The Grottoes
Of the Shenandoah,
Consisting of
The Weyer and the Fountains Caves,
The Two Most Wonderful Caverns in the World,
at
Grottoes Station of Shenandoah Valley Railway,
Augusta County, Virginia.
Lighted by a Grand System of Incandescent
Electric Lights.
Now ready for visitors, having been recently opened to the public.

For information about The Grottoes and Excursions, address,
A. M. Howison, Secretary,
Staunton, Va.

The Valley Virginian Print.
Staunton, Va.
150p.
ABOUT THE ASSOCIATION

The American Spelean History Association is newly chartered as a non-profit corporation for the study, dissemination and interpretation of spelean history and related purposes. All persons of high ethical and moral character who are interested in these goals are cordially invited to become members.

ABOUT THE QUARTERLY

The Association anticipates the publication of the Journal of Spelean History on a quarterly basis. Pertinent articles or reprints will be welcomed. As a photo-offset process is in use, articles should be submitted in a form which can be photographed for direct use, i.e. single spaced, on 8½ x 11 paper and with adequate margins. Submissions of rough drafts for preliminary editing is strongly recommended. Line drawings are no problem; photographs require special handling and the editor should be contacted. Dark clear xerox copies of books, etc. reproduce well.

ABOUT THE COVER ILLUSTRATION

The three caves of Cave Hill near Grottoes, Virginia - Grand Caverns, Fountain Cave and Madison's Cave - are among the most historic of the United States. The 23 page 1889 pamphlet whose cover is reproduced here is a surprisingly historical document for a commercial publication of this type. Even its cover clarifies the confusing term "Grottoes of the Shenandoah" which many have assumed pertained only to Weyer's Cave (Grand Caverns).
TWO CENTURIES OF HISTORY AT
THE GROTTOES OF THE SHENANDOAH:
GRAND CAVERNES AND ITS NEIGHBORS

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Rear cover: The Angel's Wing, or Bridal Veil, Grand Caverns
(photo by Flournoy, courtesy Grand Caverns)
Today, Grand Caverns is not nearly so well known as certain other Virginia caverns located closer to Washington, D.C. Certainly this is not due to any lack of historical tradition, for as Weyer's Cave, it and its neighbors long were America's most celebrated. Beauty is there aplenty, and legendry too. George Washington's signature can be seen in Madison's Cave, but this is only part of the interest these caves present to the speleohistorian.

This special issue of the Journal attempts no all-encompassing coverage of these caves. Indeed, it omits such noted accounts as that in Kercheval's famous "History of the Valley of Virginia", first published in 1825. Instead, it presents several basic accounts providing sequential intimate glimpses of the caves throughout their history - and raising some intriguing questions: Whence the name "Amen's Cave" on the map below? What information had Burton Faust on the commercializations of these caves that the rest of us lack?

Notable throughout the commercial history of Grand Caverns has been restraint in advertising. Included here are a short excerpt from a recent pamphlet - hardly 100% accurate but much more significant than most productions of this type - and extensive portions of a historic 1889 pamphlet.

Included also is Jefferson's map of Madison's Cave, which appears to be the first cave map in the United States. The 1806 and 1809 accounts reprinted here fix the initial history of the cave, particularly in contrast to the Betsy Bell legend of a century later. The 1809 account has been attributed variously to John Edwards Caldwell and S.L. Mitchell. The 1854 Harper's Monthly account by David Strother - Porte Crayon - is so widely available and of such minor importance historically that its florid descriptive has been omitted here.

The map below is from the 1853 edition of Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia. Data on its history and the origin of the name "Amen's Cave" would be welcomed. - ed.
The Grottoes of the Shenandoah.

At Grottoes station of the Shenandoah Valley Railroad the traveler through the famous valley of the Shenandoah finds two of the most remarkable and wonderful caverns in the world, the Weyer Cave and the Cave of Fountains that together are known as The Grottoes of the Shenandoah.

Grottoes station is 16 hours from New York, 13 from Philadelphia, 8 from Baltimore and 7 from Washington. Pullman Palace Sleeping and Parlor Cars are run daily from New York and Philadelphia, by way of Harrisburg and by daylight through the lovely Valley of the Shenandoah, to The Grottoes. A similar car service connects this charming resort with Little Rock, Memphis, Chattanooga and the Southwest by way of the Norfolk & Western at Roanoke, and with the West and Northwest and the South by the Chesapeake & Ohio at Waynesboro Junction, but 14 miles from The Grottoes.

The Grottoes of the Shenandoah are in a noble ridge, covered with forest trees of many kinds, in the midst of an estate of over two hundred acres, embracing not only the wonderful Weyer and Fountains caves, but also a hundred acres of groves, wide stretches of lawns and meadows, a long reach of the charming South River of the Shenandoah, where boating, bathing and fishing may be indulged in, and the new Grottoes Hotel, with its hundreds of feet of broad verandas commanding well nigh a thousand square miles of magnificent landscape, sweeping from the Blue Ridge on the East across the thirty miles wide Shenandoah Valley, with the Massanutten chain in the middle, and range after range of the Great Appalachian mountains, there over four thousand feet above the sea level, stretching far away to the West.

The new Grottoes Hotel is not only well furnished and well kept, but is lighted throughout with incandescent electric lights, thus assuring cool rooms and pure air. A broad avenue and graded and shaded walks lead from the hotel directly west, but a short distance, to the wonderful caves, the way lighted at night by electric lamps.

At the entrance to Weyer Cave a pleasant furnished reception room invites to rest with the lovely valley of South river in prospect.

Weyer Cave, which is so well and so truthfully described in the following article from Harper's Magazine, has been closed to the public for some time while dry and easy passages have been cut between its grand halls and chambers and wide spaces leveled for the accommodation of visitors, so that every portion of its miles of wonders may be seen without the soiling of a garment or the wetting of a sole; at the same time the Westinghouse Electric Company, of Pittsburg, Pa., put in, with great
labor and expense, a magnificent system of incandescent electric lights, rendering it not only pleasant to wander through the vast stalactic halls and chambers of this grandest of caverns, but lighting up their lofty and superbly ornamented ceilings and their sculptured and dazzling crystal covered walls.

The Cave of The Fountains has also been improved and made easy of access, so its gigantic features, unlike those of Weyer Cave, can be seen to advantage with magnesium and other lights.

The Grottoes of the Shenandoah Company, confident in the belief that its property contains two of the greatest natural curiosities in the world—curiosities so wonderful that the oftener they are visited the more they are admired—is sparing no expense in making the surroundings of their remarkable grottoes agreeable and attractive, and providing that the place shall become a great resort for the seekers after recreation and enjoyment, where endless objects of interest, varied enough to meet the demands of every taste, abound on every hand. It invites the great traveling public to avail itself of the liberality of the railways and buy the round-trip excursion tickets to The Grottoes that are on sale throughout the country, and visit not only the most curious and marvelous specimens of Nature's handiwork found in almost endless variety in the Weyer and Fountains Caves, but also to visit the famous battle fields near at hand, ride over the fine roads and enjoy the lovely scenery of the Valley of the Shenandoah, fish, boat on and bathe in its bright and abounding waters, botanize in its large and luxuriant flora, geologize in the dozen great geologic formations here in view and from which this enchanting region has been sculptured, and at the same time inhale health and vigor from the cool and dry atmosphere of a broad plateau from 1,000 to 1,500 feet above the sea level, bounded by great mountain chains rising thousands of feet higher.

