

The *Gale Encyclopedia of the Unusual and Unexplained* (GEUU) presents comprehensive and objective information on unexplained mysteries, paranormal abilities, supernatural events, religious phenomena, magic, UFOs, and myths that have evolved into cultural realities. This extensive three-volume work is a valuable tool providing users the opportunity to evaluate the many claims and counterclaims regarding the mysterious and unknown. Many of these claims have been brought to the forefront from television, motion pictures, radio talk shows, best-selling books, and the Internet.

There has been a conscious effort to provide reliable and authoritative information in the most objective and factual way possible, to present multiple viewpoints for controversial subject topics, and to avoid sensationalism that taints the credibility of the subject matter. The manner of presentation enables readers to utilize their critical thinking skills to separate fact from fiction, opinion from dogma, and truth from legend regarding enigmas that have intrigued, baffled, and inspired humankind over the centuries.

PREFACE

ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND ADVISORS

Brad E. Steiger has written over 150 books with over 17 million copies in print. His vast writing experience includes biographies, books of inspiration, phenomenon and the paranormal, spirituality, UFO research, and crimes. His first articles on the paranormal appeared in 1954 and, today, he has produced over 2,000 articles on such themes. Steiger has appeared on such television programs as *Nightline with Ted Koppel*, *ABC Evening News with Peter Jennings*, *NBC Evening News with Tom Brokaw*, *This Week* (with David Brinkley, Sam Donaldson, and Cokie Roberts), *The Mike Douglas Show*, *The David Susskind Show*, *The Joan Rivers Show*, *Entertainment Tonight*, *Haunted Hollywood*, *Inside Edition*, *The Unexplained*, and *Giants: The Myth and the Mystery*. Sherry Hansen Steiger is a co-author of 24 books on a variety of topics on the unusual

and unexplained with her husband Brad. Her continual studies in alternative medicine and therapies led to the 1992 official creation of The Office of Alternative Medicine under the Institutes of Health, Education and Welfare in Bethesda, Maryland. Both Steigers have served as consultants for such television shows as *Sightings* and *Unsolved Mysteries*.

The advisors for *GEUU* are Judy T. Nelson, the Youth Services Coordinator for the Pierce County Library System in Tacoma, Washington; Lee Sprince, former Head of Youth Services for the Broward County Main Library in Fort Lauderdale, Florida; and Brad E. Steiger, author of Gale's former Visible Ink Press title *The Werewolf Book: The Encyclopedia of Shape-Shifting Things*. For *GEUU*, both Nelson and Sprince were consulted on *GEUU*'s subject content, its appropriateness, and format; Steiger advised on the content's organization before he became the author of *GEUU*.

FORMAT

The *Gale Encyclopedia of the Unusual and Unexplained* consists of fourteen broad-subject chapters covering a wide range of high-interest topics: Afterlife Mysteries; Mediums and Mystics; Religious Phenomena; Mystery Religions and Cults; Secret Societies; Magic and Sorcery; Prophecy and Divination; Objects of Mystery and Power; Places of Mystery and Power; Ghosts and Phantoms; Mysterious Creatures; Mysteries of the Mind; Superstitions, Strange Customs, Taboos, and Urban Legends; and Invaders from Outer Space. Each chapter begins with an **Overview** that summarizes the chapter's concept in a few brief sentences. Then the **Chapter Exploration** provides a complete outline of the chapter, listing all topics and subtopics therein, so that the user can understand the interrelationships between the chapter's topics and its subtopics. An **Introduction** consisting of 6 to 12 paragraphs follows; it broadly describes the chapter's theme. Then each topic is

explored, along with each subtopic, developing relevant concepts, geographic places, persons, practices, etc. After each topic, a **Delving Deeper** section provides complete bibliographical citations of books, periodicals, television programs, Internet sites, movies, and theses used, and provides users with further research opportunities. **Boldfaced cross-references** are used to guide users from the text to related entries found elsewhere in the three volumes. Sidebars supplement the text with unusual facts, features, and biographies, as well as descriptions of web sites, etc.

Each chapter contains photographs, line drawings, and original graphics that were chosen to complement the text; in all three volumes, over 250 images enliven the text. Many of these images are provided by Fortean Picture Library—"a pictorial archive of mysteries and strange phenomena"—and from the personal archives of the author, Brad Steiger. At the end of each chapter, a glossary, called **Making the Connection**, lists significant terms, theories, and practices mentioned within the text. A comprehensive glossary of the terms used throughout all three volumes can be found at the end of each volume.

