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HOLLOW EARTH AND UFOs

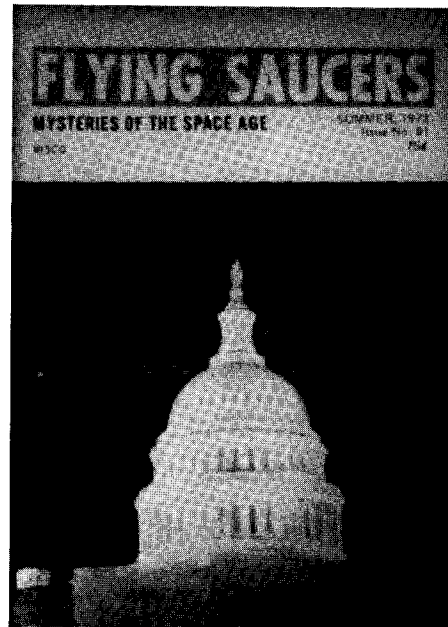
The idea that the earth is hollow and populated by subterranean civilizations is an ancient one, with deep roots in folklore and mythology. But its modern form was the creation of John Cleves Symmes (1779-1829), an American eccentric who believed that the earth is made of a series of concentric spheres, with huge holes (over 4000 miles wide, he estimated) at the north and south poles. In common with others over the next 150 years, Symmes sought with little success to secure official or private sponsorship for an expedition he would lead into the earth, there to explore and open "new sources of trade and commerce" with the inner-earth race. For his efforts Symmes was much mocked (though immortalized in American literature as the inspiration for Edgar Allan Poe's proto-science-fiction tale *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* [1838]), but after his father's death Americus Symmes kept the faith alive. In 1878 he published a collection of his father's lectures and

kept in touch with hollow-earth enthusiasts (Gardner, 1957; Kafton-Minkel, 1989).

Other influential titles were *The Hollow Globe* (1871), based on messages from spirits channeled through medium M. L. Sherman, Frederick Culmer's *The Inner World* (1886), and William Reed's *The Phantom of the Poles* (1906). Hollow-earth ideas appear in H. P. Blavatsky's occult classics *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888) and were elaborated upon in H. Spencer Lewis's *Lemuria: The Lost Continent of the Pacific* (1931), which contended that remnants of this advanced race dwell within Mount Shasta in northern California.

Under the direction of Cyrus Teed (1839-1908), who claimed the Mother of the Universe had chosen him to be the savior of the world, a utopian community dedicated to "Koreshanity" was formed, eventually settling near Fort Myers, Florida, in 1897. Teed taught the most radical of hollow-earth doctrines, namely that the "universe is a cell, a hollow globe, the physical body of which is the earth; the sun is at the center. We live on the inside of the cell; and the sun, moon, planets and stars are all within the globe" (Michell, 1984; Thole, 1956). In 1913, in *A Journey to the Earth's Interior*, Marshall B. Gardner, returning to a Symmes-like hollow-earth model (though disparaging Symmes all the while), proposed that a sun, 600 miles in diameter, heats the underworld, affording its inhabitants a pleasant, tropical climate.

In 1934 Guy Warren Ballard (1878-1939), writing as Godfre Ray King, published *Unveiled Mysteries*, which anticipates (and no doubt inspired) themes and motifs of later flying-saucer-contactee literature. Ballard reported that in 1930, while eating lunch by a spring on Mount Shasta, he met a young man who filled Ballard's cup with a creamy liquid and bade him drink it. (A similar story would be told by contactee **Orfeo Angelucci** 20 years later.) As he did so, an electric shock filled his body, and under its influence the young stranger's true appearance was revealed; he was Count Saint Germain, an eighteenth-century occultist who according to Blavatsky still lived on as a Tibetan Master. After many other contacts with the count, Ballard was taken on an out-of-body tour 2000 feet below Wyoming's Grand Teton Mountains, where he found a world of wonder and beauty. Later



In the mid-1950s Ray Palmer started *Flying Saucers* magazine, which promoted the Shaver mystery, the hollow earth, men in black, and other outlandish UFO tales.

ly responsible for speculations about their extraterrestrial origin. Even in the previous century there were published suggestions that unidentified aerial objects, such as those reported in great numbers in 1896-97 (see **Airship Sightings in the Nineteenth Century**), were of interplanetary origin, and in three books published between 1919 and 1931, Fort wrote at length on such ideas, which were picked up by the **Fortean Society** and its magazine *Doubt*. Moreover, a great body of both scientific literature and SF in the century before the summer 1947 wave, which brought flying saucers into public consciousness, had concerned itself with extraterrestrial life and even communication and visitation. It took neither a leap of imagination nor a Ray Palmer for post-World War II Americans to connect seemingly unearthly atmospheric objects with possible intruders from outer space. In any case, most UFO witnesses, then as now, had never heard of Palmer. The UFO phenomenon is the creation not of one man but of tens of thousands

of UFO sightings.

If Palmer's role in UFO history has been exaggerated, there is no denying that he was a colorful personality. An accident early in life made him a hunchback, but he remained physically active, even playing on the Ziff-Davis softball team. A fall in the flooded basement of his Evanston home, however, further injured his already damaged body, and after that his physical activities were restricted. Though he stood less than five feet tall, he was, at least to those who never ceased admiring his imagination, audacity, and relentless self-promotion, something of a giant.

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PRINCE NEOSOM

In 1958 a Detroit baker named Lee Childers appeared before a local flying-saucer club and declared himself an interplanetary traveler. Not only that, he avowed, he could travel in space simply by closing his eyes and entering another state of consciousness. In fact, he said, he would demonstrate the technique to his audience. Over the next 10 minutes, eyes shut, he journeyed to the moon, Venus, and Mars. Soon Childers was telling interplanetary tales on a local radio station.

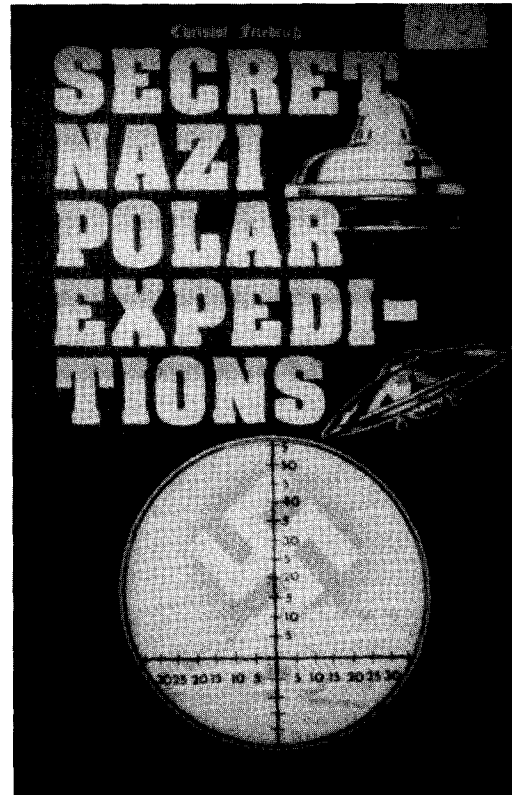
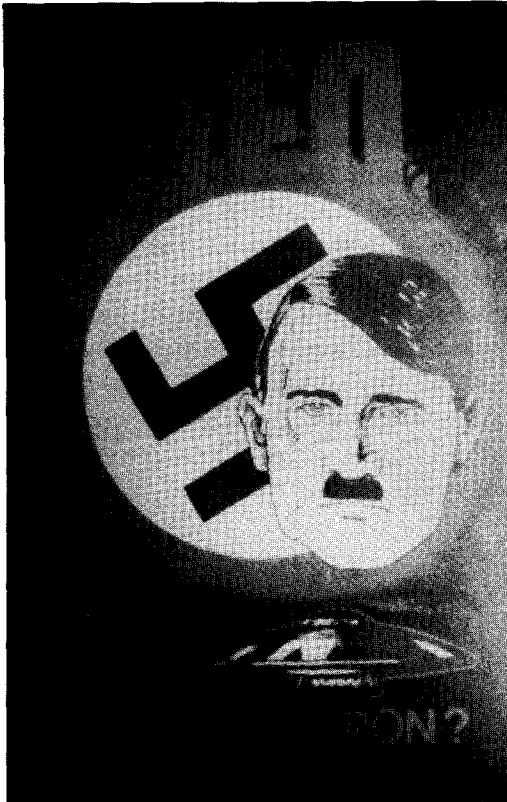
Among those who heard and believed Childers's yarns was Douglas Hancock, a member of the U.S. Army Band. In October 1958 Hancock arrived in New York, introduced himself to local flying-saucer

enthusiasts, and persuaded one group, the Bureau of UFO Research and Analysis, to bring Childers in to lecture. By the time Childers got to New York, in early December, he had become a spaceman, Prince Neosom of the planet Tythan, eight and a half light years from earth. Neosom also answered to the name Dana.

