



# Pangea Institute

## Big Thicket Texas Report July 2005

My interest in the similarities between the Florida Swamp Ape and the Texas Bigfoot that inhabits the swamp lands of East Texas and Louisiana began with an e-mail from my cryptozoology student, Aaron Tecklenburg who had just seen an episode of Animal X on the Discovery Channel's Animal Planet. The episode featured Chester Moore and Kriss Stephens of the American Primate Conservation Alliance two renowned Bigfoot hunters based the mid-west.

I knew that Moore and Stephens had been conducting investigations (with Ken Gerhard, a field investigator with the Center for Fortean Zoology) into the Bigfoot Phenomena in the Pacific Northwest and in Belize (where the creature is known as Sisemite).

At Aaron's suggestion, I contacted Stephens through a press release I found on the Internet. Kriss, after learning about the purpose of my inquiry, put me in touch with Moore. Chester was able to provide me with a copy of the tape from the Animal X episode. In the meantime, another of my Students, Lisa Wojcik had also caught the show and made a VHS copy of it — sending the copy to me not knowing of my contacts with Tecklenburg.



I had been working on Jennifer Ward's encounter with the Florida Swamp Ape in the Green Swamp area near her home in North Lakeland, Florida and subsequent reports from eyewitnesses who had come forward thanks to Jennifer's courage in reporting the incident publicly. However, the other eyewitnesses have preferred to remain anonymous but have been extremely helpful in providing corroborating information to support Jennifer's observations.

When the tapes arrived, I was immediately struck by some differences in the description of the animal that had been sighted by Kriss Stephens in the area where the filming had been shot. I was skeptical about the blurry face segment of the episode and decided to question Moore about that issue when the opportunity arose.

Moore's DVD arrived with a number of Bigfoot track castings he had made of the creature in his locality. I had already received a casting of the Florida Swamp Ape's track from the Florida Museum of Natural History and compared Moore's track with Ocala National Forest cast.

The Ocala track was larger than the Texas track (which had included two footprints from juvenile creatures). This was consistent with the photographs of footprints that Jennifer had taken from the area where she sighted her creature a few minutes after her encounter. While the tracks from Lakeland were smaller than Ocala track, the proportions and general shape were identical for the Florida specimen.

Moore's tracks were smaller as well, but

showed only four clearly defined toes rather than five digits on the foot.



Due to the size, and proximity of the juvenile tracks, I concluded that both Jennifer's Ape and the Texas footprints belonged to a female of the species.

The description of the Texas creature also differed from Ward's portrayal of the Florida Swamp Ape (corroborated with the other accounts). Most notably, the Texas Bigfoot was reported to have a higher forehead and the anatomical feature known as a sagittal crest along the top of the cranium where the Lakeland Swamp Ape didn't. Jennifer also reported that the creature she saw had black hair except for white around its eyes.



Stephens reported that the creature she saw, and the one that supposedly observed the filming crew in the blurry image segment of the show, had reddish colored hair. Other than that, the animals had essentially the same characteristics in height, body shape,

physiology, locomotion, and so forth.

Many of the behaviors described by Stephens when I spoke with her were similar with those of orangutans and other primates - this was also consistent with the Swamp Ape reports I had reviewed over the past years. No particular behavior stood out as unique.

Nevertheless, my initial conclusion from the skull characteristics was that the two animals were not of the same species.

I'm already on the record with the theory that the Florida Swamp Ape is a higher primate that evolved in the Americas and has somehow escaped scientific detection. Renowned Anthropologist, Grover Krantz, theorized that Bigfoot crossed the Bering Sea land bridge along with humans and migrated to the Americas from Asia. I agree that the Bigfoot or Sasquatch of the Pacific Northwest is likely a hominin that originated in Asia. I do not agree with Krantz that all "Bigfoot" creatures now reported in the Americas originated in the Old World.