Each volume has a cumulative **Table of Contents** allowing users to see the organization of each chapter at a glance. The **Cumulative Index**, found in each volume, is an alphabetic arrangement of all people, places, images, and concepts found in the text. The page references to the terms include the volume number as well as the page number; images are denoted by italicized page numbers.

USER COMMENTS ARE WELCOME

Users having comments, corrections, or suggestions can contact the editor at the following address: *Gale Encyclopedia of the Unusual and Unexplained*, The Gale Group, Inc., 27500 Drake Rd., Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535.

UNDERSTANDING THE UNKNOWN

The belief in a reality that transcends our everyday existence is as old as humanity itself and it continues to the present day. In fact, in recent years there has been a tremendous surge of interest in the paranormal and the supernatural. People speak freely of guardian angels, a belief in life after death, an acceptance of extrasensory perception (ESP), and the existence of ghosts. In a Gallup Poll released on June 10, 2001, the survey administrators found that 54 percent of Americans believe in spiritual or faith healing; 41 percent acknowledge that people can be possessed by the devil; 50 percent accept the reality of ESP; 32 percent believe in the power of prophecy; and 38 percent agree that ghosts and spirits exist.

INTRODUCTION

What are the origins of these age-old beliefs? Are they natural phenomenon that can be understood by the physical sciences? Some scientists are suggesting that such mystical experiences can be explained in terms of neural transmitters, neural networks, and brain chemistry. Perhaps the feeling of transcendence that mystics describe could be the result of decreased activity in the brain's parietal lobe, which helps regulate the sense of self and physical orientation. Perhaps the human brain is wired for mystical experiences and the flash of wisdom that illuminated the Buddha, the voices that Mohammed and Moses heard in the wilderness, and the dialogues that Jesus had with the Father were the result of brain chemistry and may someday be completely explained in scientific terms.

Perhaps the origin of these beliefs is to be found in psychology? Humankind's fascination with the unknown quite likely began with the most basic of human emotions—fear. Early humans faced the constant danger of being attacked by predators, of being killed by people from other tribes, or of falling victim to the sudden fury of a natural disaster, such as flood, fire, or avalanche. Nearly all of these violent encounters brought about the death of a friend or family member, so one may surmise that chief among the mysteries that troubled early

humans was the same one that haunts man today: What happens when someone dies?

But belief in the unknown may be more than brain chemistry or a figment of our fears. Perhaps there is some spiritual reality that is outside of us, but with which one can somehow communicate? Perhaps the physical activity of the brain or psychological state (the two are of course related) may be only a precondition or a conduit to a transcendent world? The central mystery may always remain.

GHOSTLY ENTITIES AND URBAN LEGENDS

There is not a single known culture on planet Earth that does not have its ghost stories, and one can determine from Paleolithic cave paintings that the belief that there is something within the human body that survives physical death is at least 50,000 years old. If there is a single unifying factor in the arena of the unknown and the unexplained it is the universality of accounts of ghostly entities. Of course, not everyone agrees on the exact nature of ghosts. Some insist that the appearance of ghosts prove survival after death. Others state that such phenomena represent other dimensions of reality.

And then there are the skeptics who group most ghost stories in the category of "Urban Legends," those unverifiable stories about outlandish, humorous, frightening, or supernatural events. In some instances, the stories are based on actual occurrences that have in their telling and retelling been exaggerated or distorted. Other urban legends have their origins in people misinterpreting or misunderstanding stories that they have heard or read in the media or from actual witnesses of an event. There is usually some distance between the narrator and his tale; all urban legends claim that the story always happened to someone else, most often "a friend of a friend."

THE ROOTS OF SUPERSTITION

Whatever their basis in reality, certain beliefs and practices of primitive people

helped ease their fear and the feeling of helplessness that arose from the precariousness of their existence. Others in the community who took careful note of their behavior ritualized the stories of those who had faced great dangers and survived. In such rituals lies the origin of "superstition," a belief that certain repeated actions or words will bring the practitioner luck or ward off evil. Ancient superstitions survive today in such common practices as tossing a pinch of salt over the shoulder or whispering a blessing after a sneeze to assure good fortune.

