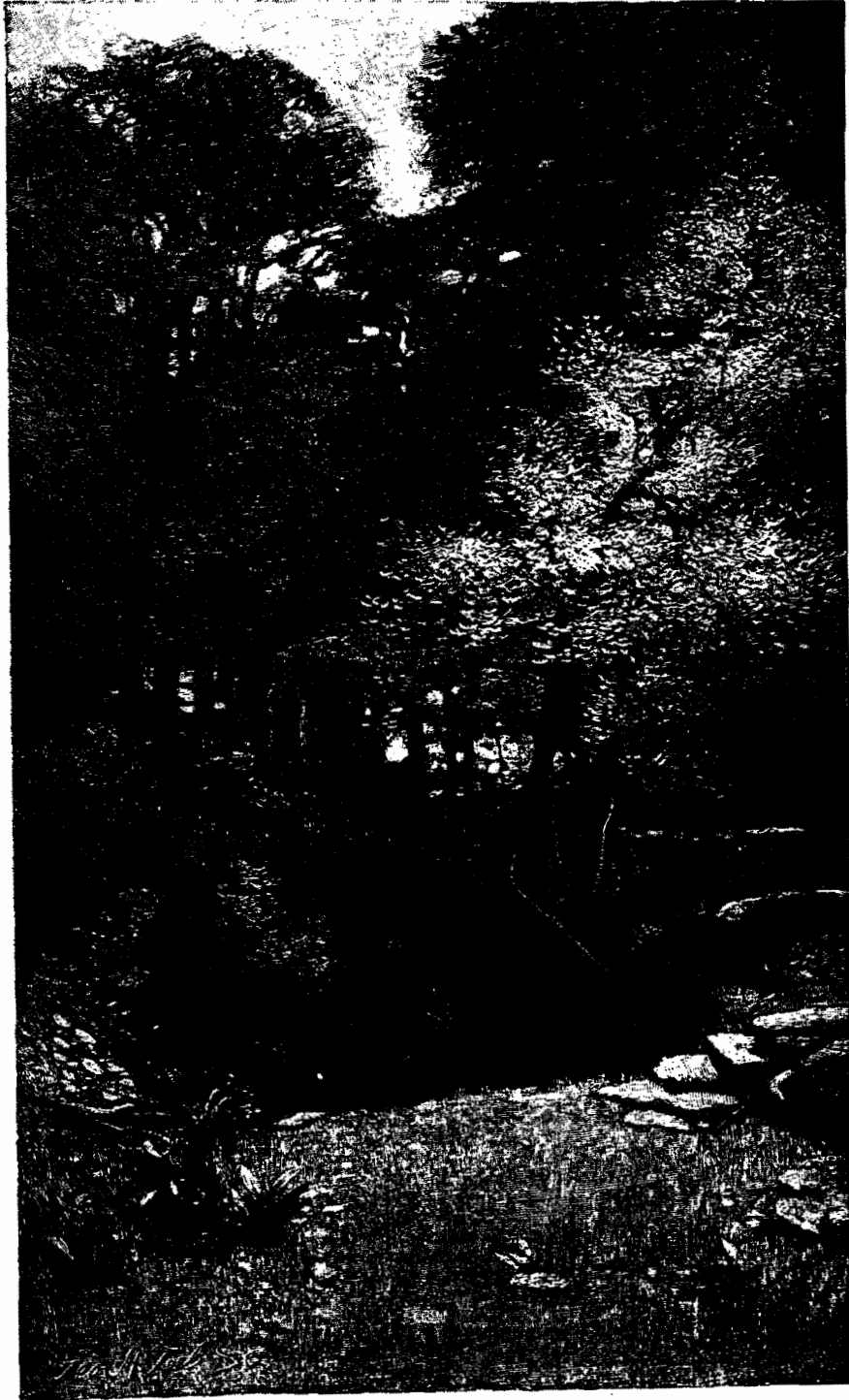


THE JOURNAL OF  
**Spelean History**

OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION



Entrance to the Mammoth Cave, Kentucky.

VOLUME 9, NO 1 #32

JAN. - MAR., 1976

THE JOURNAL OF SPELEAN HISTORY

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

This engraving along with several others appears in ASPECTS OF THE EARTH by N.S. Shaler, published in 1889 by Charles Scribner's Sons, New York. Chapter 3 is entitled "Caverns and Cavern Life" and includes such topics as the effect of caverns on imagination, the classification of caverns, limestone caves, methods of formation, caverns of Kentucky, sink holes, shafts, domes, galleries, formation of stalactites, natural bridges, the air of caverns, the effect on decay and health, the relation of primeval man to caverns, dwellings, burial-places, remains of animals, animals living in caverns, bearing of evidence on Darwinian theory, geographical distribution of limestone caverns, hot spring caves, mineral deposits, fault caverns, wave caverns, Blue Grotto, Staffa Cave, Rock House Caves, lava and other volcanic Caverns, and Symmes' Hole. This is all covered in pages 98 to 142. Two names appear on the illustration, J.F. Murphy and Geo H. Teel Se.

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 often 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. Haliday, 1117 36th Avenue E., Seattle, Washington 98102. All issues of Volumes 1-7:2 are available on Microfiche from Kraus Reprint Co., Rt. 100, Millwood, N.Y. 10546.

