

'I Got a Good Look'...Another Indiana Bigfoot Tale

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By KATHY WIBERT, Leisure Time Editor

Nineteen-year-old Andy Keith didn't sleep well for a few weeks in August after an early morning encounter with an unusual visitor to his neck of the woods in northeastern Martin County.



Keith, an employee of the Martin County Highway Department, was headed to work at about 6:30 that summer morning, with the 15 mile drive ahead of him down the narrow country lanes that wind through the wooded hill country to Shoals. He had just topped a gentle rise in the road a short distance from his trailer home when he saw a strange creature cross the road some 200 feet in front of him.

The creature appeared to be half man and half beast, not unlike the legendary "Sasquatch" or "Bigfoot" which is seen from time to time in the northwestern states, according to Keith.

"I got a real good look at him," he said.

Keith said the "thing" appeared to have come across an open field from the direction of Indian Creek, and it disappeared into the heavy underbrush on the other side of the road after being sighted.

It was from six to seven feet tall and had shoulders about three and a half feet wide, according to Keith. It was covered with long black hair, streaked with gray, and had a strangely sloping head with human facial features; its arms were ape-like and hung to mid-thigh.

Keith said when he saw it, the odd creature appeared to be in a hurry, looking neither to the right nor left, and "taking" the road in about three five-foot- long strides that were curiously manlike. It left in its wake a strong, sickening odor of dead fish. According to Keith, it was the odor, more than fear, that prevented him from following the weird being.

"It stunk" he said.

"When I smelled it, I thought it was kind of crazy to follow anything that smelled that bad."

When asked whether Keith's neighbors in the sparsely- populated hill community near the Martin-Lawrence County Line were skeptical about his unlikely encounter, Keith said, "They believed me...they just weren't sure what I'd seen."

Some suggested that maybe he'd sighted a bear (which is not unheard of in that heavily wooded area which is near Crane Naval base).

"Others thought maybe I'd seen the hind end of a cow," said Keith disgustedly.

There was no doubt whatsoever in Keith's mind as to what he had seen - putting a name to it was another matter.

The next Friday, after Keith's sighting on Monday, a "Bigfoot" hobbyist from Indianapolis camped out near Indian Creek in hopes of spying the fabled creature.

After a rainy all-night vigil he left for home on Saturday.

"If he had stayed Saturday night, he would have run right into it," Keith said.

It was on Sunday that Keith and two Bloomfield men were searching for some trace of the "thing's" earlier visit when Keith discovered fresh footprints in a bottomland cornfield about one-half mile southeast of his home. Some cornstalks had been eaten off in the area of the prints which were at the edge of the field.

The footprints had to have been made sometime Saturday night or early Sunday, Keith explained, because it had rained earlier and there was no water standing in the indentations. There were two prints, 20 feet apart. One was in a grassy area, but the other was clearly defined in the rainsoftened field, and Keith made a plaster cast of it. The plaster cast shows a 15 inch-long "foot" that measures seven inches wide at the widest part and four inches wide at the heel.

The print indicates that the creature had only one big toe and no arch to its foot.

Because of the depth of the imprint, Keith estimates the-weight of Martin County's "Big-foot" to be anywhere from 400 to 500 pounds.

He said one of the men with him when the tracks were discovered weighs about 250 pounds. The man tried in vain to make an imprint as deep as the one found.

"He couldn't come close in it," Keith said-even by stomping as hard as he could.

Andy Keith's experience with "Bigfoot" isn't the first among the people in this small community. At least one man reportedly had an uncanny encounter with the strange creature three or four years ago, and rumors have had Bigfoot roaming the area for some time. Area residents are hesitant about reporting such sightings however, fearing ridicule. Keith said he, himself, sought no publicity but word of his plaster "proof" leaked out, and he has been the subject of numerous radio broadcasts and newspaper stories throughout southern Indiana.

We asked Keith's wife, Pamela, if the idea of some unidentifiable "beast-man" prowling around the countryside near her isolated home frightens her.

"I don't think about it," she said.

It's not that simple for Keith, however.

'I didn't sleep for two or three weeks after seeing him," he said.

"I still get sick when I think about it."