The earliest traces of magical practices are found in the European caves of the Paleolithic Age, c. 50,000 B.C.E. in which it seems clear that early humans sought supernatural means to placate the spirits of the animals they killed for food, to dispel the restless spirits of the humans they had slain, or to bring peace to the spirits of their deceased tribal kin. It was at this time that early humans began to believe that there could be supernatural powers in a charm, a spell, or a ritual to work good or evil on their enemies. Practices, such as imitating the animal of the hunt through preparatory dance, cutting off a bit of an enemy's hair or clothing to be used in a charm against him, or invoking evil spirits to cause harm to others, eventually gained a higher level of sophistication and evolved into more formal religious practices.

As such beliefs developed, certain tribal members were elevated in status to shaman and magician because of their ability to communicate with the spirit worlds, to influence the weather, to heal the sick, and to interpret dreams. Shamans entered a trance-like condition separating them from life's mundane existence and allowing them to enter a state of heightened spiritual awareness. According to anthropologists, shamanic methods are remarkably similar throughout the world. In our own time, Spiritualist mediums who claim to be able to communicate with the dead remain popular as guides for contemporary men and women, and such individuals as John Edward, James Van Praagh, and Sylvia Browne issue advice from the Other Side on syndicated television programs.

MONSTERS AND NIGHT TERRORS

Stone Age humans had good reason to fear the monsters that emerged from the darkness. Saber-tooth tigers stalked man, cave bears mauled them, and rival hominid species—many appearing more animal-like than human—struggled against them for dominance. The memories of the ancient night terrors surface in dreams and imagination, a kind of psychic residue of primitive fears. Anthropologists have observed that such half-human, half-animal monsters as the werewolf and other werereatures were painted by Stone Age artists more than 10,000 years ago. Some of the world's oldest art found on ancient sites in Europe, Africa, and Australia depict animal-human hybrids. Such “therianthropes,” or hybrid beings, appear to be the only common denominator in primitive art around the planet. These werewolves, were-lions, and were-bats belonged to an imagined world which early humans saw as powerful, dangerous, and frightening.

Images of these creatures persisted into the historical period. The ancient Egyptians often depicted their gods as human-animal hybrids. Pharaoh identified himself with the god Horus, who could be represented as a falcon or a falcon-headed human. Anubis, the god of the necropolis, can be shown as a jackal-headed man, probably because such carrion-eating jackals prowled Egyptian cemeteries. Many other civilizations felt the power of these kinds of images. For example, the ancient Greeks fashioned the minotaur (half-human, half-bull), the satyr (half-human, half-goat), the harpy (half-woman, half-bird) and a host of other hybrid entities—the vast majority unfavorably disposed toward humankind. Examples could be found in other cultures as well.

CUSTOMS AND TABOOS

In 2001, scientists were surprised when bits of stone etched with intricate patterns found in the Blombos Cave, east of Cape Town on the southern African shores of the

Indian Ocean, were dated at 77,000 years old, thereby indicating that ancient humans were capable of complex behavior and abstract thought thousands of years earlier than previously believed. In Europe, numerous sites have been excavated and artifacts unearthed that prove that structured behavior with customs and taboos existed about 40,000 years ago.

Customs are those activities that have been approved by a social group and have been handed down from generation to generation until they have become habitual. When an action or activity violates behavior considered appropriate by a social group, it is labeled a “taboo,” a word borrowed from the Polynesians of the South Pacific. An act that is taboo is forbidden, and those who transgress may be ostracized by others or, in extreme instances, killed.

However, customs vary from culture to culture, and customary actions in one society may be considered improper in another. While the marriage of near-blood relations is prohibited in contemporary civilization, in earlier societies it was quite common. The ancient brother and sister gods of Egypt, Osiris and Isis, provided an example for pharaohs, who at times married their sisters. Polygamy, the marriage of one man and several women or one woman and several men, is prohibited in modern civilization, but there are still religious groups in nearly every nation who justify plural marriages as being ordained by the deity they worship. Adultery, an act of infidelity on the part of a married individual, is one of the most universal taboos. The code of Moses condemned both parties involved in the act to be stoned to death. Hindu religious doctrines demand the death, mutilation, or humiliation of both men and women, depending upon the caste of the guilty parties.

Taboos can change within a society over time. Many acts that were once considered forbidden have developed into an acceptable social activity. While some of the old customs and taboos surrounding courtship and marriage, hospitality and etiquette, and burials and funerals may seem amusing or quaint, primitive or savage, certain elements of such acts as capturing one's bride have been pre-

served in many traditions that are still practiced in the modern marriage ceremony.