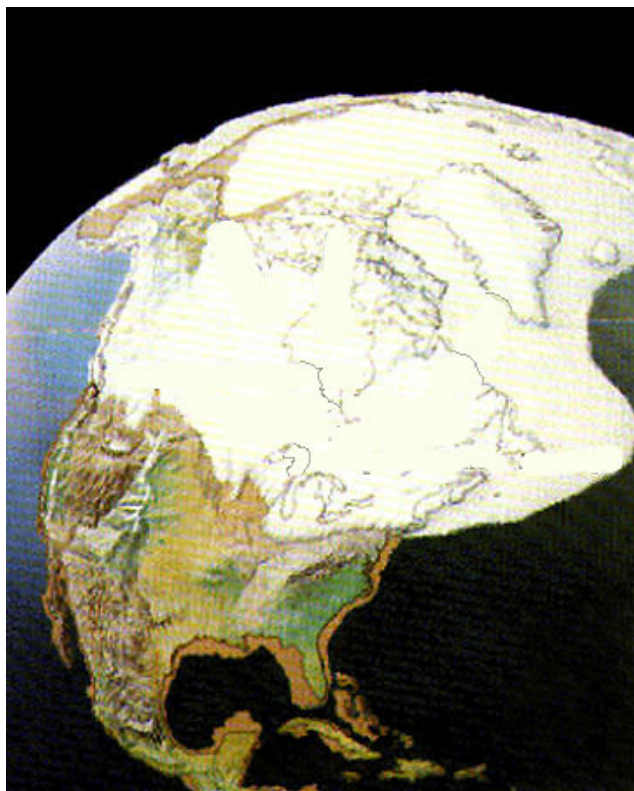
There is evidence of some primitive primates evolving in North America in the scant but verified fossil record. The reason that there isn't considerable fossil evidence to trace the development of primates on the North American continent is glaciation that occurred during the ice ages.

Early prosimian primates emerged during the

Paleocene, 65 to 54 Million years ago (at which time North America had not separated from Europe). Apes first appeared on the scene during the Eocene, 54 to 33 million years ago. The first homonins evolved during the Pliocene, 5.3 to 1.8 million years ago - at least they did in Africa and Asia.

The North American conditions weren't conducive to the preservation of fossil evidence as a series of ice ages took place at nearly the same time that these creatures would have been evolving.

The ice sheet that impacted much of North America covered Canada and extended into the great plains of the United States almost to Saint Louis, Missouri. The glacier itself would have effectively erased any evidence of primates in these northern regions.



Below this glacier line, the environment would not have been conducive to primate survival, as it would not support the rain forest vegetation

required for their existence. So any primates that did evolve in North America would have been forced southward into the Gulf States (where many probably remained), Central and South America. We all know how efficient the coastal swamp lands are in eradicating the remains of any creature that dies within its environs.

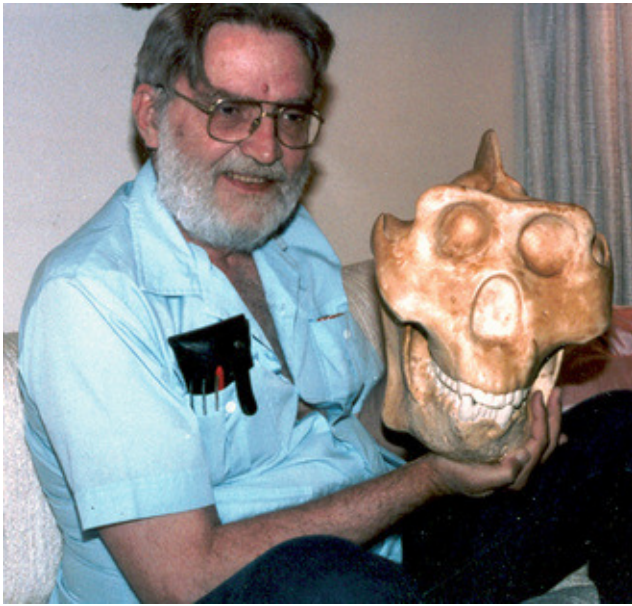
I suspect that, once North and South America became conjoined, during the middle Miocene about 14 million years ago, early North American primates migrated to Central and South America along the then expanded coastline to escape hostile climatic conditions in the northern latitudes.

In South America these New World primates continued to evolve into forms that are similar, but not identical, to those found in Africa, Asia and Europe and some eventually returned to North America when the climate became more hospitable. But, by this time, the sea levels had risen and covered the fossil evidence of their ancestor's trek south thousands of years before.

