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 those goals are cordially invited to become members. Annual membership is $5.00; family membership is $6.00; library subscriptions are $4.00.

THE COVER

"The Saracen's Tent," is an illustration from an article in the 1880 Board of Regents Annual Report of the Smithsonian Institution. The article is titled, "Report of a Visit to the Luray Cavern, In Page County, Virginia, Under the Auspices of the Smithsonian Institution, July 13 and 14, 1880." This and other illustrations for the report were provided by the Shenandoah Valley Railroad. The artist was probably Alexander Y. Lee. A more recent report on a human skeleton found in Luray Caverns, written by Russell Gurnee, appears in this issue of the Journal.

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THE JOURNAL

The association publishes the Journal of Spelean History on a quarterly basis. Pertinent articles or reprints are welcomed. Manuscripts should be typed and double-spaced. Submission of rough drafts for preliminary editing is encouraged. Illustrations require special handling and arrangements should be made with the editor in advance. Photos and illustrations will be returned upon request.

BACK ISSUES

Some back issues of the Journal are available of all volumes from Jack H. Speece, 711 East Atlantic Avenue, Altoona, Pa. 16602. Out-of-print issues are in the process of being republished and will be available soon. All issues of Volumes 1 - 7:2 are available on Microfiche from Kraus Reprint Co., Rt. 100, Millwood, New York 10546.

Official Quarterly Publication of the
AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

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July - December, 1977

Vol. 10, No. 3 & 4
ASHA Annual Meeting, 1977

The regular annual business meeting of the American Spelean History Association was held August 4, 1977 at 4:40 p.m. in room 150 of the Natural Resources Center of the Community College of Alpena, Michigan, in connection with the 34th annual National Speleological Society Convention, and immediately following the history session.

The meeting was called to order by ASHA President, Ernst Kastning. The minutes of last year's meeting were read and approved. The Treasurer's report was as follows:

ASHA FINANCIAL REPORT 8/1/77

Balance 6/30/76 1103.81

Expenses:

7/ 2/76 Peter Hauer Memorial $ 25.00
7/20/76 Postage 15.00
8/27/76 Vol. 8 #'s 3 & 4, J.S.H. 98.49
9/12/76 Editor's expenses 77.69
3/ 9/77 Vol. 9 #1 covers 22.74
4/ 4/77 Membership cards 19.25
7/26/77 Vol. 9 #1 170.00
7/28/77 Envelopes 3.00 -431.17 672.64

Income:

Dues 80.00
Libraries 32.00

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Jack Speece reported on the status of the Peter Hauer Memorial Award and it is hoped that it will be approved by the N.S.S. Board this year so an award can be made at next year’s convention.

A discussion was opened concerning the possibility of A.S.H.A. becoming a section of the N.S.S. A motion was made by Russ Gurnee and seconded by A. George that the membership give the officers of A.S.H.A. a vote of confidence in their decision to become a section of the N.S.S. (refer to August, 1970 A.S.H.A. business meeting). The vote was unanimous.

The question of how the Journal should catch up with its issues was discussed. Editor Michael Cullinan reported on the status of the Journal and its need for material for print. The editor was given the authority to act on this matter in the best way that he sees fit.

The twelve members present unanimously reelected the following Trustees: William R. Halliday, Russell H. Gurnee and Harold Meloy. They also unanimously elected Jack H. Speece to be the fourth Trustee. At the recommendation of the members, the Trustees appointed the following officers:

President: Ernst H. Kastning
First Vice-President: Paul Damon
Second Vice-President: Angelo I. George
Secretary - Treasurer: Jack H. Speece
Editor: Michael D. Cullinan

It was announced that as this is the tenth year of the organization, William Halliday is preparing a history of the Association and any help he may receive from the membership will be greatly appreciated.

The meeting adjourned at 5:20 p.m.

Jack H. Speece
Secretary - Treasurer

History Abstracts, 1977 NSS Convention

1. The Legend of Stephen Bishop
   Harold Meloy
During the nineteen years that Stephen guided at Mammoth Cave, he almost became as famous as the cave itself. Then, for a dozen years after his death in 1857, his name was seldom mentioned and his memory all but forgotten.

After 1870, when the status of the black guides was at its lowest ebb, they resurrected the memory of Stephen and embellished it with fictional accounts of daring exploits. Their stories improved with the retelling until Stephen became a folk hero to the black community at the cave.

Authors repeated these stories in numerous publications. By 1900 the legend of Stephen Bishop had become a tradition at the cave and remains today a classic example of spelean folklore.

2. Paleolithic Rock Art in the United States
   Col. James G. Bain

From the earliest times, man seems to have had an innate desire to express himself artistically. As a result, engravings and paintings on stone dating from very early times are found world-wide. Although it is known that man has been in the area of the United States for at least 20,000 years, our rock art can not be reliably dated much before about 700 AD. In Europe, Australia, India and other parts of the world paintings and engravings have been found that in some cases are as much as 30,000 years old. This very ancient rock art is invariably located deep in caves where the environment is conducive to its preservation.

It is believed that equally ancient rock art exists in the United States, again deep in caves, but has never really been looked for. The purpose of this presentation is to arouse interest in searching for this art by cave explorers and to present some ideas on where to look, what to look for and some of the difficulties that might be encountered.