Weyer Cave, as seen in ground plan, appears as four series of grand halls and chambers connected by galleries or passages; they occupy different levels and vary in general direction:

The first series, occupying about 300 feet of air-line length and 100 of extreme breadth, extends in a southwest direction: it includes the Entrance Hall; the Statuary Chamber and its Gallery; Solomon's Temple with its Great Cataract, its lofty Throne, its ornate Pillar and grandly groined and vaulted roof; the Shell Grotto, marvelously rich in stalactic forms of snowy whiteness; the Porter's Lodge; the Pantheon; the Lawyer's Office; and Weyer Hall named for the discoverer of this cave.

The second series of halls, chambers and galleries extends to the northwest through 400 feet of length by 150 of breadth; it includes the Twins' Gallery; the Armory, with its curiously suspended Shield of Ajax; the Balustrade passage; the great Tapestry Chamber with its Cathedral Chancel, Organ Loft and Chandelier; the Drum Room with its huge sheets of thin stalactites and natural Stairway; the French Hill and the Narrow
Way, now avoided; the great Ball Room 100 feet long, 36 feet wide and 25 feet high, with fretted ceiling, large sheets of folded stalactites used as a bass drum, with numerous smaller side rooms and stalagmites suggestive of statuary; the Dungeons with their titanic forms and yawning chasms; the Senate and Congress Halls with galleries and lobbies richly ornamented and with a Crystal Spring; and the great Spar Room with its limpid lake.

The third series, the grandest of all, extends its vast halls and chambers for more than 500 feet to the west of south, from the Theatre to the huge Tower of Babel, with an extreme breadth of a hundred feet; it includes the Theatre with all its appointments properly disposed; the Grand Cathedral 260 feet long, 50 feet wide and varying in height from 30 feet upwards, and rich beyond compare in objects of wondrous interest, such as the heroic Statue of Washington midway of the length of the great nave, the shields, banners, tapestries and winged trophies ornamenting the lofty walls, Lady Washington's Grotto and Mirror in the great Eastern Aisle, the gorgeously ornamented ceiling (never seen before the recent introduction of electric lights of great power,) and the unspeakably grand display of Leaning Towers, lofty Pinnacles and other dreams of Wonderland—the Enchanted Moors of "Porte Crayon"—that fill the southern end of the Cathedral. Then succeed Jackson Hall; the Spring Grotto; the Glen with its Diamond Bank, its Tower of Pisa and churchly suggestions of Organ and Choir, Stalls and Steeple, all wonderful forms of stalagmitic structure.

The Entrance hall to the Garden of Eden and the Garden itself, a secluded grotto that in the entrancing beauty and delicacy of its crystal covered formations challenges comparison with any grotto in the known world—to have seen it alone is worth a journey of a thousand miles.

The Bridal Chamber, near the entrance to the Garden of Eden, contains a most singular and beautiful stalactite, the Great Bridal Comb and Veil; and in the same room the Diamond Water-fall is as brilliant in the electric light as a shower of sunlit jewels.

Then the Dining Room with its appropriate furniture; the Wilderness with its fretted roof 70 feet above the floor of the cave, with the Natural Bridge and its fine Causeway approach lined with statuary; and at the end of the series, in the midst of Jefferson Hall, the majestic Tower of Babel, a mighty stalagmite of oval form standing detached and rising in graceful colonnades, tier upon tier, to a noble height and a corniced crown;—a more remarkable stalagmite in size and beauty, real architectural beauty, can nowhere else be found. To the westward, behind the Tower of Babel, is a unique grotto that may well be called a Lady Chapel, so gracefully are its columns and capitals sculptured and so curious and finished are its adornments.

The fourth series extends from the Tower of Babel for 200 feet to the southeast, in a space widening, in many chambers, to 150 feet. The no-
able Tower of Babel stands on the lowest level of Weyer Cave more than 200 feet below the surface of Grottoes Ridge above it. Jefferson Hall with its branches, side chambers and grottoed niches fills this space. It is crowded with objects of interest, especially with numerous large shield-like stalactites pendant from the ceilings and walls and standing at various angles; the Giant Oyster Shells are stony puzzles; the Crystal Glacier with its glistening stream disappearing in the distance, the Snow Hill, the Coral Ridge and the Tinkling Spring are but a few of the marvels to be seen in Jefferson Hall.

The Cave of the Fountains while much smaller than Weyer Cave is as large as most of the celebrated formation-bearing caverns. It is in the form of two grand Halls, each over a hundred yards in length and each branching in great arms. Its stalactites and stalagmites are all on a grand scale and the titanic rock masses scattered around give a wild and unearthly aspect to the giant halls of the cave. It has the finest cataract forms of any known cavern. No one should fail to see it as it is unlike any other cave.

These full page illustrations are from Ed. Beyer's great Album of Virginia, engraved from the sketches of that distinguished Dusseldorf artist. These and the illustrations from Harper's Magazine are truthful but imperfect pictures of some of the thousands of objects of interest to be seen in the Grottoes of the Shenandoah.

The famous Natural Bridge of Virginia is but three hours distant to the Southeast by the Shenandoah Valley Railroad, and the justly celebrated Caverns of Luray are but one and a half hours to the Northeast by the same road. No one should fail to see both of these great and interesting curiosities where such ample provision has been made for the entertainment of visitors.

Madison Cave.—In Grottoes Ridge, northeast of Weyer Cave, is Madison Cave, made famous by Jefferson's description of it in his Notes on Virginia. When Jefferson visited that cave and made the following map of it, the Weyer and Fountains Caves had not been discovered. This cave is no longer visited; it was used for saltpetre making during three wars.

![An Eye-draught of Madison Cave](image_url)
The Weyer Cave.—By Porte Crayon.

In Harper's New Monthly Magazine for December, 1854, the 59th. number of that now widely read and almost venerable periodical, appeared the first of a series of articles entitled, "Virginia Illustrated.—Adventures of Porte Crayon and his Cousins," in which was included the following illustrated description of the Weyer Cave of the Grottoes of the Shenandoah, all the illustrations of which are reproduced from the magazine in which they originally appeared, but photographically reduced in size.

"Porte Crayon" was the nom de plume of Gen. David H. Strother, an artistic gentleman residing at Berkeley Springs, Va., at the time he wrote "Virginia Illustrated" which entitles him to recognition as one of the first of the Americans who have made its monthly magazines famous for their illustrated articles.

Porte Crayon spent many hours in the Weyer Cave sketching and studying, with the eye and the fancy of an artist, some of the wonderful scenes of this most varied and famous of all known caverns.—The lapse of thirty-five years of Nature's never ending work in the ornamentation of her grottoes has but added to the charms and brilliancy of the scenes sketched by this faithful artist. The only noticeable changes by the hand of man are those that have made all portions of this extensive and enchanting grotto easily accessible, and that have introduced, with skilful but concealed art, amid all its marvelous beauties, hundreds of the most brilliant electric lights that not only reveal more clearly what Porte Crayon saw and described, but thousands of wondrous forms of beauty, in lofty fretted roofs and richly ornamented lady-chapels, that could not be seen by the dim lights at his disposal.

"By my pocket thermometer I ascertained the temperature of the cave to be about 53½ degrees Fahrenheit, and although I sometimes remained in it from eight to ten hours at a time, I never felt the slightest discomfort from the dampness or any other cause. One morning, having risen before daylight, I went to work at a point not more than a hundred and fifty feet from the entrance. Here I suffered greatly from the cold, as the external air was at that time in the morning very frosty, and I was near enough to the entrance of the cave to feel its influence.

