

The Journal of Spelean History

Official Publication of the American Spelean History Association



January - June 2019

Vol. 53 No. 1, Issue 155

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History Section – National Speleological Society

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The Association

The American Spelean History Association (ASHA) is an Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society and exists for the study, dissemination and interpretation of spelean history, and related purposes. All persons who are interested in these goals are cordially invited to become members. Dues are \$2 per issue of *The Journal of Spelean History*. Dues can be paid for up to 20 issues (\$40). Checks should be made payable to “ASHA” and mailed to the treasurer.

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Cover: Jim White, discoverer of Carlsbad Caverns, and two tourists stand in front of his museum in 1932.

CONTENTS

Abstracts from 2018 Montana NSS Convention	3
Abstracts from 2019 Tennessee NSS Convention	8
Book Review: Underground: A Human History of Worlds Beneath Our Feet . . .	10
The Demise of Smyrna Block-Creep Cave	12
2019 Peter M. Hauer Award	17
Sea Cave "Studded" with Diamonds	17
Recently Discovered Cave Post Office Items	19

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY SESSION AT THE 2018 NSS CONVENTION AT HELENA, MONTANA

Robert L. Ripley's 1939 Visit to Carlsbad Caverns New Mexico

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World traveler, cartoonist, and radio host Robert L. Ripley visited Carlsbad Caverns on Friday, June 2, 1939 to broadcast his weekly radio program. It included "xylophone-like" music made from stalactites and stalagmites, a quartet singing "Rock of Ages" to a microphone which was a "mile" away, interviews with cave discoverer Jim White and Superintendent Thomas Boles, and a description by Ripley of a new section of the cave. A telephone line from the Big Room to the town of Carlsbad was the main link in the broadcast.

Ripley commented that Carlsbad was the greatest sight that he had ever seen, much to the delight of Boles, who had invited Ripley to the cave. After Ripley's broadcast, visitation to Carlsbad increased by 10% in the following months. For his efforts, New Mexico governor John Miles made Ripley an honorary colonel on his staff- "Believe-it-or-not!"

Charles W. Wright and the Caves of the Mammoth Cave Region

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Charles W. Wright (d. 1919) was a physician and Professor of Chemistry in Cincinnati, Ohio and Louisville, Kentucky who had a deep interest in the caves of the Mammoth Cave region in the mid-19th century. He visited Mammoth Cave more than once in the antebellum period and in 1858 his book *Mammoth Cave, Kentucky* appeared in print. In April 1859 his scientific paper "Atmosphere of the Mammoth Cave," appeared in the *Boston Medical and Surgical Journal*. In the summer of 1859 he was one of the initial explorers of Diamond Cave, and he brought the discovery of the new cave to public notice via a letter to the *Louisville Daily Courier*. In 1860 his second book, *A Guide Manual to the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky*, appeared; this guidebook is today considered a standard work on the cave. In 1866 he visited Mammoth Cave again, staying at the hotel twice in June, and in July he helped arrange a large group visit to the site as part of Cincinnati's German community's Saengerfest (choral singing) celebration. While considered an accurate observer and writer, albeit prone to exaggeration, there is one major anomaly in cave writing; Colossal Cave. In 1859, Wright penned a lengthy account of the exploration of a major cave the previous year by Larkin J. Proctor, which is fictional. Despite this, Wright was an important writer and scientist in the history of the Mammoth Cave region. He is buried in Cave Hill Cemetery in Louisville, Kentucky.

Lost in the Cave: Norman Rockwell's Illustration of Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher in Mark Twain Cave, Missouri

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One of the most iconic cave episodes in classic American literature appears in *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Samuel Langhorne Clemens (1835-1910), published in 1876 under his well-known pen name, Mark Twain. The story is based on Twain's boyhood adventures in the Mississippi River town of Hannibal, Missouri. As one of the most revered of Twain's works, it remains standard fare in courses on American literature.

The original edition was illustrated by True Williams (1839-1897). Subsequent printings included drawings by many different artists. Perhaps the most notable illustrator was Norman Percevel Rockwell (1894-1978), the celebrated and highly prolific twentieth-century artist noted for his sentimental portrayals of American culture.

In one of the most remembered episodes in *Tom Sawyer*, Tom and his friend, Becky Thatcher, become lost and frightened in the darkness of maze-like McDougal Cave. Twain has acknowledged that he explored local caves in his youth, and McDowell's Cave, now known as Mark Twain Cave, may have been his inspiration.