At a news conference Childers/Neosom/Dana produced a sketch of a rejuvenation machine and declared he had been killed three times by men in black. Just before he was to be interviewed on New York radio station WOR, Childers predicted the broadcast would be picked up by flying saucers and broadcast all over the world. On the show he told host Long John Nebel that he, Prince Neosom, had replaced a stillborn terrestrial child. An aged, infirm medical doctor had witnessed the exchange but even if still alive would not remember the transaction because the space people would have wiped out his memory. Within a few minutes Nebel, bored with what he saw as a ludicrous charade, ordered Neosom and two female associates to leave (Mapes, 1959).

Undeterred, Childers (as Neosom) made the rounds, telling ever wilder tales all the while, and in due course returned to Detroit. Soon a disgusted New York ufologist, Jonas Kover, got an idea which he thought would show up Childers even to the most gullible. He sent a telegram to Hancock and signed it "Mission for Space Unification." It read in part, "Congratulations. You search reality. Neosom no longer Prince. King. Dana's father gone to higher karma. We contact Tythan via pre-audio-electrolysis. Hail the King" (Mann, 1960). An excited Hancock immediately phoned Childers and read him the telegram. After hearing it, Childers declared that the people of Tythan had already given him the news. In fact, he added, he was surprised that it had taken the Mission for Space Unification so long to tell Hancock about it.

In short order Childers left his wife and five children to marry one of the women with whom he had been traveling, Beth Docker. The new Mrs. Childers was promptly renamed Princess Negonna. The two honeymooned on Tythan. Meanwhile, back on earth, on January 9, 1959, Hancock was committed to the psychiatric ward of St. Albans Hospital, Long Island,



According to some, Adolf Hitler and the remnants of the Third Reich fled into the interior of the earth through openings in the poles. They took with them advanced weapons technology, including the flying saucers still seen today.

there were other trips to view other subterranean secrets, climaxed by a grand meeting under the Tetons with 12 Venusian Masters (described, as **George Adamski** and other contactees would assert of their friends from earth's sister planet, as strikingly attractive and spiritually advanced). *The Magic Presence* (1935) told other inner-earth tales. Ballard, his wife Edna, and son Donald toured the United States promoting their occult group, called The "I AM" Activity.

Into the UFO age. In September 1943 **Ray Palmer**, editor of the Chicago-based science-fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*, read a letter from a reader who enclosed what he said was an ancient alphabet from Lemuria. Intrigued, Palmer ran the alphabet in the January 1944 issue and entered into correspondence with the reader, Richard S. Shaver of Barto, Pennsylvania. Soon Shaver was regaling Palmer, and through him the readers of *Amazing*, with fantastic stories, allegedly true, of his interactions with survivors of a

race of giants who 12,000 years ago, seeking to escape deadly solar radiation, fled with their superior science and technology into a system of vast underground caverns. Eventually most of these "Titans" or "Atlans" degenerated into evil creatures called "deros" (short for detrimental robots; they were robots only in the sense that they were slaves to their passions). The deros occupied themselves with sexual orgies, violence, and torture on both surface humans and teros (*integrative robots*), the small and embattled minority of Titans who had not succumbed to their baser impulses. With beams from their supermachines, the deros caused havoc and insanity in the world.

The **Shaver mystery**, as it was called, fascinated some and repelled others, who deemed it not just a bad joke but a sick bad joke, and in 1948 *Amazing's* parent company Ziff-Davis ordered the series dropped. It is, however, significant as a part of UFO history because it provoked discussions—in *Amazing* if nowhere else—of the evidence for extraterrestrial visitation

before the **Kenneth Arnold sighting** brought "flying saucers" into public consciousness (Gaddis, 1947). Shaver claimed that the deros possessed spaceships and that craft from other worlds sometimes were seen in our atmosphere.

Palmer kept the "mystery" alive in the pages of such magazines as *Mystic* (later *Search*) and *Flying Saucers*, in which hollow-earth articles often appeared. (Palmer energetically promoted a tale, popular among hollow-earthers such as F. Amadeo Giannini [Giannini, 1959], that Adm. Richard E. Byrd had flown inside the earth in the course of a 1947 polar expedition but that news of his adventures there, including meetings with superior beings, had been suppressed ["Byrd Did Make," 1961].) Between 1961 and 1964 Palmer published *The Hidden World*, a quarterly in trade-paperback format, which consisted of both reprinted and original material on Shaver. But Shaver's bizarre claims had little appeal to all but a tiny fringe of ufologists, essentially the same types who championed the hollow earth. (One group of enthusiasts who in the early 1960s decided to investigate Shaver and the hollow earth were forced to cease their activities after "all the members ... met with mysterious and sinister personal and business misfortune" [Alpert, 1971/1972].) The Shaver mystery was seen as part of the body of supporting evidence for the hollow earth but often was mentioned more as an afterthought than as compelling proof (Norman, 1969). The only other UFO publishers who paid any significant attention to the Shaver mystery were **Gray Barker**, though he confessed toward the end of his life that he believed none of it (Walton, 1983), and *Caveat Emptor* editor Gene Steinberg, who considered the Shaver affair "one of the most fascinating mysteries of our time" (Alpert, *op. cit.*). In the early 1970s Steinberg interviewed Shaver, who in the course of the conversation contradicted some of his most fundamental claims (Steinberg, 1973).

Shaver, who died in November 1975, survives as a dim memory, but Maurice Doreal (born Claude Doggins), who came in Shaver's wake, is remembered not at all. Doreal was one of a number of *Amazing* readers who wrote Palmer to attest to personal experiences in the dero caverns. The founder of an occult group, the Brotherhood of the White Temple, he claimed to have had many visits with the Masters who

lived inside Mount Shasta; Doreal insisted, however, that they were from Atlantis, not Lemuria, and that they possessed an extraordinary technology, including spaceships with which they maintained contact with White Brotherhood headquarters in the Pleiades. The Atlanteans (along with evil Lemurians whom Shaver called deros) lived in various underground locations around the planet. The most important of these was Shamballa, located beneath Lhasa, the capital of Tibet, and protected by space warps which kept outsiders from even suspecting what lay under their feet. Doreal told long and involved tales of conflict, in both ancient and modern times, between assorted inner-earth and extraterrestrial races, including the evil Snake People (Kafton-Minkel, *op. cit.*).

News from Rainbow City. Another claimant who debuted in *Amazing's* pages, W. C. Hefferlin, reported receiving advanced scientific knowledge from "Rainbow City," a deserted metropolis once populated by space visitors but now abandoned, though with many of its machines in place, under the Antarctic ice. After the magazine's readers hooted at Hefferlin's elementary errors in science, he disappeared, only to resurface a year later, in 1947, as Borderland Sciences Research Associates of Vista, California, distributed W. C. and Gladys Hefferlin's writings.

The Hefferlins said that 20 years earlier they met a man, identified only as "Emery," who they eventually learned was an agent of Tibetan Masters. In due course Hefferlin was introduced to the "Ancient Three," from whom he began receiving regular telepathic communications, and he, Emery, and they worked on plans to locate Rainbow City, which Emery located on an expedition in 1942. He learned that the original settlers were from Mars, though not originally; they had been chased there by the Snake People. In due course, as Mars' atmosphere became unbreathable, they emigrated to earth and established seven great cities in Antarctica, the greatest of them Rainbow City. Then the Snake People attacked, tipping the earth over on its axis and changing the temperate Antarctica into a cold, barren wasteland. The settlers were scattered all over the earth; they lost their technology and knowledge, reverted to a primitive state, and became our ancestors (*ibid.*).