The length of the cave in a straight line is about sixteen hundred feet; but the aggregate of all its branches and windings is near three thousand. It is said to have been discovered in 1821, by one Bernard Weyer, a hunter, while in search of some lost traps. Crayon, however, tells us that he was credibly informed that Weyer was not the actual discoverer, but some one else whose name he unfortunately forgets. It makes no difference. Not all the historians nor indignant poets who have written, or will write, can restore to Columbus the lost honor of naming the New World; and Weyer Cave will be called Weyer Cave till the end of time, in spite of any right or knowledge to the contrary..."
Madison's Cave as described by Thomas Jefferson

(text identical in all editions of his Notes on the state of Virginia)

In the lime-stone country, there are many caverns of very considerable extent. The most noted is called Madison's Cave, and is on the north side of the Blue ridge, near the intersection of the Rockingham and Augusta line with the south fork of the

southern river of Shenandoah. It is in a hill of about 200 feet perpendicular height, the ascent of which, on one side, is so steep, that you may pitch a biscuit from its summit into the river which washes its base. The entrance of the cave is, in this side, about two thirds of the way up. It extends into the earth about 300 feet, branching into subordinate caverns, sometimes ascending a little, but more generally descending, and at length terminates, in two different places, at basins of water of unknown extent, and which I should judge to be nearly on a level with the water of the river; however, I do not think they are formed by fluent water from that, because they are never turbid; because they do not rise and fall in correspondence with that in times of flood, or of drought; and because the water is always cool. It is probably one of the many reservoirs with which the interior parts of the earth are supposed to abound, and which yield supplies to the fountains of water, distinguished from others only by its being accessible. The vault of this cave is of solid lime-stone, from 20 to 40 or 50 feet high, through which water is continually percolating. This, trickling down the sides of the cave, has incrusted them over in the form of elegant drapery; and dripping from the top of the vault generates on that, and on the base below, stalactites of a conical form, some of which have met, and formed massive columns.
A splendid Cavern discovered in the Limestone Country of Virginia, in 1806.

A curious cave has been lately discovered near Madison's cave, in Virginia, which has excited considerable observation and curiosity. Its discovery was the effect of a singular accident. It is reported, that a trap for raccoons was placed at the mouth of a small hole, which was observed at the surface of the earth. On examining the success of his stratagem soon after, the owner observed that it had entangled a pole-cat, which, in attempting to escape into the hole, drew the trap after it. The owner on widening the hole discovered that it led into a dark retreat. His curiosity being thus excited, he had lights immediately procured, which, upon entering the cave, discovered a new and most splendid scene to his astonished vision.

The height, length, width, direction and contents of this singular cavity have been variously represented by different observers. Some have estimated its length and breadth at several hundred yards. Others have assigned it still more extraordinary dimensions. Some, whose imaginations are most vivid, have attempted to resemble this cavity under the earth to the splendid palaces on its surface; they have divided it into extensive splendid apartments, which they have fancifully adorned with curtains, festoons, sofas, and statues. But all agree that it is one of the most extraordinary caves which has ever been discovered in America, and which illuminates by the light of candles, one of the most magnificent specimens of nature's productions which they have ever beheld.

The roof, the sides, and many parts of the floor are strewn with the most beautiful petrifactions. These are almost of every species of form, colour and consistence. Some are as transparent as glass: some are streaked, and others are tinged with the deepest hues: some are conical, and others of the most irregular form: some are as hard as adamant, and others are extremely porous, friable and brittle. The basis of these crystals is principally calcareous earth or lime. There is not one of them which will strike fire with the flint; and of some there is no silicious earth in their composition.

The formation of these beautiful crystals is of very easy explanation. The little spars which are occasionally formed on and under one of the arches of the Richmond Canal, most strikingly point out the manner of their composition. If a stream of water has passed over a bed of lime-stone, and then filtered through the roof of this cave, what will follow? Either the water on the roof flows in such quantities, that its own weight forces it to descend to the floor, or it flows so slowly through the roof as to evaporate or be absorbed before it has acquired weight enough to descend. In the first case, the lime which floats in the drops of water will be successively carried to the floor, where it gradually accumulates into a solid pillar: in the latter case, those spars will successively accumulate on the roof. And thus different parts of the cave will sometimes exhibit spars upon its roof, and sometimes upon the floor.

Of all the specimens which we have seen of these beautiful productions, one has particularly attracted our notice. It was a conical piece of a reddish colour, which seemed to have been detached from its base by a saw. In its thickest part it was perhaps about four inches in diameter. Upon inspecting its bottom, it presented the same consistence, hardness, veins, and streaks, which are perceptible in marble. This single fact seems to us to lay open the whole theory of the formation of marbles. From the shells and other fossil productions, which have been frequently found engraved in blocks of marbles, it was easy to infer that it was a calcareous and formed substance; but here is a singular fact, which points out the manner of its formation. What is it but a calcareous crystal, formed in the manner which has been already mentioned, by water passing over lime-stone beds, and deriving the colours of its veins from the different colours of the earths and minerals through which it filters? Has it not been a long-established fact, that lime is the basis of all the marbles? Several of the beautiful crystals of this cave are about to be converted into ornaments, as watch-seals, candlesticks and other domestic decorations.

The owner has already confined his treasure under a padlock, and admits no one to enter it without a douceur of 50 cents. He has sent a specimen of its various crystals to the Museum of Philadelphia.
This place (Wier's Cave) is 16 miles from Staunton. Madison's Cave, mentioned in Mr. Jefferson's Notes is now abandoned as an object of curiosity, and is about a quarter of a mile from Wier's Cave, which was discovered in February 1806, by a pole cat's being caught in a trap, and retreating for shelter to the Cave, to which a dog pursued her. The owner of the dog enlarged the hole by which the animal entered, and discovered the place from whence I now write to you. It is certainly the most remarkable subterranean curiosity on this Continent, or perhaps in the world, and is well worth the attention of an observing traveller. The entrance, and even after you proceed some paces, is by no means calculated to increase the ardour for research, but advancing further, and getting into the midst of a variety of cones and cylindrical pillars, gives fresh hopes and vigor for further discovery. In order to designate the different objects of this Cave, I shall give to each the name affixed to it by our conductor. The drawing room is the first large opening, after creeping and going through a number a number of narrow passages, in which we were frequently obliged to get forward on our hands and knees, to guard our heads from being broke by the crystallizations which hung over them, and to ascend and descend by artificial, and oftentimes crazy ladders. The dining room is the next large apartment, here are a great number of pillars and busts, which, on the first approach, appear to be indebted for their shape to the art of the chisel, and a variety of chairs, decorated like Bishop's stalls, give it the appearance of a cathedral; this room is 39 yards long; adjoining is a collection of tamboreens, or natural drums, formed by sheets or curtains of petrifaction, and sounding, when struck, like the martial instrument from which they are named. The ball room is 42 yards long, 15 wide, and about 30 feet high, the appearance of a music gallery at one end, adds to the deception which the mind encourages in this romantic grotto; here is a very curious pillar and also a number of columns, extending from top to bottom; near this is the resemblance of a grand chair of state, called the President's chair; a representation of a bank of ice, as white and transparent as the native original, and seemingly underneath, a beautiful cascade of falling water. Washington room is 90 yards long, and of an immense height; a bust stands nearly in the centre, and at a distance, so like the great man whose name it bears, that nature, though only showing her skill in its formation by drops of water, falling for ages, from the lofty ceiling above, could not be excelled by the most skillful statuary. An admirer of the virtues of this best of men, while gazing on his likeness in this spell-bound cavern, can only be prevented by respect for the second commandment, from falling down and worshipping. Lady Washington's room opens out of the last mentioned. The diamond room takes its name from the variety of crystallizations and transparencies it exhibits; our lights were not sufficiently splendid, but had they done justice to the scene before us, I question if the eye could be presented with a more glittering or magnificent object. The enchanted room contains the image of "Lot's wife" in the very act of tripping away, and turning her head
half around, when she was caught in the act, and paid the dear forfeit of her curiosity. She has now as much the appearance of a pillar of salt as of petrifaction. How happy for mankind, if the evils brought on families and on society, by their foibles, which Mrs. Lot undoubtedly inherited from her mother Eve, were to be done away, by a few such examples of terrific justice! I denominated a very rough passage the wilderness of sin, and John Bunyan himself could not have painted a more terrific road into the garden of Eden, where the perspective presented a pleasing assemblage of trees, shrubs, variegated walks, and ornamental flowering plants. The tout ensemble appearing like a petrified flower garden, formed by nature in her playful moments, as if for her own amusement. In the bar room there is a spring of cool water, and as the conductor is generally provided with a bottle of brandy, the almost exhausted strength of the explorator may here be recruited.