In 1935, George Macy, publisher of the Heritage Press and Limited Editions Book Club, commissioned Rockwell to paint illustrations for *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*. Rockwell visited Hannibal, including Mark Twain Cave, to incorporate authentic details in his pencil-and-charcoal sketches. His drawings in the cave were made at an intersection known as Five Points. The resulting painting, *Lost in the Cave*, published in the Heritage book, has become one of Rockwell's signature pieces. It has been reproduced as prints and on many collectible items over the years.

The Fate of Legendary Caver and Speleologist Peter M. Hauer

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Peter Marshall Hauer was a legendary caver and speleologist who was raised in Pennsylvania, lived and worked in the northeastern U.S., and finally resided in West Virginia where he met his bitter end, dying at age 29 by hanging, in June 1975. Pete was a renowned speleologist, one of the country's foremost experts on the history of saltpeter caves, and a prolific author of cave bulletins, journal articles, and convention talks. On June 11, 1975, Pete disappeared from his Lobelia West Virginia farm in Pocahontas County, the same day that the murdered body of Walter Smith was discovered buried in Pete's Lobelia Saltpeter Cave. An intensive police investigation and manhunt for Pete ensued, even involving a nationwide manhunt led by the FBI. Pete's body was only discovered on November 27, 1975, hanging from a tree on Viney Mountain, ~1 mile north of his farm. Was this a case of murder - suicide, whereby Pete killed Walter and then committed suicide, or was this a case of double murder committed by a third party? Although the West Virginia State Police concluded the first theory, many caver and neighbor friends of Pete believe the second theory, and hence in the innocence of Pete. Suspicious third parties were a few neighbors, a local coven (cult) of witches, a love triangle person, and a disgruntled lake development group. This presentation reviews evidence for both theories, with an up-to-date status for this criminal case.

ABSTRACTS OF PAPERS PRESENTED AT THE AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY SESSION AT THE 2019 NSS CONVENTION AT COOKEVILLE, TENNESSEE

Young Stephen Bishop: The Early Life of the Celebrated Mammoth Cave Guide

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Stephen Bishop (1820-1857) was a remarkable man by any measure. Born into slavery in antebellum Kentucky, he was sold to Franklin Gorin ca. 1837 and brought to Mammoth Cave as his personal slave in 1838 when Gorin purchased the property. Teen-aged Stephen exhibited an unbridled passion for cave exploration and was soon assigned to the pool of cave guides, where he continued to make astounding discoveries and charmed visitors with his natural showmanship and erudite knowledge, able to quote equally well from both Greek philosophers and popular literature by writers such as Sir Walter Scott. Stephen's parentage has long been uncertain, but by reference to eyewitness testimony and Barren County court records, the authors have been able to determine that his father was Lowry Bishop, the wealthy Barren County landowner who sold Stephen to Gorin. Stephen's mother was most likely the female house slave known as Luvenia, who had been sexually abused by Bishop and gave birth to his child. Stephen was raised in the Bishop household and most likely gained his initial education through observing other children in the home at their studies. Stephen possessed a fine mind and near perfect recall and, at Mammoth, expanded upon his knowledge through contact with the many scholars who toured the cave under his guidance, so that he was able to discourse knowledgeably upon the geology and biology of Mammoth Cave.

Willard Rouse Jillson and the Crystal Cave of Sloans Valley, Kentucky

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With nearly 25 miles of passages, Sloans Valley Cave in the southeastern part of the state is the 4th longest cave in Kentucky and ranks #23 in the United States. The imposing karst window known as Great Rock Sink has historically been the most popular access point and the area within, known as Crystal Cave, was operated as a show cave until submerged in early 1951 by the impoundment of Lake Cumberland. This presentation traces the exploration history of Sloans Valley, focusing primarily upon the Crystal Cave section. Highlighted are the explorations and surveys carried out in 1950 by Dr. Willard Rouse Jillson and his geology students from Transylvania University (Lexington). Jillson was the

Kentucky State Geologist from 1918 to 1932, being reappointed by five successive governors, and was an enormously prolific writer, authoring nearly 100 books and more than 500 shorter works including *The Geology of Crystal Cave* (1954) based upon his earlier fieldwork. Jillson was also a strong advocate for the conservation of Mammoth Cave and had been in part responsible for establishment of the national park in 1941. Jillson and his students mapped 6,300 feet in the Crystal Cave section during October and November 1950, intended as salvage geology in advance of the impending submersion of the cave by Lake Cumberland. The presentation also covers exploration and surveys of Sloans Valley made during the 1960s and 1970s by the combined efforts of the Greater Cincinnati, Central Ohio, and Bluegrass grottos.

