

THE JOURNAL OF **Spelean History**

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION



CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE AND ANTHONY'S PILLAR.

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THE ASSOCIATION

The American Spelean History Association is 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. Annual membership is \$5.00; family membership \$6.00. Library subscriptions are \$4.00

THE COVER

The woodcut depicts a scene in Weyer's Cave, Virginia. The original is 15.9 x 23.1 cm. It is one of several by an unknown artist that were published beginning in 1872 in various editions of William C. Bryant's "Picturesque America." Note the lamps used for illumination. Reproduction courtesy of James F. Quinlan.

THE JOURNAL

The Association publishes The Journal of Spelean History on a quarterly basis. Pertinent articles or reprints are welcomed. As a photo-offset process is used, the editor should be contacted in advance concerning the current type of manuscript preparation desired. Submission of rough drafts for preliminary editing is encouraged. Illustrations require special handling and arrangements must be made with the editor in advance.

BACK ISSUES

Some back issues are available of Volumes 1-6 from Dr. W.R. Halliday, 1117 36th Avenue E., Seattle, Washington 98102. All issues of Volumes 1-7:2 are available on microfiche from Kraus Reprint Company, Rt. 100, Millwood, New York 10546.

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Several people have contributed numerous articles to our journal; some have contributed just a few. They have brought pleasure and stimulation into the homes of many and I'm sure the membership is appreciative. Most members, however, have had great interest in the Association but have not submitted any items for publication. They are not expected to. But unless more high-quality manuscripts are submitted for consideration, I fear that forth coming issues may tend to resemble a collection of reprinted items concerning the history of Mammoth Cave. It is the articles you write that will keep this journal alive -- or those you don't that will kill it.

One of the reasons this journal exists is to serve the interests of the members of our Association. What do you want to see in your journal? Let me know. And why not help me make it the way you want it to be.

Wandering Willie Walks to Mammoth Cave

Harold Meloy

Let me tell you a story about Mammoth Cave. It happened in 1838. The story begins in Cincinnati where a young man had been reading about the cave.

The previous year the *American Monthly Magazine*¹ had published glowing articles about Mammoth Cave in its May and June numbers. Also in 1837, the *Book of the United States*² included a description of the already famous cave. Lee's guidebook to Mammoth Cave had been published in Cincinnati only two years before that.³ These and other published descriptions of the cave were enough to fire the imagination of any adventuresome youth.

Our young man was also familiar with the novels of Sir Walter Scott. In one of them, *Redgauntlet*, is a character called Wandering Willie, a blind old man and an exceptionally fine violinist, who wandered about from place to place earning a precarious living as an itinerant entertainer, charming his audiences with his music and his stories.

Our young man in Cincinnati was also a violinist; and in the spirit of adventure he borrowed the name of Wandering Willie. He took his violin and walked to Mammoth Cave. Willie enjoyed every step of his journey, often playing the violin for his own amusement and for the pleasure of the families with whom he passed the nights on his pedestrian journey.

When he arrived at the cave he found what passed as an inn -- a log building with two rooms on the ground floor, each about 18 feet square, with a 10-foot open space between them, and an upper story over all. The resident manager, Archibald Miller, Jr., had been born there twenty-seven years before, when his father was in charge of the saltpeter works.

The cave had been purchased earlier that year by Franklin Gorin, an attorney in the neighboring county. Stephen, the 17-year-old black boy who belonged to Gorin, was learning more and more about the cave and later would become its most celebrated guide.

When Willie took his first trip into the cave, he saw the saltpeter hoppers and the log pipes, unused for 23 years. In the main cave passage, they showed him the ruts in the old road over which oxen had hauled the peter dirt to the hoppers. The log watering trough was still there, and a number of corncobs littered the area where the oxen had been tethered and fed. They told him that the huge underground avenue continued for miles. He saw remnants of old Indian torches made of canes, discarded woven grass sandals, and the rock ledge where they told him an Indian mummy had been found.

Willie was enchanted. His guide told him that the cave passages were on three different levels, some winding over and some passing beneath other passages. They walked through chambers so large that their lights would not illuminate the distant walls. He peered down pits so deep that he could not see the bottom. The wild and rugged beauty of the cave thrilled him.

That evening he asked permission to pass the night in the cave. Mr. Miller provided the blankets, and Willie selected for his underground bedroom a place in the main corridor at a spring in the cave. The spring is in a "Beautifully fluted niche in the left hand wall, caused by the continual attrition of water trickling down into a natural basin on the floor." From there the water seeps downward and, it was thought, appears again as a spring in a lower avenue.