The mountain of salt, better described by the name it bears than any idea I can give of it, is not the least wonderful of the works of nature in this cavern. On the whole, it is highly worth the attention of the curious, the notice of the naturalist, and the observation of the philosophic traveller; and where is the contemplative being that visits it, and views the sublime and grand scenery I witnessed in the close of the day, in the ascent, on the top, and in the descent of the majestic blue mountains that is not prepared to cry out in extacy, with the poet: "These are thy glorious works, Parent of Good!"

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Note on Fountain and Madison's Caves by Burton Faust

The Cave of the Fountains which is in the same hill as Madison and Weyer's Caves, was the first show cave in this country. A great deal of work was done to prepare the cave for visitors. It was quite a beautiful cave, with a stone arched entrance and stairs nearly 100 feet long to the bottom. Some of the nicest cave pictures I have I took in this cave.

Madison's Cave was a show cave circa 1926.

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(Editor's note: The above was a brief note sent to me about 1965. Due to Burton's untimely death, his documentation remains unchecked.)
The following is from pages 310-316 of:
Martin, Joseph and Brockenbrough, W.E. n.d. (ca. 1850). A comprehensive
description of Virginia and the District of Columbia, etc. J.W. Randolph,
Richmond.

The whole of Augusta county is based upon lime rock, and from the
nature of that rock, necessarily contains many curious figures, excavations
and caverns. Only two of these, however, deserve a notice, Madison's and
Weyer's caves, which are both situated in the same ridge, and are but 200
yards apart. Madison's cave has been described by Jefferson, in his notes
on Virginia, but Weyer's has been described and explored since that time,
and is far more worthy of being immortalized. The length of this sub-

dependent Cavern in a straight course is 1650 ft., but the distance is more than
doubled by following the various windings. There are numerous apart-
ments, some of which are magnificent. One measures 257 ft. in length, from
10 to 20 in breadth, and 33 in height,—another is 153 ft. long, 15 wide, and
60 high, while a third reaches the height of 100 feet! Every part is stud-

ed with beautiful stalactites, that lead you almost to believe that you have
descended into the jewelled fruit garden, where hung Albdin's lamp.

*We extract a portion of Mr. Jefferson's description which is referred to in the

text, and give also some later information concerning Madison's Cave.*

Madison's Cave derives its name from the father of the late Bishop Madison, who
resided near it, and who was equally famed for his hospitality, his practical wit, and
his convivial disposition. It has been known 70 or 80 years, but is now little visited
as a curiosity, the earth in it, allows salt petre in proportion from 2 to 4 pounds
to the hundred,—weight was 300. It was manufactured here during the war.

The earth when brought out is at the mouth of the cave put into a plank gutter
which conveys it to the bank of the river, at the bottom of the hill, where it is put into talls
or was mixed with wood ashes—water is passed through it, and this is evaporated to
salt by boiling. The lakes of water which are found at the extremity of the cave
have been navigated by a boat, and thoroughly explored, since Mr. Jefferson wrote;
they are 50 or 40 ft. deep, and are bounded on the further extremity by rocks so
about that a floating can no where be had.

Weyer's Cave is situated near the northern extremity of Augusta county, Va. 17
m., N. E. of Staunton, on the eastern side of a ridge running nearly N. and S. parallel
to the Blue Ridge, and some 60 miles more than a mile distant from the
other. The western declivity of this ridge is very gradual, and the visitor, as he approaches
from that direction, little imagines from its appearance, that it embowls one of
Nature's master pieces. The eastern declivity however, is quite precipices and diffi-
cult of ascent.

The Guide's house is situated on the northern extremity of this ridge, and is distant
500 yds. from the entrance of the cave. In going from the house to the cave, you
pass the entrance of Madison's Cave, which is only 200 yds. to the other. Madis-
son's Cave was known and visited as a curiosity, long before the discovery of Weyer's,
but it is now passed by and neglected, as unworthy of notice compared with its
more imposing rival, although it has had the pen of a Jefferson to describe its beauties.

The ascent from the bottom is steep, but is rendered less fatiguing, by the zigzag course of the path, which is 120 yds. in length.

It seems that about the year 1824, one Bernard Weyer ranged these hills, as a
hunter; while pursuing his daily occupation, he found his path in a lawless Ground
Bug, which not only eluded all his efforts but eventually succeeded in carrying off
the traps, which had been set for his capture. Enraged at the loss of his traps he made
an assault upon the domicile of the dreapredator, with grade and mace.

A few moments labor brought him to the antechamber of this subdendent cavern,
where he found his traps safely deposited.

The entrance originally was small and difficult of access; but the enterprise of the
proprietor, has obviated these inconveniences: it is now enclosed by a wooden wall,
having a door in its centre, which admits you to the ante-chamber.

At first it is about 10 ft. in height but after proceeding a few yards, in a S. W. di-
rection, it becomes contracted to the space of 4 ft. square.

At the distance of 24 ft. from the entrance, descending at an angle of 10 degrees;
you touch the Dragon's Room, so called from a stalactite concretion, which the Na-
murator undoubtedly supposed to resemble that nondescript animal.

Above the Dragon's room there is an opening of considerable beauty, but of small
size, called the Devil's Gallery.

Leaving this room, which is not very interesting, you proceed in a more southerly
direction, to the entrance of Solomon's Temple, through a high but narrow passage,
15 ft. in length, which is by no means difficult of access. Here you make a pre-
nicular descent of 15 ft. by means of substantial stairs securely fixed, and you find
yourself in one of the finest rooms in the whole cave. It is irregular in shape, being
30 ft. long, and 45 broad, running nearly at right angles to the main course of the
cave. As you raise your eyes, after descending the stairs, you are thrown upon an
elevated seat, surrounded by spursy incrustations, which sparkle beautifully
in the light of your candle.

This is not unattractively called Solomon's Throne. Every thing in this room, re-
ceives its name from the Wise Man; immediately to the left of the steps, as you descend, you
will find his Meat-house; and at the eastern extremity of the room, is a beautiful pil-
lar of white stalactite, somewhat defaced by the smoke of candles, called by his name,
yet with strange inconstancy, an impression resembling falling water at the right
of the steps, has obtained the name of the Falls of Niagara.

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Passing Solomon's Pillar, you enter another room, more irregular than the first, but still more beautiful; it would be impossible adequately to describe the magnitude of the roof. I shall therefore merely observe that it is thickly studded with beautiful stalactites, resembling in form and color, the roots of rushes, which have given the designation of Rush Room to this delightful place.

The main passage to the rest of the cavern is immediately opposite to the entrance to Solomon's Temple, and you reach it by an ascent of 11 ft. to what is called the Fountain Room. From this place, pursuing the same course, you pass a passage varying from 10 to 30 ft. in height, from 10 to 13 in breadth, and 50 in length, until you reach Bunny's Hall, which receives its name from the fancied resemblance of a fantastic stalactite, at the base of one that is upright, to old Commodore Barney, and the ramson that he used at the Halibutburn races.