In terms of social development and technology, a higher primate a like New World hominin would have lagged behind its African, Asian and European counterparts. This is due to the same kind of hunter/gatherer issues detailed by Dr. Jared Diamond as the cause of the developmental differences between the people of the New Guinea highlands and those that originated in the Fertile Crescent. (See *Guns, Germs, and Steel: the Fates of Human Societies*, W. W. Norton & Company (July 11, 2005).

Dr. Krantz maintained that Bigfoot was most likely *Gigantopithecus blacki* - an obscure, giant ape-like creature whose fossil remains were found in the Yunnan Region of China in the early 1960s. But the fossils of this large ape, so far uncovered, consist of only a few jaw fragments and teeth. The anthropological





giant sub-specie of *Homo erectus* (also reconstructed from more complete fossil evidence — also performed by Krantz).



reconstruction of a largely bipedal, 7 to 12-foot tall pongid-like creature from these scant remains is a stretch. To suggest that Bigfoot and *Gigantopithecus* are one-and-the-same is highly premature and likely a response to the highly-charged political climate of Krantz's day rather than good science. (Krantz paid the price in loss of tenure and ridicule for his "heresy" at avowing Bigfoot exists — much less ascribing it to the fossil record and suggesting it was a relative ape-man).

The evidently more adaptable *Homo ergaster* relatives could have survived, and possibly remain among us, in the form of the enigmatic Bigfoot and at least some of his cousins.

The African evolved and widely traveled *Homo erectus* is also thought to be the immediate relative of the newly discovered *floresiensis*, the diminutive hominin recently found on the island of Flores in Indonesia. But more importantly, *Floresiensis* known to have survived at least until the last ice age on Flores about 11,000 years ago.

It is more likely that the Bigfoot of the Pacific Northwest, and other hairy bipeds known worldwide under various colloquial names, are relatives of *Meganthropus* (pictured above) - a

Back to the Texas Expedition.

At the invitation of Chester and Kriss, I arranged to spend some additional time in the Houston area in advance of the Southern Crypto Conference so that we could get together and compare our research notes. In addition to our meeting, Chester and Kriss offered to take me to the filming location of the Animal X episode and another hotspot that they had identified in East Texas.

I was surprised to find that the habitat at both of the Texas sites and Florida hotspots like Big Cypress, Tate's Hell, Okeechobee marshlands and Green Swamp are nearly identical as is the available food supply. The Texas Bigfoot

does appear to have a sagittal crest along its skull where most sightings in Florida suggest that this anatomical feature is lacking on the Swamp Ape.

It's known that Plains Indian women would develop a sagittal crest (the boney plate at the top of the skull where strong chewing muscles are anchored) because they chewed tough buffalo hide to soften it. So, a diet of tough fibrous plant material could account for the anatomical difference between the two Bigfoot groups.

Moore explained that his Texas Bigfoot has taste for corn and cane (not the same as sugar cane) which has a fibrous, tough stalk. There isn't much difference between that diet and the lima bean and sugar cane/swamp reed fare that the Swamp Ape seems to favor. But, Florida sugar cane can be sucked dry of its high carbohydrate content while Texas cane grass has to be chewed. So, it's possible that this contributes to the added anatomical feature of the Texas creature.

I'm certain that both animals are an opportunistic hunter/gatherer and will eat most anything available. The animal's omnivorous diet likely includes small reptiles and mammals. There are reports of the Florida Swamp Ape attacking domesticated animals as large as pigs. In Texas, Bigfoot has been seen killing calves with its bare hands. Both creatures are reported to prefer lands adjacent to cattle ranches and are known to have taken down game as large as deer. So there isn't much real difference in their access to meat - a necessity to support the function of the advanced mental gymnastics of a predatory primate.

We visited the site of the Animal X episode in the late afternoon, just before a major rain and lightening storm passed through the area which was near Beaumont, Texas. Chester and I explored the site long enough to ascertain that

there had been woodsmen around a few days prior to our visit (they left tracks) and feral hogs foraging through the underbrush - likely the night before.

I had been concerned about the field calculations that film crew had used to determine the height of the creature that was seen on the FLIR unit across the pond that were included in a segment of the episode.