Official Quarterly Publication  
of the AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY  
ASSOCIATION

President: Dr. John F. Bridge  
45 Short Street  
Worthington, Ohio 43085

Secretary-Treasurer: Jack H. Speece  
711 E. Atlantic Avenue  
Altoona, Penna. 16602

Editor: Michael D. Cullinan  
4705-B Shrader Court  
Richmond, Virginia 23228

Associate Editor: Jack H. Speece

Assistant: Michelle Arrington

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Column . . . . .	3
Obituary: Peter M. Hauer . . . . .	4
Newspaper accounts of Pendleton Co., W.Va. Caves . . .	5
Accounts of Destruction of Saltpetre Works in Cave Along White River, Missouri, 1862 . . . . .	11
"Caves" Article from 1816 ELEMENTS OF GEOGRAPHY . . . .	13
Arch Springs and Cave, Jack Speece . . . . .	14
Cave Hermits: Vignettes of America's Past, Ernst H. Kastning . . . . .	17

### EDITOR'S COLUMN

With the publication of Volume 8 (1975), Pat Quinlan's editorship of the JOURNAL OF SPELEAN HISTORY came to an end. Thus concluded an important two-year segment in the history of the Journal itself. Pat instituted numerous improvements in the style and personality of the publication, and the membership must surely be saddened that she found it necessary to resign. A career must come first, and this is likewise a consideration for your new editor. My position at WLEE radio in Richmond takes great amounts of time and energy and volumes 9 and 10 of the Journal will thus be tardily finding their way to your mailbox. Volume 9, Number 2 will be following soon, but while I try hard to at least partially fill Pat Quinlan's shoes, I hope that there will eventually appear an enthusiastic and capable historian to take over the job of Journal editor. My own background is more oriented toward the geology aspect of speleology, but my emphasis has always been on just plain, old sport cavin' (22 years). In the meantime, working with the members of ASHA will be an enlightening and fun experience for me, and of course I will need your continued help in the form of ideas, suggestions, papers and pictures. My sincere thanks go out to those who have produced articles for the Journal to get the 1976 and 1977 issues off the ground. There's still room for much more, so please keep the quality material coming. Lastly, I humbly solicit your patience as I learn the ins, outs and pitfalls of the new job. Happy caving and successful researching to you for an even better ASHA.

Mike

PETER MARSHALL HAUER

NSS 7391 F

ASHA # 26

Peter M. Hauer will long be remembered as a dedicated speleohistorian and saltpetre cave researcher. He worked well with people of all walks of life and was loved by all. Conservation was a way of life with him and he almost singlehandedly saved the falls of Hill Creek in West Virginia. His numerous efforts in speleology resulted in his receiving a Fellowship of the NSS in 1970 and he was the first recipient of the Mitchell Award in 1972 for the best convention paper. The best known of his many writings include: CAVES OF MASSACHUSETTS; THE HISTORY OF KENNY SIMMONS CAVE; THE MASS CAVER; and CAVES OF WAR; HISTORY OF SALTPETRE CAVES OF THE VIRGINIAS, as well as numerous saltpetre cave reports. Besides being active in many speleological organizations Pete also belonged to several conservation groups and was president of the local chapter of the Isaac Walton League.

A graduate of Gettysburg College, Pennsylvania as a biology major, Peter taught ghetto children for five years at the Harrisburg (Pa.) Outdoor Educational Center before retiring to his West Virginia farm to earn a living from the land. This farm became a well-known stop-over for many cavers who traveled in the area. The hills of West Virginia were Pete's true love and the forest was his church where God had provided so many things in rich abundance. "Sympathy with Nature is a good part of man's religion." It will take many good men many long hours to complete all the endeavors which Pete had started. Although some of his views may have seemed strange to a few, he remained sincere in his beliefs and never interfered in the lives of others. His interests and experiences covered the spectrum from that encompassing the cultural circles of universities to that of the bare necessities of life.

Pete Hauer served as Secretary-Treasurer of the American Spelean History Association from 1969 to 1975. He contributed much to the Journal and of the six articles he produced, the most remarkable were: "The Saltpetre Cave at Natural Bridge, Virginia," and "Pennsylvania's Only Saltpetre Cave." He also left behind information which will result in many future articles.

A memorial fund is presently being established in behalf of Peter M. Hauer. This fund will be used to present an annual cash award to a person engaged in the most significant spelean history project of the year. The fund is being sponsored by the Mid-Appalachian Region of the NSS and supported by the American Spelean History Association. A trust of \$600 is needed to make the award perpetual. Donations are being accepted by Dale Ibberson, 3417 Walnut St., Harrisburg, Pa. 17109.

## NEWSPAPER ACCOUNTS OF PENDLETON COUNTY, W.VA. CAVES

The following accounts from The Herald, Franklin, W.Va. were contributed by Attorney John C. Taylor, 34, of Huntingdon, Pennsylvania. An active caver, he happened upon the articles, as well as those which will appear in Volume 9, No. 2-4, during thesis research for his history doctorate (The Effects of the Depression in Pendleton County, W.Va.). The accounts will be presented in sequence.

From The Herald, Franklin, W.Va., P. 4, September 13, 1929

"Caverns Near Mouth of Seneca To Be Opened To The Public," \*  
Ross B. Johnson \*Seneca Caverns

Fairmont, W.Va., Aug. 14: Caverns surpassing in their beauty and vastness anything yet exhibited to the public will be opened for tourist inspection in Pendleton County, near Mouth of Seneca, early in June, 1930.

R.A. Loar, who has just completed three years of exploration in the caverns of the state, organized the company and is the promoter of the venture which will bring to the public natural beauties of West Virginia. During the past year, Mr. Loar has been completing preliminary work for opening the caverns.

The caverns are without equal upon the globe, according to Mr. Loar. In one room alone, all the caves of Virginia could be placed, he states. He told of a room an acre in extent and more than one hundred feet high. Beautiful stalactites descend from the ceiling and sides and the floor is covered with wonderful stalagmites resembling inverted icicles. Many of the stalactites are 20 feet in diameter he said.

