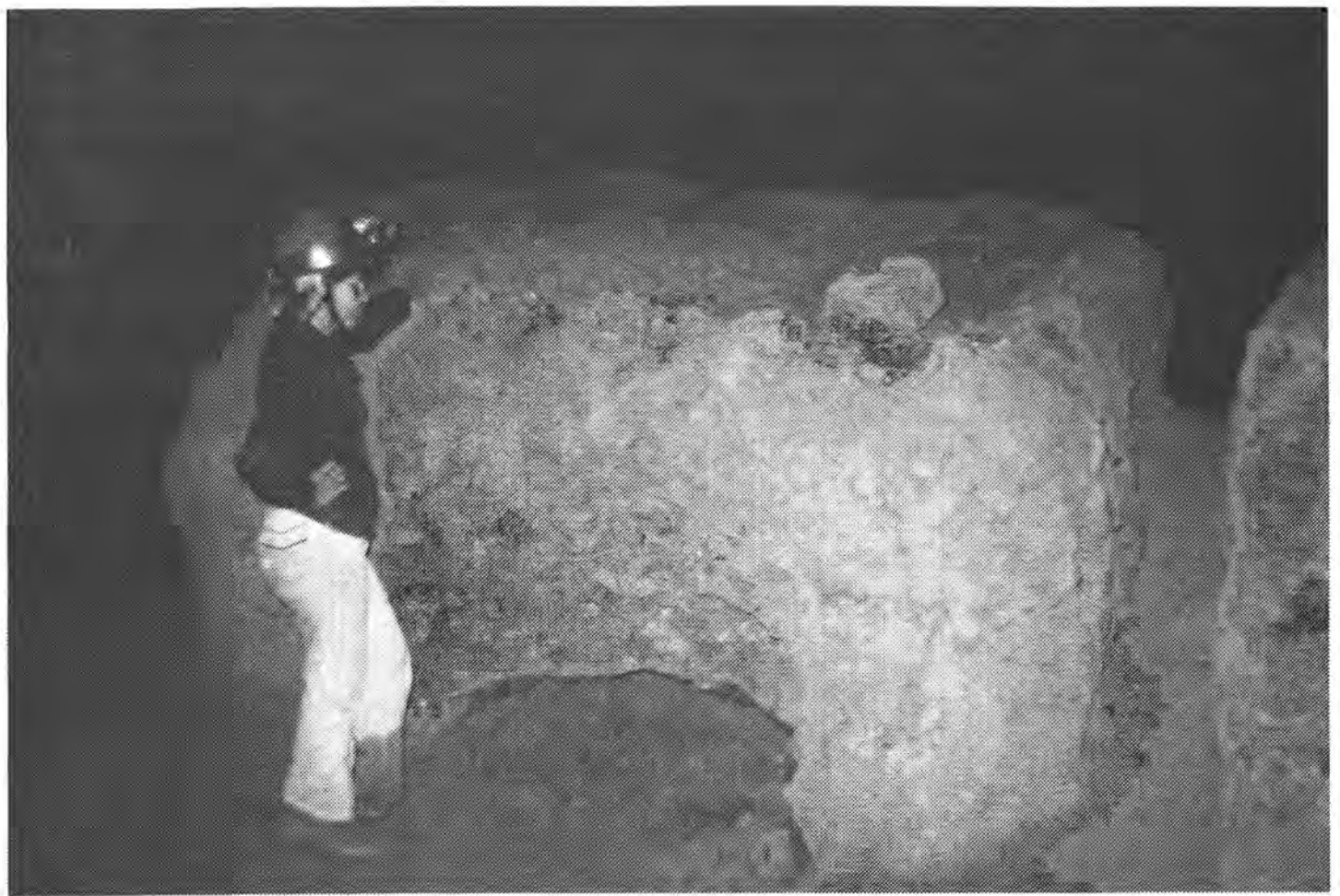


# Salt peter Mining and the Civil War in Jackson County, Alabama

by

Marion O. Smith



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FRONT COVER  
Salt peter vat cast in Tumbling Rock Cave

## THE NEED FOR SALTPETER

The formation of the Confederate States of America in early 1861 soon led to a bloody Civil War which created an urgency for all types of munitions. One of the South's most crucial necessities was to find an adequate supply for the ingredients of gunpowder: sulphur, charcoal, and saltpeter. The first two were not much of a challenge. Large amounts of sulphur were stored in Louisiana, originally for use in refining sugar, and pyrites could be roasted. Trees for charcoal, "the willow, dogwood, and alder," were plentiful. Saltpeter (calcium nitrate converted to potassium nitrate) was the major concern. Although some state governments had various amounts of powder on hand, and more was acquired when Federal forts and arsenals were seized, the total was far from adequate.<sup>1</sup>

Consequently, there were efforts by local, state, and the Confederate governments to insure that there was a sufficient supply of powder and its components. One decision was to buy saltpeter and powder in Europe and ship it through the recently declared Federal naval blockade. Another was to revive saltpeter mining in the Appalachian caves of Virginia, Tennessee, Georgia, and Alabama, which had been largely neglected since the War of 1812, and to encourage mining in the Ozarks of Arkansas.

The entire story of the Confederacy's effort to procure domestic saltpeter has not yet been told nor will it be now attempted. This study will chronicle only what is known about that effort in one north Alabama county, Jackson.

### 1861 SALTPETER MINING EFFORTS IN JACKSON COUNTY

Soon after the Confederate government was formed, various state authorities began a quest for a satisfactory supply of saltpeter. In Tennessee Samuel D. Morgan (November 8, 1798-June 10, 1880), a Nashville dry goods merchant, on behalf of the state Military and Financial Board, wrote a number of letters on the subject, not only to Tennesseans but to residents of Arkansas and Alabama. As a result newspapers, such as those in Tusculumbia, Florence, and Huntsville, published requests for information about saltpeter caves.<sup>2</sup>

On May 10, 1861, Nelson Robinson (c1800-April, 1862) of Bellefonte, Alabama, responded to one of Morgan's inquiries:

Since writing you last, I have called public attention to your wants in our little newspaper. . . . I have Succeeded in geting a company to go to work in the Sauta Cave, the best in the region with one hundred hands. They commenced on Monday last & I hope in a short time you will be in rect of Some of their products.

He also reported that he had gotten a party to examine a large cave in DeKalb County "near old fort Payne." He was concerned that not enough men would be obtained to work saltpeter caves because "Such is the false military furvor here to enter the army . . . it is destroying home industry."<sup>3</sup>

A week later A. T. Preston (b. c1835), a Virginia-born clerk living in Paint Rock, wrote William B. Figures, editor of the Huntsville Southern Advocate:

There is a cave situated about one mile from this Station, which has previously been worked to considerable advantage, and is said to contain vast quantities of Saltpetre. It is on the tract of land known as the Coles Estate. Cannot an investigation be made by some

competent scientific man? If satisfactory, I and many others will be willing to devote some days in each week to the working of it.

Another May newspaper report referred to the same cave: "A gentleman who has recently explored a cave in Keel's Mountain, Jackson co., near Coles' Spring, on the railroad, says that there are still excavations and wooden troughs, indicating the preparation of saltpetre there."<sup>4</sup>

There is no documentary evidence that during the Civil War Preston or any other person worked this site, now known as Crossing Cave, although it is possible it could have been mined a short while. The cave has been mined sometime, and a local tradition indicates that early settlers made saltpeter there, and later, about 1830, a gang of rogues "under pretense of manufacturing saltpetre . . . carried on . . . counterfeiting operations in the . . . cave."<sup>5</sup>



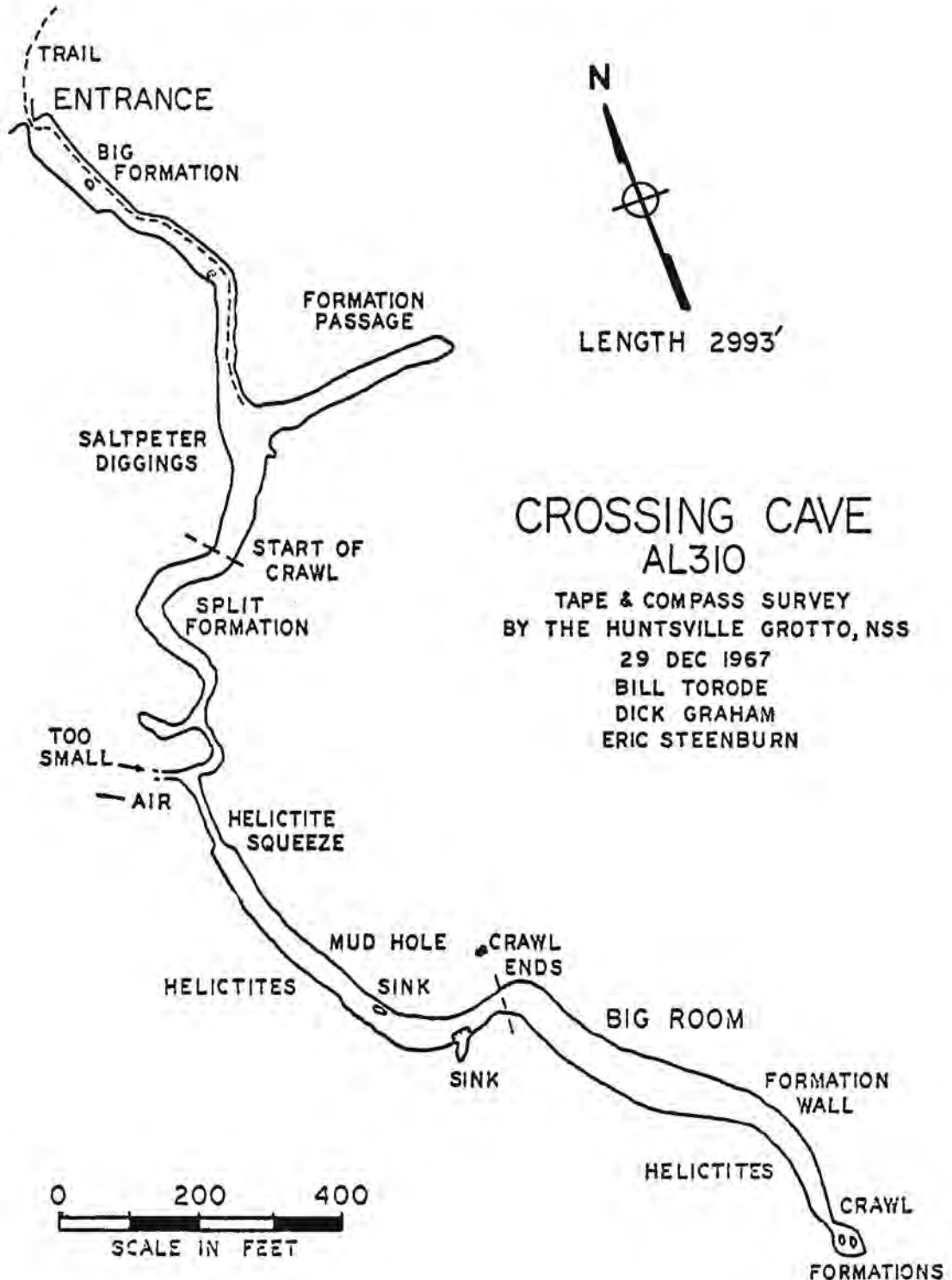
An artist's view of Crossing Cave.  
From Harper's Weekly, August 16, 1862.

In early May, 1862, after the Federals had occupied Alabama north of the Tennessee River, some bushwhackers fired into a west-bound train in the vicinity of Paint Rock and wounded two men. The colonel in command "stopped the train and sent several detachments in pursuit of the rebels." One party, commanded by Captain Leonidas McDugall (c1823-October, 1862), Company H, 3rd Ohio Infantry, was led by a slave "into a cave . . . in the neighborhood of Paint Rock" which is undoubtedly Crossing Cave. A Private Hubner wrote an exaggerated description of the cave and the dangers within:

The entrance . . . is not easily detected. It is half hidden by bushes and rocks. We had to walk some distance with heads bent; but the cave got wider and wider, and looked like a church with fine columns and arches, strange formations of the dropping limestone. . . . We went about two miles into the cave, found signs of occasional visits by human beings, and the negro assured us it was in fact a hiding-place of a guerrilla band.

We had to go back when the torches burned down. There are many side caves and abysses, and without light it is a most dangerous place. The cave is five miles long, and has several outlets.

Over a hundred years later the cave was surveyed and determined to be only 2,993 feet in length. The Ohio soldiers probably explored just the first thousand feet, because the next 900 feet of passage is a crawl. The main area



mined for saltpeter, whenever it was done, is a room some 600 to 750 feet from the entrance.<sup>6</sup>

On June 28, 1861, James R. Harris (b. c1835) of Winchester, Tennessee, reported to Samuel D. Morgan "concerning the making of saltpetre" by a company with which he was associated. Harris had "visited the Caves" he had mentioned in an earlier letter and "Satisfied" himself "that they will pay to work and propose commencing operations right Away--provided we can have the assurance from . . . [the Tennessee government] that the present price [25¢ per pound]



Test pit and tunnel in Sauta Cave's Catacombs.

will be paid, for a Limited time Say 6 mos." The "Caves are situated In Jackson Co Ala convenient of access--and within Ten miles of Stephenson." He asked for the prices of kettles "suitable for the purpose" which could be bought in Nashville, suggesting four should be purchased, "holding 100 gal<sup>s</sup> or more each. -- to be paid for in Saltpetre or money in 60 days." It is not known which caves Harris was planning to mine or if his company actually began work.<sup>7</sup>

In spite of the proposals to mine saltpeter near Paint Rock and Stephenson, the only Jackson County cave known to have been mined in 1861 was Sauta. Between May and December three different parties successively leased the cave: George W. Rice, John F. Anderson, and John D. Borin until August; Joseph W. Dunkerly of Knoxville, Tennessee, until December; and then Hugh Carlisle and George L. Henderson of Marshall County, Alabama.<sup>8</sup>

## THE NITRE BUREAU IN JACKSON COUNTY

By early 1862 interest in saltpeter mining by private parties and state governments alike was waning, which meant the South was in danger of not producing the amounts necessary to sustain a determined war effort. Soon, in April, the Confederate Congress created a Nitre Bureau for the more efficient working of caves, and the Confederacy was divided into districts with a superintendent in charge of each.

