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Front Cover

Lower entrance to Williams Canyon, in Manitou Springs, Colorado. Photo taken in the early 1950s by Bill Bowers for the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce.

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The Journal of Spelean History

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THAT MUCH-DISCOVERED CAVE

Who Actually Found Cave of the Winds?

by Donald G. Davis

The Cave of the Winds - Colorado's nationally known show cave - was discovered on June 26, 1880, by schoolboys John and George Pickett during a hike led by the Reverend Roselle T. Cross, then pastor of the Congregational Church in Colorado Springs. Such is the traditional account of the first entry into this famous cave, and the version accepted in the great majority of publications that mention the history of the cave. This story is recounted many times each day by tour guides at the cave and immortalized by a carved stone relief displayed in front of the gift shop. It is repeated in the cave's current information booklet, *The Cave of the Winds: God's Underground Gift to Colorado* (Graphic Services, 1985), and even in a 1986 television program, "Silent Splendor," about the uncovering of a remarkable new passage.

On the face of it, there would seem to be little reason to question this simple and rather appealing story, which through a century of repetition has gained status as a minor canon among popular ideas of the history of the Pikes Peak region. Nevertheless, connoisseurs of cave history have long known it is the focus of a lengthy and complicated controversy. Did the Picketts really make a discovery? Basic accounts of the problem have appeared in two books, William R. Halliday's *Adventure Is Underground* (Harper, 1959) and Lloyd E. Parris' *Caves of Colorado* (Pruett, 1973). These discussions, however, rely on few sources, and their interpretations are correspondingly limited (and, in some details, inaccurate). It is still not possible to resolve the dispute with any dramatic revelation, but there are many other sources - some neglected for a hundred years or more - that tell us much about the true roles of various claimants in the controversy.

As for the classic Pickett trip, there is no doubt that it did happen exactly as claimed. Within days of the event, Cross wrote an admirably detailed report in his church newsletter, the *Congregational News*, for July 1880. This was immediately reprinted, unchanged except for headlines, in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* of July 2. Since this document is basic to our subject and is the earliest descriptive account of the cave, I will reprint it here in its entirety:

GRAND DISCOVERY

A WONDERFUL AND BEAUTIFUL CAVE

THE FINEST IN THE ROCKY MOUNTAINS

MAGNIFICENT STALACTITES

ANOTHER ATTRACTION FOR MANITOU

The first trip of the Boys' Exploring Association was a grand success and a great surprise to themselves and everybody else. It resulted in the discovery of the most beautiful cave, so far as we know, in Colorado of the Rocky Mountains. It was discovered in William's[sic] Canon, on Saturday, June 26th. The discovering party was led by Rev. R. T. Cross, and consisted of

the following boys: Geo. Pickett and Bertie Peck, assistant leaders; John Pickett, Harry Johnson, Geo. Neal, Arthur Tuthill, Bertie Cone and Lathrop Hill. They set out with the aim of exploring the Canon as fully as possible. They took candles, thinking that they might visit the old cave, but thinking the charges of the guide too high for their means, they passed on and discovered a cave of their own, one that far eclipses the old one, that being in the main only an extended crevice, theirs being a genuine cave with large rooms and wonderful stalactites. [The "old cave" - then called Mammoth Cave, now Huccacove - had been found by quarrymen on the east side of Williams Canyon and opened to visitors about April of 1875. Cross elsewhere describes the proprietor in 1880 as a "half drunken man who demanded fifty cents each for seeing the cave or fissure." As a show cave it did not long survive the opening of the more attractive Cave of the Winds.]

As they passed up the Canon the leader sent the assistant leaders in charge of several boys to explore crevices and openings up the sides of the Canon. While one party was doing this, John and George Pickett found their way up an almost inaccessible path and discovered the entrance to the cave which in honor of them will be known as *Pickett's Cave*.

Coming back and informing the rest of the party they all with great difficulty made the ascent, lighted their candles and began to explore. Creeping through the narrow opening they found themselves in the first chamber, about ten feet long and four feet high. Then crawling through a narrow crevice for twenty or thirty feet they entered another chamber of considerable size, to the right and left of which were beautiful grottos, each about twenty feet long and fifteen high. The one at the left contained beautiful folds of stalactite, appearing like curtains one behind the other. Going forward they entered another room still larger with some small but beautiful grottos.

Going forward still further they entered a chamber of wonderful beauty, very irregular in shape but about sixty feet high. To the left were immense masses of stalactite matter, as though a river had flowed into the cavern and suddenly frozen as it was leaping down in successive cascades. The peculiar curtain or drapery-like form of the stalactites it is impossible to describe. As the eye follows this frozen river of lime up the side of the cavern it finally rests upon a long and large stalactite just discernible in the gloom of the upper-most dome. At the right of this room there is a high room forty feet long, at the end of which is a small passage full of fine stalactites. This leads to a huge well forty or fifty feet deep. To what beautiful rooms this may lead is not yet known. At this point a very fine double stalactite was obtained for the cabinet of Colorado College.

Retracing their steps they followed the main course until they came to a steep descent of eight feet. Climbing down this they were in a small room which at first seemed to be the terminus of the cave. But they soon found a narrow passage extending upwards at an angle of about 45°, the bottom of which was completely covered with a smooth stalactite formation. Scrambling up this passage they discovered an upright chimney four feet in diameter and some forty feet or more in height. At the foot of the chimney two narrow passage-ways lead off - no one knows where. That they lead to

other rooms could easily be seen and was also proved by the strong current of air that came from them, nearly extinguishing the candles. The chimney and these passages contain fine stalactites. From this point the explorers returned to the mouth of the cave, from which with exceedingly great difficulty they made their way to the bottom of the canon.

The temperature of the cave was so low that a person's breath congealed as on a winter's morning. The only inhabitants of the cave found were two large fat rats and a bat. Future explorers are requested not to kill these animals and are also requested to leave undisturbed the beautiful stalactite formations.

The cave is very difficult of access, the approach being very steep and somewhat dangerous. On Monday, June 28th, President Tenney of Colorado College visited the cave in company with Rev. R. T. Cross, and fully confirms the account given above. Specimens from the cave can be seen at Ratliff's Museum. They were secured for Colorado College.

Rev. W. D. Westervelt, at Manitou, will have charge of the cave, and will take parties to it. The fees paid him will be used for the new church at Manitou.

On January 21, 1985, with permission of the Cave of the Winds management, I took a copy of Cross's report into the long-disused lower part of the cave, and verified the accuracy of his description step by step. It was easy to match with the cave, and many of the features mentioned, including the large stalactite in a dome, are still intact. Like most inexperienced cavers, Cross exaggerated somewhat the heights and depths of his vertical elements, but his account is refreshingly free of the florid Victorian hyperbole typical of most cave descriptions of that time. Cross and his Boys' Exploring Association penetrated most of the horizontal passage accessible from the original entrance - only about 200 feet, but respectable for schoolboys using candles. Just inside the entrance I found many old signatures, the oldest legible being "Chas. Marsh/July 5th 1880" - evidence of the local interest aroused by Cross's report, which had appeared in the *Gazette* only three days before.

One month later, Cross brought his readers up to date on the progress in Pickett's Cave:

The account that we gave in our last number of the discovery of this cave has been copied by many other papers. Some people doubted its truthfulness, but not those who visited the cave. What we wrote then was all true but it was not the whole truth, for the cave has since been explored to twice the distance reached by the first discoverers, and rooms found that surpass in beauty any that we had seen a month ago. It was found that the cave was on land belonging to the Heminway [sic] Bros., and accordingly the discoverers relinquished all claim to it. It was put in charge of the Boynton Bros. and Charles Cross, all of Manitou. These parties have spent about one hundred dollars in opening it, putting in ropes, ladders, etc., and are now prepared to take people through it at one dollar each. We feel sure that those who love to see the beautiful and curious and grand will feel amply repaid for the trouble and cost of visiting it. We have explored the parts that we had not seen a month ago, and will give a brief supplementary description of them.

Branching off from the upper part of the largest room of which we spoke before, another chamber was discovered, running back a long distance. One part of it is named the Lady's Boudoir. We can give no adequate idea of the beauty of the stalactites found here. One is over three feet long. Another is very slender and graceful, being over two feet long and only a half inch in diameter at the top. Others are attached to the rock at both ends. When struck with the fingers they give forth beautiful music, so many different tones that a tune can be easily played on them. A number of these stalactites were broken off by some vandal who broke into the cave Sunday, July 25. The narrow opening beyond which we did not go at first has been blasted so that a man can easily get through. As soon as you are through it you enter a room over 200 feet long, of varying widths and in some places about seventy feet high. To the left there is a precipice of about fifteen feet, beyond which there is a room containing magnificent stalactite formations. To the right there is a precipice of about forty feet. It has been dug out so that with the help of a rope one can easily get down. A number of beautiful rooms branch off to the right. About twenty feet up the wall of one of them there is one of the finest groups of stalactites in the cave. Instead of being straight they are turned and twisted into the most fantastic shapes. Going further you find other rooms, chambers, walls, pillars, etc., which we have not time to describe. In the farthest recesses of the cave are found specimens of flowering alabaster, or gypsum. In some places there are beds of pebbles covered with stalactite encrustations. The pebbles were probably washed into the cave when Williams Canon was an inlet of the sea. Beach pebbles are found in some of the open caves of the canon two hundred feet up the walls. [Modern geologists interpret these pebbles differently; the sea had receded from the area long before the canyon and its caves existed. The pebbles were deposited in the caves by streams from the adjoining canyons before the canyons had been cut below the cave level.]

The opening to Pickett's Cave is in the large open gorge which has always been known as the Cave of the Winds. The members of the Boys' Association were all agreed in naming their cave Pickett's Cave. As they get no financial benefit from the discovery they ought not to be deprived of the privilege of naming it. We hope the proprietors of the cave and all our readers will call it by the name that the boys gave it. In conclusion we advise our readers to visit the cave. It is the equal of any of the attractions around Colorado Springs. (*Congregational News*, August 1880)

The section opened by blasting clearly corresponds with the lowest level of the cave, now known as Thieves' Canyon; but it was the se-called "Lady's Boudoir" passage which would later be the key to the more impressive upper levels.

From the beginning, Cross was jealously possessive of his party's status as discoverers. When in March of 1881 a *Gazette* reader claimed that the cave was not new, Cross responded emphatically that "it was perfectly evident that no human being had ever been in the cave, and that no stalactites had ever been broken off." This challenge turned out to be a false alarm - it was obvious that the reader had confused Pickett's Cave with the "old" (Mammoth) cave - but more serious ones were to come.

Meanwhile, George Washington Snider, a stonecutter who had recently moved from Ohio to Manitou, and his associates enter the story with further discoveries. Cross reports:

Charles Cross and the Boynton brothers of Manitou spent considerable money and time in opening up the cave, putting in ladders, etc., but never received enough to pay for the trouble. During the fall this part of the cave was left open and stripped of nearly all its beautiful specimens.

Two of the boys who were among the first discoverers found, on one of their visits to the cave, a crooked chimney nearly filled with stalactite matter. In January of this year Mr. Reinhart [sic] and the Snyder [sic] brothers of Manitou were exploring the same chimney when they found at its upper end a small hole through which, with great difficulty, the smallest of the party worked himself and soon emerged into a very large room nearly 200 feet long, containing thousands upon thousands of stalactites and stalagmites. . . (*Congregational News*, March 1881).