The Hefferlins and their wild stories soon were forgotten, but in 1951 a New York man named Robert Ernst Dickhoff revived a version of them in his self-published *Agharta: The Subterranean World*. Nine years later the pseudonymous Michael X featured Rainbow City in a book which claimed Venusians were helping the Masters to wipe out the deros. He also wrote of astral communications with the spirit of Marshall Gardner, who enthusiastically endorsed the book (X, 1960).

In the 1950s contactee followers and other uncritical flying-saucer enthusiasts thrilled to rumors of underground tunnels in which space people had bases and communed with terrestrial spiritual leaders. Ray Stanford, for example, wrote of a friend who "had trouble believing it when he learned that the space people had informed us that an underground tunnel ran right under the jungle village [in Peru] where he lives." But then he and his family heard "commotion coming from UNDERGROUND.... Someone was working underground for reasons completely unknown to anyone besides those doing it and a few others. The space people, their craft and bases, Mystery Schools for preservation of ancient wisdom, the members of these Brotherhoods, their headquarters, and fantastic undiscovered structures are, along with other things which I must not prematurely mention here, all real and physical.... The space visitor ... whom I call 'Aramda' has worked to some extent with such schools. He has visited some of their magnificent constructions.... Naturally, since both the space visitors and these schools are working for the enlightenment of earth, they are working together" (Stanford and Stanford, 1958).

In another UFO hollow-earth tale set in a Latin American country, residents of San Carlos, Costa Rica, located near the Nicaraguan border, reported flashing lights and anomalous noises emanating from an inactive volcano. After a number of sightings of UFOs seeming to enter the mountain, the Costa Rican government allegedly sent investigators there, but their efforts to climb to the top were always frustrated by thunderstorms and flash floods which would erupt as if out of nowhere. Finally, however, the searchers got to the summit and there saw astonishing sights, according to an ostensibly straight-

faced dispatch in an April 1955 issue of the San Jose newspaper *Ultimas Noticias*.

The correspondent wrote:

The bottom of the crater is one gigantic airlock, so camouflaged that, when we arrived at the summit of the mountain, we felt deceived and under an illusion, believing that, here, nothing abnormal existed, despite the times we had observed unknown flying objects approaching the rim of the crater and descending into it as we, ourselves, were still fighting our way up the slopes. We also watched a huge flying saucer, which flashed blinding rays of light, emerge from the open crater. The light is the force that moves the saucers. The stones that were under these rays of vertical light crumbled as if they were compressed under the weight of an immense burden, and a little later were disintegrated as if they were lumps of sugar!

The expedition had learned, according to the correspondent, "They—flying saucer entities in this dead crater—do not come from Venus, or any other planet in our solar system. They proceed from interplanetary space, or from the interior, even of our own planet" (Delair, 1977).

Iowa evangelist Theodore Fitch, in a 1960 book titled *Our Paradise Inside the Earth*, placed the Garden of Eden in our planet's interior and populated it with "small brown men" who fly saucers using the "free energy" espoused by Otis T. Carr (see **Otis T. Carr Hoax**). In 1961 *Australian Saucer Record* published a long account by an anonymous contributor who claimed "experiences with the saucer people, trips aboard the space ships and ... [a] visit to a saucer base in Antarctica, located within a 140,000 square mile oasis beyond the South Pole in Queen Maude Land. Yes, I saw fabulous cities of an unknown, advanced civilization whose ancestors belonged to the race that inhabited the lost continents of Atlantis and Lemuria" ("An Amazing Story," 1961).

Three years later the most popular of the latter-day hollow-earth books was published, *The Hollow Earth*, by Raymond Bernard, the pseudonym of Walter Siegmeister. In the book Siegmeister, a political and occult eccentric with many strange ideas (one of them that sexual intercourse destroys one's physical

and moral fiber, another that the male sex is a mutation which should be eliminated) and a checkered career (including trouble with the U.S. Post Office over his promotion of a dubious enterprise in Ecuador), is more of a synthesizer than an innovator. The text consists in large part of lengthy quotations from nineteenth-century hollow-earth texts, updated with material from Ray Palmer's various ruminations, and reports on the conspiracy to keep the truth about the hollow earth, flying saucers, and the pole holes from the human race (Bernard, 1964). *Secret of the Ages*, a 1974 book by Brinsley le Poer Trench, a British occultist, contactee chronicler, and early editor of *Flying Saucer Review*, revived Shaverian scenarios of evil inner-earthers who kidnap and brainwash surface people. Trench averred that the "ground work has now been prepared for a take-over of this planet by those who live inside it."

Nazis inside the South Pole. In 1976 *UFOs—Nazi Secret Weapon?* revealed that at the end of World War II Hitler and his Last Battalion were whisked away via submarine to Argentina and then established a base for advanced saucerlike aircraft inside the South Pole. When the Allied nations discovered what Hitler had done, eight nations, purporting to be a "scientific expedition" under the command of Adm. Richard E. Byrd, went to Antarctica to wipe out the Nazi base but were no match for the Germans' secret weapons. Authors Christof Friedrich (pseudonym of Ernst Zundel) and Mattern (no other name) speculated that the Nazis were "outer earth representatives of the 'inner earth'"—thus accounting for their racial superiority. The two men, associated with a Toronto-based clearing house for Nazi materials, made no secret of their pro-Hitler sympathies; in 1985 and 1988 Zundel would be tried in Canada for writing and distributing a book, *Did Six Million Really Die?*, which questioned the historical authenticity of the Holocaust (Heard, 1990). *Secret Nazi Polar Expeditions* was published in 1978, and the same year Zundel began soliciting funds for a hollow-earth expedition, in which a chartered airliner with a large swastika painted on its fuselage (presumably so that it would not be shot down by Nazis mistaking it for a bomber) would fly over Antarctica. Nothing came of the proposed quest.

Anti-Semitic, pro-Nazi hollow-earth themes figure

in the channeled teachings of Cosmic Awareness Communications, headquartered in Olympia, Washington, and in Norma Cox's self-published *Kingdoms Within Earth* (1985). In both of these, powerful Jewish interests ("International Bankers") conspire to enslave the earth and to hide the truth about the subterranean realms.

In the late 1970s the International Society for a Complete Earth, directed by retired U.S. Marine pilot Tawani Shoush of Houston, Missouri, hoped to fly a dirigible into the north-pole hole and return with proof of an inner world and its wonderful inhabitants—if the expedition members felt like it. Shoush told *Chicago Tribune* columnist Bob Greene that he and his party might just stay. "The hollow earth is better than our own world," he said, "and we can only speculate that we will feel like coming back" (Greene, 1978). Shoush believed the inner earthers are "Nordic" people who occasionally fly over the surface in saucers. Though he used a swastika on his stationery, he denied he did so because of Nazi sympathies.

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remains of five Avengers at 600 feet on the ocean bottom ten miles northeast of Fort Lauderdale. One plane bore the number 28, the same as of Taylor's aircraft. But on June 4 Graham Hawkes, who had headed the search, conceded that further investigation had proved the craft were not from Flight 19. The numbers on the other planes were different from those on the fabled flight. Moreover, the craft were an older generation of Avenger.

In 1985, reminiscing about the event, Willard Stoll, who had led Flight 18 half an hour in front of Taylor's flight, remarked, "What the hell happened to Charlie? Well, they didn't call those planes 'Iron Birds' for nothing. They weighed 14,000 pounds empty. So when they ditched, they went down pretty fast. But they found the *Titanic*, and maybe one day they'll find him and the others. Wherever they are, they're together."

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Hollow Earth

The idea that the Earth possesses a hollow interior that houses an underground civilization is an old one – the widespread religious belief in hell is one expression of this notion – but the first American to try to prove it was the eccentric John Cleves Symmes (1779-1829). Symmes believed that the Earth is made up of a series of concentric spheres, with 4,000-mile-wide holes at the north and south poles. In spite of massive ridicule, Symmes wrote, lectured, and lobbied vigorously for funding to mount an expedition through the poles to the interior, where he and his party would meet the inner-Earth people and open "new sources of trade and commerce."