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The following morning the guide came for him, and Willie told his new friends that he had spent a glorious night in the cave. His journey homeward took him by way of Lexington where he visited with Rev. Robert Davidson, the president of Transylvania University. Davidson later wrote:

"It was in the autumn of 1838, that I met with him, He was a tall muscular young, man, as straight as an Indian, somewhat bronzed by the sun, and his habiliments rather Gibeonish. He was the son of an eminent citizen of Cincinnati, and was on his return from a pedestrian excursion for amusement to Mammoth Cave. He had a violin slung in a green bag, under his arm, with whose music he had solaced his weary hours, and entertained his hosts along the road."⁴

Back at the cave, the guide Stephen was showing the cave-tourists the place where Wandering Willie had slept and the spring from which he drank. From that time on, it was known as "Wandering Willie's Spring." Six years later Alexander Bullitt wrote a book⁵ about the cave. He said:

"This spring derives its name from that of a young gentleman, the son of a highly respectable clergyman of Cincinnati, who, in the spirit of romance, assumed the name of Wandering Willie, and taking with him his violin, marched on foot to the Cave. Wishing no better place in which to pass the night, he selected this spot, requesting the guide to call for him in the morning. This he did and found him fast asleep upon his bed of earth, with his violin beside him."

Such is the stuff from which legends are born. The sleeping youth and his violin would become another chapter in the saga of Mammoth Cave. And it would be embellished by later guides. Gorin sold the cave in 1839; Miller died within another decade, and Stephen in 1857. A completely new complement of guides were showing the cave in 1867 when Dr. Forwood toured the cave. His guide showed him the spring and told him it was named for:

"an eccentric young country violinist, who assumed the name of Wandering Willie, became separated from his companions while within the cave, had his lamp extinguished, and was found lying asleep beside the spring."

Like so many others, Forwood felt the magic of Mammoth Cave; and like others, he transcribed it into a book. The book⁶ gave the 1867 version of the legend. Franklin Gorin, then an old man, was asked to give his comments; and he wrote the author that it was not correct. Gorin continued:

"The spring received its name from a young man who walked from Cincinnati to the cave, accompanied by his violin. After exploring, or seeing much of the cave he asked permission of Mr. Miller, the agent, to be allowed to remain in the cave overnight, at the spring that then had no name, with his violin as his sole companion. Upon promising that he would not leave the spring until the guide should return, his wish was assented to; and, being furnished blankets, he was left to enjoy his loneliness and his violin. He told in the morning that he had spent a glorious night."⁷

Another decade passed, and so did Gorin. The tale of the sleeping boy and his violin was firmly established as a part of the folklore of Mammoth Cave. New and different guides were conducting cave visitors along the trail beside the spring. One of the visitors was Rev. Horace C. Hovey; and like the good doctor before him, he too fell under the spell of Mammoth Cave. They paused at the "symmetrical recess chiseled by the tiny rill, whose limpid water was collected in a little pool." The guide told the story; and Hovey later wrote about:

"a poor blind boy who rambled over the country winning a precarious living by his violin, and who, as he said, was resolved to see the cave for himself. He lost his way, and when found by his companions, was quietly sleeping beside this basin, which ever

since has been called Wandering Willie's Spring."⁸

That's the story.

I haven't told you his real name -- because I don't know it -- yet. However, there are some clues as to his identity. The spring in the lower passage which lies beneath the place where Willie slept has been known as "Richardson's Spring" since the 1840's. A penciled notation in the margin of an 1852 magazine description of the lower spring reads:

"Richardson's Spring has special significance for Cincinnatians since Willie Richardson, the wandering violinist was from there."

The source of the notation is not known, but Rev. Robert Richardson was a Methodist minister in Cincinnati at about this time. We are still looking for 1838 newspaper stories, letters, and other materials which will add to our meager knowledge of the young man who inspired the story.

The legend of Wandering Willie lives on. It is a tale often told by those who are fascinated by the folklore of Mammoth Cave.

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2. Mellen, Grenville, 1837. A Book of the United States [pub. unk.], Hartford. [Reprint of Nahum Ward's oft published 1816 description of Mammoth Cave.]
3. Lee, Edmund F., 1835. Notes on the Mammoth Cave. James and Gazley, Cincinnati. 30 p.
4. Davidson, Robert, 1840. An Excursion to the Mammoth Cave and the Barrens of Kentucky. Skillman, Lexington, Ky. p. 65.
5. Bullitt, Alexander C., 1845. Rambles in the Mammoth Cave, During the Year 1844. Morton & Griswold, Louisville, p. 43-44. [Reprinted by Johnson Reprint Corp. New York, 1973]
6. Forwood, William Stump, 1870. An Historical and Descriptive Narrative of the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky. Lippincott, Philadelphia, p. 61.
7. -----, ibid, p. 228-229.
8. Hovey, Horace C., 1882. Celebrated American Caverns. Clarke, Cincinnati. p. 79. [Reprint of 1896 ed. by Johnson Reprint Corp., New York 1970.]

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Earliest Known Description of White Cave, Mammoth Cave National Park, Kentucky

James F. Quinlan

The following letter by an unknown person was published at Haverhill, Mass., in the Merrimack Intelligencer, August 10, 1815.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman resident in Kentucky, formerly of this State.