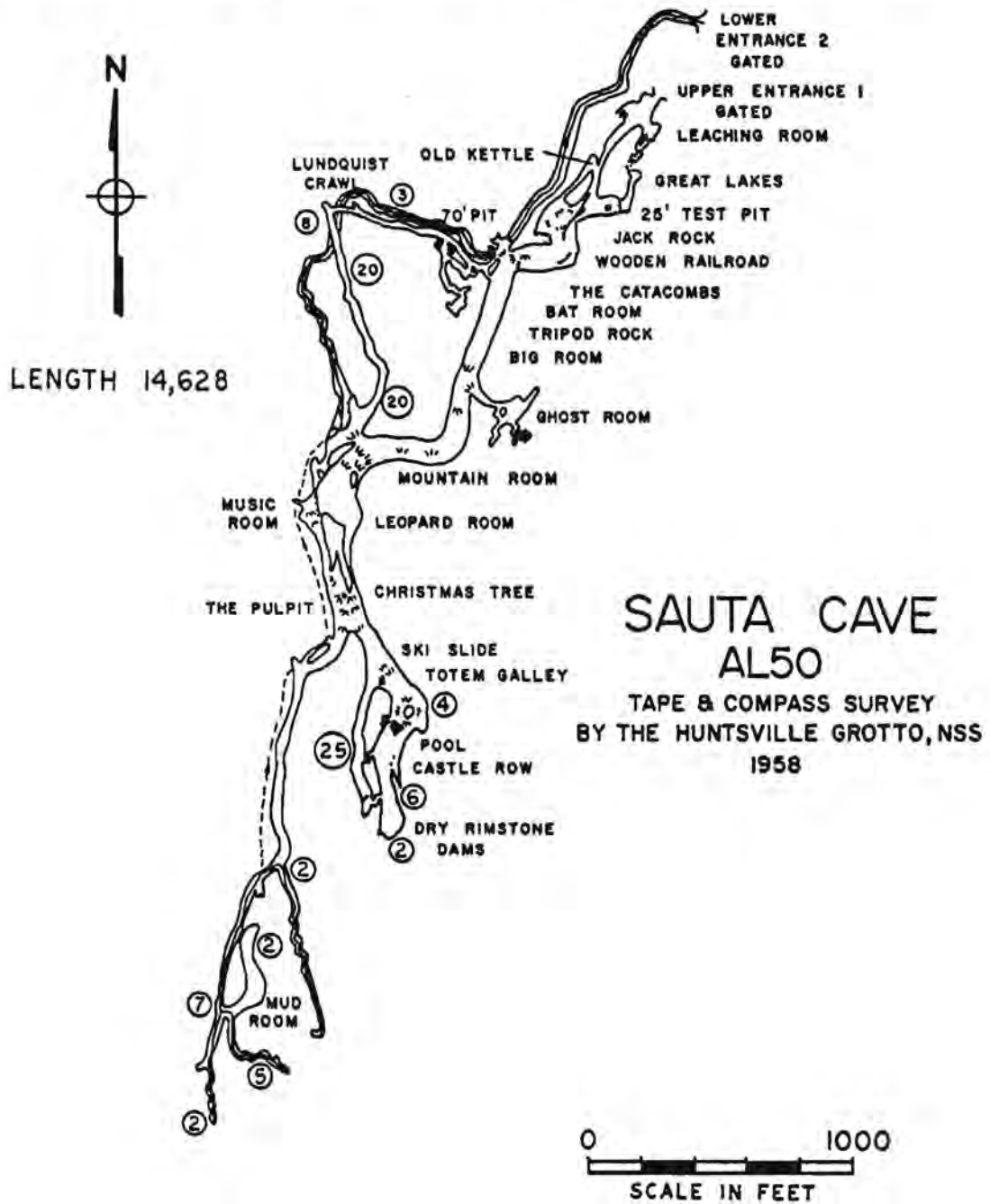
The Union forces occupied Huntsville in April, 1862, and for a time controlled extreme northern Alabama, including much of Jackson County. The Bureau could not organize that region until the following August when the Federals retreated. Then, Jackson County became part of Nitre District No. 9, under Captain William Gabbett (b. c1830), an Irishman and former private in Cobb's Georgia Legion. Headquarters were moved from Cave Spring, Georgia, to Huntsville and subsequently to Larkinsville.<sup>9</sup>

In mid-fall, 1862, Carlisle and Henderson transferred their lease of Sauta Cave to the Nitre Bureau, and it was worked on government account until the Northern forces returned to the county the next summer. Sauta was the largest saltpeter cave operation in Alabama and probably the entire Confederacy. This mining effort has been addressed in earlier publications, particularly Civil War History, and will not be repeated here. But data about the number of employees at the cave is the result of more recent investigations.<sup>10</sup>



Civil War map of the Sauta Cave area.

Payrolls for the Sauta Cave Saltpeter Works are extant from November, 1862, through August, 1863, although for some months information is incomplete. The number of white employees ranged from twenty-three, in August, 1863, when the operation was closing due to the return of Federal troops, to 102 the previous March. During five other months there were ninety-one to ninety-seven white laborers present. Some of these workers were Jackson County residents, but many more were longtime Nitre Bureau employees, recruited in various Georgia counties. Quite a number of slaves, usually hired from owners outside Jackson County, were also employed at Sauta. November, 1862, through July, 1863, payrolls show from nineteen to eighty-four black workers present per month. The combined labor force at and near the cave for March and April, 1863, was 181. In addition, there were also members of Captain James H. Young's Nitre Guard Company stationed at the site and a



number of local residents did occasional odd jobs at or sold products to the works. Only by taking all these people into account can the scale of operations at Sauta Cave be appreciated. The superintendent and assistant superintendent at the cave November, 1862-July, 1863, were John Bate and Joseph Douglas.<sup>11</sup>

During the 1862-63 period when Jackson County was in the Confederate lines, Captain Gabbett was aided in his Nitre district by several assistant superintendents. These included Alonzo C. Ladd and Cyrus C. T. Deake of Huntsville, John D. Borin of Stevenson, Henry W. Grantland of Morgan County, Alabama, and James M. Walker and James M. Hull of Georgia. C. A. Sprague, also of Georgia, was the Nitre district bookkeeper.<sup>12</sup>

One of Gabbett's duties was to encourage and oversee private saltpeter contractors and collect their output. The known contractors in his district outside Jackson County from late 1862 through mid-1863 are: Fearn, Johnson & Co., D. W. Parker, and William H. Herrin of Marshall County; James H. Collier of Madison County; Masterson & Moore and Robert A. Rogers of Winston County; Bradley & Co. of Limestone County; and Morris & Noble [sometimes Henry Morris or Allen & Morris], John F. Roberts, and James Ratliff of Morgan County. In addition, the captain's office kept payrolls and supplied the laborers at the caves directly worked by the Nitre Bureau, including Trinity and Eureka caves, Morgan County, Big Spring Cave [Guntersville Caverns], Marshall County, Fort Payne [Manitou] Cave, DeKalb County, and of course Sauta Cave, Jackson County. Contracts were also made with potash producers such as Allen & Rose and Scott and Brother, all of Morgan County.<sup>13</sup>

Jackson County contains a number of caves besides Sauta which have been mined for saltpeter. Many of these were probably mined during the Civil War. A few can be correlated to wartime documents but these are exceptions to the rule. In addition, there were a number of Jackson County saltpeter contractors whose mining sites often cannot be identified or correlated with any known cave. The discussions which follow represent what is now known about the "lesser" saltpeter caves of the county, besides Crossing Cave already mentioned, and the residents of the county who were saltpeter contractors or longtime saltpeter workers.

#### TUMBLING ROCK CAVE

One of the best known caves in Jackson County is Tumbling Rock or Blowing Cave at the head of Mud Creek, currently owned by descendants of Absalom Dolberry (June 8, 1821-December, 1901). Estimated at 9,120 feet in length, although more passage certainly exists, this cave is known for the strong breeze issuing from its entrance during the warm season of the year. Perhaps the earliest written reference to it was May 12, 1848, by Charles S. Jones (1800-1850) of Bolivar in northeastern Jackson County to Albert J. Pickett of Montgomery, who was preparing a state history:

Some [caves] are saltpeter as Souta and Nichojack . . . but the most interesting is the blowing Cave near the head waters of Mud Creek. . . . It is calm at the equinox say vernal. As the weather becomes warm it commences blowing out with a current in proportion to the heat of the weather at the hottest sending forth a current at the rate of 20 miles or perhaps more per hour. It roars and shakes the leaves of the surrounding trees to their top blowing off a man's hat and turning the skirts of his coat over his head then gradually slacking until Autumnal equinox. As the cold weather sets in it commences sucking in increasing with the severity of the weather

till at the extreme Winter it sucks in with the same force that it blew out with in Summer but at all times it is perfectly calm within the cave at 50 yards and upwards from its mouth. How far the Cave extends into the Mountain is unknown as no one has ever seen its end. I have been twice as far as I could go without wetting myself say about 1 1/2 mile. I have visited it at all seasons of the year and speak from my own knowledge except as to velocity of the current air this I guess at[.]<sup>14</sup>

Prior to the Civil War Tumbling Rock Cave was probably owned by the Sanders family. Joseph Sanders, Sr. (b. c1793) in 1830 and 1831 bought the west half of the southeast quarter and the east half of the southwest quarter of section 35 of T2SR5E, the north line of which apparently just included the cave entrance. Benjamin Sanders's name is on the cave walls with 1833 and 1836 dates, although an earlier 1824 date exists with an illegible name, perhaps Ivy or Joy.<sup>15</sup>

During the first half of the war Tumbling Rock was worked for saltpeter. William Gideon (November 8, 1813-October 2, 1897), H. J. Houston (b. c1830), and Jesse King's[?] names are on the cave walls with December 28, 1861, 1862, and January 6, 1862, dates, but it is unknown if these men had any mining connection. In 1863 the cave was definitely mined by contractors named Boyd, Hudson, and Barbee, who on February 7, March 31, and May 1 delivered to Captain Gabbett at Larkinsville respectively 393, 298 1/2, and 448 pounds of saltpeter. In the cave, near the saltpeter area, are the names W. C. and Elisabeth Houston (b. c1825), J. A. Boyd, James M. Hudson, and J. B. Stephens (b. c1836).<sup>16</sup>

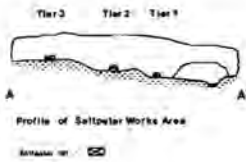
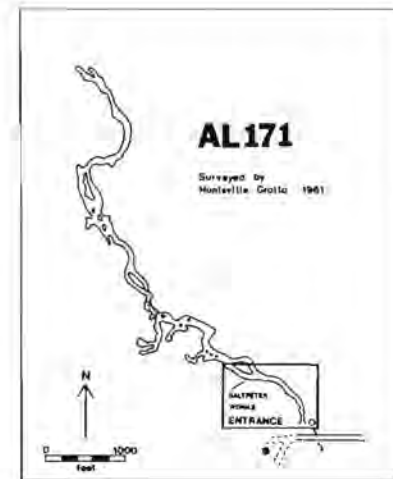
The Boyd, Hudson, and Barbee partnership was apparently James A. Boyd, James M. Hudson, and David Jefferson Barbee. Boyd (b. c1827) before the war was a Madison County resident who maintained a lumber yard near the Huntsville depot and a saw mill at Boyd's Switch [later Lim Rock] on the Memphis and Charleston Railroad. In December, 1862, he was living in Jackson County and signed an affidavit which stated that nineteen of his slaves ran away during the spring and summer Union occupation. Hudson (July 23, 1825-June 15, 1890), a native of Greenville, South Carolina, and a physician, was a resident of Maynards Cove. Barbee (June 9, 1835-1865), a son of Mark Barbee who lived about one and a fourth miles east southeast from Tumbling Rock Cave, was prior to the war a "Shop Keeper" in the household of Joseph McCaleb, a Hollywood [then Bellefonte Station] area merchant.<sup>17</sup>

According to tradition, on or about April 10, 1863, Joseph Sanders, Sr., the owner or former owner of Tumbling Rock, "was shot by Jeff Barbee, Thomps Houston, and John Teeters" on the farm containing the cave. The reason for this murder is not now known. Perhaps it was because the Sanders family was Unionist in sympathy. At least two of Joe Sr.'s sons and one son-in-law served in the Third Ohio Cavalry and a half dozen or more other Jackson County Sanders eventually joined local Federal units. Barbee's brothers were in the Confederate service. A modern tale which may relate to the Sanders shooting is that sometime during the late 1960s or early 1970s a member of the now defunct Decatur, Alabama, Grotto [cave club] found the rusty remains of a Civil War pistol in one of the saltpeter vats in Tumbling Rock Cave. It is not known how Jeff Barbee died, whether he was tried and hanged, was shot in revenge, or expired of either a disease or natural causes, but he was dead before November 13, 1865. On that date his estate was appraised as follows:

|                |          |
|----------------|----------|
| 1 Bay Mare     | \$ 75.00 |
| 1 Silver Watch | 25.00    |

Historic Signatures:  
 H. J. Houston  
 1862  
 W. C. Houston  
 Elisabeth Houston

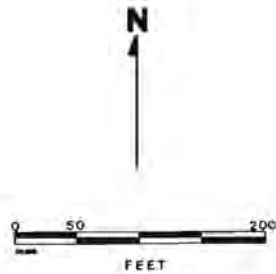
Historic Signatures:  
 1833 Benjamin Sanders  
 James M. Hudson  
 J. B. Stephens  
 J. A. Boyd



# TUMBLING ROCK CAVE

## Jackson County, ALA.

Resurveyed by  
 K. H. Graer  
 P. Kambeala  
 M. O. Smith  
 Jan. 1990



ENTRANCE  
 SPRING

Kambeala/1990

|                                       |                 |
|---------------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1 third interest in two large kettles | 12.00           |
|                                       | <u>\$112.00</u> |

The estate also contained \$227 in cash, and the final settlement on July 19, 1867, included \$31 "realized from notes of Dr Hudson."<sup>18</sup>

The saltpeter mining evidence in Tumbling Rock Cave is considerable. About 150 feet from the entrance are rocks made into a walkway. A few hundred feet further, on a large, high shelf on the right, are at least five mounds of dirt, which may be the remains of small saltpeter vats. Some thousand feet inside is the main saltpeter area which has at least eight vats and associated dug out areas. The vats, which are about eight by eight or eight and a half by eight and a half feet, are arranged in tiers of three, two, and three, with the middle tier having piles of dumped dirt at each end. The wood has mostly rotted away, leaving only dirt casts, some intact, some broken. On top of one of the vats is a human barefoot print, indicating it was probably made while Boyd, Hudson, and Barbee worked the cave or shortly thereafter.<sup>19</sup>

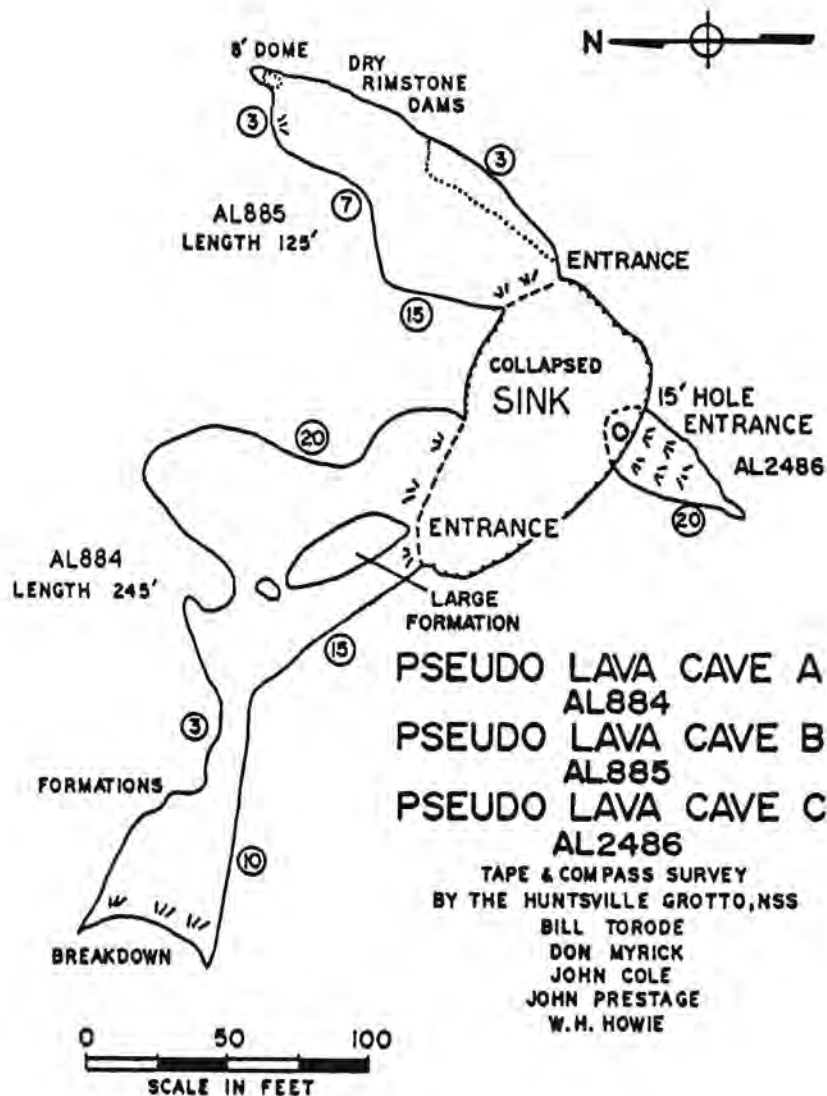
#### BIG AND LITTLE COON VALLEY MINERS AND CAVES