To the rest of the world, Symmes is remembered, if at all, as the inspiration for Edgar Allan Poe's early science-fiction tale of a hollow Earth, *The Narrative of Arthur Gordon Pym* (1838). Yet Symmes was a pioneer of sorts, a man who

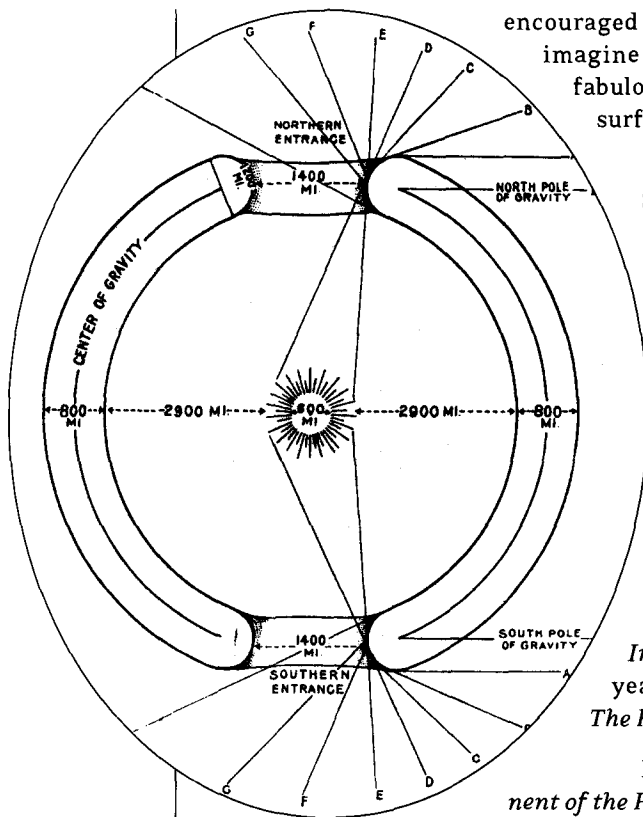


Diagram showing the Earth as a hollow sphere, from Marshall B. Gardner's *Journey to the Earth's Interior*.
(Courtesy Fortean Picture Library.)

encouraged generations of independent thinkers to imagine a new earthly geology and to dream of a fabulous race that secretly shares the planet with surface humanity.

Among the first to be infected was Symmes's own son Americus, who kept in touch with other hollow-Earth disciples and in 1878 published an anthology of his father's lectures. By this time even the spirit world had picked up on the theme. In 1871 medium M. L. Sherman brought out *The Hollow Globe*, based on supposed communications from the dead. Helene Petrova Blavatsky, founder of an influential school of occultism called Theosophy, wrote of the hollow Earth in two classic works, *Isis Unveiled* (1877) and *The Secret Doctrine* (1888). Frederick Culmer weighed in with *The Inner World* in 1886, and exactly twenty years later William Reed released his book, *The Phantom of the Poles*.

In a 1931 book, *Lemuria: The Lost Continent of the Pacific*, H. Spencer Lewis added a new ingredient to the mix when he reported that remnants of a super race, survivors of the long-ago sinking of the great Pacific continent Lemuria, dwell within Mount Shasta in northern California. (In reality, the idea of "Lemuria" was invented in the nineteenth century, first by biologist Ernst Haeckel as a hypothetical home for the original *Homo sapiens*, then elaborated by Blavatsky in her imaginative "history" of the human race. There is no geological or biological evidence that such a place ever existed.) Lewis, founder of the Ancient Mystical Order Rosae Crucis (better known as the Rosicrucians), led his followers on expeditions to the mountain in search of the secret Lemurian colony. Lemurians would not have been hard to spot. They were, according to Lewis, seven feet tall with large foreheads, in the middle of which was a growth – a "third eye" for perception both extraordinary and extrasensory. According to Lewis:

Many years ago it was quite common to hear stories whispered in Northern California about the occasional strange looking persons seen to emerge from the forests and the dense growth of trees in that region, and who would run back into hiding when discovered or seen by anyone. Occasionally one of these oddly dressed individuals would come to one of the smaller towns and trade nuggets or gold dust for some modern commodities. These odd-looking persons were not only peculiar in their dress and different in attire from any costume ever seen on the American Indian, and especially the California Indian, but distinctive in features and

complexion; tall, graceful and agile, having the appearance of being what one would term foreigners, but with larger heads, much larger foreheads, headdresses that had a special decoration that came over the center of the forehead to the bridge of the nose, and thus hid or covered a part of the forehead that many have attempted to see and study.

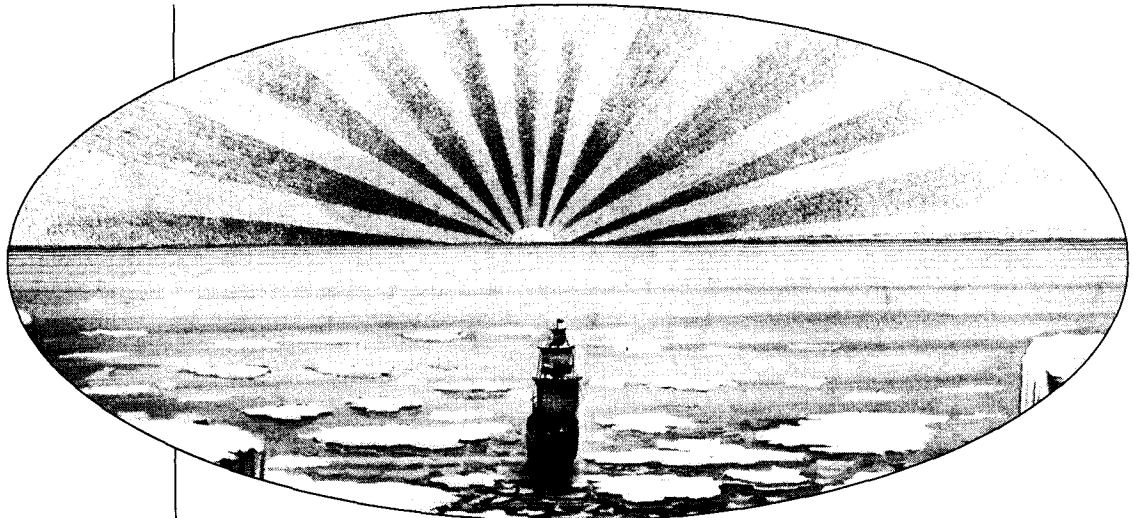
These sorts of legends would persist well into the UFO age. In a 1993 publication, one "Commander X," allegedly a retired military officer privy to the deepest secrets of the UFO cover-up, declared that Mount Shasta "has a highly charged aura which prevents the forces of darkness from penetrating anywhere nearby. Teams of Lemurians, Space Brothers and elementals[,] working jointly, meditate daily underground here to heal the planet and to keep this sacred spot from either physical or mental attack."

Ufologist Bill Hamilton reports meeting "a young, very pretty blonde girl with almond-shaped eyes and small perfect teeth" – born in 1951 "in a city called Telos that was built inside an artificial dome-shaped cavern in the Earth a mile or so beneath Mt. Shasta, California." The woman, identified only as "Bonnie," told Hamilton that she, her friend, and fellow Telosians travel via tube shuttle to visit other subterranean cities populated by survivors of Lemuria and Atlantis. "One tube connects with one of their cities in the Mato Grosse [sic] jungle of Brazil," Hamilton states. "The Lemurians have developed space travel and some flying saucers come from their subterranean bases." The Lemurians are members of a cosmic federation that links them to extraterrestrial intelligences.

Late in the nineteenth century a religion based on hollow-Earth doctrines came into being under the leadership of Cyrus Teed (1839-1908). Teed claimed to have been contacted by no less than the Mother of the Universe, who imparted some important news: he was to be the savior of the world. Teed founded a utopian community, based in Fort Myers, Florida, and dedicated it to "Koreshanity," according to which the "universe is a cell, a hollow globe, the physical body of which is the Earth; the sun is at the center. We live on the inside of the cell; and the sun, moon, planets and stars are all within the globe." In other words, the universe is inside out.

Less radical, relatively speaking, was a 1913 book, *A Journey to the Earth's Interior*, by Marshall B. Gardner, who returned to the Symmes model of the hollow Earth (though speaking ill of his mentor at every turn). Gardner thought there was an interior sun, though it was not *the* sun. This sun, 600 miles in diameter, gave the underworld a pleasant climate, allowing its inhabitants to live in tropical splendor.