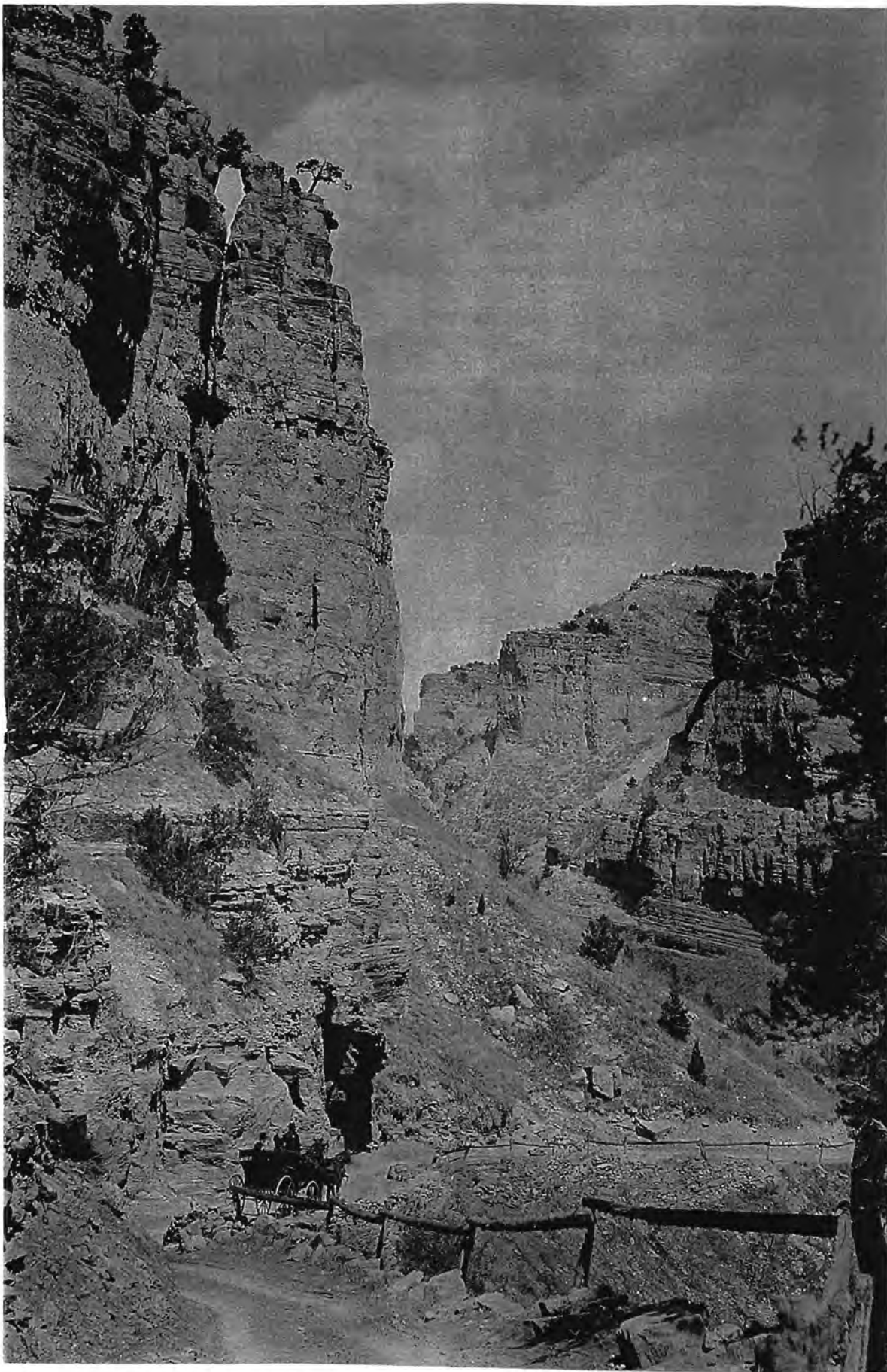
Snider named this room Canopy Hall. His party made the mistake of talking about the find in Manitou, whereupon a mob swarmed into the cave the following day and stripped many of the stalactites. Though the damage dismayed Snider, it had not discouraged him from signing on January 29, 1881, in partnership with Charles Rinehart, a contract to purchase the cave land from Frank Hemenway. In February the partners reopened the cave after finding a series of new and attractive chambers beyond Canopy Hall. This time the developments did pay off, and the Cave of the Winds quickly became one of the established attractions of the young Manitou resort. In 1895 a tunnel was opened directly into Canopy Hall and the "Pickett's Cave" and Cross/Boynton levels were closed off from the standard tours.

On June 9, 1881, Snider had also dug into another equally impressive cave on the west side of the ridge, whose entrance he believed to lie on a tract of land he had filed on in his own name. In March of 1885 after receiving title to the land, he opened this "Manitou Grand Caverns" to visitors and operated it as sole proprietor



STAIRWAY TO ORIGINAL ENTRANCE OF CAVE OF THE WINDS

COURTESY OF CAVE OF THE WINDS



HORSE DRAWN CARRIAGE IN WILLIAMS CANYON
FROM AN OLD ADVERTISING PHOTO

in competition with Cave of the Winds. This brought to a climax growing differences between the two partners and in 1885 Rinehart sued Snider for control of the caves. In 1895, after Rinehart's death, his estate was granted a one-half interest in the Grand Caverns; in 1896 Snider, faced with family debts, turned over its operation to his brother Charles and left Manitou. (The Grand Caverns operation was closed after Snider's departure; sources give shut-down dates ranging from 1896 to 1916, but 1906 is the most probable year of its final closure. It was later connected, by digging, with Cave of the Winds.)

In further family transactions and legal actions not settled until 1905, Snider lost his ownership in both caves to Rinehart's heirs, and other members of Snider's own family. The details of this contention are extremely complicated and would be a great digression from our story. Suffice it to say that Snider felt he had been defrauded, and moved to California in 1900, nursing a deeply smoldering resentment.

During all this time, historians seem to have accepted the Pickett/Cross party of 1880 as the original discoverers of Cave of the Winds (e.g., Frank Hall, *History of the State of Colorado* [Chicago, 1891], 3:377). One of them (Percy Turner in his 1895 *History of Manitou's Caves*) even purports to quote George Snider himself as telling his companions after the Canopy Hall find that "the cave was discovered some time ago by two brothers, John and George Pickett, who . . . undertook to climb the mountain we have just left. At that time there was no trail there and no one had ever tried to climb it." (This "quotation," published fourteen years after the conversation that supposedly included it, was obviously invented.)

The cave's operators, however, refused to call it Pickett's Cave - a nagging annoyance to Cross, who repeatedly published protests of this disregard of discoverers' rights. (This rejection of the name was, I think, inevitable - whatever the commemorative merits of the appellation "Pickett's Cave," it lacked the flair needed for a commercial cave.)

A more serious conflict finally emerged in 1916, when the embittered George Snider, then about sixty-five years old, published a booklet - *How I Found the Cave of the Winds*. Having been deprived of his caves and the wealth he had expected from them, he seems to have resolved at least to appeal for public recognition of what he felt to be his rightful place in history. However, his estranged brother, Oliver Perry Snider, then managing the cave, refused to allow the book's sale there. George thereupon wrote an addendum putting forth his grievances against the usurpers of his rights, the expanded version being titled *How I Found and How I Lost the Cave of the Winds and Manitou Grand Caverns*.

Despite the discovery claim implicit in his title, Snider seems to have been more concerned with discrediting the claims of the Picketts and the Reverend Mr. Cross, whom he blamed



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of Onyx, Calcite and
Flowering Alabaster found in
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Easily reached over a beautiful
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as ringleaders in the despoliation of Canopy Hall. He introduces a sequence of several prior claims not hitherto published:

In the fall of 1879, soon after I came to Manitou, I made the first of these excursions up Williams Canon, at which time I formed the acquaintance of one Tom Green, the owner of the lime kilns at the Narrows, from whom I first learned about the caves high up in the cliffs.

Mammoth Cave was the best known of these, being the largest of the several that up to that time had been discovered and located high up in the cliff above the Narrows. From this Green was earning a little revenue on the side by charging an admittance fee of 50 cents.

A visit to this cave awakened an interest which led to my making some exploration on my own account believing that if a larger cave could be found my fortune would be made. During that winter of 1879 and 1880 I effected an entrance into all the holes I could find in the walls of the canon, among them the original entrance to what was even then known as the Cave of the Winds, an appellation bestowed upon it, I afterward learned, by a local photographer, James Thurlow by name, who had taken a number of views of the mountains thereabout, some years before, including this entrance.

The cave as I then found it consisted of but two or three bare and unattractive rooms on the lower level. I found names inscribed on the walls bearing dates as far back as 1872. Unfortunately, many of these names have been obliterated in some subsequent blasting made necessary in enlarging the opening and clearing the way of the debris.

Inquiry developed the further fact that a man by the name of Charles Cross, one of the early settlers in this region, claimed to have entered this cave in 1874, and for a time it was referred to as Charlie Cross's Cave.

Another story gives the credit of discovery to the Pickett boys, George and John, who found the entrance in 1880; but as I myself was in this little old cave in 1879, and found by the names and dates inscribed on the walls that there had been others there before me, it is clear that their happening upon the same cave cannot be called a discovery.

Snider supplements these revelations about this "much discovered cave" with a notarized affidavit, dated 1915, by pioneer Arthur B. Love, who had originally preempted the property for its timber. Love stated that he "found the cave and . . . went in about fifty or seventy-five feet" with his brothers Robert F. and William A. Love in 1871 or 1872. He declared that "if anyone had ever been there before there was no sign of it, for . . . there was no trail and I had to cut a way through."

In 1921, Cross, then seventy-seven, had been living in Ohio for the last eleven years when a copy of Snider's booklet came to his attention. Incensed, he promptly wrote his own pamphlet vigorously defending his party's discovery. This was printed in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* of July 31, 1921. The core of Cross's argument was as follows:

George W. Snyder [sic] claims that he discovered the Cave of the Winds at Manitou . . . I claim, however, with the utmost confidence, that I and some of my Sunday school boys discovered that cave, June 26, 1880 . . .

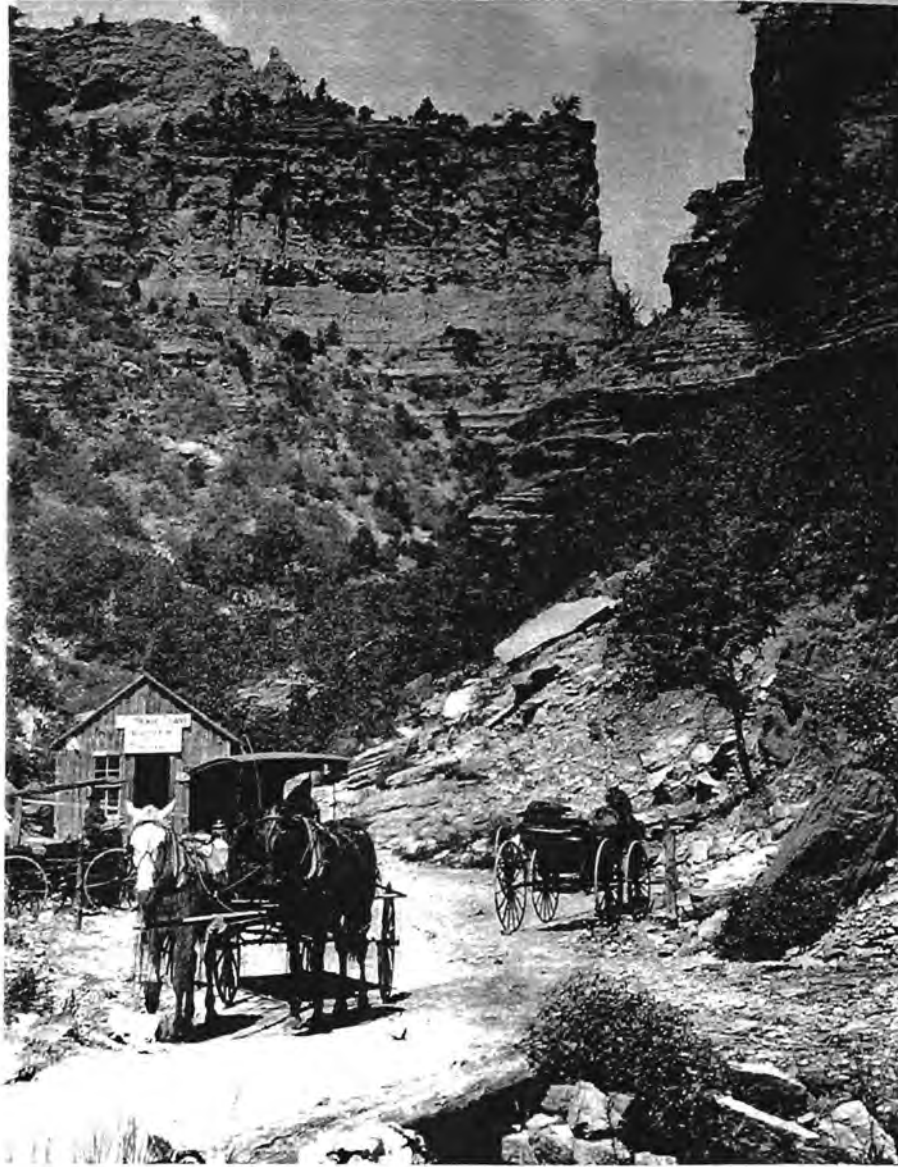
The story of what we found and how we found it I carefully wrote out within a few days and published it in the July number of my paper, *The Congregational News*, a copy of which lies before me as I write No one then questioned our discovery. Some one wrote from Trinidad that he had known of the cave, but evidently he had in mind the large fissure near the Narrows, or else the open gorge under a sort of natural bridge, in which gorge we found our entrance. I have stereoscopic pictures of that gorge and bridge taken by J. Thurlow. He or some one had called it The Cave of the Winds, the name finally given to the cave itself. I officiated at Mr. Thurlow's funeral December 26, 1878. His wife continued his business under his name and those pictures may have been taken after his death and after our discovery.