   Angelo L. George

Meloy (1968) has extensively documented the discovery of four mummies from Short Cave, Edmonson County, Kentucky. The revised mummy excavation chronology is as follows: a child, 1811 (Clifford, 1811; Wilkins, 1817); Fawn Hoof, 1811 (Wilkins, 1817); the two scudder mummies, 1814 (Rice, undated letter; Meloy, 1968). George (1972, 1975) recorded a similar mummy site called the Lexington Catacomb, allegedly located in Fayette County, Kentucky. The story of hundreds of embalmed mummies is a distorted account written by Thomas Ashe (1808); who visited the midwest in 1805-mid 1806. There is enough evidence to support the supposition that Ashe never arrived in Lexington (Leavy, 1875).

Comparative analysis of the Catacomb story suggests a true historic event and site that may have been located in the Mammoth Cave region (George, 1975). Additional research into Ashe's story has shown the Lexington Catacomb and its mummies to be the earliest written account on the first discovery of Native American mummy burials from the Short
Cave site. The exact number is presently unknown, but "hundreds" seems too excessive. Short Cave is the only cave in Kentucky where specific mummy burials have been found and documented. Strength to the Catacomb-Short Cave theory is based on five points: (1) Ashe used an exact description of a real cave mummy; (2) he used a fractured account of a subsoil stone box grave; (3) employs a dry cave; (4) the geography of the Catacomb matches most of the internal features seen in Short Cave; (5) all of the Catacomb mummies were mutilated and destroyed; this is a parallel event that covers the motive of the operation by the petre monkeys in 1811 and 1814 at Short Cave. The superstitious petre monkeys performed ritualistic murders on the mummies to make sure they were not supernatural beings from the infernal regions. Ashe is directly credited with fathering the misconception that Native Americans embalmed their dead prior to internment; and later because of this belief, the Mammoth Cave area mummies were considered to be of Egyptian descent. Not until recently were the mummies found to be simple burials preserved by favorable conditions in the cave environment.

Meriam (1844) allows a three year hiatus for renitrification to occur in the cave soils at Mammoth Cave before resuming mining activity. This practice may have also been exercised in other saltpetre caves of the region. Short Cave being of limited horizontal extent may have only been worked in 1814, 1811 (as the revised mummy excavation data suggest), 1808, 1805, and 1802. It is entirely conceivable that Ashe's Catacomb-Short Cave story dates toward the 1805 or 1802 work period. The technical source to Ashe's Catacomb story is still unknown and under investigation.

4. Early Accounts of Howe's Cave, Schoharie County, New York: A Review of the Pre-1900 Literature

Ernst H. Kastning

The discovery of Howe's Cave in east-central New York has been traditionally credited to Lester Howe who entered the cave on May 22, 1842. However, there are references in the literature indicating that the cave was previously known to local Indians who called it "Otsgaragee," meaning "cave of great galleries." Howe's Cave was later used by Jonathan Schmul, a local Jewish peddler, and Rev. John Peter Resig, a German immigrant pastor, as a home and a hiding place from Indians. Just prior to Howe's 1842 "discovery," the cave was known as "blowing rock." Less than four months after Howe's visit, E. George Squier referred to the cave as "The Schoharie Caverns" in a newspaper account written in August, 1842. Geologist William W. Mather may have been the first to affix Howe's name to the cave when his description and lithograph of the entrance were published in a report of the New York Geological Survey in 1843. Yet, neither of these names were widely used at first, as suggested by another name, "Cataract Cave," used by A. Eggleston in 1846. One of the earliest published accounts of the cave, following its development for tourists, was written by Professor Simeon North of Hamilton College in 1851. By this time the name "Howe's Cave"
was fully accepted. Several other accounts soon followed, as Howe's Cave joined Weir's, Mammoth and Wyandotte Caves as one of America's original show caves. One of the most interesting descriptions of a mid-nineteenth century tour through the cave was hand-written in 1861 under the pen name of Pip. This manuscript matches an article by an anonymous author published in 1863. Sentence for sentence, the accounts are the same, but the words and names of individuals were changed in an obvious attempt to conceal plagiarism. Evidence suggests that the hand-written version may have been authored by J. Pierpont Morgan, the celebrated railroad and banking tycoon.

5. The Cave of Delaware
   Jack H. Speece

A look at Delaware's geology would be enough to indicate that caves should not be found here. However, a cavity of significance does exist less than 100 feet from the Pennsylvania border. This shelter was used by the Delaware Indians who roamed the Delaware Valley over 200 years ago. Archeological studies were performed here in the 1940's. It wasn't until 1958 that the site became known to the speleological world. Since that time the cave has been "discovered," reported and mapped more than any other cave of equal size in the country. It has become important scientifically, historically, speleologically and archaeologically. This single cave of Delaware has become a matter of great discussion among caving circles in recent years.

6. Historic Maps of Mammoth Cave
   Harold Meloy

The history of Mammoth Cave can be read from its maps. Since 1810, over a hundred have been made. These supplement the published histories of the cave and often provide significant information not to be found in other sources.

Only from its maps do we learn that prior to the erection of the salt-petre vats within the cave that there were earlier V-shaped vats at the cave entrance; that the prehistoric basket rediscovered by archeologist Patty Jo Watson in 1969 was known in 1813; and that Stephen Bishop in 1842 was acquainted with the passage rediscovered by the CRF, and by them named Hanson's Lost River, when they connected the Flint Ridge Cave system to Mammoth Cave.

An integrated study of its maps gives us new insight to the history, legends, traditions and folklore of Mammoth Cave.

Book Notes
William R. Halliday

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Caves of Montana, by Newell P. Campbell, N.S.S. #8430. Montana Bureau of Mines and Geology (Room 206, Main Hall, Montana College of Mineral Science and Technology, Butte, Montana 59701). 169 plus vi pages, 2 plates, 84 figures including many cave maps. 8 1/2 x 11" paper. $2.00 plus 75¢ postage/handling.