By this time the hollow Earth concept, though disparaged by scientists as preposterous and physically impossible, had taken a firm hold in the imagination of many occultists. The next major occult figure to pick it up was Guy Warren Ballard (1878-1939), whose *Unveiled Mysteries* (1934), written under the pseudonym Godfré Ray King, told of an extraordinary experience the author had undergone four years earlier. Ballard wrote that while on an outing at Mount Shasta, he met a stranger who gave him a creamy liquid to drink. Once he had done so, Ballard saw the man as he "truly" was: Count Saint Germaine, an eighteenth-century occult figure who, Blavatsky had written, lived on as an immortal Tibetan Master.



The interior of the globe, with the central sun, as seen from the entrance, from Marshall Gardner's *Journey to the Earth's Interior*.

(Courtesy Mary Evans Picture Library.)

Ballard said he met the count many times after that and in his company took numerous out-of-body tours under the Earth, where he explored a beautiful world of scientific and spiritual marvels. In time he even started meeting space people under the Earth. Under Wyoming's Grand Teton Mountains he attended a conference with twelve Venusian masters. He told comparable tales in a follow-up book, *The Magic Presence* (1935), and until his death he, his wife Edna, and son Donald toured the United States and spoke to large audiences of seekers who soon joined the Ballards' occult group, The "I AM" Activity.

The Shaver mystery

Until Richard Sharpe Shaver came along, nearly all nineteenth- and twentieth-century hollow-Earth proponents spoke of the inner world's inhabitants as members of an advanced, benevolent race whom it would be desirable for human beings to meet and befriend. Shaver, however, had another story to tell. Shaver technologized hell.

In September 1943, in Chicago, *Amazing Stories* editor Ray Palmer read a letter from a Barto, Pennsylvania, reader who claimed to know of an ancient Lemurian alphabet. Palmer reprinted the alphabet in the January 1944 issue, and soon he and the reader, Richard Sharpe Shaver, were corresponding regularly.

Shaver told Palmer of his encounters with evil creatures known as "deros" – short for "detrimental robots." They were not robots as ordinarily understood; "robots" was simply a name given to races produced by genetic engineering that the "Titans," the giant people of Lemuria, performed. The Titans, some of whom were as tall as 300 feet, lived on the Earth's surface until 12,000 years ago, when they were forced to escape to distant planets. Most of the "robots" fled into great caverns under the Earth to avoid deadly radiation from the sun. (Some genetic

products of the Titans, however, stayed on the surface, adjusted, and became the present human race.) Deros – demons in all but name, and close to it even there – were degenerate, sadistic idiots who had access to the advanced Titan technology, which they used to heighten sexual pleasure during the orgies to which they were addicted. They also used the machines in marathon torture sessions on kidnapped surface people and also on the “teros” (integrative robots, who were not robots but good subterraneans who, though vastly outnumbered, were fighting the deros); they also employed the machines to cause accidents, madness, and other miseries in the world above the caves.

How did deros get that way? Shaver was never entirely coherent on the subject. Here is the answer he gave in the June 1947 issue of *Amazing*:

A dero is a cavern wight whose ancestors had the habit of bringing in the sunlight over the penetrays. Their evil nature is due to a constant “hearing” (telepathic) of sun vibrants because these same penetrays they use to bring in the sunlight and warmth were designed to handle thought-waves, to detect and augment waves of those frequencies heard by the brain. Their brains got dis (infections) on the lipoid films of the brain cells, where thought is generated. This went on for centuries, for an age, and the hereditary result was a dero, the ancient “Devil” of mythology, and his people – humans whose minds handle only disintegrant pattern thought.

In any event, between 1945 and 1948 *Amazing* and its companion pulp *Fantastic Adventures* were filled with exciting and terrifying tales of the underworld. Most of these stories bore Shaver’s byline, but Palmer was writing them. The first, “I Remember Lemuria!”, all 31,000 words of it, appeared in *Amazing*’s March 1945 issue, and in the introduction Shaver told readers of his vivid memories of life as “Mutan Mion, who lived many thousands of years ago in Sub Atlan, one of the great cities of ancient Lemuria!”

A flood of letters crossed Palmer’s desk, some from individuals who claimed they, too, had met with the deros and barely lived to tell *Amazing* about it. Chester S. Geier, one of the magazine’s regular contributors, started the Shaver Mystery Club as a way both of handling the mail and of “investigating” the “evidence” for the deros. Palmer and Shaver had caused quite a stir.

Not all readers were happy about it, however. Many were furious; convinced that some sort of swindle was afoot, they feared that the Shaver mystery would make all science-fiction fans look like fools or worse. By 1948 their protests led Ziff-Davis, *Amazing*’s parent company, to order the series stopped.

After co-founding *Fate* with Curtis Fuller in 1948, Palmer left Ziff-Davis and moved to tiny Amherst, Wisconsin, to produce his own magazines, notably *Flying Saucers* and *Mystic* (later called *Search*), which regularly featured Shaver material. In 1961 he started *The Hidden World*, a series of magazines in trade-paperback format, and over the next three years reprinted Shaver’s original articles and ran new contributions from a diminishing band of enthusiasts.

FLYING SAUCERS



JUNE, 1970 - - - Issue No. 69
WISCO 75¢

MYSTERIES OF THE SPACE AGE



FIRST PHOTOS OF THE HOLE AT THE POLE !
Satellites ESSA - 3 and ESSA -7 Penetrate Cloud Cover!
Mariners Also Photograph Martian Polar Opening!

Shaver died in Arkansas in November 1975, Palmer in Florida two years later.

Other hollow Earthers

Another *Amazing* reader who claimed to have met the deros was Maurice Doreal (born Claude Doggins). Like Ballard, he said he was friends with the Masters who lived inside Mount Shasta, though unlike Ballard he said they were from Atlantis, not Lemuria. According to him, the Atlanteans and the Lemurians lived in great caverns under the Earth and regularly visited, and received visits from, other star systems. His own occult group, the Brotherhood of the White Temple, was headquartered in the Pleiades and involved in complex interstellar diplomacy and warfare, which Doreal detailed at length in his various writings.

W. C. Hefferlin wrote *Amazing* about his adventures in Rainbow City, an abandoned extraterrestrial metropolis under the Antarctic ice. Though its inhabitants were long gone, they had left their advanced technology in place. Hefferlin's account of the space people's secrets failed to impress those readers who knew something about science; they wrote to jeer at the Rainbow City man's elementary errors, causing Hefferlin to drop out of sight for a year. He reappeared under the sponsorship of Borderland Sciences Research Associates (BSRA), an occult-oriented group headquartered in Vista, California. In various BSRA publications Hefferlin and his wife Gladys related that Rainbow City's inhabitants were a race that had settled on Mars to escape the evil Snake People. When atmosphere on Mars become unbreathable, they emigrated to Earth and settled in seven great cities (Rainbow City being the greatest of all) on the continent of Antarctica, then a tropical paradise. Unfortunately, the Snake People found out where they were and attacked, scattering the settlers all over the Earth and, incidentally, tipping the Earth over on its axis, which is how Antarctica got to be such a frigid place.

Rainbow City was revived in 1951, in Robert Ernst Dickhoff's self-published *Agharta: The Subterranean World*, and again in 1960, in *Rainbow City and the Inner Earth People*, by Michael Barton, writing as Michael X. Barton also revived the Shaver mystery, reporting that Venusians and Masters were allied in a struggle to wipe out the deros. He further claimed to be receiving psychic communications from the long-deceased Marshall Gardner, who enthusiastically endorsed Barton's book.

Far and away the most popular of all such books was *The Hollow Earth* (1964), by Raymond Bernard, the pseudonym of Walter Siegmester. Siegmester was a strange character who had operated on the fringes of the occult scene since the 1930s, promoting assorted enterprises such as a South American utopian colony (which the U.S. Post Office concluded did not exist) and publishing his bizarre theories about gender (which he believed to be unhealthy) and the male sex (a mutation that ought to be eliminated). *The Hollow Earth* contributed little new to the inner-Earth legends and in fact quoted at length from nineteenth-century texts on the subject; the rest of the book focused on Ray Palmer's ruminations as well as speculations about the alleged conspiracy to hide the truth about the hol-

Opposite Page:
Cover of *Flying Saucers* magazine, June 1970, depicting a satellite photograph allegedly showing the hole in the North Pole.
(Courtesy Fortean Picture Library.)

low Earth, flying saucers, and pole holes. Yet the book sold well, went through numerous printings, and introduced many readers to the subject.