Two days after our discovery I took President Tenney of Colorado College to see what we had found. He was the first person besides the boys and myself to enter the cave. He always gave me the credit for the discovery. So did the people of Colorado Springs and Manitou at that time. So does Who's Who in America. So practically does Hovey in his book on "American Caverns," published in 1882. So did Ernest Ingersoll, the nature writer, in a leading magazine [*Century*, July 1882]. So do several of my books in which I tell the true story, the last of which, on "The Mountains," has just been published in Boston. . . .

A most significant and conclusive fact is that the owners of the cave, Rinehart, and Snyder himself, during the nine years that I remained in Colorado, and also in later years, gave me the freedom of the cave, never asking of me an admission fee. Also they honored my request in writing to admit free any special friend whom I sent them, a privilege that I used sparingly. They also admitted free the boys who were with me in the discovery. And these favors were in recognition that we had discovered the cave.

If Mr. Snyder was in the cave in the winter of 1879-80, as he asserts on pages 6 and 7 of his pamphlet, it is strange that he did not tell of it before we found the cave, and especially after we found it and the fact was creating so much interest. I heard no echo then of any such claims. He may possibly have been in that open gorge in which we found the opening. He says, on page 7, that the cave as he found it consisted of two or three bare and unattractive rooms, but when we found it in June, 1880, a few months after he claims to have been in it, we easily, and without ropes or ladders, found four or five rooms. . . . that contained many fine stalactites. . . .

Mr. A. B. Love, according to Snyder's pamphlet, claims to have been in the cave in 1871 or 1872, and that the opening could be seen from his cabin in the canon. The open gorge could be thus seen but hardly the opening to the cave. If he did enter the first rooms of the cave, which I doubt, and saw what we saw in those rooms, it is strange that nothing came of it, and that the people in Manitou eight years later knew nothing of it. There were Norse colonies in Greenland and further south 500 years before Columbus, but they perished and nothing came of them. Nevertheless Columbus discovered America and he will never lose the credit of it. He made it known to the old world.



ORIGINAL TICKET OFFICE, WILLIAMS CANYON, EARLY 1900S

COURTESY OF CAVE OF THE WINDS

Mr. Snyder discovered many more rooms in the cave than we found. . . . I have always given credit to Mr. Snyder for his extension discoveries in the cave. They were fine and are the glory of the cave today. The credit for them should satisfy him. Why at a late date should he try to deprive those Sunday School boys and myself of the credit for discovering the cave at first? The credit is rightly ours, and I shall assert it and contend for it as long as I live or can speak and write. . . .

Since writing the above, I find in one of my numerous scrapbooks a Guide Book, referred to on page 6 of Mr. Snyder's pamphlet and spoken of as his work. [Here Cross seems to misunderstand - Snider refers to his advertising matter for Manitou Grand Caverns, not to the guidebook Cross describes.] It is a booklet of 32 pages, in which is the fullest description of the cave I have ever seen. It occupies about one-half of the book, which describes all objects of interest about Manitou. It was printed by The Daily Republic of Colorado Springs. It was published by Charles Rinehart for Rinehart and Snider, the owners of the cave. It is not dated, but was evidently issued before the Midland railroad was built, or the Cog road, or the A. T. & S. F., thru Colorado Springs. On page 16 it says:

"This cave was discovered by John and George Pickett on the 26th of June, 1880. These boys were the sons of Rev. J. W. Pickett, deceased. They were out exploring under the direction of Rev. R. T. Cross, now of Denver. It has been greatly enlarged by the present owners but we wish to put on record that these young men were first to bring to light the Cave of the Winds."

The headline writer for Cross's rebuttal remarked that "what Mr. Snyder will say on reading Dr. Cross's article is material for another story." Unfortunately, this story was never to be written. George Snider had died in Los Angeles on June 26, 1921 - forty-one years to the day after the Picketts' famous outing. So, which of the conflicting claims are credible? Who really did discover Cave of the Winds?

Some authors (e.g., Harry Johnson in the *Colorado Springs Gazette-Telegraph* of July 30, 1929) assert that the Indians knew (and even named) the cave. That they visited the entrance is probable, but no historic Indian has been recorded as being there at any given time, nor have any artifacts established their presence in the cave.

Arthur Love had no apparent emotional involvement with the cave, and I see no reason to distrust his sworn statement that he entered it. It is likewise hard to believe that while Manitou was being populated in the 1870s at least a few other people did not venture into the cave. But if they had, could Cross honestly conclude, as he maintained in 1881, that "it was perfectly evident that no human being had ever been in the cave?"

A clue may lie in the second part of Cross's statement, in which he declared that "no stalactites had ever been broken off." Although Cross had requested his readers in 1880 to "leave undisturbed the beautiful stalactite formations," he himself did not set a good example in this respect. He was in fact an avid mineral collector and dealer. He repeatedly advertised selections of Colorado minerals in his newsletter, for one dollar postpaid, a standard item being "Stalactite from Pickett's Cave." In December of 1881 a more lucrative sale was reported: "The large specimen of flowering alabaster from Pickett's Cave, which had been left at Pike's Peak Museum, in Colorado Springs, was bought by Mr. Rinehart for \$25. The proceeds are used to help pay the church debts."

In a later work, Cross expresses more explicitly his ambivalent attitude about cave decorations:

Speaking of caves, how tantalizing it is to visit one and go through room after room that is covered with fine specimens and not be permitted to take even a poor one! Of course it is all right, for the finest cave would soon be stripped if each visitor took away one specimen. But what a pleasure it would be if one could help himself to anything he saw, and go out loaded down with specimens! Not many collectors have had such a privilege. I have had it and in the next chapter I propose to tell about it . . . when everybody was helping himself to the contents of the [Cave of the Winds], I came out of it again and again with all the stalactites I could well carry. It was a pity so to despoil some of its rooms, but as long as it was being done and I could not stop it I thought I had as good a right as anyone to the specimens. (*Crystals and Gold* [Nebraska Newspaper Union, 1903], 77, 82)

It is apparent from this that Cross may have taken it for granted that anyone finding the cave would have made their mark by looting the decorations. Certainly many did before the cave was guarded. Yet, despite the rudimentary conservation ethics of the nineteenth century, it is possible that the cave had had early visitors who, either from disinterest or moral scruples, refrained from laying waste the stalactites. Furthermore, in the dim light of candles, Cross's party could have overlooked the early signatures mentioned by Snider. Finally, modern cavers observe that, if months or years elapse between visits to near-entrance areas of caves, footprints in floor earth are often wiped out by water influx and the actions of rodents and other cave life. Thus, Cross's opinion, however innocently held, cannot be accepted as conclusive evidence that the cave was virgin.

It is also possible that earlier visitors went southwest from the entrance chamber, up into a small blind room. The Picketts' route turned northwest through a hands-and-knees crawl before opening into larger rooms. (The detritus that floored this constriction was mined out to make a walkway when the cave was developed, but the original floor line is clearly visible on the walls.)

George Pickett, interviewed years after the trip (*Gazette*, April 30, 1908), said that "we had to break stalactites and stalagmites to enter the mouth . . .," but this is unlikely, since no such obstacle was mentioned in Cross's original accounts.

Whatever may have been the status of the interior of the cave, and whether or not there was a trail to it in 1880 (stories differ on this point), Cross overreaches in suggesting that the Thurlow photos of the Cave of the Winds entrance "gorge" might have been taken by James Thurlow's widow after Cross's trip, thereby casting doubt on which name for the cave came first. Here Cross seems to forget that he himself had earlier said that the "gorge" had "always been known as the Cave of the Winds." Moreover, though the fact was apparently unknown to either Cross or Snider - and has also been overlooked by later historians - there is documentary proof that the entrance had been visited and named at least five years before 1880.

This proof is an engraving in *Harper's Weekly*, October 2, 1875, from sketches by John A. Randolph of scenes around Manitou Springs. One, captioned "The Cave of the Winds - Williams Canon," is a view out from the entrance. It is not known whether Randolph had actually visited the site (he might have worked from Thurlow's photograph), nor does the accompanying text mention the cave. Still, this is the earliest-known published reference to the cave, and establishes that "Cave of the Winds" is definitely an earlier name than

"Pickett's Cave." (Various writers have assumed - without citing any authority - that the cave was named for the winds that blow through it. But it is also possible that, as with "Mammoth Cave," it was named in imitation of a then-better-known eastern attraction. The other "Cave of the Winds" - a grotto behind Niagara Falls - had been featured by *Harper's Weekly* only three weeks earlier.)

The next-earliest-known reference is an August 3, 1876, Denver *Rocky Mountain News* article approximating an early-day hiker's guide to Williams Canyon, which mentions, among other attractions, both Mammoth Cave and Cave of the Winds by name, though giving no details. It directs the reader to walk up the canyon bed and return via the rims, where "there is a good trail along the summits on either side of the canon." This demonstrates that Williams Canyon must have seen significant numbers of sightseers at least four years before the Picketts' visit.

Cross also justified his discovery claim by making a sharp distinction between the "gorge" spanned by two natural arches - Thurlow's Cave of the Winds" - and "Pickett's Cave" proper, which he considered to begin with the crawlway at the back of this antechamber. However, the "open gorge" is clearly a partly unroofed chamber of the cave behind, and the innermost few feet of the outer grotto are beneath the "drip line" of the final overhang. In modern caving practice, this would require the inner regions to fall under the name Cave of the Winds already applied to the outer.

Notwithstanding the faults we may pick with Cross's claims, he raised one good question which remains unanswered: If George Snider really entered Cave of the Winds the year before the Boys' Exploring Association, why *did* Snider wait thirty-six years before challenging Cross's priority? There are many possible legitimate reasons. Perhaps Snider was simply not interested in such quibbling in his busier and more prosperous days. Probably he also understood that legendry is valuable to a commercial cave, and saw the Pickett story, whether true or not, as a pleasant little tale with which visiting families could identify. But reviewing the evidence, I suspect that Snider's belated claim to have beaten the Pickett party to the cave in 1879 ought not to be taken at face value.



REV. ROSELLE T. CROSS IN 1890

According to Snider's 1916 book, "the western part of Colorado was first my goal, but it was a time of great unrest among the Indian tribes . . . the warlike activities of the Utes, and more especially the now historic Meeker massacre, drove me from that section and in my wanderings I came to Manitou in the fall of 1879" (The Meeker massacre occurred in late September of 1879; tensions remained high in October.)

However, an earlier biography of Snider (in Hall's *History of Colorado*) gives a rather different account of his whereabouts at that time: "In the fall of 1879 he came to Colorado, and in December following engaged with the Denver & Rio Grande railroad company, in the construction of their stone work on the branch from Antonito to Espanola, N. M. Feb. 2, 1880, he located in Manitou," adding that Snider "spent much time in prospecting (from 1879 to 1884) about Aspen, Ashcroft, Crested Butte and the Elk Mountains." All of this

does not absolutely prove he could not have visited Cave of the Winds in 1879; but with Ute-dodging, prospecting, and railroad work - all in distant places - one wonders where the caving time fits in. (This timing would not preclude Snider from having entered the cave between February and June of 1880 - later than he claimed, but still before Cross.)

We have already seen that Percy Turner, who asserted that his account was based on Snider's diary, gave Picketts priority; the same is true of Frank Hall. Do we have any early statement from Snider himself? The whereabouts of his diary are unknown, and the authorship of the guidebook attributed to Snider by Cross is questionable.

Possibly the closest thing available is a manuscript, dated 1886, among Hubert Howe Bancroft's papers. As background for his monumental history series, the historian and his assistants collected data from various people, including George Snider. The resulting document, though written anonymously in the third person, presumably reflects information direct from Snider thirty years earlier than his book. The manuscript calls Snider "discoverer" of Cave of the Winds (the only source except his book to do so) - yet nevertheless admits that the Pickett party had previously explored the first rooms, but places this event in 1879 (certainly an error) and Snider's arrival in Manitou in 1878, further confusing the issue.

