people in parked cars have been badly frightened by approaches of Bigfoot-like entities over the years.

OLD BRIDGE (8)

(Abt. 10 mi. SE of New Brunswick on S.R. 18.) On the night of September 2, 1958, Mr. and Mrs. Dominic Bacigalupo were watching television in their living room at 336 Greystone Road. At 9:00 P.M., Mr. B. went to the kitchen to get some coffee. As he returned to the living room,

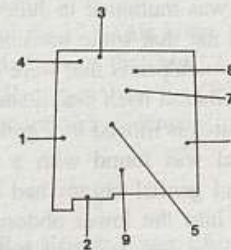
there was a shattering roar. A chunk of ice had torn a three-foot hole in the roof and ceiling of the kitchen where he had stood.

PEMBERTON (9)

(Abt. 30 mi. E of Camden on S.R. 530.) Here on the northwest edge of the Pine Barrens, a very strange ax or wedge was plowed up in a farm field in 1859. Characters on it were similar to the incomprehensible runes on the inscribed stone found in the Grave Creek Mound of West Virginia. The object was described by John C. Evans in letters to the American Ethnological Society, and by a Dr. Abbott of the Smithsonian Institution. Nobody seems to know where it is now.

TRENTON (10)

Two young men were hoeing weeds in a cornfield near here, on June 16, 1884, when stones fell on them from the sky. The next day, the same thing happened again. Since there were no buildings or fences or anything else behind which anyone could have hidden, the pair—George and Albert Sanford—took fright and went into Trenton to tell of their experience. They returned with a sizeable crowd, who could only watch as stones went on falling.



NEW MEXICO

BLACK ROCK LAKE (1)

(Or Salt Lake; 20 mi. NW of Quemado on S.R. 32.) These waters, worked by a salt-recovery firm, are highly sacred to the Zuñi and other tribes. The Indians still place prayer sticks at the edge of the lake and ritually pray for rain when drought threatens. The prayers usually work, observers say. Older Zuñi say this formation was created by the Zuñi Salt Woman, who comes to earth periodically and leaves barren spots everywhere she walks.

COLUMBUS (2)

(32 mi. S of Deming on S.R. 11.) The Tres Hermanas Hills are three neatly conical peaks sitting side by side just north of here along the west

side of S.R. 11. There is an extensive cave network in the hills, parts of which are naturally self-luminescent from radium salts among the rocks. These caverns are said to have been important in pre-Columbian mysticism. Certain observers of the contemporary occult scene speculate this role may continue today, with the Tres Hermanas area being used as a shrine of sorts by cultists operating between Mexico and the United States.

Just south of the hills, on the outskirts of Columbus, is a trailer park calling itself the City of the Sun Foundation. The group publishes a newsletter called *The Golden Dawn*, which was the name of a famous English society of bygone decades that specialized in ritual magic and had among its members such notable maguses as Aleister Crowley and S. L. MacGregor Mathers.

DULCE (3)

(84 mi. E of Farmington on U.S. 64.) Unidentified flying objects are often seen around here, according to some residents of this town at the northeast corner of the Jicarilla Apache Indian Reservation. Practically anyone, they say, who drives over the ridge to the small canyon bisected by the Navaho River just north of the town (which looked like a busy beer-drinking and lovers lane area last time I was there) is likely to see something unusual in the sky most nights.

About 10 miles east of Dulce, on private rangelands near an abandoned coalmine, a beef cow was mutilated in June of 1976. The owner, Manuel Gomez of Dulce, told me that some unusual form of flying machine was involved, because of groundprints that were left in triangular groups at the site. Likewise, the mutilation itself was a study in triangles: The triangular prints of the whatever-it-was moved in a greater triangle pattern around the area. The dead animal was found with a neatly cut triangular channel where its excretory and genital organs had been removed. Another large triangular incision up into the lower abdomen had removed the internal sexual structures. Tongue and tail had both been cut off to triangular points.

FLORA VISTA (4)

At a nondescript ancient ruin just south of here, across the Animas River, a local boy discovered two small stone tablets bearing untranslatable hieroglyphics. One of them bore two skillful little sketches of elephants. These so-called Elephant Slabs are now in the Arizona State Museum, Tucson. The site where they were found has been dated at some time after A.D. 1100.

The elephants depicted on the stones introduce another troubled topic that paleontologists would just as soon avoid: whether there were pachy-

derms contemporaneous with early man in North America. The accepted version is that they were long extinct before the first aborigines arrived over the Bering Straits. However, there have been other representations of elephantidians, such as the stylized drawings on deer bone fragments from Jacob's Cavern, near Pineville, Missouri. A jug dated at about A.D. 1000 was found not far to the northwest of here, near Shiprock Mountain. It also bore a sketch of an elephant. (*See also* Havasupai Canyon, Arizona.)

The other glyphs on the slabs are a mixture of Indian signs, characters from Near Eastern alphabets of about 1100 B.C., and symbols used recently by treasure hunters and for western cattle brands. The few archaeologists who have commented on them have rejected them out of hand as fakes.

In the hills just a mile or two north of here, what we might call the paranoid school of UFOlogists has set one of their stranger dramas. In February of 1948, their story goes, a spaceship 31 feet in diameter crashed in Hart Canyon; all 12 of its miniature occupants were dead. These creatures were humanoid, except that they were only three feet tall.

An autopsy was then supposedly performed by "the government," and it was found that although the little creatures looked to be about 30 years of age, their brains showed signs of being several hundreds of years old. In other words, they had discovered how to stop the clock on aging (which may help explain why the story is told most often by the more elderly members of UFO-chasing circles).

After the autopsy, heavies of the U.S. Air Force gathered up the bodies and the spacecraft and ferried it all to that big "hardware" store of the skies, Hangar 18 at Wright Patterson base in Ohio, where some think Uncle Sam is hiding all the suppressed evidence.

LOS LUNAS (5)

(20 mi. S of Albuquerque on Rio Grande River.) About 15 miles northwest of here, in a harsh desert area of the San Isleta Indian Reservation, is a black-topped basaltic mesa with an arroyo where huge boulders lie tumbled and tossed. One of these has a unique claim to fame, for on its four- by eight-foot surface are the Ten Commandments—in Phoenician, and other unlikely alphabets. The rock lies just below the crown of a bluff. It obviously has fallen from a position perpendicular to the mesa.

The official verdict on this Inscription Rock was handed down in 1936, when archaeologist Frank Hibben of the University of New Mexico looked at it briefly and pronounced it a "Mormon hoax" that had "probably" been carved "during an encampment on a trek to the West." A good many people familiar with the place have been skeptical as to how any mentally competent Mormon trekking to Salt Lake City or anywhere else could have got so far from the beaten track or how, having scrambled up the 45-degree

grade into this obscure arroyo, he would have been in a mood laboriously to graffitize in a half-dozen ancient languages.

Assuming that he was so inclined, and had such an Oxonian command of dead languages, our Mormon must have had with him the special tools needed to cut hard basalt, including a handy-dandy two-inch chisel that would have been necessary to get even a one-inch swing of his hammer, as he lay wrenched around on his back inscribing the part of the rock that was (until recently) buried in sand. One wonders how many of the present experts who airily dismiss inconvenient inscriptions as hoaxes have ever tried to carve so much as a comma with hand tools in rock like basalt.

The bulk of these characters are Phoenician, with a sprinkling from Egyptian, Etruscan, Hebrew and, apparently, Russian Cyrillic. The Ten Commandments translation was made decades ago by Professor Robert Pfeiffer of Harvard University. In the 1960s, one Robert LaFollette came up with another idea: The inscription was really a transliteration of the Navaho Indian tongue, telling the epic story of a people who were pursued by enemies and fled across the sea.

These travelers fought battles and went through a sojourn of hunger and thirst. At length, they met tribes—presumably Indian—who helped them, and they then arrived at a river and set up a community. It sounds uncannily like the tale told in Latin by the “Roman” relics of Tucson, Arizona. Or, for that matter, like the biblical story of the fleeing Israelites. (On other “Phoenician” finds in America, see Davenport, Iowa, and Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.)

PORTALES (6)

“Angel hair” fell on this town on October 11, 1958. It was variously likened to “gossamer” strands up to 50 feet long, to “fine dust held together by static electricity,” and the inevitable “flying spider webs.” Portales is midway on a line between Roswell, New Mexico, and Amarillo, Texas. That entire corridor was rocked in the summer of 1959 by a sequence of severe explosions of unknown cause, apparently originating in the sky.

SANTA FE NATIONAL FOREST AREA (7)

The Sangre de Cristo range of the Rocky Mountains, running down from Colorado past Taos to Santa Fe, is an area of great beauty and of natural and human mystery in this “land of enchantment.” This is one of the great “powerhouses” of the North American continent; for a discussion of some of the historic aspects of this, refer to “Taos.”

Chimayo (28 mi. N of Santa Fe on S.R. 76.) Santuario de Chimayo, the 160-year-old adobe church here, has long had a Lourdes-like reputation

among Spanish-speaking people. At Easter in 1976, the small town and humble church were almost overwhelmed by 15,000 pilgrims from all over the world. Two religious sculptures, a gruesome Penitente-style *Cristo* called Our Lord of Esquipulas, and the Holy Child of Atocha, are believed to have curative powers.

But it is mud from the “hole of holy earth” in the church that yearly attracts upward of 50,000 persons. They scoop up the damp red clay from the hole and smear it on afflicted parts of their bodies. Others pack the earth into jars and plastic bags to take home with them. The mud is removed from a now-dry spring that was originally sacred to the Indians. The local priests do not make any claims for the earth, but pilgrims believe that it can heal and the renown of this place is steadily growing.

Holman (35 mi. NW of Las Vegas on S.R. 3.) The “face and chest of Christ” appeared seven feet up on a pink stucco wall facing the Immaculate Heart of Mary Church on May 18, 1975. The Reverend Ralph Bayer, priest at the church, said the image was regularly appearing at about 9 P.M. every night. “It’s quite distinct, with long hair, beard and all,” he said. “Sometimes a cross is visible and other times the Virgin Mary or an angel appears alongside Christ.” The image appears to glow and measures four by two feet. It has been frequently photographed and shown on television. It fades away before dawn each day.

Hyde Memorial (Abt. 15 mi. NE of Santa Fe on S.R. 475.) The lodestone, or *la piedra iman*, is used by sorcerers of both Indian and Spanish heritage in much the same way as it was in the Old World tradition (a good literary presentation of its lore is in the fifth-century poem “The Magnet” by the Roman poet Claudius). Lodestones are believed to be a potent charm against witchcraft and the evil eye, and to be a strong attractant of the affections of others. But anyone who acquires one incurs an obligation: It must be “fed” with iron and watered every Friday, since the stone is believed to possess life. If the owner neglects this, he will have problems.

Brujos and *bruja*s (witches) in the Southwest find many of their lodestones at three sites in New Mexico: at the north end of this park, in the Cerrillos mining district, and in the San Pedro Mountains. There are two kinds of lodestones, the male or *macho*, which looks wrinkled and black, and the female or *hembra*, smooth and brown. *Piedras imanes* are sexist: Men must always use *macho* and women *hembra*.

TAOS (8)

It was tempting simply to omit Taos, since there is so much that could be told but so little that can be compressed here. Then too, the more casual passerby may not find overmuch of immediate interest, since this is and always has been an insider’s place. The mysteries of Taos are mainly

human mysteries and the closed circle does not open to the "uninitiated."

Except for its natural setting, the town of Taos has never been particularly impressive-looking. There's a Holiday Inn now, a few quickie restaurants, golf courses, and overpriced touristware stores. But fundamentally, little has changed from the ancient place of adobes eternally shedding bits of their walls to *tierra madre* with each spring thaw. The population is very modest: 2,500 or so, although I'm sure there are those who find reason not to be around when the government nose counters come—such as the health cultists who sheltered Linda Kasabian in the wake of the Charles Manson murders.

Taos is a nodal point where three different currents flow together and maintain an uneasy synergy: the chthonic Indian, the Spanish-Mexican, and the white North American. Symbolically, at least, a good bit of whatever force is in the offing centers in some subtle way on The Mountain. Psychoanalyst Carl Gustav Jung, like a good many notables in the past century or so, touched base here toward the end of his life. In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, Jung writes of his wanderings on "the mountain, which has no name. . . . The story goes that, on days when the mountain is wrapped in clouds, the men vanish in that direction to perform mysterious rites."

Jung tells of meeting an old Indian of Taos Pueblo on the magic mountain, who asked: "Do you not think that all life comes from the mountain? . . . We are the sons of Father Sun, and with our religion we daily help our father to go across the sky. We do this not only for ourselves, but for the whole world. If we were to cease, in ten years the sun would no longer rise."

Of those mysterious rites of the Indians Jung says nothing, probably because he was able to find out nothing. But if he had gone all the way over The Mountain to the north side, he might have seen the cave above the Lucero River, not far from Frijoles Cañon, where human sacrifices were made by Indians in bygone years—some say even now. It is an ancient tradition: The Aztec of Mexico, who some think originally came from here, believed that the sun needs sacrificed human hearts and blood for its nourishment.

For sheer, unadulterated New Mexican witchcraft, you would have to investigate places like San Mateo, Arroyo Hondo, or especially the creepy La Madera, where the witches live in caves and little huts up and down the mountain valleys, like some weirdly transposed Tibetan Bon sorcerers. Taos in a way seems to have sublimated these impulses, and this may be a reason why more revolts, plots, and conspiracies have begun here and filtered out into the wider surroundings of the Southwest than from anywhere else in New Mexico.

Looming large in the history of Taos is the baroque figure of Arthur R. Manby. The spacious adobe house he built on Pueblo Road still stands, oc-



The "beehives" at Cochran Ghost Town, Arizona. Courtesy of Ronald L. Ives.

Hopi Indian Village at Walpi, Arizona. Courtesy of Arizona Office of Tourism.



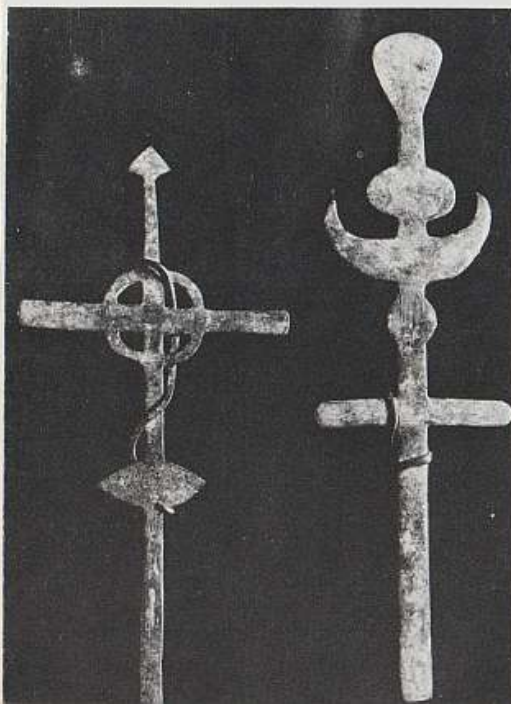
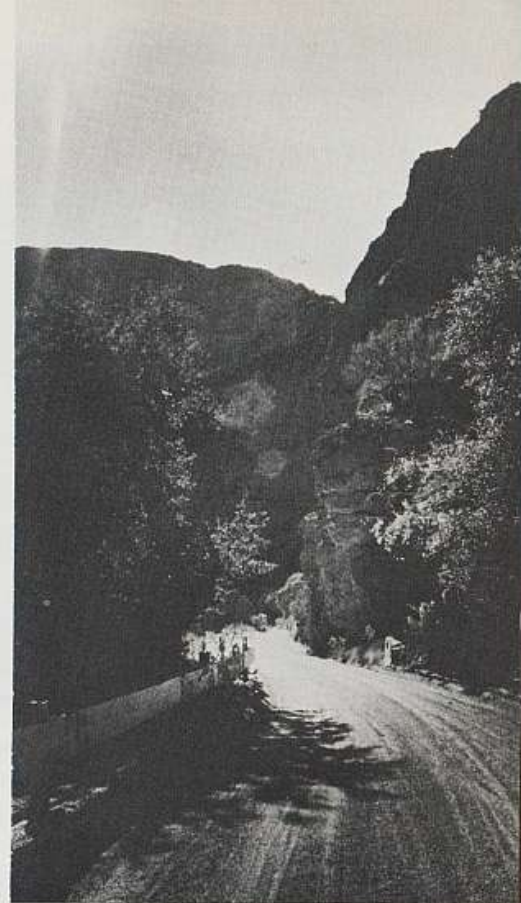
Montezuma Castle National Monument, Camp Verde, Arizona. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



Petrified wood at Petrified Forest National Park, Arizona. Courtesy of the National Park Service.



Into the Superstition Mountains on the Apache Trail. Courtesy of Arizona Office of Tourism.

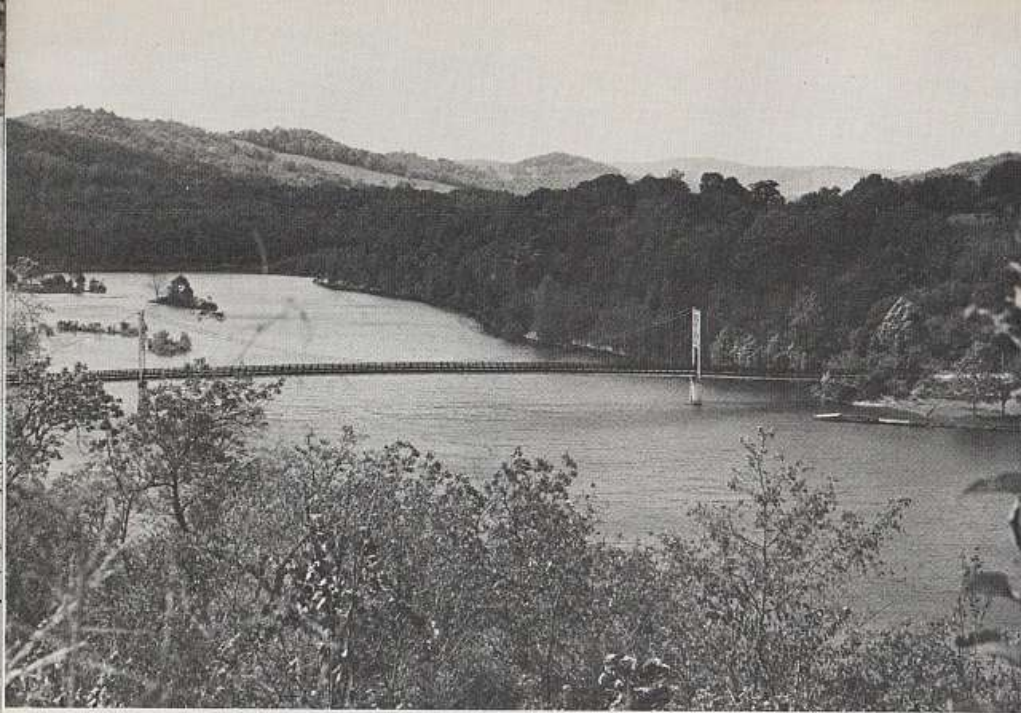
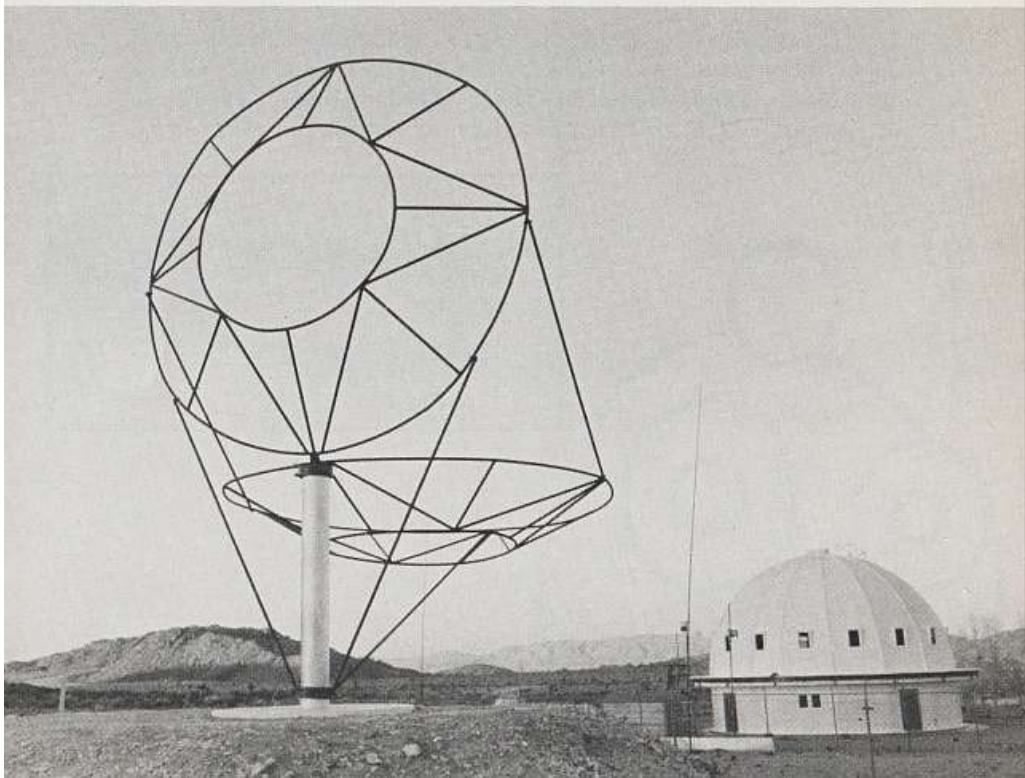


"Roman relics" of Tucson, Arizona. Courtesy of Arizona Historical Society.



A "rambling rock" of Racetrack Playa, California. Courtesy of Dwight Warren.

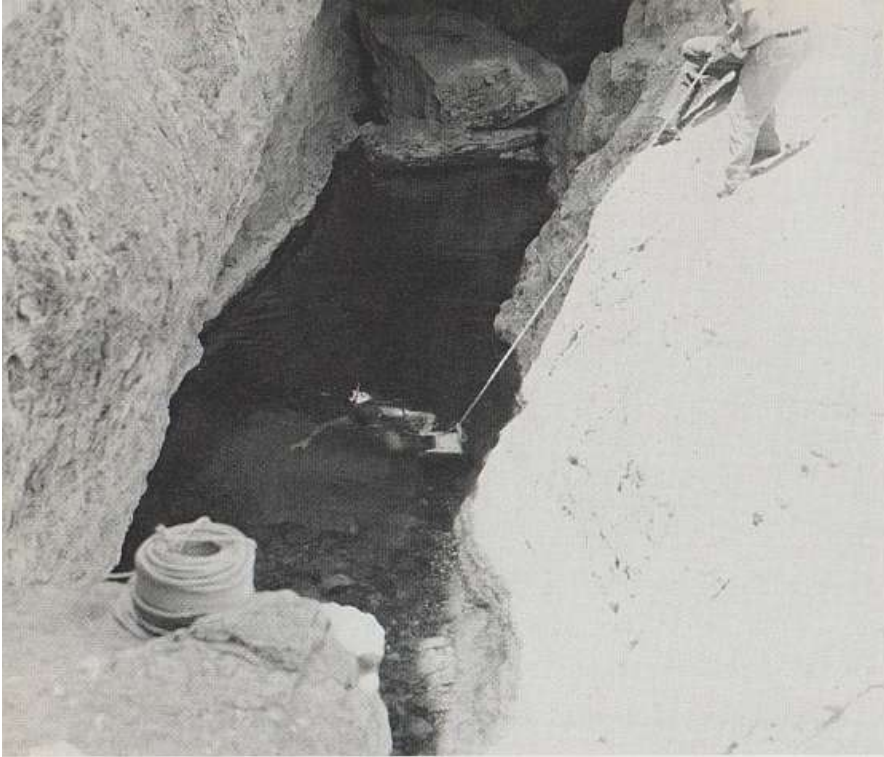
"Integratron" at Giant Rock Airport, California. Doorway to time travel?



The White River of Arkansas near Newport: A haven for dragonlike monsters? Courtesy of Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism.

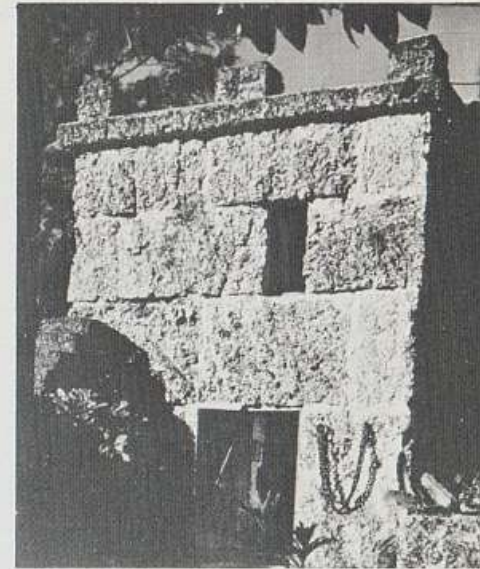
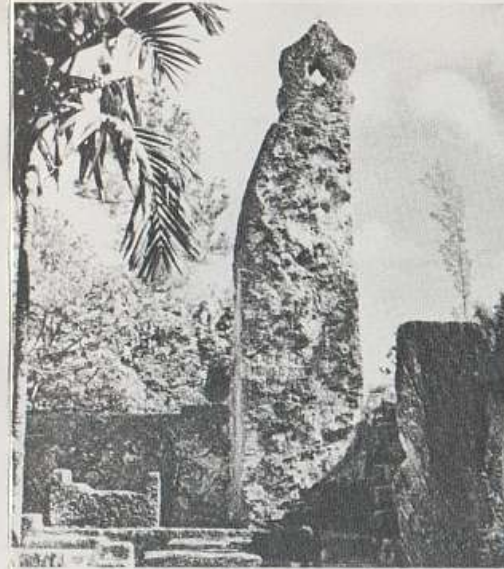
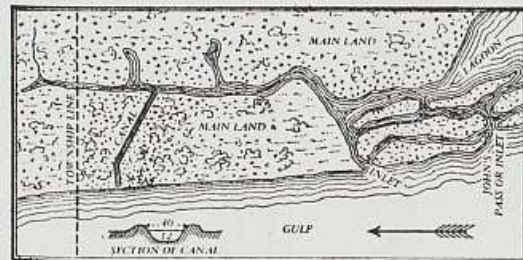
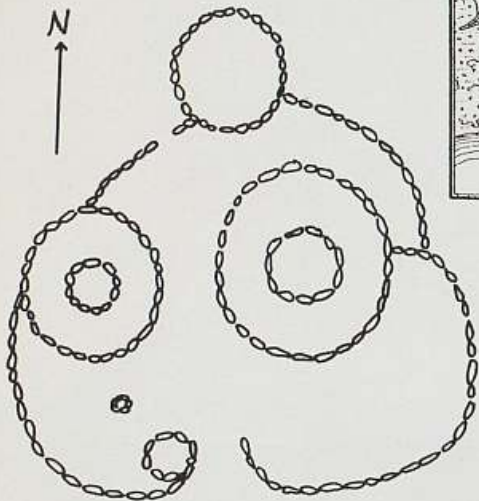
"King Crowley," found at Crowley's Ridge, Arkansas. Courtesy of Tom Townsend.





Devil's Hole at Death Valley, California: For Charles Manson, a "Hole in the World." Courtesy of Death Valley National Monument.

Left: Ground plan of one of the Apishapa River Canyon (Colorado) stone ruins. The larger concentric circle is about 20 feet across. Could this be a giant female figure? Right: The mystery canal of Naples, Florida, as it appeared in 1885. Adapted from *American Antiquarian*, 1885.



Giant Obelisk (left) and Leedskalnin's Tower (right). Both at Coral Castle, near Homestead, Florida. Courtesy of The Coral Castle, Inc.

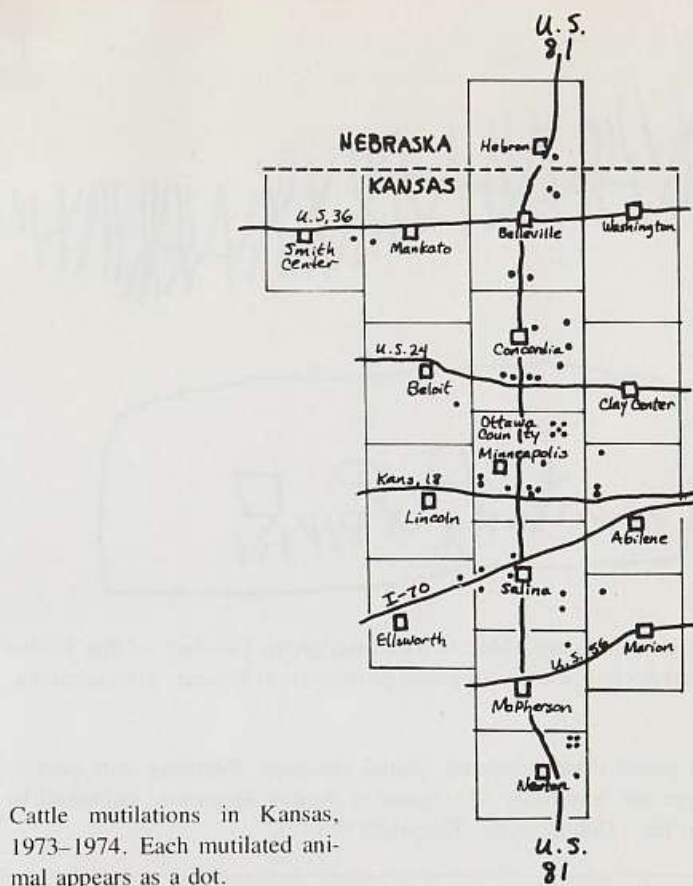
The Nampa Image. Courtesy of Idaho Historical Society.





Cahokia Mounds, Illinois. Courtesy of state of Illinois Department of Conservation.

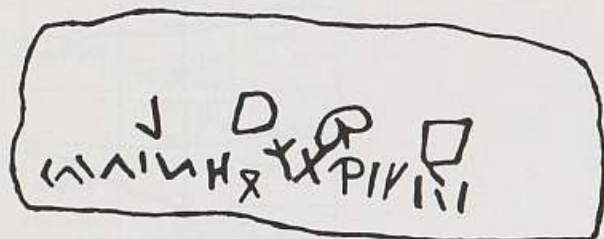
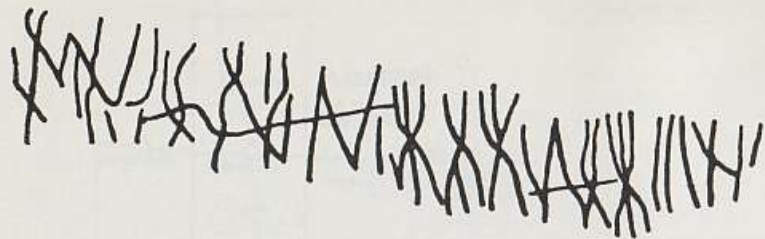
Left: Object from well-boring, Peoria County, Illinois, 1870. Drawings of each side from *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, 1871. Right: Restored prehistoric petroglyph at Balustrade Bluffs, near Alton, Illinois. Courtesy of Illinois Office of Tourism, Department of Business and Economic Development.



Cattle mutilations in Kansas, 1973-1974. Each mutilated animal appears as a dot.

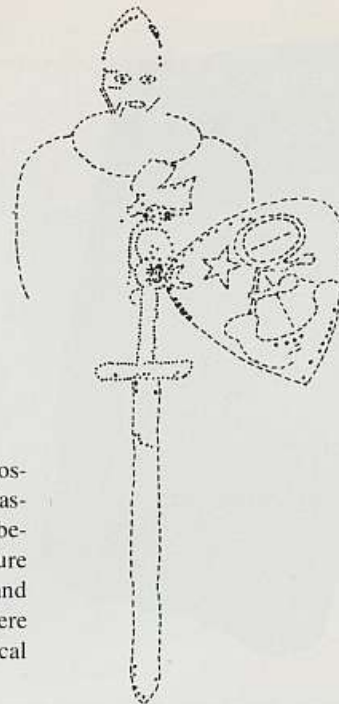
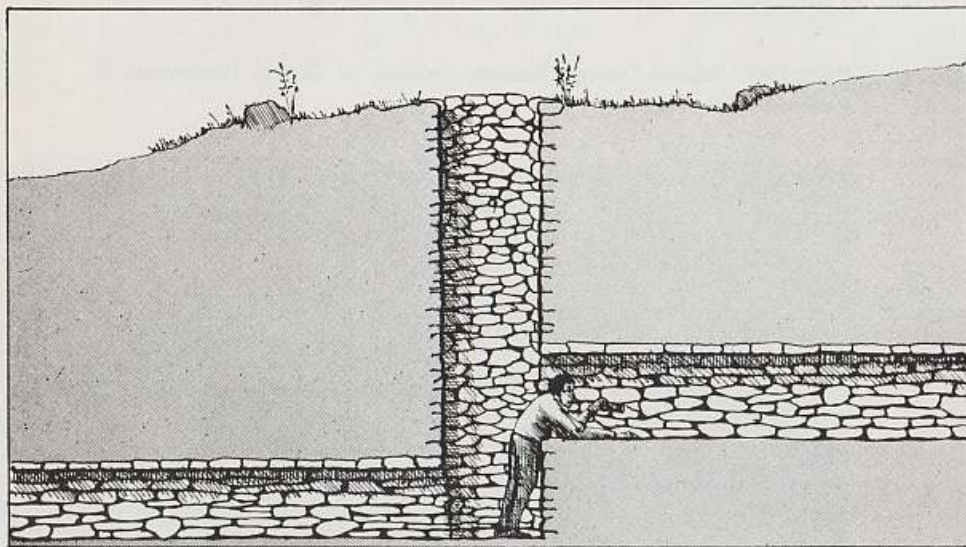
Rock City, Ottawa County, Kansas. Courtesy of Kansas Department of Economic Development.





