

In 1992 Clark published *The Emergence of a Phenomenon: UFOs from the Beginning through 1959* as Volume II in this series. Its 113 entries cover every aspect of pre-1960s ufology and it includes photos and an extended bibliography of citations that lists rare, ephemeral and obscure materials. Particularly noteworthy are long entries on the airship sightings in America in the late 1800s; the "foo fighters" seen by many pilots during World War II; the "ghost rockets" seen in Europe shortly after the war; and the work of Dr. Edward Condon and the University of Colorado committee which was asked by the U.S. Air Force in 1966 to examine the available evidence on UFO sightings.

Volume II of Clark's planned three-volume series has received good press reviews. Dr. Marcello Truzzi, Director of the Center for Scientific Anomalies Research and an academic known for his balanced approach to paranormal phenomena called it "even better than his excellent first volume." Truzzi notes that "Even those familiar with UFO history will find much that is new or that could previously be found only in obscure sources; and those new to the field could not do better than start their explorations with this volume." Dr. David Jacobs, author of *The UFO Controversy in America* calls it "absolutely indispensable for all UFO researchers, amateur and professional alike."

Volume III, tentatively titled *High Strangeness: UFOs from 1960 through 1979*, covers the last missing historical period and is scheduled to be released in Fall 1994. It will be reviewed in a later issue. If you're seriously interested in the UFO phenomenon, buy the series.

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Ambrose Bierce is Missing and Other Historical Mysteries, by Joe Nickell. Lexington, Kentucky: University Press of Kentucky, 1992. 155 pp. \$22.00, (hardback), ISBN 0-8131-1766-6.

Anyone interested in studying anomalies will find this book useful reading. Former detective Joe Nickell's slender volume describes nine of his own investigations, each one selected to illustrate a specific approach or methodology.

Where to begin tackling the sometimes daunting problems presented by unknown or unexplained phenomena can often leave investigators bewildered. Through both discussion and example, Nickell describes how to start an investigation in various different fields, what questions to ask and how to build hypotheses. He outlines entertainingly a number of traps into which the unsuspecting can fall. A wealth of information is cunningly disguised in the nine interesting mysteries addressed.

Each chapter looks at a different area of investigation. Nickell's book covers the subjects of ancient riddles, biographical enigmas, hidden identity, scientific challenges, folklore and questioned artifacts. The author also does some interesting literary sleuthing on the topics of suspect documents, lost texts and obscured sources. Attributions are given either in the text or in chapter footnotes at the back of the book.

In his opening chapter, Nickell makes the useful distinction between "research," a scholarly or scientific inquiry and "investigation," which implies that the information is somehow obscured and that there is some element of mystery. When the latter is the case, it is helpful to develop various theories and test them with the evidence until a preferred hypothesis is reached. When in doubt, "Occam's Razor" or the simplest explanation should be the standard. Here the author argues strongly for vigilance against wishful thinking (often unconscious) which leads to the inappropriate imposing of a hypothesis on the facts.

This is illustrated well in the second chapter where Nickell investigates "The Mystery of the Nazca Lines," those enormous and beguiling pictures of birds, spiders, monkeys and other creatures etched into thirty miles of gravel plain in southern Peru. Because the designs are fully visible only from the air, flying saucer enthusiasts insist they prove extraterrestrial visitation. Others believe (without the slightest evidence) that the Nazca Indians developed the technology to build hot-air balloons. The author and six friends decided to disprove the aerial theory by exactly reproducing the Nazca "Condor" from the ground using only a center point, a T-square, posts and over a mile of string. As Nickell reasonably points out, it seems unlikely that a civilization which had developed interstellar flight would resort to plotting a crude design with wooden poles. He readily admits that the question of *why* these great pictures were made remains a mystery, but the question of *how* has been effectively answered.

The puzzle of aging newsman Ambrose Bierce's disappearance during the Mexican Civil War is described in chapter three under the heading of Biographical Enigmas. Nickell cautions that in dealing with biography, the literary sleuth must not only be alert for obvious bias or cover-up, but needs to be clear-eyed when viewing clues through the seductive prism of legend. Although his theories about the Bierce mystery are developed into an interesting story, I am not completely convinced of Nickell's assumption. His interpretation of the hints Bierce left in his writings is imaginative and logical, but only one of several which could be deduced. The reader must draw his own conclusions.

In the provocative case Nickell uses to illustrate the problems of uncovering hidden identity, I feel that his own investigation is a useful object lesson for the reader in the dangers of selecting evidence which supports what appears to be a personal bias. Naturalized American citizen John (Ivan) Demjanjuk was extradited to Israel to stand trial as the Nazi death-camp murderer "Ivan the Terrible," but he claimed throughout the seven-year trial that he was the victim of mistaken identity. Nickell marshals an impressive, but circumstantial array of evidence against Demjanjuk. However, he erroneously calls the German-organized "Russian Army of Liberation" a Nazi unit, and he overlooks the testimo-

ny of Treblinka concentration-camp survivors who categorically stated that Demjanjuk was *not* Ivan the Terrible. Of course it is easier to critique this case in hindsight after the Israeli court acquitted Demjanjuk than when Nickell was writing a year or so before the trial's end. Perhaps one could even argue that the acquittal is suspect on political grounds. However in this case, I think the author unwittingly illustrates his own admonition about the need to be vigilant against personal prejudice and wishful thinking.

Instructive value aside, Nickell's fluent conversational writing makes for easy reading and the format of the volume allows for short periods of relaxed perusing similar to reading a collection of short stories. The book is indexed and each chapter is followed by an interesting recommended-reading list.

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Jules Verne by Lawrence Lynch. Twayne Publishers (Macmillan Publishing Company), 1992, 127 pp. \$22.95 (c).

Before the modern era of science fiction, usually seen as starting in the 1920-1930s, a few preeminent individuals each produced a great body of work which exemplified central themes still evident in today's science fiction. Poe generally wrote fantastic tales, which would often take scientific miracles and excursions into morbid psychology to realize. Wells wrote from a multi-perspective point of view, in which perhaps possible, but far advanced, scientific knowledge could implement his visions. And Jules Verne produced many tales in which the science content is integral to the story and seems real because Verne was able to cleverly extrapolate from his deep contemporary understanding of science toward his visions of expected scientific progress—he emphasized scientific possibilities that encompass contemporary science but were not bounded by current capabilities.

Lawrence Lynch's admirable brief book discusses in five informative chapters episodes from Verne's life and gives reasonably complete accounts of his major works, the products of 40 years of devotion to themes in which scientific verisimilitude was Verne's dominant passion. Born in 1828 to fairly well-established parents in Nantes, France, Verne had an early life with some adventure, including attempts at age 11 to run away from home as a cabin boy on a schooner bound for the Indies. After this aborted episode Verne realized his dreams for adventure primarily in his writings. His first publication in book form (*Five Weeks in a Balloon*) appeared in 1863; in 1905 Verne died, having