For the speleohistorian, Caves of Montana provides an excellent basis of future work. While delayed so long in publication that exciting new alpine discoveries are covered only by last-minute editorial additions, much historical data are given for the nearly 300 caves included, including many old newspaper references. Perhaps the main speleohistorical omission is the lack of reference to the pioneer work of Basil Hritsch, although Basil's Ice Cave is included. It even includes "Lost Cave of the Yellowstone," from "The Cave on the Yellowstone, or, Early Life in the Rockies," by Helen G. Sharman, Chicago, Scroll Publishing Company, 1902, 371 pp., which I have in my cave fiction collection.

Clearly the biggest speleobibliophile's bargain of the year too!

WRH

Further Note on Hovey's "Celebrated American Caverns"

On October 26, 1977, Rick Banning found an item of considerable interest while browsing in the new USGS library in Reston, Virginia: a copy of the 1896 edition of Celebrated American Caverns with an author's inscription that raises some intriguing questions. It reads:


"Mem. The entire edition of this work (except ten copies) was destroyed by fire - with the plates. H.C.H."

In the past, this fire at the publisher's has generally been considered to have destroyed the entirety of an entire new edition of Celebrated American Caverns, not the 1896 edition which is changed so little from the 1882 edition that it barely qualifies as a separate edition. This is spelled out on page xiv of the introduction of the 1970 Johnson Reprint Company reprint. Personally, I had never considered 1896 edition as especially scarce; of the five copies of CAC which I have owned, two have been of this date. It looks like more research is indicated.

I would very much appreciate if the readers of the Journal of Spelean History would let me know if they own copies of the 1896 or 1882 edition of CAC (and the color of the binding, if the latter), together with any other information they may have on this subject.

WRH
The Skeleton of Luray Caverns

Russell H. Gurnee

Although they did not know it at the time, on August 13, 1878, Benton Stebbins and Andrew Campbell dug in the bottom of a sinkhole in the Shendoah Valley of Virginia to make the "find of the century." Their discovery was Luray Caverns, now celebrated as one of the finest stalacmitic caves in the country.

The sinkhole led to a series of chambers hollowed out of the limestone rock by natural solution and decorated with stalactites and stalagmites in almost overwhelming profusion. Stebbins and Campbell were convinced that they were the first to enter the cave and they proceeded to open the entrance for access to the thousands of visitors who would make the cave a place of destination in coming years.

But, they were not the first humans to visit the cave. On October 4, 1878 Andrew Campbell gingerly climbed down a fifty-foot chasm deep within the cave and flashed his light on a skeleton crumpled and contorted in a heap on the floor of the crevice. Closer examination showed the major portion of the skeleton to be hidden under dripstone; the skull, jaw, ribs and leg bones clearly visible. This was an unnerving experience for Campbell; and with the flickering light of his candle, he beat a hasty retreat to return with others to examine the find.

Dr. William H. Miller, local medical doctor and druggist, confirmed that the bones were human and guessed that the victim was a young person, possibly fifteen years old. He could not tell the age of the bones except that the stalagmitic growth on the bones showed them to be "very old."

The skeleton intrigued the press; the first editorial (by James Gordon Bennett of the New York Herald) predicted that the admission to the cave would be "one dollar," and undoubtedly a fence would be built around the skeleton to charge another dollar to view the "grisly remains."

The Page-Courier of Luray was also intrigued by the skeleton; but it took another view. A tongue-in-cheek report was printed that publicly chastised the coroner for not investigating the death in the cave.

"Why is it?...Why don't the coroner summon his jury as the law directs and hold an inquest, a post mortem, an autopsy, or something of the kind over the 'ghastly skeleton' so notoriously known to have been found in the Luray Cave?....Are our citizens to be allowed to slip out of memory upwept, unhonored, and unsung? What business is it of his if it is a 'prehistoric' man? Is that any reason to suppose there was no foul play?..."

The coroner, evidently a man with little humor, responded to the in-
sinuation that he was not doing his duty by publicly suggesting that the editor take "warm baths as this is useful for those with disordered minds." The editor neatly dispatched the coroner to the realms of forgotten bureaucrats with the following apology:

"As we stated last week, we owe the coroner an apology which we now hasten to proffer. Our strictures upon his remissness in his duty regarding the skeleton were based upon the idea that 'he knew his duty, and did it not.' Had we dreamed that his brain was located elsewhere than in the case of ordinary mortals, we had never thought of reproving him for any failure to perceive his duty....therefore we must conclude that he wears his own brain nearer the ground than other men. In this view of the case we may have commented too severely upon his failure to see his duty and we hope to be forgiven. Were we in the prescription business we would suggest to him that an emetic might have the effect of elevating his thoughts to a plane from which he might more readily see objects that properly come within the purview of his ancient and dignified office."

Not everyone was intrigued with the skeleton. Major Alexander J. Brand, Jr., the first reporter to write about the cave reported about the remains in the New York Herald:

"It was a ghastly and revolting looking object, which I consider the least interesting of the numerous wonders to be found in the caverns and will only be visited by those actuated by a morbid curiosity."

However he was not so repelled that he did not remove a portion of the thigh bone as a momento of the trip. The poor skeleton was rapidly disappearing. It seemed that every visitor wanted a souvenir, so the lose bones were taken and only those cemented into the floor by calcite growth remained. Two weeks after the discovery, two thigh bones, one shin bone and the jaw with three teeth were all that were left. Horace C. Hovey, eminent authority on caves in the 1880's, attested to the fact that "we saw that skeleton in 1878."

