

Introducing B. C.'s Hairy Giants

A collection of strange tales about British Columbia's wild men as told by those who say they have seen them

By J. W. BURNS

ARE the vast mountain solitudes of British Columbia, of which but very few have been so far explored, populated by a hairy race of giants—men—not ape-like men?

Reports from time to time, covering a period of many years, have come from the hinterlands of the province, that hairy giants had been occasionally seen by Indian and white trappers in the mountain fastnesses, far from the pathway of civilization. These reports, however, were always vague and indefinite; for the reason that no person could be found, or, at least, nobody came forward with the information that they had obtained a close-up view of these strange creatures.



The Chehalis river which the hairy giant waded in pursuit of the Indian.

Persistent rumors led the writer to make diligent enquiries among old Indians. The question relating to the subject was always, and trite excuse: "The white man don't believe, he make joke of the Indian." But after three years of plodding, I have come into possession of information more definite and authentic than has come to light at any previous time. Disregarding rumor and hearsay, I have prevailed upon men who claim they had actual contact with these hairy giants, to tell what they know about them. Their story is set down here in good faith.

Peter Williams lives on the Chehalis Reserve. I believe that he is as reliable as well as an intelligent Indian. He gave me the following thrilling account of his experience with these people.

Peter's Encounter with the Giant

ONE evening in the month of May twenty years ago," he said, "I was walking along the foot of the mountain about a mile from the Chehalis reserve. I thought I heard a noise something like a grunt nearby. Looking in the direction in which it came, I was startled to see what I took at first sight to be a huge bear crouched upon a boulder twenty or thirty feet away. I raised my rifle to shoot it, but, as I did, the creature stood up and let out a piercing yell. It was a man—a giant, no less than six and one-half feet in height, and

covered with hair. He was in a rage and jumped from the boulder to the ground. I fled, but not before I felt his breath upon my cheek.

"I never ran so fast before or since—through brush and undergrowth toward the Statloo, or Chehalis River, where my dugout was moored. From time to time, I looked back over my shoulder. The giant was fast overtaking me—a hundred feet separated us; another look and the distance measured less than fifty—then the Chehalis and in a moment the dugout shot across the stream to the opposite bank. The swift river, however, did not in the least daunt the giant, for he began to wade it immediately.

"I arrived home almost worn out from running and I felt sick. Taking an anxious look around the house, I was relieved to find the wife and children inside. I bolted the door and barricaded it with everything at hand. Then with my rifle ready, I stood near the door and awaited his coming."

Peter added that if he had not been so much excited he could easily have shot the giant when he began to wade the river.

"After an anxious waiting of twenty minutes," resumed the Indian, "I heard a noise approaching like the trampling of a horse. I looked through a crack in the old wall. It was the giant. Darkness had not yet set in and I had a good look at him. Except that he was covered with hair and twice the bulk of the average man, there was nothing to distinguish him from the rest of us. He pushed against the wall of the old house with such force that it shook back and forth. The old cedar shook and timbers creaked and groaned so much under the strain that I was afraid it would fall down and kill us. I whispered to the



The Indian house that was wrecked by Peter's giant.

old woman to take the children under the bed."

Peter pointed out what remained of the old house in which he lived at the time, explaining that the giant treated it so roughly that it had to be abandoned the following winter.

"After prowling and grunting like an animal around the house," continued Peter, "he went away. We were glad, for the children and the wife were uncomfortable under the old bedstead. Next morning I found his tracks in the mud around the house, the biggest of either man or beast I had ever seen. The tracks measured twenty-two inches in length, but narrow in proportion to their length."

The following winter while shooting wild duck on that part of the reserve Indians call the "prairie," which is on the north side of the Harrison River and about two miles from the Chehalis village, Peter once more came face to face with the same hairy giant. The Indian ran for dear life, followed by the wild man, but after pursuing him for three or four hundred yards the giant gave up the chase.

Old village Indians, who called upon Peter to hear of his second encounter, nodded their heads sagely, shrugged their shoulders, and for some reason not quite clear, seemed not to wish the story to gain further publicity.

On the afternoon of the same day another Indian by the name of Paul was chased from the creek, where he was fishing for salmon, by the same individual. Paul was in a state of terror, for unlike Peter he had no gun. A short distance from his shack the giant suddenly quit and walked into the bush. Paul, exhausted from running, fell in the snow and had to be carried home by his mother and others of the family.