There is a question, too, about Snider's motive for cave hunting. His book mentions only his desire to make his fortune through development, but Turner, Hall, and the Bancroft manuscript all aver that Snider was looking for stalactites to send to relatives and friends back east - the very vice for which he condemns Cross and the Picketts. This makes it still more questionable that Snider found the cave before Cross; if he had, we might expect that he would have removed enough stalactites that Cross would notice that the cave had been damaged.

Finally, Snider's book does not give us any specifics as to what he did or saw in the cave during his first winter in Manitou. He does mention an exploratory adventure wherein he plunged through a false floor over an abyss and had to be rescued by Lyman Boynton, his companion. His own book gives no date or location of this, but Turner says it took place "before the opening" (presumably meaning the Snider/Rinehart opening in February of 1881) and in Pillar Hall in the old part of the cave. Since Pillar Hall (which seems to be the old name for Thieves' Canyon) was blasted open only after the Cross/Pickett "discovery," this episode could only have occurred after June 1880, possibly during the Boyntons' abortive development attempt. (I have not determined whether Lyman Boynton was one of the Boynton brothers involved in the 1880 development effort. "Boynton brothers" storekeepers with the initials W. S. and F. E. are listed in Manitou directories of 1888 and 1892. In issues of the *Congregational News*, Lyman and Winfield S. Boynton are identified as being members of the Congregational Church.)

Thus, although proof is lacking, there is cause for skepticism that Snider actually preceded Cross into the cave. I find no persuasive evidence that Snider was other than one of many who became interested in the cave *after* Cross had publicized it. If this is true, did Snider simply err because of failing memory when he wrote - or did he knowingly fudge a little on his years to upstage the Pickett faction?

The cave itself remains cryptic on such questions. I have searched it for signatures but have found none dated earlier than the July 5, 1880, one which followed the *Gazette* account of the Pickett trip. Later ones are plentiful.

What, then, can we conclude about the roles of various claimants? Cross believed he had been vindicated after his 1921 defense, and wrote to Manly Ormes on November 21: "The

cave matter has been settled satisfactorily. The present Mr. [O. P.] Snider in charge of the cave concedes that his brother was wrong. They tell visitors that the cave was discovered by John and George Pickett under my leadership." (Considering the estrangement between George and O. P. Snider, I doubt if the latter had ever said otherwise.) When Cross died on November 18, 1924, newspaper headlines still eulogized him as "Cave of the Winds Discoverer."

Nevertheless, Arthur Love and his brothers, in 1871 or 1872, were probably the first white persons to enter the cave - but it is not certain whether, or how far, they penetrated past the open antechamber. Others probably made casual, unrecorded visits in the 1870s, and the antechamber had certainly been pictured and named (presumably by Thurlow) by 1875 - but there is no proof that any one penetrated the interior in that decade, though this is both possible and likely.

It remains possible, though unlikely, that on June 26, 1880, Cross and party were the first into the interior. Certainly they were the first to make a purposeful and assertive exploration and to document it satisfactorily. Cross was the most articulate of the actors in the cave's early history, and it was his publicity that precipitated the cave's rise to fame (at the cost of serious vandalism, some of it by himself). His *Congregational News* was a professionally printed, high-quality monthly newspaper, read by people of influence in the Pikes Peak region. As an amateur geologist, Cross also had connections in the scientific academic community; he brought the cave to the attention of pioneer cave authority Horace Hovey, who published the first scientific report on it in *Scientific American* on April 23, 1881.

Charles Cross and the Boynton brothers unquestionably discovered several hundred feet of virgin passage in the lower levels. Later accounts have underestimated their role in the cave's development; for instance, Hovey's classic *Celebrated American Caverns* (1882) - the first book to discuss Cave of the Winds - telescopes the history by omitting the entire Charles Cross/Boynton episode and saying that Snider dug into Canopy Hall from the same chimney found by the Picketts on their "discovery" trip. Snider's chimney was actually off the Boyntons' Lady's Boudoir passage about 100 feet to the north. Snider says Charles Cross claimed to have entered the cave in 1874, but this is not otherwise confirmed. The name "Charlie Cross's Cave," which Snider attributes to that time, would more logically have been applied in late 1880 when Charles Cross was trying to develop the cave. (Charles Cross, like the Boyntons, is also reported to have been a member of the Congregational Church - it is curious how often connections with this church turn up in early events at the cave. He, however, remained in the area many years after the minister departed, and I have found no indication that the two Crosses were related. Manitou directories list Charles Cross as a "hack driver"; 1885 census records show him as a native of England.)

As for George Snider, his own book negates his having truly "found" Cave of the Winds. But it is beyond doubt that he did discover more of its passages than any other person, and that his energy in exploration and development set the course for the cave's later history. Even Cross admitted in 1921 that Snider's "extension discoveries . . . were fine and are the glory of the cave today." The Manitou Grand Caverns find was his alone, notwithstanding a tall tale in which pioneer lawyer Billy Kimberly claimed to have witnessed a bizarre carousal, including dancing red devils, in the caverns in the 1860s (*Caves of Colorado* misleadingly treats this yarn as a serious discovery claim). Whatever may come to light concerning unresolved questions, George Snider is likely to remain the central figure in the history of the Cave of the Winds system.

The legacy of discovery and exploration in Cave of the Winds has been renewed in recent years as the management has permitted organized caving groups to do extensive mapping, scientific and historic examination, and dig out sediment plugs to reveal new passages - one of them, Silent Splendor, more beautifully decorated than the historic sections. Since January of 1982, about 4,400 feet of unknown or unsurveyed passage have been added to the system, which is now recognized as Colorado's second-longest surveyed cave with a total of about 9,100 feet mapped as of April 1986. I like to think that Rev. Roselle T. Cross, George Snider, and other pioneer explorers would be pleased that their tradition is being followed by a later generation.

Early Colorado College librarian Manly D. Ormes (d. 1929) preserved files of Colorado Springs newspapers and compiled an index that made it easy to locate otherwise obscure cave references. Colorado College also has the only files of Rev. Roselle T. Cross's *Congregational News* that I have located. The Colorado Historical Society's Stephen H. Hart Library has the one surviving copy of Percy Turner's *History of Manitou's Caves, the Grand Caverns and Cave of the Winds and Points of Interest in and about Manitou* (Denver: Merchants Publishing Co., 1895) known to me. The Colorado State Archives has the abstract of Supreme Court Case No. 3393 - the protracted lawsuit between Snider and the Rinehart family (an incomplete copy is in the Pioneers' Museum Cave of the Winds file in Colorado Springs). I have also consulted files in the Penrose and Manitou libraries. The Denver Public Library Western History Department has the long version of George Snider's book, *How I Found and How I Lost Cave of the Winds and Manitou Grand Caverns* (Denver: Carson-Harper, 1916), as well as extensive indexed files of clippings and other materials and newsletters of the state's chapters of the National Speleological Society. The Bancroft manuscript, "George W. Snider, Colorado Springs, September 23rd, 1886," P-L 75, was used by permission of The Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. Finally, I am especially grateful to Cave of the Winds management and staff for permitting me unrestricted access to all parts of the cave system - a privilege which had made the historical records understandable.

This article is a part of ongoing research on the history of the Williams Canyon caves and I would greatly appreciate correspondence from readers who may have private files or other important sources unknown to me.

1885 ARTICLE ON AN EARLY TOUR THROUGH MANITOU GRAND CAVERNS

submitted by Donald G. Davis

Below is perhaps the most interesting and amusing of the many historical accounts of early visits to Manitou Grand Caverns. It includes an actual conversation with discoverer George Snider, showing his perspective on the loss of his ownership of Cave of the Winds, and some of the flavor of the personalities of George and his first wife Vera. The large stalactite "carefully corralled with a big iron hoop" can be seen today after more than a century, with the iron bar still around it.

Note that the narrator calls the cave "Crystal Caverns." This is puzzling; it is the only known reference that uses this name. Either the writer changed the name for reasons of his

own, or George Snider experimented briefly with a new name but returned to the original "Manitou Grand Caverns."

This article has never before been reprinted. In fact, we were not able to reprint it, because the microfilm copy available in libraries had half the first column cut off. Through the courtesy of Eleanor Gehres, manager of the Western History Department of the Denver Public Library, the original bound copy was brought out of storage, and I was able to hand copy the missing text. We present it here with our appreciation to the Western History staff.

MANITOU

THE CRYSTAL CAVERNS AT THIS FAMOUS WATERING
PLACE GRAPHICALLY AND HUMOROUSLY DESCRIBED.

"THE EARTH'S NOSTRILS," WHERE NATURE HOLDS ITS
BREATH WITH A WE--THE GUARDED STALACTITE

A LECTURE ON GEOLOGY THROWN IN BY THE CAVE
PROPRIETORS FOR THE BARE PRICE OF ADMISSION.

EDUCATED HEELS IN DEMAND BY A SCORE OF LOVELY
GIRLS AND ADVANCED MAIDENS.

It may not be generally known in Denver that Manitou has two caves, but such is the fact, the discoverer of "Cave of the Winds," being the finder also of "Crystal Caverns," Manitou's largest acquisition.

To reach Crystal Caverns, instead of going up Williams Canyon, you take the more picturesque route of Ute Pass, go by Rainbow Falls, and just beyond, turning onto a newly constructed road you climb the dizzy sides of several mountains, until you come within a few yards of what looks like the entrance to a dug-out, but what on closer inspection proves to be the mouth of the cave.

Spending a Sunday in Manitou, not long since, I concluded to pay the Crystal Caverns a visit.

Accordingly, the owner of the cave (who drives his visitors up in a capacious old vehicle himself) rumbled around to the porch of the Mansion house, where a good sized load awaited him. There was a Boston girl, plump, rosy and spectacled; a bride and groom who held each other's hands and gazed into each other's eyes with an absorbed, beatific look and had to be helped in simultaneously - couldn't let go; a dignified member of the clergy and his estimable wife; two college boys on a summer "vaca," and last but not least a dude and his girl from the Springs. I had observed the later gentleman with considerable interest the night before at the hop at the Manitou house. I suppose it is an open secret that there is such a swell of beautiful, attractive married ladies and such an undertow of charming, budding girls at Manitou this season, and so few dancing gentlemen that a man who carries a pair of educated heels is fairly fought over. This gentleman belonged to that class exclusively and seemed filled with a noble and heroic desire to be shared by all alike, so much so he even outdid our popular hotel clerk, Walker, in this respect. Perhaps it was this violent exercise, or an undue indulgence in soda water, that made him look so used up physically and attenuated mentally as he stood there in the full glare of the morning



George W Snider

THE DISCOVERER OF THE MANITOU GRAND CAVERNS
AND THE CAVE OF THE WINDS.

PHOTO OF GEORGE WASHINGTON SNIDER FROM
HISTORY OF MANITOU'S CAVES: THE GRAND CAVERNS AND CAVE OF THE WINDS
THE MERCHANTS PUB. CO., PRINTERS, DENVER, COLO.



PIKES PEAK FROM THE ROAD TO MANITOU GRAND
CAVERNS, FROM AN ADVERTISING FOLDER

sunshine, with his arm clasped by a short, plump beauty of the most bewitching and kittenish type. She was one of those soft, peachy darlings that presented at a glance a bewildering combination of roses, dimples, fluffy hair and yards of ecru lace.

"All aboard," shouted the cave man. We climbed in, the "Dimple" hoisted up last, giving out as she came a prolonged, hysterical giggle, which ended, when seated, in a series of muffled squeaks.

"All ready," was shouted. The cave man cracked his whip - we still sat there. There was a look of regret in several pair of lovely eyes left on the piazza and an unmistakable look of triumph in those of the "Dimple's" as she nestled up to her trophy; then with another snap of the whip and much smart shaking of the lines we drove away. I will here remark parenthetically that I have seen young ladies credited with a "Cheshire grin," girls who laughed, laughed continuously, but I have yet to see the equal of that animated "Dimples." Such another bag of long-drawn, overflowing, ecstatic mirth I never hope to see again. The giggling business worked as if by machinery and took as long to wind down as a Waterbury watch does to wind up. It would turn itself loose without the slightest provocation, beginning in a series of little gurgling sounds way down in the innermost depths of that plump anatomy, bubble up to the surface like effervescing ale, develop into rippling musical ha ha's running up and down the laughing gamut until it drowned out all conversation, and even nature held its breath with awe; then when we had given up all hopes of it ever ceasing the fair performer would suddenly turn on the stop-valve and wind up with an Oh, de-ah! and the calm that followed would be positively appalling in its silence.