Above: Manana Island (Maine) rock inscription. Courtesy of Bar Harbor Historical Society. Below: Aptuxcet Runestone, at Bourne, Massachusetts.

Goshen tunnel (Massachusetts), partial elevation. Reprinted with permission from the November 1971 issue of *Yankee Magazine*, published by Yankee, Inc., Dublin, N.H., Copyright © 1971.



The "Scottish knight" on Prospect Hill, Westford, Massachusetts. The figure is believed to be formed of a mixture of punch-holes, scratches, and discolorations. Dotted lines here show the more hypothetical parts of the supposed figure.

Prehistoric copper mine, Keweenaw County, Michigan. Courtesy of Michigan Tourist Council.





The Kensington Runestone.
Courtesy of City of Alexandria,
Minnesota.

Patrolman James Johnstone, Rock Hill, Missouri, holds steel chain that fell from the sky across tractor driven by Wallace Baker, on May 15, 1959.
Courtesy of The Pulitzer Publishing Company.

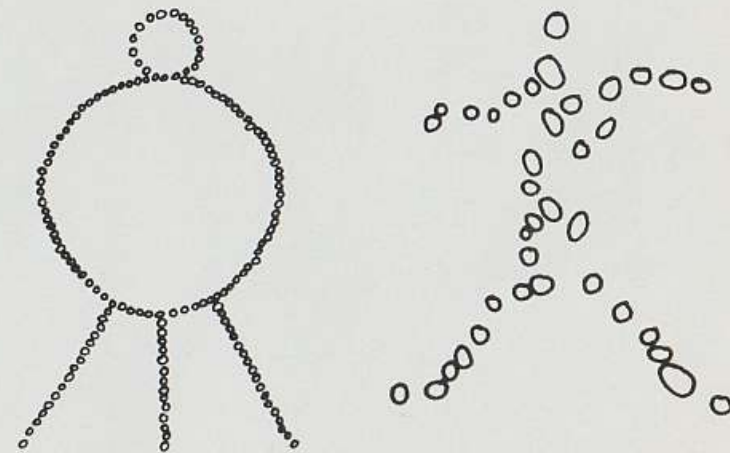


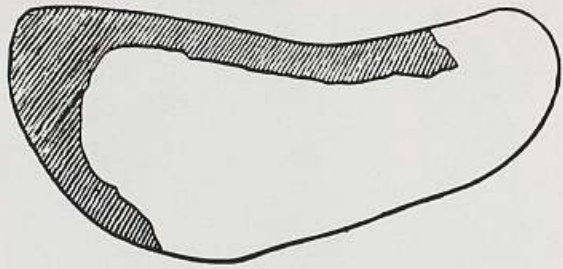
Impressions of Human feet in Sandstone-Block. - p. 231.



Footprints in rock reported by Schoolcraft near St. Louis, Missouri. (*American Journal of Science*, vol. 1, no. 5, 1822, p. 231.)

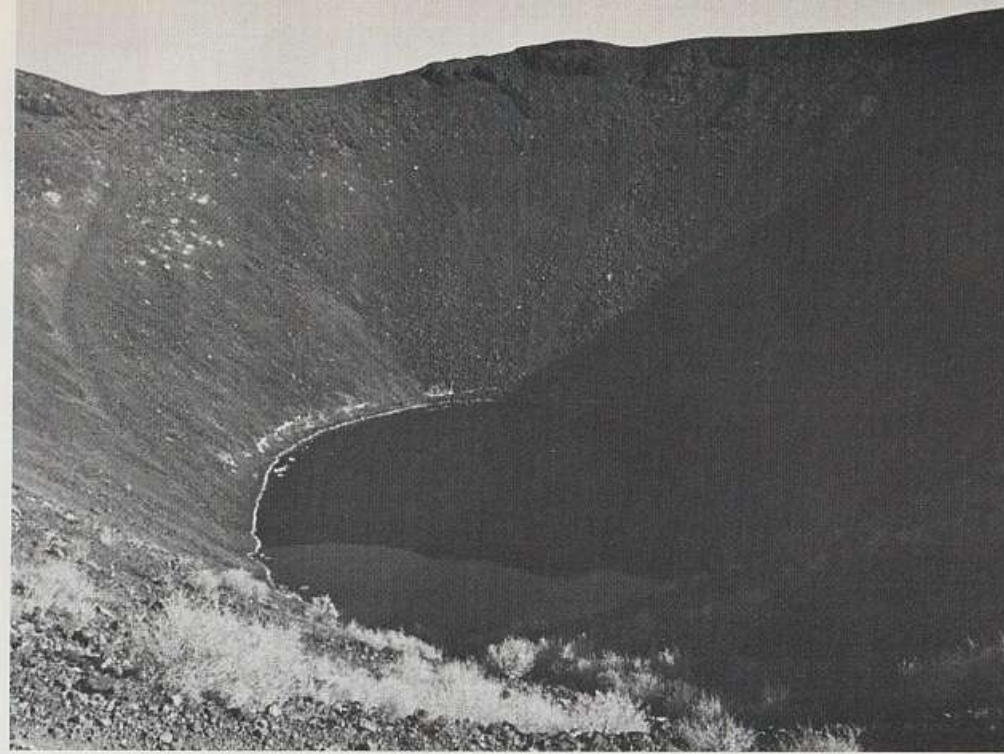
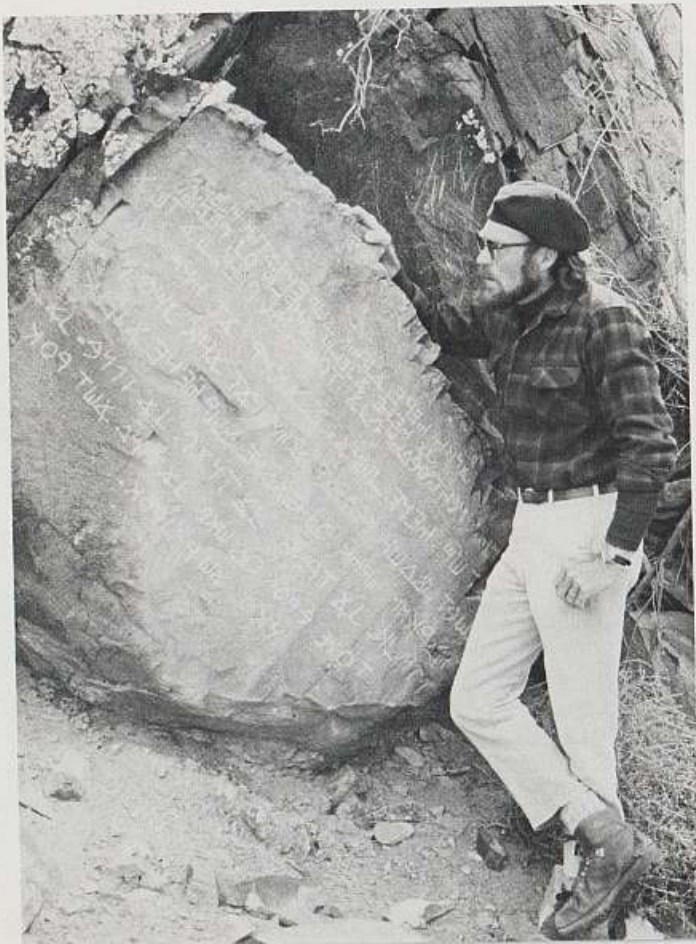
Left: Ground figure, Blackfeet Indian Reservation, Montana. Is this a "man"? That's what anthropologists say. *Right:* Ground figure near Bozeman, Montana. Indians could portray human figure well when they wished to.





Print found in Upper Pliocene stone near Carson City, Nevada, in 1882. Originals were 18 inches long and eight inches wide. Adapted from *American Journal of Science*, 1883.

Southwest writer Jack Kutz examines Inscription Rock (New Mexico). In recent years, earth has been cleared away from the base of the rock: When first found, it was partly buried. Courtesy of Jack Kutz.



Black Rock Lake. Courtesy of New Mexico Department of Development.

The only known photograph of a Penitente crucifixion, taken by Charles F. Lummis in 1888 (New Mexico). Lummis was shot immediately afterward, but survived. Courtesy of Southwest Museum, Los Angeles.



Copyright 1888
By C. F. LUMMIS



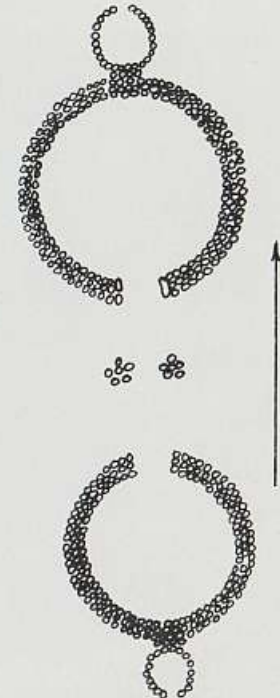
Two inscriptions of the "Elephant Slabs" (New Mexico).

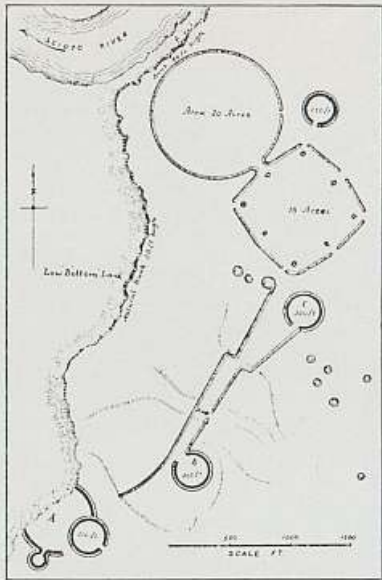
Howard Lacey and his son measure one of the "craters" formed on their farm near Venice Center, New York, in recurring November twelfth mystery blasts of 1960s.



A nineteenth-century sensation: The Cardiff Giant reposes today at Farmer's Museum, Cooperstown, New York. Reproduced courtesy of New York State Historical Association, Cooperstown.

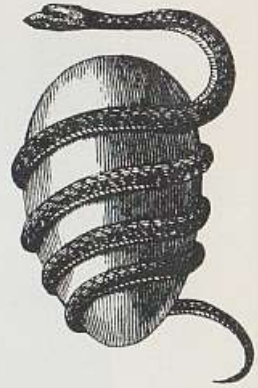
Prehistoric boulder sculptures of unknown origin and function in Stutsman County, North Dakota, as drawn by anthropologist T. H. Lewis in 1891. Arrow indicates magnetic north.





The pre-Columbian ground structures at Newark, Ohio, are believed to have been similar to the original Mound City Group at Chillicothe, Ohio, shown in a nineteenth-century ground plan.

The turning tombstone of Marion Cemetery, Ohio. Courtesy of Marion Area Chamber of Commerce.



Serpent Mound (Ohio): a snake-and-egg sculpture like this one from ancient Greek myth, or something more abstract—like a spermatozoan?

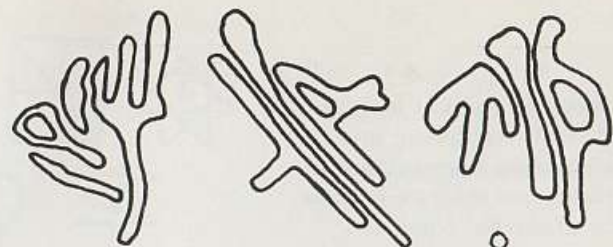
The Heavener Runestone. Courtesy of Oklahoma Tourism and Information Division.





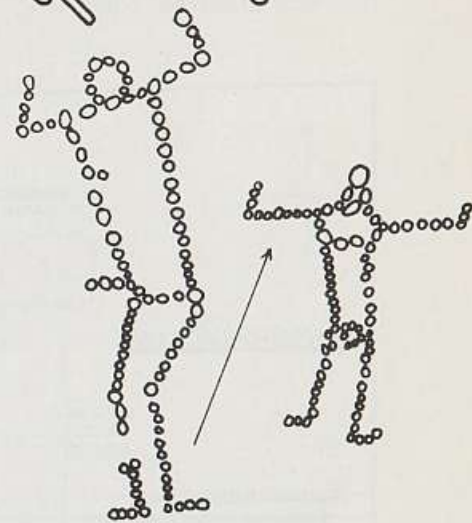
Examining one of the pyramids at Beverly Hall, Quakertown, Pennsylvania.

Ringing Rocks State Park, Pennsylvania. A state official checks one of the rocks with a hammer.

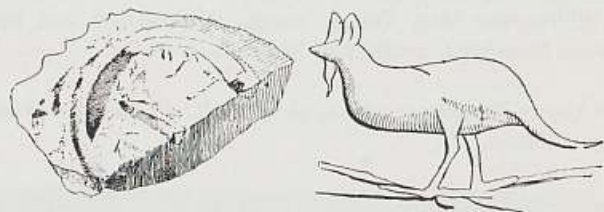


Some of the Mechanicsburg, Pennsylvania, ironstone patterns. "Phoenician" inscriptions or plow scratches?

Male and female boulder outline figures of Punished Woman Hill, Codington County, South Dakota, as drawn by T. H. Lewis in 1889. The male figure is about 13.5 feet from head to heels. Arrow indicates magnetic north.

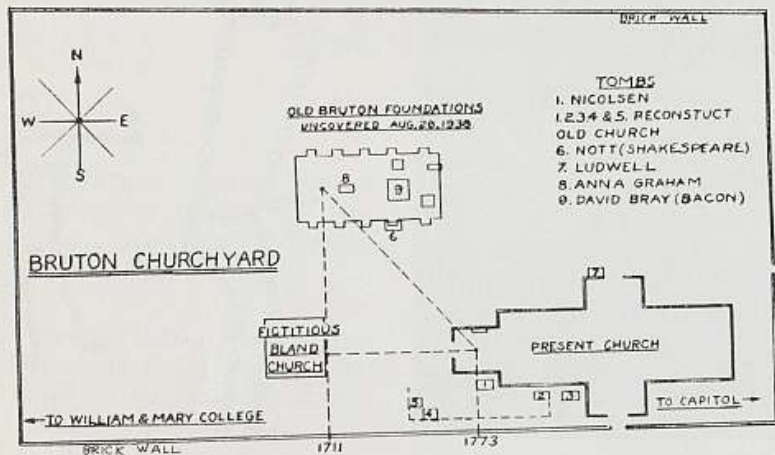
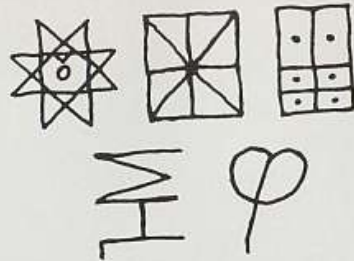


A sampling of carvings found on a rock wall of Bradley County, Tennessee. Adapted from *Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 1891.



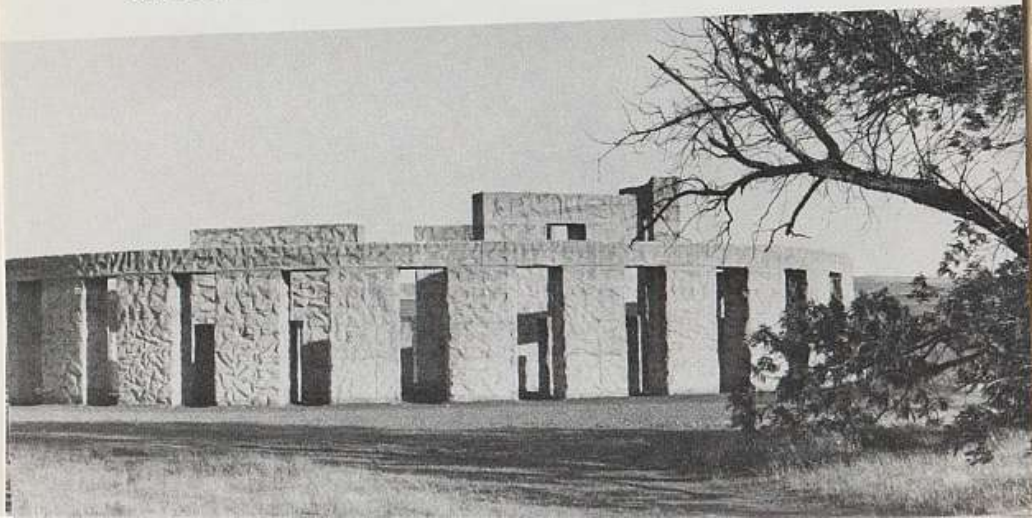
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Curious rock carvings that have been compared to Greco-Roman mystical emblems are among many puzzling ancient artifacts found along the Roanoke River near Clarksville, Virginia.



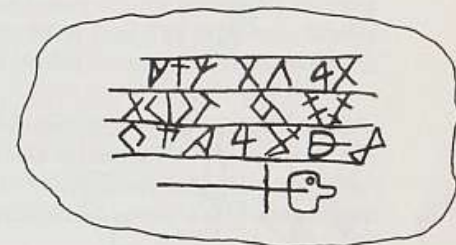
The dotted lines converge on where Marie Bauer Hall thinks the cubic crypt lies, in the churchyard of Bruton Parish Episcopal Church of Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia. Figures 1711 and 1773 refer to distances in feet east of William and Mary College campus. Reproduced from her book, *Foundations Unearthed*, courtesy of Marie Bauer Hall.

The little-known Stonehenge replica at Maryhill, Washington. Washington State Travel Photo.



A typical Mima Mounds area view. Washington State Travel Photo.

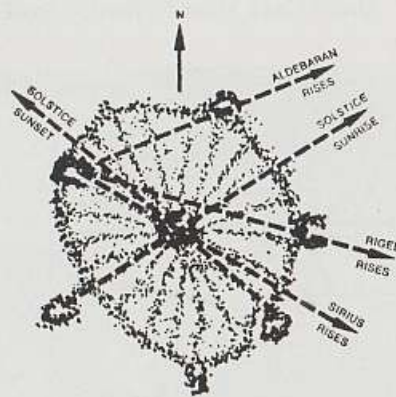
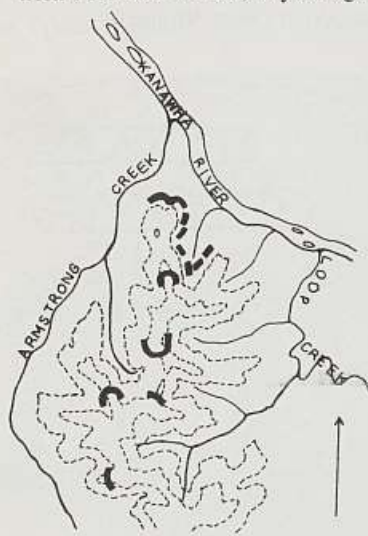
Left: Inscribed stone found in Braxton County, West Virginia, scene of many paranormal events. Are these runes or "Korendese" letters? Right: Grave Creek Mound "Runic" Stone Inscription (West Virginia).





Grave Creek Mound, West Virginia. It originally contained tomb chambers and slanting passageways similar to Old World pyramids. Skeletons in tombs had teeth unlike those of modern man. Courtesy of West Virginia Department of Commerce.

Left: Mt. Carbon (West Virginia) "Walls." Only top two 500-foot contours of mountain shown. Thickness of structures exaggerated. Right: Some of the presumed astronomical alignments across the cairns of Big-horn Medicine Wheel, Wyoming.



cupied today by the Taos Art Association Museum. Some say that it is also occupied by the restless ghost of Manby, who was found inside, brutally murdered.

Manby was an odd amalgam of cultivated English gentleman, secret society adept, and vicious robber baron. Upon arriving in the Southwest in the 1880s, he became involved in a nonstop round of mine swindles and petty shakedowns. He graduated from these to a gigantic and still not completely understood attempt to get legal title to most of the land of present-day Taos County, apparently in collusion with shadowy international financial forces in New York and London.

Manby moved in a homicidal haze where somebody or other seems to have ordered "Off with his head!" oftener than the Red Queen in *Through the Looking Glass*. His trail was littered with the decapitated heads of opponents and former associates. But in his semideranged old age, he seems to have lost control of the secret society that he had set up as his private terrorist and rub-out squad. His own decayed body (some said that it was *not* his body) was found locked inside his house in the summer of 1929. It was decapitated. There was a half-chopped-away head sitting in the next room, but nobody was really sure if it was Manby's or not.

One of the sites in the Antonio Martinez land grant that Manby seemed to be most anxious to get into his control was the place known as Manby Hot Spring, roughly 11 miles northwest of Taos on the east side of the Rio Grande River. The spring is reached from a network of unmarked trails turning off S.R. 3 between Colonias and Arroyo Hondo, and local inquiry is imperative. However, I should point out that a visit to the spring is not to be lightly undertaken. Not only is the site a strenuous one to reach, at the bottom of a deep Rio Grande River gorge, but there have been incidents of violence there. A good many local people refuse to go near the spot.

Manby was interested in the spring because he believed that it was the proverbial "spring of perpetual youth" that had been described to the conquering Spaniards by the Aztec. Petroglyphs flanking the spring on the canyon walls and consisting of three concentric circles and a pair of square spirals were taken by Manby to be Aztec symbols confirming their former use of the place. Along with mounds and rows of rock resembling building foundations not far away on the Lucero River near The Mountain, Manby thought he had discovered the famous Aztlán, where the Aztec had come from.

But I am afraid all this is only a paltry part of the full story of Arthur R. Manby, and behind him of Taos itself. As the *Santa Fe New Mexican* editorialized after Manby's dreadful death: "One cannot help believing something has been going on in Taos which when revealed will astound the world."

THE PENITENTES

Goethe wrote somewhere that there is no greatness without something extravagant. And of all the marvels in this stupendous Southwest, there is really nothing to compare—in the human sphere, at least—with *El Hermanidad de Nuestro Padre Jesús*, or the Penitentes. For, what could possibly be more extravagant than the yearly crucifixion of man?

Some of the original sixteenth-century Spanish settlers in New Mexico conceived of their arrival here as a reenactment of the Israelite entry into the Promised Land. So, perhaps there is a certain cyclical completeness in the annual restaging here of the drama of Golgotha. Perhaps it is inevitable that a land so austere grand should preserve such severe human ways. With the exception of some much milder self-mortification sects in Mexico, these Penitentes appear to be the sole survivors of the flagellants that were so numerous in medieval Europe.

The Penitentes live among the isolated valleys of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, whose name is so well suited to their practices. Their area of activity once included about a dozen counties of north-central New Mexico, and a half-dozen in south-central Colorado. Today, it is practically confined to San Miguel, Mora, Taos, and Rio Arriba counties in New Mexico, and Alamosa, Huerfano, and Pueblo counties, Colorado. A few New Mexican towns have become particularly well known as Penitente centers: Taos, the headquarters, Abiquiú, Chimayo, Córdova, Las Trampas, Mora, Peñasco, Questa, San Mateo, Tres Ritos, Truchas.

There can be few experiences more unforgettably eerie than catching the first snatches of the reedy shriek of the *pitero* drifting closer on the cold night breeze as a Penitente procession wends its way toward one through a remote canyon deep in the mountains, on any Friday night in Lent. Otherwise brave men have been known to turn away and hurriedly find business elsewhere at the approach of that wild flute tootling.

There are good reasons for this: The Penitentes do not want onlookers at any part of their rituals that are not explicitly offered in public, and they are militant in defending their privacy. Gawkers will be driven off with a shower of rocks or a beating with the formidable yucca whips that the flagellants normally use on one another. Rifle-carrying guards are present also, and the guns are not merely for show.

Anyone who managed to conceal himself sufficiently close, however, would see a memorable sight. Walking in procession would come first the *rezador* (reciter), carrying a book and chanting prayers. Next marches the *pitero* or player on the shrill *pito* flute, and behind him would come one or more of the penitents, lashing themselves and those ahead of them with their whips.

Nowadays, Penitente crucifixions performed close to populated areas do not employ living *Cristos*. Crosses with carved Christ-figures are substi-

tuted. However, in the wilder mountain locations, the full ritual is still enacted. Crucifixions take place on Good Friday at any time between noon and dusk. One brother is selected to play the *Cristo*, a great honor, and to him falls the forbidding task of carrying a massive timber cross up a long, steep path to the Calvario, all the while being frenziedly whipped to a bloody lather by other brothers. When he and his cross reach the mountain calvary, he will be crucified on it for about half an hour. Culminating a 40-day span of Lenten austerities and punishments, this can be a dangerous ordeal, and there have been numerous individuals who did not survive it.

So far as is known, Penitente crucifixions now do not involve nailing of the *Cristo* to the cross, although some nineteenth-century witnesses claimed that they saw this being done. But even if nailing still were done, or if the Christ were roped to the cross but died anyway, it is highly unlikely that anyone outside would be the wiser. Secrecy about their affairs is rigid: In former times, the punishment for betraying the order was to be buried alive.

Those who have studied them claim that the Penitentes employ rites and symbolism that are more typical of certain occult groups than of any Catholic order. The altars inside their *moradas* (lodges) are draped in black velvet and decorated with skulls, both embroidered and actual, and have 13 candles. Heavy chains can be heard clanking during their meetings as members mortify themselves by shackling. Each man initiated into the order is given a mutilation scar on the small of the back consisting of three parallel lines across three other parallel lines, forming a sort of 3-by-3 grid pattern of crosses. During crucifixions, the Penitente *Hermano Mayor* and his six assistants wear a crown of wild roses, and dress the wounds of the *Cristo* with a lotion made from rosemary plants—making for a curious juxtaposition of rose and cross symbolism.

Penitente burials often used to be made with the corpse standing up, under a rocky cairn pyramid. I have been told by informants in southern Colorado that it is not unusual to see "spook lights" and "fireballs" over Penitente graveyards and *moradas* in the Huerfano River area on nights when rituals are in progress.

WHITE SANDS MISSILE RANGE (9)

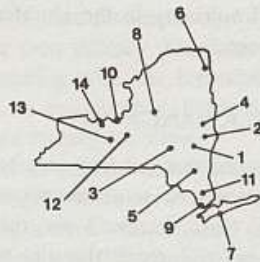
In the San Andres Mountains that run like vertebrae along this moonscape weapons testing area is an otherwise unexceptional peak that is by far the most hysteria-provoking "lost treasure" site this side of Canada's Oak Island. Watergate watchers will recall that the treasure of Victorio Peak even figured vaguely in the White House skulduggery bared in the Senate testimony of Richard Nixon's former assistant, John Dean.

Actually, at 1,500 feet, Victorio is more of a big hill than a peak. Its location is now supposed to be secret. You won't see it on any modern

map, and cartographers claim they are not sure exactly where it is. But spotting it really is not that difficult: On a map of New Mexico draw a line from the northwest corner of the White Sands National Monument northward to the town of Truth or Consequences. The peak will be about seven miles northwest of the monument along this line, and 38 miles straight west of Alamogordo.

The recurring interest in Victorio reached one of its periodic crests when the famous Boston attorney F. Lee Bailey joined forces with a secret group of treasure claimants who believe that the hill contains a cave full of gold bars, gems, and 27 human skeletons. It was they who had secured the ear of H. R. Haldeman and other Nixonian potentates in their effort to gain entry to the high-security White Sands area. In late 1976, a group of treasure hunters finally received permission of the U.S. Army, which controls the area, to check the peak with scientific detection equipment. At one point, in April 1977, a sort of X-raying of Victorio was in progress and was supposed to have detected "chambers" within. Later, however, it was announced that no entrance could be found and that this latest search was being abandoned.

Legends of stupendous treasures here go back to early Spanish times. But the recent version couldn't have a less auspicious origin. A drifter and ex-convict whose prison records say he "operated confidence racket. . . . Old gold brick and gold mine swindle," claimed to have discovered the treasure trove in 1937. The late Milton E. "Doc" Noss said he had been exploring the mine shaft whose boarded-over opening still exists on top of the peak. It was then that he found the chamber with gold bars "stacked up like cordwood" and the 27 tied-up skeletons. However, the inevitable sequel of all treasure stories followed: After Noss had made several descents into the chamber to remove gold, the opening to it was accidentally filled up and "lost." No one has been able to find it since.



NEW YORK

ALBANY AREA (1)

One of many "phantom hitchhikers" has been talked of here for years. It supposedly takes the form of a young girl in white evening dress standing by the big gates of Graceland Cemetery (680 Delaware Ave.) on rainy nights. Motorists who stop to give "her" a lift recall that she said she was

going to an address on Lark Street, but had vanished from the car by the time they arrived. The drivers then would get out, in their puzzlement, and go to the door of the house where an older woman would greet them and seem to know exactly what has happened: "It's my daughter again. You understand, of course, that she has been buried up there for some years now. . . ."

Louis C. Jones, a distinguished New York State historian and folklorist who tried to collate enough ghost stories to grasp their central patterns and psychological origins, gave quite a bit of attention to this particular tale. He noted that it is the most widely told ghost story in modern America. Jones suggested that the total history of this one story, including its origins, periods of quiescence, and its various changes and constants might give "the answer to many of the riddles of our folk culture."

But he concludes by saying: "I prefer to leave its popularity a mystery, as I prefer to leave many things mysteries. I'm not one of the 'old believers' Robert Frost speaks of, but on the other hand, I have tried to avoid any taint of the scientific. It's getting harder and harder to do. . . ."

Chatham (28 mi. SE of Albany, off Taconic State Pkwy.) Old-time residents of the Hudson River valley between Kingston and here claim that two ancient steam trains occasionally made their way northward on the tracks of the former New York Central Railroad, on an unspecified day in late April. The sprucely painted black engines have wide smokestacks and glimmer richly with brass. There are no engineers or firemen. The rolling stock is a veritable shroud of black crepe, fluttering in the wind. The first train has a few flatcars, on one of which sits a large band, and although it seems to be playing its instruments, no sound is heard. The second train has but a single flatcar and on it a lonely coffin. Like the band, the entire apparition glides along in deathly silence. Time too is said to hang in abeyance, for ensuing real trains pull into Chatham five to eight minutes late.

There is an odd thing about this elaborate hallucination of Abraham Lincoln's famous funeral train, that passed here while carrying his remains back to Illinois for burial in April of 1865. It does not exactly match the photographs and descriptions we have of the real train, which consisted of enclosed, coach cars. But this is the way many different people, watching in the backcountry where the rails leave the river's edge, have described it.

Kinderhook (Abt. 20 mi. SE of Albany on U.S. 9.) Lindenwald House, just southwest of Kinderhook, is claimed to have a virtual stock company of spooks. It is another "haunted" place, along with Jumel Mansion in New York City and the Octagon in Washington, D.C., that is associated with the memory of the enigmatic Aaron Burr. Lindenwald was the home of Martin Van Buren in his retirement after serving as eighth president of the United States, and the latter's shade is the one most often reported

here, usually gliding about in the vicinity of the orchard. But there are many others as well.

Certain details seem rather sinister for what, on the face of it, should have been merely the decorous country seat of a former president. A workman who had been employed in the house swore that there were the bones of fifteen persons, slaves as he thought, buried in the huge "wine cellars" beneath. These cellars are unusual in that they contain (or contained) a group of large shafts bored deep into the ground, the conventional explanation for which is that they were wells used for water "to cool the wine." There also are rumors of at least one tunnel leading out of the basement to parts unknown, although that is supposed to be walled up now.

But the most colorful chapter of the history is that pertaining to the former vice-president and political adventurer, Burr. The latter was a close friend of an early owner of the house whose son, Billy Van Ness, had stood second to Burr in the duel that killed popular Alexander Hamilton. Burr was forced to duck out of sight for a while, and some have surmised that he may have spent the time here. One story has it that a secret attic chamber was found here early in this century by the then owner, Dr. Bascom H. Birney. It is supposed to have been a small room with no outside window or inside door that adjoined the incongruous Italian-style campanile that Van Buren had had tacked onto the house. A calling card bearing Burr's name is said to have been found in the chamber. But whether so headstrong and forceful a person as Burr would have stayed holed up in a tiny cell for any length of time seems doubtful to me.

It was while staying at Lindenwald that novelist Washington Irving first heard the legend of the headless horseman, which has long been told around these parts, but which he moved to his favorite area of the Hudson around Tarrytown. The Van Alen house, built in 1737 a mile north of here, is quite faithfully described by Irving in *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* as the home of the Van Tassels. Even fairly recently, neighbors claim to have seen "Merwin," as the supposed original for Ichabod Crane is fondly called, galloping at midnight off the pavement of S.R. 9H and in at the Van Alen drive. Merwin rides as far as a leaning pine near where a small stream flows under the road, where he disappears (ghosts, of course, have problems crossing running water).

North Greenbush Bob Hill, the manager of radio station WHRL, happened to be looking toward the sky at 4:15 p.m. on July 24, 1973. He soon noticed tiny white specks tumbling and wriggling and fluttering downward from the void, growing larger and larger, but with astounding slowness, like a slow-motion film. "I'm certain the things must have been above 10,000 feet," Hill said later. "The sky was crystal clear. There was nothing to interfere with my observation. It took something like half an hour to 45 minutes for the objects to land."