Joseph Calvin Thornton (September 2, 1832-February 6, 1908), a Marion County, Tennessee, native and a farm laborer living a couple miles southwest of Stevenson, was apparently a worker for saltpeter contractors named Mathews [or Matthews] and English. After he died his widow, Jennie B. Russell Thornton (September 15, 1844-f11927), applied for a pension. She claimed that about September, 1862, her husband enlisted as a private in George E. Cowan's Company, 18th Alabama Battalion Cavalry, CSA, and within a few months received a finger wound and was transferred to the Nitre Bureau. In support of her claim, John D. McCrary (September 23, 1839-August 3, 1926) and Albert G. Gentry (c1840-f11914) signed affidavits that "J. C. Thornton did work in the Salt Petre caves in Matthews Cove, Alabama." In 1910 Ira Thornton, a son, in response to a query by the state archivist, said the same thing, adding that his father "was overseer of the detail" and that "several hands" worked there, some of whom were still living. But he had no knowledge of "the amt of out put."<sup>20</sup>

At Larkinsville on March 12, 1863, Captain Gabbett did in fact give J. C. Thornton a certificate of detail, declaring he was "exempt from being removed as a conscript, by reason of being employed in the C. S. Nitre Works at Matthews Cave Jackson Co Alabama." However, Thornton was warned, as were all detailed men, that if he was "found one mile from said Works without a written Furlough from the superintendent of said Work, he will be liable to be arrested as a conscript and taken to the nearest Camp of instruction by the Enrolling Officer of Jackson Co."<sup>21</sup>

On the mountainside about two-thirds mile from the eastern end of Matthews Cove there is a sink which contains three small grottoes, recorded as Pseudo Lava Caves A, B, and C. Internal evidence indicates that two of the three were mined for saltpeter. Together, they are the most likely site which Mathews and English, with the help of Thornton and others, worked. The war-time owner of the property, William Matthews (b. c1823), who obtained title in 1852, was probably the partner of English.<sup>22</sup>

The two obvious entrances of the Pseudo Lava caves appear to have been mined. A, the longest cave in the sink at 245 feet, contains an eight foot long, one foot diameter log which has had both ends sawed. In recent years both A and B have been dug by pot hunters, but in each there are piles of dirt which seem to ante-date efforts at artifact plundering. Both of these caves have old graffiti, some of which pre-dates the Civil War. Pseudo Lava A has

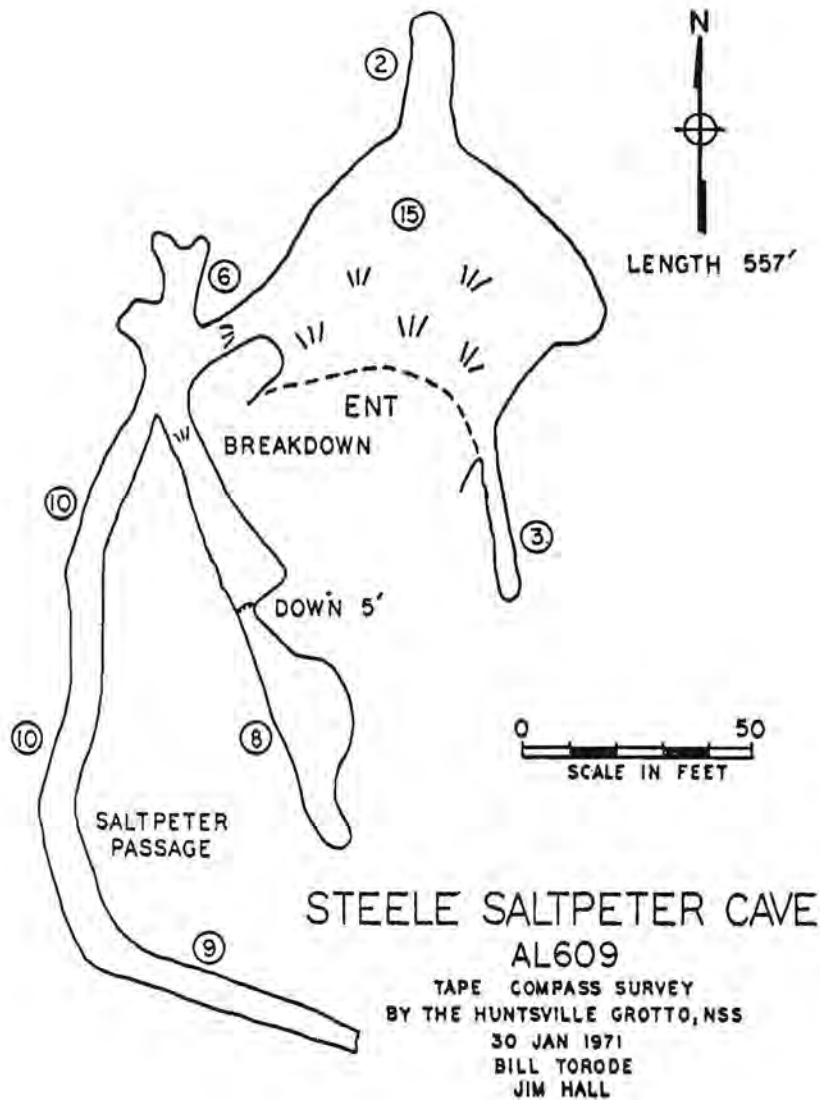


Willy[?] Talley 184[?], Bill Alison, Walter Talley[?], Lula Dury, Wallace[?] G[reen?] 1849 [or 0?], J M Evett 1910, and T M Mathews, while Pseudo Lava B has 1846 with no associated name, Walter Folks[?], RAH, and J E Mills.<sup>23</sup>

Although the Pseudo Lava caves are the best candidates for where Thornton and others labored, it is also possible that they instead worked what is known as Steele Saltpeter Cave nearly two miles away in Big Coon Valley proper. This cave, on the land of the late Jonah Ivy, is 557 feet long and was definitely mined, evidenced by pick marks and rocks piled on ledges. No Civil War writing has been found on its walls. However, 1854 and 1858 dates are present, associated with the Shipp family, along with early 1890s dates inscribed by the Tate family.<sup>24</sup>

At Stevenson on May 25, 1863, John D. Borin, then superintendent of sub-district D of Nitre District No. 9, issued the succeeding order to Calvin Thornton:

You are hereby required to proceed to construct and put into immediate operation, works for the production of Nitre, at a cave on big coon, at the head of O'Rara's hollow. Said cave is supposed to

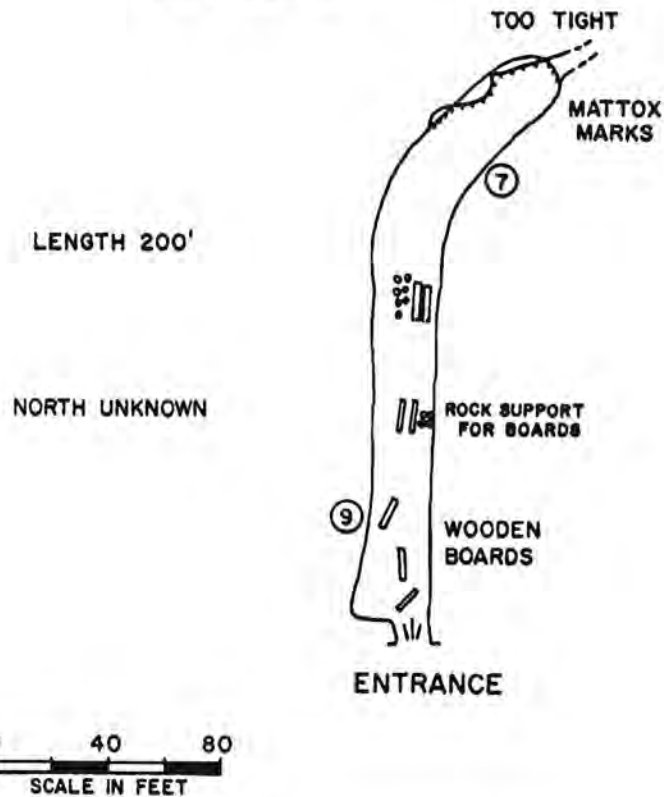


be upon Benjamin O'Rara's land, and is now remaining unworked. This order must be considered as Subject to be countermanded if there exists a previous contract, or bona fide claim by other parties engaged in the manufacture of Nitre. Such older claims if any exist, will be Subject to the decision of Captain Gabbett. . . .<sup>25</sup>

It is not known if Thornton complied with Borin's order. If he did probably little was done since the following July and August the Union army reoccupied much of the county and thousands of soldiers were in nearby Crow Creek Valley. O'Rara's Hollow is not listed on modern maps, but it corresponds to the small cove on the north side of Big Coon Valley which contains Culver Hollow trending north northeast and Kellum Hollow trending northwest. Land records show that by the war Benjamin O'Rara (b. c1810), a native Georgia farmer, owned the east half of the southeast quarter of section 4 and the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 3, both in T2SR6E, and the southwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 34 in T1SR6E, for a total of about 160 acres. The only recorded cave on this property is in a large sink in the northwest quarter of the northwest quarter of section 3, and is only about thirty feet long. Even though a current Little Coon Valley resident claims there is a saltpeter cave in the Culver Hollow vicinity, all

DEVERS COVE SALTPETER CAVE  
ALI567

SKETCH MAP  
BY THE KNOXVILLE GROTTTO, NSS  
23 OCT 1982  
MARION O. SMITH



Mattox marks in Devers Cove Saltpeter Cave.

attempts to locate it have failed.<sup>26</sup>

About three miles northwest of Matthews Cove is the obscure entrance of 200 foot long Devers Cove Saltpeter Cave. This small cave has passages seven to nine feet high and eighteen to twenty-five feet wide. In the front are seven segments of rotten split log boards and a small rock support for some of the boards. Near the end is a bank of clay-earth some four and a half or five feet high with numerous four inch wide mattox or small hoe dig marks. No 1860s or earlier inscriptions are on the walls, but undated names such as Tho Smith, May Rook, and Clyde Bohanon are present. The initials HAS, WH, and PDA 7/31/16 have been scratched on one of the mattox marks in the clay bank. It is not known when or by whom this cave was mined.<sup>27</sup>

Big Coon Valley's Rainbow Cave, according to a study of the now extinct Birmingham Community, was mined during the Civil War for saltpeter. In 1944 the kettles supposedly still remained. If this is the Rainbow Cave in Happy Hollow, no evidence of mining is detectable today.<sup>28</sup>

Little Coon Valley's Sentell Hollow allegedly contains "a large cave with a fine spring [where] salt petre had been mined . . . during the Civil War." As of yet, no large cave in the hollow has been located. However, high on the mountain and to the side of the main ravine, is a small, hundred foot long spring cave which has no evidence of mining. Dirt under nearby bluffs may have once been disturbed by man.<sup>29</sup>

#### BLUE RIVER CAVE OF MAYNARDS COVE

Blue River is a 6,014 foot long stream cave about five miles north of Scottsboro which penetrates Dean Ridge in a northeasterly direction. Its waters resurge on the east side of the ridge at the very impressive Robinson Spring. The front 400 feet of this cave is dry and contains evidence of saltpeter mining, but the passage beyond is literally a river. Just inside the entrance a passage to the left has been dug down as much as two feet, with some rocks piled along the walls. The initials SR are there. One hundred twenty feet from the entrance in the main passage is a hundred or more foot long dug pathway, the first forty feet of which is two to two and a half feet deep and four and a half feet wide, with dirt from the excavation piled to the right. The next eighty feet of pathway is stoop height and a fifteen foot wide shelf on the left appears to have had a dirt layer over a foot thick removed. A few faint pick marks remain and some rocks have been placed to the right of the shelf. The date 1863 and **A** are smudged on the walls. The room beyond the dug stoopway is about a hundred feet wide and overlooks the large stream passage. It is possible to follow the left wall nearly a hundred feet before being "forced" to the stream. Undisturbed breakdown boulders align the edges of this room, but the dirt in the middle appears to have been tampered with, evidenced primarily by a small mound.<sup>30</sup>

A considerable amount of graffiti is on the walls and ceiling of this room. Although many of the names cannot be deciphered, some of the more legible ones are listed below:

|                                 |                        |
|---------------------------------|------------------------|
| Albert Pope[?]                  | E R Keeton             |
| A N Keeton                      | C W Jerogin[?]         |
| J M Cann[?] 1884                | 1863                   |
| Bell Lusk                       | 1906                   |
| J L P 1907                      | N F Bells[?]           |
| Louie Wright                    | 1883                   |
| Luther Ridgeway March 4[?] 1934 | J P Hall               |
| Arthur Hartline                 | C N Dodson Feb 21 1926 |





Dug Pathway in Blue River Cave.

#### SAND MOUNTAIN SALTPETER CAVES AND THE VISIT OF GENERAL ROSECRANS AND HIS SOLDIERS

Beginning at the Tennessee line, Sand Mountain is a wide, raised plateau which extends many miles to the southwest, on the south side of the Tennessee River. The easternmost portion of Jackson County encompasses part of the western slope of Sand Mountain, which includes three known saltpeter caves: Long Island, Fabius, and Coon Creek. The latter of these is the most significant mining site, but because of the visit of numerous Union soldiers to Long Island it has by far the largest literature.

#### Long Island Saltpeter Cave

Long Island Saltpeter Cave has 13,493 feet of extremely mazelike passages, interspersed with some large rooms, up to seventy-five feet wide and 200 feet long. The furthest straight line distance from the entrance is only about 840 feet. Although little evidence remains today, during the war the cave was mined by King H. Newby (b. c1839) and Daniel Hill (b. c1822). Newby's name, next to an 1862 date, is in one of the large rooms. On January 30, April 30, and August 28, 1863, either Newby by himself or with Hill delivered to the Confederate Nitre Bureau officials at Chattanooga, Larkinsville, and Kash's Store respectively 96<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub>, 117, and 231 pounds of saltpeter.<sup>32</sup>

### The Union Army Tour of Long Island Cave

During June and July, 1863, the Federal Army of the Cumberland under Major General William S. Rosecrans forced the Confederate army to retreat from Tullahoma, Tennessee, to the vicinity of Chattanooga. After a few days' rest, Rosecrans began a campaign to capture Chattanooga itself. He decided to cross the Tennessee River southwest of the city while some of his forces feinted a crossing both north of and at the city. Because of the junction of two railroads, Stevenson, Alabama, was used as a supply base, and between August 28 and September 4 the bulk of the Union army crossed the river at Bridgeport, Shellmound, and at Caperton's Ferry near Stevenson. Once on the south side, General Rosecrans hoped his movements would be screened by Sand and Lookout Mountains and he would be able to approach Chattanooga from the rear.<sup>33</sup>



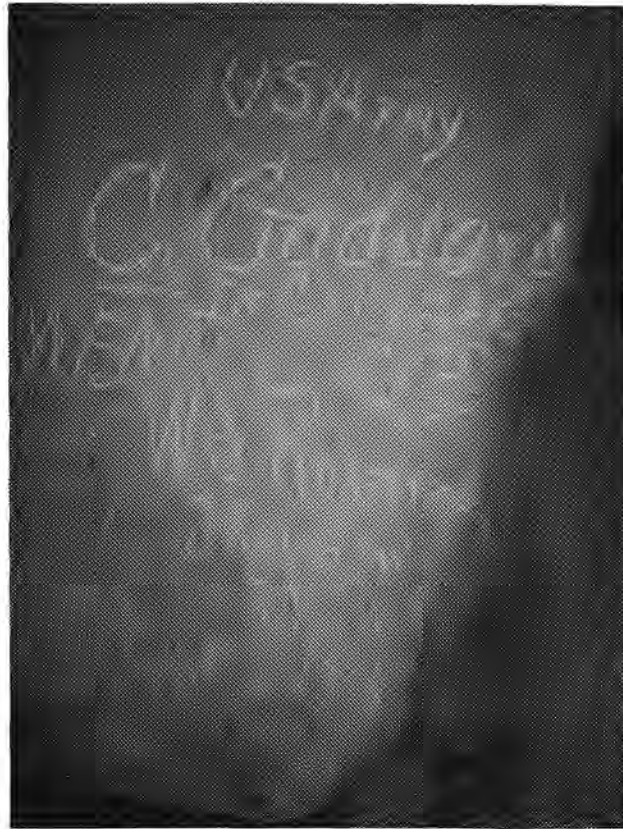
Civil War Map of Long Island Cove.