Shaver's version of the inner Earth dominated *Secret of the Ages*, a 1974 book by Brinsley le Poer Trench (later Lord Clancarty). According to Trench, an occult-oriented saucer enthusiast, evil inner-Earthers regularly kidnapped surface people and brainwashed them into becoming their agents. Now, he said, the "ground work has . . . been prepared for a takeover of this planet by those who live inside it." Small-circulation periodicals such as Richard Toronto's *Shavertron* and, later, Dennis Crenshaw's *The Hollow Earth Insider* carried Shaver material and other inner-Earth speculation through the 1970s and into the 1990s. In the 1980s the "Dark Side" school of ufological extremism, which married far-right political conspiracy theories to paranoia-drenched UFO tall tales, incorporated deros and the hollow Earth into its complex mythology.

Nazis inside the Earth

Some hollow-Earth believers exhibit not just fascination with but open sympathy for Nazi Germany. The chief figure in the Nazi hollow-Earth movement is a Toronto man named Ernst Zundel, who writes under the name Christof Friedrich. Zundel operates a clearinghouse for Nazi materials and contends, as do other neo-Nazis, that the Holocaust never took place. In *UFOs – Nazi Secret Weapons?* (1976) he claimed that when World War II ended, Hitler and his Last Battalion boarded a submarine and escaped to Argentina; they then established a base for advanced saucer-shaped aircraft inside the hole at the South Pole. When the Allies learned what had happened, they dispatched Adm. Richard E. Byrd and a "scientific expedition" – in fact an army – to attack the Nazi base, but they were no match for the superior Nazi weapons.

To Zundel the Nazis were "outer earth representatives of the 'inner earth'." This in his view accounted for their racial superiority. In 1978, with the publication of his *Secret Nazi Polar Expeditions*, Zundel solicited funds for his own polar expedition, for which he planned to charter an airliner with a large swastika painted on its fuselage. The swastika not only would bear witness to Zundel's ideological loyalties but also let the inner-Earthers know that their visitors were friendly.

Around the same time an expedition to the opposite pole, the northern one, was being planned by Tawani Shoush of Houston, Missouri. Shoush, a retired U.S. Marine Corps pilot and head of the International Society for a Complete Earth, wanted to fly a dirigible through the pole, where he and his companions would meet the "Nordic" inner-Earthers and possibly join them permanently in their realm. "The hollow earth is better than our own world," he told *Chicago Tribune* columnist Bob Greene (October 31, 1978). Though he denied harboring Nazi sympathies, his stationery prominently featured a swastika. Neither Zundel's nor Shoush's expedition ever got off the ground, literally or figuratively.

An unambiguously pro-Nazi, anti-Semitic work, Norma Cox's self-published *Kingdoms Within Earth* (1985) held that an international Zionist conspira-

cy has hidden the truth about the hollow Earth as part of a plot to enslave the human race. In this and other homemade books, as well as in a newsletter titled *Secrets*, the unabashedly racist Cox, an elderly Arkansas woman, warned that "here in the United States the White Christian is targeted for extinction," and soon Jesus himself will do open battle with the demonic inner-Earthers and their surface-dwelling allies. In the meantime, she said, "It appears that Deros have all but taken charge of the world."

Comparable themes figure in literature published by Cosmic Awareness Communications of Olympia, Washington. The organization claims to have its information from spirit beings who channel through the group's representatives.

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Jacko

On June 30, 1884, a strange creature was captured near the village of Yale in south-central British Columbia. It was glimpsed from a passing British Columbia Express train by engineer Ned Austin, who thought it was a man lying danger-

witnesses, all of whom observed the repeat appearance, estimated that no more than a minute passed between the two sightings.

The episode ended when distraught Soviet trainmen closed the curtains and directed the three not to look out the windows.

According to Ryan's notes from the interview, "There were two lights towards the inside of the disc which remained stationary as the outer surface went around.... The lights sat near the top of the disc. If a line representing the diameter of the disc were divided into three segments, the lights would have been located at the two points of division between the middle segment and the two outside segments.... The aircraft was circular. The aircraft was round. It resembled a flying saucer" ("Senator Richard Russell's UFO Sighting," 1985).

There is no evidence that the report was ever passed on to **Project Blue Book**.

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SHAVER MYSTERY

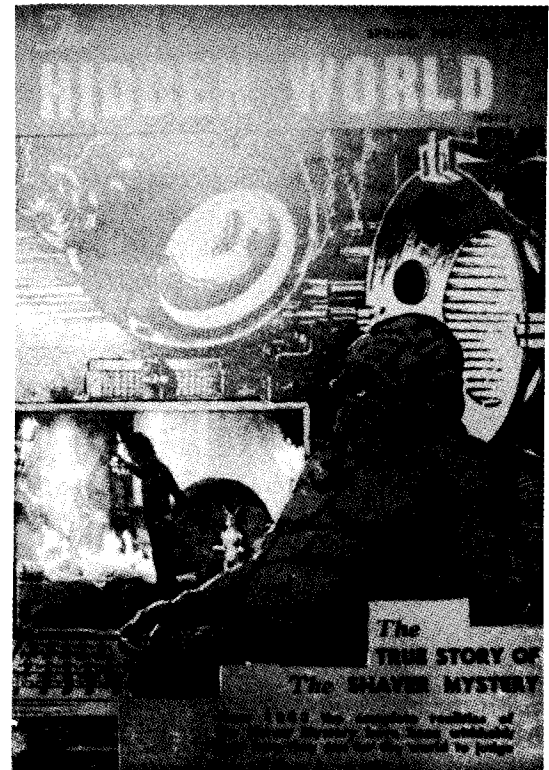
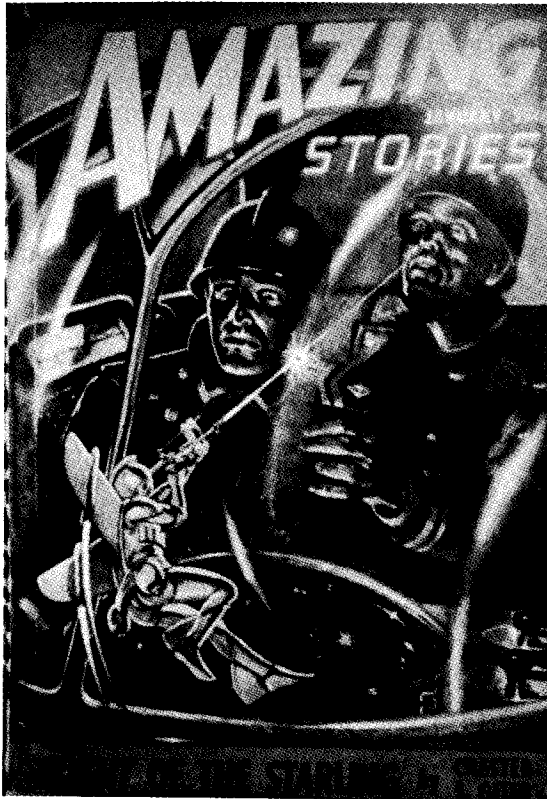
The "Shaver mystery" began, like a similarly peculiar episode, the **Allende letters**, with a crank letter which fell into the wrong hands. In this case the hands were those of *Amazing Stories* editor **Ray Palmer**, who one day in 1943 retrieved a sheet of paper from the wastebasket to which another editor, Howard Browne, had consigned it after sneering about "crackpots." The letter, from one S. Shaver of Barto, Pennsylvania, purported to reproduce an ancient alphabet from the lost civilization of Lemuria, the Pacific Ocean's equivalent of Atlantis. Palmer, always looking for something to excite his readers' interest, published the alphabet in the January 1944 issue and soon afterwards received a long manuscript from Shaver, now signing himself Richard S. Shaver, titled "A Warning to Future Man."