"The first and second time," went on Peter, "I was all alone when I met this strange mountain creature. Then, early in the spring of the following year, another man and myself were bear hunting near the place where I first met him. On this occasion we ran into two of these giants. They were sitting on the ground. At first we thought they were old tree stumps, but when we were within fifty feet or so, they suddenly stood up and we came to an immediate stop. Both were nude. We were close

Continued on page 61



A general view of the Chehalis valley where Peter the Indian met the giant. In circle: Old Charlie, who says he talked to a Sasquatch (giant) woman and wounded one of their boys.

Introducing B.C.'s Hairy Giants

Continued from page 9

enough to know that they were man and woman. The woman was the smaller of the two, but neither of them as big or fierce-looking as the gent that chased me. We ran home, but they did not follow us."

One morning, some few weeks after this, Peter and his wife were fishing in a canoe on the Harrison River, near Harrison Bay. Paddling round a neck of land they saw, on the beach within a hundred feet of them, the giant Peter had met the previous year.

"We stood for a long time looking at him," said the Indian, "but he took no notice of us—that was the last time," concluded Peter, "I saw him."

Peter remarked that his father and numbers of old Indians knew that wild men lived in caves in the mountains—had often seen them. He wished to make it clear that these creatures were in no wise related to the Indian. He believes there are a few of them living at present in the mountains near Agassiz.

Charley Victor's Story

CHARLEY VICTOR belongs to the Skwah Reserve near Chilliwack. In his younger days he was known as one of the best hunters in the province and had many thrilling adventures in his time.

Did he know anything about the hairy ape-like men who were supposed to inhabit the distant mountains? Charley smiled, and answered that he had had a slight acquaintance with them. He had been in what he thought was one of their houses. "And that is not all," said he. "I met and spoke to one of their women, and I shot . . ." But let Charley tell the story himself.

"The strange people, of whom there are but few now—rarely seen and seldom met—" said the old hunter, "are known by the name of Sasquatch, or, 'the hairy mountain men'."

"The first time I came to know about these people," continued the old man, "I did not see anybody. Three young men and myself were picking salmon-berries on a rocky mountain slope some five or six miles from the old town of Yale. In our search for berries we suddenly stumbled upon a large opening in the side of the mountain. This discovery greatly surprised all of us, for we knew every foot of the mountain, and never knew nor heard there was a cave in the vicinity.

"Outside the mouth of the cave there was an enormous boulder. We peered into the cavity but couldn't see anything.

"We gathered some pitchwood, lighted it and began to explore. But before we got very far from the entrance of the cave, we came upon a sort of stone house or enclosure; it was a crude affair. We couldn't make a thorough examination, for our pitchwood kept going out. We left, intending to return in a couple of days and go on exploring. Old Indians, to whom we told the story of our discovery, warned us not to venture near the cave again, as it was surely occupied by the Sasquatch. That was the first time I heard about the hairy men that inhabit the mountains. We, however,

disregarded the advice of the old men and sneaked off to explore the cave, but to our great disappointment found the boulder rolled back into its mouth and fitting it so nicely that you might suppose it had been made for that purpose."

Charley intimated that he hoped to have enough money some day to buy sufficient dynamite to blow open the cave of the Sasquatch, and see how far it extends through the mountain.

The Indian then took up the thread of his story and told of his first meeting with one of these men. A number of other Indians and himself were bathing in a small lake near Yale. He was dressing, when suddenly out from behind a rock, only a few feet away, stepped a nude hairy man. "Oh! he was a big, big man!" continued the old hunter. "He looked at me for a moment, his eyes were so kind-looking that I was about to speak to him, when he turned about and walked into the forest."

At the same place two weeks later, Charley, together with several of his companions saw the giant, but this time he ran toward the mountain. This was twenty years after the discovery of the cave.

Charley Shoots a Sasquatch Boy

I DON'T know if I should tell you or not about the awful experience I had with these wicked people about fifteen years ago in the mountains near Hatzic." The old man rubbed his knee, and said he disliked recalling that disagreeable meeting—it was a tragedy from which he had not yet fully recovered.

"I was hunting in the mountains near Hatzic," he resumed. "I had my dog with me. I came out on a plateau where there were several big cedar trees. The dog stood before one of the trees and began to growl and bark at it. On looking up to see what excited him, I noticed a large hole in the tree seven feet from the ground. The dog pawed and leaped upon the trunk, and looked at me to raise him up, which I did, and he went into the hole. The next moment a muffled cry came from the hole. I said to myself: 'The dog is tearing into a bear,' and with my rifle ready, I urged the dog to drive him out, and out came something I took for a bear. I shoot and it fell with a thud to the ground. 'Murder! Oh my!' I spoke to myself in surprise and alarm, for the thing I had shot looked to me like a white boy. He was nude. He was about twelve or fourteen years of age."