Intrigued, Hill jumped in his car and drove down Lape Road, where he saw two of the white objects alight in a hayfield. When he picked them up, he found they were sheets of paper containing complex mathematical formulas and accompanying graphs. They referred to such matters as "wavelength dependence," "polarization by infinite ice cylinders," "incomplete Davis-Greenstein orientation," and "normalized extinction."

Hill said there was nothing on the paper to identify them as belonging to anybody. He checked and found that the formulas did deal with at least one known physical process—a friend of Hill's who is a nuclear physicist identified "normalized extinction" as something involving light phase cancellation, a far-fringe-area subject of study. On checking with various local and federal officials, Hill pretty well rules out any aircraft that could have dropped the papers.

BOYNTONVILLE (2)

(16 mi. NE of Troy on S.R. 7.) On the road between here and the now all-but-vanished hamlet of Groveside, residents have reported a procession of headless men. The phantoms have recurred infrequently for many years, and supposedly are seen crossing the road by those coming along in the mists just before dawn.

COOPERSTOWN (3)

The Cardiff Giant is still displayed, at Farmer's Museum, just north of Cooperstown on S.R. 80. The stone figure of a giant man, 10½ feet long and weighing 2,990 pounds, was uncovered on October 16, 1869, by workmen digging a well on a farm near the town of Cardiff in Onondaga County, New York.

Since the whole question of fossils was a very hot topic at the time, with parlor positivists and fundamental religionists hotly debating the issue on every hand, the Cardiff Giant became an immediate box-office success. Farmer "Stubb" Newell seemed all geared up for showbiz, quickly displaying the figure to the public as "a true, petrified ancient man" at the then appreciable fee of 50 cents a head. Within the week, a swelling stream of visitors descended upon the farm and ticket revenues soared. By mid-November, a syndicate of local capitalists had bought control of the Giant and moved it to nearby Syracuse where there would be better exposure to railroad passenger traffic. A number of prominent scientists expressed favorable opinions. Professor James Brator of the New York State Museum accepted it as a genuine ancient sculpture, but not as a fossil.

Denunciation, however, was not long in coming. Citizens of the neighboring town of Tully, undoubtedly jealous of the jack raked in by this runaway commercial success, produced witnesses who claimed they had seen a large packing crate being trundled toward the Newell farm a year pre-

vious. The *New York (City) Herald* weighed in with the first of the hoax accusations: an abortive effort to prove that the Giant was the product of a Canadian stonemason. Paleontologist O. C. Marsh of Yale University huffed to the *Buffalo Courier*—although without personally examining the piece—“It is of very recent origin and a decided humbug.”

At this point a strange character named George Hull stepped forward with an elaborate *mea culpa* of how he had masterminded the whole thing. Hull identified himself as the owner of a cigar factory in Binghamton, New York. His story was that, some years earlier, he had gone to Iowa to help work off the mortgage on his sister's farm (apparently the cigar factory was not overly demanding of his time). While there he had met a traveling preacher whose stock in trade was the passage in Genesis (6:4) about “giants in the earth in those days.” Hull marveled at how people could believe in such things and decided to go into the game himself.

After trips back and forth to Binghamton, where he sold the cigar factory, he bought a block of gypsum in Iowa. He shipped it to the studios of Edward Burghardt in Chicago, where sculptors carved the giant. Hull claimed that he himself had been the model for the blandly heroic-looking face.

To make the piece look appropriately aged, Hull swabbed it with sulfuric acid and worked it over with a needle-studded mallet. The statue went by rail to a siding outside Binghamton, from where it was hauled by horse wagon about 60 miles north over back roads to the Newell farm and buried in the barnyard. (Newell was claimed by Hull as another of his relatives.) Hull bided his time for a year before cuing Newell to go ahead and make the discovery.

This is not the place to question the official verdict of science—and journalism—that the Cardiff Giant was “a hoax.” The odds are that, as a petrified man, it was one. But I confess that Professor Brator's idea of an ancient statue is one that has always intrigued me.

Of immediate interest is the enigmatic “exposer” of the find, George Hull. One of the quickest things to catch the eye is a fact that was often noticed by people of his own time: Hull was invariably dressed completely in black, from head to foot. He was very tall, stooped, and with a swarthy complexion. People who met him received a rather sinister impression, and not only after he had stepped forward and loudly described his astounding complex and expensive doings in pulling off the hoax. Those who have made a specialty of studying the black-garbed and swarthy weirdies that have often been reported removing or distorting evidence of UFO incidents might do well to look into the background—what little was ever learned—of George Hull, cigarmaker extraordinaire.

This central part of New York State, where the Finger Lakes reach down clawlike from Lake Ontario, contains its full complement of anomalies. In

all of the hullabaloo over the Cardiff Giant's authenticity, it was forgotten that Onondaga Hollow, where the Newell farm lay, had produced many fossil bones, before and after the Giant. These were mainly reptiles and fishes, including a 12-inch petrified fish that is still preserved by the Onondaga Historical Association, and which was of exactly the same color and type of material as the Giant. Newell's neighbors insisted that there was a spring near the farm whose waters turned sand and gravel into stone in a few months time.

About 15 miles northeast, when the rail link between Cazenovia and Canastota was being built, five giant human skeletons—one of them more than 11 feet long—had been dug up. But even petrification of human cadavers was by no means unheard of. One such incident, described by local newspapers during the controversy, occurred in Onondaga Valley Cemetery only five miles from the Newell farm. The *Syracuse Journal* of November 20, 1869, reported the case of a man who had died in 1841 and whose remains were exhumed in 1856. The body was found to be petrified “as hard as stone,” and of the same color as the Giant. Further, the features of the face were indistinct, the hair was missing, and the arms had adhered in places to the body and the lower limbs to one another, just as with the Cardiff Giant.

GREENWICH (4)

(17 mi. E of Saratoga Springs, off S.R. 29.) A rather hostile ghost is said to haunt the rectory house of St. Paul's Episcopal Church here. The Reverend William R. Harris and his family were occupying the handsome, 150-year-old house on Main Street when the entity put in its first appearance, in the summer of 1972.

KINGSTON (5)

Burrowing deep in some fusty library, Charles Fort discovered a case of self-levitating rocks that occurred in 1815 in a farm field seven miles southwest of here, near Marbletown. *Niles Weekly Register* reported in its issue of November 4, 1815, that the stones would first float up three feet above the ground, then glide 30 to 60 feet to the side and settle down again. Scared onlookers suspected witchcraft but could think of no reason why any witch would take time engineering such a display in a vacant cow pasture. (On animated rocks, see also Death Valley, California, and Ozark, Arkansas.)

The Kingston area has been subject to unpredictable ground subsidence and cave-ins for decades. In one case, a street collapsed several feet below ground level and had to be filled in with truckloads of rubbish and wrecked

cars before the surface could be restored. A woman living on Hasbrouck Avenue almost disappeared when her lawn fell in beneath her one day, exposing an apparently bottomless abyss. She was able to save herself by grabbing a rosebush at the edge of the chasm and pulling herself back up, albeit with thorn-torn hands. The commonest supposition is that the problem is abandoned "mines" beneath the city. Pine Plains, which is 12 miles east of Kingston, has had the same problems. In one instance, a cow fell through the ground in a pasture and splashed to its death in a water-filled cavern 25 feet below.

At Red Hook, about 10 miles northeast of Kingston on U.S. 9, a four-foot crocodile was killed in a pond August 4, 1970. Sixty miles to the south and 30 years earlier, there were a large number of strange crocodile appearances. (See Southeast Counties, New York.)

In Ulster County, 20 miles southwest of Kingston, a mysterious object bearing "hieroglyphics" reportedly dropped from the sky near the Rondout Creek Reservoir area in the Catskills on April 17, 1883. Charles Fort mentioned the supposed occurrence in a letter to *The New York Times* in 1924, in which he requested further information on the event. The similarity to the North Greenbush fall of mathematical papers seems clear. But the falling of manufactured objects is not unknown either. See Penfield, Michigan, for a report of an aluminum wheel that dropped before witnesses in 1897.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN AREA (6)

As my listings for the state of Vermont also show, this entire lake vicinity is lively. It would appear that there is some quite profound geological activity going on, at least on the New York side. Whiteface Mountain, about 20 miles west of the lake, has risen in the past few years from sixth to fifth among the state's highest peaks, according to the U.S. Geological Survey. Mt. Dix is now sixth, and both overtook Grey Peak, now seventh. Settling of the crust is the unofficial explanation, but of course this does not answer why there is more settling in one area than in another.

Mt. Discovery, two miles south of Lewis, in Essex County, is supposed to have an on-again-off-again cave somewhere near its peak. In the nineteenth century, a hunter stumbled upon a grotto that was chock-full of—guess what? And, yes, he just couldn't scoop up all the gold just then, darn it, but planned to come back for it later. The rest of the story isn't hard to predict, and the sequel of course is that treasure bugs have been looking for the disappearing cave ever since. Perhaps the real mystery is what makes so many people locate their gold fantasies in mysteriously vanishing caves, instead of in more conventional vanishing buried caches. Or—just possibly—there really is a gold glut in Mt. Discovery.

Mt. Hoevenburg, which is also called Mt. Colden, is located about nine miles southwest of Lake Placid, and 2 miles off S.R. 73. The peak is named for Henry van Hoevenburg, an early Dutch explorer in these parts, who claimed to have found a cave somewhere near the top of the mountain. As he entered the gloomy fissure, he was suddenly confronted by what he could only describe as a "ghost." Chased back outside as fast as he could go, Van Hoevenburg lost his footing and slid partway down the mountainside, breaking both legs, an arm, and several ribs. The explorer eventually recovered, considering himself lucky to be alive, and would never go near this area again. The cave remains undiscovered.

Mt. Pharaoh, seven miles west of Ticonderoga, is the traditional site of a cave that was said to have walls covered with unknown hieroglyphs and a floor littered with gold coins or medallions. The cave is supposed to have been known to the Indians, but has been unavailable since they left the area in the 1840s. The wall-figures and gold disks were reported by a boy named Johnson who said he was taken there by said Indians. According to the tale, the Johnson family still have one of the gold disks that the youth was able to bring away as a proof of his visit. It is said to bear the figure of an elephant.

Plattsburg Some beaches of Lake Champlain here have patches of "noisy sands" that, when dry, can be placed in a cloth bag, divided in half, and the two portions clapped together to produce sounds. Different people hear the noises in different ways, ranging from doglike barking to pure musical tones. What is of interest is that this property seems somehow dependent on the immediate location on the beach and not on the sand itself, which is indistinguishable from any other sand, and always loses the sonorousness when it is removed from the area. (See also Kauai Island, Hawaii; Manchester, Massachusetts; and Churchill County, Nevada.)

Schroon Lake, about five miles west of Mt. Pharaoh, received a lump of quartzite from the sky in the fall of 1880. Fort cites a number of other falls of quartzite, observing that the topic is on the "index prohibitory" of science.

LONG ISLAND AREA (7)

Amityville A three-story Dutch colonial house in this pleasant community is the evident focus of one of the more vicious "spirits" presently at large. It was in this place that 22-year-old Ronald DeFeo, Jr., wandered from room to room with a rifle, methodically killing his mother and father, two brothers and two sisters, at about 3 A.M., on November 13, 1974. In his trial, DeFeo pleaded insanity, but was convicted of murder and sentenced to six consecutive terms of 25 years to life in prison.

Mr. and Mrs. Lee Lutz and their family, who bought the place subsequently, moved out after 28 days, claiming they had been harassed by a malignant presence. William Weber, defense attorney for DeFeo, began looking into the matter and claims to have found that the Lutzes underwent strange mood changes that infected individuals with sudden animosities. There also were mysterious noises, temperature shifts, and causeless openings and closings of doors and windows. The attorney planned to request a new trial, on the ground of demonic possession.

Weber said he had researched the history of the property on which the house stands and found that the land once was a "forbidden" Indian burial ground. The first deed, he said, had transferred the tract in 1658 from the Wyandance and Massapequa Indians to three men, one of whom had the same name as one of the original cultists listed in Massachusetts witchcraft prosecutions. Many later families living in the house experienced "tragedies," Weber said.

The prosecutor in the DeFeo trial said the claim was nonsensical and that the defense attorney was grabbing at straws.

Bay Shore The Buckland Museum of Witchcraft and Magic is located at 6 First Avenue here.

Huntington As early as 1931, there were reports of a weirdo animal in this area. *The New York Times* called it "a wandering gorilla, or perhaps a chimpanzee." Apparently this one was baldheaded. Near Ft. Hill, three miles east of Huntington, in the vicinity of Stockman Nursery, residents saw it running through shrubbery. Police found only a few tracks leading to a wooded area near the then new Crescent Athletic Club.

Not far away is Mt. Misery where writer John Keel has recorded many appearances of a very creepy manlike monster, along with other untoward phenomena over the years. It is of interest that Henry Stimson, a Wall Street attorney and key government official during World War Two, owned a mansion at the very peak of Mt. Misery, according to Keel.

Sag Harbor A sort of sonic apparition has been talked of for decades near this town at the east end of Long Island. A tall, narrow crevasse in the shore rocks at a point known as Whoopin' Boys Hollow is the site. According to the legend that has evolved, the muffled shouts and screamlike sounds sometimes heard here are the reverberations of terrified Indians of long ago.

Apparently, deceased chiefs were properly buried at Montauk Point, on the extreme eastern tip of this peninsula. But braves carrying the bier of one chief got tired of scrambling over the rocks and decided that laying their leader's remains across this fissure would suffice as well for him as his desired resting place some 30 miles farther along. However, no sooner

had they done so and then stretched out for a quick rest than a horrendous scream awoke them. It was the dead chief, of course, shaming them by hurtling himself off the litter to the foaming rocks far below. It is the echoes of the pallbearers' cries of fright that sometimes rise up from the roar of the waves today.

Seaford The James M. Herrmann family, then residing in Seaford, underwent a hectic and widely publicized siege of paranormal torment in February and April of 1958. The onslaught began after two "burning" objects, one resembling a giant bird, fell from the sky over the Herrmann neighborhood. No wreckage of any kind was found, but shortly afterward, bottles and jars around the house began to pop off their caps and jump and motate around. Later, heavier objects including a large religious statue and a radio also went into orbit and floated about the house.

LYONS FALLS (8)

(42 mi. SE of Watertown on S.R. 12.) In 1951, "Wash" Mellick was fishing on the Black River that runs through town when a huge animal surfaced, 25 feet away. "It was about 15 feet long," Mellick told reporters, and was "dark brown in color with a round, tapered body." It had fins like "two hands" and eyes that stuck out "like silver dollars." He threw stones to scare it away, but it only stared morosely at him.

Afterward, a search party including college professors, a state conservationist, and two science students tried to capture the thing. But old-timers chuckled at these futilities, saying that the Black River beastie can't be caught with a fishnet. Then they added something most interesting: The monster had been seen in the area three times in the preceding 10 years, but always when there was an electrical storm in progress.

At Lowville, 28 miles southeast of Watertown, a bright object passed in the sky on the evening of November 11, 1846, and left a mass of "fetid jelly," four feet in diameter, on the ground. (See Monterey, California, for more on the *Pwdre ser* phenomenon.)

NEW YORK METROPOLITAN AREA (9)

Once again I will urge the seriously interested reader to look into Charles Fort's *Complete Books*, now once again in print. It has an excellent index, listing a couple of dozen items for New York City alone, which I won't repeat here—except for one: the disappearance in Central Park on December 12, 1910, of a girl named Dorothy Arnold. That same day, a swan unaccountably materialized from nowhere on the lake, near the 79th Street entrance, where Dorothy Arnold had vanished.

Empire State Building (350 Fifth Ave., at 34th St.) Another bird matter concerns this quintessential "skyscraper," as these affairs used proudly to be hailed. The structure has been the occasional target of migrating birds. The latest incident that I know of was on September 29, 1970, when thousands of birds veered out of their flight pattern, dashed into the 1,472-foot walls, and fell senseless to the ground. It was thought that they had been attracted by floodlighting, but on this evening the tower lights had been turned off a few hours before they hit. Then too, there was the disastrous incident in the 1940s when the ESB was struck and badly damaged by a U.S. military plane that somehow went out of control and plowed straight into the building. All this and King Kong, too.

Fawcett Building (67 W. 44th St.) The headquarters of the publishing company was shaken by mysterious vibrations on the afternoon of September 24, 1966, and was evacuated by 450 employees. Workers on several floors said the tremors were rocking the walls and jiggling plants and lamps. Next morning's *New York Times* reported that City Building Commission inspectors could find nothing amiss in the building's structure, and that the Fordham University seismograph had recorded nothing unusual that day.

Fourteenth Street Fault I don't know how Fawcett Building people analyzed their little adventure, but as for me I couldn't help remembering the old stories that all is not well "down in the holler," as we used to say in Arkansas. If they had to think about the geology of the city at all, most Manhattanites would probably recall vague clichés about the granitic substructure that supposedly makes all of those heavy buildings possible.

Substructure there certainly is, but what is not well known—or often discussed, anyway—is evidence that the area is sundered by an extensive series of faults and caverns, not too far beneath the ground. Geological research long ago indicated that a large underground rift in the bedrock runs across from the Brooklyn Navy Yard beneath the East River to East 14th Street on Manhattan. From here, the fault runs diagonally northward along the island, roughly paralleling Broadway, to about West 86th Street, where it passes under the Hudson River. Other fault lines cross the north end of the island: one along the west end of the Harlem River, a second coinciding with the Dyckman Street valley, and a third lying beneath 125th Street and the Manhattanville depression.

Then there is the old story that, at what is now the north end of East River Park, Consolidated Edison had planned to build a large power plant some years back. However, in a preliminary soil stability test in 1962, a large core drill punched through the rock at about the 200-foot level and entered a gigantic cavern of unknown extent. The company supposedly closed up the hole quietly and built a park over it.

But New Yorkers have been warned. A fellow named Richard Shaver, who started out as a science fiction writer and then began taking his own reveries seriously, evolved an entire melodramatic mythology about evildoings down in the subterranean world. Shaver claimed that he had personally been down in the caverns under Gotham and gazed upon the unlovely Deros—the Deranged Robots that had been created by the ancient Atlanteans, but then turned o'nerly like Frankenstein's monster and went off to do their own evil number. Shaver saw at a glance that these beings were just killing time down there, waiting for some unfortunate moment to fling themselves upon the hapless and unsuspecting people walking around overhead.

Jumel Mansion (West 160th St. and Edcombe.) Situated in Washington Heights on the highest point in Manhattan, this 1765 house long was supposed to be haunted by the ghost of Eliza Jumel, widow of one of the place's former owners, Stephen Jumel. General George Washington had his military headquarters in the octagonal drawing room of the house for a time during the Revolution. By a coincidence of sorts, Eliza Brown, who was to live in the house much later after her marriage to Jumel, always claimed to be an illegitimate daughter of Washington.

After Jumel's death, the ambitious Eliza married Aaron Burr, who was advanced in years. For some reason, Burr's name has come to be associated with a number of haunted houses, starting with another one of geometric attributes, the prestigious Octagon in Washington, D.C., where tradition has it that he used to enter clandestinely for liaisons with Dolley Madison.

Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation (155th St. and Broadway.) Among many other puzzlers in the collection here is a bronze protector for the handle of a spear, indubitably of the Bronze Age, that was found in an Ontario burial ground. The usual question is, when was it brought across the Atlantic?

Office of Tibet (801 Second Avenue, at 45th St.) This "office" has the exotic appearance of a temple. There are large color pictures of monks at prayer, Buddhist scrolls, six-foot sacramental trumpets, and a large ceremonial portrait of the scholarly-looking Dalai Lama. The people here maintain that they're supported from funds brought with them during their exit from Tibet in 1951. There are officially only "a few hundred" Tibetan refugees in the United States, some of whom are associated with the University of Washington in Seattle, working as lumberjacks in Maine, or living in New York City, where most of them hold staff positions at New York University.

The Tibetan Museum (338 Lighthouse Ave., Staten Island) might also

be of interest, as it has been to a seven-foot "bearlike monster" that was seen around it a few times in 1975.

Across the harbor to the east, there have been strange animals for decades, doubtless merging over from the ones that have been so prevalent on Long Island. In the Queens area, 241st Street between Snell Boulevard and Rushmore Avenue was the scene of unprovoked bird attacks in 1934. *The New York Times* report of June 18 said a bird "with blazing eyes" and resembling an owl had been fluttering in the faces of residents, most of them prominent financiers. These folk said they had beat the "bird" away but that it returned to the attack before flying off. No one was injured.

During the great errant croc wave of the 1930s, a four-footer was caught on Pier 9 of the East River Harbor, June 1, 1937. On June 6, a 24-inch croc was caught in the Brooklyn Museum subway station.

Between 1877 and 1880, an awesome "winged human form," as the *New York Sun* of September 18, 1877, called it, often livened the sky over Brooklyn and Coney Island. He had "bat's wings," wore basic black garb, and had "a cruel and determined expression," according to *The New York Times* of September 12, 1880. Maybe this was because he was "engaged in flying toward New Jersey."

OSWEGO (10)

Pieces of ice that "resembled the fragments of icicles" fell in a thunderstorm on June 11, 1889, according to the *Monthly Weather Review*. Fort wondered how this occurrence would square with the usual theories on the formation of frozen precipitation. Freakish fog and icing conditions have often been blamed for the ship disasters that some think have reached an inordinately high number in this east end of Lake Ontario.

Inevitably, the nickname of "Inland Bermuda Triangle" has been applied to the area northeast of a line between Mexico Bay, New York, and Prince Edward Point, Ontario. Most of the incidents have occurred closer to Canada, particularly along Marysburgh's Long Point. Many mariners who have had difficulties in this area recalled that ships' compasses had acted up. This is not surprising considering that at least half a dozen geomagnetic anomalies are believed to exist in this end of the lake. Lake Ontario's shipping problems have continued right up to recent years.

SOUTHEAST COUNTIES (11)

Around June 16, 1976, a "phantom sniper" fired a dart at a woman in Hartsdale. A week later, June 23, the same thing happened in Greenburgh. On July 22, a woman in Yonkers received her dart out of the dark at 10:30 P.M. and became the seventeenth female victim to be so assaulted since February, according to mystified police. Evidently that was the end of it—

unless we want to count the 100 teen-aged bandmen marching in Walden, 10 miles northwest of Newburgh, who suddenly collapsed with mysterious cramps and nausea on August 14.

In Putnam County, near Brewster, police patrolman Gene Blaney saw on October 8, 1967, "this big glob of fire falling from the sky" at about 3:30 A.M. "As it hit the earth it exploded, and I saw balls of flame seven or eight feet tall shoot up in the air. White smoke came rolling out of it like clouds. I thought it would never stop."

On September 3, 1927, *The New York Times* described the "good-sized" crocodile that had been caught in a small creek near Middletown. Not quite two years later, a two-foot specimen was caught 15 miles southwest near Port Jervis, on July 2, 1929. In September of 1929, a three-foot crocodile was killed at Hackensack Meadows, New Jersey, about 40 miles southeast of Middletown.

On October 2, 1929, three crocodiles of unreported length were found on Collender's Point near Darien, Connecticut, a few miles from the Westchester County border. On March 22, 1931, a 24-incher was caught in bushes on an estate near Pleasantville. On June 28, 1932, several were seen in the Bronx River in Westchester County. Two or three of these were swimming; one three-footer was found dead. On July 1, 1932, a crocodile was sighted swimming in Crestwood Lake, Westchester.

A three-foot crocodile was caught in north Yonkers on March 7, of 1935. Later that month, a six-foot croc was found dead in the Westchester hamlet of Grass Sprain. Five smallish crocodilians were caught at Huguenot Lake, New Rochelle, on August 11, 1938. Were all of these "discarded pets that had probably been flushed down the toilet by their owners," as explainers invariably claim?

In the seventh chapter of *Lo!*, Fort took note of the "crazy croc" syndrome, pointing out how many of them kept cropping up at Over-Norton, Oxfordshire, England, through the years. This part of New York seems to be a similar "teleportation" spot (to use one of Fort's coinages) here in Weird America. (See also Decatur, Illinois; Quabbin Reservoir, Massachusetts; and Oakland County, Michigan.)

SYRACUSE (12)

A detonation of unknown origin broke windows and liberated "a heavy stench" in the southeast suburb of De Witt, on August 7, 1971. It centered on the Lyndon Park area, a conglomeration of trailer houses. Hancock Airport reported only two small planes in the air (this was at 4:20 A.M.), and air force officials denied that they had any sound-barrier breakers in the area at the time.

Although police were concerned that the stink might indicate a gas main rupture, the gas company said there was no evidence of one. We anomalists wouldn't have worried too much, however. The orientation to house

trailers is a tip-off, for everything from unidentified flying objects to crazy critters constantly skitter around people living in these inadvertent Reichian orgone boxes. Heavy stench is part and parcel of the same doings.

Some sort of phantom bomb like this detonation seems like a possible sculptor of the cuplike, 198-foot depression at Great Lakes State Park, several miles east of De Witt. At least that is what happened at Venice Center, New York. Scientists still bicker over whether these holes are "astrolemes" or "meteorite craters," pretty much the way they do with analogous structures in the Southwest (see Meteor Crater, Arizona, for instance). Another theory is that lakes like this and nearby Round Lake are "glacial meltwater plunge-pools," where glaciers paused, like a dog at a fire hydrant, I suppose, on their way through the area.

In Onondaga Lake, on the northwest outskirts of Syracuse, saltwater fish varieties such as sargassum and short-fin squid have been caught occasionally for years. Salt deposits and springs have long been known in the area, and so some causalists suggest that there may be a layer of salt water below the freshwater of the lake in which fish farfetched from the Atlantic and accidentally released here by man might have survived.

I do not know if saline and nonsaline waters stay separate, like oil and water, for the convenience of theoreticians, but I doubt it. No self-respecting authority has suggested the other obvious possibility: some sort of channel underground to the sea. So, let me be the first.

Skaneateles Lake, some 18 miles southwest of here, has evinced a rather more prankish paranormality. John Cazzola and Robert Moore, residents of Liverpool, New York, reported that they had been chased away from the lake by a barrage of pebble-throwing on the night of October 28, 1973. The two were preparing to fish at the point located three quarters of a mile from West Lake Road, when the stones began to pepper them from some invisible source.

The demonstration followed them in their car all the way back to their homes. This might have been a case of *Lithobolia, or the Stone-Throwing Devil*, as Richard Chamberlayne titled his 1698 book on malicious rock-hurling that tormented a farmer in New Hampshire. Or it may have been a distraction device to get the two away from the lake while something else possibly went on there.

There have also been giants in the Onondaga County earth in these days, both real and faked, for which see Cooperstown, New York.

VENICE CENTER (13)

(15 mi. S of Auburn on S.R. 34.) The Howard Lacey farm, halfway between here and Poplar Ridge on Town Line Road, acquired several un-

scheduled holes in the ground at about 12:30 A.M. on November 12, for three years in succession.

The first one appeared in an alfalfa field after a big bang at 12:30 A.M., November 12, 1966. The "crater" was five feet across, three feet deep, and surrounded by a 44-foot circle of exposed earth. Around the perimeter, dirt had been thrown straight up, as if an explosive had gone off underground, and there were no signs of a meteorite impact. Experts from the air force and Syracuse and Cornell universities examined the site. Net findings were negative: no meteorite splatter, no radioactivity.

In 1967, at 12:30 A.M., November 12, a sharp blast again stunned the area. Again there was an excavation, although it went unnoticed for some time since it was in a wooded area on the Van Nostrand farm, 400 yards east of the Lacey house.

In 1968, same time (12:34 A.M.), same station, the November twelfth blast was "terrific," according to the Laceys. It was heard as far as 20 miles away, and spewed out a crater 18 feet wide and five feet deep, and back in the alfalfa field again. By this time there were dark murmurings of "extremely well-planned hoax" directed against Farmer Lacey, although what there was to be gained, other than the destruction of valuable cropland, was not explained. However, among a large variety of investigators who sealed off the field for a meticulous inspection, a U.S. Army ordnance officer told reporters that "it wasn't an explosive device that made the hole."

Just possibly, a daring hoaxer could have zipped out and dug the 1968 crater in a quick premidnight foray (the fields were closely watched by many onlookers the previous day). But how the clever person would have contrived that 20-mile explosion without explosives is a poser.

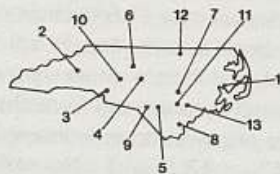
I understand that there has been no repetition of the blasts in following years. But unless the rap could somehow be pinned on local people—who, before and since the incidents, have certainly not shown themselves unduly interested in notoriety—this must be another of those "things" that really shouldn't have happened quite this way.

WAYNE COUNTY (14)

At Lyons, another exercise in puzzling periodicity had taken place in 1891 and 1892. Charles Fort lists *Scientific American* and *Nature* reports on the "bright light" that appeared regularly in the night sky, starting December 9, 1891, and recurring every twenty-seventh night: January 5, February 2, February 29, March 27, and April 23, 1892.

Experts launched into mathematics-laden explanations of how the synodic period of the sun was causing an "auroral" display. Could be, Fort observed, but that did not explain why the phenomenon was localized to this dot on the map.

NORTH CAROLINA



BATH (1)

(From Greenville, 35 mi. E on U.S. 264; 6 mi. SE on S.R. 92.) On the old Cutlar farm, a mile west of here, are the "Devil's Hoofprints," a series of depressions in the ground about six inches wide and two inches deep. Like the "Devil's Tramping Ground" near Siler City, the story is that nothing grows in them, or even stays overnight in them, and they are said not to have been obliterated or significantly changed since the early nineteenth century.

At that time, in the year 1813, legend records that a sportsman named Jesse Elliot was killed when a temperamental mare did some too-fancy footwork, stomping the prints into the ground and striking Elliot's head against a tree. But nobody really knows for sure, and it would seem unusual for mere horse tracks to stay around so long.

Cutlar family tradition has it that livestock will not go near the prints. Even hungry hogs, when tempted with grain scattered over the area, would eat up to the edges of the depressions, but would not touch what had fallen into them. When debris has been dropped into the indentations, the story is that it has vanished by the next morning.

BROWN MOUNTAIN (2)

(E of S.R. 181, 14 mi. NW of Morganton.) Probably the most famous of all mystery-light phenomena in the United States occur in this area. Although they do appear all year long, July through September is the best time to look for the lights, preferably just after a thunderstorm, but not on a rainy or overcast night. Most of the numberless people who have seen the lights since Indian times have described them as rolling or "tumbling" along the crest of this big bluff in the fringes of the Blue Ridge.

Their appearance has been likened to a cigarette carried through a darkened room, sometimes dilating into a rainbow of colors and swelling to the size of a floodlight. Some persons have spoken of gigantic luminous spirals in the sky that sound almost like the spectacular whorls of Vincent van Gogh's painting *Starry Night*. But, as is so often the case, the lights have never successfully been photographed.

Reactions of local residents range from a skeptical "I've never seen 'em in my life—and I've looked too" to bizarre accounts of pursuits at night by fireballs or what elsewhere would be called unidentified flying objects, with familiar disturbances to auto headlights and electrical systems.

In his 1965 book, *The Brown Mountain Lights*, the late Ralph Lael of this area described trails that he worked out while trying to find the source of the lights:

Take North Carolina Highway 181 to Mortimer Road. From Mortimer Road, in the area of Wilson Creek, follow Timbered Branch upward on the slope between Chestnut Knob and Small Chestnut Knob. Cross several small branches on the right side of Timbered Branch, to a larger stream, which is Wild Cat Branch, flowing out of a spring in the mountainside at Wild Cat Hollow.

Above this, a difficult climb along rattler-infested cliffs leads to Wild Cat Knob. From here, one has a good view of a large, flat rock on the side of Brown Mountain, about three quarters of a mile away, where Lael says most reports place the lights' origin. Another suspected source point is Upper Creek Canyon.

The rest of Lael's book describes how one of the lights approached him one night and guided him inside the mountain, where he was treated to an inspirational oration from an entity identifying itself as a Venusian and warning him that mankind is in danger of destroying the earth, but that the forces from Venus are not about to let that happen. Later, Lael took a trip to Venus himself in a flying saucer, leaving and returning from inside Brown Mountain.

Scientists have more or less given up on the Brown Mountain lights, but for some early safaris here, see chapter 10 of Fort's *Lo!* A typical case was the 1913 visit of a U.S. Geological Survey expert. After considering such explanations as the trusty "fox fire" or moonshiners' stills, he went back to Washington and opted for the stray headlight theory, claiming that the lights were merely lanterns of railroad locomotives flashing up over the hills.

"Damnation," groaned one mountain man. "Don't that fool know there ain't no train inside of 50 mile of here?"

CHARLOTTE (3)

This is a region of many unaccountable gifts from the skies. Charles Fort notes reports of a daily rain shower that began regularly at three in the afternoon in a small area between two trees at the corner of Ninth and D streets. The showers started around the first of October 1886 and continued for some time, on schedule whether the sky was cloudy or clear. An officer of the U.S. Army Signal Service came to study the phenomenon and re-

ported that "sometimes the precipitation falls over an area of half an acre, but always appears to center at these two trees. . . ."

Jumping to the 1950s, I find that a dollop of "light, foamlike, thick liquid" (somewhat contradictory adjectives, there) fell on May 20, 1957. It was slimy, numbing to the touch, and vaguely sulfury in odor, according to the *St. Louis Post Dispatch* of the following day.