Everybody who has meandered up Ute Pass knows what a lovely drive it is. How the road winds up the canon, the gorge dropping down one side from fifty to a hundred feet, but with plenty of breadth for the highway, making the route by no means dangerous. And I have no doubt the "Dimple" had been over the road a dozen times; yet all the way up she was in a delicious thrill of horror. "Oh, Mister Johnson!" she would cry, "Ha, ha, ha! Te, he, he! I shall fall - I know I shall - I shall be killed, (clasping his arm spasmodically) Oh, de-ah!"

But when we reached the falls and drove quite near to get a better view of this lovely sheet of water, she dropped her escort's arm and burying one pretty hand in his soft, twilled scarf and the other in the lapel of his coat (like a kitten about to shin up a tree) she turned on the pyrotechnics of her mirth until the canon was filled with ripples and gurgles which the echoes multiplied and hurled back on us with redoubled fury. Even the falls got rattled and seemed to hang suspended and inanimate for several minutes, while Mr. Johnson, once free, very grimly replaced the antique coin in his cravat and looked unutterable things.

"How did you come to find this cave, Mr. Snyder?" said the clergyman, to the cave man when once we could hear again."

"Oh, I was just kind of wandering around prospecting and I saw a sort of moisture-like fog coming out a crevice, and I widened the opening and went in and found it."

Mr. Snyder looks the easy-going prospector who delights in nature and the freedom of an untrammelled life; a philosopher who could get a good deal of comfort out of any combination of circumstances.

"You found the Cave of the Winds, didn't you, Mr. Snyder?" pursued the clergyman.

"Y-e-s."

"Own it now?" continued the clergyman, who had an unusual business turn to him.

"No."

"Sold it?" persisted the clergyman.

"No," sententiously, "beat out of it."

"Why, that was unfortunate," said the divine.

"Yes, I always get beat," said the cave owner, with cheerful indifference, whistling softly to himself. "You see, I just took a partner in on that scheme; at the end of two years, I did all the work, and he brought in a bill of \$1,800 for advertising, improvements and legal advice: You see, he was a lawyer, and we had legal advice every day. I just wilted and opened up my new find."

We had now reached the cave, and the proprietor's wife, armed with a lantern, stood at the opening ready to guide us through. We stepped inside. It was dark and Erebus and a cool draft of air greeted us - quite a contrast to the breath of August outside.

Whatever the proprietor lacks in worldly wisdom, nature has made good in the proprietress. She took our dollars in a manner that made the patronage all seem on her side, and stowed them in her pocket with a sharp click. She marshaled us into line and gave her orders with a Wellington-at-Waterloo sort of an air and delivered her explanations with such set acrimonious precision, permitting no back talk from the groundlings, that she suggested in her make-up a cross between Semiramis and a Boston school marm. We now proceeded down a long narrow aisle until we came into a broad vaulted chamber varying from twenty to thirty feet in height. Out lights threw out long, threatening shadows of out figures, and lit up the little aisles and niches at the further end, possibly leading to chambers beyond.

"Ladies and gentlemen, attention, please," said the guide in metallic tones, bringing the pointer to bear on us. Titter from the "Dimple."

"I shall be obliged to have your attention," said the guide sharply, eyeing the culprit. "The immense underground passages known as caves are caused by the current of vast subterranean streams, which, rushing through, dissolve the limestone or sandstone formations, leaving the more imperishable rock intact, as is instanced in the Crystal Caverns, ladies and gentlemen."

"Where Alph the sacred river ran,
through caverns measureless to man,
down to a sunless sea." recited the clergyman.

"The little gentleman will now walk three times round the caravan and retire behind the curtain," said the college youth, sotto voce but a glance from the guide made him shrink an inch, and we proceeded to the next room.

"Ladies and gentlemen, we have now entered the bridal chambers."

"Oh! Mr. Johnson! The bridal chambers! Te, he, he! Ha, ha, ha!" the "Dimple" began to laugh, and though we could see the guide's mouth move, all further explanation was lost.

The bridal chamber is about twenty feet long, the walls high and the floor as smooth as if planed. Here we found one large, formidable stalactite, three-quarters of a yard in length, the only one of any size we saw in the cavern. It did not look dangerous, but as it was carefully corralled with a big iron hoop, it presumably was.

One shudders to think (had not this precaution been taken) the havoc a large, fierce stalactite turned loose upon a body of unsuspecting tourists might have worked.

"Stalactites, ladies and gentlemen," continued the guide, "are formed by a deposit of lime. The lime is held in solution in water, and the water seeping through from above deposits, little by little, its accretions upon some one point until, behold, we have the beautiful stalactite. Over fifty years is necessary to make the sixteenth of an inch."

"That depends upon the strength of the solution and the chance to evaporate, don't it!" inquired the clergyman, but the question was ignored.

From here we passed into a huge chamber fully fifty feet in length, surmounted by a vaulted roof and an immense dome or rotunda. A singular formation here is what is termed the organ. It was reached with a ladder and consisted of a group of leaf-like stalactites hanging down in fluted folds with a reflex curve at the bottom; they were about four feet in length and gave forth on being struck all the different notes of a musical instrument in softly breathing tones.

It only requires practice for some one to bring out plaintive, exquisite melody from this strange freak of nature.

"Mr. Snyder," said the guide, "you will please go up there and strike the organ."

Mr. Snyder went up the tottering perch very gingerly and smote the organ with a small stick. "A little louder, Mr. Snyder. That will do, Mr. Snyder. Come down."

Mr. Snyder descended.

"Oh, de-ah Mister Johnson; just think of getting music from such a thing. Ha, ha, ha, te, he, he!"

"This," continued the guide, stooping over some curled, twisted formation of the floor, "is the cauliflower bed."

The air is unusually pure and refreshing in the cave and the clergyman remarked to that effect.

"Yes," said the guide, "the meaning of the Greek word cave is a breathing place, as if these were the earth's nostrils. Here we experience the benefits of a thorough ventilation aided by natural chemical processes, which result in an atmosphere wholly cleared from noxious gases and surcharges with the vital elements. The cause of this, ladies and gentlemen, is the freeing of a certain amount of - -"

"Oh, Mr. Johnson," shrieked the "Dimple", "ha, ha, ha! He, he, he! Just fancy this being the earth's nose. Ha, ha, ha!"

The guide's mouth worked, but no sound reached the tympanum of our ear.

"We will now proceed through this narrow pass," said the guide, when she could be heard, "only half at a time," bringing her pointer between Mr. Johnson and the "Dimple," but she missed her reckoning, for she made a lunge and reached her escort with a squeak and an "Oh, de-ah, I know I shall be lost in this horrid place. Just fancy, he-ah Mr. Johnson, our being lost here - ha, ha, oh, de-ah!"

Mr. Johnson did not grant us his views on the threatened calamity. Here we observed several more juvenile stalactites and one puny stalagmite all carefully wired in. Near them hung a copy of the recent enactment with the penalty for defacing or carrying away specimens.

"This," said the guide, "is the camel, the man on horseback," pointing to some singular formations on the rock, "and this," casting the furtive light of the lantern into a cylindrical opening, hung with stalactites, "is the fairy grotto."

Back we come, the other half being marshaled in after us. After traversing room after room and passage after passage, although we were informed we were not half through, we declared ourselves tire enough to desist, and threaded our way back to day-light.

"It's really quite wonderful and interesting," said the clergyman, as we came up to the entrance, "although it lacks the numerous and immense stalactite formations I observed in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky, and especially those lovely crystallized effects that adorn the walls in every direction, and make it so strikingly beautiful."

"That's simply sulphate of lime," said the guide.

"Or the caverns of Indiana," said the student, "just solid alabaster, where with every turn of the torch you are greeted with showers of diamonds."

"Gypsum and Epsom salts only," said the guide. "That's nothing, ladies and gentlemen, to a cave like this formed in the tertiary period instead of the lower silurian."

In closing I almost forgot to mention Fred Blecker, the hotel end of the Caverns. He works up and ships visitors to this wonderful hole in the ground. Fred smiles and rubs his hands whenever he has a large consignment, which gracious and gratuitous performance is repeated at the cave by the proprietor and his wife without extra cost.

We walked out in the sunshine. It had taken just an hour and a half and we were well repaid for our trouble. "Crystal Caverns" is well worth the visiting. We drove back down hill, in short meter. We parted at the Mansion House. A farewell sound from the direction of the soda spring floated back as we went into dinner: "Oh, de-ah, Mr. Johnson. I shall - ha, ha, ha! Te, he, he!"

by Brandt Cole

Rocky Mountain News Supplement--Sunday, August 16, 1885, p. 9, c. 1--4

HISTORY OF THE MANITOU CAVE SYSTEM

by Donald G. Davis

Introduction

Along the west side of Williams Canyon, just below the Narrows, a cave lay for many years forlorn and degraded. Known, for reasons then obscure to us, as Pedro's Cave, it had for decades been the target, almost nightly, of beer-swilling adolescents who trespassed blithely on Cave of the Winds property to carouse in Pedro's dingy few hundred feet of passage, leaving behind bushels of cans, glass and burnt debris. Attempts over the years to seal the cave's two entrances with concrete had failed. Organized cavers, scorning it as a vandalized "party cave," often ignored it in favor of more cheerful and, seemingly, more challenging caverns elsewhere.

Yet, remnants of an old iron-pipe railing around the cave's central pit whispered of a time when this soiled dove of the spelean world was in happier circumstances; when, in fact, it was valued, and competed for paying customers with Cave of the Winds itself. The history of this time has been strangely cloudy.

Within the last decade, we have learned much more about this cave, by discoveries and rediscoveries both underground and in long-forgotten historical files. It has finally been successfully gated and access brought under control. It has been cleaned of the refuse of years of abandonment, and is open to paying customers for "wild tours" by the Cave of the Winds management. The cave as we now know it has half a mile of surveyed passage, originally discovered as three separate caves which have been combined into a unified system. There is probably much more remaining to be found, or re-found.

It is probable that none of the three presently-known segments of the Manitou Cave system had a natural entrance when the town of Manitou was founded in the 1870s. Historical accounts of both Cave of the Winds and Mammoth (Huccacove) Cave begin as early as 1875. These caves are above steep slopes high up the walls of Williams Canyon, in places much harder to reach than the Manitou system. Yet it is not until after 1900 that references appear which can be identified with Manitou Cave, despite all of its known entrances - present and past - being along the well-traveled bottom of the canyon, in plain sight. This suggests that the entrance sites must have been dug open, after being located by clues whose nature is not on record - perhaps small sinkholes, or breezes among the rocks.

Manitou Cave ("The New Cave" or "Pedro's Cave")

For many years, we knew no more of the early history of "Pedro's Cave" than was asserted by Lloyd Parris in *Caves of Colorado* in 1973:

This cave was commercialized around 1920 by Mr. John P. Innes, a young artist who had just previously inherited a substantial amount of money. Intrigued by underground wonders and aware of the possibility of getting a return on his investment, he installed hand rails, stairs, electric lights, and cleared paths. The road that led to Cave of the Winds was just a few yards from the entrance of Pedro's Cave, thus it seemed logical that tourists would also visit his cave. However, the hackneys driving tourists to the Cave of the Winds sped past his cave as if it weren't there. Chances are they received some sort of incentive from the Cave of the Winds management. Thus, a war ensued and when the end seemed inevitable, Mr.

Innes dynamited the major passage of Pedro's Cave closed to make sure that a connection to the Cave of the Winds would never be found.

But when I tried to confirm this by checking newspapers of the 1920 era, nothing could be found. Clues to the cave's history in public records were meager and did not connect with the claims made in *Caves of Colorado*. According to a lot book in the County Assessor's office, the acreage encompassing Pedro's Cave had been bought by a group of three men named Daniel H. Rupp, Thomas J. Sandford and Robert D. Weir in 1911, and resold in 1913 to Charles Austin (then half-owner of Cave of the Winds). In 1914, Austin turned it over to the newly-incorporated Cave of the Winds Scenic Attractions Co., after which it remained under Cave of the Winds ownership. County records gave no indication that John P. Innes had ever owned Pedro's Cave. In Colorado Springs directories, Innes appeared as a clerk, artist, and agent for the Denver and Rio Grande Railroad, but never as a cave proprietor.