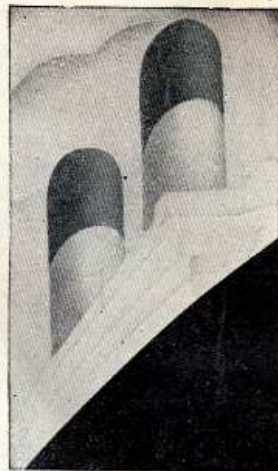
In his description of the boy, Charley said that his hair was black and woolly.

Wounded and bleeding, the poor fellow sprawled upon the ground, but when I drew close to examine the extent of his injury, he let out a wild yell, or rather a call as if he were appealing for help. From across the mountain a long way off rolled a booming voice. Near and more near came the voice and every now and again the boy would return an answer as if directing the owner of the voice. Less than a half-hour, out from the depths of the forest came the strangest and wildest creature one could possibly see.

"I raised my rifle, not to shoot, but in case I would have to defend myself. The hairy creature, for that was what it was, walked toward me without the slightest fear. The wild person was a woman. Her face was almost negro black and her long straight hair fell to her waist. In height she would be about six feet, but her chest and shoulders were well above the average in breadth."

Charley remarked that he had met several wild people in his time, but had never seen anyone half so savage in appearance as this woman. The old

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brave confessed he was really afraid of her.

"In my time," said the old man, "and this is no boast, I have in more than one emergency strangled bear with my hands, but I'm sure if that wild woman laid hands on me, she'd break every bone in my body.

"She cast a hasty glance at the boy. Her face took on a demoniacal expression when she saw he was bleeding. She turned upon me savagely, and in the Douglas tongue said:

"You have shot my friend."

"I explained in the same language—for I'm part Douglas myself—that I had mistaken the boy for a bear and that I was sorry. She did not reply, but began a sort of wild frisk or dance around the boy, chanting in a loud voice for a minute or two, and, as if in answer to her, from the distant woods came the same sort of chanting troll. In her hand she carried something like a snake, about six feet in length, but thinking over the matter since, I believe it was the intestine of some animal. But whatever it was, she constantly struck the ground with it. She picked up the boy with one hairy hand, with as much ease as if he had been a wax doll."

At this point of the story, Charley began to make pictures in the sand with his maple stick, and paused or reflected so long that we thought he had come to the end of his narrative, when he suddenly looked up, and said with a grin: "Perhaps I better tell you the rest of it, although I know you'll not believe it. There was challenge of defiance in her black eyes and dark looks," went on Charley, "as she faced and spoke to me a second time and the dreadful words she used set me shaking."

"You remember them?" I asked.

"Remember them," he repeated, "they still ring round my old ears like the echo of a thunder-storm. She pointed the snake-like thing at me and said:

"Siwash, you'll never kill another bear."

The old hunter's eyes moistened when he admitted that he had not shot a bear or anything else since that fatal day.

"Her words, expression, and the savage avenging glint in her dark, fiery eyes filled me with fear," confessed the Indian, "and I felt so exhausted from her unwavering gaze that I was no longer able to keep her covered with my rifle. I let it drop."

Charley has been paralyzed for the last eight years, and he is inclined to think that the words of the wild woman had something to do with it.

The old man told how his "brave dog that never turned from any bear nor cougar," lay whimpering and shivering at his feet while the Sasquatch woman was speaking, "just," said Charley, "as if he understood the meaning of her words."

The old man said that she spoke the words "Yahoo, yahoo" frequently in a loud voice, and always received a similar reply from the mountain.

The old hunter felt sure that the woman looked somewhat like the wild man he had seen at Yale many years before, although the woman was the darker of the two. He did not think the boy belonged to the Sasquatch people, "because he was white and she called him her friend," reasoned Charley. "They must have stolen him or run across him in some other way," he added.

"Indians," said Charley, "have always known that wild men lived in the distant

mountains, within sixty and one hundred miles east of Vancouver, and of course they may live in other places throughout the province, but I have never heard of it. It is my own opinion since I met that wild woman fifteen years ago that because she spoke the Douglas tongue these creatures must be related to the Indian."

The Wild Man at Agassiz

AT AGASSIZ, near the close of September, 1927, Indian hop-pickers were having their annual picnic. A few of the younger people volunteered to pick a mess of berries on a wooded hillside, a short way from the picnic grounds. They had only started to pick, when out of the bush stepped a naked hairy giant. He was first noticed by a girl of the party, who was so badly frightened that she fell unconscious to the ground. The girl's sudden collapse was seen by an Indian named Point, of Vancouver, and as he ran to her assistance, was astonished to see a giant a few feet away, who continued to walk with an easy gait across the wooded slope in the direction of the Canadian Pacific railway tracks.