A few miles west, in Gastonia, a shiny new French two-franc coin fell in October of 1958 at the Basil McGee house, 1005 Woodland Drive. Mr. and Mrs. McGee were working on the lawn when the coin tumbled from above into wet leaves among flowers. Mrs. McGee looked up and saw no aircraft overhead—nor Frenchmen either—but only a warm autumn sky with scattered clouds.

In Stanley, 16 miles northwest, dime-sized toads fell around the house of Mr. and Mrs. Cecil Moose on Norwood Road, in the summer of 1961. So many thousands fell that they were still hopping around the next day. Local experts opined that the toads had "probably come from a nearby pond," but of course toads do not live in ponds.

To the northeast, near Concord, a glittering object descended as if in controlled manner into a five-acre lake near here in September of 1962. Grady Honeycutt of Harrisburg, North Carolina, rowed out and saw the object clearly in the shallow water. He described it as the size of a bowling ball, shiny, and studded with short spikes. Deputies Ted May and Bob Eury came to the scene, but by then the object had begun to disintegrate and they likened it to a mass of shiny wire or shredded aluminum. This occurred at about the same time that a large hunk of steel showing signs of manufacturing processes fell in the street of Manitowoc, Wisconsin. A spike-studded sphere also fell in County Wexford, near Duncannon, Ireland.

In July and August of 1976, a Bigfoot creature was on the run around Mt. Holly (about 12 miles northwest of Charlotte), and as far afield as Catawba, 30 miles north. A group of children claimed "something that looked like a big black bear" had chased them through a wooded area.

About 12 miles west of Charlotte, in Gaston County, the ghost of an eccentric named Adam Springs is believed to be the origin of a spook light that occasionally bobs at nighttime along the banks of the South Fork River. Springs died in the mid-nineteenth century. In accordance with his instructions, he was supposedly buried standing up, a curious interment that we encounter in the case of another "ha'nt," that of Brit Bailey in Brazoria County, Texas, as well as with the Penitentes of New Mexico.

The Springs grave is in an abandoned, virtually forgotten cemetery on a hill near the village of McAdenville. The lantern-carrying ghost is said to

wander at night down this hill toward the riverbank. It usually is seen first as a floating light, and then sometimes as a tall figure dressed in severe black Quaker garb and tall, half-conical hat—which Springs affected in real life, although he was not a Quaker.

DEVIL'S TRAMPING GROUND (4)

(From Siler City, 11 mi. SW on S.R. 1006 to Harper's Crossroads; hard right turn and 2 mi. farther on 1006; area is in woods on left—south-side of road.) In this rolling countryside near the ancient Unwharrie Mountains is a clear place among the scrub timber. The 40-foot circle is more or less bare, except for thin patches of wire grass. Just as with the "footprints" of Bath, tradition assures us that sticks or other impedimenta laid on the spot are never there by next morning. However, at the time of my visit (1977), the area was littered with beer cans and even a hefty log that had obviously been left there some time previous as an experiment.

Local people I talked with did not seem bowled over by the place, but according to accepted folklore, they are supposed to believe that something piously like Old Nick must be using the path, no doubt pacing round it as he weaves his snares for mankind. But no one knows for sure, because a big part of the lore is that no one has yet spent a full night close enough to the track to find out firsthand.

Old-timers chortle over stories of young whippersnappers who flouted the tradition and were given short shrift by the malefic circle. One youth undertook to camp in the center of the spot overnight, but chickened out by about 11:30 P.M., when he was seen trotting for Siler City as fast as he could go, and wearing only a blanket. Another melodramatic legend has "a group of college students" falling asleep within the circle, whereupon they underwent some nameless horror from which they "never recovered."

There have been attempts at explaining the peculiar conformation. Most are variations on the soil-damage idea: that Indian dancing or horses walking in a circle to drive a sugar mill might have somehow permanently impaired the dirt. But while such things might have created a temporary bare spot, there seems little reason to believe that grass and trees would have stayed away ever after.

More recently, the North Carolina Department of Agriculture made soil tests and found that the soil within the circle was completely sterile, raising the question of why only that dirt should have been barren of life since the time of the earliest settlers, while outside it customary plant life and microorganisms abound.

Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of the famous naturalist, once addressed himself to the phenomenon of "fairy rings." These are circles in the ground where the vegetation shows greatly accelerated growth and often is interspersed with mushrooms. In his 1789 poem "Botanic Garden," Dar-

win writes: "So from dark clouds the playful lightning springs, / Rives the firm oak or prints the fairy-rings"—reflecting the then-prevalent belief that the rings are caused by burning of the soil by lightning.

Nowadays, with observation of the UFO phenomenon, we possibly have a more sophisticated concept of the widely varied happenings that used to be lumped together as "lightning." There have been many cases where the opposite effect has occurred and soil has been sterilized and grass withered at the site of what was taken for a "UFO landing."

From September 1975 and into 1976, 19-inch, Bigfoot-like tracks began showing up in this west end of Chatham County within a few miles radius of the Devil's Tramping Ground. Game Warden A. C. Goodwin received reports of 100 three-toed tracks, many of them near the house and garden of Mrs. Brodie Parker, near Deep River. No creature has been reported seen, so far as I know, but there have been many of the now-familiar indications of an abnormal presence. The Parkers' dog suffered paroxysms of terror, and—as in Carlos Castaneda's nocturnal struggle with "the ally" in *Journey to Ixtlán*—"it" has a habit of snapping tree limbs in the vicinity of pursuers at night.

FAYETTEVILLE (5)

The former A. S. Slocumb mansion, now owned by the local women's club, is one of those allegedly haunted houses, like the Octagon in Washington, D.C., which also have had a certain vague involvement with political mysteries. The mere claim that the place is now haunted almost seems the least intriguing part of its story. The Slocumb house was built in 1800 and used for a time in connection with the operations of the old Bank of the United States, an organization widely denounced by populist supporters of President Andrew Jackson as a nest of conspirators using money power for all sorts of hair-raising clandestine purposes. In fact, the money vault in the basement is traditionally believed to have had a secret panel leading to a tunnel network, one of which is supposed to have led to the Cape Fear River. Marquis de Lafayette visited here more than once, and the present writer has noticed that some of the many places across the country that bear this interesting man's name seem for some reason to have more than their share of abnormalities.

JAMESTOWN (6)

(5 mi. SW of Greensboro on U.S. 70.) Beginning in the 1920s, with the arrival of the automobile, a spectral hitchhiker has been reported here. As usual, the apparition is a pretty girl who flags down motorists—usually younger males—near the Southern Railway overpass at U.S. 70. Sup-

posedly, she asks for a lift to High Point, some five miles farther southwest, but on arrival at the house to which she directed them, she of course has vanished, much to the drivers' puzzlement. We know the rest: Those who go to the house to inquire are told by a kindly old woman that, yes, that was her daughter who had been killed at the railroad crossing in 1923 and she keeps on trying to get home. (See Albany, New York.)

JOHNSTON COUNTY (7)

There is undoubtedly a presence of some kind around here. It has manifested in the form of monsters, mini-sters, bridge trolls, and even phantom reenactments in the skies of the 1865 battle of Bentonville. The most recent event occurred in the latter half of October 1976, when an eight-year-old boy and a 20-year-old woman reported the cavortings of a very tiny man—"about the size of a Coke bottle," according to the lad—near the town of Dunn. Editor Fred H. Bost of the Dunn *Daily Record* investigated and expressed himself as satisfied that there was no hoax and that the two had seen *something*.

In the summer of 1964, a loathsome bozo frequented the area of Dean's Old Mill, just outside Smithfield. There were at least 10 sightings of "a large, perhaps mentally ill man," and reports of finding hogs, a goat, and a cow killed and partly devoured. The thing was seven feet tall, had 16-inch footprints, and "a distorted countenance." At the same time, a similar goofus was on the rampage near Delia, Kansas.

I wonder if we will ever get historians to include the factor of "sensitive spots," or what Ivan Sanderson called "vile vortices," in their calculations of the why of events. If they do, a likely contender might be the east-central part of Johnston County, centering on the 35-odd square miles of desolate wilderness bordering the Neuse River (pronounced Nooz).

Just south of here, the forces of William T. Sherman and Joseph E. Johnston fought a short but bloody battle in the closing days of the Civil War. Long-time residents, perhaps thinking I would scoff, have somewhat reluctantly told me about people they knew who had stood agog while breathtaking dioramas of the warring cavalades unfolded across summer sunsets after a thunderstorm.

One of the several bridges across Mill Creek, which meanders through the battleground, is the subject of a very old haunt story. A mystery light once bobbed up and down over the stream at night, and it came to be identified with the ghost of a Legree-like slaveowner named Lynch who was murdered by a slave named Old Squire. However, the activity must long have ceased, because I could find no agreement among local informants as to which bridge was involved.

Most of the "action" here, however, has focused on an island in the

river called Neuse Isle. It is a matted, overgrown affair that is appropriately dense with funereal cypresses. Residents here seldom find occasion to go into the river thicket, and they are particularly disinclined to visit the island. For a century, tales have been told of the swinging shadows of 49 hanged men among the wind-tossed treetops of a dark, stormy night.

The men were plundering "bummers" who had come in behind Sherman during his scorched-earth campaign in this heartland of the Confederacy. After a spree of rather dastardly crimes against the citizenry, a Confederate punitive force went out and rounded up the freebooters, who had their camp on Neuse Isle. All of them were hanged—but the memory reputedly lingers.

For anyone desiring to investigate here, I suggest first getting a county map at the courthouse in Smithfield, and then inquiring of the helpful and knowledgeable folks who can usually be found at the Bentonville Battle-ground Museum, just north of U.S. 701, between Smithfield and Newton Grove.

MACO (8)

(15 mi. W of Wilmington on U.S. 74/76 to S.R. 87; left a few hundred yards to railroad crossing.) The Maco Ghost Light frequents the Seaboard Coast Line tracks here between the Highway 87 crossing and a bridge over a small stream a quarter-mile east. Resembling a ghost trainman swinging his lantern, the light has been associated with a story of a conductor named Joe Baldwin who was killed and decapitated by a train in 1868. His ghost supposedly still looks for that missing head. For a long time, trainmen here carried two lanterns, one red and one green, so they wouldn't be mistaken for the oft-seen apparition.

Many people have seen the light, ranging from ordinary citizens of the area to such celebrities as President Grover Cleveland, who watched it once from his private railroad car. The entity is said to favor dark, rainy nights. It usually starts glowing around the bridge, often darting in from the side as if off the creek. It then moves westward along the rails toward the crossing (sometimes prankishly playing around, or even entering, cars parked along the track to watch it). Faster and faster it moves, swinging wider and wider in a UFO-like "pendulum" movement. Then it pauses and backtracks to where it began, and winks out for another night.

As is usual with all mystery light phenomena across the country, there have been attempts to dismiss the Maco Light as the random reflection of auto headlights. Even though the effulgence has been appearing for a lot longer than there have been cars driving along the highway a quarter-mile north through thick woods, this hypothesis was given a fair shake recently. All traffic in the area was blocked off while observers watched for the

light. After a discreet delay, it appeared as usual along the now completely dark rails.

RAEFORD (9)

In mid-February 1953 there was an outburst of livestock killings centering on the V. S. Hynes farm in nearby Oakdale. The carnivorous dweller in the shadows this time took the form of a giant cat. Most of the Hynes sheep flock was killed by slashing of the throat. Mystified authorities could only suggest that it was "a leopard that had escaped from a petshop."

SALISBURY (10)

About 15 miles southeast of here, off U.S. 52 at Gold Hill, is the abandoned Randolph gold mine. The 850-foot shaft has been the site of ghostly lights and many spook stories since the nineteenth century.

On October 6, 1970, at 9:30 P.M., there was a mystery explosion over Salisbury. No official explanation was ever offered.

SAMPSON COUNTY (11)

On February 15 of 1850, a plantation here was littered in an area 30 by 900 feet with a fall of fresh blood, brains, and scraps of the internal organs of some creature or other. The gruesome matter dropped from a freakish red cloud, just as did a similar fall of sliced meat on Good Friday of that year in Cloverlea, Virginia.

WARREN COUNTY (12)

In the summer of 1959, unexplained blasts that seemed to originate in the sky rocked San Francisco, California, and a large area of West Texas and New Mexico. A few hours later, Henderson, North Carolina, was rocked within a 29-hour period by two unexplained detonations. Authorities here finally decided they had been touched off by someone who had hung bombs in treetops.

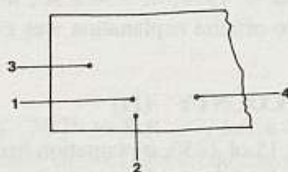
WARSAW (13)

(29 mi. S of Goldsboro on U.S. 117.) A ghostly train with a mournful whistle and blinding headlight was reported occasionally along the Seaboard Coast Line tracks north of here in earlier decades of this century. Sometimes it played its repetitive role "straight," with all of the graphic—if nonsensical—realism of old-fashioned cars rattling along behind a busily chuffing engine.

At other times the phenomenon waxed more prankish and threw the fear of the Lord into pedestrians on the tracks, particularly those who might have thought themselves caught in the middle of one of the river trestles by an onrushing train with bellowing whistle and improbably gigantic light. More than one engineer of an actual train likewise was badly scared at the thought of a head-on collision with the thing. But inspection afterward showed that the sound and light show was stationary at some point down the track.

It is believed in these parts that this was the phantom of a local train that had been called the "Shoo Fly," which derailed and crashed one day around the turn of the century, killing three trainmen.

NORTH DAKOTA



BISMARCK (1)

A shower of "flinty" stones fell over the city at 9 P.M. on May 22, 1884. Fifteen hours later, another identical fall occurred over the area—making this a statistically highly significant event.

In 1738, a truly strange inscription stone was discovered in this vicinity, along the banks of the Missouri River. It was found by French explorer Pierre Gaultier de Varennes and was taken back with him to Quebec in 1743. There, puzzled Jesuit scholars pored over it, finally venturing the opinion that the characters were those of the Tatar language of Central Asia. The stone was about 14 inches long and set in a pillar, which was revered as an unknown but miraculous totem by the Mandan Indians. According to historian Frederick Pohl, the stone has been traced to the basement of a church in Rouen, France, where it is still buried under World War Two bomb rubble because of lack of funds to dig it out.

CANNON BALL (2)

(32 mi. SE of Bismarck on Missouri River.) The Cannonball River takes its name from the many peculiar, spherical sandstones along its banks and bluffs near its junction with the Missouri and continuing along the west bank of the Missouri north to Ft. Rice. Like the similar but larger boulders of Rock City, Kansas, it is a geological mystery how such forms were

created in nature's workshop, which—except for crystals—seems to avoid geometric forms. A number of the "cannonballs" are also on display in the city park at Mandan, North Dakota.

FT. BERTHOLD INDIAN RESERVATION (3)

Near Fishhook Village, about 12 miles east of Elbowoods and 10 miles southwest of Raub, along the north shore of Lake Sakawakea, were a series of "hoofprints" about two feet in diameter. They resembled the tracks of a giant horse and were several inches deep in the sod, with the bottoms of some lined with pebbles. The prints at one time formed a trail starting near the village and running 450 feet to a larger depression in the ground. From here, the prints returned somewhat to the south to the village.

Local Indians now maintain that their ancestors made the marks after a major war with the Dakota in 1853. The marks are in rather poor condition. Those lying within Scout Cemetery, northeast of the village, are the best preserved. At one time there were in the vicinity at least two mounds with scattered stones atop them.

Ethnologists today tend to accept contemporary Indian claims of having built these ground effigies for rather banal purposes in recent times, but earlier investigators were skeptical, noting that such stories seem to have only recently cropped up in Indian lore. Also, both Mandan and Hidatsa storytellers claimed the prints for their own tribes.

STUTSMAN COUNTY (4)

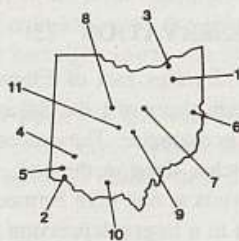
About 18 miles southeast of Jamestown on private land, and south of the village of Montpelier, early explorers discovered a large number of puzzling ground figures made of boulders. One of the most artistically appealing of the boulder outlines, looked at from an aerial view in a drawing, is a group of two broken circles with their openings adjacent. The larger circle is 16 feet across and the smaller one 13 feet; their centers are 27.5 feet apart.

Each has a pair of "horns," or another incomplete small circle, with their openings facing away from the group. The four openings of these varied circles are all aligned on an axis that, when last measured, was seven degrees west of magnetic north. Another broken circle lies somewhat north of this pair and has its opening aligned 16 degrees east of magnetic north.

A quarter-mile southwest are two circles, one of which is divided in halves and the other in quarters. Four miles south and on the east side of the James River are two closed parallelograms. They are about 300 feet apart and aligned (some decades ago) on a bearing 32 degrees south of west.

All of these structures are located slightly west of the ninety-eighth meridian of west longitude and so would seem to qualify for inclusion in my Mystery Meridian (*see* Kansas).

OHIO



AKRON (1)

At the same time as "insects" were supposed to be causing water to fall on a lone cottonwood tree in Stillwater, Oklahoma (an inappropriate name, that!), an area near a brickyard here had a continuous drizzle of water during several cloudless days. This was in late October of 1892. The point where the water appeared out of nowhere was clearly visible, some distance off the ground. A local "naturalist" pontificated that water vapor from the brickyard was rising and condensing at a certain point; but as Fort remarks, if this were the case, there should be even more copious local showers over any pond on any hot day.

At this same time, water mysteriously fell as mist in an area about a dozen feet square behind a house in Martinsville, Ohio, 49 miles northeast of Cincinnati. A month later, a peach tree in the middle of a drought-stricken area in Brownsville, Pennsylvania, was favored with its own private rain shower.

CINCINNATI (2)

In late January and early February 1972, there was a great deal of celestial commotion, with banging and booming, UFOing, and even some poltergeistery and parapsychic on the ground here and there.

On July 22, 1955, Ed Mootz was mowing his lawn at 440 Boal Street. As he reached out to pull some weeds near a small peach tree, drops of a reddish, oily liquid splattered onto his hand. It was warm and sticky—like blood—except that it was somewhat thicker in texture and darker in color. And it was raining down all around him. Looking up, Mootz saw about a thousand feet overhead a small, unusual cloud. It seemed to be a roiling mixture of red, green, and pink.

Noticing that the stuff on his hand was beginning to smart and sting, Mootz went inside and washed it off. When he came back outside, the cloud was gone. Next day, the peach trees were brown and dead, their fruit shriveled and dried up. The explanation given was that a cloud of effluent

"from some chemical plant" had drifted overhead and then zeroed in on his small plot of ground. Mr. Mootz didn't buy that, but he had no way of being certain of what had happened.

This was one of the general areas where "window pictures" appeared for several weeks. The phenomenon started on January 18, 1871, according to *The New York Times*, cited by Fort. Homeowners were astounded to see the images of unknown people etched on windowpanes of their houses. The pictures eventually faded and disappeared. The same thing occurred at the same time in Sandusky, Ohio, and about a year later in Baden-Baden, Germany.

CLEVELAND (3)

There are some Bigfoot watchers who are convinced that one or more of the unlovelies are living somewhere just north of the city zoo in Brookside Park. Sightings have been made periodically from the late 1960s to the mid-1970s, often around Big Creek and the railroad tracks in the area, which are very common coordinates in the manifestation of "critters" everywhere.

There have also been reports from the Lake Erie shore near Lorain, some 25 miles west of here. Scientist Constantine Rafinesque drew attention to monster reports from Lake Erie in 1819. His information was that an aqueous type had been seen in July of 1817, and was said to be 35 feet long, a foot in diameter, and dark brown in color. Rafinesque thought it might be a giant eel, a then-fashionable idea about water monsters.

At New London, 47 miles southwest of Cleveland, a seven-foot Bigfoot with glowing red eyes appeared in August of 1973, near New London Eastern Road and S.R. 511, in southwest Lorain County. Some local residents think strange things are happening in the swamp east of S.R. 162 in that area, with one or more critters and occasional saucers rendezvousing there.

An extremely malodorous specimen, dubbed the "Limberger Monster," confronted women motorists and generally raised Cain for a few weeks in Marion, Wyandot, and Defiance counties in August of 1972.

DAYTON (4)

Wright Patterson Air Force Base, a few miles northeast of town, is looked on askance by UFO traditionalists as the place where the government has stashed away a number of cracked-up saucers and pickled Venusians who didn't get a chance to get taken to our leaders, along with other goodies that would prove the "hardware hypothesis" if only the CIA or whatever other blue meanies are involved would let the truth out.

I also understand, from a recent published interview of UFO statistician David Saunders, that Dayton has the largest number of sightings of uniden-

tifieds at the moment. (Just what correlation there is between that and the old Wright Patterson Hangar 18 rumors, I will have to leave to the reader to draw.)

One of these incidents, occurring in October of 1973, was a cattle mutilation. A woman reported to police that "an oblong object" with blinking lights killed two cows after it landed in a field behind Boston, Ohio, on Petersburg Pike. This was one of 80 reported UFO sightings in west-central Ohio that night.

In late May of 1968, a kangaroo appeared at 2:15 A.M. alongside Interstate Highway 75, some miles south of Dayton near Monroe. A Cincinnati zoo director called by reporters admitted that he had been hearing other kangaroo stories in the vicinity, but suspected that the animal was merely an escapee of some kind. Hopping macropodians have been relatively common Fortean fauna lately in certain other midwestern areas, particularly northern Illinois, and wearied explainers there have given up trying to wish them off on zoos and circuses.

A green rain spattered down on Dayton on March 26, 1948. Autos, houses, clothing, and sidewalks were all tinted for a while, unfortunately nine days late for the appropriate saint's day. At Xenia, 16 miles east of Dayton, a three-foot crocodile was caught in Huffman Pond on July 6, 1936. At this same time, a major croc errant outbreak was going on in Westchester County, New York.

Charles Fort's account, in the twenty-third chapter of *Lo!*, of the many unusual occurrences in Dayton during the disastrous floods of March 23, 1913, which included far stranger happenings than mere high water, makes rather creepy reading. As this is written, in early 1977, the worst winter "ever" is in progress in the United States, and news reports indicate that it has unleashed special fury around Dayton, Ohio.

HAMILTON (5)

(22 mi. N of Cincinnati on U.S. 127.) A monument to a certain John Symes, apparently a notable in the hollow earth coterie, still stands here, at my last report. It was raised to Symes by his son and shows him bestriding a model of the hollow globe, natch.

HAMMONDSVILLE (6)

(14 mi. NW of Steubenville off S.R. 7.) A large slate wall covered with untranslatable hieroglyphics was found in a coal strip mine owned by a Captain Lacy in the fall of 1868. Workman James Parsons uncovered it behind a large mass of coal. The lines of glyphs were about three inches apart. Local scholars could not puzzle them out, but before more qualified savants could arrive, the slate had decomposed and crumbled from the unwonted exposure to fresh air. A similar wall that did get studied—and

then massively ignored—was found in a farm field of Bradley County, Tennessee.

LOUDONVILLE (7)

A mirage of a large, unknown city was seen by many residents here at 4 P.M. on March 12, 1890. Some thought the image was of the town of Mansfield, 30 miles away; others, more daring, opted for Sandusky, 60 miles distant. The most enraptured declared for "the New Jerusalem." Since then, there have been fleeting spook lights in fields and woods outside town.

MARION (8)

In the Marion Cemetery, Delaware Avenue and Vernon Heights Boulevard, is one of America's most "ingenious" and baffling anomalies. It concerns the impressive gravestone of the Charles Merchant family, where a tapering white granite column supports a mighty black granite sphere about three feet in diameter.

The structure was put up in 1897. By the summer of 1904 it had begun to do its peculiar trick: a gradual turning of the ball atop the pedestal. This was first noticed when it was seen that the small circular rough spot intended to sit in the top of the pedestal had moved out of its socket. The invisible rotation has continued ever since, despite all efforts to fasten the structure.

At first, mason's cement was poured into the recess atop the column. Two months later, the big sphere had imperturbably rotated about 10 inches. Molten lead and other adhesives were attempted, ineffectually.

Explanations have been equally inconclusive. Initially, pranksters were suspected, but that idea had to be dropped when it was found that a derrick and several strong men were needed to restore the polished, three-ton orb to its proper position. When the phenomenon was first announced, observers at all levels of the scientific hierarchy came to Marion. Before long, the theory that is still more or less promoted by die-hard materialists was evolved: that the rotation is caused by unequal heat expansion.

In short, it is believed that the sun shining on one side of the sphere while the other is in shadow causes enough expansion of the stone on the hot side that it gains a fraction of an inch of traction against the pedestal, preventing the sphere from returning to its exact position overnight when it has cooled and "shrunk." But there are several problems with this otherwise tidy theory:

—If the sphere does expand and contract so markedly, why would not the pedestal holding it also expand and contract, thus canceling any supposed drag or traction?

- In view of the sphere's great size and weight, would there be enough expansion of polished granite in Ohio's temperate climate and surrounded by large shade trees to supply the force needed to slide it against the huge inert friction of its own full weight on a small support point?
- It has been observed by cemetery custodians that the sphere continues to revolve at about the same rate the year round, even during months when sunshine is rare in central Ohio.
- If the turning is caused by unequal expansion, resulting from one side of the ball being heated by the sun while the other was not, the torque caused by "inching" of the supposedly heat-distorted sphere against the base should bring the spot on the ball up toward the sun on the south side. However, it turns the opposite way, toward the north.
- Individual headstones on the Merchant plot are replicas of the main monument, although their spheres measure 15 inches in diameter. No movement has ever been detected in them, nor in two other large monuments of the full-sized design in Prospect, Ohio.

Disturbances in graveyards are more frequent than we usually think. The displacing or tipping of tombstones, many of which are massive and securely anchored, is invariably ascribed to "vandals," even though there is often evidence linking it with other nonnormal phenomena in a given area. In Colorado, 1975, for example, cemetery damage in one locality was simultaneous with unaccountable outbreaks of arson and with mutilations of nearby beef cattle. I find it most significant that the Marion Cemetery apparently is built on or near the site of prehistoric mounds, memorialized now in the Indian Mound School adjacent to the graveyard.

Newtonian physicists have always set a lot of store by their Foucault pendulums. When I was taking first-year physics at the University of Iowa, I fondly remember lab classes repairing to the basement where the big plumb bob suspended from a beam in the attic swerved slowly over a sort of sundial plate on the floor. It was, and is fascinating: close to a true *perpetuum mobile*. And Arthur Koestler, in his book *The Roots of Coincidence*, has a lot of provocative things to say about the hyperphysical implications of Foucault pendulums. But I have a hunch that there are enigmas equally far-reaching at work in the Marion turning tombstone.

Today, though, the thing is completely forgotten, and even few in Marion know or care of it. But this most mysterious ball rolls on alone, like a little world that inches north to south, while the big one swirls west to east.

NEWARK (9)

This city has grown up right atop what is now believed to have been a sort of necropolis of the mound builders. Much of the original fantastically

elaborate layout has been destroyed by modern development. But still remaining is the perfectly circular earth walls enclosing about 20 acres, adjoining which is a regular octagon of about 18 acres. Long corridors with high earthen walls linked these and other structures. A separate channel extended straight from the main site to the Licking River bank about 2.5 miles away, and grandiose funerary rituals are believed to have been conducted within the walls.

All of this is supposed to have been built around the first or second centuries A.D., if you accept current archaeological gestalts, and radiocarbon dating (which not all archaeologists accept anymore). What always strikes me, however, is the why of it all. Of the thousands of ground structures decorating the eastern states at the time of white settlement, there were many that contained greater cubic yardages than the Cheops Pyramid. Those Hopewell and Adena Indians must have been extremely busy folks for the few centuries in which they are now assigned the task of doing so much heavy construction.

SERPENT MOUND (10)

(17 mi. SE of Hillsboro on N side of S.R. 73.) This incredible ground sculpture is surely one of the most important native American artworks—maybe one of the most important American artworks of any kind. Measuring a quarter-mile long, 20 feet wide, and about five feet high, the obvious representation is of a snake. But there is an abstract quality to the head that raises my doubt.

Possibly it is the ancient "occult" motif of a snake eating an egg. Or, on the far fringe of fantasy, might it be some pre-Leeuwenhoek rendering of a spermatozoan? Remember that the moons of Mars and the companion of Sirius were talked of by Swift and Voltaire long before mainstream astronomy discovered them, so no doubt other things were known before the dates we assign them.

There are other more realistic serpentine mound structures: in Illinois (also in Adams County); at Rice Lake, Ontario, Canada; at Avebury in England. In Hughes County, South Dakota, a serpent figure is picked out with rocks. Clearly, the mound builders were impressed with snakes and made many effigies of them, although none bigger than this one. In addition, there are a large number of other animal and humanoid figures among our numerous pre-Columbian ground sculptures. We have displays representing men and women, elephants, birds, buffaloes. Many are perfectly geometric.

This raises the question of point of view. Like the now-famous Nazca Figures in Peru, all these structures—but particularly Serpent Mound—are clear examples of figures made to be seen from high in the air. From the ground, Serpent Mound simply looks like a dull series of flat-topped hills.

Even with modern machinery, building structures like these would be a

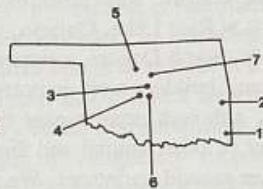
punishing task. And, since there would be little if anything to be gained aesthetically from the task, I must say that it strains my credulity to believe that hard-pressed ancient people at the subsistence level of hunting-gathering or rudimentary agriculture described by our present experts either could or would undertake such a seemingly meaningless task. Why not make something that they themselves could appreciate? Moreover, I am not convinced that the work could even be coordinated to form such an artistically perfect figure entirely from ground level.

Archaeologists grudgingly admit that the "Indians" who built Serpent Mound were unusually careful to leave not the slightest clue within the working as to their identity. However, since a few points, pigments, and potsherds in the simple burial mound nearby seem to be attributable to the "Adena people" (c. 800 B.C. to A.D. 400, the Serpent Mound is usually chalked up to them, too.

WESTERVILLE (11)

(Abt. 12 mi. NE of Columbus on S.R. 3.) In late August 1910 a farmer named Daniel Lawyer living near here saw a white cylinder, resembling marble, fall from the sky. In a letter to Charles Fort, the farmer said the object did not appear to be artificial, but seemed like a meteorite—with the added interest of having marks carved on it. A photograph of the cylinder, which was 12 inches long and weighed about three pounds, was published in *Popular Mechanics* magazine, volume 14, page 801. Fort remarks that this was one of a series of such occurrences that summer, in North America and Europe.

OKLAHOMA



EAGLETOWN (1)

(Far SE corner of state, on U.S. 70.) Just outside this town, in Rock Creek, a large crocodile measuring almost nine feet in length was killed in July of 1949. The area is a few miles west of DeQueen, Arkansas, which was visited by a spiral-traveling "monster" in the late 1960s. "Cracked crocs" have recurred in absurdly nonprobable numbers in several geo-

graphical focuses of the United States, notably Decatur, Illinois; Oakland County, Michigan; and Westchester County, New York.

HEAVENER (2)

(48 mi. SW of Ft. Smith, Ark., on U.S. 59.) About two miles east of here on Poteau Mountain, the Heavener Runestone State Park enshrines a 12-foot monolith with a runic inscription of eight characters. (Heavener, by the way, is pronounced with a "heave" rather than a "heaven.") The inscription has been variously translated. The earliest and most literal rendering is GNOMEDAL. A gnome, then as now, was a goblin of earth spirit. DAL meant valley. Hence, "valley of the gnomes." Frederick J. Pohl, historian and gadfly of the archaeological establishment, favors a slight variant: GNOME for sundial, and DAL, valley—"valley of the sundial." His idea is that, since the stone stands at the west end of the 40-mile-long Poteau Ridge, with its surface just lighted by the sun at noon, it forms a type of sundial.

Another cryptographic rendering is made by California runecist Alf Monge, who claims the inscription is an anagram for November 11, 1012, St. Martin's Day.

Pohl gives a summary of what little is known of the Heavener runestone in his 1961 book, *Atlantic Crossings Before Columbus*. He believes that it is around 1,000 years old. He also points out something that might be kept in mind by anyone considering a visit to the site: Local people avoid the area until November or later because it is infested with rattlesnakes in summer.

Reportedly, there were a lot of other runestones in the area but most were dynamited by treasure lunatics in the 1920s, who always had persuaded themselves that the stones concealed gold hordes. One inscription stone that survived is in the Kerr Museum near Heavener.

THE MYSTERY MERIDIAN.

This north-south grouping that is so well represented in Kansas shows up in a band of Oklahoma sites as well:

Crescent (3) (32 mi. N of Oklahoma City on S.R. 74.) Plutonium is one of the most toxic elements and is highly carcinogenic. Only a few pounds are needed to make a full-fledged atomic bomb. It is fitting, in a way, that one of the few U.S. plutonium packing facilities is located here, at a mystery/history node in the Meridian.

This was the place where one Karen Silkwood died under puzzling circumstances in November of 1974. Silkwood was preparing to turn over to the *New York Times* a file of investigative data pertaining to alleged safety

irregularities at the plant, which is operated by the Kerr-McGee Corporation. U.S. Treasury investigators probing cattle mutilations in the western states were told by criminal informants that plutonium had been stolen from the Crescent plant and had ended up in the hands of "devil worshippers" headquartered in Texas. The same gang, it was alleged, were behind the mutilations.