<h1>NOW OPEN</h1>	
<h2>MANITOU CAVE</h2>	<h2>RAINBOW FALLS</h2>
The Mammoth Cave of Colorado	In Use Pass About 1/2 Mile From Manitou
One Mile of Subterranean Grandeur.	The most beautiful waterfall in the Pikes Peak region.
Lighted Throughout by Electric Lights.	Shickens and Huts are supplied to visit the immense grotto under the falls.
Manitou Cave is Situated About 1/2 Mile From Manitou in Williams Canon.	Photographs taken on horse, with falls as background, make excellent souvenirs.
Admission 50c	Refreshments are served in the pavilion. Admission 25c

Focusing on these earlier dates, clues to the puzzle began to emerge during perusal of microfilms of the *Manitou Springs Journal* at the Penrose Library and Colorado Historical Society. On July 7, 1911 appeared this announcement:

THE NEW CAVE OPENS JULY 10

ANOTHER ATTRACTION FOR MANITOU - LOCATED IN WILLIAMS CANON.

The new cave recently discovered in Williams Canon, will be opened to the public next Monday, July 10.

This is a new attraction for Manitou, and will, no doubt be numbered among the most popular.

On July 14, the *Journal* expounded:

ANOTHER SCENIC ATTRACTION

THE NEW MANITOU CAVE IN WILLIAMS CANON.

The new Manitou Cave in Williams Canon, which has been creating such wide-spread interest, was officially opened Monday morning. As the

owners have been rather reticent, the size and scenic wonders of the cave were a surprise to those who had the pleasure of going through it.

While every effort has been made to make the journey a safe and clean one, with electric lights placed to good advantage, the wilderness, natural beauty and mysterious atmosphere have been carefully preserved, and one emerges into daylight with the sensation that he has passed through a genuine experience.

As the birth of the cave dates back but a few months, the work of development is still in process; thus affording an added interest to the visitor, who sees above and around him passages holding the promises of new beauties.

As yet no name has been found that seemed suitable for this beautiful cave, and so a little contest has been inaugurated. Each visitor is entitled to a suggestion, and at the end of the season the winner of the preferred name will receive a lot in the town of Manitou. A lot, too, that will be worth many times the cave admission price of fifty cents.

Manitou is indeed to be congratulated upon adding this attraction to her list of "Places worth visiting."

And on July 21:

BUSINESS AT NEW CAVE

IS ON A STEADY INCREASE - OWNERS BUY MORE PROPERTY

Rupp, Sandford and Weir, owners of the New Cave, bought this week about five acres of Williams canon frontage from Geo. N. White, to complete their holdings on both sides of Williams canon.

City Attorney Dolph, at the last council meeting ruled that Williams canon was now open to automobiles to the entrance of the new cave.

The patronage to the new cave has been very heavy and its receipts are growing daily, quite complimentary to this new attraction.

Mr. Williams and Carl Bruce are now handling the advertising for the New Cave.

A lot will be given to the party giving the most appropriate name for the New Cave, so all get busy.

The Cave was soon noticed by media outside Manitou, as the *Journal* proudly declared on August 11:

D. H. RUPP A REAL CAVE MAN

TRINIDAD PAPER SAYS NICE THINGS ABOUT MANITOU CITIZEN

The following is taken from the Trinidad Chronicle News, and is complimentary to D. H. Rupp, a Manitou resident.

"D. R. [sic] Rupp, former manager of the Southern Colorado Power and Railway company, has become a cave man. Back to the primitive Rupp has gone and, having drawn a magic circle around an attractive piece of landscape in the vicinity of Manitou, the former Trinidad resident is setting the stage to enrich himself with the shining half dollars freely extracted from the pockets of the many thousand tourists that annually visit Manitou, and see the wonders of that locality.

Rupp has discovered a new cave less than half a mile from Manitou, a cave which promises to vie in fame with the Cave of the Winds. Rupp and two other men associated with him have purchased ground and have opened the cave, which is as full of natural wonders as a dog is of fleas. Considering that it is only since last April that the cave was discovered, it begins to look like Rupp has a 'gold mine.'

The cave is a natural wonder. Exploring its subterranean passages, one encounters many things that almost startles [sic] the imagination. There is a 'spirit lake' - a pool of water, which at a certain time every day, rises as though it would flood the cave and as mysteriously disappears again - like some maniken [sic] pulled by a string. In one portion of the cave a flow of crystal water is encountered and overhead, are curious formations of rock. During the season, thousands of tourists have visited the 'New Cave.' It is one of the many places of interest in Manitou."

This was followed by another encomium published September 1:

THINKS NEW CAVE IS A WONDER

ROCKY FORD MINISTER TELLS OF VISIT TO THIS NEW ATTRACTION.

Rev. O. L. Orton, a Methodist minister of Rocky Ford, after visiting the New Cave in Manitou, has written the following letter to one of the proprietors:

The Methodist Parsonage,
Rocky Ford, Colo.,
August 11, 1911.

Gentlemen:

"I visited the New Cave today, and I was amazed at the indications of its vast extent, size of chambers and at its marvelous intestinal [sic] formations. Your discovery will become one of the first attractions of the Pike's Peak region when fully explored and developed. The community, as yet, does not realize its magnitude and its value to the three cities as another scenic wonder. Still, it should be apparent, it seems to me, to every fair-minded



NARROWS IN WILLIAMS CANYON
CIRCA 1880S

COURTESY OF CAVE OF THE WINDS

visitor, that the extent of this new cave is only limited by the wanderings of the gaseous mineral waters as, during the ages past and at the present time, by natural law and geyseros eruptions, they have hewed out extensive caverns, subterranean ages and magnificent channels.

You will have the mystery cave of the world."

O. L. Orton.

(It is curious that the obscure Rev. Orton, despite his floridly unscientific prose, was one of the first to link the origin of the Williams Canyon caves to the rising waters of the Manitou mineral springs, as we now think is correct.)

The winner of the naming contest was announced September 15:

OKLAHOMA SCORES AGAIN

WAS SUCCESSFUL IN SUGGESTING NAME FOR THE NEW CAVE

The New Cave in Williams canon which was opened the past summer by Messrs. Rupp, Sandford & Weir has been named "Manitou Cave." Last spring the owners of the cave announced a contest to secure a name for it and, they offered a lot in the Ouray addition as a prize for the most appropriate name suggested.

The contest ended this week and the prize was awarded to J. L. Cushenberry of Wann, Okla., for offering the name "Manitou Cave." In the many names offered only one wished to call it "Manitou Cave."

The cave owners, as is apparent from other items in the *Journal*, had been real estate developers in Manitou for some years; Rupp was also a son-in-law of the wealthy Jerome B. Wheeler, better known to history as a banker and builder in Manitou and Aspen. The donation of this town lot may have been no great burden on them. Nevertheless, it "startles the imagination" to recall that the supposedly-unique, prize-winning cognomen, "Manitou Cave," is the very name already used by the newspaper back on July 14, when it announced the contest! It is also ironic that this expensively-established name should have been entirely forgotten in later decades, to be supplanted by the unheralded Pedro (of whom more later).

I checked to verify that the donation of the prize lot was actually made. The County Clerk's records confirm that Lot 13, Block 7 of the Ouray addition, 75 by 35 feet, was indeed signed over by Weir to one Lizzie Cushenbery [sic] on September 16, 1911. But when I went to look at the lot - with fantasies of seeing little old Lizzie rocking away her golden years on the porch of her rustic vine-covered cottage - I found that there had been a catch in the deal. It was a steep plot of mountainside at the very southern edge of Manitou, with no sign that anything had ever been built on it! Lizzie may have taken one look and decided it wasn't worth paying the property tax. Weir, it seems, gained good publicity for his cave by giving away land that would have been hard to sell otherwise.

"Manitou Cave" was probably thus called not only because it was the closest cave to the town (falling, indeed, within the city limits), but also to capitalize on the still-remembered fame of Cave of the Winds' twin, Manitou Grand Caverns, opened in 1885, and closed a

few years before 1911. Visitors might have been persuaded to tour Manitou Cave under the impression that they were seeing the formerly better-known Grand Caverns.

The owners of Manitou Cave were not only running the cave and selling real estate, but were at the same time operating as paying attractions Rainbow Falls (at the entrance to Ute Pass) and another more ambitious enterprise - the new Red Mountain Incline, a scenic railway intended as competition for the nearby Mount Manitou Incline. Wishing, probably, to devote more attention to the Red Mountain Incline, they leased out the cave and falls (*Journal*, May 17, 1912):

MARTIN LEASES MANITOU ATTRACTIONS

WILL HAVE CHARGE OF MANITOU CAVE AND RAINBOW FALLS.

Weir, Sandford & Rupp closed a long lease this week renting the Manitou Cave in Williams canon and Rainbow Falls, comprising 100 acres, located in Ute Pass, to J. T. Martin, of the Cheyenne Carriage & Burro Company.

Mr. Martin has conducted the business in Cheyenne canon for the last seven years, and is an up-to-date attraction man. He expects to open up the Manitou attractions in a few days. He will make this place his future home.

John T. Martin was duly listed in the city directory as operator of Rainbow Falls, but not of Manitou Cave, nor was the cave ever given its own directory listing as was Cave of the Winds. The New Cave had run advertisements in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* in July of 1911, touting the "Wonderful Whirlpool Dome, Phantom Passage and Convention Hall," and again under its new name on July 7, 1912, claiming "One Mile of Subterranean Grandeur." But on the average, these were outclassed in both size and repetition by the ads for the longer-established Cave of the Winds. If brochures, postcards or souvenirs were ever produced for Manitou Cave, I have not found any in historical collections. Praise notwithstanding, the New Cave was never able to operate on the scale of the older one.

The reporters were discreetly silent as to the response of Cave of the Winds management to the nuisance of having a competitor, however new and callow, straddling its own Williams Canyon wagon road. If a "cave war" ensued, as among the show caves of Kentucky, it seems to have been a restrained one. Still, one wonders about the following incident (*Journal*, November 1, 1912):

BURGLARS ACTIVE IN MANITOU

LAMPS STOLEN FROM RED MT. INCLINE DEPOT AND MANITOU CAVE

The Manitou Cave entrance was smashed open recently and all of the tungsten lamps numbering over thirty were taken from their sockets.

During August of the past summer about 500 feet of heavy insulated copper wire was stolen from the poles of the Red Mt. Incline Railway, and all of the tungsten lamps in the Ruxton avenue depot were taken.

The matter was reported to the police of the three cities, but none of the material has been recovered.

Our sources do not make it clear whether the cave ever opened for the 1913 season. In any case, it appears that Rupp, Sandford and Weir had overextended themselves. In 1913 the Red Mountain Incline went into receivership, and, after a brief revival a few years later, would ultimately be abandoned (its scar south of Manitou is still to be seen). The Cave of the Winds thereupon seized the opportunity presented by the Rupp combine's financial distress (*Journal*, October 31, 1913):

C. H. AUSTIN BUYS LARGE TRACT OF LAND

SECURES PROPERTY LYING BETWEEN CAVE OF THE WINDS AND MANITOU

The 65 acre tract of ground which is so located as to practically control Williams canon, was sold last Saturday by the owners, T. J. Sandford, D. H. Rupp and R. D. Weir, to C. H. Austin, one of the owners of Cave of the Winds. The purchase price is said to be about \$20,000.

The property lies between the town of Manitou and the Cave of the Winds property and extends east to the Cliff Dwellings and west nearly to Ute Pass.

\$377 per acre was a very good price for largely undeveloped mountain land in 1913, but this transaction must have been a relief to all concerned. Rupp et al. divested themselves of a marginal cave operation and received an infusion of much-needed cash. Cave of the Winds was rid of an annoyance and - probably more important - gained control of the lower end of its own ridge, enabling it to start work in 1914 on the new, direct Serpentine Drive auto road that was vital to expand visitation to the level prevailing today (the Williams Canyon wagon route was too narrow to accommodate two-way auto traffic). As for Manitou Cave itself, it remained in the *Journal's* list of local attractions as late as January, 1914, but it seems unlikely that the cave was ever reopened after coming under Cave of the Winds ownership.

Sandford became Manitou postmaster and died in 1922; Rupp took the same office in California, dying in 1917; Weir's fate I have not yet learned.

