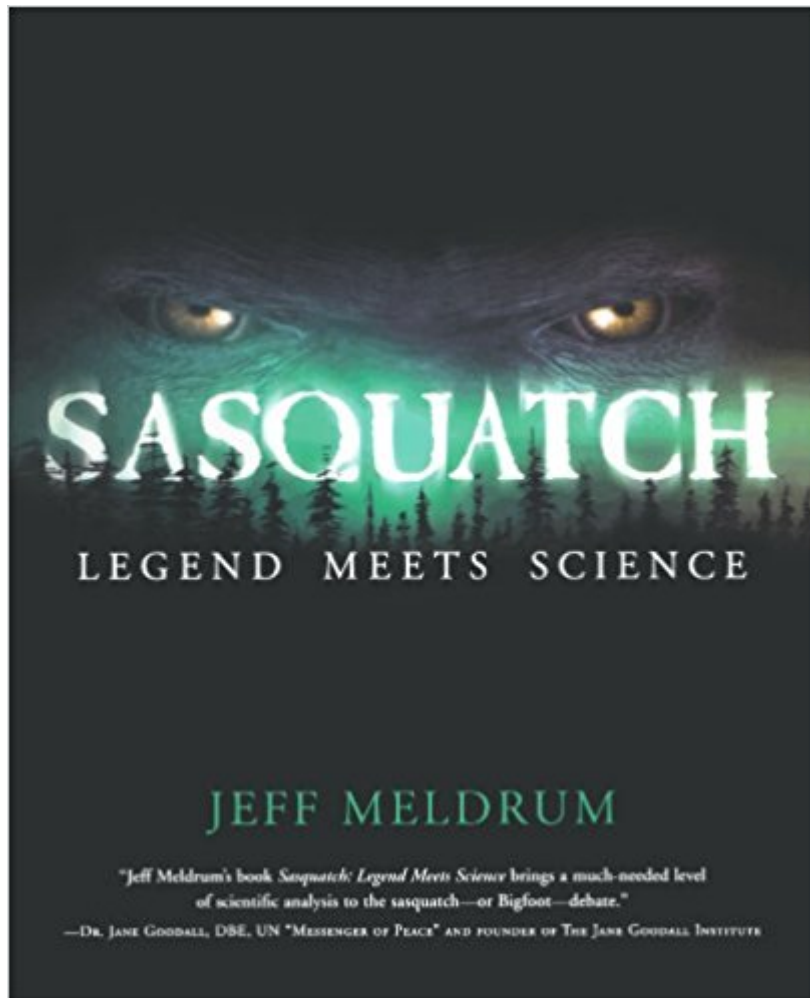




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Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science



Synopsis

In this landmark work on a subject too often dismissed as paranormal or disreputable, Jeffrey Meldrum gives us the first book on Sasquatch to be written by a scientist with impeccable academic credentials. He gives an objective look at the facts in a field mined with hoaxes and sensationalism. Meldrum reports on the work of a team of experts from a wide variety of fields who were assembled to examine the evidence for a large, yet undiscovered, North American primate. He reviews the long history of this mystery--which long predates the "Bigfoot" flap of the late fifties--and explains all the scientific pros and cons in a clear and accessible style, amplified by over 150 illustrations. Anyone who has pondered the mysteries of human evolution will be fascinated and eager to join Dr. Meldrum in drawing their own conclusion.

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Customer Reviews

“Jeff Meldrum’s book ‘Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science’ brings a much needed level of scientific analysis to the Sasquatch - or Bigfoot - debate. Does Sasquatch exist? There are countless people - especially indigenous people - in different parts of America who claim to have seen such a creature. And in many parts of the world I meet those who, in a matter-of-fact way, tell me of their encounters with large, bipedal, tail-less hominids. I think I have read every article and every book about these creatures, and while most scientists are not satisfied with existing evidence, I have an open mind.”