Cathedral-like caverns, their sides and ceilings covered with crystals of every kind and marked by beautiful formations are a part of the three acres of underground rooms included in the land which the company will exhibit to tourists. Animals of many kinds are represented on the walls, formed by nature in one of her facetious moods.

The caverns are said to be 600 million years old and are described as storehouses of pre-historic matter. Bones of wild animals and of human beings will be found at the bottom of one so-called Hell Holes which Mr. Loar plans to explore, he believes. This hole he states, is 1600 feet in depth. Many persons have disappeared in the Hell Holes, according to Mr. Loar.

One thousand acres of uncut forest land and wonderful waterfalls add to the scenic beauty of the land under which the caverns are

123

located he stated. Thus, he says, there will be three great drawing cards: the caverns, Seneca Rocks, and the famous Smoke Holes.

The company which plans to exhibit the caves is composed for the most part of persons living in the immediate section. A high meeting of these persons and their friends will be held at the Cave Schoolhouse, near Seneca Rocks, Saturday, August 31, where a celebration will be staged, relative to opening of the caves.

Active work of preparing the caverns for inspection will begin the first of September and continue until the opening is held next June. Surveyors and photographers will begin their labors. A lighting system will be placed and grading will be accomplished. A radio and telephone system will be installed.

Exploration of the caves will continue. They have appeared endless, up to this point. Mr. Loar himself has had many perilous experiences while engaged in the dangerous but intriguing work.

In one instance, after crawling through a small hole, he was unable to extricate himself on the return trip. He was naked by the time he succeeded in escaping from his tight position, his clothes being torn from his body. At other times he has had narrow escapes from falling over cliffs.

Huge balls of binding twine are carried by the explorers to ensure eventual escape from mazes of underground chambers which easily bewilder even the most experienced. The unwinding twine is the only safe means of returning the explorers to the surface.

The caverns may be reached by a motor drive of about four hours from Fairmont, Mr. Loar said. Persons driving there are advised to motor to the Cave Schoolhouse by touching at Petersburg, Franklin and Riverton.

\* \* \*

From The Herald, Franklin, W. Va., November 15, 1929 Page 1

"Cave Is Explored" \*

\*Hell Hole

Robert A. Loar of Morgantown the "Cave Man," was successful in reaching the first landing, a distance of about 60 feet on November 9, in a cave that is known as "Hell's Hole" on the North Fork. Those who went down by a rope swing and pulley were Dr. Krause of St. John's Academy, Petersburg, Mr. Amos of Petersburg, and another explorer from Moorefield, also Ollie Harman and Job E. McDonald of Key, W. Va.

From this 60-foot landing another could be seen about 75 feet further down but the men found that a different arrangement would have to be made to reach it. This second landing looked very interesting with large openings leading off in many directions with entrances perhaps as much as 60 feet high.

\* \* \*

From The Herald, Franklin, W. Va., December 6, 1929 Page 1

"Explorer Is Badly Injured"

"Dr. H.R. Krause Painfully Injured Exploring "Hell Hole" Cave"

Dr. H. R. Krause principal of St. John's Academy at Petersburg, was painfully injured last Saturday while attempting to explore the famous "Hell Hole" cavern which is located on the property of P.H. Harper near here.

Dr. Krause in company with Job F. McDonald, B.L. Snider and Clarence Harman of Riverton, went to the opening of the cave Friday equipped to explore the vast cavern. The opening of the cave is a huge hole in the earth approximately 160 feet in depth. The walls of this cavern drop sheer 160 feet. To reach the opening of the cave Dr. Krause and his party used a steel winch and 250 feet of steel cable.

Friday the party descended to the mouth of the cave and discovered two vast underground caverns. One led under the land of D. S. Nelson and the other under the property of Mrs. Mary J. MacDonald. Saturday the party again ascended into the cave and made further explorations.

When they decided to return to the surface, Dr. Krause was the first to be pulled up from the depths of the "Hell Hole." When he had been hauled approximately half way to the top, the winch broke and Dr. Krause fell to the bottom of the pit, landing on a pile of rocks. The winch was hastily mended and injured man was hauled to the surface where it was found that while in great pain he was not severely injured. A doctor was called who administered first aid to Dr. Krause after which he was taken to his home in Petersburg.

\* \* \*

From The Herald, Franklin, W. Va., Mar. 28, 1930, Page 1

Promoter of Seneca Caves Visits Romney

Robert A. Loar, the Cave Man, has been here for the past few days in the interest of the Seneca Caverns Co., which he has promoted, and is now developing one of the largest caverns in the east. Many of our leading citizens have already taken stock and many more will do so.

The Caverns are located in Pendleton County near the North Fork, Riverton in what is geologically known as the Stone's River lime

in the Ordovician System, which accounts for the great age and size of the caverns and the wonderful formations. There is one stalagmite of peculiar interest which is shaped like the Capitol Dome, which he says he believes is the largest in the world.

There are six caverns in a row but only two will be opened this year and when the great hallway is cleaned out and all six caverns opened there will be several miles of subterranean wonders and beauty open to sightseers.

By his untiring efforts for the past year Mr. Loar has developed one of the most valuable (words blurred) capitol stock in the South Branch Valley except for a small amount he will sell along State Route No. 5 and Route No. 50.

Arrangements are being made with the Potomac Valley Power Corporation to furnish electricity for lighting the caverns and the grounds.

The company expects to have the caverns opened by June 1 this year and a large force of men are now at work at the construction.