And John Innes - where does he fit in the enterprise? His name does not appear in the newspaper accounts. A telephone interview in 1987 with Innes' daughter, Rosemary Hetzler of Colorado Springs, confirmed that - although she described her memory of events concerning the cave as not good - her father was in fact involved with the cave "about 1914" (not 1920 as Parris wrote). Mrs. Hetzler said that the young Innes had come into a substantial inheritance which he "went through rather quickly," investing in both the cave and the Red Mountain Incline. What return, if any, Innes got from these failing projects she did not know. We may conclude that Innes was certainly a financial backer of Manitou Cave, and it is possible, though not confirmed, that he also acted as manager or guide. If he was ever an owner, however, the fact is not documented in the county records.

A 1987 call to John Hetzler, Rosemary's son, of Parachute, Colorado (who was a Cave of the Winds guide in the 1970s and was Lloyd Parris' source of information about Pedro's) confirmed Rosemary's account but did not add significantly to it. At John's suggestion, I sent an inquiry to his uncle, John P. Innes of Northridge, Cal. (son of the original John Innes), but never received a reply.

For the period between 1921 and the advent of recorded caving by the Colorado Grotto of the National Speleological Society in the 1950s, little information is available. *Caves of Colorado* has the following:

The first known cave club in Colorado held several of their meetings in the upper main room of this cave during the days of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC camp) in the late 1930's.

Near the end of the 1940's and up until 1957, Pedro's Cave was sealed shut with concrete slabs. Now, however, the concrete has been broken and the cave has two entrances. The northern one is a 6-foot drop through a small pit. The southern, and larger pit entrance, is located around the small limestone outcropping a few yards away.

This second entrance was not visible until 1960. Reports from people visiting the cave before then say that a cemented wall was discovered in the upper section and that someone, trying to chip through this wall caused a large amount of rubble to fall into the pit in the Upper Main Room, some of which tore loose part of the hand rail. Undoubtedly, the cement chippers were successful, but surprised, to find it only led to the surface. [This entrance was recemented closed in 1994.]

Who was "Pedro"?

How did the name "Pedro's Cave" come to be applied to the abandoned Manitou Cave? *Caves of Colorado* said only that "Pedro was an old Indian who lived in and around Manitou Springs in the early days." He was not, it turns out, one of the local Utes or Plains Indians. Daniels & McConnell's book *The Springs of Manitou* (1964, P. 93) states that:

In reality [Chief Manitou was] a Santa Clara [near Los Alamos, New Mexico] Indian Chief named Pedro Cajete. For twenty-eight summers Pedro returned to Manitou to dance at the cliff dwellings and to sell postcards and souvenirs. He shrewdly saved his money and led his pueblo's fight against encroachments on their land by whites.

Mrs. Hetzler also remembered Pedro as Chief Manitou, and said that his name was pronounced "Pee-droh," with a long e. A photograph of him, in Plains Indian headdress, is extant today (e.g., *Gazette Telegraph*, May 18, 1958).

Not until John Graham, publisher of the *Pikes Peak Journal* (current name of the *Manitou Springs Journal*) allowed me and Rick Rhinehart to examine bound copies of the *Journal* from 1920 to 1956 - a period not on microfilm - did we find a clue to the real reason behind the name "Pedro's Cave." This was in a short item from April 30, 1920:

VANDALISM AT THE CAVE OF THE WINDS

. . . The Grand Caverns . . . have been broken into three times, and the building at the entrance of the caverns, no longer in use as an attraction, fairly torn to pieces. The doors have been broken down and so much damage done that [Cave of the Winds manager} O. P. Snider . . . said yesterday that the building would have to be taken away The little

pavilion halfway up the canon where the old Indian sells his curios has been broken into and much damage done.

The "little pavilion" was most likely the old ticket office at the ex-Manitou Cave. The location "halfway up the canon" would fit, assuming that the reporter had in mind as the "canon" the narrow cliff-walled segment near the mouth of the Williams Canyon drainage. It is probable that the "old Indian" was Pedro Cajete. We know that he was on good enough terms with O. P. Snider to have been invited to supper with him at least once; it makes sense that Snider would have seen fit to allow Pedro to occupy the Manitou Cave office, both as an additional attraction on the Williams Canyon road, and as a deterrent to trespassing and vandalism in the closed cave.

However, in early June of 1921, the Manitou area was scoured by a massive flood that destroyed the Williams Canyon road. According to the *Journal*, 100 men and 12 teams of horses took more than two weeks to reopen the road. The fate of Pedro's pavilion is not mentioned, but any structure at road level in lower Williams Canyon would almost certainly have been swept away. In the aftermath, a hole appeared along the canyon wall and swallowed most of the flow of the Williams Canyon creek into a cave-room lake (*Journal*, July 22, 1921). The report does not name the cave involved, but Pedro's Cave in recent years has taken water from the creek in just the manner described. The 1921 flood probably began the filling of Pedro's Cave which has continued intermittently since, and may have spelled the end to Pedro's occupancy of the site, though he continued to visit Manitou for some years afterward.

Mysteries

Was Manitou Cave - as *Caves of Colorado* suggested - larger in its commercial days? Could the modest dimensions of Pedro's Cave, as we know it, generate such panegyrics as Reverend Orton's letter? This is not impossible; the early Cave of the Winds was little larger, yet Hovey's *Celebrated American Caverns* (1882) extravagantly claims "ninety rooms" and two miles of passage in it. On the other hand, there is sound reason to suspect that we see less of Pedro's Cave than its original customers did. Most of it lies lower than the adjacent bed of Williams Canyon, and is subject to intermittent flooding from the canyon stream, with occasional development of temporary sinkholes that dump in sand and gravel, as happened in 1921. The developers may have excavated much fill to open the tour route, and the lower passages, especially to the south and east, would easily refill if not maintained.

More questionable is Parris' claim that the disgruntled John Innes dynamited the cave's major passage when competition from Cave of the Winds had forced its failure as an attraction. I asked the Hetzlers about this; John replied that he had heard the story not directly from his grandfather, who died before he was born, but from his mother - who, however, told me that she did not remember the incident. Parris identifies the dynamited site as the breakdown at the north end of the eastern parallel passage, but this is a very massive collapse and is situated where the cave intersects the bed of Williams Canyon - a likely place for a natural terminus.

No known maps of the historic Manitou Cave are extant. Of the recorded named features from its developed period, Phantom Passage and Convention Hall cannot be identified, and the Whirlpool Dome may or may not be the dome above the central chamber with the iron railing, where the cave's pit entrance was open for many years until 1994. The only known photograph from that era (from the Colorado Historical Society's "Rio Grande Collection," in their Cave of the Winds file) is of the ticket office, a simple shed-like

structure directly in front of the northern entrance and clearly signed "ENTRANCE/NEW CAVE."

But the 1912 burglary account does give some support to the assumption that the cave was then larger. "Over thirty" bulbs were reported stolen from their sockets. If the commercialized cave was no longer than the 700 feet cited in *Caves of Colorado*, then that many lights would have been spaced, on average, not much more than 20 feet apart, even if the upper-level crawls - probably never developed - were lit. However, a spacing of up to 50 feet would be credible, which would allow for as much as 1,500 feet of developed passage. (Though the management itself advertised "one mile," show cave operators of that era so commonly overstated their lengths that this claim need not be taken seriously).

The stream of water described must have been pirated from the Williams Canyon creek, which, except during the highest runoff, still sinks either upstream or a little downstream from the cave depending on the flow. The fluctuating "spirit lake" may have responded to daily rhythms in the creek's flow (or to the pump which was once located in the "Pump Room?") This water probably flowed south in the now-silted Pump Room trend. If silting has indeed caused passages to be filled, the most likely direction in which the lost passages lie is down the dip of the rock strata, to the south and east. Beyond the sediment plugs, there may remain hidden galleries, still with their paths, wiring and railings, dark and silent for more than 80 years, and faded from human remembrance.

Centipede Cave

Before the opening of Manitou Cave, the following item had appeared in the *Colorado Springs Gazette* of March 30, 1910:

EXPLORE NEW CAVE

Centipede Cavern in Williams Canon may be thrown open to the public. R. D. Weir of this city, and J. F. Sanford of Manitou have had a force of men exploring the cavern known as Centipede cave in Williams canon for several days with the intention of opening up a series of caves. The cave has penetrated into the mountain side about 100 feet, and to a depth of about 40 feet, and it is claimed that the caverns discovered are beautifully decorated and that there are a number of stalactite and stalagmite formations. The men will push the work in order to open the cave, if it is of value, before the tourist season.

Weir's involvement seemed to link this 1910 announcement with the property containing Manitou Cave (J. F. Sanford was presumably a Manitou attorney, not to be confused with the similarly-named T. J. Sandford). During the era when cavers knew only "Pedro's Cave," we assumed that this story probably referred to it, before the longer, lower levels had been dug open. But when the later *Manitou Springs Journal* items turned up, a discrepancy was evident: the "New Cave," soon to be called Manitou Cave, and finally Pedro's, was said to have been discovered only in April 1911.

It was not until 1988 that a tenuous chain of reports led to a rediscovery and better understanding. James W. ("Holly") Meacham, a caver active in the 1950s, passed on to Rick Rhinehart tales from elderly local residents who claimed that Pedro's Cave passed under Williams Canyon to passages now buried. On April 24 Rhinehart noticed a small solution fissure, along the eastern side of Pedro's main chamber, that emitted a cool breeze. Within the next two weeks, some of us dug several yards northeasterly into a crawlway

beneath the orifice, uncovering in the process a battered metal bucket and pipe section that showed that the passage was not virgin. Finally, the crawl, after passing under the Williams Canyon road, opened up into large walking passage. We ultimately surveyed several hundred feet of complex passage, which we reburied until Air Force Academy students sealed the pit (southern) entrance and completed a gate for Pedro's Cave on December 11, 1993, protecting it from the vandals who until then had the run of the cave.

We found no evidence, however, that the rediscovered section had been part of the tour route of the commercial Manitou Cave. There were no signs of trail work or electric wiring, or anything to suggest that large numbers of people had traversed the passages. But pick marks at the end of one chamber, and boards and rotten timber beams in a few places, made it clear that men had done work there. More interesting were several graffiti smoked or carved in the ceilings, at least two of which were clearly dated 3/31/1907 - four years before the reported discovery of the "New Cave." Particularly intriguing were the initials "R. W." (undated), which matched Robert Weir.

While exploring breakdown spaces above the main galleries, I was especially gratified to find a small chamber blocked by a concrete wall, above which light was shining in through a two-inch-wide hole. Peering through it, I saw that I was just above the Williams Canyon road, looking across at the Pedro's entrance. From the outside, this tiny opening was hidden in a slope of earth and brush. Clustering of graffiti in the near part of the cave suggested that the original finders of the cave had entered here, not by way of the crawl from Pedro's Cave; that route might not have been opened until after the discovery of the main cave from its own entrance in 1911.

We now believe that this eastern cave segment fits the 1910 account of Centipede Cave better than does Manitou/Pedro's Cave proper (though there is no evidence that stalactites or stalagmites of any significance were ever there). Although the identification remains unproven, we are provisionally calling this eastern block of the Manitou Cave system Centipede Cave. However, at least two other openings in the hillside nearby are also blocked with concrete walls. These have not been located from inside the system, and pending excavation to see if other caves are behind these walls, we cannot rule out the possibility that one of these, or some other completely lost, is the original Centipede Cave.

An earlier news story (*Denver Times*, August 6, 1908) may also involve Centipede Cave:

WOMAN, LOST IN CAVE, SETS HER HAIR AFIRE

BURNS MAY DISFIGURE VICTIM FOR LIFE AND THE SHOCK IS THREATENING HER MIND.

PARTY OF TOURISTS EXPLORING DUNGEON OF MANITOU IMPRISONED EIGHT HOURS--

TAKEN OUT EXHAUSTED.

SPECIAL TO THE TIMES.

COLORADO SPRINGS, Aug. 6. -- Lost in the labyrinth of a cave hundreds of feet from human help, her hair set on fire by the flames from her candle, which flickered and went out, the agonizing cries of her daughters, who were entombed in another chamber, adding to her own distress, Mrs. Emma Elliowt [sic] went through a frightful experience at Manitou yesterday, and,

as a result, is in a precarious state suffering from nervous shock and with the possibility that her reason may become dethroned.

With her three daughters, the eldest 20 years old, Mrs. D. E. Whitney of Jacksonville, Fla., and Robert West of San Francisco, Mrs. Elliowt remained there eight hours, and with the others crawled on her knees looking for an outlet. The party finally found its way out last night, and utterly exhausted, they were taken in town by friends who were organizing a searching party and assisted to their various hotels.