In the spring of 1880 Professor Joseph Leidy of the University of Pennsylvania made a hasty inspection of the remains and confirmed the opinion that the portions exposed from the stone were human, and that in all probability the other bones, skull, etc. might be found on either side of the body, beneath the calcite. But it appears that they were already scattered in places across the country by relic and souvenir hunters. In spite of this the skeleton still had an appeal for the visitor and there were requests to visit the "Skeleton Gorge" where the stubs of bones could be seen.

One local enthusiast for the object was Pauline Carrington Rust, a local girl with poetic bent, who expanded Dr. Leidy's brief inspec-
tion into a book-length poem called the Legend of the Luray Caverns. This romantic, nicely illustrated bit of speculation hinged upon the unlikely story of a young Indian brave being in the cave as punishment for his having "mated with a pale faced dove." A crime of miscegenation was powerful stuff for a young Southern girl; but it is a little far-fetched to believe that an Indian tribe would inflict live burial upon one of its braves for the defiling of a white woman. The book enjoyed brief popularity as its sale was encouraged by Mr. Carson, manager of the Luray Inn. It also aided in the formation of the Monday Literary Club of Luray where Miss Rust was a charter member.

Another version of the origin of the Luray skeleton came in a New York Sun article in April of 1887. This story came from a correspondent who claimed to have been in the larger of the two Luray Caves during the Civil War. He was a Federal cavalryman and, to avoid Mosby's Guerrillas, he took refuge in the cave. While wandering about in the depths, his blood was frozen when he came upon a ghostly skeleton chained to a ring in the floor of the cave. The dry air of the cavern had made a mummy of the unfortunate man. Talking sometime later with an old woman who lived some miles from the cave, the veracious reporter got a clue to the mystery. An aristocratic and wealthy farmer of Page County had, many years before, enticed a Southern Lothario who had ruined his daughter, into the cave and to punish his perfidy, the farmer chained him to the ring in the lonely darkness to expiate his crime.

It is not known how these object lessons affected the moral fiber of the young swains of Luray, but it might have deterred couples who attended the "Mazy Dances" held in the cave on Illumination days from straying into the dark recesses of the cave.

By 1887, when Professor Leidy returned to the cave, he had difficulty in breaking off a piece of the thigh bone in order to see if it was fossilized. Without sufficient remains to continue interest in the skeleton the visitations to "Skeleton Gorge" dropped off.

In 1893, a simply awful novel was written about the cave: Arsareth, A Tale of the Luray Caverns. This Victorian melodrama written by B.C. Warren, used the locale of the cave to spin the most unlikely story set in the 1830's about the region. The title, Arsareth, is taken from the Greek Bible and is supposed to be the area where the lost ribes of Israel wandered about.

The skeleton of Luray, now with only a few remnants left, played a minor role in the story. The idea of the skeleton intrigued Mr. Warren however, and he had a whole charnel house of bones that the characters romped in. The cave was located by means of a "ouija" board and several copper plates that told of the location of buried treasure. It is so outrageous in its contrived artificial situations that it might be supposed to be a handbook for contemporary television programs.
There is no worthwhile description of the skeleton; the exposure of the author to the Shenandoah Valley was obviously limited to the Luray Inn and the Shenandoah Valley Railroad.

In 1906, some 450 people from the National Geographic Society visited the cave and the group observed that a "vivid imagination was necessary to see the resemblance to a human skeleton."

The next public interest in the skeleton came about when the new owner of the cave, Col. T.C. Northcott, planned to have the Smithsonian Institution remove the bones so a trail could be constructed over the chasm. This action inspired Walter A. Tuttle to write a book entitled *Tongo, The Hero of Luray Caverns*. While this book was in press the skeleton was removed to Washington and so the visitors had to be content with the description of the relic. While this story is not as bad as Warren's work, it is pretty terrible. An outline of the story goes something like this:-

The time is 500 A.D. in the Valley of the Shenandoah River. An Indian brave called "Swiftfoot" meets and marries "Smiling Blossom." They have two children named "Tongo and Bright Eyes." (wait...it gets worse) Tongo is also called "Deep Thinker" (which is more than can be said for the author) and wins his eagle feathers by strangulating a young bald eagle. Motivated by a vision he takes off in search of a cave where the Great Spirit lives. He finds the cave (Luray, of course), enters it, meets the Great Spirit, loses torch, lies down and dies; the Great Spirit carries his soul away (honestly, that's the way it goes). The Indian tribe now enjoys a thousand years of peace.

All of this is supposed to explain the presence of a "young male," Tonga, in the cave. Unfortunately, before the book was published, the head of the Anthropology Department of the Smithsonian, Dr. A. Hrdlicka pronounced the remains to be of a "sub-adult female" (Bright Eyes perhaps?). Since he never published any opinion on the artifacts, the popular story of Tongo continued to be given to the tourists at the cave.

Today, the remains lie in drawer #317.033 in an obscure corner of the Natural History Building of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It was suggested that Dr. Hrdlicka's excavation of the skeleton of Luray was to see if there were "beer cans" with the bones, or other evidences of recent origin. Dr. Hrdlicka was interested in finding evidence that might disprove the accepted theory of great antiquity of bones covered by calcite. In any event, Hrdlicka did not think the remains to be of sufficient importance to prepare a report. The bones are in the storerooms; the gravesite is beneath a masonry walkway in the cave; and the legend of the earliest visitor to Luray Caverns is as intriguing as ever.
First Description of Iceland's Surtshellir?