The caverns will be open at both ends so crowds can go in at one end and out the other. Both ends open in beautiful scenic parks of virgin forest.

A few of the things tourists will see in a visit to the caverns are Seneca Rocks, the highest in the East; Hier's Rock, Champe Rocks, Nelson Gay, Haystack Rocks, the famous "Smoke Holes," the Hell Holes, the largest spring in the world and the highest mountain in the East with one exception. The woods are full of all kinds of game including bear, deer and wild turkeys.

This is indeed the "Switzerland of America" and it only lacked the opening of the great caverns to make it the greatest pleasure place of America, and this has been done by Attorney Robert A. Loar, the "Cave Man." - South Branch Record

\* \* \*

From The Herald, Franklin, W. Va., April 23, 1931, P. 1

"New Cavern Is Found On South Fork" \* Elkhorn Mountain Cave

"A.E. Krause Writes Concerning The New Discovery:

Near the top of South Fork Mountain, close by Elkhorn Rock where there are great sinks, there are several openings indicating the cavernous nature of the mountain. An assay was recently made to learn what may possibly be underground.

possibly be underground.

A hole on a hillside near John Mongold's and Sam Shafer's said to be about 60 feet deep was selected to make the descent. Instead of being 60 feet, the hole was found to be about 170 feet to the first landing. Down thru the dark hole and over precipitous cliffs a few ventured the descent to a great subterranean corridor of about 1000 feet in length and as wide as 30 feet while the ceiling towered in places as high as 100 feet to all appearances.

Going over the last precipice one is landed on a great and steep pile of rocks and dirt washed in thru the past centuries. Down its steep and rocky slope for perhaps 60 or 80 feet one comes to the floor of the great cavern stretching as a mighty hall thru the dark abyss of earth and rock.

As we throw our lights about into the blackness where never sun has shined or mortal eye has looked, we were at once met with a wondrous sight - a gigantic beautiful stalagmite formed by the drippings of untold centuries. One stands almost aghast before its fantastic beauty, while sheer massiveness mixed with sparkling fancifulness makes the spectacle still more impressive. In no other cavern, not even in the largest in the Shenandoah Valley, has the writer seen such beauty linked with gigantic forms. The waters dripping from the great dome above have left their (portion of paper missing).... too may be enraptured as by the sound of a great xylophone of nature's art. If one could take time to pick the various sounds a great cathedral organ might be imitated.

Ascent may be made to the base of this great formation by several large and dismal stalagmitic basins trough and cups formed by the splashing of millions of drops of water through the long centuries. These latter formations present at is (sic) where a balustrade about the great column, and from it one may view more closely the work of the whimsical artist, or he may look down into the lower depths. Artistic scallopings, convolutions and corrugations, all shining in sparkling white, send the mind into rapturous dreamings over nature's wondrous art. What wonders concealed all these years from man! Words present themselves impotently before the great artistic formation.

We climbed down, went along the vast corridor only to be stopped again and again by some other strange sight. The very floor itself sparkled up like crystal snow. We cannot mention all; just a few.

Along one side for perhaps 50 feet in height and width hangs a great waterfall, or perhaps better, a great snowbank hanging down in great folds and sparkling like diamonds before our lights. The splashing, pourings and dashings of myriad years, caught as it were by some magic wand, were suddenly turned to stone, and now all stands there in ghostly silence and serenity. Great stretches of ribben stalactites, many feet in length, 12 and more inches wide hang down like great strips of bacon with streaks of darker color for the lean, and

a beautiful stretch of pure white at the edge to closely simulate the fat. These are far larger and more beautiful than the so-called "Breakfast Bacon" of the Shenandoah Caverns. Great towers stood along our way, some fallen by some prehistoric convulsion in nature. This great wall of calcite surpasses all similar forms in size and beauty the writer has ever seen. The imagination runs wild as one stands before it.

We traveled on and were greeted by one striking formation after another till at one end 270 feet below the surface a miniature lake gave pleasing variety to our eyes. - Countless stalactites as a great inverted forest reflected their forms into the silvery waters. We might go on, but the formation, water and mud impeded our progress. Overwhelmed by so many entrancing beauties and strange objects, deeply impressed by the awfulness of the tremendous cavity we were in a desire came over us to leave the dark and ghostly corridor and rise to God's light and cheering skies again. The very formations seemed to an imaginative mind to resent the disturbance we were making in their sepulchral abode.

We started the return and were greeted by one thing after another not noticed before. One just had to chain his mind from running wild amid the crystal replicas of familiar things of life.

One thing we must mention. On our return we came to another great hole to other depths. We peered down with our flashlights but their weak beams could not pierce the dense darkness. We threw a rock down and heard its tumbling on down, down until lost to the ear. A cold shudder came over us as we thought of being on the (portion of sentence missing)...plungelings, as it were Cerberus barking back his forbidding, "Beware." At times we thought we could hear a splashing into some great Stygian river or lake. Later we let down a whole ball of strong string with a sinker at the end. We unwound and unwound till the whole ball was consumed and yet the bottom was not reached. Another shudder came over us and still another when we measured the string and found it to be over 350 feet in length. What a project for other more intrepid explorers.

From this same mountain there come forth great springs such as Spring Run and Dumpling Run, springs which were scarcely affected by the long drought of last summer. Surely there must be some vast body of water down in these untold depths. What wonders may greet the eyes of him who can muster the courage to make this last terrible descent. As for us we gladly leave it to others.