El Reno (4) (25 mi. W of Oklahoma City on U.S. 66.) In late May of 1971, something described as midway between a gorilla and a man was ranging around this area. Wags dubbed it the "Abominable Chicken Man" when it showed a proclivity for raiding henhouses. But one policeman, unamused by it all, said: "They'd cut out the wisecracks real quick if they saw some of those tracks around their homes."

Enid (5) What might there have been in this small city to attract not one, not two, but three persons involved in what pioneer conspiratologist Otto Eisenschiml has called "the strange death of Abraham Lincoln"? Yet, local history records that a chap who killed himself with strychnine—or at least ended up poisoned to death—at the local hotel on January 13, 1903, had identified himself as none other than John Wilkes Booth. He had been living in and around Enid for quite some time, using a number of aliases. At the time of his death, he was known as David E. George and posed as a house painter, although no one seems to have taken that role any more seriously than he did.

George always seemed to have plenty of money and spent most of his time in taverns. When well-oiled with drink, he often delivered lengthy Shakespearean recitations, which amazed those who heard them as being far superior to ordinary barroom blague. He had confided to a number of persons that he, Booth, had escaped from a burning tobacco barn at Port Royal, Virginia, where he was cornered after the Lincoln assassination, leaving another man to be shot in his place. A last request, found among George's effects, was that actor Edwin Booth of New York, the brother of the assassin, be notified of his death. This was done by telegram, but there was no reply. (For the pre-Enid activities of J. W. Booth *soi-disant*, a nineteenth-century book by investigator Finis L. Bates entitled *The Escape and Suicide of John Wilkes Booth* contains a wealth of arcane information. Also invaluable, of course, are the several revisionist studies of the entire Lincoln death conspiracy written many years ago by Otto Eisenschiml.)

A man who certainly should have been able to shed some light on the identity of "George" was also residing in Enid at the time. This was Boston Corbett, the army sergeant who had rushed up and shot into the burning barn, killing Booth in a sort of instant preplay of the Ruby-Oswald exchange of 1963. Corbett, who seems to have escaped from an insane asylum somewhere along his checkered trail, was working in Enid as a

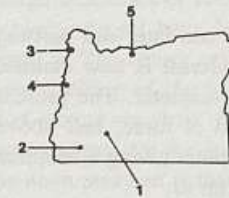
drug salesman. He may even have carried strychnine in his samples kit. But if he was in town at the time of George's death, he never came forward.

Eight months after the death, a newspaper in Rockport, Indiana, reported that the former property manager for the Laura Keane Theatrical Company, who had opened the window for Booth to escape Ford's Theatre after shooting Lincoln, had retired and was living, where else but at Enid, Oklahoma. He too kept silent.

Oklahoma City Area (6) An "airship" or two hovered luminously in the skies during the flap of April 1897. Four years later, in November of 1901, a 4.5-foot crocodile was killed in the Canadian River at the southwest edge of Norman. Charles Fort was interested in the curious, unsolved killings of three men in July 1907 who were found with their ears cut off.

Stillwater (7) For several days during a long drought in October of 1892, rain fell on a large cottonwood tree near here. A Dr. Neel, director of the Agricultural Experiment Station, went to the tree to analyze the phenomenon. He captured some insects and said that they were causing the precipitation, never mind exactly how. But Fort found several other cases around the country where the same thing was happening, notably Akron and Martinsville, Ohio, and Brownsville, Pennsylvania.

OREGON



CRATER LAKE (1)

On January 8, 1867, the army garrison at Ft. Klamath was startled by a post-reveille cannonadelike blast, followed by an earthquake. Then came darkness, caused by black smoke or clouds filling up the sky. Next fell ashes, brown in color, as thick as in a fast snowfall. Half an hour later was another quake, described as "frightful" by witnesses. Some buildings were shifted as much as 90 feet, presumably those on hillsides.

Explainers said there had been a volcanic explosion in the vicinity, since a dark column of smoke was seen in the direction of the Klamath Marsh. But investigation turned up no eruption there, or anywhere else in Oregon between 1846 and 1916. Charles Fort noted that an opposition of Mars had

occurred two days after the Klamath explosions in 1867, a correlation that he had found in many other such blasts around the world, up to the year 1879.

GRANTS PASS AREA (2)

Galice (15 mi. NW of Grants Pass on a Josephine County road.) About two miles southwest of here, in the Siskiyou National Forest, is a group of ancient "beehive" stone structures of the kind conventionally dubbed as "kilns," whether for charcoal or limestone depending upon which expert one talks to. There are others in Oregon south of Bend, near the Arnold Ice Cave. Some authorities believe that the Spanish built these; others aren't so sure. Similar structures exist near Florence, Arizona.

The Oregon Vortex (Near Gold Hill; exit I-5 on S.R. 234, Crater Lake exit, and inquire locally.) Although geomagnetic anomalies are not at all rare, most of them are in remote locations where human contact is minimal. This one, although possibly of a higher order of confusion than many, has been near the main north-south artery of the Coast for decades. In recent years, the "vortex" here has been skillfully promoted as a tourist attraction and so has acquired a possibly exaggerated reputation.

The site is on a hillside overlooking Sardine Creek and near the abandoned workings of the Gray Eagle Mine, where \$30 million in gold was dug. Although this remote forest clearing was regarded as cursed by the Indians and avoided by them, the first recorded disturbances seem to have occurred around 1890, when the scales in the mine's assay office began to act up.

The shed was abandoned and later slid partway down the hillside to its present spot. The area of interest is now claimed to be exactly 165 feet, four and one-half inches in diameter. The present proprietors claim that it represents "a spherical field of force, half above the ground," and have prepared an interesting pamphlet giving a technical explanation of what the magnetic lines of force are up to.

The oddities that are claimed to happen here are too numerous to list in detail. Perhaps the best known are gravitational. Plumb bobs hang at an angle toward the center of the circle, and their weights can more easily be pushed toward the center than toward the outer rim. Tree limbs droop or, if possible, curve upward around the supposed spheroid of force. Cigarette smoke or confetti thrown over the area can, on a calm day, demonstrate an eddy pattern, as though stirred by an unseen hand.

Photic and perceptual distortions are also claimed. Dimmer light intensity in the center of the "vortex" than in the surrounding area is reportedly indicated on photoelectric exposure meters, although whether this might involve some mechanical effect on the meter itself I don't know. Horseback

riders have to beware because their mounts often shy or spook when approaching the area. Birds avoid flying overhead and do not nest in adjacent trees.

It should be obvious that there could well be a large X factor of suggestion and "hype" in the supposed reactions of uncritical individuals, particularly when they walk through the old mine shack with its steeply leaning floor and are then assured that they are leaning toward magnetic north.

I confess that I have not yet had the opportunity to make any serious study of the place. If I ever do, one factor that I would like to check is the old story that the aberrations are strongest when the moon is full, declining overnight to a minimum at dawn and strengthening as the sun passes the zenith. A lunar dimension has very often been noted in other parts of the paranormal continuum, and particularly in the UFO/monster syndrome. I suspect that there is still much to be learned of the effects of terrestrial magnetism.

MANZANITA (3)

Along the Pacific beach here, about 25 miles south of the mouth of the Columbia River, large quantities of wax have been found over the years. Most of it turns up in the sands around the mouth of the Nehalem River on a wild and windswept tongue of land covered by dunes and grass.

The unusual explanation is that this is beeswax, dumped on the beach when the *San Francisco Xavier*, a Spanish galleon bound for Mexico from the Orient, cracked up here at some time around 1705. Some treasure enthusiasts even claim that the wax has been analyzed and found to come from Ghedda, India, where large quantities of such wax were produced in former times. Many of the pieces found have had numerals and letters imprinted, which are interpreted as "inventory marks."

There also are Indian legends telling of the foundering of a ship and, inevitably, tales of the burial of a huge sea chest by two supposed survivors of the wreck, who then were murdered by the Indians. Others are not so sure of all this, however. The main problem is that the wax keeps washing up through the sand. No doubt a shipload of the stuff would have cast up quite a lot of the material, but how it could keep appearing after two and half centuries seems strange. In fairness to treasure theorists, however, there is evidence of a large hulk lying a short way out from Nehalem.

NEWPORT (4)

Would you believe three little tree stumps "that walked across the pasture"? And in your choice of hues: orange, blue, white, yellow, and "watermelon-colored"? That, at least, is what Kathy Reeves—then aged 16—reported in April of 1966. By autumn, dozens of people around this

coastal lumbering area had at least seen an unidentified flyer or two, and some a lot more: A display of stark, staring cyclopes were encountered by a couple of people.

Although 1966 was a hyperactive year for golliwogs everywhere—after all, wasn't it the year that Satanist Anton Szandor LaVey proclaimed "Anno Satanae I"?—this sort of thing was not completely unprecedented in these parts. Pioneer Mountain, a short way outside Newport, has long been a center for ultrareality, even if the reports are not taken seriously by everyone in the community.

To some extent the 1966 oddities appear to have been what we now call by the unfortunate adjective of "poltergeistic"—That is, there was a strong psychic aspect to them that centered on Kathy Reeves. She said the "haunting" of her parents' house had begun after she and another girl were walking home one night and saw what appeared to be a flashlight with a cover over the end. "I thought it was somebody playing a trick, so I threw a rock at the light. A lot of big ones went on all around it and we ran home."

The Reeves family were harassed to the point of moving out of their house on Pioneer Mountain. Before that, however, a number of people studied the goings-on. Max W. Taylor, a chemist for the Georgia-Pacific Corporation, camped on the Reeves front lawn and was rewarded by seeing what he described as "two bluish lights" perched on the roof one night. Deputy Sheriff Thomas W. Price saw a flying object: "I don't know what it was, but it was orange and it was bigger than any star. I know it wasn't a meteor or a satellite because it was maneuvering. There was a noise like a giant spinning top. It made the hair stand up on the back of my neck."

After the Reeveses left, the new owner, Delbert Mapes, said the freak show seemed to have left with them.

THE DALLES (5)

Beneath a flag showing a big black footprint on a light field is the house trailer home of the Bigfoot Information Center, the headquarters of what we might call the old guard of the crazy critters world. The place is run by Peter Byrne, a former safari leader from Nepal, who is now engaged in what he calls "the ultimate hunt": an effort to capture a Bigfoot alive.

Byrne is adamant in believing that Bigfoot represents a highly reclusive kind of higher primate, even though he has been following up sightings all over the Pacific Northwest for a number of years now and has so far not been successful in obtaining any physical evidence that has not been found elsewhere in the country.

Some who have studied the phenomenon in its nationwide ramifications suspect that that five-toed print on his flag may be a symbol of a fundamental—and arbitrary—limitation: A large part, possibly even a major-

ity, of the sightings now being made involve creatures with four or even three toes. Anyone with a smattering of biology realizes that this simply "cannot be" in terms of orthodox comparative anatomy.

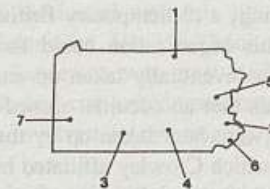
Byrne's response to the weird aspects of the Bigfoot vector is a policy of exclusionism of the same kind that he denounces in biologists who do not accept his own "long-lost primate" theory. In two places in his 1975 book, *The Search for Bigfoot*, Byrne denies that reports occurring outside the Pacific Northwest are "describing a Bigfoot."

One of the areas in The Dalles where the creatures have most often been seen is the Pinewood Trailer Court, at the east end of town, between Crate's Point Hill and Table Mountain. Because of the large number of reports here, Byrne for years has been staking out this area and a neighboring rock quarry, using a large array of Buck Rogers technology, including Starlight snooperscopes. He admits to having no success yet. At the same time, he seems to have overlooked a subtle but essential point: The Bigfoot entity, whatever it is, has a big hang-up about trailer parks and people—particularly women—living in them. This fact might indicate that we are dealing with something much more complex than a mere wild animal.

Another possibility is that The Dalles has some innate tendency to a broader spectrum of offbeat phenomena, of which "creatures" may be only a part. On January 20, 1971, an empty school bus suddenly went wild in the parking lot of The Dalles High School. It started, roared across the lot as students scattered, slammed over a 20-foot embankment, stopped, and then started again. Finally, an employee got inside and ripped out wiring to stop it. A "short" was blamed, as is usual in these cases.

There are also a couple of supposedly haunted houses in The Dalles that have received nationwide attention from people interested in such things.

PENNSYLVANIA



BRADFORD COUNTY (1)

At Tioga Point, on what was then the Murray farm just southwest of the town of Sayre, a prehistoric mound yielded the oddest skeletons yet in the Fibber McGee closest of American archaeology. A distinguished team of professional antiquarians opened the mound in the 1880s. Present were Dr. G. P. Donehoo, Pennsylvania state historian and a prominent Presbyterian

Church dignitary; Professor A. B. Skinner of the American Investigating Museum; and Professor W. K. Morehead of Phillips Andover Academy.

Inside the mound, they discovered the bones of 68 men that they estimated to have been buried around the year A.D. 1200. The average length of the skeletons was seven feet, with many of them much taller. On some of the skulls, two inches above the foreheads, were bony projections, evidently "horns" or horn buds that had been there since birth. Some of the specimens were sent to the American Investigating Museum in Philadelphia, where they apparently disappeared into the maw of the archaeological "memory hole," for no one will admit to any knowledge of them today.

In December of 1886, an amateur archaeologist named W. H. Scovill uncovered a mound at Ellisburg, 75 miles west of Sayre in Potter County. He found inside the skeleton of a man close to eight feet long.

Bucks County (2)

Beverly Hall (Near Quakertown; inquire locally.) The grounds of this Rosicrucian establishment suggest a "heavier" occult scene than the casual visitor, at least, will find in progress. There are a number of stone pyramids, the largest perhaps 15 feet high and featuring a sealed bronze door covered with Cabalistic reliefs. The setting is a series of terraced plots containing carefully placed rosebushes. Another pyramid stands in a pool of lotuses.

A few hundred feet to the west, among a grove of trees, a large bronze circular plaque covered with the "evocation" names and symbols of ritual magic, somewhat reminiscent of the "Tetragrammaton" shown by Rembrandt in his famous engraving of Doctor Faustus, is set in the ground. The several buildings of the Beverly Hall complex lie to the north, including a dormitory for visiting members and a white, Parthenon-like "temple" structure.

If Francis King, a contemporary British historian of occult groups, is to be believed, this organization could have a link of sorts with the "sex magic" that was eventually taken up and promulgated by Aleister Crowley. King claims that an occultist named P. Beverly Randolph worked out the rituals that were later taken up by the German-originated *Ordo Templi Orientis*, with which Crowley affiliated himself. (Possibly this man may be the origin of the name of this estate.)

But, if this was true, something of a shift seems to have been made, since the present activity here—publicly, at least—is confined to marketing the health-related and politically conservative books of the late R. Swinburne Clymer. As the San Jose, California, Rosicrucians found out to their sorrow, there was no more scathing a denouncer of "sex magic" than Clymer.

Ringin' Rocks State Park (15 air mi. NE of Quakertown on Delaware River; from Upper Black Eddy, take S.R. 09037 SW to S.R. 475, and follow 475 to park.) Is there some unfriendly force at work in this heap of rocky rubble that keeps plants and animals at bay, and even repels birds in their flight? Could this have been an ancient structure, human or otherwise, that was "totaled out" at some unknown point—possibly by bombardment of meteorites? That is the sci-fi range of questions that have been asked by people who have studied this seemingly prosaic patch of gray-black stones.

This is one of several such sites in eastern Pennsylvania; others are the Stony Garden at Haycock, a field at Pottstown, the Devil's Race Course in Franklin County, and spots in the South Mountain area. In all of these places, rocks that ring when struck with a hard object are found. Such rocks are not extremely rare in the world, but in combination with other factors, their presence makes these places highly unusual.

The Upper Black Eddy patch of ringin' rocks is completely barren of topsoil. The surrounding countryside is equally rocky, but fully penetrated with soil to a depth of at least 10 feet. There is a marked absence of plant life in the seven-acre slope that contains the ringin' rocks. Only an occasional lichen patch can be found on the undersides of some of the ringers, which make up about one third of the rocks. Rarely, a weed will make a one-season stand among the rocks, but will not recur.

It is possible to stand with one foot on rather lush forest greenery and the other on the bare, jagged rocks. The conventional theory is that the missing soul was somehow leached away; but this does not explain why the surrounding soil was not also washed away. If that was because there are trees and plant cover on the surrounding area, well, why was there no plant cover on the ringin' rocks?

The rocks are of the basaltic variety known as diabase, but there is some question as to their exact chemical makeup. Some scientists have attributed the ringin' quality to the presence of quartzites and rhyolites. The noted anomalist Ivan T. Sanderson was fascinated with this site and felt that it was one of the major mysteries of America. His 1967 book, *Things*, has an extensive section on the site. Sanderson was most curious about metalloid constituents in the rocks. He had conducted tests that made him suspect the metal molybdenum was involved in the ringin' phenomenon in some way.

Only about a third of the rocks in the pile have musical talent. These are neither sharply angular (as if shattered) nor are they globular or ovate (as if waterworn). The puzzling fact, however, is that most of the ringers are pitted with shallow depressions shaped rather like saucers, or else have irregular networks of channels gouged on their sides and undersides. Sanderson felt that the more strongly pockmarked and fissured ones resembled stony meteorites, and one of the more common popular theories is that the rock field was dumped here by a decomposing meteorite.

The rocks lie in a jumbled heap that inclines away into a sort of semicircular basin. Sanderson speculated on the possibility that there had been structural handiwork in the area after a member of one of his research expeditions found what looked like ancient stone masonry in a cave that runs under the pile. Sanderson wondered whether the "moat" that he believed ran two thirds of the way around the area did not suggest the basic outline of a European-style, Copper Age hill fort.

The biological anomalies are, if anything, more intriguing. It has been observed that birds seldom if ever fly over the field, much less land on it. Although domestic animals seem to have no fear of the rocks, the only wild varieties found here are a few spiders and insects.

A clue to the nature of the process at work here might be inferred from Sanderson's observation that samples of the ringing rocks seemed to inhibit biological growth, both animal and plant, when tested in fish tanks. However, they simultaneously developed from themselves patches of white fungoid mycelia that could not be identified.

There are indications of geomagnetic disturbances here. Reportedly, airplane pilots flying over the area sometimes experience confusion in their instruments. Some people who visit the park complain of disorientation and nausea.

BEDFORD AREA (3)

Buffalo Mills (Abt. 20 mi. SW of Bedford on S.R. 96.) On August 19, 1973, a man described as nine feet tall and wearing clothing of "funny" color and cut walked around the streets of Buffalo Mills at around 8 P.M. Those who saw him were terror-stricken and locked their doors. This town is near the extensive Wonderland Cavern system.

Pavia (20 mi. N of Bedford on S.R. 869.) There is a stone monument here to the two sons of Samuel Cox who were killed in the forest in some unknown way in April of 1856. The lads, aged five and seven, were missed by their parents one day. After 100 searchers had combed the area for 10 days, a young farmer living 12 miles away reputedly saw in a dream where the two youths lay, dead. The story goes that the pair were found exactly there. But there was no mark of violence and no clue to what had killed them.

If this book represents anything more than a collation of crazy coincidences, then I have the feeling that this area of south-central Pennsylvania could be one of rather malefic implication. Only a few miles northwest of Pavia, in Cambria County, is the Johnstown Flood National Monument, commemorating the deaths of 15,000 known persons in the terrible rampage of the Conemaugh River, May 31, 1889. There never was much of an explanation of why the dam went out. As this is written, in early 1977, Johnstown has again been beset by floods and explosions.

HARRISBURG (4)

The Pennsylvania State Museum, at last report, still holds several of the Mechanicsburg Stones, part of a large number found eight miles from here in Cumberland and York counties. They are remarkable because they bear patterns that have often been compared to characters of the ancient Phoenician alphabet. Others were flattish plates bearing straight grooves exactly six inches apart. The latter were found in large numbers stacked up in piles, as if for a building project of some sort. I understand that a chemical analysis of the red oxidation on the surface of these—including the sunken carved surfaces—dates them at 2,000 years old or more.

The lettered stones have puzzled translators because of their seeming repetition of characters resembling Semitic *aleph*, *beth*, *gimel*, and *daleth*—A,B,C,D—rather like a child first learning the aleph-beth. Of course, most authorities deny that the carvings are man-made, and the last I heard, that was the position of the Pennsylvania archaeological establishment and the officials of this museum. Their view is that the patterns were formed by erosion.

The first of the stones were found west of Mechanicsburg and south of Conodoguinet Creek. Later, more sites were discovered in York County east of Dillsburg and south of Weeches Creek. These ironstones are so hard that even a machinist's diamond scribe can barely scratch them. Nevertheless, another theory is that the inscriptions were the random scratchings of farmers' plows.

The linear, V-shaped grooves are said by geologists to have been formed naturally since their deeply incised lines do to some extent follow fault lines in the stones. But the near-perfect straightness of the grooves does give one pause. The "inscription" stones have a much shallower and rounded groove. They show no evidence of a chisel or any edged tool, and they do not follow visible fault lines. Oddly, only ironstones have the inscriptions; the softer limestone in the same areas is untouched. But other ironstone areas close by have no inscriptions.

These stones have been shunned by geologists and archaeologists. Frederick J. Pohl writes that he once obtained the support of a wealthy backer and tried to interest a number of professional scientists in simply going to Mechanicsburg to analyze the stones, all expenses paid. There were no takers.

Dr. W. F. Foshag, head curator of the Department of Geology, Smithsonian Institution, told Pohl: "I know of no one who is familiar with the ironstone concretion occurrence at Mechanicsburg. Such objects are not uncommon, and the natural markings are frequently mistaken for cuneiform characters. They are, however, natural in origin and are due to shrinkage of finely crystalline material." However, Dr. Foshag had never seen the rocks.

JIM THORPE (5)

(8 mi. W of Exit 34, Penn. Tpk. N.E. Extension, on U.S. 209.) Cell No. 17 in the local jail supposedly bears in one of its walls the handprint of a young man named Tom Fisher who, on March 28, 1878, was executed for a crime that he had not committed. The incident occurred as a part of the Molly Maguire turbulence in the coalfields, when brutal working conditions and resistance to unionization provoked violent reprisals from predominantly Irish-American miners.

Fisher had been caught up in a dragnet operation, and it was later admitted by witnesses who had helped convict him that their testimony had been false. On the morning of his hanging, Fisher had screamed a malediction as the sheriff came to escort him to the gallows: "My mark will stay on this wall forever as a reminder you've hanged an innocent man." With that, the young man thrust his palm against the wall, leaving a sweaty print. The mark has remained and survived numerous attempts to repaint and replaster it away.

PHILADELPHIA (6)

European occult orders established outposts in the New World early in colonial times. In Latin areas, this was accomplished through sects operating within Roman Catholic orders, such as the Jesuits and those "Third Order" Franciscans who gave rise to groups like the Penitentes of the Southwest. In the English colonies the activity was more up front. At the end of the seventeenth century, there was a Rosicrucian-oriented fraternity established among the prosperous German Protestant community in what is now the Germantown section of the city.

Johannes Kelpius, an initiated pupil of the famous Cabalist Knorr von Rosenroth, came here with a small band in 1694. They built a cube-shaped monastery and astrological observatory in the Wissahickon Woods of what is now the north extension of Fairmount Park. Kelpius retired to the life of an anchorite in the cave there, but died in 1708 of illness brought on by his austerities.

Initially, the Kelpius group practiced Pietist Christianity, emphasizing ecstasies, illuminations, prophecies, and what we today call astral projection. Scholars like J. F. Sachse have shown that they also were interested in Cabalism, talismanic magic and that they imported many now-classic works on alchemy, astrology, and hermetic arts. It appears that successors of Kelpius drifted away from Christian sectarianism and became more of an esoteric order.

The young Benjamin Franklin is said to have begun his busy involvement with the occult after having his interest whetted by the private mystical library of the Germantown and Ephrata cults. He was the printer of

the groups' religious material and was well acquainted with Conrad Beissel and Michael Wohlfarth, leader-mystics of the Ephrata Moravian Brethren, as the community was then called.

This may be why Franklin favored German as the official language for the new country at the time of the Revolution. George Lippard, an engrossing but now forgotten writer on curious matters around Philadelphia, suggests that the sect was also in close touch with George Washington and played a key role in instigating and encouraging the Revolutionary War.

Professor Silliman, writing in his *American Journal of Science and Arts*, records the finding of what appears to be two carved letters, deep in a stone quarry. A block of marble dug out in November of 1829 was being cut into thin slabs for use in a building. Midway through the block, a rectangular indentation was exposed by the saw. It was about one and one-half by five eighths of an inch in area, and in it were two raised letters somewhat resembling *IU*, except that the base of the *U* was not rounded but angular. The block came from a depth of 70 or 80 feet. Silliman wisely refrained from comment or explanation.

A classic example of the fall of "star jelly" occurred at 26th and Vare Boulevard the night of September 26, 1950. Police officers John Collins and Joe Keenan observed a "shimmering" object drift across the street ahead of them. They found that it had settled in a field and consisted of a gelatinous mass about six feet across and a foot thick in the center, tapering to a couple of inches thick at the edges. It gave off a dull purple glow.

Two other witnesses, Sergeant Joe Cook and Patrolman James Cooper, joined them. When Collins tried to pick the object up, it disintegrated like watery gelatin in his fingers. The entire mass evaporated within a half hour. This is one of the few falls of a gelatinous meteor that did not occur in October. For more on that subject, see Monterey, California.

On January 23, 1955, a grapefruit-sized blazing object crashed through the window of the William C. Cunningham residence. Mr. Cunningham tried to throw it out the window again, but it blazed up and badly burned his hand. Part of it fell on the bed and exploded. Fire marshals found pieces of strange metal embedded in the window frame. Astronomers said the material was not meteoritic, but was "probably a homemade bomb." Police could find no indication of why anyone would want to bomb Cunningham, however.

PITTSBURGH AREA (7).

A monster explosion high over Pittsburgh celebrated the twenty-fourth of June 1938. Scientists estimated the blast was the equal of 10,000 tons of

TNT; fortunately, it occurred about 12 miles up. It was attributed to an "exploding meteorite," but no fragments were ever found. This day is St. John's Eve, of course, and is perhaps the most important day of the year in many of the mystery cults and in such fraternal organizations as Freemasonry. Oddly enough, it is also one of the half-dozen days of the year that are most active in the UFO and paranormal sphere, according to such researchers as John Keel.

Or possibly the heavenly hullabaloo was in honor of the fact that the ghost at the Croatian Catholic Church in nearby Millvale had just been put on the literary map by author Louis Adamic in an article in *Harper's* magazine for April of that year. Adamic was a good friend of an artist named Maxo Vanka, who was painting murals inside the church. He almost tumbled off his scaffold the first time he saw the black-robed apparition marching slowly down the aisle and performing various ritually motions at the altar one midnight. Once it lit candles and another time it blew out a long-burning lamp designed to be windproof. Older members recalled that the apparition had been manifesting itself for at least 15 years. I have no recent information on what it has been up to lately, if anything.

Pittsburgh and points east, including much of Westmoreland and Indiana counties, have for some years now been a source for a huge number of unidentified flying—and furry—objects reports. To a certain extent this is owing to the presence of some unusually energetic UFO buffs. But my own investigations satisfy me that non-UFO-oriented citizens are equally aware of the strange activities in their area. I understand that the peak "flap" years of 1973 and 1974 alone produced 245 known witnesses to 118 "creature" appearances in this Pittsburgh area alone.

Greensburg investigator Stan Gordon and his crew did a fine job of interviewing and gleaning the essential information from the large number of people exposed to the Bigfoot rampage of that time. A lot of what we know about the Big Hairy Manimal entity today stems from this one spectacular outbreak.

A huge number of these incidents occurred around trailer courts. The big hairies peered in windows, hammered on walls, tore dogs apart outside, and tampered with electrical switch boxes. By far the most exhibitions were to women, in some cases with horror-kissers thrust right into open windows of darkened bedrooms. They ran through all of the endearing tricks that they have played elsewhere: They sought out women experiencing their menstrual periods, chased cars, made "baby-crying" noises in woods at night, were seen often around railroad tracks, shook the ground when they ran, "peek-freaked" around lovers' lanes, skulked through cemeteries, and radiated "sulfurous" and "rotten meat" smells.

There were also some slightly less frequent traits: A number of women

reported that they had screamed or exclaimed something at the instant of seeing the monster, and that they then heard the thing mimic or mock them. There seemed to be a definite interest in corn: A number of farmers reported the beings apparently picking, husking, and eating ears of corn, and hanging around cornfields. (Many Amerindian sorcerers believe that the key to magic power on this continent is a *Kachina* or genie that has some link with the corn plant.)

A number of people reported experiencing a sort of hallucination in which the Bigfoot at first had the form of a tree that they then realized "shouldn't be there." At this point the "tree" transmogrified into the critter and walked away. In a couple of cases, only a part of the animal was seen running about: either the head and torso or the lower appendages, with nothing else visible. One Bigfoot hit by a car completely vanished the moment it was struck.

There were also a number of broken tree-limb reports, which have been made with increasing frequency in monster sightings elsewhere. And, in common with a significant number of UFO contactees over the years, there was at least one person who had been shooting arrows who was approached by one of the creatures.

By far the largest number of sightings occurred around the Latrobe and Derry vicinities. One of the busiest spots was the Superior Trailer Court, a little way northwest of Derry. There were also a large number of sightings at Greensburg, particularly in brush along a railroad track near Greengate Mall; around the Greensburg Golf Course on S.R. 130; and near the St. Anne's Home. Along Paintertown Road just north of Irwin, a southeast Pittsburgh suburb, are some low cave openings, and there were a number of reports of the creatures slipping in and out of these.

Some of the appalling confrontations experienced by individuals are more thrilling than any dreamed up by the most barmy Hollywood "monster" scenarist. One young woman was in the bathroom of a friend's house near Jeanette when she glanced out the open window and saw rising up just outside a huge hairy head with protruding upper fangs, glowing red eyes, and two pricked-up ears. It was still looking in as she raced out of the room. Another woman glanced out an upstairs window one night and saw first a three-clawed "hand" and then an apelike face descend from the roof edge and look in at her upside down.

At a farm near Beaver, two young girls were in a driveway in a wood at dusk. Suddenly they both saw an eight-foot white hairy thing walking through the trees and carrying a glowing sphere in its hands. The girls ran into the house and reported to their father, who went outside to investigate. He was gone for an hour, and when he returned seemed to have undergone a personality change. He denied that he had gone outside, insisted that some things should not be discussed, and became an adherent of a little-known religious sect that expects the imminent destruction of the world. He has forbidden anyone from entering his woods.

RHODE ISLAND



BLOCK ISLAND (1)

(Abt. 15 mi. S of Galilee by ferry.) Between here and the mainland, in Block Island Sound, a highly dramatic mystery light traditionally is believed to recreate the tragic end of the eighteenth-century ship *Palatine*. Unfortunately, there are so many versions of the story that it is tempting to view the legends as folkloric fabrications on some innate natural phenomenon. The ship is said to have burned in the water in 1738, killing at least one person, and the spectacle has recurred over the sound in early December, at irregular intervals. John Greenleaf Whittier wrote a poem on the subject that tells the complicated story.

NEWPORT (2)

The Old Stone Mill of Touro Park, with some justification, has been called the most puzzling historic structure in the United States. This might be granted if we can assume that Mystery Hill, New Hampshire, and some of the more significant mound complexes are "nonhistoric."

For some time now, local opinion on this dry masonry drum perched atop an arcaded ring of eight stone pillars has been sharply polarized. Most of those who give the tower any attention believe that it was built around 1675 by Governor Benedict Arnold as a flour mill. It was supposed to have replaced an earlier wooden affair that had blown down in that year.

There are a number of difficulties with this idea, although there is evidence that the structure may have been adapted for use as a mill in Arnold's time. The main problem is a basic structural shortcoming: Windmills are subject to strong torquing forces and a heavy stone mass atop the rather spindly circle of pillars would be a very poor engineering solution, besides being much more difficult to build than, say, a solid wall construction. Also, there are no millstones in evidence, and no record of any. It is unlikely that the present second floor would be strong enough to support such heavy machinery, nor is there any way for the machinery to have been installed there. The open bottom area would be most impractical for working with flour on wet or windy days, of which there are a lot around here.

As historian Philip Ainsworth Means has observed, if Arnold had designed the tower as a windmill, it would have been unique in the history of

the world. There is none other like it, including the building at Chesterton, England, that Arnold is supposed to have visited and copied. It seems certain now that Arnold had never been to Chesterton, besides which the tower there was not built as a windmill but as an observatory.

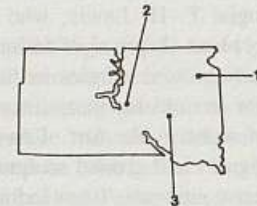
If Arnold did not build the tower, this leaves the question of who did, and that is not easy to answer. Means, and a number of other pre-Columbian revisionists such as Frederick Pohl and Charles Boland, believe that either Norsemen of the twelfth century or Portuguese explorers slightly later may deserve the honors.

When the famous copper-swathed skeleton was found 20 miles northeast of here at Fall River, Massachusetts, the Norsophiles seized on it to bolster their case, claiming that it was the remains of the explorer Thorwald, who had built the tower. Poet Henry W. Longfellow threw in his lot with this camp in his *Saga of the Skeleton in Armor*, making his hero sail to Newport and . . .

