Chapter 28

Clues to a Cataclysm

Frank O. Klein's pinpointing of the north magnetic poles' locations at positions 125 to 200 miles further north than was earlier predicted attracted great interest in the scientific community, particularly among top government scientists under Vannevar Bush. Since 1831, when the first observations were made, the magnetic north pole had remained almost static on Boothia Peninsula until 1945 (from 70°06'N-96°54'W 70°30'N-96°00'W). Klein's discovery in 1948 that the main magnetic north pole had moved to the northwestern shore of Prince of Wales Island (73°15'N-99°45'W) revealed that it had dramatically moved 165 miles closer to the geographic north pole.[1] The government scientists subsequently began a scientific investigation into the ramifications of Klein's findings. Many of their study groups, held at the Pentagon, were attended by Major White and Dr. Paul Siple.

The first determination of the Pentagon study was that while the rate of northward magnetic polar movement (which Dr. Paul Siple sought to establish) seemed to be unpredictable, it had been in a decidedly north-north-westerly direction, moving ever closer to the geographic North Pole. The question in the minds of many in the scientific community was what would happen if and when the magnetic pole converged on the geographic pole. Was there a connection between the powerful geomagnetic forces involved in polar movement and the mechanism that caused geologic change?

The forces that have created mountains have remained a mystery, and yet there has to be an explanation for high strata of mountain rock containing marine fossils. Some tremendous force had to lift up the land with such pressure so as to raise former sea beds to high altitudes. There must be some reason why "beaches" of sand formed from ocean-wave action are found at 1500-foot altitudes in the mountains of Italy.[2] Scientists have not yet been able to agree on whether the change that raised the sea beds was slow or rapid.

Spitzbergen is an island well within the Arctic Circle, and is now snow and icebound most of the year. Yet on Spitzbergen there is ample evidence that tropical corals once grew on the shores of the island.[3] Spitzbergen also has considerable coal deposits, attesting to the island's once-temperate or tropical climate. Also found there were numerous fossils of water lilies imbedded in lignite, also confirming that the island once had a warm and marshy environment.[4] How can we explain the once-temperate climate of this arctic region unless either the whole earth was once warmer than it is now, or unless the poles were in a different location relative to the earth's crust?

When Admiral Byrd went to the Antarctic from 1933 to 1935, his expedition found leaf stem imprints and fossilized wood under the snow and ice.[5] Sir Ernest Shackleton found coal beds within 200 miles of the geographic South Pole, evidence of massive primeval forestation in Antarctica.[6] The explanation is not as obvious as saying that the Antarctic was once devoid of ice so that the plants

and forests could grow. We still must account for the fact that massive forestation doesn't occur where there are six months of darkness during the year, a characteristic of a polar area.

Also found near the geographic South Pole were the fossilized footprints of a prehistoric mammal-like reptile.[7] Since reptiles are known to be cold-blooded, and need the warmth of the environment to sustain their body heat, it is evident that the Antarctic did not always have a cold climate. If this is true, Antarctica could not have always been located at the south geographic pole.

Although the phenomena referred to as Ice Ages are an accepted fact, few scientists can agree on how they are caused. Not only have mile-high ice sheets covered the northern North American continent as far south as New Jersey, Ohio and Wisconsin; but Europe, Africa and India have had their ice ages too. There are many theories as to how they are caused, but none have been proven. We are left with numerous explanations, some plausible, and some improbable. The last Ice Age is believed to have ended only about 10,000 years ago, leaving many mysteries unsolved.

Millions of animals were frozen alive by the sudden glacial conditions of the last ice age, and hundreds of thousands have been found as they died, buried frozen in the ground. The New Siberian Islands, located 200 miles off the northern coast of Siberia, are almost literally composed of the bones and remains of multitudes of prehistoric mammoths, saber-toothed cats, giant beavers (the size of goats), prehistoric rhinoceros, buffalo, deer, horses, and other small mammals.[8] How could so many of these animals (also found throughout Siberia and Alaska) be frozen intact within the ground in such a way that ten thousand years later their flesh, when thawed, was said to be "edible"? Indeed, at one Russian scientist's banquet the main course consisted of quite palatable mammoth steaks.[9] Another question is how the tundra of northern Siberia and Alaska could have supported such large populations of prehistoric animals, unless the Arctic once had a temperate climate with lush vegetation?

It is well-known that tree rings are a measure of tree growth over annual seasons. Why then do prehistoric frozen tree trunks unearthed in Spitzbergen, Norway, have no rings?[10] Only if there were once no seasons in Spitzbergen would the trees have no rings. But the only place on earth where there are no seasons is at the equator. If the earth's equator once passed through or near Spitzbergen, then it is obvious that, relative to the earth's crust, the earth's geographic poles would once have to have been in different locations than they are now. What caused their apparent shift?

An expedition digging in the Canadian Archipelago only a few hundred miles from the geographic North Pole found under the ice and snow hundreds of frozen (not petrified) prehistoric tree trunks, shattered as though by massive tidal wave activity, and buried in the sand. Beneath the surface they found another layer of similar tree trunks, and beneath that layer yet another, until they had identified nine different levels of evidence of catastrophic change.[11] Not only was the Arctic apparently once a highly forested temperate or tropical region, but it was subject to periodic cataclysmic upheavals.

It is clear that there have been times in the earth's history when geologic change has upset the living conditions of its flora and fauna. Many examples argue that such changes are violent and dramatic. As Professor Frank C. Hibben points out in his book *The Lost Americans*:

> The Alaskan muck is like a fine, dark gray sand...Within this mass, frozen solid, lie the twisted parts of animals and trees intermingled with lenses of ice and layers of peat and mosses. It looks as though in the midst of some cataclysmic catastrophe of ten thousand years ago the whole Alaskan world of living animals and plants was suddenly frozen in midmotion in a grim charade...
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> Throughout the Yukon and its tributaries, the gnawing currents of the river had eaten into many a frozen bank of muck to reveal bones and tusks of these animals protruding at all levels. Whole gravel bars in the muddy river were formed of the jumbled fragments of animal remains...
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> The Pleistocene period ended in death. This is no ordinary extinction of a vague geological period which fizzled to an uncertain end. This death was catastrophic and all-inclusive... The large animals that had given their name to the period became extinct. Their death marked the end of an era.
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> But how did they die! What caused the extinction of forty million animals? This mystery forms one of the oldest detective stories in the world. A good detective story involves humans and death. These conditions are met at the end of the Pleistocene. In this particular case, the death was of such colossal proportions as to be staggering to contemplate.[12]

If life on earth can be subject to such wholesale destruction, there is much to be said for learning all that we can about the geological forces involved.