We have but weakly told what our eyes have beheld. All we can say, the half hath not been told. A.E. Krause

*The next issue of the JOURNAL OF SPELEAN HISTORY will carry the second and final sequence of newspaper articles on West Virginia Caves contributed by Attorney John C. Taylor.*

CIVIL WAR NOTES ON A MISSOURI SALTPETRE CAVE

Contributed by Marion O. Smith  
Knoxville, Tennessee

From: Official Records of the Rebellion, Ser. 1, XIII, 59-60

Report of Col. Lafayette McCrillis, Third Illinois Cavalry.  
West Plains, Missouri, April 25, 1862

GENERAL: As you instructed me, I moved my command over to Little North Fork, thence down to Mr. Bratton's store, directly east of Forsyth. There I heard that the Confederates were manufacturing saltpeter, 8 miles below its mouth, south side of White River, protected with a guard of 50 Confederate troops. I sent Captain Drummond, of the Fourth Iowa Cavalry, to ascertain if the works could be destroyed from this side, and moved the rest of my command on the road 5 miles north to support him, and if necessary to cross to secure the Talbot Ferry, 3 miles below the works. Captain Drummond found the caves lightly guarded, and arrested 3 men he supposed to be pickets on this side, and ordered them to cross 8 of his men and Mr. Doyle, our guide (who volunteered), in three canoes, under cover of 8 of his best riflemen, stationed opposite on this side of the river, and succeeded in destroying the works, which were very extensive.

In taking Talbot's Ferry the guard to protect the saltpeter works fired upon Lieutenant Heacock's command, Company I, Fourth Iowa Cavalry, from log houses on the opposite side of the river, and it pains me to report that the brave officer fell mortally wounded. Then I ordered forward the howitzer, which soon shelled them out of the place, with what loss to them not known; no other to us. I took possession of Talbot's Mill and Mr. Bean's, on Big North Fork and all of ferries, as ordered....

L.F. McCrillis  
Commanding Detachment

Major-General Curtis  
Commanding Southwestern Army

\* \* \*

From: Cincinnati Daily Commercial, May 7, 1862, P. 1, c. 8.

From Gen. Curtis' Army - Lieut. Colonel McCrillis's Expedition to the White River In Arkansas - Destruction of the Enemy's

## Saltpetre Works

[Correspondence of the Missouri Democrat]

West Plains, April 30, 1862

On the 16th inst., Col. [Lafayette F.] McCrellis [McCrillis], of the Third Illinois Cavalry, was sent by Gen. [Samuel R.] Curtis, with a detachment, to the southward, to take possession of certain mills and ferries.

The command moved over the Little North Fork of White River to Bratten's store, directly east of Forsyth. The country during the first day's march, was sparsely settled, not a house being seen for thirty-five miles. Several houses were seen on Big Creek, which were formerly occupied by Union men who were driven from home. The command encamped the first night near the homestead of a Mr. Fisher, who was killed a few months since by Bray's Desperadoes. The ridges were followed as much as possible to avoid the muddy bottoms. Encamped the second night between Spring Creek and the Little North Fork. There information was received that the Confederates had extensive works in operation for the manufacture of saltpetre from a nitre cave, located eight miles below the Little North Fork, south side of White River. It was said that these works were protected by a rebel guard of fifty men. Colonel McCrellis [McCrillis] ordered Captain [James T.] Drummond, with a detachment of twenty men, to reconnoiter and if possible destroy the works. The Captain started at 3 P.M., the distance to the cave being eighteen miles. After the expedition started it commenced raining and poured down in torrents, with peals of thunder and lightning. The road led through a very rough country. Capt. Drummond arrived in the vicinity of the cave and soon after day-break sent Sergeant Smith with four men three miles above to press some canoes and their owners to row the party across the river to the cave. The night previous Capt. Drummond's men started two of [Major General Sterling] Price's men out of the widow McCracken's house, who made their escape, but the horses, saddles and guns were captured. We also captured four mounted men and their arms. The guns were broken up. One secesh was fired upon, but made his escape in the brush. The canoes were rowed down opposite the cave by the sulky owners and preparations were made to cross the river. The entrance to the cave was seen half way up the sides of a steep bluff on the opposite side. The structure for manufacturing the saltpetre was erected below on the bottom, next to the river, and shutes from the cave to the "works" for sliding down the dirt. - There was an island in the river between our party and the works, but voices could be distinctly heard from the opposite side. - Eight men, with Mr. Doyle, the guide, were rowed across the river above the island, and the remainder of the party stayed on this side to cover the movements of those opposite. Both parties on each side of the river marched down simultaneously.

The rebels were seen to make their appearance on the top of the bluff, and were fired upon. They were seen running about in great commotion. The buildings were reached by our men and the work of destruction was commenced. The structures, sheds and vats, were set on fire, the steam engine was broken up and pitched into the river, and about 10,000 pounds of saltpetre, nearly prepared for transportation, were destroyed. - The latter article was contained in large reservoirs, placed under a long shed in four tiers. Our men done the business up in short order, protected by the rifles from the opposite shore. As often as a head made its appearance above the bluff, its owner was popped over. Having accomplished the destruction of these contraband works, the party recrossed the river in safety. An accident occurred to one of the party, Corporal Mason, of Company G, Fourth Iowa, who was severely wounded in the thigh by the accidental discharge of a Starr revolver. - After our party recrossed the river, a dozen rebels were seen on the opposite side, cocealed [sic] in the brush. From the efforts made by the secesh to get at the mouth of the cave, it was supposed they had arms concealed therein. It was learned that one shipment of saltpetre has been made this Spring. The works happened to be poorly guarded, it being subsequently ascertained that Colonel [W.O.] Colman [Coleman] was at Yellville, twelve miles distant, with 300 men, and had a company on the march for the protection of the saltpetre.

