

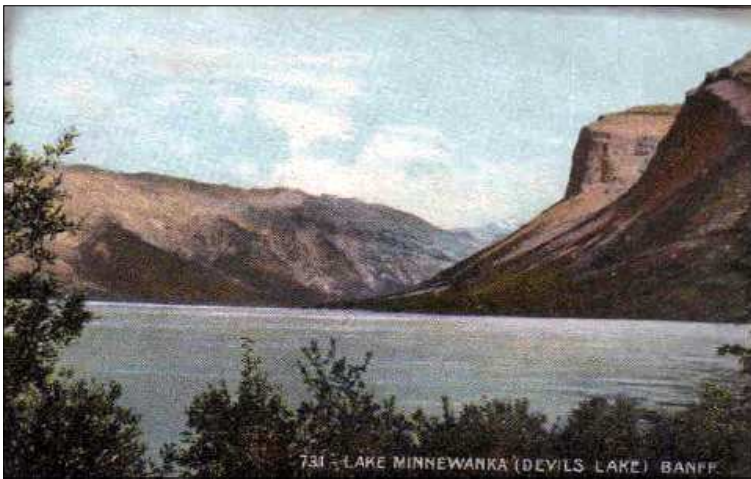
The Lake Minnewanka Wildman

by Sean Viala

Sean Viala, an Alberta researcher, has provided this account of a probably sasquatch that inhabited an area in Banff, Alberta. Those of you who have been to Banff will know just how rugged (and absolutely beautiful) this area is. Many thanks to Sean for his contribution. CLM

The Lake Minnewanka Wildman

Lake Minnewanka is located in Banff National Park, Alberta, Canada. The information provided here was collected through a variety of sources, including: archive reports, old newspapers and local legends. The lake is seen here in an old post card, circa 1905 (shown below). Up to about this time, it was known as “Devils Lake” (shown on the image), which may have been associated with the term “Indian Devils”—now known as sasquatch.



The first indication of the creature that became known as “The Lake Minnewanka Wildman” took place in late 1895. Several people were out fishing along the southern shore of the lake when they found footprints of “gargantuan size.” They estimated that the prints were 19 inches long.

Then in early 1896 footprints of the same size were found, again near the shore [in snow on the frozen lake]. The individual who discovered the prints decided to follow them, and he found that they led to a hole broken in the ice of the frozen lake. From that point, they trailed off into the woods. He stopped following them at this point.

In the late spring of 1896, a trapper was checking his lines when he noticed a large creature moving in the distance. It walked towards the woods and ducked to avoid a tree limb that was across its path. Later, the trapper

inspected the area where the creature had ducked, and he found that the limb was more than 7 feet above the ground. This indicated that the creature was considerably greater than 7 feet tall.

In the late summer of 1896, two prospectors spotted what they thought was a “great bear.” They shouldered their rifles and fired at it. To their surprise and horror, the creature stood up on two legs and emitted “a most horrible shriek.” It then ran off into the forest. As it disappeared, they could still hear it screaming from within the forest. They quickly left the area.

In early winter 1897, the creature lurked near the outskirts of a temporary settlement. The dogs in the area raised the alarm, and men armed with rifles came running to see what had caused their dogs to bark and growl so ferociously. The creature was almost immediately spotted, and was greeted by a hail of gunfire. Once again, it ran away screaming and disappeared into the forest.

It wasn’t until late summer 1897 that the creature was seen again. This time, two young boys watched it at a distance as it walked along a small ridge and disappeared from sight. They ran home to tell others of what they had seen.

The creature seemed to disappear from the area for a while, perhaps fed up with trigger-happy settlers, as it was not sighted again until fall 1898. This time a man fishing along the lake shore sighted it from an estimated distance of 40 -50 yards. The creature bared its teeth and growled at the man, and once again it was fired upon. It ran from the area emitting “hair raising cries.” It was believed that the creature was hit by at least one of the bullets as spots of blood were found on some of the trees in the area.

In early winter 1898, two Irish wolfhounds were found dead just outside a small settlement. Footprints 19-inch long were found in the area. The settlers mounted a hunt for the creature, but nothing was found.

In the spring of 1899, the creature was spotted near a cabin, watching a pair of horses stationed in a small corral. The inhabitant of the cabin appears to have caught it off guard as we are told he shot it with a lever action rifle and apparently hit it at least 3 times. It fell to the ground, but quickly rose again and dashed off into the forest.

In the late summer of 1899, a small pile of fish bones was found near the lake shore with several 19-inch long footprints nearby.

In the early winter of 1899, a man on horseback

spotted the creature at a distance. It was walking towards the west and the witness noticed that it had a very bad limp. Perhaps this was the effect of being shot so many times. The man watched it until it disappeared into the distant tree line.

That was the last report of “The Lake Minnewanka Wildman.” Perhaps it decided to give up on the Lake Minnewanka area and head to a place where there were fewer people and naturally fewer bullets to dodge. Whatever the fate of the creature, this is probably the last we will hear of it.

Shown here is a photograph of the lake taken in 2004 from about the same view point as the c.1905 image. From what we can see, nothing has changed in the last 100 years. I am sure, however, that this lake as well as countless others in North America, could reflect many strange tales from the deep and distant past.



NOTE: This report sparked further research in the Lake Minnewanka area covered in the article “Unusual Sasquatch” previously presented.