Near the centre of the room, which is small and somewhat deceives the name, an upright board points out to the visitor the main path of the cave, which runs to the right. Two passages cut off to the left, the first, on a large, irregular, and nearly circular area, led the Lawyer's Office, in which is a fine spring of water or rather a reservoir where the droppings from the ceiling have collected, the other, through a passage to what is called the Armory, from an inscription that has received the name of Ajax's Shield. Between the Lawyer's Office and the Armory, and communicating with both, is another large, irregular apartment, which is named Wynne's Hall, after the original discoverer of the cave, who, together with his dog, stands immortalized in one corner.

Before we get bewildered and lost in this part of the cave, which is more intricate than any other, let us return to the guide-board in the centre of Barney's Hall, and pursue the route usually taken by visitors. Following the right hand opening mentioned above, which is rather low being not more than 5 ft. in height, you pass into the Twin Room, taking heed lest you fall into the Devil's Bake Oven, which curves close to your feet. This room is small, and communicates directly with the Entrance Room, which is 20 ft. distant from the guide-board. The arch here suddenly expands, and is sunk pluvial to the height of 60 ft. and by dint of haste you may return to the Porter's Lodge, through a passage directly over the one which you have just passed. There are many beauties in this upper passage.

You will find, 30 ft. from the Twin Room, in a direction due west, brings you into the Tan Yard, which contains many beauties. The floor is irregular, in some places sinking into holes somewhat resembling tan-vats, which together with several hanging stalactites resembling hides, have given a name to this fascinating apartment. On the S. side of the room, immediately to the left of the main rush, is a large opening which admits you at once into the Armory, already mentioned.

Carrying your course to the N.W., you leave the Tan Yard, by a rough, but not difficult ascent of 50 ft., at an angle of 60 degrees, into what may be considered an elevated continuation of the same room, but which has been deservedly dignified with a brilliant appellation.

If by right, as you step upon level ground, you will observe a perpendicular wall of rock, arising with great regularity, if you strike upon it with your head, it resounds with a deep, mellow sound, strongly resembling the tones of a Bass Drum, whence the room has received the name of the Bass Room. Upon a closer examination, this apparent wall will be found to be only a thin stalactite partition, extending from the ceiling to the floor.

There is nothing else of much interest, in this apartment, we will proceed to the most magnificent portions of the cavern.

You leave the Drum Room by a flight of natural stairs, 7 ft. in perpendicular height. A large opening now presents itself, which expands to an extensive apartment, to reach which it is necessary to make a nearly perpendicular descent of 10 ft., by means of a substantial pair of stairs. This apartment is the far famed Ball Room. It is 100 ft. long, 50 wide, and about 25 high, running at right angles to the passage into the Armory, already mentioned.

The general course of the room is from N. to S., but at the northern extremity there is an elevation of 20 ft. on the E. you will reach a precipice 20 ft. from which you can look down into the Tan Yard, having performed a complete circuit.

Near the centre of the Ball Room, is a large, calcareous deposit, that has received the name of Paganini's Statue, from the circumstance that it furnishes a good position for the music, wherever balls are given in these subterranean regions. The floor is sufficiently deep to admit of dancing upon it, and it is not uncommon, to have balls here. The ladies are accommodated with a very convenient Dressing Room, the only opening to which, communicates directly with the Ball Room.

You leave this room, by a gradual ascent of 40 ft. at the southern extremity, similar to the one already described at the other. This activity is called the France's Room, from the following circumstances:—Some years since, a French gentleman visited this cave, accompanied only by the guide; they had safely gone through, and returning had reached the top of this hill, when by some accident both of their lights were extinguished, and they were left in Egyptian darkness, without the means of relighting their candles.

Fortunately the Guide, from his accurate knowledge of localities, was enabled to find his way directly to the entrance—a distance of more than 300 ft.

Another gentleman, by the name of Patterson, has immortalized his name by attempting the same feat, although it was a complete failure. Hearing of the Frenchman's adventure, he undertook to find his way back to the entrance, from the Ball Room, by the same passage and ground; he succeeded in ascending the stairs, but had proceeded only a few paces farther, when his feet slipped from under him, and he was prostrated into an aperture, where he lay unhurt with the company, alarmed at his protracted absence, returned for him. His resting-place is called Patterson's Grave to this day.

From the French Hill, a long, irregular passage extends in a N. W. direction, which terminates at the Nearer Entrance. This passage is 50 ft. in length, varying from 3 to 5 ft. in width, and from 1 to 3 ft. in height. It leads you to the brink of a precipice, 19 ft. in height.
Natural indentations in the face of this precipice, afford a convenient means of descent, and these natural steps have received the name of Jacob's Ladder. To correspond with this name, as in Solomon's Temple, every thing is named in a religious sense; a flat rock opposite to the extremity of the Narrow Passage, is Jacob's Temple; and a deep, inaccessible perforation in the rock, by its side, is Jacob's Ice House.

If you ascend the ladder you turn to the left, and pass through the room, remaining still continuing to descend though less perpendicularly, to the centre of a small apartment, called the Davenon. The descent from the top of the Ladder to this place is 38 feet.

This room communicates, by a passage about 4 ft. sq. with the Senate Chamber. A thin flat rock, stretches over nearly half of this apartment, which is only about 10 ft. in diameter, at the height of 8 or 10 ft. from the floor, forming a sort of Gallery, which has been called the name already mentioned, so beheved to be true.

The Senate Chamber communicates by a high, broad opening, with a still larger apartment, denominated Congress Hall.

This name must have been given, on account of its proximity to the last mentioned room, and not from any thing particular in the room itself. It is large, and like the Ball Room, runs nearly at right angles to the main path,—its course being nearly N. and E. and having several openings, runs through its whole length. The main path winds to the left as you enter the room, but we will diverge a little to the right, and explore the dark recess that presents itself to view.

The floor of Congress Hall is very uneven, and at the northern extremity, is somewhat abruptly. Chunting this ascent if you pass through one of the openings in the wall mentioned above, you will be able to see through the whole extent of the other half of the room, but it is impossible to traverse it, on account of two or three deep pits, that occupy the whole space between the wall and the side of the room.

You then bend around to the right of the opening through which you passed, your eye vainly attempts to penetrate the deep, dark abyss that presents itself, and you hesitate to descend. Its name—The Infernal Regions, does not offer many inducements to enter it; and for many years, it has been supposed to contain a严 fixed air, so that visitors avoided it, it has never until recently, been thoroughly explored.

Our course now lies to the S. W. up a perpendicular ascent of 17 ft., to what is called the Lobby. From this place, an expert climber, well acquainted with the cave, may pass through secret passages, and bye rooms, to the main path, without entering the Lobby, only to descend again on the other side, after taking a few steps horizontally. A perpendicular descent of 17 ft., brings you to the most magnificent apartment in the whole cavern.

This is Washington's Hall, so called in token of respect for the memory of our Country's Father, and it is worthy of bearing the name. Its length is 25 ft., its breadth from 10 to 30 ft., and its height about 32 ft. being remarkably level and straight, through the whole length.

Not far from the centre of this room, is an immense deposit of calcareous matter, rising to the height of 6 or 7 ft., which, very strikingly resembles a statue clothed in drapery. This is Washington's Statue, and few can look upon it—seen in the dim light of two or three candles which rather stimulate than repress curiosity, without experiencing a sensation of awe and solemnity, as if they were actually in the presence of the mighty dead.

A few yards from the entrance, another room branches off to the left, to reach which you must ascend a bank of 5 or 6 ft. in height. This is called the Theatre, from the fact that different parts of the room correspond to the Gallery, Stage and Pit.

I have said that the breadth of Washington's Hall was from 10 to 30 ft.; this must be understood only of the lower part of the room, for the arch stretches over 10 ft. high, which forms the left wall, and embraces another room, and is called Neros Hall. The entrance to this arch is opposite to the Statue, and is at the same level with the Hall. The wall that separates the two rooms, is several feet thick, and has received the strange name of The Rock of Gibraltar.