Wonder Cave: A Tennessee Past Time

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Wonder Cave is located in the Pelham Valley in Grundy County, Tennessee and it is one of the oldest commercial caves in the state. It was discovered in 1897 by three Vanderbilt Students and just a few years later, it was commercialized by Robert M. Payne. For 17 years the cave was featured to affluent guests who were visiting the nearby Monteagle Assembly. Water was even pumped up the mountain from the mouth of the cave to the hotel guests. Members of the Payne family continued to manage the cave until the 1980's when R.M.'s great grandson, who was running the cave, passed away. The cave was sold to a local Chattanooga businessman and continued to operate until the year 2000. Since 2000, the cave has been closed to the public and cavers.

Even though Wonder Cave operated as a commercial cave for nearly 100 years, a complete and accurate map of the cave was never completed. In 2014, Jason Hardy and Kelly Smallwood began the survey of Wonder Cave and have surveyed nearly 3 miles of cave passage. Please join us for a journey through the history of one of Tennessee's Past Times, Wonder Cave.

Adventures in the Mammoth Cave Literature

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While exploring the Mammoth Cave literature from the nineteenth century, I have recently located several sources which are new to me which cave historians may find of interest. This paper introduces these sources. "Natural Curiosities of the Western Country," appeared on July 27, 1814 in *The [Brooklyn, New York] Long Island Star*; it focuses upon the cave mummies and is one of the oldest known newspaper accounts of Mammoth Cave. Alexander Clarke Bullitt's missing

"Letter from the Mammoth Cave," one of eighteen in a series from *The [New Orleans] Daily Picayune* in 1845, was recently located in *The [Augusta, Georgia] Chronicle and Sentinel*, which reproduced the whole series in late 1845 and early 1846. The 1871 book by William Furniss, *Rip-Raps: Or Drift Thoughts Wide Apart* contains an account of a trip around 1847, providing information on the history and location of cave features and persons like Stephen Bishop and Dr. John Croghan. On September 12, 1853, the *Louisville Daily Journal* published "A Visit to the Mammoth Cave. By an Old Loafer and Two Sick Belles." This anonymous article discusses the guides, the social nature of the tours, and the current proprietor. Lastly, the 1882 London book *The Gallynipper in Yankeeland. By Himself.* is an anonymous account of a post Civil War trip; it successfully captures the patten used by cave guides William Garvin and Mat Bransford. As books and newspapers from the past continue to be digitized, we will undoubtedly find other new sources concerning Mammoth Cave.

The History of the Exploration of McFails Cave, Schoharie Co., New York

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McFails Cave is the Northeast's longest known cave and the NSS's first preserve. In 1906 the cave was ignored by those exploring nearby Cave Disappointment. In 1958 it was shown with about 350 feet of passage. By 1963 it had nearly 5 miles. Now the cave stands just shy of 7.1 miles in length. What went into these discoveries and who was involved is well documented but has not been presented in single talk until now.

The Wanton Destruction of One of Tennessee's Largest Saltpeter Mines

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Piper Cave, located in Smith County, Tennessee, was the site of one of the largest saltpeter mining operations in Tennessee. Bailey (1918) states that the cave was mined during the Civil War.

The map by McCary and Davis (1955) shows the location of sixteen (16) saltpeter vats. The map shows two (2) of these vats half way from the entrance to the end of the cave and the other fourteen (14) are located near the southwestern end of the cave. In 1918, Bailey noted that the saltpeter vats were in a "fair state of preservation." By the time Barr (1961) described them, he said that they were "poorly preserved, most of the wood having rotted away because of the high humidity."

While preparing the manuscript for the book "Caves of the Highland Rim", I received an email from Kristen Bobo stating that when she and Cory Holliday

had gone to Piper Cave in 2012 and 2013 to conduct a bat count for the Nature Conservancy, they found that the owner had used a bulldozer to flatten the floor of the cave and in the process had destroyed the saltpeter vats. One photo taken by Kristen Bobo showed dirt pushed to the side of the passage with brown pieces of wood from the former saltpeter vats sticking out. She believes that all of the Civil War saltpeter vats have been destroyed, based on her visit.