THE WHITE CAVE

Is about a mile from the Mammoth, and, I think, far exceeds it in beauty, though of much inferior dimensions. We were here ushered into a superb hall, through the middle of which runs a partition of beautifully petrified pillars and pilasters, standing so near each other, that, except at two or three natural doors, a person cannot pass from one room into the other. At the top, where they are attached to the dome of the cave, they are decorated with the most fanciful workmanship. Here may be seen in their greatest beauty, all the orders of the Grecian architecture, Corinthian capitals, Ionic bases, Doric columns, and Gothic walls and arches. The partition extends 50 or 60 yards.-- The arch overhead is ornamented with festoons and stalactites, arranged with wonderful ingenuity; and in many parts of the cave are figures still more fantastic; among which is one called The Eagle, from its resemblance to that bird; another The Indian Queen, from its likeness to the human form. And, indeed, a strong analogy may be traced here between these natural phenomena, and the choicest works of art. Chinese porcelain cannot exceed in beauty of form or skill of configuration, the natural dishes that in many places cover the area of the cave. Near the middle is a basin of an oval form, of three or four barrels capacity, which appears if formed by the plastic hand of the potter. The sides of the vessel, which are about an inch thick, and several inches deep, are fluted and scalloped as the most elegant vases. A part of the reservoir is covered with an incrustation like the deck of a boat. The water it contains possesses a crystalline purity. Near this basin is a shallow pool, round which, on account of the straitness of the passage, we were obliged to creep like quadrupeds a few yards, to where we came to a mound covered with dishes of various sizes and forms, full of clear water. The edges of these vessels run in waving zig-zag lines, the sides fluted, and like those of the honey-comb, each partition forming the sides of two cells. Our senses only can give us a perfect idea of the beautiful diversity of these figures, delineated by nature's great Architect and Potter!

Woodford Co. (K'y) July, 1815.

Nothing is known about the identity of the Woodford County writer. One might logically infer that he was formerly a resident of Massachusetts but, since it was customary for American newspapers of the 19th century to freely republish what was already published in other papers, I am not certain that such an inference is justified. The July 17, 1816 issue of Thomas' Massachusetts Spy or Worcester (Mass.) Gazette includes an early description of Mammoth Cave by a person in Woodford County, Kentucky -- presumably this same person. This Mammoth Cave description was republished in the August 14, 1816 issues of The American of Hanover (N.H.), the August 17, 1816 issue of the Merrimack Intelligencer and undoubtedly other papers. There is no reason to think either the letter reproduced above or the Mammoth Cave account were not previously published in newspapers not cited herein.

Note that the correct name of the cave is White Cave, not White's Cave as it has often been miscalled.

Three Short Summers: The Story of Hiawatha Caverns

Gary K. Soule

Hiawatha Caverns is a formerly commercialized cave located in the hilly farmland near Witoka, in southeastern Minnesota. Although the cave was discovered as recently as 1962, and operated commercially during the summers of 1964, 1965, and 1966, today the only thing remaining is an old shed with the words "Hiawatha Caverns" in big red letters painted on it. Inside the shed a few of the old directional signs to the cave may be found, and a short distance down a brush-covered hill one may find the entrance to a steeply slanted metal tunnel that disappears into the side of a hill. Although the farmer, Ed Meitzke, who owns the land tries to keep the tunnel door locked, vandals have partly succeeded in destroying what at one time was a very pretty commercial cave.

One Spring Ed Neitzke noticed that a narrow shaft opened up on the side of a hill that was being used as a cow pasture. He was afraid of losing a cow into the opening, so he filled it with fence posts. Shortly afterwards a neighbor boy, Carl Douglas, tied a piece of rope to a fence post and worked his way down a narrow partially blocked opening. He discovered a cave, that according to the Winona Daily News reports, reached a depth of 70 feet and had a length of about 1/4 mile. (After seeing the cave myself I would say the total depth is about 30 to 40 feet, and the cave has a little bit less than 1/8th mile of passage which had been opened to the public.)

The cave went largely unnoticed until the following year, when two Illinois business men became interested in the cave. They talked the owner into giving them a 99-year lease on the cave so that they could commercialize it. In turn, they would pay him \$2,500 a year, plus 10% of all admission fees collected. They spent all of 1963 and the first six months of 1964 developing the cave, at a cost of \$20,000.

The development included removing about 1/2 million pounds of clay and rock, and digging a new horizontal entrance into the cave. Colored electric lights and gravel-
ed walkways were put into the cave. The commercial cave tours were priced at \$2.00 for adults and lasted about one hour. At one time, there had been another entrance to the cave some 15 yards from the main entrance, but today it is sealed shut. All the cave guides were girls and at one time ten of them were employed.

The third summer, a man named Blanchard took over the management of the cave. The original managers realized that the cave was not going to be a financial success.