Fascinated, Palmer turned it into the 31,000-word

science-fiction novella "I Remember Lemuria!" and published it, under Shaver's by-line, in *Amazing's* March 1945 issue. In the introduction Shaver explains that he recalls vividly a life as "Mutan Mion, who lived many thousands of years ago in Sub Atlan, one of the great cities of ancient Lemuria!" (In fact, Lemuria is a nineteenth-century invention [Melton, Clark, and Kelly, 1990].) Palmer subsequently claimed that over the next three years, as *Amazing* devoted a significant portion of its content to the Shaver mystery, the magazine's circulation soared from 135,000 to 185,000 (Palmer, 1961), but Curtis Fuller, another editor at Ziff-Davis (which published *Amazing* and other magazines), says an audit indicated no significant change in circulation figures (Fuller, 1990).

But there was no denying that Palmer himself was hooked, and so were those of his readers who signed up to join the "Shaver Mystery Club," directed by Chester S. Geier, a regular contributor to *Amazing*. There were even those who asserted they themselves had been in the caves where according to Shaver hideous creatures dwelled. One correspondent, a certain Fred Crisman, reported that he had fought his way out of one with a submachine gun. Crisman was later to achieve lasting notoriety for his involvement in the 1947 **Maury Island hoax**. For his part Palmer went to Pennsylvania to meet Richard and Dorothy Shaver in person. The night of his arrival, as he lay in bed, he allegedly heard five voices, speaking first in English, then in an unknown tongue; the subject was their recent observation of a woman's being torn into four quarters in a cave four miles away and four miles down. "What I heard could not have come from Mr. Shaver's lips," Palmer swore. "It was humanly impossible!" (Palmer, *op. cit.*).

Many *Amazing* readers, however, were outraged, and to some hard-core, vocal science-fiction fans Shaver's claims and Palmer's promotion of them seemed a cynical exploitation of public credulity and, worse, something that could make all fantasy enthusiasts look like lunatics. Yet those who knew Shaver, both then and later, were convinced of his sincerity, even when they were unable to swallow his stories. To all appearances Shaver believed what he said, and he gave every indication of remaining firm in that conviction until his death in November 1975. Nonetheless by any reasonable standard his claims were bizarre,



The “Shaver mystery” began in the mid-1940s in the pages of the popular pulp science-fiction magazine *Amazing Stories*. Between 1961 and 1964 Ray Palmer, *Amazing’s* former editor and the “mystery’s” principal promoter, published a quarterly magazine on the subject, *The Hidden World*.

preposterous, and, in their obsession with stomach-turning sadomasochism, singularly unpleasant.

In the caverns. Shaver gave various accounts of how he came to know that we share the earth with other beings who live in vast caverns beneath the earth’s surface. Toward the end of his life, he told interviewer Gene Steinberg that while working as a fisherman in Delaware Bay, he “noticed that the clouds were doing paintings, and somebody was painting on the clouds with some apparatus, and I could talk to them, and I did talk to them ... mentally. And over a period of time, a whole summer and fall, I got quite well acquainted with the people of the underworld, just by talking to them with cloud pictures and mental voices” (Steinberg, 1973).

But in the original version of the story, Shaver first encountered a member of the underground race one night apparently in the 1930s (Shaver was always vague on dates) when a reading of Lord Byron’s

narrative poem *Manfred* convinced him that “Byron was not, strictly speaking, writing fiction” but trying to convey some reality he could not reveal outright. Shaver turned off the light and sent out a mental message, which resulted in the appearance of an apparition of a woman who seemed to read his thoughts without betraying any of her own (Shaver, 1961). Then, evidently not long afterwards, while working at his job as a welder, he began hearing mental voices which he learned emanated from depraved creatures known as “deros” (short for “detrimental robots,” though they were not robots, merely slaves to their passions) who delighted in torturing people.

Unable to shut the voices out of his head, Shaver quit his job and spent the next years in flight. During this period, by his own admission, he spent time in mental hospitals and prisons. Finally a beautiful woman, one of the “teros” (“integrative robots”—again, not ro-

bots) who opposed the deros, engineered his escape from prison and into the caverns. Later the deros killed her and the other teros with whom Shaver was living, but he managed to escape, eventually to spread the word to readers of *Amazing Stories*.

Shaver claimed that a race of giants known as the Titans or Atlans once lived on earth. These beings possessed advanced scientific knowledge and a technology far superior to our own. Twelve thousand years ago, when the sun began emanating deadly radiation, the Titans escaped into vast natural and artificial caverns, but even these were not sufficient to protect them. Consequently the most favored members of the race boarded spaceships and found refuge on distant planets. Those who remained behind either managed to adjust to the sun's rays and survive on the surface (the present-day human race) or continued to dwell in the caverns. Most of the cavern-dwellers degenerated into sadistic idiots who lived for perverted sex, violence, and cannibalism. The deros used the machines left by their ancestors to cause trouble on the surface and also to battle the teros, who struggled against overwhelming odds to foil the enemies' evil schemes. As Palmer explained it, the deros "have death rays, giant rockets that traverse in the upper air ... ground vehicles of tremendous power, machines for the revitalizing of sex known as 'stim' machines (in which these degenerates sometimes spend their whole lives in a sexual debauch that actually deforms their bodies in horrible ways almost beyond mentioning), [and] ben rays which heal and restore the body but are also capable of restoring lost energy after a debauch" (Palmer, *op. cit.*).

Beyond "Amazing." In 1948, apparently in response to complaints from irate science-fiction buffs, Ziff-Davis ordered the Shaver series dropped. (Palmer would later write, "As part of the campaign against the Mystery, 'fandom' conducted a boycott; requested your editor's dismissal in personal visits to Mr. William B. Ziff, my then employer; wrote vitriolic articles in their fan magazines; began a barrage of hoaxes designed to gain publication, then to be exposed as hoaxes so as to cast doubt on the legitimate phases of the Shaver Mystery; circulated reports that your editor was insane, had been found in his basement clutching a magnet in one hand, a piece of coal in the

other and screaming wildly that the deros were after him; criticized every story in the magazines as trash ... in order to get me relieved of my editorship; and many other things hardly of a gentlemanly or honest nature" [Palmer, 1958].) By then Palmer was involved with another magazine, *Fate*, devoted to "true mysteries" of the kind Shaver and his followers viewed as evidence that superbeings are here and interacting with us. But Curtis Fuller, his partner in the new enterprise, had minimal enthusiasm for the Shaver mystery, and the magazine ran only one article on the subject (Patton, 1950).

Palmer moved to rural Wisconsin, where Shaver now lived, and started science-fiction magazines (*Other Worlds, Imagination*) and a *Fate* competitor (*Mystic*, later *Search*) in which pieces by Shaver, both fiction and alleged fact, continued into the 1950s (Pobst, 1984). *Other Worlds* eventually became *Flying Saucers*. None of these periodicals had a circulation of more than a few thousand, and only a minority of readers had much interest in Shaver, but it was among them that the "mystery" remained a living issue. It was in *Mystic* that Shaver revealed the "secret" of the flying saucers, of which he said there are three kinds: "One kind comes from space to see the sights, or to loot the caverns under our feet; the other kind have lived here in hiding for centuries—and loot the would-be looters." The third kind are projections from the machines in the caverns (Shaver, 1956). Elsewhere Shaver wrote that "saucers do come here from other planets and are shot down from our own caverns by rays. The weird and extremely rapid maneuvers which the saucers go through are evasive measures.... Some saucers that are shot down are full of friendly people from other planets on friendly missions to Earth. Others are traders" (Shaver, 1963).

In 1961 Palmer released the first issue of *The Hidden World*, a quarterly magazine in trade-paperback format, consisting of material on the Shaver mystery. The last issue was published in 1964. Though Shaver contributed the bulk of the content, it is unclear what he wrote and what was written or rewritten by Palmer. Throughout the years of their association, Ray and Marjorie Palmer contributed generously to the financial support of the Shavers (Fuller and Fuller, 1990), reports to the contrary notwithstanding (Pobst, *op. cit.*). Palmer helped Shaver market agate stones

which when cut open with a diamond saw, so Shaver averred, were found to contain actual photographs of the Titans' world. As one nonbeliever would remark, "Many children see funny and monstrous faces in the linoleum swirls of the bathroom floor or the grain pattern of a door, and it appears Shaver found his pictures of the Titans in the same way" (Kafton-Minkel, 1989).