Since the foregoing paragraph was written, Mr. Point, replying to an enquiry, has kindly forwarded the following letter to the writer, in which he tells of his experience with the hairy giant:

"Dear Sir: I have your letter asking is it true or not that I saw a hairy giant—man—at Agassiz last September, while picking hops there. It is true and the facts are as follows: This happened at the close of September (1927) when we were having a feast. Adaline August and myself walked to her father's orchard, which is about four miles from the hop fields. We were walking on the railroad track and within a short distance of the orchard, when the girl noticed something walking along the track coming toward us. I looked up but paid no attention to it, as I thought it was some person on his way to Agassiz. But as he came closer we noticed that his appearance was very odd, and on coming still closer we stood still and were astonished—seeing that the creature was naked and covered with hair like an animal. We were almost paralyzed from fear. I picked up two stones with which I intended to hit him if he attempted to molest us, but within fifty feet or so he stood up and looked at us.

"He was twice as big as the average man, with hands so long that they almost touched the ground. It seemed to me that his eyes were very large and the lower part of his nose was wide and spread over the greater part of his face, which gave the creature such a frightful appearance that I ran away as fast as I could. After a minute or two I looked back and saw that he resumed his journey. The girl had fled before I left, and she ran so fast that I did not overtake her until I was close to Agassiz, where we told the story of our adventure to the Indians who were still enjoying themselves. Old Indians who were present said: the wild man was no doubt a "Sasquatch," a tribe of hairy people whom they claim have always lived in the mountains—in tunnels and caves."

Do hairy giants inhabit the mountain solitudes of British Columbia? Many Indians, besides those quoted, are sincerely convinced that the "Sasquatch," a few of them at least, still live in the little-known interior of the province.



My Search for B.C.'s Giant Indians

by JOHN W. BURNS as told to Charles V. Tench

Do the hairy, 8-foot tall Sasquatch still live? I have spent over 16 years, as teacher at Chehalis Indian Reserve, seeking them

I HAVE spent more than 16 years trying to track down, in the unexplored wilds of British Columbia, Canada's most elusive tribe of Indians. They are the mysterious Sasquatch—wild giants eight feet tall, covered from head to toe with black, woolly hair.

My search for these primitive creatures began in 1925 when, after serving on the Vancouver *Sun*, I was appointed teacher for the Chehalis Indian Reserve. Here, buried in the bush by the banks of the Harrison River, B.C., some 60 miles from Vancouver, my wife and I have been friends for 16 years with the Chehalis Indians.

Because they knew I wouldn't taunt them, my Chehalis neighbors revealed to me the secrets of the Sasquatch—details never confided to any white man before. The older Indians called the tribe "Saskehavas", literally "wild men". I named them "Sasquatch", which can be translated freely into English as "hairy giants".

I've never personally encountered a Sasquatch myself. Yet I've compiled an imposing dossier of first-hand accounts from Indians who have met the wild giants face to face and know survivors of the tribe still live today. I was always aware when the Sasquatch were in the vicinity of our Indian village; for then the children were kept indoors and not allowed to venture to my school. The Chehalis Indians are intelligent, but unimaginative, folk. Inventing so many factually detailed stories concerning their adventures with the giants would be quite beyond their powers.

Certainly, they are highly sensitive when white strangers ridicule their well-authorized stories. Once, on May 23 and 24, 1938, an "Indian Sasquatch Days" festival was held at Harrison Hot Springs, B.C. After getting special permission from the Department of Indian Affairs, Ottawa, I took several hundred of my Indians.

Unhappily, a prominent member of the B.C. Government made a hash of the ceremonies. In his welcoming speech over the microphone, the official blundered: "Of

course, the Sasquatch are merely Indian legendary monsters. No white man has ever seen one. They do not exist today. In fact . . ."

He was drowned out by a rustling of buckskin garments and tinkling of ornamental bells as, in response to an indignant sign from old Chief Flying Eagle, over 2,000 Indians rose to their feet in angry protest. The Chief stalked to the open space where the Government officials stood, and, turning his back on them, thundered into the mike in excellent English:

"The speaker is wrong! To all who now hear, I, Chief Flying Eagle, say: Some white men *have* seen Sasquatch. Many Indians *have* seen Sasquatch and spoken to them. Sasquatch still live all around here. Indians do *not* lie!"