One summer night during the 1966 tourist season, this second owner packed up and left in the middle of the night, never to be heard from again! The cave was crudely run until the fall of 1966, and then closed for good, thus adding another sa a to the never ending list of commercial caves that are no more.

For those who are interested in old commercial cave literature and related memorabilia, it should be pointed out that in addition to several newspaper clippings and ads, the cave had two different types of red, white, and black brochures, a car bumper sticker, and lettered T-shirts that had the cave name printed on them. The bumper sticker was of the adhesive-type and featured red letters on a black background. A row of simulated stalactites was sketched on the bottom third of the sticker, which read "Newly discovered Hiawatha Caverns", Witoka, Minn.

While it is true that this cave is not historically old like the Decorah Ice Cave and Wompi Cave in Iowa, it still has a fascinating, although short, history of its own -- one that should be recorded for the sake of spelean history.

References

- Mercer Co. (Ill.) Times Record. January 15, 1964. pg. 1.
Old cave brochures (two different types)
Rochester (Minn.) Post-Bulletin. July 28, 1964, pg. 8.
Verbal communication from Mr. & Mrs. Ed Neitzke, owners of the cave, and a guided tour of the cave courtesy of Mr. Neitzke, June 15, 1974.
Winona (Minn.) Daily News. January 6, 1964, pg. 3, and June 15, 1964.

Descriptions of American Caves in 19th Century Newspapers

Stuart Sprague

- 11-4-1815 Lexington (Ind.) Western Eagle, Bethlehem, N.Y. Two caves "explored a short time since, by a party of young gentlemen from Cairo
(1) entrance "sufficient to admit the entrance of a barrel"
(2) at foot or precipice of rocks 50-60' high. Quite narrow.
- 3-2-1816 Vincennes (Ind.) Western Sun. "Discovery of an extensive cave of natural Epsom salt... near the town of Corydon." Analyzed by Drs. Burrell & Adams.
- 12- 5-1816 Canton, Ohio Repository. Laurel Hill nr. Uniontown, Fayette Co. Pa. Described by John A. Paxton of Philadelphia from Am. Telegraph.
- 10-15-1817 Lebanon, Ohio Western Star. Copy of a letter from Dr. Kendal of Hancock County to Abner Locke, Prop. of Milledgeville Museum. "Stalactites; being petrified vegetable matter. I do not pretend to say what kind of vegetable substance it was previous to the process of petrification; though the block from which I obtained this piece resembled both in form and texture, a section of an Ash limb."
- 6-15-1818 Charleston (S.C.) Courier from N.Y. Advertiser. St. Lucia Cavern.
- 7-17-1818 Canton, Ohio Repository. Sing Sing, Westchester Co., N.Y.
- 6-23-1818 Pittsburgh Gazette. Sing Sing, really a colonial mine with augers.
- 1-4-1819 National Intelligencer. Maury Co., Tenn. William Donnison of Nashville to S.L. Mitchell from Boston Int.
- 3-25-1820 Jackson Missouri Herald. Corydon, Ind. 1/13 "There was found about the first of this month, in a cave in this county, about 1000 counterfeit banknotes, on different banks. Mr. Nathan Veatch and Isaac Meek entered the cave, for the purpose of looking for salt petre, when they came to a ~~bottle about half full of linseed oil~~, a block with two rollers, supposed to be used for striking bank notes; and searching further, through a narrow passage of about forty feet, into a large apartment, they found the money. No plates have as yet been discovered; but it is expected they are likewise concealed therein. It did not appear that the place had been resorted to very

lately, or that the materials had been lately used."