*There for my lady's bower
Built I the lofty tower
Which, to this very hour,
Stands looking seaward.*

Some researchers have taken the tack of thoroughly analyzing the measurement scheme used in constructing the various elements of the structure. Reportedly, the English foot, which was standardized by the seventeenth century and had been used for other structures in the area, was not employed in the tower. Instead, as is reported in an article in *Rhode Island History* (July 1948), the medieval Rhineland-Norse foot, equivalent to 12.3543 English inches, or 0.31374 meter, was the unit of linear measure. This was also the measurement used by the Norse after the thirteenth century.

SOUTH DAKOTA



CODINGTON COUNTY (1)

In the northeast corner of the county, on a "hogback" hill on private land about three miles south of Punished Woman's Lakes, are the remains of two giant ground figures formed of boulders. One of these, measuring about 13.5 feet from head to heels, is usually interpreted as male. The

companion female figure is about eight feet long and is located 42 feet to the southeast.

The male figure is traced out with 104 boulders; the female with 92. South of the two figures, a network of trails links a complex of four primitive rock pyramids or cairns laid out within an area of several hundred feet. There are also a number of shallow pits or depressions in the ground within this layout.

In the Dakota Indian tradition, ancestors a few generations back made the effigies to commemorate a romantic tragedy. A young bride had run away with a lover, both of whom later were killed at the appropriate male and female spots by the lawful husband. There are those scientists, however, who believe that the several such ground effigy complexes in the West are far older than the occupancy of a given area by modern tribes, most of whom have moved around greatly within the past few centuries.

Of interest to me is the geodetic location of this site: It is slightly to the east of the ninety-seventh meridian of west longitude, and as such quite close to the Mystery Meridian that I have arbitrarily set between 97 and 98 degrees west longitude.

MEDICINE KNOLL (2)

(Hughes County, abt. 3 mi. SW of Blunt.) A 360-foot snake effigy, made of 825 stones and oriented northward, lies along the north end of this *Paha Wakan* (medicine knoll) of the Dakota Indians. A rock cairn, once about four feet high, was at the midpoint of the figure, but was long ago vandalized. The Dakota have a legend that the snake was made in commemoration of a great war speech after a successful hunting season.

About 15 miles west of here, and six miles north of Pierre, is a boulder outline known commonly as the Turtle. It is on the north side of Snake Butte. Running northward along that bluff for 500 yards is a row of rocks that, in Dakota tradition, are supposed to mark the blood that dripped from an Arikara chief as he fled the Dakota, mortally wounded. At the edge of the bluff are a large complex of squares, circles, and parallelograms.

Anthropologist T. H. Lewis, who first studied these sites in the nineteenth century, was skeptical of Indian claims to have built fairly recently all of the many ground effigies in the western states. He felt the monuments were far too old for that, since many of the stones were embedded almost out of sight in the turf. Lewis suggested close resemblances between these figures and ground sculptures of unknown origin that are found widely in other continents, from India to Algeria and Scandinavia.

No doubt there is a certain basic kinship between the ithyphallic figure of Codrington County, South Dakota, and the famous Cerne Abbas Giant of Dorsetshire, England. Modern scientists seem inclined to accept Indian accounts, perhaps because this gets them off the hook of determining what

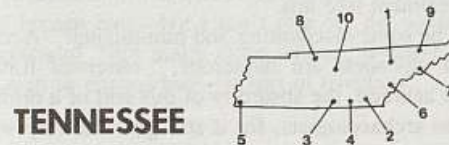
earlier people might have built the structures. But there is no doubt that some Indians are inclined to make quite broad claims, probably with a sly humor that is lost on sobersides scientific notebook jotters. The Hopi of Arizona, for instance, claim to have made *all* such ground structures in the country during their wanderings—even Serpent Mound in Ohio.

WESSINGTON SPRINGS (3)

(From Mitchell, 22 mi. W on I-90, and 25 mi. N on U.S. 281.) Four miles north of here on private land is a high knob, known by some as Turtle Peak, with ancient structures on its highest point. There was a burial mound here, which was long ago excavated, and on its southwest side, quite abstract boulder outlines in the ground of a woman and some kind of quadruped. These are 15 and 20 feet long, respectively.

Another hill two miles southeast of this one has a stone "pavement circle," about 17 feet in diameter and quite similar in concept to the ones in Stutsman County, North Dakota. At one time, a number of other boulder outlines were still to be found in the Ree and Wessington area hills.

This area is a few miles west of the ninety-eighth degree of west longitude, which marks the west edge of my Mystery Meridian. For more on that, *see* Kansas.



BIG RIDGE STATE PARK (1)

(Abt. 44 mi. NW of Knoxville and to the right off U.S. 441.) It has been reliably reported that people sitting in their cars near Norris Dam can sometimes hear musical sounds. These are usually present on windy summer days, and only from inside an automobile with the windows tightly rolled up. The local park rangers refer to them as "the bells." But Frank Podrznik, the park naturalist for the east district of Tennessee, who was the first to publicize them, said they sounded to him like a flute player trilling up and down the scale.

One is tempted to reach for poetic imagery like, say, "piping down the valleys wild." But these are skeptical days, like it or not, and I find myself

instead thinking about (a) reservoirs and (b) automobiles, both of which have a high attraction factor for unexplainables. I'm sure Blake would understand.

BRADLEY COUNTY (2)

(Near the village of Chatata, 13 mi. from Cleveland.) Sometime in the late 1880s, a farmer named J. H. Hooper found a stone with peculiar markings on a wooded hillside of his farm. Digging around a bit, he exposed a wall of red sandstone that was inscribed with unknown characters and drawings for about 16 feet of its length. A total of 872 symbols were discovered, arranged in wavy parallel and diagonal lines. Among these were depictions of strange animals, such as the two-legged, bearded number that appears in our illustration.

Eventually, a few intrepid antiquarians arrived and pattered about for a while. So far as I know, the only published notice that was taken of this stupendous discovery was a minuscule article by one A. L. Rawson in the *Transactions* of the New York Academy of Sciences. He noted the peculiar fact that there seemed to have been a deliberate effort by the long-ago inscribers of the glyphs to conceal what they had so laboriously chiseled out.

Apparently the letters had first been carved into the rock, after which "a dark red cement . . . was worked in and raised above the surface, and a cement placed over the whole, against which the outer course of stones was placed, fitting closely." Archaeologist J. Hampden Porter remarked, "As a rule inscriptions are intended to be read . . . I do not remember any instance of a designed concealment like this."

Inevitably, there had to be some discounting and minimizing: "Accidental imitations of Oriental alphabets are numerous," observed Rawson. Somehow, despite all their acumen, the absurdity of this sort of a priori patronizing does not occur to archaeologists, for it still goes on very widely in their shoptalk and writings. Since Rawson and company admittedly hadn't the least idea of who had made the Bradley County inscriptions, their next-breath contention that the Oriental characters were "accidental" merely adds one more impossible layer of riddles. And what are the odds that anyone could "accidentally imitate" anything in the extremely arduous labor of inscribing stone? (Actually, Oriental characters are not totally unheard of in North America: see Grapevine Canyon, Nevada.)

Rawson's final comment is well-taken, however: "Some of these forms recall those on the Dighton Rock [in Massachusetts], and may belong to the same age. How many other hidden inscriptions there may be in this, the geologically oldest continent, it is impossible to say but delightful to conjecture."

Charles Fort took opportunity to wonder whether this might be yet an-

other tantalizing hint of some "lost colony or lost expedition from somewhere."

FLINTVILLE (3)

(13 mi. SE of Fayetteville, off U.S. 64.) There was quite a spectacular tussle with a Bigfoot entity here in late April of 1976. The seven-footer displayed most of the common attributes of its tenuous kind: Its eyes glowed red, it stank, and it wheezed like an asthmatic horse. The creature was first seen on the night of April 23 by two teen-agers in an automobile (I do not know if they were "parked"). Three days later, it tried to abduct Gary Robertson, aged four, as he played in his backyard at the Melvin Robertson residence at evening.

Shortly afterward, the thing was chased down and cornered by a posse led by Deputy Sheriff Homer Davis, Robertson, and Stan Moore of Fayetteville. After it had absorbed about 40 rounds of gunfire, the beast tossed a barrage of huge rocks (another mannerism) and managed to slip away into the woods. Traces of "mucus" and hair were found next day, with 16-inch footprints.

Game Warden James E. Ledbetter turned the hair sample over to the *National Enquirer* newspaper, which claims to have had them analyzed by Dr. Jack Davies, head of the Department of Anatomy at Vanderbilt University Medical School, Nashville; and by Jay Pintacuda, chief chemist and head of the forensic laboratory of the Palm Beach County, Florida, sheriff's department.

Davies reported: "I don't know what it is. It shows some of the characteristics of human hair—but I can't rule out the possibility that it's animal hair." Pintacuda: "It's really quite unique. It doesn't fit any specific pattern of human or animal hair—it sort of overlaps. . . ."

KIMBALL (4)

(31 mi. W of Chatanooga on U.S. 41.) There have been a number of "monster" sightings around here through the years. In mid-January of 1934, a "giant kangaroo" convulsed this entire area of the Tennessee River valley. Like so many other critters, it had a pathological hatred for dogs and killed quite a number of them, along with other farm animals.

The Reverend W. J. Hancock told *The New York Times*: "It was as fast as lightning and looked like a giant kangaroo running across the field." The beast had just tangled with a large police dog and left nothing but the head and shoulders in the owner's yard. Search parties tracked it up a mountainside, where tracks disappeared near a cave.

Two years later, in June of 1936, a being that people could only liken to

"a prehistoric beast" was destroying livestock on nocturnal prowls. It appeared once in the streets of South Pittsburg. Finally, it was either driven away or killed when its apparent den in a hole along the Tennessee River bank was blasted with grenades and machine-gun fire. Not long after that, a mangy panther was shot in hills close by and the mystery was hailed as solved.

In the spring of 1968, Brenda Ann Adkins reported an encounter with a Bigfoot entity on Monteagle Mountain, some 19 miles northwest of here off U.S. 41. She had stopped her car near the edge of a cliff to take pictures when she smelled a putrid odor and heard a noise behind her. Turning, she saw a seven-foot monster covered with black hair shuffling toward her. "I was absolutely frozen with fear," she told writer John Keel. "The face was a mixture of an ape and a human. I still have nightmares about that afternoon. It seemed to be angry and was growling. I thought he would push me off the cliff or something. Then he stopped about six feet from where I stood, cocked his head in a quizzical way, and just stared at me. He studied me for a few moments, then seemed to smile, made a little blubbering noise, and walked back into the brush."

About 40 miles northeast, over Walden Ridge to the east from the Sequatchie Valley, the banks of Rock and Roaring creeks not far from the village of Brayton contain a number of unearthly footprints molded in rock. They are larger-than-life circular impressions that look a little like horse tracks. And there are also rather stupefying humanlike footprints measuring 13 inches across and having six toes. Other six-toers have been claimed as far afield as Crittenden, Arizona.

MEMPHIS (5)

In case anyone wants to go bushwacking, I can pass along for what they are worth the recurrent "little red men" stories that you can sometimes coax out of old river rats here. The little folk are supposed to be the size of a 10-year-old child, jabbering among themselves and climbing like monkeys in the woods among Mississippi bayous. They often appear arrayed in cast-off human clothes.

Where the "red" comes from I have not yet determined, but I am meditating on the Delphos "Wolfgirl" of Kansas, who could really skedaddle through brush and was thought to wear bedraggled red clothing. Also, there is the spook in the basement of the Old Moravian Brothers' House, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, that is known as the Little Red Man because of his attire.

As improbable as it may seem to the uninitiated, there is a modicum of soft-core evidence for the existence of "little people." In the twelfth chapter of *Book of the Damned*, Fort sums up the case, discussing "pygmy flints" found in England, India, France, South Africa, and elsewhere,

which are so tiny that they must be studied under magnification. Also, there is the matter of "tiny tombs": Some of these were found near the anomaly ridden Arthur's Seat in Scotland, and for decades there have been stories in east Tennessee and southwest North Carolina of stone tombs found along the eastern slope of the Great Smokies. Skeletons were all three feet tall, no more, or so 'tis said.

Memphis is another of those cities with a substantial tunnel system. The official version is that they were built in a short time for some not too well-explained military purpose during the Civil War. These are not merely burrows through the ground but walled and arched masonry structures that probably could not have been quickly executed. Exactly how extensive they are I do not know: I only know of the entrance at the east end of the Harahan (Interstate 55) Bridge, near the Holiday Inn. The opening is to the right as one heads east on Crump Boulevard, approximately between Delaware and Indiana streets. Unfortunately, this is now grated over and locked, but it leads to a larger tunnel parallel with the Mississippi that runs north along South Third Street toward city center.

Fort's data on weather conceptions and skyfalls over Memphis suggest that this is—or was—a rather disturbed area in the atmospheric sense, if none other. On January 15, 1877, the *Scientific American* reported, there was a materialization of thousands of snakes up to a foot and a half in length, over two blocks of the south part of the city.

Although the reptiles were crawling on the ground, "none were found on roofs or any other elevation above ground, and none were seen to fall." On December 2, 1904, at 10 o'clock in the morning, the sun vanished and a stygian darkness fell. The next quarter hour brought widespread terror, as can be imagined.

Across the Mississippi, in St. Francis County, Arkansas, the event horizon, as they say in quantum mechanics, has been slightly skewed also. Before the big solidification of dogma in pre-Columbian archaeology at the turn of the century, there was a great deal of puzzled speculation about the prehistory of this area. In 1881, for example, the *American Antiquarian* published excellent articles about the remains of canals, artificial lakes with paved bottoms, huge mound complexes, and evidences of extensive human occupation here long ago, centering on Memphis as a Cahokia-like temple city.

I wonder what it means that St. Francis County was one of three areas in Arkansas cited in the first published Bigfoot report of North America, which appeared in the *Memphis Enquirer* of May 9, 1851. (See also Greene County, Arkansas.) In 1897, an aquatic monster in Mud Lake,

Arkansas, 15 miles west of Memphis on U.S. 79, sought attention by making noises and slapping the water with gusto. The display went on for some days at a regular time every afternoon. The natives took to calling the beast "the sea serpent," but in its finale the story gets queasy.

Evidently journalists were getting carried away with their own humor and with the late-dawning suspicion that the thing just couldn't be. There is a tongue-in-cheek account of the harpooning and dragging ashore of the creature by a flotilla of rowboats, when it was found to be 16 feet long and eight feet around. The mouth was described as "frightening" with triple rows of fairy-tale dragon's teeth. Needless to say, perhaps, there is no indication today of what became of this unusual trophy.

MONROE COUNTY (6)

About 10 miles east of Sweetwater, along the banks of Bat Creek, a small slab of stone covered with ciphers was found in 1885 by Smithsonian Institution archaeologists. They quickly filed it under "Cherokee Indian" and forgot it. For a wonder, however, they did not misplace it, and in recent years archaeologist Joseph B. Mahan of the Columbus, Georgia, Museum of Arts has revived the issue.

As an expert on the Cherokee language, Mahan has called for reexamination of the piece, observing that "you can't simply ignore evidence just because it doesn't fit current theory." Mahan has also studied a similar stone found by Manfred Metcalf at Ft. Benning, Georgia, in 1968. It is about nine inches square and covered with triangles, circles, and lines. Dr. Cyrus Gordon, a Mediterranean studies scholar at Brandeis University, believes that the symbols on both stones had strong resemblance to writing of the Minoan culture that perished in 1100 B.C.

About 35 miles southwest of here is the Bradley County site where an entire inscribed wall was found, many characters of which seem to be Phoenician.

NEWPORT (7)

(49 mi. E of Knoxville on I-40.) The Holiness Church of God in Jesus' Name near here appears to be the U.S. headquarters for snake-handling and poison-drinking cults. The group attracted unwelcome national attention when two individuals drank strychnine at a service here in April of 1973 and died. The victims were the Reverend Jimmy Ray Williams, aged 34, and Buford Pack, 30.

There were vicious snake bitings that July at the cult's national convention, which has been held here in July of most years. After this, federal authorities launched prosecutions culminating in a ban on snake-handling.

The judge ruling on the case did permit poison drinking, however, on condition that no one "offered the bitter cup" to anyone else. Another center of this forbidding cult is near London, Kentucky.

ROBERTSON COUNTY (8)

(Abt. 50 mi. NW of Nashville, and 2 mi. from Adams, on S side of U.S. 41.) Bell Witch Cave and a cemetery are all that remain today at the scene of an extraordinary onslaught on a family by some unknown paranormal entity. Unfortunately the cave is not presently open to the public.

The story began around 1817, at the family farm of John Bell, the prosperous owner of 1,000 acres of fine land here near the cave. He was walking through his cornfield one day when "a peculiar animal," somewhat doglike, suddenly confronted him among the rows of corn. Alarmed, Bell raised his gun and fired, but the creature vanished. Some days later, one of his sons saw an eerie and monstrous bird perched outside the house. Feeling a twinge of fear, the boy went for a weapon but on his return the gigantic fowl took wing and slowly sailed away. From that day forward, the strange events at the Bell house began. The activities were distinctly poltergeistic, but with such extreme malice—and peculiar intelligence—that the incident has become a classic of supernatural lore.

All the family except one son and the mother, Lucy Bell, whom the witch seemed to think was the most perfect person on earth, suffered endless slaps, pinches, hair-pulling, and dozens of other pranks. But its main objects of spite were the family's slaves (the witch was a terrible bigot) and the father, John Bell, whom it constantly avowed it would destroy, after it had learned to talk in a not unattractive female voice.

Finally, in December of 1820, Bell did die of extreme nervous prostration and debility brought on by unremitting harassment, some of which took the form of outright physical assault and beatings by an invisible assailant.

I cannot recount more of the amazing and often amusing exploits of the Bell Witch here. The story has been told so many times by collectors of ghost tales that there should be no problem for the interested reader to find the highlights of it in a local library or bookstore. (Also, the Chamber of Commerce at Springfield, Tennessee—Box 307, Zip 37172—still has paperback reprints of the classic M. V. Ingram *Authenticated History*, at a nominal price.)

Some aspects of the case, however, are of general interest to this inquiry of ours. I have already mentioned that there is a cave on the scene and that the witch, or some weird entity cognate with it, first appeared in a cornfield. But it also seems that the Bell farmstead had been built on the site of an Indian burial ground, according to the two members of the family who wrote detailed accounts of the affair. In fact, the witch itself mentioned the

burial ground aspect in a half-humorous way more than once. It also tends to raise one's eyebrows a bit that the witch said she was from North Carolina, and occasionally disappeared for a while, after which she said that that is where she had been.

A quite similar entity, only not so cruel, manifested to the Fox sisters in Hydesville, New York, a couple of decades later, and cajoled them into starting the Spiritualist movement. There was also a John Bell involved in that case.

Many points of similarity to the obscene, malign, boisterous, but subtly humorous personality of the Bell Witch may be noted in two other cases: the Esther Cox "possession" affair in Amherst, Nova Scotia, and the Dagg family troubles at Clarendon, Quebec, in 1889 (described by Fort in chapter six of *Wild Talents*). Like the Bell Witch, the latter projected the impression of a rowdy and profane reprobate who hypocritically feigned religious contrition and brayed a hymn when its obscenities shocked the ladies.

One of the Bell Witch's many talents was a gift of prophecy. This ability was noted many times by the family: The entity's advice on forthcoming matters was always accurate. But it also looked further into the future. Charles Bailey Bell, a physician and descendent of the original family, published an account of the entire affair in 1934, titling it *The Bell Witch, A Mysterious Spirit*. He gave a great deal of attention to the "wonderful things" prophesied by the witch, many of which had come true.

Among these were the Civil War, emancipation of the blacks, the rise of the United States as a world power, and the First World War. After the prediction of victory in a second world war, the forecast becomes more somber. The witch foresaw the total, final destruction of our civilization in "a rapidly increasing heat, followed by a great explosion." We can take a measure of comfort in the fact that the latter prediction is not dated, however, as were the others.

SNEEDVILLE (9)

(45 air mi. NE of Knoxville on S.R. 33.) On Newman's Ridge, about 10 miles west of here, live the remnants of an ethnically anomalous group known as the Melungeons. An olive-skinned people who have always worn their raven-black hair quite long, the clan has dwindled from large numbers to a couple of hundred individuals.

Although they preserve many unusual customs and contacts between them and their predominantly Anglo-Saxon neighbors are still restrained, most of the old prejudices and horror legends about the Melungeons—that they are devil worshipers, drink blood, and concoct superpotent moonshine—have been forgotten. Still very much in effect, however, is the mystery that shrouds their origins. There are theories that

—They descended from ancient Phoenicians who "got here first";

—They are one of the Lost Tribes of Israel;

—They are progeny of the Welsh chief, Madoc, whose party supposedly explored the Mississippi Valley in the twelfth century and trekked overland to this area;

—They spring from the long-sought refugees of Sir Walter Raleigh's lost colony at Jamestown, which disappeared around 1560 from Roanoke Island;

—They immigrated as Portuguese colonists or sailors before the Revolutionary War.

Melungeons themselves favor the Portuguese theory. But recently Dr. Cyrus H. Gordon, Mediterranean antiquities scholar with unorthodox ideas, has given impetus to the Phoenician idea with his studies of alleged Phoenician inscriptions on various stones found in North and South America.

One of the most intriguing of the many folk tales about the Melungeons is the tradition that they once had mysterious sources of gold. They originally bought and paid for their farms with gold, according to the story, although this would suggest that they arrived in the area at some time after the land was pioneered and parceled. Supposedly, their talents with gold continued until the mid-nineteenth century, when they were making gold and silver coins. Some of these apparently were counterfeit U.S. eagles and double eagles, but the legend claims they were so fine and contained so much more gold than government issue that their coins were much in demand and made a good deal of money for local merchants and bankers who received them in commercial exchange.

The Melungeons cherish their privacy and do not welcome intrusions by outsiders. I would strongly suggest that anyone considering an approach to them first get background information before making any firm plans. A good local source might be Charles Turner of Turner's Drugstore, Sneedville.

As this is written, the Melungeon story or a version of it still was being presented at the Sneedville Amphitheater on weekends during July and August. The vehicle is a sort of historical pageant entitled *Walk Toward the Sunset*.

WILSON COUNTY (10)

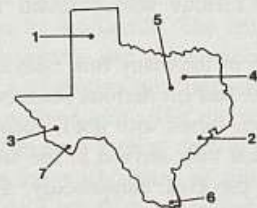
On August 17, 1841, a shower of meat fell on the farm of E. M. Chandler, along Spring Creek, near the village of Bairds Mills. A friend, J. M. Peyton of Lebanon, had just stopped by for a chat when some of Chandler's

slaves ran up to announce that the flesh had fallen in a tobacco field, after a small red cloud moved swiftly across an otherwise clear sky. It gave off a sharp crack of thunder and dropped the bloody material on the green tobacco leaves.

Scientists arrived in numbers to investigate, and newspapers across the country reported the matter in detail. Dr. Gerhard Troost, a respected biologist, concluded that "the flesh is without doubt animal matter which has originated on this earth. I feel that the 'blood,' however, is not actually blood, but rain that has picked up some red dust and some gummy substance."

Another expert gave the standard buzzard puke explanation for fleshy falls, describing how a scavenging bird had lost its dinner while flying over the tobacco.

TEXAS



AMARILLO (1)

In the summer of 1959, blasts apparently originating in the sky thundered along a 200-mile corridor from here to Roswell, New Mexico. In the town of Pampa, 55 miles northeast of here, the wall of a downtown building was cracked by the concussions, but seismographs indicated no significant earth tremor. No supersonic aircraft flights were noted at the time. Simultaneously, mystery blasts occurred over a three-day period in the San Francisco Bay area. Within a few days of these, two unexplained explosions rocked Henderson, North Carolina, within a 29-hour period.

In late August of 1970, white-hot metal chunks weighing hundreds of pounds crashed to earth on the George Gruhky ranch near Adrian, 43 miles west. After the fall, U.S. Air Force and North American Air Defense officials said the chunks were fragments of a Soviet satellite that they had predicted would break up. But if they had predicted it, they kept it quiet beforehand.

On February 27, 1971, Amarillo newspapers reported that during the severe blizzard of the preceding week an estimated 15,000 cattle had "strayed." The snow reportedly drifted so high that cattle simply walked

away over the fences. But where they went remained a mystery, and there were those who wondered if there was any link with the cattle mutilation phenomenon that would break out the next year in this same area.

BRAZORIA COUNTY (2)

(Abt. 40 mi. S of Houston.) Five miles west of Angleton in an area called Bailey's Prairie is a sporadic spook light that is associated with the ghost of a pioneer-days character named Brit Bailey. It is usually seen as a globe-like entity with a dull glow like luminous paint. It has at times been pursued over wide stretches of prairie country.

Bailey died in 1833 and was buried standing up, at his own request. This is a type of interment that has supposedly been done among the curious Spanish-American sect of the Penitentes of New Mexico. Another eccentric who was vertically interred is believed responsible for a haunting in his area of Gaston County, North Carolina.

In addition to the luminous "ghost," it is also said that low rumblings from deep in the earth can be heard at certain times by those standing over Bailey's grave.

CHINATI MOUNTAIN SPOOK LIGHT (3)

This phenomenon has been seen hereabouts since pioneer times. It is a glowing sphere, about the size of a basketball, that slowly brightens up, moves about, sometimes splits in two, then merges back into one. Its glow ranges from a mere will-o'-the-wisp to a white-hot glare too blinding to watch. The best spot for observing it, local people say, is along U.S. 90, between Marfa and Alpine in the Cienega Mountains, and near Paisana Pass.

There has been the familiar automobile headlight explanation, routinely advanced in every mystery light case across the United States. In this instance, lights are supposed to emanate from over the next hill on Highway 90. But the mystery light usually glows steadily, while occasional cars flash past in a few seconds. Most importantly, the light was seen by the earliest settlers and Indians in the area, long before any gas buggies chugged into these hills.

DALLAS-FT. WORTH AREA (4)

Would you believe John F. Kennedy as a ceremonial king-who-must-die? I'm afraid there is a certain body of opinion, undoubtedly the farthest-out brain wave of assassinology yet, that maintains the killing was pulled off, not by the Russians, the Cubans, the CIA, or the Mafia, but by alchemists. As I understand the hypothesis, President Kennedy was for some reason

chosen as The King (remember "Camelot," "MacBird" and all that?) after the fashion of James G. Frazer and Mary Renault whose *The King Must Die* he had been given to read before his death.

This killing of the king in Dallas was related somehow to the touching off of the world's first atomic bomb at the Trinity Site in New Mexico 18 years earlier. Apparently the Bomb was the "destruction of primordial matter" stage of the grand alchemical working, but these conspiracy buffs aren't much more specific on details than were the early alchemists in their recipes. Anyway, Kennedy represented the next stage of the process—the "Death of the White King"—when he was immolated on a trinity site of his own. For, aren't Dealey Plaza and the ill-famed Triple Underpass on the old bank of the Trinity River?

The connecting thread between here and New Mexico is the old reliable thirty-third parallel of latitude. Unfortunately, by my map reading, I can't make "33" run any closer than about 20 miles north of city center Dallas, and about 35 miles south of Trinity Site, on the Jornada del Muerto and Devil's Highway, New Mexico. But maybe I am being too picayune.

But, 33 skidoo or not, this area for sure is on the Mystery Meridian, north to south. "The Blob" and "the Satyr" should be proof enough of that. The first of these appeared around May 15, 1973, when Marie Harris encountered a black, jellylike globule growing in her backyard in Garland, a northeast Dallas suburb. It was described by the *Dallas Morning Herald* reporter as "a mysterious membrane that pulsates. It has multiplied itself sixteen times over in two weeks." It was full of blackish-red glop, with thick bubbles, and changed colors when punctured.

From East Dallas, Edna Smith reported seeing one of the blobs climbing a utility pole: "It was red and pulsating, like the one I read about. For heaven's sake, what is it?" That presented no problem to various unnamed experts contacted by reporters: "probably a fungus," "probably a bacterium," etc. (For some reason, no one ever says "probably nostoc" anymore about jellylike gazebos. See Monterey, California, for more on the *Pwdre Ser* phenomenon.)

Between Garland and downtown Dallas is White Rock Lake, which is home to a ghost that monitors activities in a nighttime "petting" area at the lake. It appears as a young woman in dripping wet evening clothes (like so many hitchhiking ghosts, that) and has been seen by so many hundreds of people over the years that it is not really dreaded, but looked on as a sort of local fixture.

On the other hand, "a satyrlike ogre" grooves on the hanky-panky at Ft. Worth's Lake Worth. The Ft. Worth *Star-Telegram* said on July 12, 1969, that the thing has been around for years. The lake is the major reservoir for

the city's water supply, which might be a tip-off of sorts. The critter has been reported most often around Mosque Point and on Greer Island, and the *Star-Telegram* said "descriptions of the monster have ranged from a half-man, half-goat thing with fur and scales, to a seven-foot, three-hundred-pound hairy, hoary being that throws auto tires five hundred feet."

The Dallas-Ft. Worth area has been the recipient of many skyfalls. On January 27, 1964, a flaming object bobbed and weaved in the sky and finally dropped at the Melvin L. Lewis house, igniting the lawn and leaving a choking sulfur stench. On June 18, 1958, fish rained on Pentagon Parkway. They were about three inches long and dark gray with red spots.

Charles Fort should be read for detail on several early incidents, including a peculiar moving shadow on the ground on April 8 of the portentous year 1913. No one could see anything in the sky that might be causing it. The "great airship," fresh from its triumphs in Kansas and Illinois and now displaying "great wings, resembling those of an enormous butterfly . . . presenting a magnificent appearance," wowed 'em here in mid-April 1897.

About 15 miles northeast of Dallas are a number of abnormal rock formations. They are scattered around the towns of Rockwall, Fate, Levon, and Nevada. Although pretty much forgotten now, at one time there was a certain controversy between those who insisted that the structures are naturally formed and others who suspected they might be ancient stone walls.

A number of digs and some truly impressive photographs have been made of the below-ground sections of the "walls." The most recent was undertaken by an amateur geologist of Ft. Worth named Sanders in 1949. Sanders's photos, made at a wall northwest of Fate, show beveled stone blocks of somewhat crude finish but quite straightly laid in several layers, with a gray-yellow sandy material that could possibly be mortar between them.

Although it does not really emerge from the pictures I have seen, Sanders has also claimed that some of the stones bear carved designs. By far the most interesting observation, however, was made by L. P. Livingston, a staff geologist for the Humble Oil Company. He suggested that if the walls had originally been one sheet of rock that later broke into block-like fragments, the quartz veins in one block should run in the same plane as those in adjoining blocks. Close-up photographs show that this is not the case.

In 1901, a certain Dr. Robert Hill, locally famed as the "Aristotle of Texas geology," published an article on the walls, and classified them as elastic sand dikes related to the Balcones Fault running across the area. Since that time, official geology has been satisfied with a received opinion

and considered the case closed. So far as anyone in the area knows, there has never been an excavation of the walls by any establishment geologist or archaeologist.

The latter have avoided the site on the grounds that there never have been any small artifacts found here that would indicate human habitation. Apparently this is not strictly correct, however: Among Sanders's photographs is a vaguely triangular, two-eyed piece of rock that was found about 75 yards from one of the walls. It has been likened to a Mayan serpent head figure.

MERIDIAN AREA (5)

Cranfills Gap (14 mi. S of Meridian on S.R. 22.) Well, Meridian is a good name because that's exactly where it is, on the Mystery Meridian, between 97 and 98 degrees west longitude. I wonder if those alchemist watchers who found such rococo symbolical significance in the tragic events of Dallas, 1963, caught a news item from this part of Texas on April 13, 1976. On the Clifford O. Jenson ranch about eight miles east of here on County Road 219, a windstorm came up suddenly, and before long pelicans came down, stone dead.

Joe Stevens, a biologist of the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, identified the birds as migrating white pelicans, but had no idea of what had killed them. If these Texans had been aficionados of old-time alchemy, which undoubtedly they were not, they would have been thrilled at "envisioning the pelican," a term for observing the coveted mercury-to-gold transformation. And a manifestation of the highly potent number 33 would have been almost too good to be true.

Glen Rose (24 mi. N of Meridian on S.R. 144; 55 mi. SW of Ft. Worth on U.S. 67.) Giant humanoid footprints have been reported intermixed with reptile tracks of 135 million years ago along the Paluxy River bed west of here, in and near Dinosaur Valley State Park. In at least one case, a human print clearly overlapped a dinosaur track, suggesting that the two must have been made at the same time, when the present rock was still in the form of mud.

Orthodox paleontologists are intrigued with the dinosaur tracks because dinos are still very much "in," and these were the very first "sauropod" tracks found anywhere. But they want no part of the human prints because they would mean rejiggering too many theories. So, they accept the reptile marks but reject the human ones as man-made—by the Indians, by practical jokers, by local people trying for a tourist attraction, you name it.

This double-speak only makes the experts look bad, however, because it shows their lack of familiarity with the area. There are not just one or two conspicuous and laboriously carved phony tracks, but at least three long

trails of them, and they rise and fall from sight periodically as the river ebbs and floods and rearranges the silt of its bed.

In July of 1976, Bigfoot-hunter John Green studied the site in association with Jack Walper, professor of geology at Texas Christian University. With great labor and the use of dikes and a powerful pump, they were able to expose a number of the normally submerged footprints, both reptilian and human. The latter were about 18 inches long and from five to seven inches wide.