— Dr. Jane Goodall, DBE UN Messenger of Peace & Founder - the Jane Goodall Institute

“Jeff Meldrum is a scientist, an expert in human locomotor

adaptations. In *Sasquatch: Legend Meets Science* he examines all evidence critically, not to force a conclusion, but to establish a baseline of facts upon which further research can depend. His science is not submerged by opinion and dogmatic assumption. With objectivity and insight he analyzes evidence from tracks, skin ridges on the soles of feet, film footage, and DNA, and he compares it to that on primates and various other species. He disentangles fact from anecdote, supposition, and wishful thinking, and concludes that the search for yeti and sasquatch is a valid scientific endeavor. By offering a critical scrutiny, *Sasquatch* does more for this field of investigation than all the past arguments and polemics of contesting experts. — Dr. George Schaller, Vice-President of the Wildlife Conservation

DR. JEFFREY MELDRUM is an Associate Professor of Anatomy and Anthropology at Idaho State University.

I appreciate books which at least attempt to keep a balance between opposing views. Dr. Meldrum does that, even if he lets the mask slip a bit at the end. However, I didn't find the book as satisfying as I had hoped. In particular, I thought that some areas were covered far too extensively, some not nearly extensively enough, and some not at all. Perhaps I can review some of these areas. Dr. Meldrum specializes in primate locomotion. It is therefore natural that he would devote considerable space in the book to reviewing the footprint evidence. I'm sure Dr. Meldrum can differentiate between primate footprints and those of any other order and that he can detect clumsy fakes. However, human ingenuity is such that I'm not sure that he or anyone else can be certain that clever fakes can be ruled out, especially since footprint detail, as he admits, is by its nature ephemeral. I do think that the suggestion that the consistency of the size and shape of footprints is significant is not a valid point. There are so many representations in various media and I have been aware of what they looked like for at least 50 years. Anyone wishing to make a fake could easily have based it on readily available representations. Nevertheless, Dr. Meldrum's expert opinion is certainly better than mine and is the most persuasive argument for Sasquatch/Bigfoot (S/B)'s existence in the book. Whether the length and detail of the section is justified is another matter. The various sections dealing with how things might have happened but for which there is no evidence take up far too much of the book. There was a giant Asian ape, *Gigantopithecus*, now extinct. Is there any evidence it was ever in North America? No. The land bridge over what is now the Bering Strait is the way many animals came and went between the Americas and Asia. S/B might have used that means of access to the Americas. Is there any evidence that it did so? No. Fossils are only created

in certain specific conditions and many species die without leaving fossil remains. True, but so what? We're talking about a living species here, not fossils, even if there were any, which there aren't. Native American folklore tells of hairy men. That would only have probative value if all the other Native American legends had a foundation in fact. One of the most prevalent is the Thunderbird, a giant bird capable of lifting an Orca and whose wings make the sound of thunder. Does anyone believe that is a real bird? While all these discussions in the book MIGHT be possibilities, they have no evidential value. Dr. Meldrum brings out the old saying, absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, but equally absence of evidence proves nothing. A scientific discussion should be about evidence, not speculation, so what does the evidence show? It's at this point that the book fails to live up to its claims. Logic begins to go out of the window, some major issues are given little consideration and others are ignored completely. Just to go over a few: what does S/B eat? Dr. Meldrum vaguely says its diet is omnivorous, which would probably be right, but why so little discussion of the specifics? An animal weighing up to 800lbs and up to 8/9 feet tall (Dr. Meldrum's calculations) must eat a LOT of food. Since there is no indication that it uses tools, let alone traps, how does it collect its food, and why does it not do what every other animal including man does and establish a feeding pattern, returning to places where food is abundant? Animals are routinely trapped by putting food out, since all animals will eat the easiest food to collect. Why doesn't this work with S/B? No explanation of this is even attempted. What does it do in Winter? Animals in climates with cool Winters either predate, migrate or go into hibernation/dormancy. Dr. Meldrum suggests that the latter is most likely, but animals in this state are easy to locate. Those that do stay awake are easier to see and must go to areas where food is available. A huge dark-haired bipedal primate searching for food in Winter must stick out like a sore thumb. No explanation. What happens to the sick, injured or old animals? Typically such animals lose their fear of danger since they must try and find the easiest sources of food and they are therefore easy to find and catch. The only exception is animals which live in colonies, where less robust specimens are cared for, but is anyone out there suggesting that we have somehow missed colonies of massive primates? The whole S/B premise is built on them being solitary. Not only does Dr. Meldrum not offer a scientific explanation of the absence of sick, injured or old animals, he doesn't even raise it as an issue. There are many other issues- where do mothers with young live, the fact that no-one in the nearly 50 years since Patterson/Gimlin has managed to capture as good, let alone better, footage of the creature (I had to laugh at the comment that because wildlife photography is difficult creatures ALREADY IN CAPTIVITY are used- why don't we try that? Oh, wait.....), the fact that the last large primate discovered, the Mountain Gorilla, was found hundreds