- 2-23-1826 Delaware (Ohio) Patron. Old man frozen in, near Norristown, Pa.
- 12-3-1840 (Lexington) Kentucky Gazette. Bottomless Lake, White Lake, Sussex Co., N.Y.
- 3-30-1846 Louisville Courier. "A vast and beautiful cave has been discovered near Middletown, Va. It has been explored to the distance of a half a mile."
- 4-21-1845 Louisville Courier. "Rambles in the Mammoth Cave, during the year 1844 -- By a Visitor -- is the title of a handsomely printed and well 'gotten up' book of 100 pages."
- 6-27-1845 Louisville Courier. Among hoosiers, travels cave called Bell's from shape of entrance.
- 5-17-1850 Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen from Madison (Wisc.) Argus. Mr. Howel Lumley. Five days in and out second entrance. One part 70' high "to extend over much of two counties", 37' lake.
- 2-20-1852 Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen from Richmond (Va.) Times. Blasting limestone near Buchanan. Skeleton, gold cross, coins.
- 10-19-1855 Paris (Ky.) Western Citizen. Missouri shortage of saltpetre. "Franklin, Gasconade, and Osage counties are said to abound in caves and bluffs containing saltpetre." --St. Louis Republican.
- 11-6-1855 Bardstown (Ky.) Western American. "Many years ago, salt-petre was manufactured from deposits in caves of Hardin County."
- 3-15-1856 (Springfield) Illinois State Register. Laborers on Va. Central RR near Covington strike a cave with skeleton and seven bones, 1823 & 1826.
- 6-13-1857 Kansas City (Mo.) Enterprise. Maries Co. Big Saltpetre Cave explored on 11th and printed in Jefferson Inquirer. 1 3/4 mi from Gasconade River on Cave Spring Creek, Twp. 38 Sec 21 R 9 W. Guided by R.H. Prewett, Meyer Fridge of St. Louis wrote it up.
- 8-12-1859 Maysville (Ky.) Express. Colossal Cavern, G.W. Wright, Prof. of Chemistry, Ky. School of Medicine, 7/28/59 to ed. Courier.
- 2-27-1874 Nashville (Mich.) News. A breathing cave, Western N.C. Mts., Fox Range.
- 10-27-1873 Louisville Courier-Journal. J.J. Roberts, tunnel on farm of L.J. Proctor, large domes.
- 3-13-1874 Barboursville (N.C.) Mountain Echo. Breathing Cave, Fox Range.
- 8-12-1875 Maysville (Ky.) Eagle. Mummy in Grand Avenue Cave near Glasgow.
- 3-31-1876 Barboursville (Ky.) Mountain Echo. Land of S.K. Veach near Augusta. Skeleton & sword.
- 11-9-1876 Maysville (Ky.) Bulletin. Maryland, a new Mammoth, rumbling passing of train near by.
- 6-28-1878 London (Ky.) Mt. Echo. Thomas Kelley, cave owner, 24 acre farm, three mummies purchased by Ed. Moore of Louisville, remainder by Major George M. Proctor.

A Checklist of View-Master Commercial Cave Stereo Slides

Peter M. Hauer

Many consider the stereo view to be extinct -- a relic of antique shops, flea markets and carefully sorted collector's files. But many thousands of stereo views are sold annually. The modern version is sold under the registered trademark, View-Master. It consists of a circular reel that is 3.5 inches in diameter and holds 14 16 mm transparencies (7 stereo views). They are viewed either by projection onto a screen (with or without polarizing filters to preserve the three-dimensionality) or, more conveniently, with the aid of a hand-held plastic viewer. Although View-Master reels were published for many years by the Sawyer's Co. of Portland, Oregon, the company was acquired by the GAF Corporation of New York and the views are now published and marketed by GAF. Because the collecting of antique views of caves on stereo mounts is of special interest to cave historians around the country, I present here a listing of View-Master cave scenes that have come to my attention from various sources. Some are dated, some are not. A request to the Sawyer Company for more complete information of what has been published yielded only a current price list. I am sure there are many more to be found. Quality is usually quite good.

I want to thank Dave Brison with whom I compared notes some years ago. His 1946 View-Master catalog was a welcome source of information.

1. Alum Bluff Cave, Smokey Mtns. National Park, Tenn. (1 view) Reel # 336-Gt.
This shelter was mined for saltpetre
2. Blue Grotto (Italy) (1 view)
Reel # 1300 ca 1950
Slide # 10-Blue Grotto of Capri
3. Carlsbad Caverns (3 reels)
Reel #'s 251, 252, 253.
4. Cave of the Mounds (Wisconsin) (1 reel)
Reel # 192
5. Cave of the Winds (Colorado) (1 reel)
Reel # 234, ca. 1946.
6. Cave Rock (Lake Tahoe, Calif.) (1 view)
Reel #183
7. Cenote (Sacred) Mayan Ruins (Yucatan, Mexico) (1 view) Reel # 520 (Chichen Itza)
8. Cheddar Gorge & Caves (Somerset, England) (1 reel)
Reel # 1037
9. Cliff Dwellers (Mesa Verde Models) (1 reel)
Reel # SP-9055
10. Endless Caverns (Virginia) (1 reel)
Reel # 263, ca. 1955.
11. Hermits Cave (Palestine) (2 views)
Reel # 4017, ca. 1949
View # 4 - In the Wady Kelt (shelter)
View # 7 - Martyred hermit skulls, 550 A.D.
lining a cave wall.
12. Howe Caverns (New York) (2 reels)
Reel # SP 9022 and ?, ca. 1950's
13. Jenolan Caves (Australia) (1 view)
Reel # B2882, # 2
View # 7: Cathedral Chambers
14. Our Lady of Lourdes Grotto (France) (1 reel)
Reel # 1411, ca. 1953
View # 4 - Entrance to cave.