By the afternoon of September 4, Rosecrans's chief of staff, Brigadier General and future president James A. Garfield, sent a message to one of the subordinate generals that "Department headquarters will be established tonight at Cave Spring, near the foot of the mountain and near the head of Island Creek." This schedule was achieved and Rosecrans spent the night at a house near present day Gross Spring, which issues from a low-roofed stream cave.<sup>34</sup>

Rosecrans was supposed to move his headquarters to Trenton, Georgia, by 2 PM the 5th. But a staff member, Captain James P. Douillard, reported "Hd Qtrs Dept. [was] delayed one day at Cave Spring on account of wagons in the road" and the "Genl. Commanding explored the cave near Hdqtrs."<sup>35</sup>

The General and numerous men attached to Headquarters took advantage of the temporary halt to explore the recently abandoned Newby and Hill saltpeter cave, which was only a few hundred yards from the cave spring. Internal evidence, now obliterated, indicated that Rosecrans and some of his men penetrated the cave to an area which if not virgin had certainly been previously visited by only a few. There, in what is now called the Register Room are a number of inscriptions. The most significant of these, high on the wall above

a ten foot climb, is US ARMY C GODDARD LT COL & AAG WEM GB W S ROSECRANS Maj Gen<sup>1</sup> USA PT 5 1863. Names of officers and men of the 10th Ohio Infantry are on the lower walls of the same room, and many additional Union soldier scratchings are in other parts of the cave, especially in the maze passages near the entrance.<sup>36</sup>



Names in Register Room.

The Register Room is only about 500 straight line feet from the entrance. However, the underground route is actually much longer. To reach the Register Room General Rosecrans at one place had to crawl on his hands and knees about fifty feet, which must have been a novel scene to the enlisted men. Matthias Baldwin [Ball] Colton (1839-1915) of the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry was one of the privates in the cave who witnessed this. His brother, Captain William Francis Colton of the same regiment, recorded in his diary that:

Many of the men, Ball included, visited Hill's Cave, and during a visit to this cave by General Rosecrans and staff, the General's rather bulky form became wedged in a narrow passage, and for a few minutes it was a question whether the campaign might not have to be continued under the next senior general. (Ball said, "He seemed pretty well frightened. We guided him out.")<sup>37</sup>

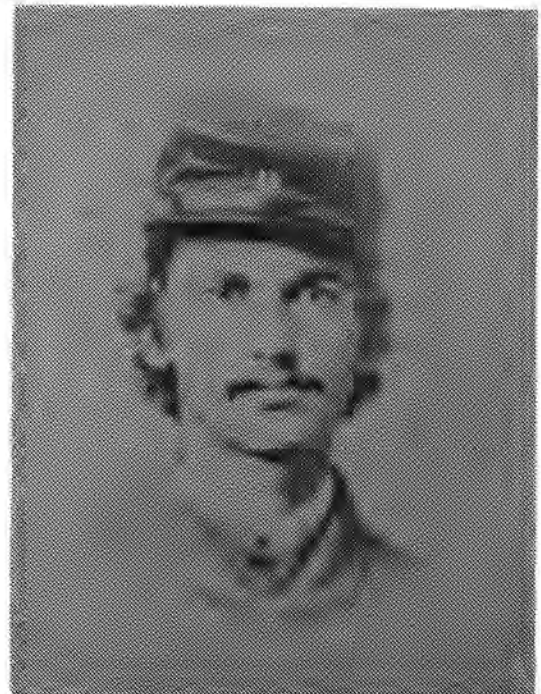
If the number of names on the walls is a guide, there must have been many dozens of men roaming the passages of Long Island Cave that day, and perhaps the next day as well. As usual, many inscriptions are illegible, but the bulk of the easy-to-read names are given below:

John Wagoner  
 Van Deman  
 Daniel O'Conner  
 John Wilson 10 OVI Co C[?]  
 G[?] I[?] Spencer Detroit  
 John Dobener Co K 10 Regt OVI  
 Joseph Munter  
 Van Buskirk Cap Co E 92 ILLS  
 John Fox  
 Maj Hudson 10th OVI  
 Genl Rosecrans & staff  
 Sept. 5th, 1863  
 C[?] Murphy  
 R A Weir Sep 5 1863  
 C. P. Bonner Anderson Cav  
 Sept 5th 1863

R. Liebaum 10th Ohio Infy  
 A. J. Daugherty 1863  
 Dick[?] Miller Co K 10 Regt  
 George Ostermann  
 John H. Warner  
 R. E. Vincent  
 G. W. Churchill  
 E. R. Devolt 92 sc[?]  
 Joseph Falrus[?] Comp K  
 10th Regt  
 Ohio Vol Inf Sept. 5th, 1863  
 Dick Hixler Co K 10th  
 S T Hamilton Co B AC Sep 63  
 George Shuck  
 W Truesdail<sup>38</sup>



Rosecrans Stuck. From Column South.



Ball Colton. From Column South.

The 10th Ohio Infantry regiment is heavily represented among the names found in the cave. It, the 1st Battalion Ohio Sharpshooters, and the 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry, also known as the Anderson Cavalry, were attached to General Rosecrans's headquarters during the Chattanooga-Chickamauga campaign.<sup>39</sup> Below are identifications of some of the men who visited the cave.

### Rosecrans

William Starke Rosecrans (September 6, 1819-March 11, 1898), a Delaware County, Ohio, native, graduated from the military academy at West Point (1842) and served in the engineer corps twelve years. When the war began he was the president of a kerosene refinery in Cincinnati. In June, 1861, he was appointed brigadier general and soon waged a successful campaign in western Virginia. Transferred west, he led large Union armies in battle at Iuka and Corinth, Mississippi. Promoted major general, he commanded the Army of the Cumberland from October 27, 1862, until October 19, 1863. During this time he successfully held his ground at the battle of Murfreesboro and captured Chattanooga. Suffering a major defeat at the battle of Chickamauga, September 19-20, 1863, he was relieved of command, and in 1864 headed the Department of Missouri. Resigning from the army March 28, 1867, he was briefly (1868-69) minister to Mexico before becoming a resident of California, congressman (1881-85), and register of the treasury (1885-93).<sup>40</sup>

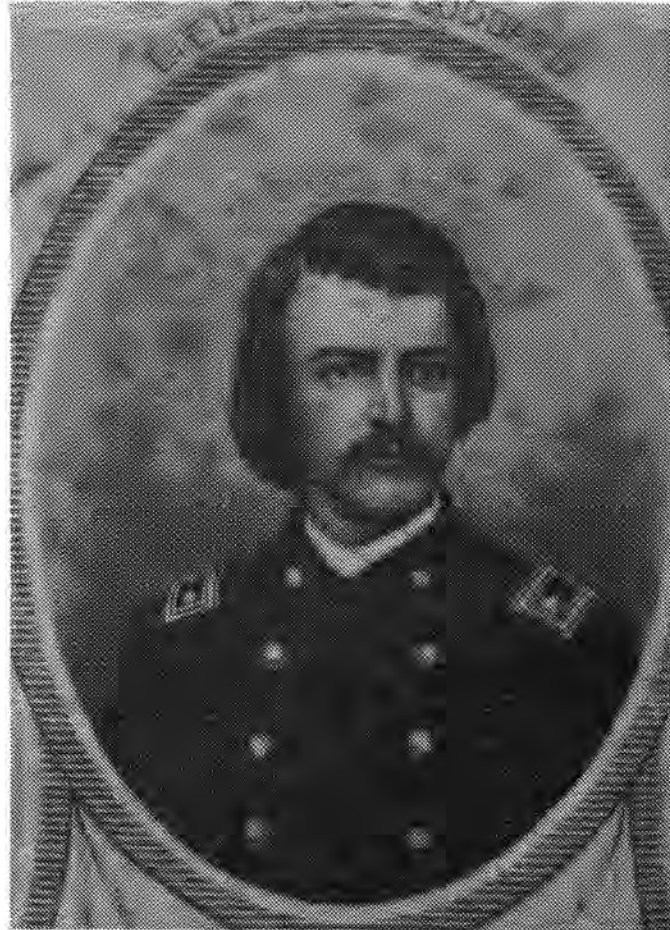


General William S. Rosecrans.

### Goddard

Calvin Goddard (February 9, 1838-April 4, 1892), a Norwich, Connecticut, native, in 1851 moved to Cleveland, Ohio, where he be-

came a bookkeeper. Commissioned 1st lieutenant, 12th Ohio Infantry, January 9, 1862, he was detailed as aide-de-camp to General Rosecrans in West Virginia, and accompanied him to Mississippi and Tennessee where he became the general's assistant adjutant general with the rank of lieutenant colonel. In November, 1863, he resigned from the army. After the war he was a Wells Fargo Express Company officer in New York City before becoming the president of a rapid transit company in Chicago.<sup>41</sup>



Calvin Goddard.

#### DeVolt

Dayton, Ohio-born Elam R. DeVolt (c1838-July 29, 1901) was a private, Company H, 92nd Illinois Infantry, September 4, 1862, to June 21, 1865. From September, 1864, through February, 1865, he was an orderly at regimental headquarters. After the war he was a merchant in Chicago, where his last address was 2217 W. Taylor Street.<sup>42</sup>

#### Dobener

John Dobener [Duberrer, Doberrer, Dubber] (c1839-March 25, 1914), born at Eber, Hanover, Germany, was before the war a wagon maker. He was a member of Company K, 10th Ohio Infantry April 18, 1861-June

17, 1864, and held a variety of jobs while in service. On July 6, 1861, he was detailed as a teamster, and at other times served as a carpenter or wagon repairer. Deserting at Huntsville, Alabama, in August, 1862, he was absent until April 12, 1863, when he was restored to duty without trial. Although his unauthorized absence evidently cost him his January 1, 1862, promotion to corporal, in June, 1863, he was an orderly at General Rosecrans's headquarters. Subsequent to the war he lived in Winston Place and Cincinnati, Ohio. In the 1890s he signed his pension papers with an "X," which may have been for convenience since by then he had only partial sight in one eye. In the cave his name was clearly written, either by himself or a friend.<sup>43</sup>

#### Hamilton

Samuel Todd Hamilton (March 10, 1844-March 29 or 30, 1906), a native of Beaver County, Pennsylvania, served as a private, corporal, and sergeant in Companies I and B, 15th Pennsylvania Cavalry, August 22, 1862-June 21, 1865. After the war he graduated from Duff's Commercial College in Pittsburgh and was briefly a bookkeeper before being appointed 2nd lieutenant, 2nd U.S. Cavalry, June 16, 1867. Making a career of the army, he retired as a captain August 15, 1892, and subsequently resided in Baltimore, Maryland, where for several years he was marshal of police. Promoted to major retired April 23, 1904, from March 14, 1905, until his death he was a recruiter at Harrisburg, Pennsylvania.<sup>44</sup>

#### Hudson

John E. Hudson (b. c1838) served in the 10th Ohio Infantry from April 19, 1861, until June 17, 1864, during which time he rose from 1st lieutenant and captain of Company C to major (January 20, 1863). During the immediate post-war years he was a hide and leather merchant in Nashville, Tennessee.<sup>45</sup>

#### Munter

Cincinnati-born Joseph Munter (May 12, 1841-June 19, 1911) was a machinist before enlisting June 3, 1861, as a private in Company K, 10th Ohio Infantry. He deserted at Louisville, Kentucky, about October 1, 1862, and returned to duty without a trial six months later. In May, 1863, and February-March, 1864, he was a company cook. Mustered out with the regiment on June 17, 1864, the succeeding October 3 he reenlisted as 1st sergeant in Company H, 106th Ohio Infantry and served until July 12, 1865. He returned to Cincinnati until 1872 and then moved to Canton, Ohio.<sup>46</sup>

#### O'Connor

Prior to the war Daniel O'Connor (c1830-February 12, 1885) was a ship's carpenter near Cincinnati. He enlisted as a private in Company A, 10th Ohio Infantry April 22, 1861, and the following September 10 was injured by the explosion of a shell at the battle of Carnifex Ferry, West Virginia. Commissioned 2nd lieutenant of Company E January 9, 1862, he was later adjutant of the regiment before

his final promotion, May 15, 1863, to the captaincy of Company K. Mustered out June 17, 1864, he later resided in St. Louis, Missouri, where he was a policeman and chief clerk for the local internal revenue collector.<sup>47</sup>

#### Ostermann

George Ostermann (c1830-December 17, 1894), a painter, was a private and corporal in Company K, 10th Ohio Infantry until he was mustered out June 17, 1864. Because of medical problems he was frequently absent from duty, being variously treated for rheumatism, diarrhoea, and ulceration of the leg. His right leg was injured between the ankle and knee during a retreat at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, October 8, 1862, when he tripped over a root or stump. Subsequent to the war he lived in Cincinnati, Ohio, and Covington, Kentucky.<sup>48</sup>

#### Truesdail

William Truesdail (January 9, 1815-November 25, 1867), a native of Chautauqua County, New York, engaged in a number of business enterprises near Erie, Pennsylvania, before becoming a railroad builder in Panama, Missouri, and Texas. Appointed military superintendent of the Northern Missouri Railroad in 1861, he soon contracted to supply General U. S. Grant's army with beef and was later in charge of the army police and secret service under Generals John Pope and W. S. Rosecrans. Although called "colonel," he was a civilian, and was unpopular in some quarters. In September, 1863, the U.S. military governor of Tennessee, Andrew Johnson, charged that Truesdail had been "deep in all kinds of plunder, and has kept the army inactive to enable his accomplices and himself to become rich by jobs and contracts." By the time of his visit to the cave he had been relieved as chief of police. Truesdail died of consumption at Bunker Hill, Illinois.<sup>49</sup>

#### Van Buskirk

Mathew Van Buskirk (c1838-January 11, 1901) was a member of the 92nd Illinois Infantry from mid-1862 to June 21, 1865, when he was discharged at Concord, North Carolina. Elected captain of Company E August 15, 1862, he was promoted to lieutenant colonel October 10, 1864. Sometime after returning home he moved to Iowa, residing first at Eldora and then at Iowa Falls, where he was a merchant.<sup>50</sup>

#### Van Deman

Joseph H. Van Deman (b. c1829) was assistant surgeon, 10th Ohio Infantry, July 11, 1863, through May 23, 1864, when he resigned. In September, 1863, he was reported "on duty for medicine at Stevenson, Alabama," and the following February 27 he was detailed to USA General Hospital No. 3 at Chattanooga.<sup>51</sup>

#### Wagoner

John Wagoner [or Wagner] (June 13, 1843-August 17, 1922), a

German native who immigrated to Ohio and worked as a "wood turner," served in Company K, 10th Ohio Infantry from May 2, 1861, through June 17, 1864. Wounded at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky, he spent several months recuperating at his home in Cincinnati. The remainder of his enlistment he was present, serving as company cook June-December, 1863. Little is known about his postwar activities except that his last ten years were spent at the National Military Home in Grant County, Indiana.<sup>52</sup>