You have this splendid apartment, at the S. W. extremity, by a passage, not above 8 ft. high, running at the foot of the Pyramids of Egypt and Cheops's Needle. At the end of this passage, on the right, is another Spring or reservoir, not as large as the one in the Lawyer's Office. A descent of 3 or 10 ft. brings you to the Diamond Room, which may be considered as forming a part of our Church, a long, irregular room, more lofty than any that we have yet entered. Its length is 152 ft., its breadth from 10 to 15, and its height 50 ft.

At the farther extremity, a beautiful white spire shews up to a considerable height, which is appropriately styled the Steeple, and has, no doubt, suggested the name of the room. Nearly opposite to the centre of the Church, is a recess, raised several ft. of considerable extent.

This forms a very good Gallery to the Church. Immediately in the rear of the Gallery, and in full view from below, is a great number of pendant stalactites, of several ft. in length, and of various sizes ranged like the pipes of an organ, and bear a striking resemblance to them. If these stalactites are struck by any hard substance, they send forth sounds of various pitches, according to their size, and a stick run rapidly along several of them at once, produces a very pleasing variety of sounds. With great propriety this is called The Organ.

Passing under the Steeple, which rests on an arch elevated not more than 10 ft., you enter the Dormo Room. This room is named from a long natural table, that stands on the left side, and is not quite as large as the Church, though it has a height of 50 ft. Wav not for the kind of wall which the Steeple makes it might be considered as a continuation of the Church, and its length 1 therefore included in that of the Church. A little to the left of the table is a small mound opening. Proceeding only a few paces, through the opening, you suddenly find yourself in an immense Chamber, stretching from the Gallery of the Church, with which it communicates, to the Dining Room, to its main extremity, and proportionately wide. This is called Jackson's Room, and the floor is very irregular.
This room is rather uninteresting, but it leads to one that deserves a passing notice. Directly opposite the little passage which conducted you hither, is a large opening; passing this, the rocks contract until only a narrow pass is left, a few feet in length. This conducts you to the most magnificent, or at least to the most beautiful and interesting portion of the whole cavern. There is but one apartment and that is small, but the Garden or Enes, for so it is called, derives its beauty from the singular arrangement of the immense stalactites, hanging from the roof, and meeting the stalagmites, which have ascended from the floor to meet them; or in few words, it seems as if at some former period a sheet of water had poured down from the roof and by some wonderful operation of Nature, had become suddenly petrified. This sheet is not continuous, but strongly resembles the folds of heavy drapery, and you may pass among the windings as through the mazes of a labyrinth, and the light of a candle shines distinctly through any part of it.

A portion of the floor of this room, is composed of a beautiful, fine yellow sand, whereas most of the cave is a stiff clay, with very few indications of sand.

Returning to the Dining Room, the next room, or perhaps it should be called passage, is denominated the Wilderness, from the roughness of the path-way, and is only 10 ft. wide, but it rises to the immense height of 90 or 100 feet! As we come along the Causeway, and look down upon our right, we shall see our company 10 to 15 ft. below us, while our eyes can scarcely penetrate through the darkness to the ceiling above their heads. Upon the very verge of the rock upon which we are standing, are several beautiful white stalagmites, grouped together, among which, one stands pre-eminent. This is Bonaparte with his Body Guard, crossing the Alps. The effect is peculiarly fine, when viewed from below.

Proceeding only a few paces from the Emperor, you find yourself upon an arch, under which your company are passing, which is very appropriately called The Natural Bridge.

You are now upon the lowest level of the cave, and at the entrance of the farthest room. This is Jefferson's Hall, an extensive, but not very elevated apartment, quite level. Before I describe this room, we must diverge a little, and visit six or two rooms, that branch off from the main path. Directly to your right, as you emerge from the Wilderness, there rises an immense mass, apparently of solid stalagmite, 30 ft. in length, 30 ft. in breadth, and 30 ft. in height; this mass is beautiful beyond description, very much resembling successive stories, and is called The Tower of Belz. The most splendid portion of the Tower, is on the back, but it is difficult of access, for it is necessary to climb up the surface of the rock to the height of 15 or 20 ft. the view however, amply repays you for the labor.

For a few moments, you can scarcely convince yourself that an immense body of water is not pouring over the precipice in a foaming cataract, so white, so dazzling is the effulgence of the rock; and when this impression is infused the words of the pious Bard rush into the mind, where he describes the awful effects that will follow the consummation of all things;

"The Cataract, that like a Giant wrath, Rushed down implacably, as seized at once By sudden frost, with all his heary locks, Brood still!"

One might almost imagine, that Pollock had visited this wonder, and caught the idea so forcibly expressed above, from viewing this magnificent scene.

We have already so much exceeded our intended limits, that we must only look into the large apartment, that occupies the space behind the Tower, which is called Sen WALTER SCOTT's Room, and then hasten back to the main path. Jefferson's Room, that we left some time since, is very irregular in shape, and is 235 ft. long, following the various windings. What is commonly called the end of the cave, is distinguished by two singular, thin, lamellar rocks, 5 or 6 feet in diameter united at their bases, but spreading out so that the outer edges are several feet apart; this is called The Fly Trap.

To the left of the Fly Trap is a large recess, where is a fine spring, at which the weary visitor is glad to slake his thirst, after the fatigues of his arduous undertaking.

A few yards beyond the Fly Trap, is an opening in the solid wall, at the height of about 12 ft. through which you are admitted by a temporary ladder. By hard climbing you soon penetrate to the end of the recess, where you will find the Source of the Nile! This is a beautiful, limpid Spring covered over with a thin pellicle of stalagmite, yet sufficiently strong to bear your weight; in this spot there is a perforation that gives you access to the water beneath.

At all seasons, the air of the cave is damp, but the dampness of the floor depends upon the weather; if you except a moist place near the Fly Trap, there is no standing water throughout all the cavern, so that no difficulty can be accounted for. The temperature remains invariably in all parts, at about 50 degrees of Fahrenheit, from which it follows, that if the cave is visited in the winter, its air feels quite warm; but if in summer, a proportionable degree of cold is experienced. The spring and fall are the best times for visiting, for then the atmosphere without, is nearly at the same temperature with that within the cave, and it is more dry at these times.
seasoned veteran and had commanded the regiment a year or longer.

Fortunately, I prevailed upon him to write his recollections, and they are very readable. He had always a gallant heart for the ladies, especially if they were young and pretty! So after your lecture, I came home and refreshed my memory by turning to his description about that visit to the cave.

You may be able to identify the particular cavern by the name it was then called, and by the location somewhere near Staunton and Lexington. Just in order to give the story its setting I have copied for you the paragraphs before and after those about the cave, even tho they have nothing to do with the cave. Thought you might like to put this into your files.

Meyer: in Shenandoah Vall
of the 5th New York Volunteer C

May 19th (1864) the regiment marched to Lexington and arrested Ex-governor Letcher and brought him to Staunton. Some of those duties were much harder to execute than fighting. We arrived at the governor's house about daylight in the morning. He got up and dressed, and as he came out of the house his wife and daughters were on the steps weeping. They looked good to me, and if I could have had my way I would have told the old man to skip. We put him into an ambulance and after getting out of town we halted for breakfast and fed out horses. We ate with us and chatted. We treated him as well as we could. He was taken to Washington and after a few days was released and returned home. I have often wondered whatever became of those pretty daughters who wept on his shoulders that early morning.