\* \* \*

The following is taken from page 88 of Benjamin Workman's ELEMENTS OF GEORGAPHY (16th edition) published by McCarty & Davis in Philadelphia in 1816.

"Caves. Madison's Cave, in Virginia, is a great curiosity. It is on the north side of the Blue Ridge, and extends into the earth three hundred feet. The vault or opening, is from twenty to fifty feet high, of solid limestone, through which water is continually percolating. The trickling down of the water has formed an elegant encrustation on the sides of the cave; and the dropping from the top has formed solid spars, hanging like icicles; and on the bottom it has formed fingers like sugar loaves.

Another cave is near the North Mountain, in Frederick County, Virginia. The entrance into this is on top of an extensive ridge; the descent is thirty or forty feet into a well; from whence the cave extends, nearly horizontally, four hundred feet into the earth, preserving a breadth from twenty to fifty feet, and a height from five to twelve feet.

In another ridge, at the Panther Gap, Virginia, is the Blowing

Cave, of about 100 feet in diameter; from which issues a constant stream of air, sufficient to keep weeds prostrate at the distance of twenty yards. The air is strongest in dry frosty weather.

In Kentucky, caves are found amazingly large; some of which extend several miles. Near the head of Salt River, a subterranean lake has been discovered.

\*                      \*                      \*

## ARCH SPRINGS AND CAVE

Jack H. Speece

Arch Springs and Cave has been a landmark in Sinking Valley, Blair County, Pennsylvania long before the first white man entered in the early 1750's. The valley has a limestone floor and contains many caves as well as deposits of zinc and lead ore which became valuable during the Revolutionary War. The first written reference to the cave was in 1788 and history of the area is closely related to the landmark. Several attempts to commercialize the system have ended with natural disasters. The world's longest soda straw stalactites are well secured beyond several siphons that challenge the best of diving teams. Interest in the cavern is evident throughout the years by the numerous pictorial arrangements that have been produced.

If the American Indian could have written about the wonders they encountered, surely the Arch Springs and Cave in Sinking Valley would have been recorded long before the 1788 article which appeared in Columbian Magazine. The arch became an outstanding landmark to the early settlers of the valley. It is believed that white men had visited this area as early as 1750.

The valley at that time in history was covered with a vast forest and was visited by only a few. After it was ascertained that lead ore was available here, the government was notified and General Daniel Roberdeau was directed to command an expedition from Carlisle, Pennsylvania in April, 1778 to search for the badly needed mineral. In order to gain aid and protect the workers from savage Indian attacks, it was necessary to build a small fort near the mines. The ore proved not as abundant as was hoped and was a very low grade, so the operation was abandoned in 1779. Most of those involved withdrew from the hostile valley.

An interesting story involving the cave and the people at this time tells of Jacob Roller, Jr. and Mathius Bebault being killed by the Indians. Roller had been a long-time enemy of the Indians

and was out in his fields one day with Bebault when a small band of the renegades surrounded the two and killed them. The Bedford Rangers traced the savages to the entrance of the cave and lost all trace of them, giving rise to the belief that the killers had entered the cave and escaped by some secret entrance, perhaps at the arch. Today we know that on the basis of the customs of the Indian tribes inhabiting Central Pennsylvania, this theory is unlikely. The Indians' superstitions made them fearful of caves and they rarely entered them. Tales of recent vintage still claim that explorers have traversed the caverns and exited at the arch, nearly a mile away, perhaps during a very dry season. As of yet, such an individual has failed to prove the claim true, and discoveries made in 1965 have helped show that such a feat might be impossible.

Jacob Isett is recorded as entering the valley prior to 1800. His large limestone house located next to Arch Springs is still occupied. Engraved on a large stone near the peak on the north side is his name along with his wife Eleanor's, plus the date 1805. One wall in Isett's house has slots in the sides where guns were used to fight off Indian attacks.

In U.J. Jones' (1856) History of the Early Settlement of the Juniata Valley are two sketches. One is of the cave entrance and is rather realistic. The other is of the arch and appears to be rather fictional. The arch has attracted painters from all over and has served as a model for many amateurs. More talented artists have even been commissioned to record its beauty. In the Pennsylvania Railroad Station in New York City is a large mural of this splendid band of exposed limestone with the quiet stream flowing under the arch.

Several views of the cave entrance, looking from the inside out, and one of the arch were produced by W.T. Purviance, a Philadelphia photographer, sometime in the early 1870's (James F. Quinlan, personal communication). Purviance produced several formats of these views, one of which was included in a set of "Scenes of the Pennsylvania Railroad." Quinlan further adds that these views (three different ones) are the only stereoviews which he has seen of Pennsylvania caves.

A black and white postcard showing the exterior entrance of the cave with a man standing in front was produced by the Albertyse Company of Brooklyn, N.Y., sometime prior to 1908. The card was titled, "Sinking Valley Cave, Pa." A colored print of the arch was also used for producing a postcard by G.V. Miller & Co. of Scranton, Penna., for the Union News Company sometime prior to 1909. This card was titled "The Cave in Sinking Valley Near

Tyrone, Penna." Thus there perhaps was some confusion during this time by the tourists as to the distinction between the cave and the arch. The arch is easily noticeable but the cave is somewhat hidden and slightly off the beaten path.