#### An 1863 Newspaper Account of Long Island Cave

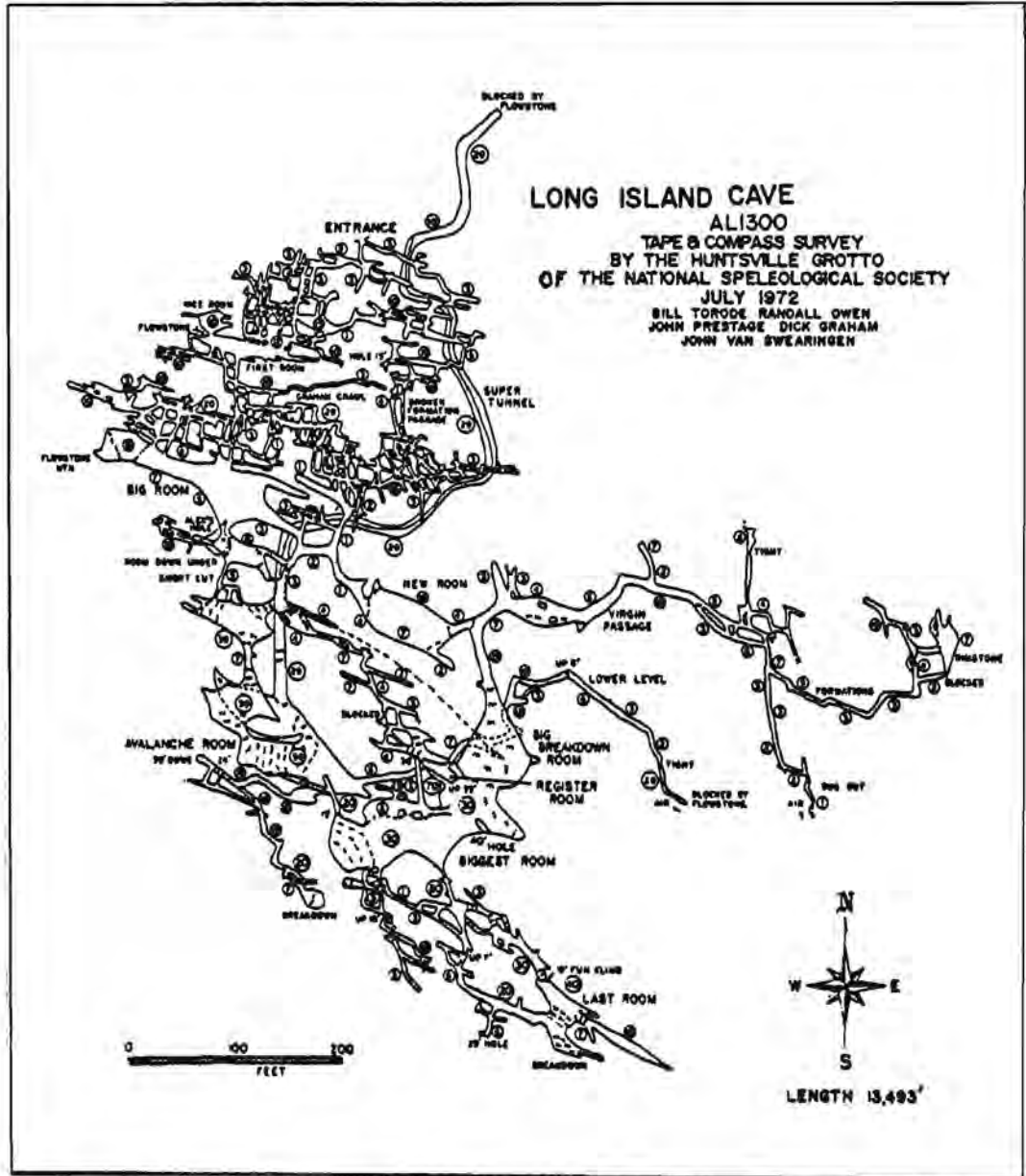
The same day General Rosecrans, his staff, and numerous soldiers toured Hill's or Long Island Saltpetre Cave, "Quill," a Louisville Journal correspondent, and Frank Jones also joined the throng of visitors. The following sensational story by "Quill" emphasizes that for a time they had strayed from the main body of explorers and had gotten "lost":

Camp was pitched in a little cove nestled among the mountains, and was screened from the sun's burning rays by not a single tree. In seeking the shade of mountain groves the soldiers discovered, about half-way up the mountain, a cave which the citizens had named "Saltpetre Cave." The rebels have been working the cave ever since the war began for that now valuable and costly ingredient of gunpowder saltpetre. The supply is abundant, the people say, and the article of a superior character. Some of the men entered the cave and pursued its winding passages some distance. Unacquainted with the place they reported the fact of the existence of a great natural curiosity of that character, and immediately a number of parties organized to explore it. Some indulged their curiosity further than others, until finally two were lost, but succeeded, after a perilous search, in finding their way out.

The reports of the extent and wonders of the "big thing" underground grew rapidly as they passed from mouth to mouth, and the exploring fever that possessed so many did not fail to affect your correspondent. Procuring a piece of candle and joining a party of friends from the office of the Provost Marshal, I ascended to the mouth of the cave. A current of cold, chilly air issuing from the cave made it difficult to enter with a burning candle. The visitor, on entering, is compelled to do so in a stooping posture, and to advance some distance in that position, along a path apparently hewn through the solid rock. The aisle is very narrow, and my corpulent friend Frank Jones suffered numerous abrasions in edging through the contracted passage-ways, in the rear of the leaner candle-bearers. A multitude of aisles branched from the main passage, like tributaries to a mighty river.

As we advanced the ceiling disappeared, and the narrow path growing in width and echoing our footsteps assumed the appearance of lofty aisles. . . . The walls were of solid, unbroken stone, and converged so gradually that our candles failed to illumine the dark void above us. We soon found ourselves in a capacious chamber, hung with numerous stalactites and apparently supported by huge columns formed by the slow process of dripping. At the further end of the chamber is a spring of water formed in a natural basin and enclosed, except a small opening near the floor, by a formation of sand drippings that looked like curtains carved by the hand of a sculptor.

To this chamber the way is clear and cannot be easily lost. Apartments, larger in size and more interesting in character, were reported some distance off, with which an aperture which we were compelled to creep through on our hands and knees communicated. Again we moved forward and soon rose into a grand chamber, hung with stalactites. . . .



My corpulent friend Jones and I, in obedience to an irresistible curiosity, left the main party, and, passing from one discovery to another, traversed aisle after aisle, squeezing through fissures that seemed impassable; crawling through apertures that would scarcely admit our bodies; climbing over and descending ledges, until sheer exhaustion would not permit a further advance.

We found a negro far down in this trackless labyrinth of passages, who had evidently wandered about for some time in fruitless efforts to retrace his steps to the entrance of the cave. We rested and started to return. An hour passed, and we were yet among

among strange formations. Loose rocks here and there blocked the path, and pillars connected by arches supporting lofty partitions, extensive, strange apartments appeared on every hand. We came to a chamber, passed hurriedly through it in our anxiety to escape from the place, and discovered to our amazement that there was no way of exit except by the path that led us there. Then the conviction possessed us for the first time that we were lost. We were a long distance, perhaps a mile and a half [actually only a few hundred feet] from the entrance. The way back was difficult, even to one acquainted with the intricate and multitudinous aisles. We knew it not, and had vainly searched an hour in quest of some familiar spot that would give a clue by which to thread the labyrinths of the cave. We had grown hoarse in shouting for assistance, but no voice replied. Our candles were melting rapidly away, scarce an inch remaining. Night was coming on, and the visitors to the cave would all be leaving. Before dawn on the following day the camp would be broken and the men on the march. No one had ventured where we were. We had nothing to eat, and not a sound could be heard but the quick, short breath, and the throbbings of fear-burdened hearts, that even waked the faint echoes of the dismal caverns. A night in the cave seemed inevitable, and starvation there not improbable.

Big drops of perspiration oozed from my overheated forehead; the air seemed to grow hotter as time advanced; and every muscle that held me up relaxed. Jones had banished levity, and looking reality in the face, failed to check the fugitive blood that left his features as colorless as a moonbeam. For a moment no one stirred. Each was wrapt in the solemnity of the occasion, and was silent in the contemplation of his own danger.

The negro, tall and brawny, breathed hard. Fear fixed him to the rock on which he stood as firmly as though the hand of Providence had petrified him. His body bent slightly forward, eyes wide open and lips agape, he was a perfect Hamlet in bronze, listening for something from the spirit world. His sense of hearing was so acute, that a sound which failed to reach either me or Jones was detected by him, and following his hasty footsteps, we soon emerged into an extensive chamber, into the opposite extremity of which a ray of light shot out from an adjoining apartment, and we hailed with shouts a happy deliverance. . . .<sup>53</sup>

#### Fabius Cave

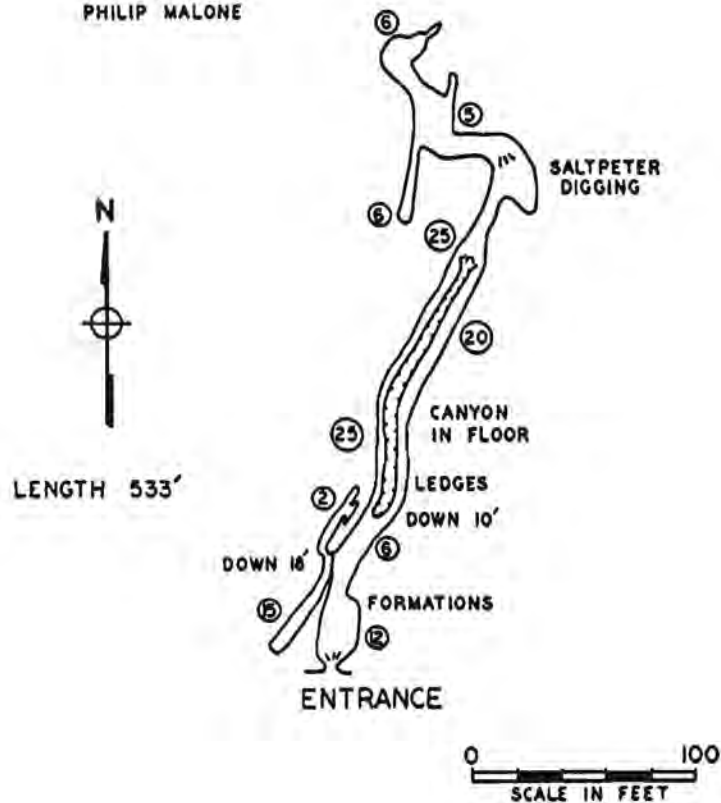
Fabius Cave is at the base of Sand Mountain near the Old Fabius Community. Its stoop height, climbdown entrance leads to 533 feet of passage, the majority of which is six to ten feet wide and ten to twenty feet high, plus some three or four foot high "rooms" at the terminus. The cave is damp the first hundred feet, then after a twelve foot climbdown it is very dry for the next 250 or 300 feet, and again somewhat damp near the end.<sup>54</sup>

This cave was definitely mined for saltpeter. There are cedar tree trunks at the twelve foot climbdown and at least five poles or split logs at other places, which may have served as planks for an "upper level" walkway. In one area near the back four or five vertical feet of dirt have been excavated. In that same locale is a three by four foot test pit some four feet deep. Past this, on the walls of the last two "rooms" are a number of old names. Many are illegible but they are as early as the mid-nineteenth century, with concentrations of 1887, 1926, and 1934 dates. G Champion 1850

is the oldest, and others include W. O., H. P., and J. F. Caperton, the last next to a May 14[?] 1862 date. Some illegible names, including possibly some of feminine gender, seem to accompany what appears to be 1863.<sup>55</sup>

## FABIUS CAVE ALI376

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY  
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTO, NSS  
3 JULY 1972  
BILL TORODE  
PAUL DOPPEL  
PHILIP MALONE



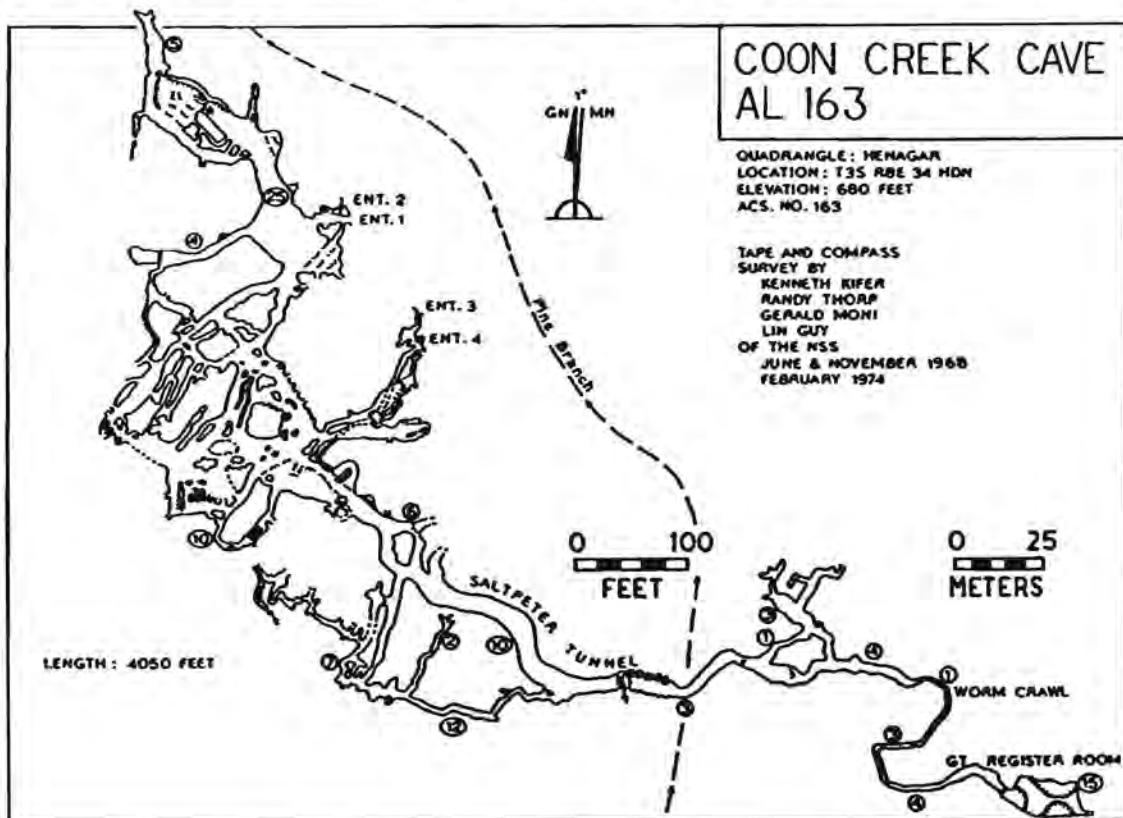
It can only be speculated when or by whom Fabius Cave was dug for saltpeter. By the time of the Civil War the cave was on still unsold government land and consequently had no local owner. The Capertons did own much property in the general vicinity but there is no record of any of them selling saltpeter to the Confederate government. Two of the Capertons who signed the cave wall were in the Southern army, although in May, 1862, when much of Jackson County was within Union lines, J. F. was between enlistments and may have been hiding. There are two known sets of partners who might have mined caves on Sand Mountain, Kash and Cox and Garner and Allison, based solely on the fact that they delivered saltpeter to Kash's Store west of present day Flat Rock. Only one of these men has been identified. It seems certain that Kash was Levi (October 22, 1802-May 31, 1879), a Kentucky-born farmer who was also the keeper of the store in question. On March 3, 1863, Kash and Cox presented fifty pounds of saltpeter to the Larkinsville office, and the following August 27 and 28 they and Gardner and Allison delivered respectively 318 and 100 pounds to Kash's Store. Where these contractors obtained their saltpeter is

unknown, but for one of the partnerships Fabius Cave is at least a possibility.<sup>56</sup>

### Coon Creek Saltpeter Cave

This four entranced, 4,050 foot long cave on the south side of Sand Mountain's Coon Gulf has had several names. During the Civil War it was probably known as Wheeler Cave. The first topographic map of the area in 1892 located it under the generic name "Saltpetre Cave," and National Speleological Society affiliated explorers of the 1950s and 1960s alluded to it as either Walker Saltpeter or Coon Creek Saltpeter Cave.<sup>57</sup>

The 1950s cave explorers adopted the name Walker Saltpeter because they used "an overland approach . . . over the property of Mr. Sam Walker." Local lore gathered at that time indicated that during the war "The mules descended down the cliff" 600 vertical feet "via a trail to the cave" which wore out teams in a month's time because of the "rugged pace."<sup>58</sup>



Although internal evidence suggests that this cave was second only to Sauta as the most heavily worked saltpeter mine in Jackson County, as usual those who conducted the operation can only be guessed at. The cave contains man-made walkways, numerous pick and mattox marks (particularly in a six foot deep, fifteen foot wide, thirty foot long "pit"), piled rocks, scattered smudge marks, and one passage entirely blackened with soot. In addition, there are many old names, but unfortunately few from the War of Secession are legible:

Sept 25 32 J S Frazer[?]  
V E Stone [?]  
Wm H Davis March 29th 1889

D K Maxwell  
T S McCoy [McCay?]  
W. V. Brumby 1893

|                                      |                                      |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| J H Bowman 1930                      | A: F: Dover Born November 22 1866    |
| A B Westbrook Aug 9 1885             | A. F. Dover March 16 1886            |
| E M Moore                            | W C Niles                            |
| J W Sanders Aug 1 <sup>th</sup> 1902 | R E Underwood 1868                   |
| M[?] L Wells                         | J W Bails 1866[?]                    |
| Charlie Shrader Born May 11 1899     | J L Evans Oct 62[?]                  |
| Arrillian Young                      | John Johnson                         |
| 1862 Loyd                            | J P Johnson                          |
| <u>                    </u> 1856     | F M Knight                           |
| Margie Wheeler                       | D[?] J[?] Corfall[?] May the 13 1862 |
| Wright[?] Sharden[?] 1863            | L F[?] Wheeler                       |
| H[?] Highfield[?] 1862               | L R Evans                            |
| C E Day Feb 27 1927                  | G J Blevins <sup>59</sup>            |

The only known document which mentions Wheeler Cave is a Nitre Bureau voucher, dated December 1, 1863, to J. M. Borin for "six (6) days hire of one (1) yoke ox Team hauling Nitre & Lead from Wheeler's Cave Jackson Co Ala To Rome Ga furnishing self & Team from Nov. 25<sup>th</sup> to Nov. 30<sup>th</sup> 1863 inclusive @ \$4<sup>00</sup> pr. Day." On this trip Borin brought to the Bureau officials 414 pounds of saltpeter and 306 pounds of lead. Between March 31, 1863, and August 13, 1864, Borin delivered saltpeter at least five other occasions, totaling 3,548 pounds, to the "floating" District No. 9 office at Larkinsville, Chattanooga, Kingston, Georgia, and Blue Mountain and Montevallo, Alabama. The largest of these deliveries were 1,012 pounds to Larkinsville and 1,399 pounds to Montevallo. Since generally the territory south of the Tennessee River remained in Confederate control, it is conceivable that all of J. M. Borin's saltpeter was made at Wheeler Cave.<sup>60</sup>

In 1852 Richard Wheeler (1806-1856), a native of Wilkes County, North Carolina, moved to Sand Mountain from Gilmer County, Georgia. About the same time some of his brothers also migrated to Alabama. By the war a number of Wheelers lived in the "South Coon" vicinity, although none of them owned any land. Some of them may have squatted on the government land which included the cave. In 1874 Andrew Lindsay Wheeler (January 26, 1838-f11930) homesteaded 160 acres about a mile west of Coon Creek Cave.<sup>61</sup>

J. M. Wheeler, who was a laborer and later superintendent of boiling at the Chattanooga Potash Works, June-September, 1862, may be the same man who the next December 19 and May 30 sold 120 and 45 pounds of saltpeter to Confederate authorities at Chattanooga and Larkinsville. Whether he was kin to the Wheeler family of Sand Mountain or was in any way associated with Wheeler Cave is unknown.<sup>62</sup>

#### PAINT ROCK VALLEY SALTPETER CAVES

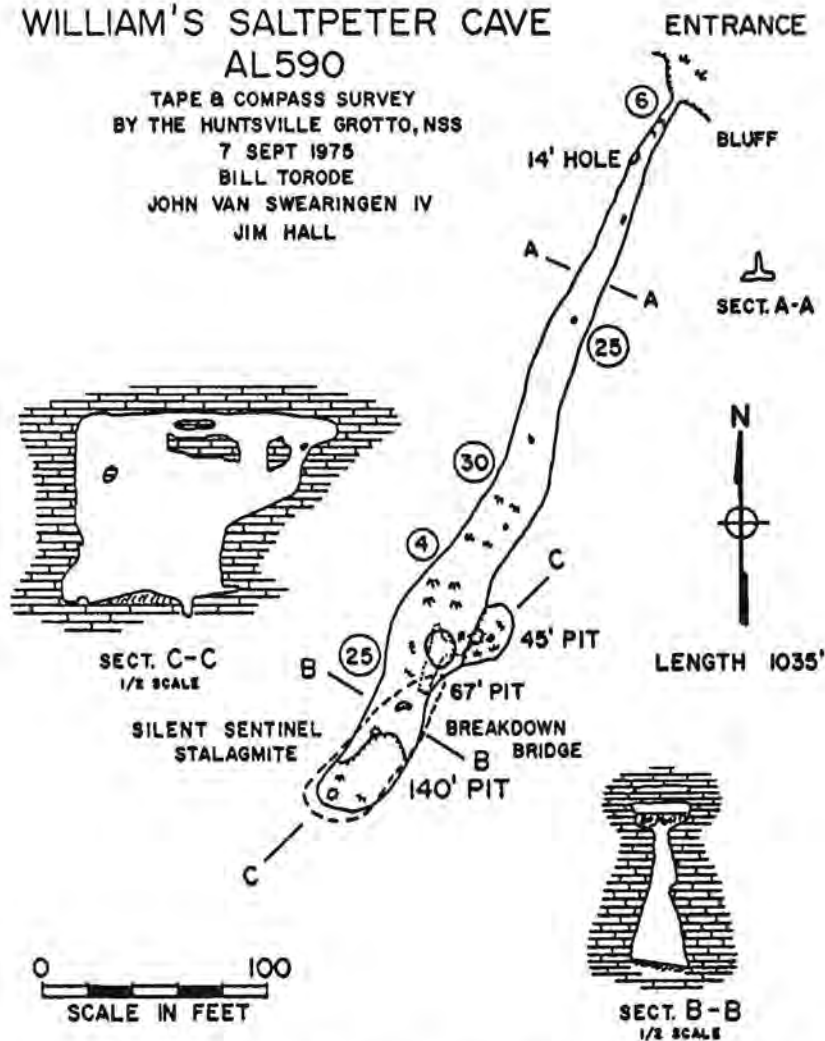
Besides Crossing Cave, the Paint Rock Valley region of western Jackson contains only two other verified but very marginal saltpeter caves. However, there are traditions that other caves have been mined, and Nitre Bureau vouchers exist for one saltpeter producer who was apparently from that locality.

Williams Saltpeter Cave, 1,035 feet long, has an obscure entrance on the side of Saltpeter Cove east of Hollytree. About thirty feet inside the entrance is a fourteen foot deep hole which may have had some dirt removed. There are no other obvious signs of mining nor is there any nineteenth century writing on the walls.<sup>63</sup>

Saltpeter Cave is the "generic" name of a large-entranced, 3,729 foot long grotto in Honey Hollow. Some seventy-five feet inside the sixty by forty

# WILLIAM'S SALTPETER CAVE AL590

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY  
BY THE HUNTSVILLE GROTTTO, NSS  
7 SEPT 1978  
BILL TORODE  
JOHN VAN SWEARINGEN IV  
JIM HALL



foot entrance, still in the daylight zone, is a dirt pile which is probably the remains of a leaching vat. Nearby, "C C Tipton 1863" is twice scratched on the wall. Charles C. Tipton (March 21, 1820-September 15, 1879) may have been the miner. He was a native Alabama farmer who lived in the close by Clear Creek area, claiming before the war real estate worth \$5,000.<sup>64</sup>

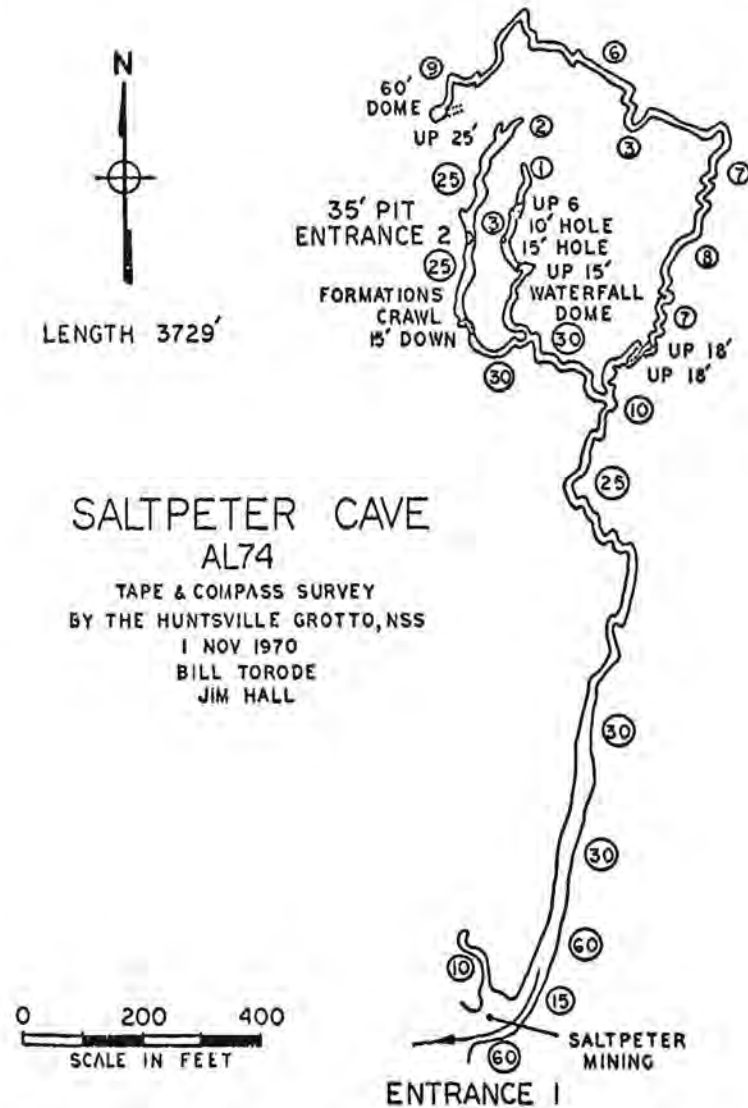
In 1927 local historian John R. Kennamer, after an extended discussion of the mining operation at Sauta Cave, wrote that Jackson County had smaller caves which had been "worked some for saltpeter," including "one in Bishop's Cove in Paint Rock Valley, and another one near Guess Creek." The one in Bishop's Cove, two miles east of Estill Fork, has not been relocated, and the large entrance chamber of Guess Creek Cave has been dug by pot hunters so as to alter any saltpeter mining evidence.<sup>65</sup>

L. C. Shook on May 20 and June 29, 1863, delivered 279 and 192 pounds of saltpeter to the Confederate Nitre office at Larkinsville. But unfortunately it is not known where this saltpeter was made. L. C. was either Leroy C. (August 30, 1833-December 15, 1864) or his brother Levi or "Live" C. Shook (c1834-f11877), who before the war lived in the same house somewhere in the Paint Rock Valley.<sup>66</sup>

## OTHER JACKSON COUNTY SALTPETER CONTRACTORS

A number of nitre contractors have already been discussed, eight of whom had or possibly had a Jackson County connection. At least four more local

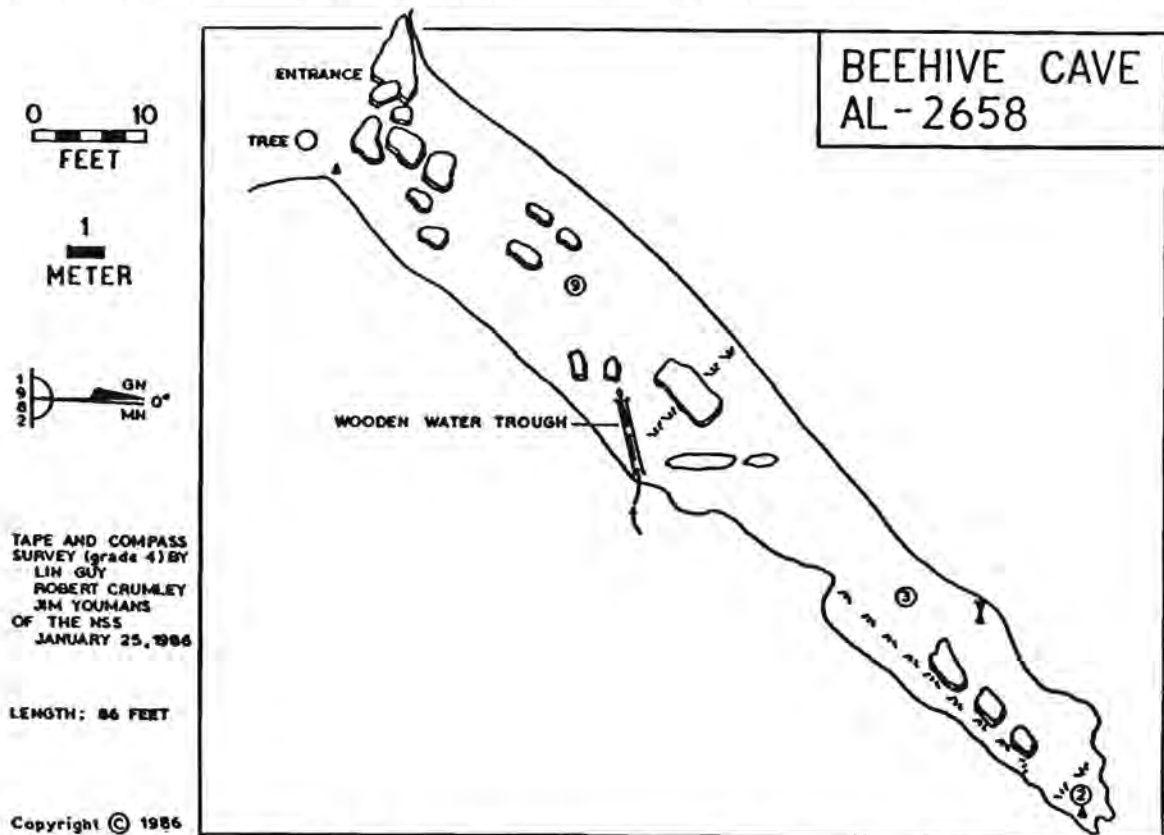
contractors supplied saltpeter to the Larkinsville office. Hall, Foster, and Harrison on May 31, June 9, and November 22, 1863, delivered 342, 204, and 103 pounds. Their last delivery was at Gunter'sville, which meant if they were Jackson countians, and there were many in the county with their surnames, they probably had to sneak it out of Union lines. On May 31 and July 3, 1863, Mett and Sanders brought in 216 and 243 pounds, the latter to the Chattanooga office. Mett may have been Lewis E. Metts (c1828-March 14, 1875), a Tennessee-born laborer who in April, 1861, was licensed to sell liquor at Stevenson, and in 1862 was in the army with Joseph Calvin Thornton.<sup>67</sup>



At Larkinsville on November 21, 1862, Cowley and McLemore sold to Bureau officers 435<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds of saltpeter at seventy-five cents and twenty-two more pounds at seventy cents. It is probable that these men were among the Cowleys (D. M., B. F., and James H.) and McLemores (John, William, and James P.) who were employed at Sauta Cave, and whose families lived in the Mink Creek area a couple miles to the south.<sup>68</sup>

Thomas Latham (August 23, 1827-February 23, 1903), a farmer who owned 311 acres of land in Boxes Cove near Larkinsville, sold saltpeter to Captain Gabbett twice in February, 1863. On the 3rd he delivered 164 pounds and on

the 25th he brought in 272 pounds. Where he made this saltpeter is unknown. No saltpeter caves are known in T3SR5E, sections 20 and 29, where he owned property. Two possible sites of Latham's mine are Beehive Cave in section 32 just south of 29, and the dirt deposits in the bluff near Indian Rock Cave, in



section 20 just north of his land. Beehive Cave is only eighty-six feet long, with a twelve foot wide, nine foot high entrance. It has no graffiti and no currently discernible signs of digging, but under a drip near the right wall about thirty-five feet inside is an eight foot long wooden water trough. Latham was in reality a unionist and after the Federal reoccupation of Jackson County he served as a 2nd lieutenant in Company A, 1st Tennessee and Alabama (Independent) Vidette Cavalry, USA, August 28, 1863, until his discharge at Stevenson June 16, 1864. After the war he lived in Tennessee three years and nine months, but was back in Jackson County by 1870. In 1871 he moved to Arkansas, first to Benton County, and the next year to Washington County, where he remained.<sup>69</sup>

#### JACKSON COUNTIANS WHO REMAINED IN THE NITRE SERVICE AFTER THE UNION OCCUPATION

Numerous residents of Jackson County worked as laborers at Sauta Cave or were members of Captain James H. Young's Nitre Guard Company. But in mid-1863, when the Federals regained the area north of the Tennessee River, the Nitre Bureau activities of most of the locally residing laborers ended, and many of the Guards deserted. Other Jackson Countians, however, including faithful Guard members, continued either in the regular or sporadic employ of the Nitre Bureau.