Green found that some of the tracks had very pronounced ridges around them where the original mud was pushed up as the foot sank in. He reasoned that this eliminated the possibility of the tracks being either fakes or accidental products of erosion, since it would have been necessary to cut down the surrounding rock for a considerable area to leave the ridge around the impressions. Most of these tracks are found in the vicinity of Dinosaur Valley State Park, about five miles west of Glen Rose.

RIO GRANDE VALLEY (6)

In late December of 1975, a big flap (all puns intended) of appearances of huge and grotesque birdlike creatures began here in this southern tip of Texas—which lies between 97 and 98 degrees west longitude. Two of the earliest sightings were by policeman Arturo Padilla and Homero Galvan, who watched a pelicanlike thing "sailing" over San Benito at 5:15 A.M. on December 28.

On January 1 in Harlingen, Tracey Lawson, 11, and her cousin Jack Davis, 14, were playing in the Lawsons' backyard when Tracey noticed a "horrible-looking black bird," more than five feet tall and with large red eyes standing 100 yards away in a plowed field. Its wings were bunched up at its shoulders and its gray face was "gorillalike." It had a sharp, six-inch beak. The head was completely bald, and it was making a shrill screaming.

It had been standing near a pit by an irrigation canal. Suddenly, either by running or flying down across the pit, it reappeared much closer to the kids, on the northeast corner of the Lawson property. At this point, the children went inside the house. Later, eight-inch tracks with three toes were found outside, pressed an inch and a half into the hard ground.

If you'd like to go "Big Bird" hunting, you might try San Benito (10 miles southeast of Harlingen on U.S. 77). Residents of the La Palma section on the northeast side of town are convinced that *un pajarrissimo* has been around for years. Guadalupe Cantú III, then aged 19, said in a 1976 interview with researcher Jerome Clark that one of the creatures had been using the roof of his family's house as a combination landing pad and privy for at least 11 years. It made a catlike meowing sound, a rough screech like an eagle, and a sound like clacking false teeth. Wings were heard flapping.

Worse, it left large droppings that police found contained remains of insects, grain, and bones—the mark of “a very primitive digestive system,” in the opinion of one officer.

But the strange thing is that no one around the Cantú household has ever seen the critter, nor have many others around the neighborhood who have heard it. Two women who were supposed to have seen it described it as having a cat face a foot in diameter, no beak, and a thick, foot-long neck. One of them said she had been attacked by it when walking in her yard. It had huge wings with black feathers.

Another La Palma resident recalled that he and his wife-to-be had been sitting in a parked car one night when they saw one of the weird birds, “bigger than a man,” and with its wings folded “around itself,” perched on a nearby telephone pole, staring at them, tuning in and turning on.

Aurora Although there is practically nothing left of this northern Hidalgo County town today, its memory lingers on among UFO fanciers. For this was the site of the apparent grand finale to the great airship excitement of 1897. On April 17, after weeks of startling and puzzling people farther north, the fateful craft is said to have soared unsteadily in over Aurora and caused the town to live up to its name by striking a windmill and crashing in an exploding mass of flame.

The Dallas *Morning News* for April 19 said the pilot's body had been too mutilated to be described, but was obviously nonhuman. It was also claimed that papers bearing unknown symbols were found and that a U.S. Signal Service officer believed the pilot was “from Mars.” The pilot's funeral was to take place at noon on April 20, according to the account. The consensus now seems to be that this was a hoax, dreamed up by promoters. If so, they did not know their business very well, to judge from the way Aurora prospered.

La Feria (11 mi. W of Harlingen on U.S. 83.) In the early 1970s, a 30-foot acacia tree belonging to a certain Sam Morse here, began shedding up to 18 gallons of liquid a day from its leaves. The “crying tree,” as it quickly became known, turned into a sensation of sorts among religious persons who believed the exudate possessed magical healing powers. Overwhelmed by throngs, Morse began charging a 50-cent admission to the tree, which was 20 years old in 1973. Such behavior is not normal to acacias—which by the way are the traditional oracular “Burning Bush” of the Bible, and are of supreme importance in Masonic mysticism. Unhappily, Morse informs me, the tree is now dead.

Port Isabel (32 mi. E of Harlingen on S.R. 100.) In the summer of 1959, the Coast Guard retrieved an object just offshore that resembled the nose cone of a rocket and that apparently had been in the water several months.

In a letter to the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena, Washington, D.C., the commanding officer of the ship that made the recovery reported the following marks found on the object: the letter *D* with the numerals 282 printed inside it, and in handwriting, “A-92/57 LW.” As of that date, the Coast Guard said, no positive identification of the object had been made, nor did any branch of the U.S. armed forces nor any foreign government claim it.

On October 12, 1888, the lighthouse at Point Isabel was barraged by a rain of nails. The next night, at twilight, another shower of nails came. The bombardments continued, with clods of earth and oyster shells occasionally interspersed. Large numbers of people gathered and saw the materials flying in, but could not detect where they were coming from.

In the spring of 1935 and again around September 20, countless tons of fish were killed and washed ashore along the north end of Padre Island. In the September outbreak, the shore for 50 miles was lined with the dead fish from the Gulf of Mexico. All varieties were represented, ranging from eight-foot tarpon to two-inch mullet. On both occasions, the dead fish began to wash ashore after a stifling stench was noticed along the shore by fishermen and residents.

In nearby Brownsville, on September 21, 1970, an 18-inch crocodile was nabbed inside a cotton bin, into which it probably wouldn't have been able or interested to climb by itself.

TERLINGUA (7)

(80 mi. S of Alpine on S.R. 118, 8 mi. W on S.R. 170.) This fascinating ghost town sits atop a labyrinthine abandoned mercury mine, part of which merges with a network of preexisting caverns. Parts of the triple caves (Terlingua derives from “three tongues”) under neighboring Tres Cuevas Mountain were used for sorcery and religious rituals before white men entered the area. There are stories that the fabulous Aztec treasure, spirited out of Mexico City in 1520, may be secreted somewhere here—along with about 50 other locations.

Depending on your social predilections, you may or may not want to visit here during the first Saturday in November of any year. For some completely baffling reason, a group addicted to the cooking and eating of chili beans holds its annual “cook-off championship” here then, with literally thousands of people from all over the country thronging to this far corner of nowhere for the festivities.

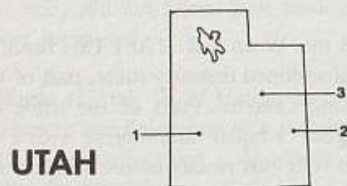
The Perry mine is located about three miles west of town on S.R. 170, and north a short way on a gravel road. One has to be very careful poking

around near the mine site. The last time I was here, in the mid-1970s, there were still many shafts lying open and unsuspected among the sand and brush. A few people have taken disastrous falls in them.

About 50 miles northwest of here along the Rio Grande, the Mexican town of Ojinaga, opposite Presidio, Texas, has a chapel on Sierra de la Cruz Mountain that was built atop a cavern believed by common folk to be the abode of El Diablo, and other dark spirits. Local *brujos* and *brujas* still go to the cave for certain kinds of manipulations.

To the east of Terlingua, just over the Chisos ("spooks") Mountains, is Big Bend National Park. Early in 1972, Douglas A. Lawson, a student at the University of California, unearthed the first of three skeletal remains of a prehistoric flying reptile. This one was really a doozie: With a 51-foot wingspan, it is believed to be about twice the size of any hitherto discovered, or dreamed of, pterodactyl. The wingspan of an air force F-4 Phantom fighter plane, by the way, is 38 feet—and this is known among pilots as a hefty plane.

Occasionally, various cults oriented to the "black arts" have held clandestine meetings in the west end of Big Bend National Park, a few miles east of Terlingua near Mule Ear Peaks. The month of August is supposed to be the active time, although for various reasons park personnel may not admit to knowing of such happenings. For a melodramatized version of what is supposed to go on at their meetings, see the 1974 Peter Fonda and Warren Oates movie, *Race with the Devil*.



ANTELOPE SPRINGS (1)

(23 mi. N of Milford on S.R. 257.) In 1968, an amateur geologist named William Meister found a fossilized human sandalprint here in Cambrian rock. There is a fossil trilobite embedded in the heel of the print, suggesting that the track was made and the creature still living at the same time. Such trilobites are ascribed to the Paleozoic era of 250 million years ago.

Dr. Hellmut H. Doelling, of the Utah Geological Survey, examined the discovery, apparently finding no irregularities or evidence of imposture. In

a private communication, he told me only that an impression resembling a sandalprint had been found in Middle Cambrian shales. Most other antiquarians have taken no notice.

MOAB (2)

About 35 miles southeast of here, in a remote desert valley near the town of LaSal, is the Big Indian Copper Mine. On a rock plateau that had been cleared by bulldozers preparatory to mining development, another of those monotonously momentous anthropological discoveries that appear so unwelcome to present authorities took place in 1973.

A party of rock collectors led by one Lin Ottinger were picking over the area when they found pieces of brownish bones and teeth. Ottinger knew basic excavation procedures and immediately began looking for the brown stains that decaying organic matter leaves in sand. It was not long before the rockhounds found just such an outline and carefully cleared the sand away from the top of a large intact bone.

Again, Ottinger's skill came to the fore, and he stopped digging immediately, realizing that the importance of the discovery was that bones—presumably human—were *in situ* in semirock of incalculable age, and that for the find to be scientifically acceptable, the final excavation would have to be made under strict supervision.

A week later, Ottinger returned to the site with Dr. J. P. Marwitt, professor of anthropology at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. With them were a team of photographers, a news reporter, and other observers. Professor Marwitt began to dig and, as photographs and movies recorded the action, uncovered the lower halves of two human skeletons. The bones were articulated (laid out in natural configuration), showing that the bodies were intact when covered by soil, and that the bones had not fallen or been washed in to the stratum from some higher and newer level. A number of other technical factors indicated that the bones were as old as the stratum in which they lay.

The age of the level: at least 100 million years, of either the Lower Dakota or the even older Upper Morrison formations. But, as Marwitt observed at the site, the bones appeared to be quite modern in configuration; not an ancient half-simian, but *Homo sapiens*. Final estimation of age could only be made, Marwitt explained, by laboratory dating processes. So, all of the bones were packed up and taken to the University of Utah.

And that is as far as anything ever went. If any carbon 14 or other age testing was ever done, no one would admit to it. Professor Marwitt suddenly became disinterested in the subject and hard to reach. Not long afterward, he left Utah and took a job in a college in the East. A year later, Ottinger gave up and recovered the box of bones—still untested.

PRICE AREA (3)

Nine Mile Canyon (Abt. 20 mi. NE of Price.) Enthusiasts for the "ancient astronauts" idea might find rocky food for thought in the petroglyphs of this long canyon. Until about A.D. 1100, the Fremont culture occupied the canyon and, presumably, left rock carvings comprising one of the heaviest concentrations of such art in the world. Practically unique in Indian art are the trapezoidal, two-legged entities constantly portrayed in the Fremont glyphs.

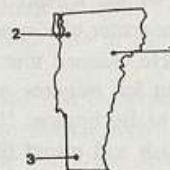
There is question as to whether these are supposed to be human beings or some sort of *Kachina* spirits. Those prepared to face the risks in seeing extraterrestrial visitants in abstract primitive art could probably make a case for these figures as beings entirely foreign to the Indians' normal experience.

One glyph shows one of these angular androids wearing what might be either a horned headdress or, as Dänikenites might say, an antenna-fitted space helmet. To the figure's left, there is a saucer-shaped object, and the trapezoid "man" stands before a row of uplifted hands. Might this grouping imply human awe before some supernal being?

Wattis (Abt. 12 air mi. SW of Price, off S.R. 122.) In 1954, miners at the Lion Coal Corporation broke through into a pair of existing tunnels as they dug. The working was in the center of a 3,500-foot spur of rock branching off a mountain that contains the main mine. The coal seam being worked was at a depth of 8,500 feet. Before finding the strange passageways, the miners had found pockets of coal that was oxidized from long exposure to air, and that was so soft that it could be taken out with bare hands.

They encountered more and more of this until they hit the two tunnels, 200 feet apart. Both were about five feet high. They were half-full of fallen coal and rock, and had been mined on both sides. There was no trace of any entrance from the outside and no record of any other mining operations in the area at any time.

VERMONT



DANVILLE (1)

(25 mi. NE of Montpelier on U.S. 2.) This remote town of a few hundred people in Vermont's quaint "Northeast Kingdom" seems an unlikely spot for an international headquarters. And yet that is what it has become in recent years as the American Society of Dowsers attracts increasing attention and holds its steadily growing annual conventions here each autumn.

Dowsing, one facet of which used to be known as "water witching," is a quite practical pursuit that unfortunately has had to wait for the present occult explosion to achieve its measure of public interest. Dowsers may—or may not—use a stick or rod or other device to find water in a given piece of land. They can be in search of anything from oil or buried gold to the "vibes" of someone's physical state of health. Or so it is believed by people whose doings are monitored, analyzed, and mulled over here. Judging from the peripheral subject matter of recent conventions—"Aurameter and Health," "Power of the Pyramid," "Noxious Rays," among others—there must be ample input from other, rather free-wheeling frontiers of knowledge.

Conventions are held over a weekend about the time that the autumn leaves are coloring, which is almost worth a trip in itself in this part of the country. Those interested in attending should write the American Society of Dowsers, Danville, Vt. 05828, as far in advance as possible for information.

LAKE CHAMPLAIN (2)

I can't imagine anyone today who hasn't heard of the fabulous denizen of a certain loch of Scotland. But few Americans seem to be aware that this much more handsome lake of our own claims a similar mascot, which has been seen almost as many times as "Nessie" since French explorer Samuel de Champlain first described it in July of 1609: "A great long monster, as thick as a barrel and with a head like a horse . . ." Maybe the distance of Scotland lends enchantment.

"Champlainie," if you will, put in several bursts of appearances in the nineteenth century: near Port Henry, New York, 1819; at midcentury when

steamboats first began to ply these waters; and again in the 1880s. Sightings continued sporadically until the 1960s, when there was quite an upsurge of them.

One of the stoutest defenders of the legend (which is not without its scoffers) was Walter Hard, former editor of *Vermont Life*, a publication of the state promotion department. He claimed that he and his wife had observed the creature for more than ten minutes on Labor Day 1962 as it swam off Appletree Point, north of Burlington: "The head was the distinguishing feature—large and whitish and round like a beach ball. . . . It was definitely snakelike in form. I could see three or four humps up in the air, but they were vertical—not lying horizontally along the water like a snake's would."

In 1964, there was a telltale bit of behavior when the creature reportedly surfaced near a Westport, New York, summer camp for boys and girls, touching off a frightened swimming race for shore.

On May 17, 1970, Mrs. Grace Lee of Enosburg Falls, Vermont, her husband, and six other persons were fishing from the Isle La Motte Bridge. Mrs. Lee saw the water begin to churn and a huge, snaky head emerge, followed by three humps. It was a greenish-black in color.

No sooner had the giant, eellike thing appeared than there was an odd bit of business with eels. First Mrs. Farnham, one of the party, felt a tug on her line. She reeled in and found that she had caught an eel. Then her husband, John Farnham, caught an eel. Finally, Mrs. Lee herself had a strike and began hauling in the biggest eel of all, except that it was so strong that it snapped the line and disappeared. At this point they saw the monster turn, as if satisfied with the spectacle, and swim away in the direction of Isle La Motte.

This island, located at the north end of the lake, about 17 miles northeast of Plattsburg, New York, crops up in another interesting yarn. Robert E. Pike of Swanton, Vermont, grew up on Isle La Motte and recalled in a 1971 interview that he had been present when a skeleton of what was thought to be an alligator was found at the bottom of a farm pond in the 1940s. The pond was on the edge of a swampy area near the Isle La Motte Bridge. In 1945, an unusual reptile about 14 inches long was caught in the harbor near the island: It resembled a crocodile, except that it had very small jaws.

The last appearance of the Lake Champlain monster of which I have a record occurred in 1972, when a family saw "something like it" in shallow water near Milton.

A good many Lake Champlain monster fans believe that the beastie(s) lives in the lake's 400-foot deep spot between Ft. Cassin Ruins Park and Cedar Beach, Vermont. According to folklore, the bodies of persons who drown here do not rise to the surface. Others maintain that the area of the lake between Burlington and Grand Isle is the busy place.

One of the early classic UFO reports comes from Burlington, which juts into the middle of the lake. A punishing explosion stunned the city, followed by the fall of a "ball of light," on July 2, 1907. Many reputable witnesses, including Bishop John S. Michaud and former Vermont governor Woodbury, saw it.

Bishop Michaud recalled that the event was followed by the appearance over the city of a torpedo-shaped body, hanging motionless in the air, 50 feet over the tops of the buildings. It was about six feet long by eight inches in diameter. The outer shell was dark, but had "tongues of fire" spurting from several spots. The object disappeared to the south and seemed to be disintegrating, with the flames shooting out where the surface broke.

I don't know that there is any connection, but something that sounds a bit like Bishop Michaud's "torpedo shape" is, or was, lying in the Richelieu River about 12 miles north of Isle La Motte. This point is in Quebec Province, Canada, between the towns of Lacolle and Clarency, and as of July 15, 1973, it was still on the bottom there. Divers who examined and photographed it for U.S. and Canadian authorities estimated its weight at 500 pounds and described it as "long and thin." Neither of the respective governments has claimed it.

Just as Scotland has its Lochs Shiel and Morar monsters, which are not often heard of, so North America has a whole host of other lake and river monster reports. Here are some of the creatures most often talked of: White River, Arkansas; Bear and Payette lakes, Idaho; Flathead Lake, Montana; Pyramid and Walker lakes, Nevada; Lake Mendota and Sturgeon Bay, Wisconsin. In Canada, Lake Okanagan, British Columbia, is host to the famous "Ogopogo," which staged a busy round of encores in July of 1976, according to news reports.

MT. GLASTENBURY (3)

(Abt. 9 mi. NE of Bennington in Green Mountain Natl. Forest.) At least seven persons vanished in this vicinity between 1945 and 1950. That, of course, is the headline type of story that gets a good play in written accounts; but people in these hills can tell a far more absorbing tale of a jinx of some sort that has had the long-term effect of virtually wiping out human habitation on large areas of the mountain. I have not received requested information at press time on whether there have been any recent human disappearances here.

In every case, large search parties scoured the area. Only once was anything significant found, but the circumstances were so unusual themselves to suggest that some singular phenomenon must have been at work. The

corpse of Frieda Langer was found on May 12, 1951—seven months after her vanishment. The body was lying in an open, easily accessible part of the forest that had been crisscrossed many times by searchers in the month that they had looked for her.

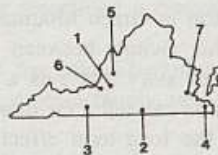
But the villages of Glastenbury and Somerset, once sprinkled like a Grandma Moses scene around the three peaks of Mt. Glastenbury, have also vanished. In the 1880s, these communities had a total population of 500. Many of the residents worked in a small charcoal and iron industry that eked out a living here, just as in the “cursed” area of Dudleytown, Connecticut, to the south—now also a ghost town.

By the late 1930s, all of the old families had died out or been decimated and driven away by persistent misfortunes, including outbreaks of diphtheria and whooping cough among children that were not experienced by surrounding communities. This decline and fall seemed to coincide with the exhaustion of the forests and the almost complete denuding of large areas of the mountainside by the voracious charcoal producers. But the problem was not a simple economic one, since people not directly dependent on this industry were equally affected by whatever malaise was in the air.

There are vague rumors afoot in Shaftsbury, a still-surviving community, about the jinx that supposedly overhangs the area. Many longtime residents there emphasize that they have strictly avoided the ghost towns for years and intend to continue to do so. They point out that all of the human disappearances have occurred within the central area of Glastenbury ghost town.

It is almost enough to make one wonder if something other than a lexical link exists between this and the Glastenbury area of England, which is the subject of so much fevered mystical speculation these days.

VIRGINIA



BEDFORD COUNTY (1)

(Btw. Roanoke and Lynchburg.) Somewhere in the hills near Roanoke, treasure hunters believe, lies one of the more ingeniously concealed stashes of gold in North America. The Beale Ciphers, three coded letters containing nothing but strings of numbers, are believed to pinpoint the crypt hold-

ing no less than three tons of gold and gems, buried there sometime around 1821.

Since this is a treasure guide with a difference, not involving the usual “psst, bud, ya wanna buy a zillion-dollar treasure map?” from shadowy characters in dubious bars of Florida or Arizona, it has attracted some incisive minds, including a number of professional cryptanalysts.

One recent effort was the Beale Ciphers Symposium, held in the Univac Auditorium in Washington, D.C., in April of 1972. But even though “crypto” people always assure us that there is no such thing as an uncrackable code, and even though the most advanced computers have been called in to do the busywork, the Beale verdict thus far is still: no luck.

The ciphers were written a century and a half ago by one Thomas Jefferson Beale. One of the letters was supposedly decoded by using the Declaration of Independence as a key, 20 years after Beale mysteriously disappeared. The decoded chunk reads in part: “I have deposited in the County of Bedford, about four miles from Buford’s, in an excavation or vault six feet below the surface . . . the following articles.” It goes on to describe a fortune that somehow came into the hands of Beale and 30 companions, somewhere in the western states. So far the Declaration and a number of other literary items haven’t worked with the remaining two letters.

According to Carl Hammer, director of computer sciences at Univac Corporation, two positive facts have been established: The remaining Beale Ciphers are real messages, not hoaxes; and they really are code, of a kind similar to the already translated letter. Cryptanalyst Hammer should know: He’s been working on the problem for 17 years.

CLARKSVILLE (2)

Near Jeffress, just across the Roanoke River to the north, is the area where farmer James V. Howe found ancient ironworkings in the 1940s and 1950s. Eventually, he discovered other such sites as far away as Brunswick County, 50 miles to the east. He found swords and other weapons, chisels, nails, and even threaded nuts. Along with these iron pieces, he uncovered a broken bronze cup, a bronze spindle whorl, and two other bronze fragments.

The latter, Howe concluded, must have been brought in from somewhere else, since he found no traces of copper or tin at any of the ironworking sites. For that matter, even the workers of the iron must have been from somewhere else, since the Indians have no such traditions.

The Brunswick County part of the riddle was made more mysterious by the discovery, in 1950, of two inscribed rocks about a mile apart just outside the village of Dolphin. Some students think the marks indicate Roman origin.

Howe's experiences with the archaeological establishment left him, if anything, more baffled than the curiosities he had turned up. Although the Smithsonian did undertake a quickie dig in 1951, when the damming of the river was announced, the results more or less came to naught when the institution refused to run carbon 14 datings on the materials dug up. A number of other individuals and universities applied to by Howe also refused to date them.

Today, most of Howe's original sites are underwater. The bronze cup and some of the iron artifacts are still in the Smithsonian, at last report, although they are labeled "Origin Uncertain." Amateur archaeologist and historian Charles M. Boland has observed that the cup is practically identical with Roman Pompeian cups displayed in the Museum of Naples, Italy.

The area is 45 feet underwater now, but it is a long-standing local tradition that there was a "barren acre" near the now-flooded town of Springfield, and very close to the original Howe artifacts discovery sites. Reports are that the site was one where not much of anything would grow and where two odd stone objects in the shape of Maltese crosses lay in the ground. John W. Tisdale, owner of the Rosseechee Manor House in Clarksville, mentions these curious facts in some of his historical publications on this area.

Also, of course, reservoirs are a very common focus for strange events. I merely point this out, realizing that, in a strict temporal sense, the supposed anomalies here predated the damming of the river.

MEADOWS OF DAN (3)

(44 mi. W of Martinsville on U.S. 58.) Around this scenic plateau at the side of Bull Mountain are found "fairy stones," small naturally formed crosses up to an ounce in weight that have long been regarded by mountain people as powerful talismans. They take three basic cross forms: Roman, Maltese, and St. Andrews, with the Maltese being regarded as most valuable.

Traditional belief is that the wearing of a fairy cross around the neck can avert evils of many kinds and even bring luck in love, although the losing of it once put on brings disaster—rather like the lodestones of New Mexico, I suppose. One special power often credited to the stones is the ability to aid in all efforts of concealment. This was particularly in demand in the "moonshiners' paradise" around the Pinnacles of Dan, two huge pyramid-like hills 10 miles to the southwest.

The problematic thing about the crosses is how they were formed. Geologists classify them as "staurolites," or cruciform crystals of iron aluminum silicate found among metamorphic rocks in Switzerland, Brazil, and

here. Fortean writer Ivan Sanderson accepted this analysis and minimized the idea that there was anything more to the crosses than so-called penetration twins, where two crystal bars have randomly intergrown at angles of from 60 to 90 degrees. However, Charles Fort was not so sure that all of the crosses were of the same mineral composition.

Fairy Stone State Park, 18 miles northwest of Martinsville on S.R. 57, might also be of interest. A commercial source (*see* Ball Ground, Georgia) has had supposed fairy crosses for sale in recent years, but of course the tradition is that, for a truly powerful charm, you have to find and dig it yourself in these very Virginy hills.

About 20 miles southwest of Bull Mountain is the Mt. Airy vicinity of North Carolina, where unidentified objects and other paranormal alarums and diversions have gone on for decades.

NORFOLK (4)

While boring for water opposite Elizabeth, Virginia, in September of 1833, workmen brought up a coin from a depth of 30 feet. It was about the size of an English shilling of the time, of an oval shape, and unlike anything of the kind ever seen here before by the oldest inhabitant. According to historian W. S. Forrest, the figures on the coin were distinct, representing a warrior or hunter and other characters apparently of Roman origin. More strange discoveries by well-borers have occurred at San Luis Obispo, California; Boise, Idaho; and Peoria County, Illinois.

Fort records a fall of catfish, some a foot long, over Norfolk in 1853. At Lake Bedford, near Princess Anne, two crocodilians, three and four feet in length, were seen during the week of August 9, 1949. On March 5, 1951, a spook light first began appearing on Jackson Road, a shadowy lane 2.5 miles south of Suffolk on U.S. 13 and a mile west crossing Turlington Road. Jackson Road seems to be an obvious lovers' trysting place.

ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY (5)

(Abt. 30 mi. NE of Roanoke; leave I-81 at Exit 49 and follow signs to Natural Bridge.) Countless thousands of tourists every year visit the famous caverns of Virginia, and a good many of them also stop off at the Natural Bridge formation. But few outside a small circle of cave buffs are aware that a quarter-mile west of Natural Bridge is the mouth of one of the most beautiful under-wonderlands, Buck Hill Cave. Although it is now being commercially developed, this cave had been kept closed since its discovery in the early nineteenth century because of the creepy noises said to bedevil those who venture into its depths. The developers assure me that the noises continue—caused, they say, by "air currents."

These rumors run far back in the nineteenth century, but the best-known account was probably that of October 1889, when Colonel Henry Parsons hired men to explore the cavern, with a view to opening it for commercial exhibition. Preliminary reports indicated that the cave was an impressive place, with cathedral-sized open rooms, gemlike lakes, lush abstract formations, and underground rivers and waterfalls.

A crew began mapping the labyrinthine passageways and eventually worked its way quite a distance into the earth. One day the men took a break for lunch beside a limestone cataract. Near them was the black hole of a pit so deep that they heard nothing when they dropped articles into it and waited for them to hit bottom.

As the men tired of this and sat back to eat their lunch, they were dismayed to hear a moaning cry rise out of the pit. There was a silence, and then the groan rang out again—somewhat closer, as it sounded. This was followed by the rasp of heavy, menacing breathing. And that was followed by the quick exit of the panicked workmen, who grabbed only their lanterns and left their tools and other gear by the side of the chasm. When they had scrambled back to the surface, they refused to go back in the cave for any wages. And that is pretty much the way things stayed until recently at Buck Hill Cave.

About 10 miles southwest of here, toward Buchanan, a farmer was bedeviled by the flowing of corn through the walls of his locked crib. This occurred in 1871, according to Fort. Apparitions were seen around the corner area at night, and I at least am reminded of the “corn magic” that forms the basis of so much Amerindian sorcery.

SALEM (6)

(4 mi. W of Roanoke on U.S. 11 / 460.) A farm field near here was an area where mysterious disappearances once occurred. In April of 1885, Isaac Martin, a young man living nearby, had gone into the field to work, and vanished. Reportedly, there were other disappearances in the vicinity.

WILLIAMSBURG (7)

Is there a master plan for a “New World Order” that could save modern man, hidden in a hole beneath an unsuspected churchyard in the Colonial Restoration here? Is the solution to the equally nagging problem of who wrote Shakespeare’s plays down there too? Was Sir Francis Bacon the unacknowledged firstborn son of England’s Queen Elizabeth (and the Earl of Leicester)? In lieu of the English crown, to which he was the true heir, did Bacon console himself by plotting out a sort of early-day League of Nations charter for the world?

These questions, and no doubt a good many more, may be raised in the mind of anyone who cares to ponder the possibility that a secret vault, in the form of a 10-foot cube, is buried 16 feet below the cemetery of Bruton Parish Episcopal Church, on the main street of this quaintly restored seventeenth-century town.

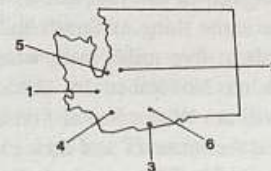
Specifically, the site of the vault is supposed to be about 10 feet west of a grave bearing the name Ann, wife of Graham Frank, which lies some 90 feet northwest of the Bruton church door.

The whole story of the discovery of the supposed crypt through anagrams (like Ann Graham, for example) and other cryptographic devices used in certain literary items and tombstones of bygone times is perhaps best told by its proprietress, Marie Bauer Hall, the wife of Manley P. Hall. Her booklet, *Foundations Unearthed*, details her difficulties with the Williamsburg and Bruton church authorities after a series of excavations that she was allowed to make there in 1938.

Ms. Hall admits that the digs did not find the chamber, but maintains that her work was summarily halted before she could dig deeply enough. I have not been able to reach anyone at Williamsburg who would comment on the matter, other than to suggest that Ms. Hall had had her chance and that diggings in a church cemetery must be kept to a minimum.

In addition to the plan for world government, the vault is also believed to contain a map to similar lore-laden Rosicrucian crypts in Europe, and the long-missing manuscripts of the writings of Shakespeare—authored by Bacon, of course. Marie Bauer Hall’s theory is that the secret archive was set up in 1676 by Nathaniel Bacon just before he launched Bacon’s Rebellion. Other documents, she thinks, were hidden at Bacon’s Castle, across the James River to the south. He had brought the papers with him from England.

WASHINGTON



CHEHALIS AREA (1)

A flying man making a “sizzling and whizzing noise” like high voltage fluttered around a barn on Mrs. Bernard Zaikowski’s farm, January 6, 1948. She said the gentleman appeared to be wearing silver-colored wings strapped to his shoulders and was manipulating controls on his chest.

Longview (Abt. 40 mi. S of Chehalis.) Four months later, on April 9, 1948, Mrs. Viola Johnson and James Pittman observed three "birdmen" hovering above the laundry where both were employed. The aviators then circled the city of Longview several times. The witnesses could not make out arms but saw dangling legs and thought that the aerobats were attired in dark flying suits with helmets. No propellers were visible, but there was a sound like an airplane engine. Meanwhile, several places in Illinois were experiencing similar overflights on that same day.

Vader (Abt. 15 mi. S of Chehalis.) Early on December 7, 1970, Mrs. Wallace Bowers and her children saw "a bright star" moving across the sky. As it approached, they saw that it was a domelike affair with a larger circle revolving around it. For a while it hovered by a powerline. As it moved away, the Bowers children said they saw a "gray shape" drop away from the craft just before it sailed off into the distance. A few days later, Mrs. Bowers saw the curtains moving in her sons' bedroom one night, so the entire family left the house until Mr. Bowers got off work. When they returned, they found that the house had been rummaged through, although nothing had been taken.

Bald Mountain (Abt. 20 mi. E of Chehalis.) Even Walt Disney's *Fantasia* sequence was never like this Night on Bald Mountain. Beyond question the most exotic "crazy critter" yet seen frightened motorists around November 17, 1974. It was horse-sized, covered with scales and standing on four rubbery legs with suckers like octopus tentacles. Its head was football-shaped with an antenna sticking up, according to the first person who ran into it, Seattle grocer Ernest Smith, who was deer hunting. And, as if that were not enough, "The thing gave off this green, iridescent light," according to Smith.

Shortly after this first sighting, but before there had been any publicity, Mr. and Mrs. Roger Ramsbaugh of Tacoma were driving along S.R. 7 one evening when they saw a dull glow near the side of the road. At first they took it for a neon sign in the fog, but as they drew alongside, they were terrified to see the same thing as Smith had.

The area was about five miles from where a fiery object had been seen crashing to earth on November 14. According to some reports, Lewis County Sheriff William Wister had at first investigated, but was told by air force and National Aeronautics and Space Administration officials to drop the matter. A special NASA team, including a heavily armed military unit wearing uniforms with no insignia, replaced county officials.

Mima Mounds (Abt. 13 mi. NW of Chehalis in Thurston County; inquire at Littlerock.) Thousands of low mounds, of unknown age and origin, dapple the grassy surface of this prairie near the south tip of Puget Sound

rather like the pigskin grain on the surface of a giant football. They have provoked some droll imaginings by mechanists and cause-and-effect addicts, both professional and amateur. Most of the explanations seem almost like high camp or some sort of put-on, except that they are quite serious, and vehemently argued.