The name "Arch Springs" has been with the arch, resurgence and area nearby ever since the settlers first came to the valley. The cave, located about three-fourths of a mile from the arch, has not been so well treated. Sinking Valley Cave and Arch Spring Cave are both recorded by the early writers. Some have called the arch a cave, but we should make the distinction between the resurgence at the arch and the resurgence at the cave. Pennsylvania State Geologist Ralph W. Stone (1930) recorded the system as Arch Spring, giving the illusion that it is only a spring and not a cave. The description does explain the cave system quite fully, but a casual look is confusing. In an expanded cave survey, Stone (1953) named it Arch Spring Cave or Tytoona Cave (after the commercialization attempt). Speece and Cullinan (1972) listed the cave as Tytoona Cave to designate it as separate from the arch itself.

#### COMMERCIALIZATION

In July, 1947 the cave was first opened commercially with electric lights and mud trails. It was called Tytoona Cave, a name derived from the neighboring towns of Tyrone and Altoona. Since the cave lacks scenic interest (except for the spectacular entrance setting), this venture lasted but a short time. Spring floods washed out the few installations which had been made and rendered the trails unwalkable. The remains of the trails and a few insulators were visible in Tytoona Cave until 1972.

On July 4, 1972, the cave was once again to be opened for public viewing. Mr. Art Kiser had done much work installing lights, cleaning the trails, preparing the path into the large sink, and clearing jeep trails through the surrounding woods. Just one month before the opening date, Hurricane Agnes created the Flood of '72 with ten inches of rainfall. The stream flooded the cave to the ceiling and destroyed most of Art's preparations. Mr. Kiser still wanted to start over, but a lack of funds prevented him from realizing his dream of opening his Indian River Caverns.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

"A Description of Bald Eagle Valley, Its Natural Curiosities, Mines, Springs, etc." Columbian Magazine, Philadelphia, Sept. 1788

Jones, U.J., History of the Early Settlement of the Juniata Valley, Henry B. Ashmeand, Philadelphia, 1856

# CAVE HERMITS: VIGNETTES OF AMERICA'S PAST

Ernst H. Kasting

Department of Geological Sciences

and Bureau of Economic Geology

The University of Texas at Austin

## Introduction

During the U.S. bicentennial year celebration, we were keenly aware of our heritage, and nearly every major event in our nation's history was portrayed in the media. In keeping with the bicentennial spirit, it may be the best time to reflect upon minor facets of our country's past as well. An interesting study, particularly for advocates of spelean history, is that of the folklore surrounding various cave hermits of the United States.

These eccentric troglodytes had contributed little to the strife for America's independence and freedom. However, they do serve as memorable examples of the common men seeking their own individual independence from hardship. Hermits that came to dwell in solitary seclusion within the walls of caves did so out of misfortune. Some sought to escape the anguish of a lost loved one, some hid from the law, some wanted to forget the anxieties of war, and others simply felt more comfortable living apart from society's burdens.

Undoubtedly there were cave hermits living in many parts of this country, but the ones we know of today are only the most celebrated, and whose lives have been chronicled in the literature. As a beginning in the study of these solitaires, this paper concerns itself with the cave hermits of the northeastern states. It is compiled from exploits found in numerous books, pamphlets, and articles. Based on the literature, Pennsylvania ranks as the number-one state in spelean recluses, having had at least four celebrated cave hermits.

Ten noted cave hermits are introduced here. Further details of their lives can be found in the references listed in the accompanying bibliography. The best general compendium of cave dwelling solitaires to date appeared in Wright's Grandfather Was Queer, published in 1939. This information has been supplemented with several other sources.

## Celebrated Cave Hermits

### Jules Bourglay

Undoubtedly the most famous American cave hermit was Jules Bourglay, the Leatherman, who traveled a circuitous 365-mile route through New York and Connecticut from 1858-1889. Many of his regular stops were rock shelters. He was given ample provisions at stops along the way by admirers and the curious. Bourglay never spoke to anyone during his hermitage and what drove him to solitude will never be fully known. Legend attributes his plight to the loss of a girl he was to marry. Fortunately, many people came to observe this lonely man on his travels, and a number of them were interviewed by Leroy Foote during his extensive research of the life of the Leatherman. Foote's account in Celebrated American Caves is the most complete of many writings on the subject.

### Amos Wilson

Amos Wilson's (The Pennsylvania Hermit) story is perhaps one of the saddest. During the early 1800's his sister was found guilty of the murder of her illegitimate child and was sentenced to be hanged. Amos Wilson tried at length to have her pardoned. In the eleventh hour, he finally secured a pardon from the governor of Pennsylvania, but was delayed on his return home by a flash flood. He arrived at the scene of the execution, pardon in hand, just in time to see his sister swing. The trauma of his experience caused him to live in seclusion in a cave near Harrisburg, Pennsylvania for nineteen years, during which time he took up writing on the virtues of solitude. His story and some of his writings were published as a small book in several editions.

### Benjamin Lay

Benjamin Lay, or the Fiery Gnome as he was called, was a rather cantankerous eccentric who moved to Philadelphia from Barbados to take up residence in an artificial cave. He would enter into long discourses against slavery and the killing of animals, with anyone who would listen. Wright's book has an excellent synopsis of Lay's life.

### Albert Large

Known as the Lovelorn Hermit of Wolf Rocks, Albert Large, like the Leatherman, suffered the loss of the girl he loved. He lived in a cave in Bucks County, Pennsylvania for twenty years. His story can also be found in Wright's book.

### Coxey Bivens

Coxey Bivens, the Delaware Valley Cave Dweller, was one of

the more recent cave hermits. When his father and mother died he took up residence in a large shelter cave on the southern shore of the Susquehanna River in Pennsylvania during the late 1800's and early 1900's. His story is told by Meyers in the New York Folklore Quarterly.