WOMAN BADLY BURNED.

Not since ten years ago when a guest at the Barker hotel became lost in the same cave and, abandoning hope of seeing human forms again, scribbled his will on the cuffs of his shirt, has such an incident happened. The party yesterday was literally entombed hundreds of feet below the surface and in utter darkness.

Because of her hair getting on fire, Mrs. Elliowt suffered the most, and her face may be disfigured for life. She was badly burned on the arms, hands and upper portions of the body. She is now at the home of Mrs. F. Davis, where she is receiving medical attention.

Mrs. Elliowt and daughter are from Chanute, Kan. The cave which they sought to explore is near the famous narrows in Williams canon and has been abandoned for many years. Originally it was discovered by a number of boys, but has always been deemed unsafe and few persons have cared to even enter it.

LOSE WAY WITHOUT LIGHTS.

The party of tourists yesterday went prepared to spend an hour or more in the cavern, but at the outset made the mistake of not taking matches with them. They had lighted candles, but shortly after entering became separated because of the labyrinth of passages and a draft of air extinguished the lights. The flames from Mrs. Elliowt's candle were blown in her face and her hair became a mass of flames. Her screams were heard by the rest of the party, but they were unable to reach her and the horror of the situation preyed upon the nerves of all to a degree that has left them weak and almost prostrated.

Mrs. Elliowt buried her head in the earth and clawed fragments of earth from the walls in an effort to put out the fire, which she succeeded in doing, but not until she had been badly burned and had lost nearly all of her hair. Then followed hours of suspense and terror in trying to find a way out, and the party was on the verge of abject despair, firmly believing that they were doomed to a living death, when a ray of light from the lamp of a tourist carriage shone through a crevice and pointed a way out to them.

The incident has caused much excitement at Manitou and it is probable that the authorities will take steps to prevent tourists from entering the cave.

The location of this incident has been assumed in the past to be Huccacove Cave (e.g., *Caves of Colorado*, p. 79). That would agree with its designation as an "abandoned cave," since Huccacove had been a show cave under its original name of Mammoth Cave ca. 1875-1880. However, Huccacove was not originally discovered by boys. Furthermore, the group was said to have been saved by seeing the light of a passing carriage from inside the cave. This would agree better with Centipede Cave than with Huccacove, whose entrance is several hundred feet up a ravine from the road, and from which a carriage lamp would be unlikely to be seen. (The graffito "R. W." in Centipede Cave is also tantalizing in this regard - it could agree not only with Robert Weir, but with the Robert West identified in the above account as a member of the party - or, of course, with any one of innumerable others.) It seems peculiar that the corresponding papers do not seem to have reported this affair.

The other episode mentioned in the 1908 *Denver Times* article - the lost hotel guest who wrote his will on his shirt cuffs "ten years ago . . . in the same cave" - does not match well with Centipede Cave, for which we have neither documentary nor graffiti evidence that it was known as early as 1898. This occurrence, however, is curiously similar to a case from the *Manitou Springs Journal* of Sept. 12, 1891, whose subject wrote his will on the back of an envelope. This happened in "the old, abandoned 'Tom Green' cave," which is unquestionably Huccacove. The 1908 mention could be a very garbled recollection of the 1891 happening (note the seven-year discrepancy), in which case the assertion that it happened in the same cave may not be trustworthy.

A final *Journal* item (December 10, 1909) that may connect with Centipede Cave:

MAY OPEN CAVE

ON PROPERTY RECENTLY PURCHASED BY MISS LISLE HARRIS

The 32 acres of land on the Williams hill which was purchased this week by Miss Lisle Harris [former editor of the *Journal*, 1905-1907] from the Palmer estate contains a number of caves, and it is the intention of the new owner to have them thoroughly explored. This will be done with a view of having them opened up as an attraction here if they are found to be attractive enough to warrant it. Several of these caves have never been explored to any great extent.

This transaction is represented in the County Clerk's records by a Bond for Deed made December 11, 1909 from Robert D. Weir to Lisle Harris for Block "W," which is indeed the tract on which the Manitou Cave system is found. Was Weir's work on Centipede Cave in 1910, then, actually done on behalf of Lisle Harris? Whatever the case, Miss Harris died on November 10, 1910, and her name never appeared in the County Assessor's books as owner of the parcel; probably she died before completing payment for the plot, so that it was not yet in her name. The item also leaves unclear which caves were in fact being worked on. In addition to the cave we now call Centipede, several other openings at various heights on both sides of the canyon show signs of early digging. Whether passage was breached in any of these, then blocked by later collapse, we do not yet know.

Deep Water Cave and beyond

Deep Water Cave, the third block of the Manitou Cave system, represents a very different era from the first two: it was first entered by humans only in February 1994. Its story, detailed by Rick Rhinehart in *Rocky Mountain Caving*, Winter 1994, is summarized below.

On a cold morning in November 1993, Jonathan Barker and Charles Lindsey spotted a plume of fog rising from a rocky hillside a few yards above the western side of the Williams Canyon road, a hundred feet to the north of the known end of Pedro's Cave. They dug on succeeding weekends, obtaining permission from Cave of the Winds management. On February 20, 1994, after moving tons of rock, they broke through into an underlying gallery that led south, paralleling the west side of Pedro's Cave.

About a thousand feet of passage extending further north and south than Pedro's itself - including a shorter parallel even closer to Pedro's Cave - were explored on the breakthrough day. Varying from high, gravel-floored corridors and domes to sand-choked crawlways, it closely resembled the adjacent Pedro's - except that it was pristine and clean, with no trash or graffiti. It was obvious that the new cave had never been entered by man, and was not part of the lost Manitou Cave tour route. Snail shells and bits of charcoal high on the walls showed that the cave had at some time been completely flooded. This led Charles Lindsey to call it Deep Water Cave, though, ironically, no water at all was found in it at the time. (Despite the lack of vandalism, no stalactitic decorations have yet been found in Deep Water Cave; it had never grown any).

When linked by overland survey to Pedro's Cave on March 3, a part of Deep Water Cave proved to be only a few yards from a breakdown area at the northwest corner of Pedro's Cave. On March 12, this was verified by a light and sound connection, and by moving breakdown, a crawlway connecting the two caves was opened. This gave the Manitou system more than 2,300 feet of surveyed passage - a great improvement on the mere 700 feet attributed to Pedro's Cave as late as 1988. To control access to the cave, the discovery entrance was subsequently backfilled, leaving an embedded pipe connecting the original entry point to the surface in the event that it should need to be reopened. Digging has since opened a little more passage in Deep Water, bringing the total length of the Manitou Cave system to more than 2,500 feet. Several promising dig sites in each of the three sections remain to be worked on.

During high runoff during late winter of 1995, water sinking through the floor of Williams Canyon flooded lower parts of Pedro's and Centipede Cave. At the same time, a temporary spring ran for a few days in the eastern parallel of Deep Water, rising from sand near its north end and sinking in a pit in the sediment further south, and demonstrating the hydrological association of the two cave segments.

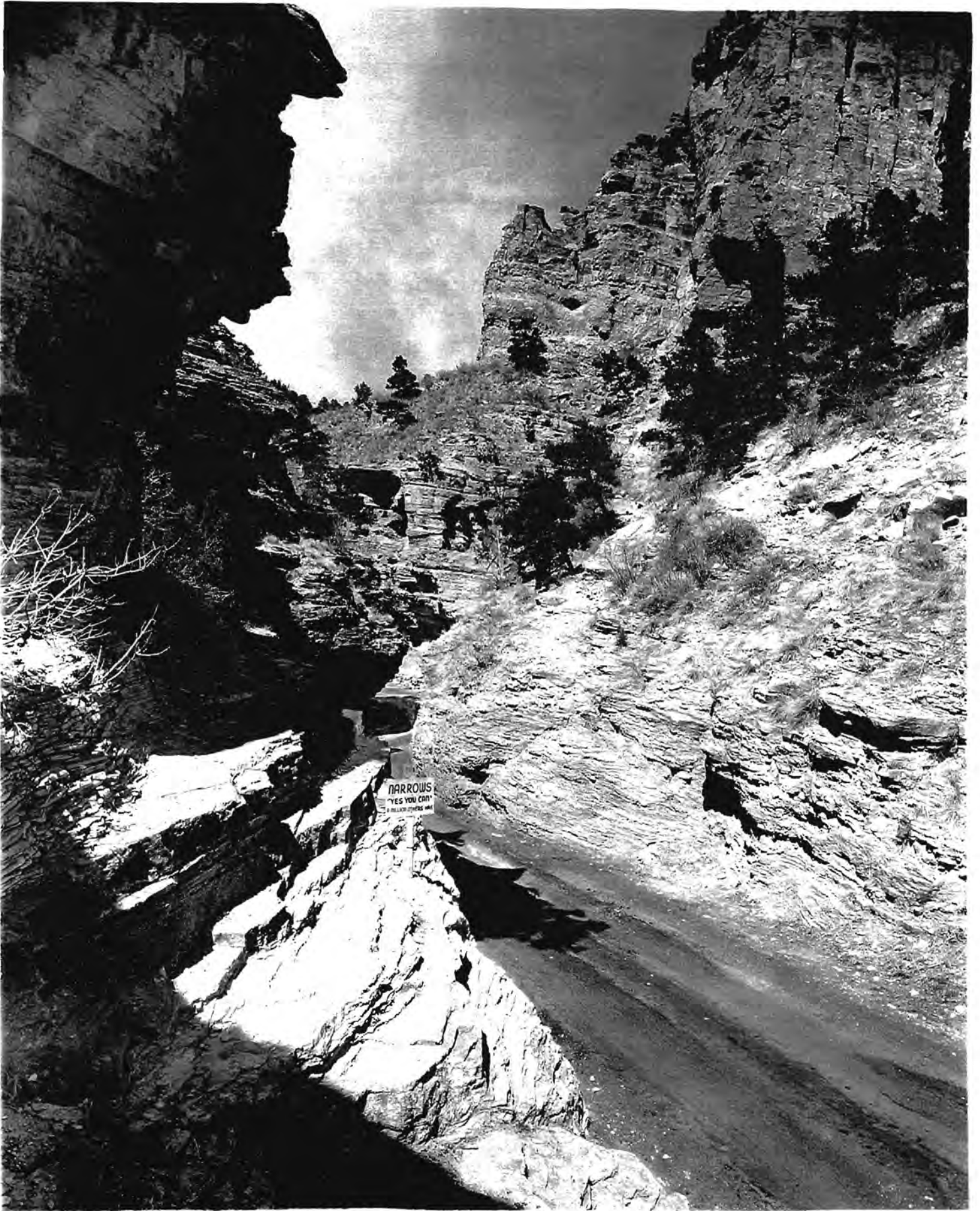
The close proximity of Deep Water to the western edge of Pedro's seems to preclude the possibility that the hypothesized lost tour route of Manitou Cave could lie in that direction. Since the Centipede section, adjoining part of Pedro's east margin, also seems not to have been on that route, the most probable directions for such lost passage to lie are in the quadrants east to south of Pedro's south end, and east to north of its north end.

In the winter of 1995, Grant Carey, General Manager of Cave of the Winds, decided to reinstitute commercial tours in the Manitou system. These are conducted as "wild" tours; the cave will not be redeveloped. After some test runs, a party of customers paying \$40.00 apiece was taken through the cave on March 18, 1995 - its first paying visitors since the last ones parted with their "shining half dollars" in 1912 or 1913.



WILLIAMS CANYON AND CAVE OF THE WINDS BUILDING
EARLY 1950S

PHOTO BY BILL BOWERS



WILLIAMS CANYON
EARLY 1950S

PHOTO BY BILL BOWERS



CANOPY HALL IN CAVE OF THE WINDS
1903, W. E. HOOK

Bill Bowers, born in Colorado Springs, took the cover photograph and the two other Williams Canyon photos in the early 1950s. There had recently been flooding in the Canyon and the Colorado Springs Chamber of Commerce wanted documentation of the condition of the road. Also, a small magazine called *Pikes Peak or Bust* wanted a photo for their cover. Mr. Bowers remembers the day very clearly. As he was trying to cross the stream next to the road, he jumped onto a log and started to fall. He then jumped to the far bank of the stream and twisted his knee badly. He used to explore the caves in Williams Canyon in 1918, though he didn't know them by name. Mr. Bowers had a photography business in Colorado Springs in the 40s and 50s with Mr. Loyde Knutson. He now has a photography studio in the Fine Arts Center in Colorado Springs.