The highly symmetrical mounds often have been likened to low haycocks or saucebowls turned upside down. At one time, the total number was estimated at nearly a million; in some areas there are still as many as 10,000 to the square mile, despite the leveling of hundreds of roads, farmland, and gravel pits. The biggest ones are seven or so feet high and the smallest barely discernible bumps. Diameters vary widely from six to 70 feet, and the bigger ones are the more perfectly hemispherical. Mounds in a given area tend to be of the same size, although there is no pattern to their relative positioning. The most perfect examples are found here on Mima Prairie, so the name has become generic.

The mounds are constructed of gravel. Many of them also contain large boulders. A silt and gravel mixture lying between the structures ends abruptly at this gravel base. In many cases, the areas between the mounds are covered with cobblestones. The shape of a mound, in cross section, has been compared to a sort of earthy convex lens set into the soil. Under some mounds, "roots" of black silt extend down a foot or so into the subsoil.

Early explorers assumed that these were ordinary burial mounds. But none of those excavated so far have yielded any bones or artifacts to suggest that humans had a hand in their construction. Although it is true that the word *mima* refers to death and burial in the Chinook language, there are no known Indian legends pertaining to the mounds.

Among the few scientists who take note of this conundrum, the setting up and knocking over of Mima Mounds theories has become a sort of scholarly bowling game over the years. One geologist's solemn explanation was that the mounds were made by prehistoric elephants rolling about on the ground. A rival gave that one the raspberry and offered the straight skinny: The mounds were sculpted out by "shovel-nosed sharks" during "a prehistoric period when the area might have been submerged by water." Another pooh-poohed that but posited a race of giant earth-moving ants, apparently about the size of fox terriers.

The latest and most elaborate explanation, worked out by biologists Walter Dahlquist and Victor Sheffer in the 1940s, is the pocket gopher theory. Its partisans point out that wherever there are mounds there are gophers (except for Mima Prairie, darn it). Therefore, each mound would have been built up by an entire gopher tribe. After thousands of years of continuous gopherizing, the excavated soil would have formed a mound.

But opponents point out those rocks—between two and 20 inches thick—that are found inside so many mounds, well above groundline. I find it difficult to visualize any gopher stuffing such stones into its cheek

pockets and surviving. Also, no known gopher heaps up dirt toward the center of its burrow opening; gopher piles are always cratered in the middle.

Besides, they're still growing. . . . Yes, some decades ago farmers and longtime residents first pointed out that the tops of many Mima Mounds are gradually rising, year by year. "Sure they're growing," says one. "When I was a kid they were level with the top of the chicken coop. Now they're several inches taller."

EAGLE GORGE (2)

(30 air mi. E of Tacoma; from Palmer, 10 mi. SE on Burlington Northern tracks, btw. Hanson Dam and the town of Lester.) Some years ago, trainmen on what was then the Northern Pacific railroad were quite familiar with a "ghost train" that was repeatedly seen in the vicinity of Eagle Gorge, in these Cascade mountain ranges. The phantom was popularly supposed to be locomotive number 33, driven by engineer Tom Cypher (an odd coincidence of name and number, that), which had derailed and crashed to the gorge floor far below in this most dangerous stretch of the 2,500-mile line. That was in 1890. Thereafter, the apparition frightened other engineers by seeming to rush headlong toward them as they rolled gingerly across the gorge in the night. The story was reported in detail by Seattle newspapers in 1892, as told by engineer J. M. Pinckney. It is interesting that Pinckney described the headlight of the onrushing spook locomotive as flashing red, green, and white lights, which would seem to have been unlikely with the dim and yellowish old kerosene head and sidelights used on locomotives in those days. Note too the presence of a reservoir at the site.

MARYHILL (3)

(On Columbia River abt. 100 mi. E of Portland, Ore.) This tiny community is the home of a full-scale replica of England's Stonehenge. A sizable chunk of the Hill railroad fortune was spent in building the henge and a drafty, Georgian-style "castle" high on these stark and windswept palisades above the river. Although there is a museum open to the public at Sam Hill's Castle, the Stonehenge structure four miles to the east is not noticeably publicized. The last time I visited it, there were no directing signs and the setting high on an uninhabited hilltop made it hard to locate from below.

Construction of all this was begun in 1913 by Samuel Hill. Although apparently not a relative of railroad pioneer James J. Hill (since he married the elder Hill's daughter, Mary), Samuel nevertheless ended up with much of the family fortune. One of the announced purposes of these structures

was as a sort of shrine to Mary Hill, for whom this town was renamed from Columbus.

Another intent, according to a bronze plaque at the henge, was as a memorial to the handful of men from Klickitat County who had died in World War One. I have been unable to determine if Sam Hill had any personal ties to this area: It would otherwise seem a trifle odd to select such a remote and sparsely populated place for a world war shrine. Also, it seems that neither of the Hills ever lived here—officially, anyway, although there are curious rumors that Mrs. Mary Hill was at one time virtually immured in the castle on the pretext of insanity. Naturally, this is vigorously denied by the Hill interests.

But those are by no means all of the puzzlers here. Sam Hill's Castle also represents a sort of Transylvania West, since the throne room and all of its ceremonial trappings from the vanished kingdom of Romania were brought over and installed here. Moreover, the Maryhill establishment was officially dedicated in 1926 by none other than Queen Marie of the defunct Romanian royal family.

The rather Hollywoodian appearance of the "restored" henge leaves a little to be desired for Stonehenge purists. Sam Hill sent an engineer and a crew of workmen to Salisbury Plain to figure out exactly what the monument must have looked like when new. Although in the original only a few of the uprights are bridged by connecting slabs, here an entire horizontal ring of curved stones has been installed above the neatly squared off vertical members.

As a concession to the rugged, Neolithic look of the British original, molds were made of the rock surfaces and brought back here to be appliquéd onto the new structure. However, one of my informants who has carefully examined the structure says that it is on the whole a functionally acceptable reconstruction, if Stonehenge be regarded as a form of astronomical observatory.

Those who visit it should take along a copy of *Stonehenge Decoded* by Gerald Hawkins: The stones can be identified correctly by name since they are all fair copies, and presumably their positions are equally accurate with reference to solar and lunar movements. The only lapse so far as state-of-the-art Stonehenge lore is concerned is that the 56 so-called Aubrey Holes, discovered in the original rocks by antiquarian John Aubrey and apparently used in eclipse predicting, are missing.

MT. ST. HELENS (4)

(Abt. 70 air mi. SE of Tacoma, and 44 mi. E of I-5.) Since there has been such a huge incidence of the Bigfoot-Sasquatch entity in Washington, I will not be able to list individual cases. For anyone interested, the several books of writer John Green will provide an abundance of case histories.

For us, the Mt. St. Helens area will have to suffice as one big centerpiece, since it has continually figured in sightings from the earliest times.

Bigfoot cognoscenti have unearthed a journal written by one Paul Kane in 1847: "This mountain has never been visited by either whites or Indians; the latter assert that it is inhabited by a race of beings of a different species who are cannibals and whom they hold in great dread. . . ." These wildmen were supposed to be responsible for the evil spirits of Spirit Lake, a class-A horror spot to Indians, just north of the mountain.

Ape Canyon is the site at this superbly beautiful, snow-covered peak where most of the action has centered. In 1924, a party of miners were driven out of the canyon by "apelike creatures" who allegedly tried to rip their cabin apart in the night and seemed impervious to gunfire. Several camping Boy Scouts were terrorized and chased from the area by what they called "an ape man" a few years ago. Footprints of huge size are periodically announced here and elsewhere around "the White Lady."

To reach Ape Canyon, approach Mt. St. Helens on S.R. 504. At Timberline Campground, on the north side, take Timberline Trail 240 over Windy Pass to Pine Creek Trail 234, and follow 234 south two miles. The canyon opens to the west toward the peak.

While you're in the area, you might as well look in at Ape Cave. Despite the name, this St. Helens site is not supposed to have any special Bigfoot correlation. It is, however, of some speleological interest, being the longest single "lava tube" ever found in the United States. The two-mile channel is thought to have conducted molten lava, or something, from the underworld. There are also "lava stalactites and stalagmites," which sounds like a neat trick, as are the odd ripples in the glassy internal surface of the tube. To reach Ape Cave, approach the mountain on S.R. 503 to Yale; at Yale take the county road northeast toward Cougar. Six miles east of Cougar, turn north on Forest Road N83 and proceed about two miles to F.R. N816. The cave is a mile along 816, on the east side.

TACOMA (5)

James Johnson, who has asked that his address not be published, has had problems with an unfillable hole in his backyard. Suggestions on what it might be range from an abandoned well to a series of supposed smugglers' tunnels. Unknown "egg-shaped" objects have been found down inside the structure, which is circular and bricked in like a beehive shape for its first three feet underground.

The Johnsons were unaware that they possessed such a structure, since the person who sold them the property had said nothing about it. One day in 1973, their dog became anxious about what was then only a small aperture in the lawn. Johnson ran a 50-foot sewer cleaner into it but could not

reach bottom. A city engineer said it was 31 feet deep and was probably an abandoned well. He suggested filling it, which Johnson proceeded to do by throwing in 164 old auto tires.

Doing some checking, Mr. Johnson found that owners in the 1920s had dumped in a load of marble at one point. Apparently this caused indigestion or resentment of a sort because "an explosion blew everything out. . . . The lady living here was scared to death and moved out," Mr. Johnson says. Another owner recalled that his father had lowered a rope and pail into the hole in 1922, and something had yanked the bucket out of his hands.

By June of 1974, the level of the old tires had dropped many feet, and Mr. Johnson gave permission for the Cascade Grotto of the National Speleological Society to "get to the bottom of it." But after several hours of heaving out the tires, the spelunkers decided that the hole was merely an old well or cistern. However, Mr. Johnson said that they did find some "egg-shaped" objects that apparently defied identification.

Other theorists have dug up old stories of a series of tunnels under Tacoma that some think might have been used to smuggle Chinese laborers about. Mr. Johnson is rather partial to the idea of an underground river. He also does not plan to go down into the hole himself: "The only time I ever want to go down under is when it's all over."

YAKIMA INDIAN RESERVATION (6)

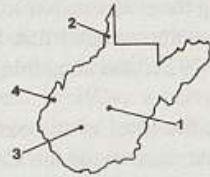
This area has been a primary locus of the UFO phenomenon for a long time, with a particular flare-up of activity between 1971 and 1975. When pilot Kenneth Arnold reported strange craft that "skimmed through the air like saucers over water" at nearby Mt. Rainier in 1947, he happened to be in the right place and time to spark off a still-growing craze. But the Yakima Indians knew all about the saucers and weren't particularly excited about Arnold's sighting.

The area here that has experienced the most activity recently is Toppenish Ridge, which runs east and west across U.S. 97 at the east end of the reservation. Another place near that called Rattlesnake Ridge has also been busy. U.S. Forestry Service fire-control personnel have been the main observers of the goings-on, which have consisted mainly of fireball-like entities floating among the deep canyons and heavy timber. Some more substantial-looking objects have also been observed, in many cases moving along the path of the large electric line heading northeastward across the area from the dam near Portland on the Columbia River.

There have been reports of UFO harassment of residents of the area, many of whom were children. One couple living in the mid-reservation village of White Swan were wakened in the wee hours by a glowing-eyed humanoid giving them an evil stare through their bedroom window. Pres-

ently, it turned and moved away, moving in languid, 20-foot strides similar to those made by the astronauts on the moon.

WEST VIRGINIA



FLATWOODS (1)

(In Braxton County, abt. 60 mi. SW of Clarksburg on I-79.) This state is another on which entire books could be written, and one of the focal points would have to be this country in the rugged, sparsely populated center section. The now-famous Flatwoods UFO/monster encounter is but an incident in an entrenched tradition of untoward events long chalked up to "Old Scratch" by inhabitants of these scattered hamlets and farms. And, sure enough, there is even at least one baffling "ancient artifact."

The Flatwoods chapter in classic American monsteriana occurred at 7:15 in the evening of September 12, 1952. A huge silvery object that seemed to be on fire plunged behind the low peak that towers over the town, as a number of children looked on from a school playground (a common target for UFO attentions the world around). Thinking it might have been an airplane in trouble, a group led by 17-year-old Gene Lemon took a flashlight and climbed the hill.

On the top they saw "a glowing spherical object as big as a house," familiar enough to us perhaps, but at that time not recognized. An acrid, irritating mist began to fill the air, and they spied huge, glowing eyes to their left under a tree.

The boy with the flashlight flicked the beam toward it, and immediately a huge figure lighted up "like a neon sign," as one youth recalled later. An orange, pumpkinlike "face" surmounted a vague, cape-shrouded body. The head was either topped by a conical dunce-cap affair, or was shaped "like an ace of spades": No one was quite sure. Eyelike apertures perforated the face and from them green-orange beams of light shot out over their heads through the swirling, nauseating mist now choking the wild scene.

Fourteen-year-old Neil Nunley recalled: "It was like hell I once dreamed about when I had a high fever. Cold chills came over me and I began to shake. It felt like something was tearing my body apart." Then there was a hiss, a wave of even more putrid odor, and they saw the towering object

begin to glide toward them. But by this time, the last of the children was fleeing pell-mell down the hillside. Most were sick to their stomachs, and some suffered symptoms of shock.

For generations, the Flatwoods area was the center of "Wampus Cat" stories among mountain folk. This sounds today like another of the phantasmal felids that we have noted elsewhere, particularly in central Illinois. In earlier times, the large, cougarlike thing that could appear and disappear at will and even fly off into the air was taken matter-of-factly here as a manifestation of the Evil One.

At the Braxton County Historical Society, investigator Gray Barker has discovered old accounts in which the "cat" seems to have shown a fascinating convertibility with what today sounds like a standard model, circular UFO. A clergyman of 1907 recorded a sighting of one of the latter as "Old Scratch taking the form of his own church."

In 1931, a fisherman named Ord Wilson found a four-inch sandstone runic tablet along Triplet Creek in the Flatwoods area. Unaware of its significance, Wilson used it for years as a paperweight and doorstop until a schoolteacher noticed it and brought it to the attention of state authorities. A translation was made by the venturesome runecist Olaf Strandwold: "Richard owns island/Guri had husband in Erik/now Ole." The stone was still in the state museum at Charleston the last time I visited there several years ago.

MOUNDSVILLE (2)

(12 mi. S of Wheeling on S.R. 2.) This town has grown up on the site of a huge ancient building complex. Early settlers discovered many curious structures, including an octagonal assemblage that looked vaguely like a fort, and numerous rock "wells" encircling the area like observation posts in the hills along the river. Just as at Newark, Ohio, there was a network of dike-shrouded "ramps" running with a great causeway down to the river.

All of this is gone now, but Grave Creek Mound, the main structure, can still be seen. When excavations were begun in 1838, it was found that the mound had an internal structure not unlike an earthen version of the Great Pyramid at Gizeh. Log-supported angular passageways were found leading to vaults at the center and base. The lower of these was a burial chamber about seven feet below ground level.

Two skeletons were lying inside, apparently of a man and a woman. They had unusual dentition in that the peaks of the molars, instead of diverging like those of modern man, united to conical points. Above this chamber was discovered another grave containing one skeleton in very poor condition.

In retrospect, however, one of the most important discoveries seems to be the small stone tablet that was found somewhere near the main mound during the digging. Although the original long ago disappeared, enough casts and drawings were made of it that we know exactly what it looked like. It is incised with 22 hieroglyphic characters, seemingly runic, and one odd crosslike figure.

In the nineteenth century, this artifact excited worldwide scholarly interest, virtually monopolizing attention at the 1875 Congress of Archaeologists at Nancy, France. Today, with the solidification of the dogma of "No Non-Indians Before Columbus," it has long since been cast by archaeologists into the overflowing dustbin of fakes and hoaxes.

MT. CARBON STONE WALLS (3)

(W end of Fayette County on Armstrong Mountain.) High on this desolate peak in worked-out coalmine country are a complex of ancient stone structures running north to south for a distance of about three miles. Although called walls, these might more accurately be described as "windows": Like analogous structures that we considered in Colorado, they are not carefully laid stoneworkings but rather, dominolike rows of loosely piled rock slabs. However, unlike the Colorado structures, which form highly complex enclosures, these remains are a fragmentary and strung-out collection of U's and semicircles.

Approximately in the middle of the complex are a number of mounds, of both rock and earth construction. One of the rock mounds has the shape of a turtle. Some of the "walls" consist largely of giant blocks of flint quartz, which must have been carried a considerable distance since the flint stratum is far below this 2,300-foot level. There is evidence among the mounds that flint implements were worked here at one time.

Archaeologists have pretty much ruled out defensive and game trap explanations, since the ruggedness of the area would have precluded any animals large enough to be so caught and there would not seem to have been anything to defend. Besides, evidence of Indian occupancy in all of central West Virginia is extremely tenuous.

Most local experts who have studied the site admit the possibility of ritualistic or ceremonial significance to the builders. Since this area is located at about 38 degrees, 10 minutes north latitude, I have wondered about possible links to Old World cult centers on the same parallels. (For more on that, see Colorado entries.)

There are a number of other "wall" sites in West Virginia about which practically nothing is known: seven miles north of Mt. Carbon at the mouth of Paint Creek; in Raleigh County, atop a nameless peak 16 miles south of Mt. Carbon; in Logan County near Omar; in Kanawha County on a natural terrace below Rush Creek.

POINT PLEASANT (4)

(43 mi. NE of Huntington on S.R. 2.) People who follow "unbelievables" are very familiar with Point Pleasant these days. Investigators like Gray Barker and John Keel have written extensively on the area, and Keel's books, *Strange Creatures from Time and Space* and *The Mothman Prophecies*, have reached wide audiences. Obviously, I can't add anything here to their studies of the incredible events of 1966 and 1967 when appearances of the winged weirdie nicknamed "Mothman" preceded the disastrous collapse of the Silver Bridge into the Ohio River, with the loss of 38 known lives.

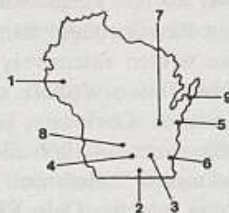
We have encountered these rather dreadful specters in many other places on our foray through Weird America. Most recently, they put on one of their surreal circuses over the southern tip of Texas, as we saw. But there is no gainsaying that the 13 months to the day from their first appearance here, on November 15, 1966, until the collapse of the bridge on December 15, 1967, showed that this area stands in some peculiar relationship to the entity.

Not much has been happening here lately. But anyone passing through the Huntington area who wants to take a quick tour might check the two main sites:

Clinton McClintic Wildlife Station, about five miles north of Point Pleasant on S.R. 62, just east of the Ohio River valley. The concrete igloo-like structures scattered over the so-called TNT Area here date from World War Two explosives manufacturing. Miles of underground workings and tunnels link the long-ruined hulks of the munitions plants. This is a "lovers' lane," and some of the most dramatic run-ins with Mothman took place here.

Chief Cornstalk Public Hunting Area, about 10 miles south of Point Pleasant. Fireballs and standard-model UFO's have long been seen among the hills here, particularly along Five Mile Creek Road between S.R. 2 and the town of Southside on the Kanawha River. The area is supposed to have been cursed against white occupancy by the famous nineteenth-century Indian chief whose name it bears.

WISCONSIN

**BALDWIN (1)**

(46 mi. NW of Eau Claire, off I-94.) In the first week of December 1973 there was unexplained disappearance of farm dogs in the St. Croix and Dunn counties area. For some reason, many of these were of the collie breed. Two weeks later, there was a disappearance of 24 collies from around the Voluntown, Connecticut, area.

JANESVILLE (2)

In February of 1892, a frozen crocodile five and one-half feet long was found on a remote bank of the Rock River near here. Another "abandoned pet"?

LAKE MILLS AREA (3)

Aztalan (Abt. 8 miles SE of Lake Mills, off S.R. 26.) This mounded formation was discovered and named in 1836 by one Nathaniel Hyer, who seems to have convinced himself that this was the legendary homeland (usually spelled Aztlan) of the Aztec Indians of Mexico.

The remains of an earth pyramid and fort here are presently dated at before A.D. 1000. The builders are now believed to have been nonnatives who had come from the south—perhaps from the Cahokia area of modern Illinois. They are disliked by the resident Indians because of their practice of eating their enemies, which was just about everybody.

Their log stockade appears to have been thoroughly burned out at some time, since there is nothing left of it today but a few cinders. Some wonder if the ashes don't show a far more intense heat than could ever have occurred in an ordinary wood fire.

Ft. Atkinson (26 mi. SE of Madison on U.S. 12.) A prehistoric mound near here has been likened in shape to the "medicine wheels" usually found farther west. Supposedly, the Indians of this neck of the woods did not go in for such things, and since established theory refuses to count-

nance any possibility of peoples here before the Bering Straits crossing, that does leave such monuments as this somewhat out in the cold. Of interest to me is the fact that this mound is 10 miles south on a line passing between Rock Lake, with its hypothetical pyramids, and the enigmatic mound and fort remain at Aztalan. Thirty-odd miles farther north is an almost identical "medicine wheel" mound at Beaver Dam.

Rock Lake (Lake Mills area, 21 mi. E of Madison on I-94.) Are there stone pyramids beneath the 40-foot waters of this small lake? The question has hung around for years on the fringes of underwater archaeology. The split, as usual, is between "the laity" and the professionals, and I'm sure it won't be hard to guess the position of the pros.

In July in 1967, diver John Kennedy of Lombard, Illinois, surfaced with three grapefruit-sized rocks that he said he'd pried from a pyramidal rock heap at the west end of the lake. On March 30, 1968, a noted underwater archaeologist, Lon Mericle of the Milwaukee Museum, announced that he had taken a team of scientific divers to the lake and spent four days exploring the bottom, without finding anything whatsoever.

Kennedy next went up in an airplane and claimed to have taken a series of pictures showing dark, squarish forms in the pale mud. These were studied by M. R. Kutska of Chicago, in planning a full-scale assault by 10 members of his diving club. They used a bearing straight west of Bartell's Boat Rentals, on the east shore. With the help of a fishing depth meter, they supposedly located the formation.

Kutska claimed that he could only get an impression of heaped rocks about 25 by 50 by 70 feet, since the water was so murky. The edges were quite straight and ended in squared corners, he said. Later, a similar heap more square in outline was found. Broken clam shells and a length of cracked-open bone were found deposited in one side of the larger structure, taken by some as a link to nearby Aztalan, where the inhabitants were gatherers of shells and habitually cracked open bones for the marrow.

An earlier flurry of interest in pyramids of Rock Lake had occurred in April of 1936 when Dr. Fayette Morgan, a Lake Mills dentist and aviator, saw the forms from the cockpit of his airplane. He called them merely "bumps," but his report gave weight to a story long told by another area resident, Claude Wilson, who claimed to have struck one of the pyramids with an oar once while the lake was low during a drought.

The Morgan sighting reached the ears of Max Gene Nohl, a noted diver from Milwaukee, who declared that he had located one of the pyramids by dragging. Curiously, however, both Nohl and Wilson described the pyramid as a truncated cone about 29 feet high and 18 feet across the bottom. Its construction, Nohl said, was of smooth mortared stones, now covered with slime and muck.

I guess only one thing remains to make this the lake that has everything. It has not been seen recently, that I know of, but between 1867 and the 1880s, a "saurian" monster was reported by numerous Lake Mills residents. In August of 1882, several men in a boat saw what looked at first like a floating log, which then raised a huge and grotesque head out of the water. According to the report in the *Lake Mills Spike* (August 31, 1882), "The air became heavy with a most sickening odor."

MADISON (4)

Lake Mendota is another of the many Wisconsin lakes with stories of monsters. In the autumn of 1917, a fisherman angling for perch was confronted by a snakelike head with fiery eyes and huge jaws. He did not stay around long enough to note further particulars. Later that year, a young couple from the University of Wisconsin were sunbathing on a pier in the lake. The girl felt something tickling the sole of her foot, but saw that her companion was apparently asleep. She lay back and prepared to catch the naughty boyfriend in the act. When the tickling came again, she looked up quickly, but instead of the boy, still asleep, she saw a dragonlike head on a long neck playfully flicking a great forked tongue at her foot. The couple hastily departed. Other reports came until the late 1920s.

Lake Monona was the site of several widely attested monster sightings in the 1890s. The first report, in June of 1897, said "it" was about 20 feet long and swimming east in the bright moonlight—a favorite lunatic setting for monsters generally. The thing vanished when shots were fired at it by observers. (See also Lake Champlain, Vermont.)

I don't know that there's any connection, but Dane County also had at one time a number of earthen "monsters." When the original settlers came in, they found many mounds in the form of fantastic animals, some of which are hard to identify with present fauna. Another large display of such effigy and abstract mounds still exists, 88 miles due west of here at Prairie du Chien, and at Marquette, Iowa, across the Mississippi.

MANITOWOC (5)

A 20-pound piece of steel, evidently part of some larger assembly, crashed in a street here in September 1962. It showed signs of being machined and was ablated as if it had passed through the earth's atmosphere at high speed and partially melted on the leading edges. The fragment was sent to the Smithsonian Astrophysical Laboratory, which determined only that it was "man-made." At about the same time in 1962, a glittering sphere descended into a lake near Concord, North Carolina.

MILWAUKEE (6)

On August 22, 1974, a 50-pound chunk of leadlike metal fell into a street from the sky, bounced 60 feet, hit ground again, and glanced off the side of the William Murray house, where it knocked loose wood splinters. A police detective said the object was "white hot" and couldn't be handled for 10 minutes. Next day the whole thing was laughingly explained: The chunk had somehow been hurled out of "some" local metal processing plant.

About 15 miles west of Milwaukee, at Lake Pewaukee, a 30-inch crocodilian was caught on July 9, 1971.

"Angel hair" fell on Milwaukee, Green Bay, Vesburge, Ft. Howard, Sheboygan, and Ozaukee in late October 1881. The scientific press of the day generally attributed it to "gossamer spiders," but the *Scientific American* confessed: "Curiously enough, there is no mention in any of the reports that we have seen, of the presence of spiders."

OSHKOSH (7)

A sudden darkness blackened the skies here at 3 P.M. on March 19, 1886. In five minutes, it was as dark as midnight. General consternation prevailed. People on the streets rushed to and fro. Driverless horses dashed along. There were no obvious wind or weather systems, and no eclipse. The gloom lasted 10 minutes and seemed to pass away from west to east, with cities to the west reporting it had happened there earlier.

There have been many other unexplained "darknesses at noon" throughout history. One that occurred in London, England, in midmorning of August 19, 1763, was so intense that it seemed impervious to candles and lights. But none of these on record have lasted more than about 10 minutes.

SAUK CITY (8)

(24 mi. NW of Madison on U.S. 12.) The late August Derleth, editor and continuer of the "Cthulhu" horror fiction of H. P. Lovecraft, once explained why he had located his Arkham House publishing firm in this seemingly unlikely place. It was, he wrote, because this south-central area of Wisconsin contains "Cthulhu power zones." The most potent of these focuses about an area occupied by two ordinary-looking rural lakes, a few miles east of here called Fish Lake and Crystal Lake. About 12 miles north is another, Devil's Lake.

Certain cult groups oriented to Crowleyian "sex magic" have been known to frequent these lakes. One of these, headquartered in Chicago, en-

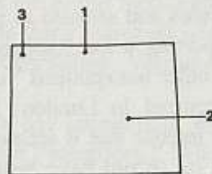
deavors to evoke the "Deep Ones" whose "point of entry to the earth plane" lies within such lakes, according to theory. Their rites are performed when the sun is in one of the water signs of the zodiac, Cancer, Scorpio, or Pisces, and preferably when Jupiter, Luna, and Pluto are also in these signs. The "evoked" entities then reportedly assume a high degree of physical presence, but their exact nature and what is done with them has not been revealed.

STURGEON BAY (9)

The Menomini Indians living near here have many legends about a great hairy "snake" living in the bay. Like other lake monsters we have cited, it seemed to have a thing about young women, and in the legends, first made itself known by carrying away two young sisters who had been at the beach one day. The aftermath is of interest to those who have studied the "Big Bird" and its occasional appearances in North America.

The Indians prayed and fasted, and at length were visited by the Thunderers, or giant birds of the god Manabus, who then flew out to the lake and saw to it that the girls were given back by the monster. There are many indications that the "Thunderbird" myth has some tie-in with the wide panoply of UFO and monster phenomena.

WYOMING



BIGHORN MEDICINE WHEEL (1)

(In Bighorn Natl. Forest, 25 mi. E of Lovell, and just N of U.S. Alt. 14.) On the west peak of Medicine Mountain, near a ledge that breaks away above Big Horn Basin, is a collection of stones laid out roughly in the shape of a huge wagon wheel. At the center is a cairn several feet high, and from it radiate 28 uneven spokes of stones to the outer rim 25 yards in diameter. Around the rim are six smaller cairns about 30 inches high, and open on one side like a rough stone armchair. Five of these face the center; the sixth faces east.

Those experts who have pondered the formation usually skirt the delicate question of who built it. Most now think the wheel was on the site before the Crow Tribe came to the area, where they have been since long before

Columbus. But Crow lore contains no traditions pertaining to the wheel, although the Indians knew of its existence, of course.

"Archaeoastronomy" is a trendy new subject these days. Astronomer John A. Eddy of the National Center for Atmospheric Research, Boulder, Colorado, has theorized that the Medicine Wheel could have been used as an observatory to pinpoint the summer solstice. Eddy has found that the center cairn and one of those on the outer rim line up perfectly with the rising sun, while another rim cairn aligns with the setting sun on Midsummer day. Other cairns on the rim, he finds, line up with the stars Aldebaran, Sirius, and Rigel around solstice.

Eddy admits that nomadic Plains peoples do not seem to have been interested in such calendrical practices, as were those more agriculturally oriented. He says local Indians told him the wheel had been there when their people came and that it had been made "by people who had no iron." (As was Solomon's Temple, I believe.)

There are those who have complained that the somewhat untidy outline of the circle suggests ineptitude by the builders. But, as Charles Fort observed of Stonehenge, "Its inattention to detail and roughly geometric" construction could suggest that it was built by cavemen—or by "post-impressionist architects from a very far-advanced civilization."

Certainly the 28 spokes of the Bighorn Medicine Wheel have at least an arithmetic relation to the 56 "Aubrey Holes" that, according to Gerald Hawkins, form the functional element of Stonehenge-as-sidereal-calculator. Maybe this is a compact form; or maybe, as Eddy suggests, there is some referent to the 28-day lunar calendar.

There is a more egg-shaped medicine wheel on Moose Mountain near Kisbey, Saskatchewan, Canada. It too is laid out so that sight lines over cairns mark sunrise and sunset at summer solstice, as well as the rising points of Aldebaran, Rigel, and Sirius.

CASPER (2)

Displayed for some years here as the mummy of a middle-aged man who was otherwise normal—except that he was only 14 inches tall and had somehow been buried inside a granite mountainside. The little mummy was discovered in October of 1932 by two gold prospectors who were working in a gulch at the base of the Pedro Mountains about 60 miles west of here.

They were blasting in the solid stone wall of the gulch when the opening to a small cave in the granite was uncovered. The chamber was four feet wide, four feet high, and 15 deep. When the dust had settled, the miners peered into the opening and were startled to see the tiny mummy sitting upright on a ledge, legs crossed and arms folded in his lap.

His skin was dark brown and deeply wrinkled. The forehead was low, the nose flat with wide nostrils, and the mouth also broad and thin-lipped.

Back in Casper, the discovery soon began to attract attention. Experts were dubious, for how could anything have either lived in or been walled up in such rock of ages?

The Anthropological Department at Harvard University vouched for the genuineness of the remain. Dr. Henry Shapiro of the American Museum of Natural History commented that the mummy was of enormous age and of unknown human type. An expert from the Boston Museum's Egyptian Department observed that it resembled in appearance those mummies that the Egyptians had left unwrapped.

Unhappily, this seems to have been another of those almost too-good-to-be-true finds that has completely dropped out of sight. No one in Casper that I have been able to contact admits to knowing anything of its present whereabouts. At last report, a family named Goodman owned the mummy, but moved from the area some years ago. There was a report that it had been sent to the Smithsonian, but a spokesman there tells me that nothing like it is listed in the catalog.

YELLOWSTONE NATIONAL PARK (3)

Some early white explorers here claimed to have heard a phenomenon that was more or less familiar to the Indians and figured in a number of their legends: the "ghost music" said to float across the waters of Yellowstone Lake, in the southeast corner of the park. Descriptions vary considerably. Some describe the sounds as quite theatrical, rather like atonal warblings of an old-fashioned pipe organ and bells played by some wilderness phantom of the opera. Others have spoken of more abstract noises like the zinging of telegraph wires in the wind or the hum of a swarm of bees.

Geologist Clyde M. Bauer, formerly of the park staff, described an interesting spatial aspect, saying that "the sounds approach, grow more distinct, pass immediately overhead, and then fade away in the opposite direction." To the Indians, the noises were the singing of a maiden who was in love with one young warrior but was forced to marry another, whereupon she swam into the lake to avoid the onerous ceremony and never was seen again.

Present-day officials at Yellowstone, however, doubt that any unusual noises are in the air. A note from the superintendent's office in 1976 told me: "Sounds can be heard from minor air currents, ripples of the water, or geysers in the background," but presumably not from whatever source figures in the legends.

I suppose it's true. But I must confess I was a little sorry to read it.

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