Benjamin F. Cowley (b. c1836), who had long been an overseer of slaves at Sauta Cave, during July 1-14, 1863, hired out three wagons, each with two-ox teams, to help move "tools &c across Tenn. River to a place of safety from the

enemy." On the following August 2nd he sold a beef to the Bureau "for subsistence of Laborers at Town Creek Potash works" on Sand Mountain in Marshall County, and from that month through October, 1863, he was overseer of slaves at the same place. His subsequent duties were overseer at Big Spring Cave, Marshall County, November-December, 1863, superintendent of Little River Nitre Works [Daniel Cave], Cherokee County, January-May, 1864, and foreman at Blue Mountain Nitre Works [Weaver-Lady Cave], Calhoun County, July, 1864. In March and April, 1864, he shod horses, put on tires and made other repairs on Bureau wagons, and sold 500 pounds of fodder for forage of government stock. In December, 1863, he was described as five feet eight inches tall, 175 pounds, with dark hair and complexion and black eyes and beard.<sup>70</sup>

After the retreat over the Tennessee River, Stephen C. Loyd (b. c1829), a Tennessee-born farmer and one of Young's Guards, worked for the Nitre Bureau as a wagon master. In late August and mid to late September, 1863, he twice traveled to Trinity Cave in Morgan County. The first time he brought the "Nitre to Gadsden," and the second trip he carried funds to subdistrict superintendent Henry W. Grantland and then removed the saltpeter to Rome, Georgia. In early January, 1864, he ferried five wagons across the Coosa River at Gadsden and carried "forage and tools to Big Spring Nitre Works." The next month, on the 9th, he repaired the tongue, body, and wheel of a government wagon, and on the 22nd accompanied two wagons to Centre, Alabama, to transport bacon stored there to Blue Mountain, the new Nitre District No. 9 headquarters.<sup>71</sup>

Before the war Tennessee native John D. Borin (c1828-cMay, 1875) operated the Stevenson hotel known as the Alabama House. During the spring and summer of 1861 he, his father-in-law George W. Rice, and John F. Anderson leased Sauta Cave and mined it for saltpeter. For the next year his activities are unknown, but soon after Jackson County was evacuated by the Federals in August, 1862, he again became involved with niter mining. Between the following September 13 and May 30, 1863, he made four deliveries of saltpeter, totaling 3,257<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds, to the Nitre officers at Chattanooga and Larkinsville. Over four months later he delivered more saltpeter, for which he received \$320.25, probably at the rate of seventy-five cents a pound. From at least March through December, 1863, he was superintendent, at ninety dollars a month, of subdistrict B of Gabbett's 9th Nitre District. The saltpeter he delivered was probably collected from various contractors in his subdistrict and not made at a cave he personally managed. Unless his vouchers are mislabeled, he was also head of subdistrict D March through May, 1863. The exact boundaries of these subdistricts are unknown, but apparently the northeastern part of Jackson, DeKalb, and perhaps other nearby counties were included.<sup>72</sup>

On May 8, 1863, Captain Gabbett announced the lead agents of his district, which included John D. Borin at Stevenson and George W. Rice at Bridgeport. During the first eighteen days of the succeeding July, Borin removed "Nitre & Lead from Stevenson Ala to Trenton Geo." He crossed the Tennessee River at Caperton's Ferry where he paid for ferriage of 4,145 pounds of unspecified material, probably saltpeter, lead, and tools.<sup>73</sup>

By January 1, 1864, Borin was superintendent of subdistrict E. How this territory differed from subdistricts B and D is not known, but it included DeKalb and Blount counties and possibly Jackson County south of the river. From August, 1864, until early February, 1865, Borin's headquarters were at Little Warrior Nitre Works in Blount County, believed to be the small caves now known as Crump and Second in the same bluff overlooking the Blackburn Fork of the Little Warrior River. In mid-August, 1864, he was reimbursed \$100 for rent of Fort Payne Cave, and \$47.50 for beeswax, thread, and tallow, presumably used to make candles to light the same grotto.<sup>74</sup>

Borin was acting as subdistrict superintendent as late as April 23, 1865. Then, at Viola, still in Blount County, he addressed a note to J. R. Hopkins, superintendent of Blountville, formerly Nixon's, Nitre Works [Posey Cave] in which he alluded to the deteriorating prospects for further mining:

Allow me to impress upon you the necessity of having all extra property in your charge secreted. That is every thing not in use. Have your business in such trim that should any thing happen, you will not be encumbered with any useless material. The Condition of the Country I think fully warrants this caution to you.

Within a week, virtually every saltpeter leaching center in Alabama ceased production.<sup>75</sup>

After the war Borin moved to Scottsboro where he worked as a carpenter and contracted to build the new courthouse. In 1869 he was a dealer in metallic burial cases. Sometime following mid-1870 he moved to Arkansas, where he died.<sup>76</sup>

In 1860 Jonathan F. Martin (b. c1826), a Tennessean and a former postmaster at Bolivar (1853-55), was a merchant somewhere west of Scottsboro, possibly Larkinsville. On July 8, 1862, he received \$1,725.50 from the ordnance officer at Atlanta, Georgia, "For 5 Bbls. and three Sacks Saltpeter 2030 lbs" which had been "brot from north Alabama near Huntsville." Presumably Martin acted as a transportation agent and did not make this saltpeter. The succeeding October 3 he sold to Captain Gabbett "48 lbs Tallow for Candles at Eureka Cave" in Morgan County, and on November 19 "2 pr. Shovels & tongs" and a "Drawer lock" for the Nitre office at Larkinsville.<sup>77</sup>

During the last two months of 1862 and March, 1863, Martin was on the Sauta Cave payroll as a supplier of a wagon and team. On November 22 he hired to the Bureau a slave named Dee, and in mid-December he helped unload office property and hauled potash at Sauta. In addition, for the first half of 1863, he was an operator for the Southwestern Telegraph Company, and in that capacity sent numerous messages for Captain Gabbett.<sup>78</sup>

By August 1, 1863, Martin was one of Gabbett's assistant superintendents. As such, between the 9th and 14th of the next month, he bought potatoes and corn and paid for meals and ferriage for five laborers and two horses at Coosa River, "on the retreat from C. S. Potash Works on Town Creek." Immediately afterwards, September 15-26, he made a "Trip to Big Spring Nitre Works to pay off hands and to buy Provisions to start the works again."<sup>79</sup>

Martin soon returned to Town Creek Potash Works, and in mid to late October went from there to District 9's new headquarters at Kingston, Georgia, to "report progress." Returning again to Town Creek, on November 28, 1863, he wrote T. J. Robinson, the superintendent of Big Spring Nitre Works:

Please have all your nitre Boxed up at once[.] I wish to Start Some wagons on my return to Gadsden after Salt and I want to Send all the Nitre on hand by them. All quiet here, nothing to eat nor no corn to feed my Horse, Consequently I will be detained here a day or two. but will be with you as Soon as I possibly can. rush things forward.

By December 2 he ferried "9 men & two horses and one wagon at Chatooga River," which indicates there was a change in travel plans. However, on January 3 and February 27, 1864, while enroute to Gadsden with saltpeter from Big Spring Cave, he did cross the Coosa River with teams and wagons.<sup>80</sup>

Big Spring Cave for much of the first five months of 1864 was Martin's

headquarters. In late March he traveled from there to take reports to the ever migrating District 9 headquarters, then at Blue Mountain. In Morgan County on April 5 and 25 he explored the cave being mined by contractors J. L. and M. V. B. Brisco.<sup>81</sup>

During May, 1864, Martin sent a number of messages to J. R. Hopkins, superintendent of Long Hollow Cave in Marshall County. On the 1st he urged Hopkins to "drive things forward with all possible speed," promising to be by in a few days when he hoped "to find your matters in good shape." Six days later he suggested that Hopkins should use his "own discretion in regard to Leting Mr. Herrin cross the River. If you think it perfectly Safe for him to go--& he will bring out the niter that he has on hand I have no objection to his going." Herrin, a Nitre Bureau laborer, had earlier been a saltpeter contractor and had worked a cave in Marshall County north of the river. On the 8th and 23rd Martin sent rations to Hopkins. But about the 29th, anticipating a Union raid, he sent an urgent dispatch. The kettles, picks, shovels, and spades were to be hidden, and Hopkins was to bring his cooking vessels, axes, and articles that could be hauled in his ox wagon, and "fall back" to Big Spring "as Rapidly as possible."<sup>82</sup>

Apparently, within days Martin and others fled Big Spring. On June 10 he purchased 200 pounds fodder "For Government animals [while] on [a] trip to Marshall Co after Secretd Tools & c," but on July 4 was forced to ferry animals across the Coosa during another threatened raid by the enemy. By about August 1 district headquarters were at Montevallo, and on the 4th Martin went to "Blue Mountain in charge of [the] Store." In mid-August he went to Blount County in charge of a wagon team and in early September went to Selma to procure supplies.<sup>83</sup>

Martin's last record is October 11, 1864. Then, in Shelby County, Alabama, he swore in an affidavit that thirteen head of hogs belonging to the Nitre Bureau had died of cholera at the saltpeter works in Marshall County.<sup>84</sup>

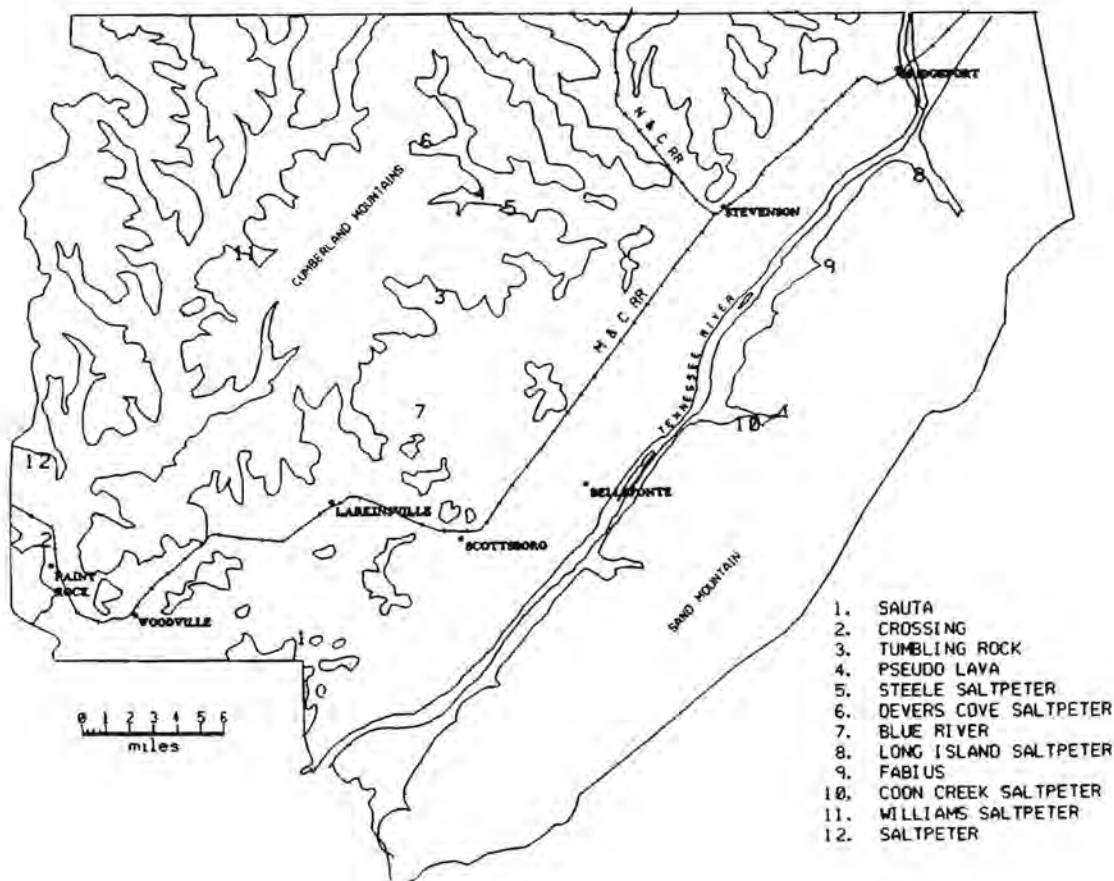
George Steptoe Woodall (c1822-f11876) was a native Alabama farmer who resided somewhere between Scottsboro and Paint Rock. On December 30, 1863, he sold 1,066 pounds of beef for subsistence of the laborers at Big Spring. During 1864 he was wagon master at Blue Mountain (February-April), Big Spring (May-June), and Little Warrior (July). His last wartime record was August 11, 1864, when he was paid at Montevallo for various repairs made the preceding February through June to "Government wagons."<sup>85</sup>

Before the war Edward Box (b. c1833) was a "day laborer" living in the vicinity of Scottsboro. From January through early July, 1863, he was a laborer at Sauta Cave, after which he was transferred to Big Spring Works through May, 1864. There, he was also a laborer, except December, 1863, when he was a "Kettle Hand." In July, 1864, he was a boiler at Nixon's Nitre Works, and his last assignment (January-March, 1865) was at Cedar Mountain Nitre Works [Horse-Adcock Caves], Blount County. A December, 1863, descriptive list indicates that he was born in St. Clair County, Alabama, was five feet, eight and a half inches tall, 156 pounds, with a dark complexion, light hair and beard, and gray eyes.<sup>86</sup>

Several other Jackson Countians who had worked at Sauta Cave continued service with the Nitre Bureau. These included David M. (September 20, 1833-May 3, 1899) and James H. Cowley (November 30, 1843-March 18, 1879), James P. (b. c1832), John (b. c1837), and William McLemore (b. c1831), Thomas W. Campbell (c1827-f11870), and Jefferson Gentle (c1833-f11870), all farmers except Gentle, who was a blacksmith. D. M. Cowley was foreman of hoppers, laborer, and commissary at Town Creek Potash Works, August-October, 1863, and alternated as commissary and foreman of the cave at Big Spring, November, 1863-January, 1864, while J. H. Cowley was a laborer at Town Creek, August-

October, 1863, Big Spring, November, 1863, and at Nixon's Nitre Works, March-May, 1864. All three of the McLemores were laborers at Town Creek in October and at Big Spring in December, 1863. Campbell, a Tennessean who moved to near Scottsboro just before the war, and Gentle, a Kentucky native who owned land west of Boxes Cove and north of Latham Narrows, also worked at Town Creek. There Campbell was a laborer September-October and Gentle was a blacksmith August-September, 1863. Campbell was later a laborer at Big Spring November, 1863, and January, 1864, and Nixon's Nitre Works, March-June, 1864.<sup>87</sup>

## JACKSON COUNTY SALTPETER CAVES



### SUMMARY

This report encompasses what is now known about the Confederate effort to procure salt peter from the caves of Jackson County, Alabama. The total amount mined in that locale during the Civil War will never be known. Despite the above lengthy discussion available records account for only 27,684<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds, all but 4,838<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> of which came from Sauta Cave alone. Another 7,070<sup>1</sup>/<sub>2</sub> pounds, or a good portion of it, may have come from Jackson. No doubt the true total was considerably more. In some instances this study has determined which salt peter contractors mined what cave, but in other cases it has not. Further painstaking research will be necessary before more of these mysteries can be solved. Jackson County may possess salt peter caves not yet known to the Alabama Cave Survey, or more of the county's already recorded 1,150 caves may have been mined but not yet recognized as such.<sup>88</sup>

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Information for this booklet came from numerous sources. The author is grateful to the following individuals who made substantial contributions: Merilyn Osterlund of Huntsville, who helped decipher the writing on many cave walls, shared her computerized list of original land owners of Jackson County, and created one of the maps; Ann B. Chambless and Carlus Page of Scottsboro, for data on the Barbee, Hudson, Sanders, and many other families; John W. Gant of Pisgah, for the Wheeler family history; William W. Torode of Huntsville, who inked the Devers Cove Cave map; Robert Crumley of Fort Payne, for biographical material about Thomas Latham; Pat Kambesis of Decatur, Georgia, who drafted the Tumbling Rock map; and Pat Anthony of Knoxville, Tennessee, who typed the manuscript in its final form.