*I'm standing at the spot where the film crew for Animal X shot the thermal footage for the episode with Chester and Kriss. We took measurements to confirm their calculations*

Chester too had been bothered by the results and had been re-checking the calculations. He discovered that the animal in the image had actually been farther from the shore of the pond than the group had originally estimated. Measurements revealed that the animal was actually closer to 7 feet in height and not the 3 to 4 feet that had been suggested in the episode.

We also found trails of trumpet flowers. This was strange in that the flowers had no obvious source in the wooded area and were not hanging on vine above the trails. Close examination of the flowers revealed that the receptacle and pedicel had been removed in every case - much like honeysuckle stems would be removed to suck out the nectar if a human

were to do this. None of the flowers contained a stigma, style or filaments indicating that they had been picked and dismantled.

At a height of 6 to 8 feet, many branches had been freshly broken and twisted by an animal that would have had to possess an opposable thumb to accomplish the feat. Some of these branches were at least 1 inch in diameter and could not have been broken by falling branches as there was no evidence of debris nearby and chance happenings would not account for the curious spiraling and fraying of the interior wood pulp. At this height, no other animal could have caused the breaking of the branches.



We left this site to meet up with Kriss at the other location and avoid being stranded by the storm on unimproved dirt roads in the deserted backcountry.

We awaited the arrival of Kriss at Chester's home as the rain and resulting traffic had delayed her progress along I-10 from her home across the Texas/Louisiana border.

While waiting for Kriss, Chester and I spoke about the "mysterious face" that Natalie had seen while filming on the path at the first location. Although it wasn't entirely evident in the video, the "animal" would have been located across a narrow bayou from the film crew about 60 yards from the group. Obviously, bushes

concealed the animal.

Chester related that Dan and Natalie had asked him to publish the image of the "face" on his website. He declined as the image was inconclusive and he hadn't been present when the sighting occurred. But, he did indicate that he thought the incident to be genuine. In addition to the similarity of the animal seen on the clip to one that Kriss Stephens had encountered at the same location the prior fall. He had other reasons for his conviction that would be best left up to Chester to clarify.



Shortly after Kriss arrived, at about 9:00PM, we departed for another of their known hotspots near Orange, Texas. We parked along side of the road adjacent to a bayou that was spanned by a bridge. It was pitch black and a light mist hung in the air from the humidity.

Upon walking down the embankment and entering the swamp area, we detected the characteristic smell of the Bigfoot and Swamp Ape. An odor something like that of a habitually un-bathed street-person combined with an unattended dumpster behind a seafood restaurant. Fortunately, the animal's scent was carried on the breeze and we didn't get the full impact of the stench, which could easily have brought tears to the eyes.

Following a path into the swamp, we worked our way back away from the roadway and into



the forested area - dodging spider webs as we went. Kriss had an IR device in hand and we used our personal flashlights to illuminate our way.

The first thing I noticed, other than the odor which had faded somewhat, was that there was no evidence of animal life on this side of the bayou - not even a snake in the middle of the night. When I say, no animal life, I mean nothing - nada - except for our arachnid friends. That was a sure sign that a large predator was near.

We listened carefully for sounds associated with wolves and coyotes, which had become an issue in this area. Chester reported that there had been some vicious coyote attacks recently and Texas wolves are notorious (Chester and Kriss both carried a sidearm with them).

About a half-mile into the woods, we paused and turned off the flashlights.

About five minutes after we had extinguished our lights, I became acutely aware that we were being watched. I thought I had heard the sound of soft footfall pacing us from behind an earthen mound on the left-hand side of the trail as we entered the wooded area. (The bayou was on our right). But, I wasn't sure of this and didn't hear any cracks of twig or shuffling of debris to accompany the footfall, so I didn't make an open issue of it. Nevertheless, when the feeling of a presence became acute, I told Kriss and Chester that I sensed it.

At that point, Kriss stated that she could detect the odor of our hairy friend. It was faint, but discernible in the humid air.

Using a technique that Dion Fossey used to put her Mountain Gorillas at ease in her presence, I began "grooming" Chester. Kriss turned on the IR unit and scanned through the forest with it. After a time, Chester took out his

own IR unit and scanned in the opposite direction. Not long after he passed the scope to me and said, "Look over there."

I raised the scope and peered into it, surveying the area where Chester indicated. Finally, I could see the characteristic green IR image of something tall that had been hiding behind a large tree trunk as it covertly moved to adjacent cover.