of miles into the African jungle the year before the Wright brothers managed to get a powered flying machine into the air, but we can't track massive primates in our own backyard with all our modern technology- but I'll conclude this review with a point that seems humorous but is actually quite serious. Of all the animals in North America, the only one that has NEVER been hit by a vehicle is S/B. How is that possible? In the area in which I live animal populations are actually estimated on the basis of how many are hit by vehicles. It's not as though S/B stays away from roads- many sightings are on or near roads. People, deer, coyotes, raccoons, even birds, all are struck by vehicles. S/B, not once. Dr. Meldrum's book is a good read and streets ahead of most books on the subject, but there are far too many unanswered and sometimes unasked questions to rate it as scientifically satisfying. At the risk of being dismissed as an armchair skeptic, I want to see a body, alive if possible (please don't kill one). That's really not too much to ask.

Sasquatch or Bigfoot is a legendary creature supposedly living somewhere in the forests and swamp lands of North America. Mainstream science regards Bigfoot as an ancient superstition turned into a kind of urban legend, and has relegated it to the same status as that of UFOs, ghosts and post-mortem Elvis sightings. Meanwhile, people on the ground keep encountering the creature. It's usually described as huge, hairy, ape-like and (sometimes) threatening. If Bigfoot is a real animal, it would presumably be an unknown species of ape. While the elusive beast has been reported from all over North America, there is a concentration of Bigfoot sightings in the Pacific Northwest and British Columbia. "Sasquatch: Legend meets science" is a book by Jeff Meldrum, one of the few scientists who take the Bigfoot phenomenon seriously. There is also a film with the same title, available free on Youtube or on DVD from . The book is much better than the documentary, which simply summarizes some of the book's findings. In Meldrum's opinion, Sasquatch or Bigfoot is a real, flesh-and-blood great ape. I admit that his arguments for its existence are surprisingly strong! I had a kind of conversion experience when reading it. If science has missed a huge, hairy and (I presume) smelly ape in the Evergreen State, who knows what else it might have missed? The return of the Christ in the etheric? OK, that was in-house self-irony. On a more serious note, "Sasquatch: Legend meets Science" is a competent summary of the pro-Bigfoot position. Since the author is a scientist, a few chapters are somewhat tedious and technical, but all chapters can be read by the interested layman. I was surprised by the large amount of suggestive evidence that could point to Bigfoot being an actual unknown animal: dermal ridges visible at the plaster casts of footprints, hair samples which doesn't match those of any known animal, "dynamic" footprints which look logical if made by an actual creature, and (of course) the Skookum print and the

Patterson-Gimlin film. (I'm more sceptical to the Freeman video and the Memorial Day video.) This would be more than enough to launch an expedition in search of some obscure subspecies of hog or antelope in the Asian underbrush, so why doesn't science take Sasquatch seriously? Here, we are obviously dealing with some kind of sociological processes at work. To be fair to the sceptics, there is a continuum between "natural" Bigfoot sightings and "supernatural" ones (including the inevitable UFOs and channelled messages), making it tempting to dismiss the whole phenomenon as a silly superstition or gigantic hoax. While my "Fortean" vein isn't overtly hostile to the fringier aspects of the BF phenomenon, I nevertheless understand why mainline scientists (or even mainline non-materialists) might feel uncomfortable with a phenomenon that looks "occult".