## FOOTNOTES

1. Nashville Republican Banner, October 31, 1861; Francis Peyre Porcher, Resources of the Southern Fields and Forest (Charleston, S.C.: Evans & Cogswell, 1863), 339.
2. John Wooldridge, History of Nashville (Nashville: Publishing House of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1890), 627-29; Samuel Dold Morgan Papers, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville; Huntsville Democrat, May 29, 1861; Huntsville Southern Advocate, May 22, June 5, 1861.
3. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, Bellefonte, 84; Jackson County Wills, Book M, 82; Samuel D. Morgan Papers, TSLA.
4. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 1; Huntsville Southern Advocate, May 22, 1861; Huntsville Democrat as quoted in the Lynchburg Daily Virginian, May 31, 1861.
5. Thomas Jones Taylor, A History of Madison County and Incidentally of North Alabama, 1732-1840 (Huntsville: Tennessee Valley Genealogical Society, 1969 [1883-84]), 92.
6. Harper's Weekly, August 16, 1862, p. 523; Official Roster of the Soldiers of the State of Ohio in the War of the Rebellion 1861-1866 (12 vols., Akron, Cincinnati and Norwalk; Published by authority of the General Assembly, 1886-95), II, 79; Alabama Cave Survey, Birmingham.
7. Samuel D. Morgan Papers, TSLA; 1870 Census, Tenn., Franklin, 1st Dist., 63.
8. Marion O. Smith, "The Sauta Cave Confederate Niter Works," Civil War History, XXIX (December, 1983), 296-97.
9. Compiled Service Records (Cobb's Legion), Record Group 109, National Archives.
10. See Smith, "Sauta Cave Niter Works," 293-315 (reprinted in Jackson County Chronicles, April and July, 1984), and Marion O. Smith, "Additional Sauta Cave Niter Works Information," Jackson County Chronicles, April, 1986.
11. Confederate Payrolls, Record Group 109, National Archives; Confederate Slave Payrolls, Record Group 109, National Archives; Smith, "Sauta Cave Niter Works," 305.
12. Ladd (c1832-cSeptember 1, 1893), an Ohio-born Huntsville lightning rod salesman and auctioneer, after the war was an Atlanta lime merchant. Deake (December 25, 1825-f11886), a New York native who was dismissed for fraudulent practices in March, 1863, in later years lived in East Tennessee and western North Carolina. Grantland (August 3, 1832-February 17, 1926), a Morgan County, Alabama, resident, moved to Nashville about 1880 where he was a cotton broker. Walker (July 24, 1833-June 16, 1875), a Cave Spring, Georgia, merchant, was superintendent of subdistrict A from September, 1862, through

1863. Hull (c1837-February 8, 1864), an Athens, Georgia, resident, was an assistant from about September, 1862, until his death of "Typhoid Pneumonia." Sprague (b. c1838) was a New York-born teacher from near Covington, Georgia. Atlanta Constitution, September 2, 1893; Huntsville Southern Advocate, April 28, 1859; Huntsville Democrat, March 27, 1861; Nashville Banner, February 17, 1926; Chattanooga Times, May 4, 1886; Grover C. Anderson, comp., Floyd County, Georgia 1860 Census (St. Louis: Printed by Mrs. Frances Terry Ingmire, 1981), 222; Shirley Kinney and others, eds., Floyd County, Georgia Cemeteries (\_\_\_ vols., Cave Spring, Ga.: Georgia School for the Deaf, 1985), I, 529; James M. Walker, James M. Hull, and C. A. Sprague files, Confederate Papers Relating to Citizens or Business Firms, Record Group 109, National Archives; Athens Southern Banner, February 10, 1864; 1860 Census, Gal, Newton, Covington P.O., 103.

13. Henry W. Grantland, W. H. Herrin, James H. Collier, Morris & Noble, Robert A. Rogers, John F. Roberts, James Ratliff, and J. H. Scott & Bro. files, Citizens Papers; Confederate Payrolls.

14. Cemetery Records in possession of Merylyn Osterlund, Huntsville, Alabama; Alabama Cave Survey; A. J. Pickett Papers, Alabama Archives, Montgomery; Flossie Carmichael and Ronald Lee, In and Around Bridgeport (Collegedale, Tenn.: The College Press, 1969), 97.

15. Land Records in possession of Merylyn Osterlund, Huntsville, Alabama; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, T2SR5E, 60; Tumbling Rock Cave notes, July 18, 1982, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

16. Ibid., July 18, 1982, January 27, March 3, 1990; 1860 Census, Jackson, 3rd Dist., 18, 62; T2SR5E, 60; Pauline Jones Gandrud, Alabama Records (245 vols., Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1981), CXLIV, 97; Boyd, Hudson, and Barbee files, Citizens Papers. William Gideon owned land south of Scottsboro, and Hiram J. Houston, who lived about a mile east of the cave, on September 16, 1862, became a private in Company C, 4th (Russell's) Alabama Cavalry, CSA. Elisabeth Houston was apparently Hiram J.'s wife. J. B. Stephens was a farmer and may be the same man who enlisted as a corporal in Colonel Lemuel G. Mead's Cavalry, CSA, January 18, 1864. Osterlund, land records; Compiled Service Records, RG109, NA.

17. 1860 Census, Ala., Madison, 1st Dist., 60; Jackson, T3SR5E, 25; T4SR6E, 36; Huntsville Southern Advocate, July 21, 1859; Scottsboro Progressive Age, June 26, 1890; Barbee genealogical data from Ann B. Chambless, Scottsboro, Alabama, January 3, 1986.

18. Annie Coleman Proctor notes and Jackson County Probate Records supplied by Ann B. Chambless, January 3, 1986, and November 11, 1989; Compiled Service Records, RG109, NA; Personal communication from William W. Torode, Huntsville. Thompson Houston (b. c1835) was a brother to Hiram J. John Teeters (b. c1844) was the son of Isaac Teeters who owned land adjacent to the Sanders's property. Tradition indicates that John moved to Fayette County, Mississippi. Letter from Ann B. Chambless, November 11, 1989.

19. Tumbling Rock Cave notes, July 18, 1982, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

20. Jennie B. Thornton file, Alabama Confederate Widow's Pension Application, Alabama Archives, Montgomery; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, T2SR7E, 73, 77; Tombstone Inscriptions, Big Coon Valley; Census or Enumeration of Confederate Soldiers Residing in Jackson County, Alabama, 1907, No. 236; Copy of Ira Thornton to Thomas M. Owen, June 9, 1910, in Burton Faust Papers, Western Kentucky University, Bowling Green. McCrary owned land in the Narrows NNE of Matthews Cove. Osterlund, land records.

21. Jennie B. Thornton file, Confederate Pension Application.

22. Alabama Cave Survey; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, T2SR6E, 64; Osterlund,

land records.

23. Alabama Cave Survey; Pseudo Lava Caves notes, January 30, 1983, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

24. Alabama Cave Survey; Steele Saltpeter Cave notes, August 30, 1981, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

25. Jennie B. Thornton file, Confederate Pension Application.

26. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, T2SR6E, 66; Osterlund, land records; Alabama Cave Survey.

27. Ibid.; Devers Cove Saltpeter Cave notes, October 23, 1982, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

28. James F. Sulzby, Jr., Birmingham As It Was in Jackson County, Alabama (Birmingham, Ala.: Birmingham Printing Company, 1944), 28; Alabama Cave Survey.

29. Eliza B. Woodall, The Stevenson Story (Collegedale, Tenn.: The College Press, 1982), 488; Alabama Cave Survey.

30. Ibid.; Blue River Cave Notes, September 19, 1982, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

31. Ibid.

32. Alabama Cave Survey; Newby and Hill and K. H. Newby files, Citizens Papers; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 1st Div., 84; Long Island Saltpeter Cave notes, January 13, 1980, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

33. The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies. 70 vols. in 128 books (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Ser. 1, XXX, passim.

34. Ibid., Ser. 1, XXX, Pt. III, 339, 341.

35. Ibid., 374; James P. Drouillard diary in William S. Rosecrans Papers, University of California at Los Angeles.

36. Long Island Saltpeter Cave notes, February 10, 1973, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

37. Alabama Cave Survey; Suzanne Colton Wilson, compiler, Column South with the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry (Flagstaff, Ariz.: Northland Press, 1960), 85-86.

38. Long Island Saltpeter Cave notes, February 10, 1973, and January 13, 1980, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

39. Official Records, Ser. 1, XXX, Pt. I, 40.

40. Ezra R. Warner, Generals in Blue (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1964), 410-11.

41. John Fitch, Annals of the Army of the Cumberland (Philadelphia, 1864), 47; J. B. Williston's Directory of the City of Cleveland (1859-60), 90; Compiled Service Record, RG94, NA; Trow's New York City Directory (1870), 417, 1163; Francis B. Heitman, Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army (2 vols., Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1903), I, 461; Goddard to Garfield, February 14, 1865, July 18, 1868, March 12, 1870, James A. Garfield Papers, Library of Congress; New York Tribune, April 6, 1892.

42. Compiled Service Records, RG94, NA; Pension Records, Record Group 15, National Archives.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Compiled Service Records, RG94, NA; Nashville Daily Press and Times, March 6, 1868.

46. Pension Records, RG15, NA.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Fitch, Annals, 346-51; Official Records, Ser. 1, XXX, Pt. I, 183; Nash-

ville Daily Press, August 25, 1863; Nashville Republican Banner, November 30, 1867.

50. Pension Records, RG15, NA.

51. Compiled Service Records, RG94, NA.

52. Pension Records, RG15, NA.

53. Louisville Daily Journal, September 19, 1863.

54. Alabama Cave Survey.

55. Fabius Cave notes, September 4, 1982, in possession of Marion O. Smith. There were at least two Huph P. Capertons in the Stevenson area. The elder (September 30, 1804-April 22, 1865) was 1st lieutenant, Company A, 18th Alabama Battalion Infantry, CSA, from June 12, 1862. His service record indicates he was killed at the battle of Chickamauga September 20, 1863, and his gravestone states he was murdered by Union soldiers. The younger (b. c1827) as well as John F. Caperton (b. c1840) in April, 1861, became privates in Company G, 7th Alabama Infantry, CSA, and on June 12, 1862, they also joined Company A, 18th Alabama Battalion. John F. surrendered at Stevenson May 13, 1865. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 1st Div., 126, 132; Gandrud, Alabama Records, CXLIV, 66; Compiled Service Records, RG109, NA.

56. Osterlund, land records; Kash and Cox and Gardner and Allison files, Citizens Papers; Tombstone inscription, Smith Cemetery, Sand Mountain.

57. Alabama Cave Survey; J. M. Borin file, Citizens papers; Stevenson Sheet (topographic map), edition of 1895.

58. "Walker's Saltpeter Cave," Georgia Spelunker, I (November-December, 1957), 6.

59. Coon Creek Saltpeter Cave notes, February 6, 1983, September 9, 1989, in possession of Marion O. Smith. Before the war two Highfield families lived atop Sand Mountain in the vicinity of the Jackson-DeKalb county line. Other Highfields lived in several Georgia counties, including Paulding day laborer H. Highfield (b. c1814). According to family lore, John Wesley Igou (1847-1917), the great-grandfather of National Speleological Society member Robert L. "R.B." West of Prattville, Alabama, during the Civil War worked at more than one Sand Mountain area saltpeter cave. One of the caves is thought to be Coon Creek. Before the war Igou resided in the north DeKalb community of McCammac and remained on Sand Mountain all his life. He is buried at Pine Grove Church near Sylvania. 1860 Census, Ala., DeKalb, Northern Div., 11, 17; Ga., Paulding, 832nd Dist., 43; Conversations with "R.B." West, May 5, 8, 1990.

60. J. M. Borin file, Citizens Papers. It is not known if or how J. M. Borin was kin to John D. Borin.

61. Letters from John W. Gant, Pisgah, Alabama, July 12, 19, 1989; Phone conversation with John W. Gant, July 17, 1989; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 1st Div., 34, 92, 115, 122.

62. Confederate Payrolls; J. M. Wheeler file, Citizens Papers.

63. Alabama Cave Survey.

64. Ibid.; Saltpeter Cave notes, March 18, 1981, in possession of Marion O. Smith; Kittye V. Henshaw and others, Paint Rock Valley Pioneers (n.p., 1986), 43; Osterlund, land records; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 4th Dis., 6.

65. John R. Kennamer, "Jackson County's Civil War Industry," Scottsboro Progressive Age, November 3, 1927.

66. L. C. Shook file, Citizens Papers; Henshaw, Paint Rock Valley Pioneers, 143; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 4th Div., 23. Both Leroy and Live Shook were privates in Mead's Cavalry regiment, the former in Company D and the latter in Company A. In 1877 Levi C. Shook bought 160 acres on the Cumberland Plateau in T3SR4E, Section 12, northeast of Slipoff Hollow and north of Pole Branch. Compiled Service Records, RG109, NA; Osterlund, land records.

67. Hall, Foster, and Harrison and Mett and Sanders files, Citizens Papers; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 1st Div., 34; Christine P. Sumner, Compiler, Jackson County Alabama Records (2 vols., Scottsboro, Ala., 1971-72), II, 38; Jackson County Probate Minute Book B, 179; Jennie B. Thornton Confederate Pension Application.

68. Cowley and McLemore file, Citizens Papers; Confederate Payrolls; Letter from Ann B. Chambless, April 5, 1986.

69. Letter from Robert Crumley, Fort Payne, Alabama, March 18, 1986; Pension Records, RG15, NA; Thomas Latham file, Citizens Papers; Alabama Cave Survey; Beehive Cave notes, March 28, 1986, in possession of Marion O. Smith.

70. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 49; Confederate Payrolls; B. F. Cowley file, Citizens Papers; John R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Department of Archives and History, Atlanta.

71. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 54; S. C. Loyd file, Citizens Papers; Compiled Service Records, Captain Young's Company, Nitre and Mining Corps, RG109, NA.

72. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 1st Div., 32; Scottsboro Alabama Herald, May 27, 1875; New Orleans Daily Picayune, May 17, 1861; John D. Borin file, Citizens Papers.

73. Huntsville Confederate, May 28, 1863; John D. Borin file, Citizens Papers.

74. Ibid.; J. R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Archives; Alabama Cave Survey.

75. Ibid.

76. 1870 Census, Ala., Jackson, Scottsboro, 3; Scottsboro Jackson County Herald, July 29, 1869; Scottsboro Alabama Herald, May 27, 1875.

77. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 27; U.S. Official Register (1853), 310\*; (1855), 194\*; J. F. Martin file, Citizens Papers.

78. Confederate Payrolls; J. F. Martin file, Citizens Papers.

79. Ibid.

80. Ibid.; J. R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Archives.

81. J. F. Martin file, Citizens Papers; Unfiled Papers and Slips, William Gabbett, Record Group 109, National Archives.

82. J. R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Archives.

83. J. F. Martin file, Citizens Papers.

84. Ibid.

85. Gandrud, Alabama Records, XIX, 96; 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 9; Confederate Payrolls; Letter from Ann B. Chambless, January 1, 1990; G. S. Woodall file, Citizens Papers.

86. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, R4SR6E, 14; Confederate Payrolls; J. R. Hopkins Papers, Georgia Archives.

87. 1860 Census, Ala., Jackson, 3rd Dist., 48, 49, 51, 33; T4SR5E, 54; (1870), 3rd Subdiv., 30, 40; Tombstone inscriptions, Gross Cemetery, Jackson County; Confederate Payrolls; Letter from Ann B. Chambless, April 5, 1986; Osterlund, land records.

88. Smith, "Sauta Cave Niter Works," 314; Boyd, Hudson and Barbee, Newby and Hill, Kash and Cox, Mett and Sanders, Cowley and McLemore, Hall, Foster, and Harrison, K. H. Newby, Thomas Latham, Gardner and Allison, J. M. Borin, J. M. Wheeler, and John D. Borin files, Citizens Papers; Alabama Cave Survey.

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