The bayou was on one side of us, and Kriss had been surveying about 180 degrees from where I was looking. Before she could say, "There's another over here." I whispered, "We're surrounded." I just became aware of another presence. Chester observed that one of the creatures had moved in behind us as we moved along the entry trail and another was between us and a berry patch that Chester and Kriss had earlier identified as a food resource. Tall grass, Chester called "cane" and then cow pasture was beyond the patch about a half-mile farther down the trail.

Chester commented that the creature behind us apparently wanted to get around our position while the animal in front seemed to want us to retreat. It moved in to within 60 yards of our position, but not closer and moved backwards as we attempted to make our way farther along the trail keeping its distance.

When I turned to talk with Chester, I got beamed with a twig that I, at first, thought that it had fallen from the canopy. The stick had caught the brim of my hat and startled me. Later I realized that it had to be thrown from something about my own height as the impact had drawn a little blood from the back of my neck. The hat would have prevented such an injury from above. But, at the time, I paid it little mind. I was also unaware, until much later, that Chester had a stick thrown at him by one of the creatures in an earlier visit to this site or I probably would have given the event more attention at the time.

At this point, I was irritated that neither Chester nor Kriss' IR unit had any facility to capture the images we were seeing or to record the screens into my digital camera. I took several photos using the flash unit on my camera - hoping that something would show up in the illumination. But, I only succeeded in producing an image with luminescent orbs from the moisture in the air and another that showed nothing out of the ordinary.

By this time, it was way past midnight and we each had a full day getting ready for the Southern Crypto Conference. Chester, Kriss and Chester's wife, Lisa, had to set up many displays at the conference center the next day for the event on Saturday. I had to meet my cryptozoology student, Lisa Wojcik, in Conroe the next afternoon and catch up on my e-mail as well.

As much as I wanted to stay the entire night, we turned to make our way back to the road. Again we detected the smell of our "shadow" as we slowly progressed back to the entrance of the woods.

About half of the distance back to the truck, I began to get nauseous. We paused and I put my head down by bending at the waist. At first, I thought that the sensation was a low blood sugar reaction from my diabetes (I had foregone having dinner). I had checked my level before we went out from Chester's house and found myself normal.

It didn't take long for the sensation to pass. Kriss mentioned that Chester's father had a similar reaction at this site some time previously. It could also have been a heat reaction, but I had begun researching another possible cause after I had a similar experience while exploring the area near where Jennifer Ward had her encounter with the Swamp Ape the prior summer late one night.

As we reached the entrance to the wooded

area, we all immediately detected the strong stench of our unseen friend(s). Chester pointed out that we had been "escorted" out of their domain.

Chester and Kriss checked out the area under the bridge that spanned the bayou while I went back to the truck to check my glucometer reading. When I checked my level at the truck, I was also within normal range.

I wasn't hungry and I'm in good touch with my condition and warning signs when I need to eat or take insulin. I just didn't have those sensations.

It was apparent to me that I probably had a pheromone reaction to the animal and strongly suspected that both my feeling of being watched and the subsequent nausea reaction were related to pheromones emanating from the creature.

Chester and Kriss joined me at the truck shortly after my moment of reflection on the evening's events.

At Chester's invitation, I would spend the night at his home and drive back to Conroe for my appointment, get checked in at the hotel, do some paperwork, and prepare for the Conference on Saturday.

The Southern Crypto Conference was very interesting and I was gratified to meet cryptozoologists like Chester's father, Chester Moore, Sr., Ken Gerhard, and M. K. Davis. Unfortunately, I didn't get a chance to hook up with Craig Woolheater from the Texas Bigfoot Research Center as he was preoccupied with other attendees at the time I was nearby. It was disappointing that several other professionals I've been communicating with for quite a while were not able to attend the event.

The displays were excellent. I had some trouble with my vision that day and couldn't make out



some of the detail without craning my neck to look through the bottom lens of my bifocals. (A subsequent eye exam reveals that I need to have surgery to correct cataracts - a common problem for people my age with diabetes - not new glasses). Nevertheless, Lisa Wojcik and I examined a number of exhibits and were particularly impressed with M.K. Davis' analysis of the Patterson/Gimlin film.