BELIEF IN AN AFTERLIFE

Belief in the survival of some part of us after death may also be as old as the human race. Although one cannot be certain the earliest members of man's species (*Homo sapiens* c. 30,000 B.C.E.) conducted burial rituals that would qualify them as believers in an afterlife, one does know they buried their dead with care and consideration and included food, weapons, and various personal belongings with the body. Anthropologists have also discovered the Neanderthal species (c. 100,000 B.C.E.) placed food, stone implements, and decorative shells and bones with the deceased. Because of the placement of such funerary objects in the graves, one may safely conjecture that these prehistoric people believed death was not the end. There was some part of the deceased requiring nourishment, clothing, and protection in order to journey safely in another kind of existence beyond the grave. This belief persisted into more recent historical times. The ancient Egyptians had a highly developed concept of life after death, devoting much thought and effort to their eternal well-being, and they were not the only early civilization to be concerned about an afterlife.

With all their diversity of beliefs, the major religions of today are in accord in one essential teaching: Human beings are immortal and their spirit comes from a divine world and may eventually return there. The part of the human being that survives death is known in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam as the soul—the very essence of the individual person that must answer for its earthly deeds, good or bad. Hinduism perceives this spiritual essence as the divine Self, the *Atman*, and Buddhism believes it to be the summation of conditions and causes. Of the major world religions, only Buddhism does not perceive an eternal metaphysical aspect of the human personality in the same way that the others do. However, all the major faiths believe that after the spirit has left the body, it moves on to

another existence. The physical body is a temporary possession that a human has, not what a person is.

The mystery of what happens when the soul leaves the body remains an enigma in the teachings of the major religions; however, as more and more individuals are retrieved from clinical death by the miracles of modern medicine, literature describing near-death-experiences has arisen which depicts a transition into another world or dimension of consciousness wherein the deceased are met by beings of light. Many of those who have returned to life after such an experience also speak of a life-review of their deeds and misdeeds from childhood to the moment of the near-death encounter.

PROPHECY AND DIVINATION

The desire to foresee the future quite likely began when early humans began to perceive that they were a part of nature, subject to its limitations and laws, and that they were seemingly powerless to alter those laws. Mysterious supernatural forces—sometimes benign, often hostile—appeared to be in control of human existence.

Divination, the method of obtaining knowledge of the future by means of omens or sacred objects, has been practiced in all societies, whether primitive or civilized. The ancient Chaldeans read the will of the gods in the star-jeweled heavens. The children of Israel sought the word of the Lord in the jewels of the Ephod. Pharaoh elevated Joseph from his prison cell to the office of chief minister of Egypt and staked the survival of his kingdom on Joseph's interpretation of his dreams. In the same land of Egypt, priests of Isis and Ra listened as those deities spoke through the unmoving lips of the stone Sphinx.

Throughout the centuries, soothsayers and seers have sought to predict the destiny of their clients by interpreting signs in the entrails of animals, the movements of the stars in the heavens, the reflections in a crystal ball, the spread of a deck of cards, and even messages from the dead. All of these ancient practices are still being utilized today by those who wish to know the future.

OBJECTS AND PLACES OF MYSTERY AND POWER

Objects of mystery and power that become influential in a person's life can be an everyday item that an individual has come to believe will bring good fortune, such as an article of clothing that was worn when some great personal success was achieved or an amulet that has been passed on from generation to generation. In addition to such items of personal significance, some individuals have prized objects that reportedly brought victory or good fortune to heroes of long ago. Still others have searched for mysterious relics filled with supernatural attributes that were credited with accomplishing miracles in the past. No physical evidence is available to determine that such an object as the Ark of the Covenant ever existed, but its present location continues to be sought. The Holy Grail, the cup from which Jesus drank at the Last Supper, is never mentioned in the Bible, but by medieval times it had been popularized as the holiest relic in Christendom.

In addition to bestowing mystery and power upon certain objects, humans have always found or created places that are sacred to them—sites where they might gather to participate in religious rituals or where they might retreat for solitude and reflection. In such places, many people claim to experience a sense of the sublime. Others, while in a solemn place of worship or in a natural setting, attest to feeling a special energy that raises their consciousness and perhaps even heals their physical body.

Mysterious megaliths (large stones) were those placed at a special location by ancient people. Such sites include the standing stones of Brittany, the Bighorn Medicine Wheel in Wyoming, and the monuments of Easter Island. All of these places were ostensibly significant to an ancient society or religion, but many were long abandoned by the time they became known to today's world and their significance remains unexplained.