### Sarah Bishop

When Sarah Bishop's house was burned by the British during the Revolutionary War, she moved to a very small cave in North Salem, New York, just across the state line from Ridgefield, Connecticut. She lived alone in absolute poverty, talking with few people, and occasionally going to town for provisions or to church. Her story is found in Wright's book (he refers to her as the Atrocity Hermitess) and in When Our Town Was Young, edited by Eichner and Tibbets. A novel, The Ridgefield Tavern, by Maurice Enright, was based on her life.

### Edward Whalley, William Goffe, John Dixwell

One of the first man-hunts in American history was the pursuit of these three judges who had condemned Charles I to the scaffold. When Charles II came to the British throne, the judges found a price put upon their heads. They hid out for some time in various places, including a three-month stay among a group of boulders atop West Rock near New Haven, Connecticut, now known as Judges' Cave. The plight of the Regicides, as they were called, is recounted in many historical writings, for example in Lemuel Aiken Welles' The Regicides in Connecticut. Wright and Perry also gave brief accounts.

### Robert

A black slave, known only as Robert, took up solitary residence in a cave in Massachusetts near Providence, Rhode Island following the loss of his family. He fell in love with a girl who promised to marry him if he would buy his freedom. He borrowed enough money from a supposed good friend, became free, married, and had two children. He was later falsely accused of not repaying the debt and was abducted and returned to slavery aboard a schooner. He spent twenty years in various duties at sea, during which time he remarried, was rejected by his new wife, and then sought to find his original family. He was told that they had died in the meantime. With little desire to live, he retired to his cave where he spent fourteen years. The story is told in a thirty-six page pamphlet, entitled Life and Adventures of Robert, the Hermit of Massachusetts by an anonymous author.

## Thomas Parr

Two men set out in 1916 from Virginia to explore the West. After seventy-three days in the wilderness, they happened upon a cave where they encountered a hermit. The man explained that he was 227 years old, was born in London, had fallen love with a noble's daughter, but had been rebuked by the parent. The separation was too much for the girl and she became sick and died. The man wandered over Europe in grief and eventually shipped as a sailor. His boat was wrecked on the shores of America and he wandered the wilderness and found the cave where he had dwelt ever since. Wright likens him to Thomas Parr, a legendary old, old man from London.

## Young Woman Discovered in a Rocky Cave

As a final example of the American Cave Hermit it is interesting to relate the story of a young woman discovered by travelers somewhere along their route through the wilderness west of the East Coast states. As the travelers tell it, this woman had fallen in love with a man working for her father, who did not approve of her suitor and threatened to kill him should they elope. The couple fled to the wilderness where her lover was brutally murdered by Indians and she was led to a cave and bound by one of them. She escaped, killed her captor, and lived in the cave for the next 19 years. The travelers subsequently took her home to her father who expired after hearing her story. The tale was written by Abraham Panther and first published in 1787. It has gone through at least 25 editions since.

## Conclusion

These are but a few of the cave hermits who have been immortalized in the folklore of our land. They sought to escape their hardships through solitude, and in so doing were able to reflect upon their lives. They provide us with an insight of ourselves. Some of us seek the solitude of the cave in our explorations. Perhaps we too long to escape, even temporarily, from the woes of society.

"Grand, gloomy, and peculiar, he sat upon the throne a sceptered hermit, wrapped in the solitude of his own originality."

-Charles Phillips (1789-1859): The Character of Napoleon

"I never found the companion that was so companionable as solitude."

-Henry David Thoreau (1817-1862): Solitude

## Bibliography

Anon., 1829, Life and Adventures of Robert, the Hermit of Massachusetts, Who Has Lived 14 Years in a Cave, Secluded from Human Society: Providence, H. Trumbull, 36p.

\_\_\_\_\_, 1839, The Pennsylvania Hermit; A Narrative of the Extraordinary Life of Amos Wilson...: Philadelphia, reprinted 1919, Beaver Springs, Pennsylvania, A.M. Aurand & Son, 64p.

Eichner, Francis and Tibbets, Helen Ferris (editors), 1945, When Our Town Was Young; Stories of North Salem's Yesterday: North Salem, Board of Education, 170p.

Enright, Maurice, 1908, The Ridgefield Tavern; a Romance of Sarah Bishop (Hermitess) During the American Revolution; Brooklyn, New York, Eagle Book and Job Printing Department, 230 p.

Footé, Leroy W., 1955, The Leather Man: in Mohr, Charles E. and Sloane, Howard N., Celebrated American Caves: New Brunswick, New Jersey, Rutgers University Press, Pp. 290-303.

Meyers, Arthur N., 1963, "Coxey" Bivens--Delaware Valley Cave Dweller: New York Folklore Quarterly, v. 19, Pp. 197-202.

Panther, Abraham, 1787, A Very Surprising Narrative of a Young Woman Discovered in a Rocky Cave...: reprinted 1972, Fairfield, Washington, Ye Galleon Press, 19p.

Perry, Clay, 1946, New England's Buried Treasure: New York, Stephen Daye Press, 348p.

Welles, Lemuel Aiken, 1935, The Regicides in Connecticut: Publication 35 of the Tercentenary Commission of the State of Connecticut, Yale University Press, 31p.

Wright, Richardson, 1939, Grandfather Was Queer; Early American Wags and Eccentrics from Colonial Times to the Civil War; Philadelphia, J.B. Lippincott Company, 358p.

\* \* \*

CALL FOR PAPERS !  
NSS Convention  
History Session

The 33d annual meeting of the National Speleological Society will be held June 24 to July 3, 1976, at Morgantown, West Virginia, on the University of West Virginia campus. Anyone wishing to deliver a paper at this session is requested to submit an abstract to Paul Damon by the first of June.

BLANK