180

15. Lava Tube (Island of Hawaii) (1 view)
Reel # 71
16. Lost River (N.H.) (1 reel)
Reel # 260, 1946 (1 view)
Reel # SP 9025
View # 5 - Hall of Ships (Franconia Notch, N.H.)
17. Luray Caverns (Va.) (3 reels ?)
Reel # SP 9026 dated 1946.
Also # 195, 2 reels, 1946
View # 4 - Hovey's Hall
(3 reel set # A8291)
Several varied later editions. Earliest undated version is # 194, A, B, and C.
18. Mammoth Cave (2 reel set)
339, # 340, dated 1946
(3 reel set ca. 1955
339, A, B, and C. Many recent editions.
19. Meramec Caverns (Missouri) (3 reels)
Reel # A 451
20. Mesa Verde (2 reels)
Reels # 226, 227 (Mesa Verde photos)
(2 views) Reel # 771A - Riders of the Desert
Views # 1, # 2 show Mesa Verde cliff dwellers.
21. Midous Grotto (France) (1 view)
Reel # 1497 - From Pau to Bagnères, De-Bigorre
View # 6 - The Midous Grotto (ls. speleothems)
22. Nativity Grotto (Bethlehem) (2 views)
Reel # 4006, ca. 1949
View # 4 - Birthplace of Jesus
View # 5 - Holy Manger
23. Natural Bridge (1 reel)
Reel # 79
(3 reel set) Reels # A 8281, A 8282 and A 8283
(possibly the same as # 79, A,B,C. -- ed.)
A 8281 - Views of Bridge, sign mentioning salt-peter cave.
A 8282 - Bridge, inside saltpeter cave, nitre mining relic, salt peter cave sign, entrance to Lost River, Lost River sign.
A 8283 - Bridge, George Washington's Survey bench, Lost River Glen.
24. Onondaga Caves (Missouri) (1 reel)
Reel # 374
25. Oregon Caves (2 reels)
Reels # 91, 92.
Later versions are 3 reels with some different views.
Reels # A 248, A, B, and C.
26. Paradise Glacier Ice Cave (1 view)
Reel # 105 - Rainier National Park
View # 4 - Ice caves
27. Sea Lion Caves (1 reel)
Reel # A 247 - 1 cave view
28. Shenandoah Caverns (Virginia) (1 reel)
Reel # 339
29. Skyline Caverns (Virginia) (1 reel)
Reel # SP 9001
30. Wookey Hole (Somerset, England) (1 reel)
Reel # 1036

Four Notes on Stereoscopic Transparencies of Caves

James F. Quinlan

1. THE ANCESTRY OF THE PRESENT MARKETER OF CAVE STEREO VIEWS

The marketing of View-Master reels by the GAF Corporation is an interesting example of history repeating itself. I illustrate this by the following that omits many dates, names, and photographic processes relevant to the history of photography.

In 1842 Edward Anthony established a daguerrotype supply house in New York City. In 1852 he was joined by his brother and the firm became the E. & H.T. Anthony Co. Although the company was still primarily a supplier of photographic goods -- the great yellow father of its day -- it also became the leading national (and perhaps leading international) publisher and distributor of stereo views during the 1860's and 1870's. One of their more famous series was the views of Mammoth Cave taken by Charles Waldack in 1866 (but not marketed by the Anthonys until 1867). The E. & H.T. Anthony Company merged with another historic photographic company, the Scoville and Adams Company in 1902 and five years later they became the Anasco Company. In 1928 it merged with two American branches of the German Agfa Company to become the Agfa Anasco Corporation, a major manufacturer of film and cameras. In 1939 the parent company changed its name to General Aniline and Film Corporation (whence the name, GAF). The name Agfa was dropped in 1943 and Anasco became one of several divisions. Sawyer's Inc., the producer of not only the View-Master reels but also View-Master projectors and cameras as well as Pana-Vue 35 mm travel slides and other photographic equipment, was acquired in 1966. In 1967 General Aniline and Film Corporation formally changed its name to GAF Corporation, but until recently the View-Master reels (and Pana-Vue color slides) were sold under the Sawyer's name. In summary, the current major international publisher and distributor of stereo views is a descendent of a company that held the same role more than 110 years ago.

2. OTHER VIEW-MASTER REELS CONCERNING CAVES

I know of the following that are distributed today in Europe:

- A. Han-sur-Lesse, ses grottes (Belgium) (3 reels)
Packet # C 363 (Reels C 3631, 3632, & 3633)
- B. Les Grottes de Remouchamps (Belgium) (3 reels)
Packet # C 374 (Reels C 3741, 3742, & 3743)
- C. Speleology (3 reels)
Packet # B 970-E (Reels B 9701, 9702, & 9703)

All of these are manufactured in Belgium by GAF (Belgium) N.V. Those of Han are published only in French; those of Remouchamps are published in French but with translations of titles into German, English, Italian, Dutch and Swedish. The Speleology reels include an introduction by Norbert Casteret and a view of him; they depict the descent and exploration of an unidentified 600 meter deep cave. It is accompanied by a 15-page illustrated booklet with a cross-section that is keyed to the text and views. The English edition of this packet (presumably a translation of the French edition into British) was test-marketed in America during the summer of 1974.

There are View-Master views of several Austrian caves and I suspect also of various other European caves. I am checking about these.