To some observers the only question of any interest was Palmer's true feeling about all this. Did Palmer believe it, or was the Shaver mystery a marketing ploy, a cynical editor's cruel exploitation of a man who ought to have been encouraged only to see a psychiatrist? To this day even those who had been close to Palmer, such as Curtis and Mary Margaret Fuller, have no answer to this question. But perhaps a clue is to be found in a small incident from the 1950s.

At a science-fiction convention in Chicago, Palmer found himself on the receiving end of a barrage of criticism for his role in promoting Shaver. One of his angriest accusers was a young man named Harlan Ellison, who would go on to become one of the field's most successful writers. At one point Ellison accosted Palmer in an elevator and demanded to know how he could pass off Shaver's wild tales as true. According to a story Ellison told on the air to New York radio personality Long John Nebel, Palmer responded by saying, "It was a publicity grabber to obtain circulation."

When Palmer learned of Ellison's charge, he wrote Nebel to confirm that he had indeed said as much, but "I DID NOT say that the Shaver Mystery was a hoax. I said it was a publicity and circulation getter." Palmer then went on to list the reasons for his belief in Shaver's story, citing his own experience at the Shavers's Pennsylvania home and others' claims of strange experiences in caves. The letter was not intended for publication (**Gray Barker**, who was given a copy of it, reprinted it only after Palmer's death [Palmer, 1980]), and if Palmer considered the whole business a big joke, there would have been no reason to write Nebel. Palmer may have honestly described his role in the affair: as *both* believer and exploiter—a position his critics seem unable to grasp. Martin Gardner, for example, charges that in the Shaver mystery "Palmer realized he had on his

hands the making of a monstrous swindle" which he exploited in spite of personal disbelief (Gardner, 1988), but this accusation seems based more in Gardner's imagination than in any compelling interpretation of Palmer's motives.

Palmer once told an interviewer, "Mentally, [Shaver] entered a very real world. And I don't believe that it's in actual caves in the Earth. I believe—now we get into the—what the psychics say is the astral. So if he went anywhere, it was into the astral" ("The *Caveat Emptor* Interview," 1971).

Sources of the Shaver mystery. Though sometimes even the most outlandish claims have *something* their proponents can point to as "evidence," this was not the case with the Shaver mystery. The relatively few other stories of dero, or arguably derolike, encounters are all suspect, most of them rumors, some of them outright fabrications. Shaver himself maintained that the reason it is nearly impossible to enter the caverns is that they are cleverly disguised; in any case, "millions of people besides Shaver ... know there are vast caverns under earth, full of strange, miraculously potent machinery," but "they do not speak because it is so obvious that they would be misunderstood to the point of persecution" (Shaver, 1947).

The Shaver mystery's sources are in esoteric lore about a "**hollow earth**" (Blomqvist, 1981; Harbinson, 1981; Kafton-Minkel, *op. cit.*; Ley, 1956), the books of early-twentieth-century anomaly chronicler **Charles Fort** (Shaver took seriously Fort's tongue-in-cheek suggestion that "we are property"), pulp science fiction, and sadomasochistic sexual fantasy. This last element led Howard Browne to characterize the Shaver material as the "sickest crap I'd run into" (Goulart, 1972). In later years Shaver's story changed in some fundamental ways. By 1973 the deros were no longer ancient earthlings forced underground; now, he said, "I wish I knew where the dero come from. I don't think they ever grew on Earth.... I think they came in from space as a kind of vermin chased away from other places" (Steinberg, *op. cit.*).

With Shaver's passing and Palmer's death two years later, in 1977, there was nobody left to carry on, though a newsletter, Richard Toronto's *Shavertron*, still appears from time to time. References to the Shaver mystery can still be found in fringe publica-

tions about the hollow earth (Walton, 1983), and a few writers claim, with marked hyperbole, that through Shaver, Palmer "almost singlehandedly created the myth of UFOs as extraterrestrial visitors" (Kafton-Minkel, *op. cit.*; Keel, 1983). One recent writer asserts, with even more exaggeration, that the "UFO Phenomenon in general might well be the Shaver Mystery Materialized" (Ford, 1990).

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PALMER, RAYMOND ALFRED (1910-1977)

Born on August 1, 1910, in Milwaukee, Raymond Alfred Palmer developed an early obsession with science fiction (SF). He became an active figure in organized SF fandom and in 1933 created the Jules Verne Prize Club, which passed out annual awards for distinguished achievements in the genre. In 1938 Palmer was appointed editor of Ziff-Davis' *Amazing Stories*, the first SF magazine, founded in 1926 by Hugo Gernsback. Under Palmer's editorship *Amazing* expanded its size to over 200 pages and concentrated on slam-bang action tales: "space opera," its critics dubbed it.

In 1943 Ray Palmer read a letter from a Barto, Pennsylvania, man named Richard S. Shaver, who claimed to have an alphabet from the lost continent of Lemuria. Thus began a controversial association between the two. The pages of *Amazing* soon were filled with stories and articles about the "Shaver mystery," based on Shaver's claims that malevolent beings called deros, remnants of a race of giants who once dwelled on the earth's surface, live in vast caverns and torment the human race with behavior-manipulating rays. Along with Shaver material *Amazing* published articles about unexplained phenomena such as those chronicled by Charles Fort earlier in the century. Palmer and Shaver contended that space visitors had arrived, and one illustration (on the back cover of the August 1946 issue) depicted flying discs nearly a year before such phenomena became widely known in the wake of the Kenneth Arnold sighting of June 24, 1947.

In 1948, in response to many complaints from irate SF fans who felt the whole business was a cynical hoax, Ziff-Davis ordered Palmer to drop the Shaver mystery. But in his spare time Palmer, in association with another Ziff-Davis editor, Curtis Fuller of *Flying*, was putting together a nonfiction magazine on "true mysteries," to be titled *Fate*. The first issue, released in the spring of 1948, featured UFO material prominently (including two articles by Arnold himself) and sold a healthy 50,000 copies. Within a year, however, Palmer moved from Evanston, Illinois, to Amherst,

Wisconsin, and bowed out of active participation in the magazine. In 1955 Curtis and Mary Fuller bought out his share of the magazine ("Ray Palmer Dies," 1977).

From Wisconsin he started a would-be competitor to *Fate*, *Mystic* (later *Search*), and several science-fiction titles, including one, *Other Worlds*, that would evolve, in 1957, into *Flying Saucers*, a more-or-less nonfiction title which featured articles of widely varying credibility and interest and a column of saucer-fan-club news. In his editorials Palmer continued to champion Shaver and related eccentric notions, prominent among them the hollow earth. Always looking for controversy, he picked a fight with the leading conservative UFO organization of the time, the National Investigations Committee on Aerial Phenomena (Gregory, 1958). Still, to all but a tiny, committed band of followers for whom he continued to cultivate the legend of Ray Palmer, *Flying Saucers* was mostly an exercise in irrelevance. Among those who were still paying attention, there was much talk of what Palmer really believed, and Palmer playfully catered to them as well. In 1965, when James W. Moseley asked him what he thought of flying saucers, Palmer responded, "What would you say if I told you the whole thing was a joke?" (Sachs, 1980). It appears that Palmer privately believed at least some of what he wrote—he seemed to have taken the Shaver mystery genuinely seriously, for example—but was also a natural promoter happy to sell anything his readers would buy.

Besides *Flying Saucers* and *Search*, Palmer published *The Hidden World*, a quarterly magazine in trade-paperback format, between 1961 and 1964. *Hidden World* consisted of reprints of Shaver stories and readers' comments. He also published books on occult topics, the hollow earth, and contactees, including such important titles as Orfeo Angelucci's *The Secret of the Saucers* (1955) and Bryant and Helen Reeve's *Flying Saucer Pilgrimage* (1957). Palmer died while vacationing in Florida on August 15, 1977.

As a promoter Palmer early on understood the market potential of flying saucers, but it does not follow, as some enthusiastic chroniclers have it (Ford, 1990; Kafton-Minkel, 1989; Keel, 1983; Menzel and Boyd, 1963), that he "invented" flying saucers or was main-