"Also I am sending to you some stalactites which were found hanging in the vault of a cavern which I visited last year. Some are solid, some are hollow or tubular, they are all singularly sculptées, some more than others. Moreover, the cavern itself merits observation; it is more than 240 paces long and 30 paces wide, and the height appears quite proportional to the width. The floor which is of rock is flat and smooth, the vault is proportioned artistically. The walls are incrusted with stone which is varicolored almost like the walls of our rooms. In the center of the ceiling, about 40 paces from the entrance of the cavern, is a skylight. In this area there are two other recesses in the walls, equally large and of the same structure, but without more than six feet of elevation. One of these alcoves has two entrances separated by a large column tresronde and shaped like the top of a castle or tower. It seems that this lair, according to the history of this country, once upon a time was inhabited by a giant named Surt, subsequently it served as the retreat of 18 brigands, whom the local people finally trapped and executed for frightful crimes."


Gaping Ghyll Hole Fathomed

(From The Bradford Observer, Saturday, August 5, 1895. Supplied by Trevor Shaw)

Gaping Ghyll Hole Fathomed

A Subterranean Cave

Triumph of a Frenchman

(by our own reporter)

For generations the awful pit at the foot of Ingleborough has been unknown and feared of man. Gaping Ghyll Hole has yawned wide beneath him, and for anything that he has known the water has fallen into it and has run "through caverns measureless to man, down to a sunless sea." Adventurous souls have longed to penetrate its mysteries, but courage has vanished at the prospect of a descent into that dark abyss from which no sound has risen but the roar of falling waters. Once, and once only, so far as local knowledge goes, has a human being tried to learn what Gaping Ghyll conceals. Some forty years ago a partial descent was made, and a depth of 80 feet was reached. Then the spirit of the explorer failed him, or his tackle proved defective, or the water fell in too much force - it is not known exactly what - and he came to earth once more, and left the mystery unresolved. Since that great day local
belief has had it that some 300 feet below the surface there was a deep, unfathomable pool. The depth of 300 feet was known, because it had been found with the plummet; but how much deeper Gaping Ghyll was, and what was in its inmost heart, no one knew. It has remained for a foreigner, and a Frenchman, to come and find out what the pit really is, and he has done it with a thoroughness and bravery that entitle him to the ungrudging praise of all good Englishmen. He has gone to the very bottom of the pit, and has explored every nook and crevice that, so far as mortal eye could tell, was explorable. Like a good Parisian, he has shed light in the darkness with his candles and his magnesium wire; and, like a gallant gentleman, he has reported progress to his anxious wife, from the depths of the earth, by telephone. The citizen to whom this proud achievement belongs is Mons. E.A. Martel, of Paris, a well-known explorer of "pot-holes," and a member of many scientific bodies. M. Martel for some little time resided in the Clapham district, and he made his preparations for the exploration with a carefulness and precision that indicated the utmost resolve to succeed in his venture. He left Clapham for London yesterday morning in order that he might impart some information concerning his discovery to the Geographical Congress, which is now being held in the capital. Before leaving for town, however, he gave to Mr. Harry Harrison, so well known to visitors to the caves at Clapham, all the measurements he had made of the pit and the subterranean cave which he had found, and left with him a couple of sketches from which the accompanying drawings have been prepared. The illustrations are rough, but accurate, being, as they are, practically reproductions of M. Martel's own sketches. Mr. Harrison has seen a good deal of M. Martel, and knowing, as he does, every yeard of the land about Clapham, he was an excellent informant in every way.

M. Martel's Apparatus

The apparatus which M. Martel used in his perilous effort was of the simplest description, consisting of three rope ladders, a stout hemp rope, about 100 yards long, and an oak post. No windlass or block was employed. His great hope was centered in his ladders, but so that he might as much as possible minimize risk he had the rope fastened round his body for the descent and ascent. His "plumbing" of the hole had shown him that at least he would have to descend 300 feet, and as his ladders were somewhat too short to allow of being used first, he determined to secure his rope to the oak post and then to attach his ladders to the rope, one ladder being fastened to the other before being lowered. The post was firmly driven into the ground at the top of the grassy slope, as shown in the drawing, and the rope stretched down to the brink of the hole itself, where the ladder began. The length of rope to traverse before the ladder was reached was about 40 feet. M. Martel's object in following this plan is clear. In case of fatigue he could rest comfortably on the ladder at the bottom, whereas if he had used the ladder first and the rope afterward he would have had to trust to sheer strength of arm and leg to retain his hold.

Into the Depths

M. Martel and his apparatus left Clapham on Thursday morning about
half-past nine o'clock, and Gaping Ghyll Hole was reached shortly after ten. The apparatus was conveyed in a vehicle supplied by J.A. Farrer, lord of the manor, and the late liberal candidate for the Skipton Division, in whose land Gaping Ghyll is situated. Mr. Farrer has shown the greatest interest in the exploration, and has given all the help in his power to M. Martel. The Ghyll having been reached, the explorer set to work to complete his arrangements. Not one single little thing did he leave to helpers. He made his preparations personally, and tested every rope and knot with the anxious care of a man who knows that his life depends upon their security. How minute his preparations were may best be understood from the statement that they occupied him fully three hours. It was not until 1:25 that M. Martel was lowered into the pit, and it was twenty minutes to four before he appeared. When he descended there were about eighty spectators, amongst whom were some of the principal residents of the district including Mr. and Mrs. Farrer; but when he emerged the number was smaller, several of the onlookers having got fatigued. M. Martel prior to his descent put some loose blue linen garments over his ordinary clothes. He was well supplied with candles and magnesium wire, and carried a telephone 600 feet in length, so that he might communicate with his wife and friends at the surface. M. Martel quickly got down the rope, and disappeared in the black mouth of the pit. The first part of his journey from the brink covered a distance of 190 ft., and he then alighted on a ledge 6 feet long and 12 feet wide. When he arrived at this welcome stage, he found that the bottom part of the ladder had fallen on the ledge and had got twisted and coiled in a heap. He was some time before he could throw it out again and resume his descent. He went down a further distance of 40 feet, and then swung in mid-air, having reached the opening into the subterranean cave. A hazardous descent of 100 feet or more, swaying precariously about, and the adventurous Frenchman had the joy of feeling solid ground beneath his feet.