However, the bits and pieces of evidence presented by Meldrum (all of them down-to-earth and completely boring from a Fortean standpoint) do deserve a fairer hearing than hitherto given - at least in principle. In practice, it might (ironically) be a good thing that mainstream science disbelieves in the Sasquatch, considering what usually happens to unknown hogs and antelopes if they are detected (clue: check the local bushmeat market). The same fate seems to have befallen the Bili ape, a previously unknown and somewhat peculiar chimp population in the Congo. But back to mainframe. What I found most persuasive in Meldrum's case is that the "legend" of Bigfoot is so consistent over time, in a manner difficult to square with an exclusively sociological explanation. The Bigfoot antics reported by many eye-witnesses are remarkably consistent with primate behaviour. Yet, great apes are supposed to have been unknown to Native Americans before the arrival of White settlers. Many aspects of ape behaviour weren't mapped until the 20th century, and some may not be widely known among laymen even today. So why has these supposedly cultural constructs of the Pacific Northwest looked like apes and behaved like apes since time immemorial? Maybe because they actually *are* apes? Ceremonial masks from Native tribes showing the Sasquatch have ape-like features, and so have traditional Sasquatch sculptures. The Sasquatches are reported to espouse ape-like aggressive patterns, including hurling small rocks at intruders. Meldrum himself has been attacked in this manner several times. (I don't think misidentification with a black bear is likely in this case - unless U.S. bears have occult powers and can levitate rocks!) It's precisely this "biological" consistency which suggests something more than the Ivory Billed Woodpecker might be unaccounted for in the U.S. forests... Even seemingly illogical traits turn out to be biologically possible on a closer look, such as the nocturnal habits of Bigfoot. The chimps at Rabongo in Uganda are largely nocturnal, suggesting it's possible for apes to turn to such behaviour if necessary. Nor are the origins of Bigfoot a deep mystery - a gigantic ape (*Gigantopithecus*) is known from the fossil record of East Asia, and could conceivably have reached North America in

prehistoric times (so did the Red Panda). Meldrum believes that Gigantopithecus was omnivorous, which would also square with the reported habits of Bigfoot. The author also points out that most ape fossils have been found outside the tropics, perhaps suggesting that the original habitat of the apes was subtropical or even temperate. On a more daring note, Meldrum suggests that the weird ability of Bigfoot to scare people or make them feel nausea is due to infrasound. Some animals, apparently, do use infrasound to communicate or even to stun their prey. That being said, I still have a lingering suspicion that there might be something more to the Bigfoot-Sasquatch phenomenon than simply an unknown ape in the West Coast rainforests. As already mentioned, there doesn't seem to be a neat way of distinguishing "natural" eye-witness reports from "supernatural" ones. The strange ability of the Sasquatch to instil fear in humans (and other animals?) could perhaps be explained by infrasound, but how far can you take these naturalist explanations before they become too exotic? How does one explain that a Bigfoot runs in front of a speeding car, when no other cars are in sight? Why doesn't this supposedly reclusive animal simply wait for the only car on the highway to drive by, and then pass the road undetected? How does one account for the vanishing acts of this creature, or its constant appearances outside its logical geographical range? My favourite example is the White (sic) Sasquatch observed in a town on Rhode Island! That's on the...ahem...East Coast. Personally, I'm more or less convinced that Associate Professor Jeffrey Meldrum's "Sasquatch: Legend meets Science" has solved one part of the mystery at hand. Or at least pointed out a perfectly reasonable working hypothesis. However, I also feel that there might be other aspects of the problem that are less easily solved within a strictly naturalist framework...

A very interesting discussion on the possibility of Bigfoot. The author does a very good job, showing what evidence is out there, and builds a convincing case for the existence of Sasquatch. More telling to me, is how he presents a case for the fact that Main Stream Science refuses to even consider the possibility that Sasquatch is extant. One of the things I have noticed throughout the study of the possibility of whether or not Sasquatch is real, is how some scientists simply dismiss any evidence without even trying to entertain its evidence with a serious eye. The book is a very good book on the evidence, presenting a step by step, evidence driven argument to support his case. A good book, and worth the read.

Very informative. It was interesting for a scientist to actually study the evidence. I agree with the author that there is just too much real evidence to say that Bigfoot doesn't exist. Unfortunately in this day and age, I fear it will take a body for most people to agree. This was a great read if you're

interested in facts.

The subject of Sasquatch "Bigfoot" is tackled in this book with seriousness and much research. Dr. Meldrum provides us with his years of experience in the field and with unbiased information. An excellent read.

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