Chronicling the Great Mummy Tour of 1816: The Year that Made Mammoth Cave Famous

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In the fall of 1815, Nahum Ward toured Mammoth Cave and created a sketch map of the cave. The next spring, Ward obtained a mummy—later dubbed “Fawn Hoof”—that had been displayed in the cave, and in the summer and fall of 1816 he put the mummy on tour. Although cave mummies and Mammoth Cave had been publicized before, Ward used newspapers to make them famous that year. He employed a three-part strategy both to get publicity and to make money. First, he published a fascinating three-part description of his exploration of Mammoth Cave. By the end of the year, the description had been picked up by at least 75 other newspapers nationwide, including a Boston paper that put Ward’s map of the cave on the front page. Second, Ward advertised heavily in the newspapers of each tour city. Third, he generated free news coverage by both promising the mummy’s impending arrival in future cities and promising her impending donation to several institutions. As a result, the mummy became a sensation, and Mammoth Cave became the best-known cave in America. The mummy’s (and the cave’s) celebrity is illustrated by popular culture references, poetry, and even addresses being given with reference to the mummy in newspapers of the time.

Yankee Tricks, Broken Promises, Displays and Dissection: Tracing the Fate of Kentucky’s Most Famous Cave Mummy

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In the Spring of 1816, Nahum Ward played a “Yankee trick” on one of the owners of Mammoth Cave, Charles Wilkins, and obtained a Native American mummy that had been found in nearby Short Cave and displayed in Mammoth Cave. Ward had promised Wilkins that he would deliver the mummy to the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester, Massachusetts, but instead sent her on a 4-1/2 month tour of six American cities, charging audiences 25 to 50 cents a head and making the mummy famous. Meanwhile, Ward made a series of promises to donate the mummy to various institutions that were seeking to amass collections

of antiquities. It was not until the tour was complete that fall, and under considerable pressure from Wilkins, his peers and the public, that Ward finally handed over the mummy to the Antiquarian Society. The Society kept her for more than 50 years, but interest waned, and in 1874 the mummy, now known as “Fawn Hoof,” was donated to the Smithsonian Institution. But neither her exhibition at the Philadelphia Centennial in 1876 nor in her new permanent venue in Washington could revive public interest, and by 1914 the Smithsonian finally relegated her to dissection.

BOOK REVIEW

Greg Brick

UNDERGROUND: A Human History of the Worlds Beneath Our Feet (2018) by Will Hunt. Spiegel & Grau, New York. Hardcover, 275 pages, 5½” X 8½” format, ISBN 978-081-29967-4-6. List price \$27.00.

If you’ve been caving any length of time someone’s sure to have asked what motivates you. In this 275-page book, Will Hunt develops the thesis that a deeper and more general motivation through the ages has been the mystery of the underground. Much of his inspiration appears to come from the 2012 book *Sacred Darkness*, edited by Holley Moyes.

Hunt’s book is not a comprehensive or systematic account of the underground throughout human history. He’s very selective about what historical episodes he examines. In an early chapter titled “The Intraterrestrials,” he takes up the scheme of Captain Symmes to explore the concentric worlds he imagined existed inside our own Earth, beginning in 1818. This becomes a springboard for a discussion of the NASA Astrobiology program, which is sampling “Martian” springs deep in the Homestake Mine in South Dakota, and for recounting Lakota legends about the origin of their people from the Black Hills underground. This is the pattern of the book: a narrative alternating between personal memoir and one or two other intertwined stories.

Hunt goes abroad on more avowedly anthropological quests, seeking the meaning of the underground in non-Western cultures. In the Australian Outback, he undergoes a lengthy ritual to glimpse the Aboriginal mining of ochre, a reddish pigment.

To me, the most original chapter was that on the value of “lostness.” Hunt describes his own experience of becoming lost in the Parisian catacombs, where he went to find the tomb of Philibert Aspaïrt, “the patron saint of the cataphiles” (those who unofficially explore the catacombs). Philibert entered the catacombs in 1793, became lost, and his body was found eleven years later, in 1804. An ornate tombstone in the catacombs marks the spot where he was buried a second time, so to speak. Hunt argues that disorientation allows for reorientation because “the neurons in our hippocampus are frantically sponging up every sound, smell, and

sight in our environment, scrambling for any strand of data that will help us regain our bearings." The confusing labyrinth thus becomes a "liminality machine." But it can also turn deadly, apparently!