3. THE HELM STEREO VIEWS OF CARLSBAD CAVERNS

At least seven 35 mm color transparencies of Carlsbad were taken and published by Grace and "Tex" Helm of Carlsbad. I would guess that they were sold during the stereo craze of the 1950's. The views are in the standard 4" x 1 11/16" mounts.

4. TRU-VUE STEREO VIEWS OF HOWE CAVERNS

Tru-Vue, Inc. of Rock Island, Illinois, published and marketed hundreds of different black and white 35 mm filmstrips with 15 stereoscopic scenes. I remember them from the 1940's but I have no idea of the history of the company. At least one filmstrip, # 1005, depicted Howe Caverns. I would not be surprised to learn that others were also made.

* * *

The Poems of George D. Prentice Concerning Mammoth Cave

Patricia H. Quinlan

George D. Prentice was born on a farm in Preston, Connecticut, December 18, 1802. His mother taught him to read when he was only 3 and he began school before he was 4 years old. Prentice was an outstanding student, began writing poetry at a very early age and published his earliest poems before he entered college. Although he studied law, he practiced it for only a few years.

He was drawn into journalism by accident but was so successful it soon became his career. Prentice became the first editor of a weekly newspaper, the Hartford, Connecticut, New England Review in 1828. The paper was an early success, and his popularity began to grow. He was known as a poet, but was more widely known as an editor.

In 1830 he went to Kentucky to write an article on the life of Henry Clay, and during his absence another poet, much admired by Prentice, John G. Whittier, was asked to temporarily take over as editor of the New England Review. While in Kentucky he was asked (with the aid of a man from Ohio) to establish a daily newspaper in Louisville. His article on Clay for the New England Review was dated November 14, 1830, and 10 days later the first issue of the Louisville Journal appeared. He stayed in Kentucky and never returned to Connecticut.

In 1835 he married Henrietta Benham, the daughter of a lawyer well known in Cincinnati and Louisville. They had 4 children; two of them died in childhood.

His older son, William Courtland is the person who allegedly descended the Maelstrom in Mammoth Cave in 1858 (not 1859 as commonly misdated.) The account of this descent was reprinted in at least 4 newspapers known to James F. Quinlan, but in his opinion (and that of others) there is no evidence that the descent was much more than a hoax.

For several years before the Civil War he lectured widely in both the North and the South and presented a gloomy outlook for the future. He felt sure there would be a civil war if Abraham Lincoln was elected President. After the failure of the short-lived Conservative Union party he felt the only course of action was to accept the Republican Union administration of Lincoln and support it.

Southern leaders tried to buy the Louisville Journal's influence just before the Civil War but he turned them down and the Journal was largely instrumental in keeping Kentucky in the Union. Although he immediately lost Southern patronage the loss was in part compensated by the Federal Government. He was held in high esteem by President Lincoln on whom he had a strong personal influence.

Probably his greatest sorrow was seeing both his sons fight in the Confederate Army, losing one in battle while he continued to run a Unionist paper. His wife's sympathies went to the South with her sons.

After the war he was an old man and the days of popularity and power were gone. The Journal merged with the Courier and became today's Courier-Journal and although he

lived in a small room at the Journal working and writing as before, the control of the paper had been passed on to others.

He died at his son's home on January 22, 1870, and was buried with Masonic honors in Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville.

Most of the above is summarized from the introduction to the following book that includes 66 of his poems: Piatt, John J., 1876. The Poems of George Prentice. Cincinnati, Robert Clark.

THE RIVER IN THE MAMMOTH CAVE

Oh, dark, mysterious stream, I sit by thee
In awe profound, as myriad wanderers
Have sat before. I see thy waters move
From out the ghostly glimmerings of my lamp
Into the dark beyond, as noiselessly
As if thou wert a somber river drawn
Upon a spectral canvas, or the stream
Of dim Oblivion flowing through the lone
And shadowy vale of death. There is no wave
To whisper on thy shore, or breathe a wail,
Wounding its tender bosom on thy sharp
And jagged rocks. Innumerable mingled tones,
The voices of the day and of the night,
Are ever heard through all our outer world,
For Nature there is never dumb; but here
I turn and turn my listening ear, and catch
No mortal sound, save that of my own heart,
That 'mid the awful stillness throbs aloud,
Like the far sea-surf's low and measured beat
Upon its rocky shore. But when a cry,
Or shout, or song is raised, how wildly back
Come the weird echoes from a thousand rocks,
As if unnumbered airy sentinels,
The geni of the spot, caught up the voice,
Repeating it in wonder -- a wild maze
Of spirit-tones, a wilderness of sounds,
Earth-born but all unearthly.