The Underground Chamber

Of the view that met his gaze when he reached the bottom of the Ghyll, M. Martel spoke in terms of the most enthusiastic admiration. His first act was to telephone to his wife to say that he should be some time in walking around and exploring, and he then set to work to measure as accurately as he could by pacing the dimensions of the chamber. He found that it is about 450 feet long, and from 120 to 130 feet broad, the height being nearly as he could tell between 90 and 100 feet. The floor is even and level, and consists mostly of sand, but at one part it is formed of pebbles. There are three large outlets, but two are completely blocked by boulders, which M. Martel assumes to have fallen from the roof; and the third is choked up with sand. M. Martel explored this passage to the extent of 30 feet, but he was totally unable to get into the outlets which are filled by the boulders, so closely are the stones packed into them. All around the chamber he discovered tiny outlets through which the water percolates into the hill. M. Martel's researches satisfied him that it would not be possible further to explore the cave unless a good deal of preliminary
engineering work is carried out. M. Martel expressed particular astonishment that in such a place as the cave he should have come across no bones whatever, either of human beings or of animals. He made some interesting observations with regard to the temperature of the water, which at the bottom of the Ghyll was 12deg. Centigrade (equal to 53 3-5ths degrees Fahrenheit). On Wednesday he found that the temperature of the water in Ingleborough Cave was 8 3-10th degrees Cent., while that in the Giant's Hole was 10deg. The difference is accounted for by the fact that at the bottom of the Ghyll the water is deeper than the streamlet in the cave and deeper than the water in the Giant's Hole. In the accompanying ground plan of this extensive cavern the shaded parts indicate the Ghyll, the smaller representing the mouth and the larger the lower portion, which is wider. So that M. Martel might explore as easily as possible, an important step had been taken, with Mr. Farrer's consent. It will be seen from the sectional representation of the Ghyll that on each side of the pit there is a waterfall, and at a distance of about 80ft. below the surface the two become united. The water on the side opposite to that from which M. Martel descended was diverted from its course into a trench, under the superintendence of Mr. J. Bateman, Mr. Farrer's agent. The water from Fellbeck was turned into Clapham Bottoms, so that very little fell into the Ghyll during the exploration. M. Martel himself was of opinion that if the water had not been so diverted it would have formed so strong a column down the pit that he would have been unable to reach the bottom. As it was, while he descended the water trickled upon his head, and added nothing to his comfort. The ordinary course of the fall on each side is shown, in the one case by a dotted line and in the other by a series of dotted lines. The total depth of the Ghyll, from brink to floor, M. Martel found to be 330 ft. The two points are indicated in the diagram by stars. On the side by which he descended he found a series of breaks, or shelves, as if at various times the water had fallen long enough and forcibly enough to wear away the rock into these steps. M. Martel's ascent proved very laborious. He was twenty-eight minutes in climbing up the ladder and the rope.

[Ed. note: The map referred to in the article did not accompany the copy sent to the Journal of Spelean History.]

Fingal's Cave & Other Stamps of Staffa

William R. Halliday

As every speleohistorian should know, the Island of Staffa is the location of Fingal's Cave (see JSH, Vol. 10, No. 2, April-June, 1977, pp 31-35. Ed.), celebrated for two centuries. And as every speleophilatelist knows, the cave appears on a 1/6 Staffa stamp, later overprinted "10p" with the switch to decimal coinage in Britain. First Day covers exist, dated 16 July, 1969, stating "Posted in Fingal's Cave, Staffa." Postal strike overprints also appear on both, and their use
from Southampton to Le Havre is outside the scope of this report.

Sophisticated collectors have always recognized these as fictitious issues, as no postal service on or to Staffa has ever existed. Since they are of special spelean interest, however, they are thoroughly collectible.

Before and after the 1977 International Congress in Sheffield, Russ Gurnee, Dave Brison and I had pleasant visits with Alastair de Watteville who bought Staffa several years ago and is doing a commendable job of making the island and caves accessible to the understanding public. Subsequently he sent me an article from the London Sunday Times which gives an authoritative view of the turbulent times of the stamps of Staffa. Excerpts from the article appear below. It should be noted that none of the gold stamps show Fingal's Cave; as far as I have been able to determine it appeared only on the 1969 issue.

Deserted Isle That Boasts
80 Million-Dollar Stamps

by Bob Rohrer

(Aug. 21, 1977)

American collectors have rushed to buy up the world's first 23-carat gold postage stamps, advertised as issued by "the Government of Staffa."

The demand from wealthy investors has been so great that "the Staffa Postal Authority" has minted a colossal $80m worth of the gold stamps, each one "a philatelic treasure, steeped in 11 centuries of tradition."

In fact the gold stamp is steeped in controversy. Staffa is an uninhabited Scottish island, less than a mile long, lying off Mull. It has no post office, no airport to handle traffic bearing Staffa's air mail stamps, and no government. The last inhabitant rowed away in 1798, abandoning it to the puffins and sheep.

