PROJECT SCROLL RESEARCH NOTE 2026-33

Nine feet from a five-foot bush: the 1964 wire record of the Dewey Lake Monster, Silver Creek Township, Michigan

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SUMMARY

In June 1964 reports of a large, hairy creature on two legs near Dewey Lake, in the Sister Lakes country of Cass County, Michigan, filled the wire services. The figure every later telling repeats, about nine feet and 500 pounds, went out on the Associated Press of 11 June as a description "pieced together by police from residents' complaints." The *National Observer*, as reprinted in *The Observer's World* (1965), traces the height to one man: "the accepted set of dimensions was established by farmer Utrup," who saw the thing standing behind a bush in his yard, measured the bush the next day at five feet, "and estimated that whatever he had seen stood four feet above that." The same AP story settles a disagreement among later books over Gordon Brown's encounter: his car's headlights lit the thing "standing between Utrup's barn and a shed," and then he "got a flashlight and followed the creature into a field near some woods." And the AP of 13 June names the conservation officer whom Wikipedia calls William Rowe as "Conservation Officer Bill Roe," who thought the creature a bear lured by swamp huckleberries.

THE RECORD

1. ***Escanaba Daily Press*, 11 June 1964, p. 1 (Associated Press, Sister Lakes)**

> *"For anyone contemplating monster hunting, here is a description of 'the thing,' as pieced together by police from residents' complaints: 'About nine feet tall. About 500 pounds. All hair up to its neck. Had black face.'" And: "He said the headlights of his car illuminated the thing standing between Utrup's barn and a shed. Brown said he got a flashlight and followed the creature into a field near some woods."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/escanaba-daily-press-1964-06-11)

2. ***The Observer's World: People, Places, and Events from the Pages of the National Observer* (1965), p. 97**

> *"the accepted set of dimensions was established by farmer Utrup, who said the day after he saw it standing behind ..." and "... in his yard he measured the bush, found it was five feet high, and estimated that whatever he had seen stood four feet above that."*

Internet Archive (borrow; read in full-text search) · See the record (https://archive.org/details/observersworldpe0000char)

3. ***Escanaba Daily Press*, 13 June 1964 (Associated Press)**

> *"Conservation Officer Bill Roe, believe[s] the reported apparition is nothing more than a bear far from its regular haunts, but brought to the area by the lure of swamp huckleberries. 'Odds-on, that's what it probably is,' he says."*

Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/details/escanaba-daily-press-1964-06-13)

4. ***Michigan Anomaly Research, Report on Current Research*, vol. 1, no. 2 (Winter 1980), p. 2**

> *"1962—Gen—Sister Lakes, Michigan. A Bigfoot-type creature is reportedly seen. Nine feet tall; black face; 'big, bright, shining eyes.'"*

Eastern Michigan University, Marcello Truzzi papers, via Internet Archive · See the record (https://archive.org/download/emu-truzzi-bwp/MICHIGAN%20ANOMALY%20RESEARCH%20REPORT%202_text.pdf)

WHAT IT CHANGES

The monster's famous height has a traceable origin, a farmer's estimate against a five-foot bush, and by 11 June the wire was giving the composite as the police's, not a witness's. Brown's car and his flashlight are one sequence, not two versions. The conservation officer's name, as the AP gave it, is Bill Roe.

LIMITS

The *Observer* passage was read in the 1965 book's reprint, through full-text search of a lending copy; its date in June 1964 is taken from the book. The AP texts were read in one Michigan paper; other printings may differ in wording. The spelling "Roe" is the AP's. The 1980 survey's 1962 entry gives no source of its own.

WHAT WE SEARCHED BEFORE CALLING IT NEW

Wikipedia's Dewey Lake Monster article; Robert Atkinson's survey of the 1964 papers (2017); Hammond, *Mysterious Michigan* (2022); *FATE* (1964), Steiger (1969), Keel (1970) and Bord (1982) in Internet Archive full-text search; web searches for Utrup with

the height, and for “Bill Roe” with the Dewey Lake Monster (October 2026), which find only Wikipedia’s “Rowe.”

Our standard for calling a finding new is set out in How we research (projectscroll.com/how-we-research/), and how we weigh each kind of record in Scrollsigns (projectscroll.com/scrollsigns/).

“New” means new to print as far as we can tell. If you know of an earlier publication, tell us and we will credit it here and raise the note’s version.

WORKS CITED

Earlier work, catalogues and databases named in this note, besides the records quoted above.

1. Michael Urbanski, “The True Story of the Dewey Lake Monster: The Week the Valley Went Wild,” *Project Scroll* (2026). https://projectscroll.com/news/the-week-dewey-lake-went-wild/
2. “Dewey Lake Monster,” *Wikipedia* (accessed October 2026). https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dewey_Lake_Monster
3. Robert Atkinson, “Monster Town USA: The 1964 Sister Lakes Monster Sightings” (29 July 2017). https://www.robert-atkinson.com/monster-town-usa-the-1964-sister-lakes-monster-sightings/

THE FULL STORY

The finding is set out in context, with the rest of its sources, in The True Story of the Dewey Lake Monster: The Week the Valley Went Wild (projectscroll.com/news/the-week-dewey-lake-went-wild/). In the discoveries register:

- `dewey-bush-nine-feet` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#dewey-bush-nine-feet)
- `dewey-nine-feet-origin` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#dewey-nine-feet-origin)
- `dewey-brown-sequence` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#dewey-brown-sequence)
- `dewey-bill-roe` (projectscroll.com/discoveries/#dewey-bill-roe)

HOW TO CITE THIS NOTE

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BibTeX

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