

THE KRAKEN, 1555 TO NOW

The one argument in this book that was fully vindicated, in order. Lee wrote in the middle of it, and did not live to see the end.

When	What happened
c. 340 BC	Aristotle describes the argonaut raising its arms as sails, and reports enormous serpents off Libya. Both fables begin in the same book.
1555	Olaus Magnus prints his sea monsters in the <i>Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus</i> . Lee reproduces two.
1605	Aldrovandus dies, having printed the barnacle goose tree.
1677–8	Sir Robert Moray’s <i>Relation concerning Barnacles</i> is read to the Royal Society and printed in the <i>Philosophical Transactions</i> , no. 137. Lee calls it a disgraceful contrast to the careful work before it.
1705	Rumphius publishes the <i>Rarities of Amboyna</i> , with the first printed description of the paper nautilus’s shell.
1755	Pontoppidan, Bishop of Bergen, describes the kraken in his <i>Natural History of Norway</i> . Lee will spend a chapter taking him seriously.
1832 and 1839	Jeanne Villepreux-Power invents the aquarium in order to rear argonauts, and in 1839 publishes the result: the animal secretes its own shell. Lee will repeat the finding without her name.
1848	Officers of H.M.S. <i>Dædalus</i> report a sea serpent in the South Atlantic. The best-documented sighting of the century.
1857	Japetus Steenstrup describes the giant squid and names it <i>Architeuthis</i> .
1861	The French despatch-vessel <i>Alecton</i> attempts to take a giant squid off Tenerife and recovers part of the tail.
1868–76	The deep-sea dredging voyages of the <i>Lightning</i> , the <i>Porcupine</i> and the <i>Challenger</i> bring up animals nobody had believed in. Lee uses them as an argument against declaring anything impossible.
1870–1880	A run of giant squid strandings in Newfoundland, including one at Thimble Tickle Bay on 2 November 1878 that is still among the largest recorded. This is Lee’s physical evidence.
1872	The Brighton Aquarium opens to the public on 10 August. Lee was at some point its naturalist — his own title page says “sometime naturalist of the Brighton Aquarium” — but neither the year he took the post nor the year he left it is stated anywhere in these two books.
1875, 1877, 1879	Sea serpents reported from the <i>Pauline</i> , H.M. yacht <i>Osborne</i> and the <i>City of Baltimore</i> . All three pictures are in this book.
May–Oct 1883	The International Fisheries Exhibition, South Kensington. The handbooks are written for it and sold at a shilling.
21 July 1883	Lee signs the preface to <i>Sea Monsters Unmasked</i> at the Savage Club.
4 September 1883	He signs the preface to <i>Sea Fables Explained</i> .
1888	Henry Lee dies. He was born in 1826.
1909	Otto Sinding, who painted the mermaid of the second frontispiece, dies.
15 January 2002	A living giant squid is photographed for the first time, at Goshiki beach in Kyoto Prefecture.

When	What happened
30 September 2004	Tsunemi Kubodera and Kyoichi Mori take the first photographs of a giant squid in its own habitat, at about 900 metres near the Ogasawara Islands.
July 2012	A giant squid is filmed in its own habitat near the Ogasawara Islands by crews from NHK and the Discovery Channel. The footage is shown on 13 January 2013 — a hundred and thirty years after Lee argued the animal was there.

From Sea Monsters Unmasked, and Sea Fables Explained, Valice Classics 14. Free at valicepress.com/companion/sea-monsters-unmasked