Hunt's book contributes to the literature of urban exploration. I've long felt that much of this genre is rather pointless. The usual pattern is a hyperbolic narrative by the pseudonymous hero who, after surviving many dangers, manages to get some place he's not supposed to go. Upon arrival, however, no significant observations or wider conclusions are made. The journey and his feelings about it constitute the material of the narrative. The tunnel functions as a megaphone of sorts, amplifying the echoes and the egos.

I was therefore pleased how Hunt makes use of his own adventures. While investigating a prolific tagger named REVS, who left a graffiti "diary" of 235 panels in the New York subways, he professes to see a connection to the Ice Age artists of Europe. Both left records in dark, inaccessible locations. But Hunt is not able to coax a truly compelling explanation from the taciturn tagger when he eventually tracks him down in a Brooklyn pizza parlor.

Hunt recounts the two-month sleep cycle experiment of French caver Michel Siffre in 1962 before undertaking his own 24 hours of sensory deprivation in a West Virginia cave. Siffre experienced entoptic (within eye) light patterns, the first stage of hallucinations. Apparently, the hallucinations, experienced by shamans around the world while on vision quests, are the brain attempting to fill the stimulatory void. Some archeologists use entoptics to explain the origin of pictographs. Hunt for his part reports seeing "small glowing orbs of light."

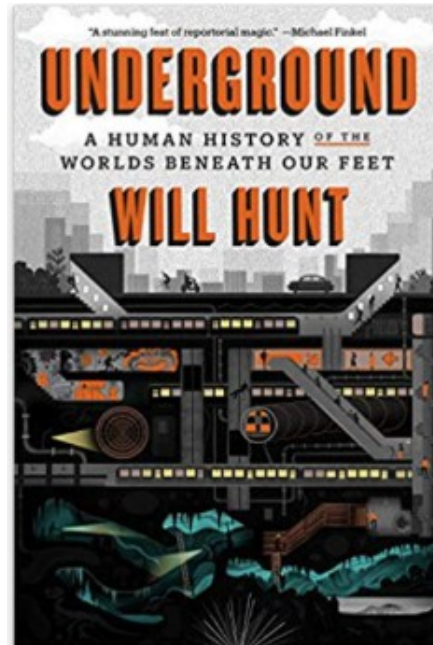
The ninth and final chapter deals with his trip to ATM Cave in Belize and Balankanche Cave in the Yucatan. ATM Cave contains the famous calcite-coated skeleton of the "Crystal Maiden," usually interpreted as evidence for a ninth century "journey into Xibalba" (the Mayan underworld) to offer sacrifice to the rain god Chaak. Apparently without effect, as the long-term drought which began around that time was devastating to Mayan civilization.

Hunt writes in an attractive, easy to read style. Judging by the abundance of epigraphs and scholarly quotes, he's well read in general literature, one of his favorite authorities being the historian of religion, Mircea Eliade. Hunt states that he spent ten years researching the book, but exactly when the undated personal events in the book took place is unclear, leaving a floating chronology.

The book contains no index, footnotes, endnotes, bibliography, or suggestions for further reading. Sources are referenced within the text itself. The B&W illustrations are not captioned and in a few cases I was confused about what was depicted. The uncaptioned illustration on page 157, for example, is Von Alvensleben's map of Baumann's Cave in Germany, but it takes a knowledgeable speleohistorian to recognize it as such. And as co-editor of *The Journal of Spelean History* I'd be remiss if I didn't point out that this early cave map dates to 1656, not 1665 as stated in the text.

Mystery, in some sense, has indeed played a huge role in caving activities over the years. Mystery motivates us to explore underground, but often only to

“solve” the mystery and find out what’s really there, whether boring or beautiful. I suspect that many of the day-to-day activities of the NSS and cavers generally, especially mapping and scientific studies, involve a net demystification of the underground. But the mystery does play an important role along the way. I recommend Hunt’s book as a fun read.



THE DEMISE OF SMYRNA BLOCK-CREEP CAVE, GEORGIA

Larry O. Blair

Brief Explanation Of A Block-Creep Cave and How The Smyrna Example Formed

A block-creep cave is generally formed as huge blocks of stone move or are moved away from a larger stone face by some extreme outside force either by nature or by the hand of man. In some examples a large slab moves downward and away from its original contact location and may move or collapse onto other blocks or boulders forming a roof or sides of a cavity. Stones, dirt and other debris may slide along and fill-in smaller cracks and contact points.