The most well-known megalithic structures are Stonehenge in Great Britain and the complex of pyramids and the Great Sphinx in

Egypt. Like many such ancient places, those sites have been examined and speculated upon for centuries, yet they still continue to conceal secrets and occasionally yield surprising information that forces new historical interpretations of past societies.

There are other places that have become mysterious sites because of unusual occurrences. The claimed miraculous healing at Lourdes, France, the accounts of spiritual illumination at Jerusalem and Mecca, and the sacred visions at Taos, New Mexico, provide testimonies of faith and wonder that must be assessed by each individual.

There are also the "lost" civilizations and mysterious places that may never have existed beyond the human imagination. More than 2,500 years ago, legends first began about Atlantis, an ideal society that enjoyed an abundance of natural resources, great military power, splendid building and engineering feats, and intellectual achievements far advanced over those of other lands. This ancient society was described as existing on a continent-sized area with rich soil, plentiful pure water, abundant vegetation, and such mineral wealth that gold was inlaid in buildings. In the ensuing centuries, no conclusive evidence of Atlantis has been found, but its attributes have expanded to include engineering and technological feats that enhance its legendary status.

Sometimes legends come to life. The Lost City of Willkapanpa the Old, a city rumored to consist primarily of Incan rulers and soldiers, was not discovered until 1912 when a historian from Yale University found the site now known as Machu Picchu hidden at 8,000 feet in altitude between two mountains, Huayana Picchu ("young mountain") and Machu Picchu ("ancient mountain") in Peru.

MYSTERY SCHOOLS AND CULTS

Once a religion has become firmly established in a society, dissatisfied members often will break away from the larger group to create what they believe to be a more valid form of

religious expression. Sometimes such splinter groups are organized around the revelations and visions of a single individual, who is recognized as a prophet by his or her followers. Because the new teachings may be judged as heretical to the original body of worshippers, those who follow the new revelations are branded as cultists or heretics.

Even in ancient times, the dissenters were forced to meet in secret because of oppression by the established group or because of their desire to hide their practices. Since only devotees could know the truths of their faith, adherents were required to maintain the strictest silence regarding their rites and rituals. The term “mysteries” or “mystery religion” is applied to these beliefs. The word “mystery” comes from the Greek word *myein*, “to close,” referring to the need of the *mystes*, the initiate, to close his or her eyes and the lips and to keep secret the rites of the cult.

In ancient Greece, postulants of the mystery religions had to undergo a rigorous initiation that disciplined both their mind and body. In order to attain the self-mastery demanded by the priests of the mysteries, the neophytes understood that they must restructure their physical, moral, and spiritual being to gain access to the hidden forces in the universe. Only through complete mastery of oneself could one see beyond death and perceive the pathways of the after-life. Many times these mysteries were taught in the form of a play and were celebrated in sacred groves or in secret temples away from the cities.

In contemporary usage, the word “cult” generally carries with it negative connotations and associations. In modern times, a number of apocalyptic cults, such as the Branch Davidians and the People’s Temple, have alarmed the general population by isolating themselves and preparing for Armageddon, the last great battle between good and evil. The mass suicides carried out by members of Heaven’s Gate, People’s Temple, and Order of the Solar Temple have also presented alarming images of what many believe to be typical cultist practice. Recent statistics indicate that there are 2,680 religions in the United States. Therefore, one must be cautious in labeling

any seemingly unorthodox religion as a cult, for what is regarded as anti-social or blasphemous expression by some may be hailed as sincere spiritual witness by others.

SECRET SOCIETIES AND CONSPIRACIES

There will always be envious individuals who believe that wealthy and powerful members of society have been able to acquire their position only because of secret formulas, magical words, and supernatural rituals. Rumors and legends of secret societies have fueled the imaginations, fears, and envy of those on the outside for thousands of years. Many secret societies, such as the Assassins, the Garduna, the Thuggee, and the Tongs, were made up of highly trained criminals who were extremely dangerous to all outsiders. Others, such as the Knights Templar, the Illuminati, and the Rosicrucians, were said to possess enough ancient secrets of power and wealth to control the entire world.