EVER since my interest in the Sasquatch was stimulated by the celebrated anthropologist, Prof. Hill Tout, I've come across fascinating proof. Oldest written record I discovered was that of the late Alexander Caulfield Anderson, after whom the West Vancouver suburb, Caulfield, is named. When he was a Hudson's Bay Co. inspector in 1846, establishing a post near Harrison Lake, Anderson frequently mentioned in his official reports "the wild giants of the mountains". Once, he wrote, he and his party were met by a bombardment of rocks hurled by a number of Sasquatch.

What do the modern Sasquatch look like? I was given a vivid description by William Point and Adaline August, Indian graduates of a Vancouver high school. They encountered a wild giant last September, four miles from the picnic that Indian hop-pickers hold annually near Agassiz, B.C.

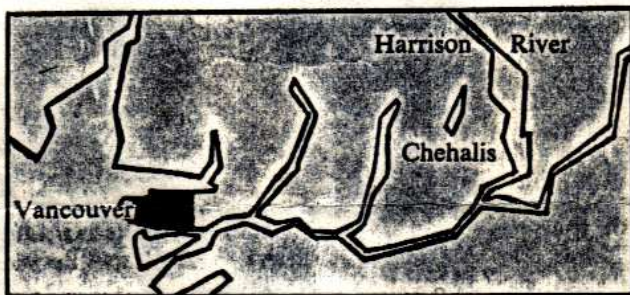
"We were walking on the railroad track toward the house of Adaline's parents," Point told me, "when Adaline noticed a person coming toward us. We halted in alarm. The man wore no clothing at all, and was covered with hair, like an animal.

"He was twice as big as the average man. His arms were so long his hands almost touched the ground. His eyes were large and fierce as a cougar's. The lower part of his nose was wide and spread over the greater part of his face, which gave him a repulsive appearance.

"Then my nerve failed me. I turned and ran."

The Indians tell me that each Summer the Sasquatch have a gathering of the survivors of their race near the rocky, shelving top of Morris Mountain. Just before the reunion, the giants send out scouts. It's these scattered scouts that Chehalis Indians have met.

Naturally, reports of the giants have drawn the inter-





Author Burns believes stories of wild giant attacks are true. Indian Peter Williams found 22" tracks. Giant ruined his home.

Emma Paul told missionary Serephine Long said a giant had abducted her when she was 16. she met Sasquatch three times.

est of anthropologists. Two years ago, an American expedition, equipped with movie cameras, asked me to enlist the aid of Indian guides. Though offered \$10 a day, not one of my Indians would volunteer.

"It would be in vain," the Chehalis said. "The Sasquatch, seeing the expedition approach, would immediately go into hiding."

The American party set out without native guides. In two weeks, they returned, weary and fly-bitten.

"For an ordinary white man," they told me, "the way to the top of Morris Mountain is utterly impossible."

YET I have accepted all the Sasquatch encounters recounted to me in good faith. One Indian known for his truthfulness, Peter Williams, told me he was chased and almost had his frame shack pushed over by a wild giant in the *Saskahaua*, or "Place of the Wild Men", district of B.C. Next morning, Peter measured the giant's tracks in the mud. The footprints were 22 inches long—compared with the average man's 10 to 12-inch tracks.

Another Indian in a canoe, Chehalis Phillip, had a rock hurled at him by a hairy giant. One of my Indians, Charley Victor, wounded a 12-year-old naked giant living in a tree trunk, and was scolded by a seven-foot Sasquatch woman in the Douglas dialect: "You hurt my friend!"

But perhaps the strangest experience happened to a Chehalis woman, Serephine Long. She told me she was abducted by a Sasquatch and lived in the haunts of the wild people for about a year. Just before she was about to marry a young brave named *Qualac* (Thunder), while she was gathering cedar roots, a hairy young giant leaped on her from a bush. He smeared tree gum over her eyes, so that she couldn't see, hoisted her to his shoulder, and raced off with the struggling woman to a cave on Mount Morris.

There she was kept prisoner, living with the Sasquatch and his elderly parents. "They fed me well," she said.

After almost 12 months, she grew sick and pleaded, "I wish to see my own people before I die." Her young Sasquatch reluctantly put tree gum on her eyelids once more and carried her back.

"I was too weak to talk to my people when I stumbled into the house," she recalled to me. "I crawled into bed, and that night gave birth to a child. The little one lived but for a few hours, for which I was glad. I hope that never again shall I see a Sasquatch."

Many of my other Indians are sincerely convinced the Sasquatch live in the unexplored interior of B.C. And with the Indians, whom I know and trust, I also believe. ♦ ♦



White teacher Burns offers this artistic conception of how Indian maid was abducted by a hairy giant. Serephine Long said giant kept her prisoner for a year in Mt. Morris cave.