General Duval invited several officers and men to visit Meyer's Cave with him. He took a band and wagon with rations both wet and dry. On reaching the cave, the old man who owned it demanded one dollar from each of us to guide us through the cave. General Duval told him the officers would give him what he asked, but the privates he thought did not have any money. The old man was very obstinate, so was the general. They were both Virginians. It finally ended in the general drawing his gun and pointing at the old man and ordering him to guide us through the cave, and telling him he would not get one cent for doing it, either. We had plenty of candles, and started, taking the band with us. It was most interesting. I had never seen anything like it. We came to one small place where we could not get the bass drum through, so we had to leave it. One rock they call the dancing hall. It was sixty feet long and forty feet wide, with a level floor, the roof being about 100 feet high. Beautiful stalactites were everywhere about us, in some cases reaching from top to bottom of the chamber, and others hanging part way down, or reaching from the bottom upward a ways.
Our lights shining on the crystal surfaces made a very pretty effect. The band struck up and we all danced to the music. The men threw off their rubber coats and those who represented ladies retained theirs so we could distinguish the difference. After going through the cars, over one mile in length, we returned to daylight, hungry and tired. After cooking coffee and other things some of the party began to be a little hilarious and I knew there would be no sleep in camp. So I gave Dr. Armstrong (the regimental surgeon, E.B.B.) a tip and we took a walk. About one-half mile from camp we came to a brick house, so we thought we would try there for a night's lodging. We knocked at the door and a lady opened it and invited us in. We made known our wants and they consented to keep us. We found a youngish man there, chaplain of a West Virginia regiment, one of our party, and three or four very pleasant ladies. The chaplain, we found, could play the piano. After having some music we retired. There was a hall at the head of the stairs and they made a bed for the chaplain on the floor, while the doctor and I occupied a room right off from the hall. We undressed and climbed into bed, bolting the door. It was the first bed we had slept in for months and it had feathers almost as high as we could reach. We raised the window and prepared for a night of bliss. About twelve o'clock we were missed in camp and it was surmised that we were over in this house. So they came over and woke us up singing, and it seemed to me I never heard any better voices anywhere. After singing awhile they rapped at the door and I told Doc then we had better dress as they surely would drag us out, so we dressed. We could hear them downstairs talking loudly and inquiring for us. Pretty soon we heard several footsteps on the stairs and calls for Barker. They had no lights, and the first thing they stumbled on was the Chaplain. I heard one of them say "here is Barker," and they took him by the legs and dragged him downstairs into the sitting room where there was a light, and then they saw their mistake. Immediately they started up again. We had our candle lighted and walked out and told them we surrendered. When we got downstairs they had the Chaplain playing the piano and we were singing again. After about an hour of that General Duval bade the ladies good evening and apologized very handsomely. He told the ladies he would send the band over in the morning to play for them, and that they would play "Dixie," Maryland, My Maryland, or anything they wanted to hear. Then they went back to camp and we all retired again. After we had breakfast in the morning and paid our bill, I went to camp and got all the sugar and coffee we had and went back and gave it to them. They seemed very grateful for those two things that they had not seen in a long while. The General sent the band over to play as he had promised, and they seemed well repaid for their night's disturbance. Then we packed up and marched back to Staunton and camp.
Post-bellum regulations at Grand Caverns
(from the anonymous 1889 pamphlet)

The Grottoes of the Shenandoah.

Notice to Visitors.—Particular attention is called to the following regulations which have been adopted by the company:

Rates of admission to Weyer Cave: For each visitor between the hours of 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., including electric lights, $1.00; after 6 p.m., without electric lights, $1.50. If electric lights are desired after 6 p.m., an extra charge will be made for them, in addition to the regular charge of $1.50, as follows: If for one person, $2.00; if for two, each $1.50; if for three, each 75 cts.; if for four, each 50 cts.; and if for five, 25 cts. each. For parties of six or more an extra charge will be made for the electric lights.

Rates of admission to Cave of the Fornicators: For each visitor between 7 a.m. and 6 p.m., $1.00; for each visitor after 6 p.m., $1.50.

A rebate of 50 cents from above rates will be allowed to any one visiting both caves within two consecutive days.

Fixed prices are established for cave specimens, photographs, maps, guide books, etc.

No one is allowed to take sticks, cases, etc., into the caves (unless physically unable to walk without them). Smoking in the caves is positively prohibited.

Visitors are politely requested to aid in preventing any kind of defacement or mutilation of the formations in the caves. No one is allowed to take any specimens from the caves; and any one detected in breaking or defacing any portion of the caves will be arrested and fined as provided by the laws of Virginia.

Our ample grounds, forests, roads, boating privileges, buildings, etc., are only for the proper use of our guests; all others will be considered trespassers unless they first have permission from the Superintendent to use our grounds.
Grand Caverns is located one mile south of the town of Grottoes, Virginia, in a small ridge called Cave Hill. The hill is 250 feet high and is located just west of the South Fork, Shenandoah River. The entrance to Grand Caverns, on the east face of Cave Hill, is 85 feet above the river at an elevation of 1210 feet.

The caverns are probably the oldest commercial cave now open in the United States, as records indicate that visitors were regularly escorted through the cave as early as 1809. Mr. Bernard Weyer is credited with discovering the cave in 1804 while hunting, and for many years it bore his name. The cave was surveyed in 1806 and 1816 by local residents. The most authentic map produced to date was that published by Robert I. Cooke in 1835.

Of historical interest, are the many names and initials inscribed on the walls and formations, many of which date back as far as 1808. For those who wish to examine this phase of the cave's history it is recommended that a flashlight be taken as the normal cave lighting does not show them well.

Grand Caverns consists of two distinct sets of echelon passages, offset and connected by a subordinate sets of passages at approximately right angles to the main ones. The primary passages are developed along the strike of the rock which is N80E and the subordinates along a series of joints which trend N60W and slope 800 to the southwest.

The limestone is fine grained, dark grey and banded by grey-green streaks. In weathering it turns light grey. It is Conococheague (Late Cambrian) in age.

The large number of shields that occur throughout the cave are of considerable interest. Of all cave formations these are among the most difficult to explain as to their origin. The most spectacular ones are Ajax Shield in the Armory and the Bridal Veil in the Bridal Chamber. In the Cathedral Room the strata is well shown and the intermingling of shaly seams is well brought out. In Jackson's Hall the ceiling is 90 feet high with distinct passages at 45 and 80 feet. At the end of the cavern, which is 25 feet below the entrance, the strike of the rock is N20E; dip 60°W.

The exit to the caverns was made by removal of two feet of limestone that closed off the end of a natural passage. On the west wall of the exit passage are to be found the oldest dates in the cave. Bibliography:


Jones, Calvin, Description of Wier's Cave, 8 pp, 1815.


Mohler, J. L., A Description of the Famed 'Weyer's Cave, 15 pp. 1881.

Fountain Cave

The entrance to Fountain Cave is about 300 yards south of Grand Caverns, on the east face of Cave Hill. It is close to the summit and lies 235 feet above the river at an elevation of 1360 feet. Fountain Cave was discovered on January 21, 1835, by a Mr. Weast, who is buried in the cemetery at the entrance to Grand Caverns, and as known for some time as Weast's Cave. It was open for a short time after its discovery as a commercial cave. Stairs and paths were constructed and candles installed for lighting.
The entrance of arched stone is man-made and is partially blocked by mud. This leads to a large room with a flat ceiling and a steeply sloping floor. The room abounds in terraced stalagmites and flowstone and offers the photographer some excellent shots. A roomy, well-decorated passage connects this room with a larger room 130 feet beyond. This second room contains numerous columns and curtains of flowstone and has a series of platforms at its south end which gives the appearance of a stage. A small tunnel leads south from this room, which permits easy passage, except for a short rise caused by debris from a sinkhole. At the far end of this passage are a series of three small rimstone pools, which should attract the attention of many photographers. Passage beyond this point requires crawling through damp clay and water.