Thou dost seem,
O wizard stream, a river of the dead --
A river of some blasted, perished world,
Wandering forever in the mystic void.
No breeze e'er strays across thy solemn tide;
No bird e'er breaks thy surface with his wing;
No star, or sky, or bow, is ever glassed
Within thy depth; no flower or blade e'er breathes
Its fragrance from thy bleak banks on the air.
True, here are flowers, or semblances of flowers,
Carved by the magic fingers of the drops
That fall upon thy rocky battlements --
Fair roses, tulips, pinks, and violets --
All white as cerements of the coffined dead;
But they are flowers of stone, and never drank
The sunshine or the dew. O somber stream,
Whence comest thou, and whither goest? Far
Above, upon the surface of old Earth, --
A hundred rivers o'er thee pass and sweep,
In music and in sunshine, to the sea; --
Thou art not born of them. Whence comest thou,
And whither goest? None of earth can know.
No mortal e'er has gazed upon thy source --
No mortal seen where thy dark waters blend
With the abyss of Ocean. None may guess
The mysteries of thy course. Perchance thou hast
A hundred mighty cataracts, thundering down
Toward Earth's eternal center; but their sound
Is not for ear of man. All we can know
Is that thy tide rolls out, a specter stream,
From 'yon stupendous, frowning wall of rock,
And, moving on a little way, sinks down
Beneath another mass of rock as dark
And frowning, even as life -- our little life --
Born of one fathomless eternity,
Steals on a moment and then disappears
In an eternity as fathomless.

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MAMMOTH CAVE

All day, as day is reckoned on the earth,
I've wandered in these dim and awful aisles,
Shut from the blue and breezy dome of heaven,
While thoughts, wild, drear, and shadowy, have swept
Across my awe-struck soul, like specters o'er
The wizard's magic glass, or thunder-clouds
O'er the blue waters of the deep. And now
I'll sit me down upon yon brocken rock
To muse upon the strange and solemn things
Of this mysterious realm.

All day my steps
Have been amid the beautiful, the wild,
The gloomy, the terrific. Crystal founts,
Almost invisible in their serene
And pure transparency; high, pillared domes,
With stars and flowers all fretted like the halls
Of Oriental monarchs; rivers dark
And drear and voiceless as Oblivion's stream,
That flows through Oeath's dim vale of silence; gulfs
All fathomless, down which the loosened rock
Plunges until its far-off echoes come
Fainter and fainter like the dying roll
Of thunders in the distance; Stygian pools
Whose agitated waves give back a sound
Hollow and dismal, like the sullen roar
In the volcano's depths: -- these, these have left
Their spell upon me, and their memories
Have passed into my spirit, and are now
Blent with my being till they seem a part
Of my own immortality.

God's hand,
At the creation, hollowed out this vast
Domain of darkness, where no herb nor flower
E'er sprang amid the sands, nor dews, nor rains,
Nor blessed sunbeams fell with freshening power,
Nor gentle breeze its Eden message told
Amid the dreadful gloom. Six thousand years
Swept o'er the earth ere human footprints marked
This subterranean desert. Centuries
Like shadows came and past, and not a sound
Was in this realm, save when at intervals,
In the long lapse of ages, some huge mass
Of overhanging rock fell thundering down,
Its echoes sounding through these corridors
A moment, and then dying in a hush
Of silence, such as brooded o'er the earth
When earth was chaos. The great mastodon,
The dreaded monster of the elder world,
Passed o'er this mighty cavern, and his tread
Bent the old forest oaks like fragile reeds
And made earth tremble; armies in their pride
Perchance have met above it in the shock
Of war, with shout and groan, and clarion blast,
And the hoarse echoes of the thunder gun;
The storm, the whirlwind, and the hurrican
Have roared above it, and the bursting cloud
Sent down its red and crashing thunderbolt;
Earthquakes have trampled o'er it in their wrath,
Rocking earth's surface as the storm-wind rocks
The old Atlantic; -- yet no sound of these
E'er came down to the everlasting depths
Of these dark solitudes.

How oft we gaze
With awe or admiration on the new
And unfamiliar, but pass coldly by
The lovelier and the mightier! Wonderful
Is this lone world of darkness and of gloom,
But far more wonderful yon outer world
Lit by the glorious sun. These arches swell
Sublime in lone and dim magnificence,
But how sublimer God's blue canopy,
Beleaguered with his burning cherubim
Keeping their watch eternal! Beautiful
Are all the thousand snow-white gems that lie
In these mysterious chambers, gleaming out
Amid the melancholy gloom, and wild
These rocky hills and cliffs and gulfs, but far
More beautiful and wild the things that greet
The wanderer in our world of light: the stars
Floating on high like islands of the blest;
The autumn sunsets glowing like the gate

Of far-off Paradise; the gorgeous clouds
On which the glories of the earth and sky
Meet and commingle; earth's unnumbered flowers
All turning up their gentle eyes to heaven;
The birds, with bright wings glancing in the sun,
Filling the air with rainbow miniatures;
The green old forests surging in the gale;
The everlasting mountains, on whose peaks
The setting sun burns like an altar-flame;
And ocean, like a pure heart rendering back
Heaven's perfect image, or in his wild wrath
Heaving and tossing like the stormy breast
Of a chained giant in his agony.

(G.D. Prentice)



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