The Laird of Staffa, Alistair de Watteville told the Sunday Times last week, "We do have one letter-box on the island, but as far as I can remember we haven't emptied that since about 1975."

The whole venture is the inspiration of Clive Feigenbaum, an English entrepreneur who lives in Harrow and runs the London and New York Stamp Company, and G.F. Rapkin, a stamp album firm.

He specializes in helping small islands and governments-in-exile to produce and market stamps and labels, which have brought him into conflict with many in the philatelic world.

In 1972 Alastair de Watteville, who lives in Chichester,
became the Laird. He bought Staffa when he saw it advertised by an estate agent. The former owner, an army chaplain, had become disillusioned after his plans to build a 1-million (pound) hotel and chalet complex on the island had been thrown out by the Scottish Secretary.

But from whose imagination did the Government of Staffa spring? Stafford Calvin says: "That must be an early brochure before before we knew too much about Staffa."

There is no doubt, however, about the runaway success of the stamps. More than 200 individual designs have been produced by Feigenbaum, each selling at $20.50 in limited editions of 20,000-40,000 commemorating anything from the American Bicentenary to Mother's Day. Two sets have sold out, netting $14 million.

The laird, however, says the gold stamps have never been sold on the island: "The price of them was so high in relation to the price of a boat fare." Fares to Staffa are £9, and the gold stamps' face value is £6.

The claim that they are genuine postage stamps is considered laughable by most philatelic authorities. The British Philatelic Federation's secretary, Herbert Grimsley, says: "They have absolutely no validity as postage stamps. They are gimmicks."

Alexander Caverns
Abstract of a booklet history by Jack H. Speece

Mammoth Spring, as the large watercourse emerging from the cave was called by early settlers, changed to Alexander Caverns in 1929 when the cave beyond the spring was commercialized. The history and the legend of this area and its "mammoth spring" go back long before Mac Alexander even suspected that there was a significant cave connected to the resurgence. This is how the story was told to Luther F. Kepler by Mr. Alexander in the early 1940's:

After the White Man came into the area and pushed the Indians further west into the wilderness, James Alexander (1755-78) built his house above the mammoth spring. The house was constructed from the same limestone in which the cave below existed. Jim extracted his living from the land. Besides his farming, he took up bee husbandry, and thus earned the nickname of beeman, and later, "Honey Jim."

The one and only lifetime goal of Jim Alexander was to maintain one hundred hives of bees. His hives were placed along the banks of the broad stream which flowed from under the perpendicular rocks below
his home. Daily he would tend the bees along with his other duties as farmer, herdsman, gardener and loyal citizen.

Honey Jim foresaw a future in the bee industry as he proceeded to place his hives on the level west bank of Honey Creek in the quiet grove. Soon he had accumulated fifty hives and was the envy of his neighbors and fellow bee keepers.

After many a long summer of striving toward a goal of 100 hives, Honey Jim finally had the banks of the stream dotted with that many busy beehives. Jim Alexander thought that his ambitions were finally realized, with nothing but sweet years ahead. One day, however, he discovered that his one hundredth hive had vanished, and in its place was a silver dollar! No other clues as to the disappearance of the hive were to be found. A befuddled Jim set to work to replace it and that night went to bed satisfied that once again he had his coveted 100 beehives.

Early the next day, Honey Jim stood on his front porch to survey his buzzing empire in the valley below, and from all appearances everything was well. He didn't have an opportunity to make a closer check until late afternoon, and discovered that hive #100 was missing again! In its place was another silver dollar. The thief had struck again. This mysterious situation compounded itself as hive number 100 was continuously stolen and replaced with the silver dollar. The story spread far and wide as Jim amassed a small fortune in silver, and his goal of 100 hives never did come to be legitimately realized. While this story was still going on, Mother Nature cooked up a surprise of her own for Jim Alexander. Spring rains began to swell surrounding streams in the usual April fashion, but the rains continued to fall beyond the normal amount. Soon the mouth of Mammoth Spring was filled to the roof and the water gushed out in a torrent. Needless to say, the banks of Honey Creek were inundated and Jim's hives with them. Every last beehive was washed away, leaving no sign of the former enterprise.

Neighbors watched spellbound as Jim's hives washed past their homes one by one. With the contents of 99 beehives disgorging their honey into the stream, no one could resist the temptation to tag it "Honey Creek." For awhile, that water had to be the sweetest in the East.

The identity of the phantom hive dealer was never learned, and Jim did try rebuilding his empire. The story came to an end abruptly as Honey Jim died unexpectedly at a relatively early age. The mystery was passed down from generation to generation and the guides of the commercial Alexander Caverns told it to the visitors time and again as they toured the beautiful chambers beneath Jim Alexander's old stone house.

Despite the fact that Mammoth Spring had been noted by many from time immemorial, no genuine Indian legends resulted. This is probably because the central Pennsylvania Indian tribes maintained an extreme aversion for caves and caverns. This can be traced to a belief taught...
in their form of religion, but in any event, the Indians did not make Alexander Caverns their home. As for the early pioneers, there is no record of how many, if any, wandered into the watery chambers of the cave beyond Mammoth Spring. The big moment of recognition came in the Spring of 1926, when two young men, John Spielman and Henry Schmidt of Pittsburgh, were visiting the Alexanders. Spielman and Schmidt were impressed with the magnitude of the resurgence and decided to probe into the darkness beyond, and upstream. They built a crude boat out of odds and ends and made ready their venture in the underground. The men set out and soon the light from the entrance faded as they paddled against the current into unknown and uncharted territory. Scanning the sinuous 30 to 60-foot high canyon-type passages, they encountered a small crawlway 400 yards from the entrance. It required a slippery scramble up a steep mudbank and a squeeze-through.