The cave is in the same limestone as Grand Caverns, but here it has a dip of 34 degrees NW and strikes N30E. The cave is developed along the strike with subordinate control by joints at an angle of 45 degrees with the strike.

Persons visiting this cave will need lights and should plan on encountering muddy paths and a somewhat muddy entrance.

* * * * *

From a Grand Cavern brochure of the 1950's:

For nearly a century and a half these magnificent Caverns, universally recognized as one of the few very Great Caves of the World, have excited the wonder and amazement of succeeding generations of visitors. Their discovery, authenticated by many contemporary records, dates from February 1804, when young Bernard Weyer, digging out a hole in the hillside to recover a trap dragged off by a groundhog, found not his lost trap, but this incredible subterranean labyrinth.

Weyer's Cave as it was known for more than one hundred years, was the first cavern in America to be shown to visitors with regular guide service. Its fascinating history has been closely associated with the history and romance of the surrounding area, and its paths have echoed to the tread of men great in the history and literature of Virginia and America.

Jefferson was familiar with these caverns. Porte Crayon's "A visit to Weyer's Cave" has become a rare collectors item. Kercheval and Howe, early historians of the Shenandoah Valley, brought descriptions of Weyer's Cave to the scientific textbooks of their time.

During the dark days of The War Between the States, the great invulnerable cavern was used as a refuge by soldiers from the many battlefields of the neighborhood, and their names inscribed upon the ancient walls form an eternal memorial. Stonewall Jackson quartered his troops here, and conducted religious services in the great underground Cathedral.
(Undated - about 1946)
From the Clay Perry Collection
Courtesy Paul Perry

C.M. Blackford, Editor
Mangrove Coast Yacht Club
and Boating News
2735 Oakdale Street S.
St. Petersburg, Florida

Mr. Clay Perry,
c/o Stephen Daye Press
105 E. 24th Street
New York City

Dear Mr. Perry:

Saw the announcement of your Second Volume of your "American Cave Series" in "OUTDOORS UNLIMITED".

I presume you intend to progress into Virginia eventually and I was wondering whether you had the legend of Wier's Cave, (now called, I believe "Wonder Cavern") at Grottos, Va? It is a Lewis family tradition and I know of no place where it is written. I remember seeing a blurb put out by the present owners of the cavern which was based on no tradition of which I know in that section. I heard the legend as a child and it is briefly this:

At the time before Staunton was settled, when the Lewis's first went into the Valley they settled somewhere near the present town of Basic. The Valley was still Indian Country. Each Fall they went hunting in the Blue Ridge for bear before they hibernated leaving women and children at home. As they hunted the Western slopes they were frequently within sight of the homestead. One day they saw the predetermined smoke signal and rushed home just as the Indians were forcing their way into the house. They were repulsed but not before they captured one of the girls.

Twenty years later a sentry, one night at Pt. Staunton, saw a figure in a man's coat walking and creeping towards the fort. He challenged, the figure continued to approach so he shot. The wounded person turned out to be a woman, a white woman who could speak no English. When an interpreter was found she told him she was the missing Lewis child, that she had been held prisoner in a cave but managed to escape a few days before. She died. Lieut. Wier was sent with soldiers following her directions and found the cave which rightfully bore his name for so long.

There are many things that do not sound consistent to me but could be checked up. I think the old Lewis house is still standing but I think it is nearer Staunton. If so they could not have seen a smoke signal from the Blue Ridge. If you go down that way you might check up the Lewises and Wheats living in the vicinity of Lynnwood and Lewiston, (houses) about 3 mi. N of Port Republic. That is where I heard the tale about 35 years ago.
COLLOQUY AND BUSINESS

DON'T FORGET THE UNPRECEDENTED MEETING IN AUGUST AT THE NSS CONVENTION!
Precise date not yet available, but sometime late in the week of Aug. 20.

ASHA board member Harold Meloy (P.O. Box 454, Shelbyville, Indiana) has published a splendid 40 page booklet: "Mummies of Mammoth Cave", the result of much research. No price stated; send $1.00 and see what happens.

Ye editor (1117 36th Ave. E., Seattle, Wash.) wonders about the "saltpeter cave" just north of the confluence of the "north fork" of "River La Moine" (Des Moines River), Iowa shown on map #3, Vol. 8 (atlas) of the 1959 American Antiquarian Society's edition of the Lewis and Clark journals. Apparently this map is in the handwriting of Meriwether Lewis but is traced from an earlier French or Spanish map. James Hedges (written communication, April, 1968) says that this should be at the foot of Capitol Hill in Des Moines but when he went looking for a rumored cave there, all he could find was a tiny adit. Anybody have any information?

Also has anyone published a bibliography of H.C. Hovey? Or any biography other than obituaries?

John Bridges (206 W. 18th Ave., Columbus, Ohio) is working on the remarkably wide variety of printings of Hovey's Mammoth Cave guide books. If you have any such, or any such information, drop him a note.

Red and Patty Jo Watson will be in Turkey Aug. 68 through Jan. 1969; mail should be addressed to: Philosophy Dept., Washington Univ., St. Louis, Mo.

BOOK EXCHANGE

Ross Eckler (Route 18, Spring Valley Rd., Morristown, N.J. has a Hovey Celebrated American Caverns to trade; wants Owen Cave Regions of the Ozarks and Black Hills, Bailey Great Caves of Ky., Amann History and Description of the Luray Cave 1882, Binkerd The Mammoth Cave and its denizens, and his Pictorial Guide to Mammoth Cave, and Hartley The Tragedy of Sand Cave.

Your editor recently picked up a spare of Brown's 1865 Ice Caves of France and Switzerland, and Kunsky's Homes of Primeval Men; still most of the previous listing available including Hovey Mammoth Cave guide and Nicholson-White Jim White's Own Story. Want many scarce, some common books. What have you?

Both John Bridge and Chuck Pease have been accumulating and trading extensively; no current list for either as we go to press.

EDITOR'S BIBLIOGRAPHIC NOTE

Brown's 1865 Ice caves of France and Switzerland is now known to come in two forms: the standard red-brown binding with preface, and a fancy binding with marbled paper without preface. Anyone know of any others?
19 April 1968

- news release for speleological publications -

**Classics in Speleology**

Dr. Richard A. [add "(Red)" here if appropriate to the
publication] Watson, NSS 1665 and Director of the Cave Research
Foundation, has been appointed Editor of a new Johnson Reprint
Corporation series entitled: **Classics in Speleology**, cave adventure
and karst science. Initially the series will include much-sought-
after books in English which have long been out of print. However,
plans are projected to include works in several modern European
languages (Johnson Reprint Corporation is the largest international
reprint publishing house in the Western Hemisphere), and perhaps
later original works in speleology. The books will be hard bound,
facsimile editions. Their price will be substantially less than the
originals which are almost unavailable today.

**Classics in Speleology** will begin with four volumes, two of
which have already been chosen: H.C. Hovey (1882) *Celebrated American
Caverns*, and R.S. Thompson (1879) *The Suckers' Visit to the Mammoth Cave.*
It is expected that the other two selections will consist of a book on
caves of some other region of the United States, and a book on cave
zoology or biology.

Negotiations have been going on with various publishers for
several years concerning this series, and it is a pleasure to
announce that it is now a reality. The appearance of **Classics in
Speleology** is a good sign for caving. Dr. Watson or Watson or Red
[use whichever form of the name seems appropriate to the publication]
writes that he would appreciate consultation in the making of selections,
so if you have any favorites you would like to see reprinted, please
send your suggestions to him at the Department of Philosophy,
Washington University, St. Louis, Missouri 63130.