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EARLY WRITTEN RECORDS

Early written references and recorded sightings that could refer to sasquatch go back about 200 years. Journals of early explorers and travelers, and old newspapers and magazines, carry reports of strange creatures that generally fit the description of a sasquatch. As can be expected, there are not many written reports in the early years. There were fewer people then, and access to the media, as it were, was highly limited. Furthermore, encounters of this nature were not “big news,” so we can reason that many reports were probably ignored.

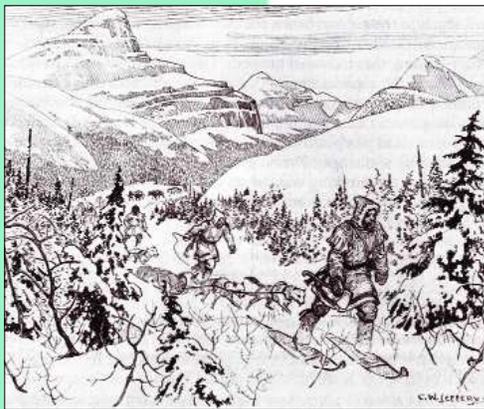
Early Explorers and Travelers

The vast unexplored regions of North America were a formidable challenge to early explorers and travelers. Undoubtedly many journals, diaries, and other writings are lost to history. Nevertheless, among those that have survived, the following recorded accounts of possible sasquatch-related incidents are among the most noteworthy.

The explorer and geographer David Thompson (1770-1857) found unusual 14-inch (35.6-cm), four-toed, clawed footprints near the present site of Jasper, Alberta, in the winter of 1811. He did not state whether the tracks appeared to have been made by a creature with four legs or two legs. However, as the First Nations people in his party would not accept that the tracks were made by a bear, then we have a little mystery. Some researchers believe what he saw were sasquatch tracks, but sasquatch prints generally show five toes and no claws. Nevertheless, other alleged sasquatch prints showing only four toes have been found, although I know of only one case where claws were indicated on any tracks. The Canadian postage stamp shown was issued in 1957. There is no known painting of Thompson.

The noted explorer and artist Paul Kane also referenced unusual creatures in his book, *The Wanderings of an Artist*. In his entry for the date March 26, 1847, Mount St. Helens area, Washington, he stated:

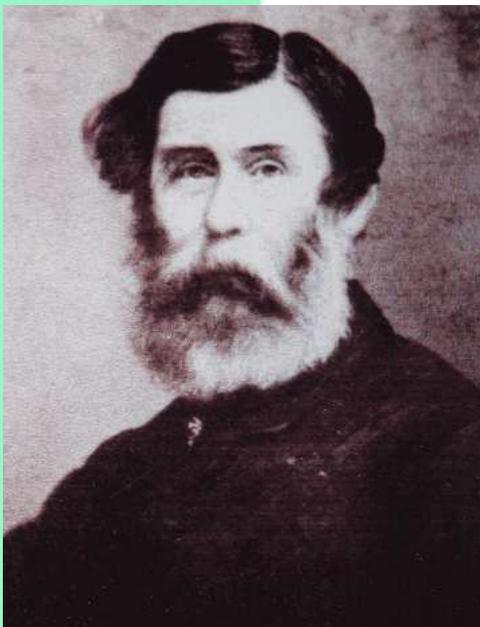
This mountain has never been visited by either Whites or Indians; the latter assert that it is inhabited by a race of beings of a different species, who are cannibals, and whom they hold in great dread; they also say that there is a lake at its base with a very extraordinary kind of fish in it, with a head more resembling that of a bear than any other animal. These superstitions are taken from a statement of a man who, they say, went to the mountain with another, and escaped the fate of his companion, who was eaten by the “Skooooms,” or evil genii. I offered a considerable bribe to any Indian who would accompany me in its exploration, but could not find one hardy enough to venture.



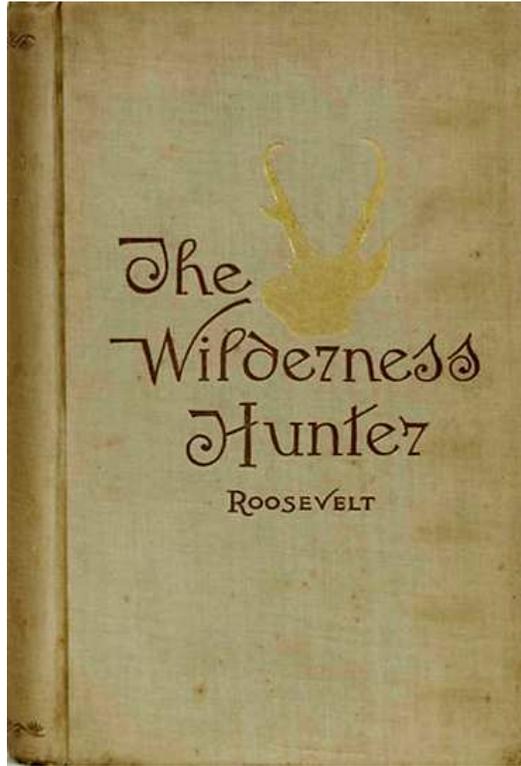
David Thompson in Canada's wilderness.
(Drawing by C.W. Jefferys)



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Paul Kane (self-portrait).



Remarkably, the first major published report of a possible sasquatch encounter is in a book entitled *The Wilderness Hunter* (1893) by Theodore Roosevelt, who later became president of the United States. In his book, Roosevelt provides a very detailed account of a story he was told by a trapper named Bauman. As the story goes, Bauman's trapping companion was viciously killed by a "beast creature" that walked on two legs. Roosevelt heard the story while he was in the Bitterroot Mountains, located on the Idaho–Montana border. By this time, Bauman was an old man, so the incident he related probably took place in the late 1850s.