Suspecting little, these two Pittsburghers were about to discover a section of cave filled with formations whose beauty was unsurpassed in any other northeastern U.S. cavern. They climbed the mudbank and wormed their way through the squeeze. As they emerged into the beautiful caverns beyond, their thrill must have been indescribable. They breathlessly explored through the forests of broomstick columns and stalagmites, stared disbelievingly at the crystal pools and spectacular clusters of stalactites and draperies sprouting from the Trenton limestone ceilings.

Upon returning to the Alexander home, John and Henry related their remarkable discovery to Mac Alexander, then owner of the property. He became quite excited and wanted to see for himself the spectacular claims of the discoverers. After his first exploring trip, he visualized the potential of exhibiting such a great natural wonder, and soon set about commercializing the caverns for all to visit and experience. Work began in the dry cavern in 1928, after a long period of planning. Engineers carefully surveyed the passages and determined a point at the extreme far end of the dry cave, away from the delicate formations, where blasting could be safely done. It had been determined that the water approach to the decorated portions of the cave was impractical, and a man-made entrance would have to be built. It took a total of several years of planning, blasting, installing steps, walkways, handrailings, and most important of course, lights, before all was ready for the first paid customers. A house and souvenir shop was constructed beside the artificial entrance, and this housed the resident manager and his family.

Finally in May, 1929, the dry portion of the now Alexander Caverns was dedicated and opened to the public. The water portion would not be ready until August of that year due to unexpected difficulties with the boat dock. Business at Alexander boomed until the worst of the Depression hit in 1931. The following year, Mac Alexander moved his family into the cave house and they served as guides for the few who could afford the tour at reduced rates...and some that couldn't. It was a tough struggle those first few years, but everyone involved helped ease the burden. One of Mac's children, Helen, is believed to be one
of the first female cave guides in those parts, if not anywhere in the U.S.

The Flood of 1936, which devasted much of central Pennsylvania, severely damaged the boats and docks at Alexander, and were never again used on the tours. This, combined with a number of other problems nearly closed the cave, with little activity until May, 1940 when a neighbor, Luther Kepler, who had picked up the 25-year lease from Mac, reopened the caverns amid much fanfare. Not long afterward, when gasoline rationing slowed pleasure traveling to a trickle, the caverns entered another period of depression. Alexander Caverns, as a commercial venture, managed to make it, however, and in 1946, another "grand opening" was held to draw attention to the cave.

Reed McClay (Mac) Alexander (1869-1942) died in October, 1942 and the cave property was passed along to his sisters, Jennie Matilda and Lillie May. When Lillie, the last of the sisters passed away in 1953, the land was sold to Moses Y. Hostetler, an "Old School" Amishman who had been farming the land above the caverns for some time. He was given first option on the cave property and when Kepler's lease expired in 1954, Hostetler refused to renew it. Typical of the Amish attitude, Moses resented the commercialization of part of his property, and the traffic and people associated with it. Alexander Caverns has been closed to the public ever since, and protected, as it were, by Mr. Hostetler and the heavy wooden door at the dry cave's entrance.

In 1966, Moses noted that the door had been broken and the formations were becoming vandalized. In the September 10, 1971 issue of the Lewistown, Pa. Sentinel, a full-page article, complete with photos, told a brief story of Alexander Caverns, and its most recent trauma. Referring to the cave as Mifflin County's own "Carlsbad," the article went on to say,

"...a gang of vandals broke the padlock on the entrance and then went to town, so to speak.

"They smashed and crushed, broke and demolished every worthwhile exhibit on the interior.

"By invitation of Hostetler, Kepler and his son, joined by Kepler's son-in-law, Henry Fisher, inspected the damage.

"Ann Fisher said the Kepler team felt the damage was of such an extent as to make the cave unfeasible as a commercial attraction again."

It's possible that the Sentinel's account by Jim Canfield was a bit exaggerated, but the fact remains that one of nature's monuments in Pennsylvania has been severely damaged. Despite the close scrutiny of Mr. Hostetler, mankind is destroying another beautiful cavern.

Speleohistorians and collectors will be interested to know that only
two cave folders were produced for Alexander Caverns. The first served the period from 1929 to about 1936 when Mac Alexander was managing the operation. The cave was described by Mac as a wanderer's dream of a subterranean paradise, with its diamond studded marble halls and maze of mirror lakes...and an underground wonder destined to attract tourists in ever-increasing numbers. Luther Kepler produced the second folder with a picture of his children among the "broomsticks" and had the slogan, "The Carlsbad of Pennsylvania,"...grandest of nature's spectacles. Only one set of twelve postcards were produced in the Mac Alexander era and were available for the first opening of the cave in 1929. The cards were numbered lightly in one of the corners. Bumper stickers were also produced in later years. There were no other souvenirs or writings about the cave of significant value.

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Recently, interest in the rebirth of the Literary Exchange, and an exchange of speleohistorical items other than print, has been expressed by ASHA members.

The editor welcomes this information and will add such a section to the Journal as soon as sufficient material is mailed to me to get the ball rolling. The next issue (January - March, 1978) should be in the mail to you in the next 90 days, so please hurry your exchange "ads" to the following address:

Mike Cullinan
4705-B Shrader Court
Richmond, Virginia 23228

Along similar lines, any suggestions you might have for improvement and/or additions to the Journal of Spelean History are certainly encouraged by the editor. Let us hear from you.

mdc