Conspiracy enthusiasts allege that there are clandestine organizations which for centuries have remained a threat to individual freedoms, quietly operating in the shadows, silently infiltrating political organizations, and secretly manipulating every level of government and every facet of society. One of the favorites of conspiracy theorists, the Freemasons, while once a powerful and influential group throughout the Western world, is today regarded by many as simply a philanthropic and fraternal organization. Another secret society, the Illuminati, deemed by many conspiracy buffs to be the most insidious of all, faded into obscurity in the late eighteenth century. However, there is always a new secret society that seeks to divine arcane and forbidden avenues to wealth and power.

SORCERY, ALCHEMY AND WITCHCRAFT

Although Christianity affirms the existence of a transcendent reality, it has always

distinguished between *religio* (reverence for God) and *superstitio*, which in Latin means “unreasonable religious belief.” Christianity became the state religion of the Roman Empire in 395 C.E., and in 525 the Council of Oria prohibited Christians from consulting sorcerers, diviners, or any kind of seer. A canon passed by the Council of Constantinople in 625 prescribed excommunication for a period of six years for anyone found practicing divination or who consulted with a diviner.

Although the Church had issued many canons warning against the practice of witchcraft or magic, little action was taken against those learned men who experimented with alchemy or those common folk who practiced the old ways of witchcraft. In 906 C.E., Abbot Regino of Prum recognized that earlier canon laws had done little to eradicate the practices of magic and witchcraft, so he issued his *De ecclesiasticis disciplinis* to condemn as heretical any belief in witchcraft or the power of sorcerers. In 1,000 C.E., Deacon Burchard, who would later become archbishop of Worms, published *Corrector* which updated Regino’s work and stressed that only God had the power to transform matter. Alchemists could not change base metals into gold, and witches could not shapeshift into animals.

In spite of such decrees, a lively belief in a world of witches and ghosts persisted throughout the Middle Ages and co-existed in the minds of many of the faithful with the miracle stories of the saints. To the native beliefs were added those of non-Christian peoples who either lived in Europe or whom Europeans met when they journeyed far from home, as when they went on the Crusades. By the twelfth century, magical practices based upon the arcane systems of the Spanish Moors and Jewish Kabbalah were established in Europe. The Church created the Inquisition in the High Middle Ages in response to unorthodox religious beliefs that it called heresies. Since some of these involved magical practices and witchcraft, the occult also became an object of persecution. The harsh treatment of the Manichaean Cathars in southern France is an example of society’s reaction to those who mixed arcane practice with heterodox theology.

In spite of persecution, the concept of witchcraft persisted and even flourished in early modern times. At least the fear of it did, as the Salem witch trials richly illustrate. In the early decades of the twentieth century, schools of pagan and magical teachings were reborn as Wicca. Wiccans, calling themselves “practitioners of the craft of the wise,” would resurrect many of the old ways and infuse them with modern thoughts and practices. Whatever its origin, the occult seems to be an object of permanent fascination to the human race.

ARE WE ALONE?

Is the earth the only inhabited planet? Imagine the excitement if contact is made with intelligent extraterrestrial life forms and humankind discovers that it is part of a larger cosmic community. It would change the way we think of ourselves and of our place in the universe. Or is the belief in extraterrestrials a creation of our minds? The universe is so vast we may never know, but the mysteries of outer space have a grip on the modern psyche, since it seems to offer the possibility of a world that may be more open to scientific verification than witchcraft.

PURPOSE OF BOOK

Whatever the origin and veracity of the unusual, these beliefs and experiences have played a significant role in human experiences and deserve to be studied dispassionately. These volumes explore and describe the research of those who take such phenomena seriously; extraterrestrials, ghosts, spirits, and haunted places are explored from many perspectives. They are part of the adventure of humanity.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Compiling such an extensive work as a three-volume encyclopedia of the unusual and unexplained proved many times to be a most formidable task. During those moments when I felt the labor pains of giving birth to such a

large and exhausting enterprise might be beyond me, I was able to rely upon a number of wonderful midwives. My agent Agnes Birnbaum never failed to offer encouragement and support; my remarkably resourceful and accomplished editor Jolen Marya Gedridge continued to assure me that there truly was light at the end of the tunnel and that the great enterprise would one day be completed; the always pleasant and helpful staff at Gale—

Julia Furtaw, Rita Runchock, Lynn Koch, and Nancy Matuszak—stood by to offer assistance; and most of all, I am forever indebted to my wife Sherry Hansen Steiger for her tireless compiling of the glossaries, her efforts in writing sidebars, her invaluable talents as a researcher, her patience and love, and her always providing a shoulder to cry on during the all-night writing sessions.

—Brad E. Steiger