In the case of Smyrna Block-Creep Cave, SBCC, the blasting and drilling of the right-of-way for 1-285, the “Perimeter Highway”, through solid exposed granite produced huge cracks and fissures in the stratum. Over time a massive knife-like vertical slab, approximately ten feet thick by sixteen feet in length broke free and began to slowly creep away from the adjoining face. It slipped away at

about a forty five degree angle and began to penetrate the shoulder right-of-way while still leaning at this angle against the face. This angle of movement eventually brought the downward penetration into contact with the actual paved emergency pull-off lane of the expressway.

The Cave Is First Visited and Mapped

In early April 1976 Dogwood City Grotto/Outlaw Grotto caver Ray Bilbo was traveling to work one morning in Atlanta after a particularly heavy overnight rain. Ray noticed the slippage of the giant slab. He contacted me that evening and on the next day a Saturday he, Tim Clarke and myself met in Smyrna and visited this unique cave.

We left the site to visit a local hardware store in order to purchase supplies to construct a cave register. We built it in the parking lot of the store then returned to install it and to map the cave. It took three shots to map the cave at just over fifty feet in length ... it qualified!

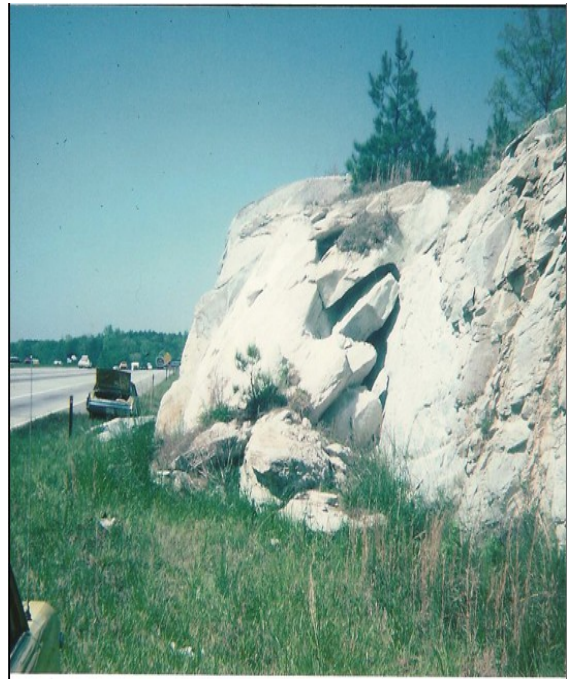
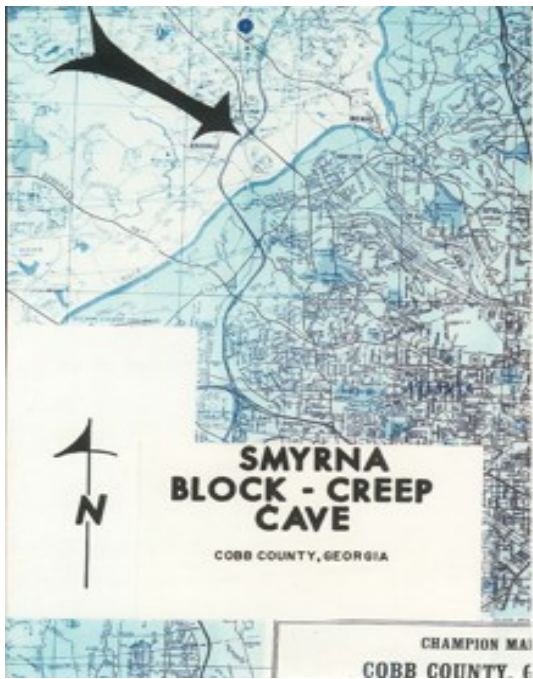
In a month or so a couple of new visitors showed up at a DCG meeting and explained how they had visited this cave, found the register and read of the existence of a caving club in the Atlanta area.

On later trips into the cave we found more evidence of rock slippage ... fine ground granite dust, small pebbles that had sifted into the void and massive skid marks on the outside surface of the rock face. On some visits a small amount of trash was found along with cave crickets, bat droppings, a spider and two caterpillars. Still later we found that our register had been removed. We felt sure the highway department had removed it to discourage visitors. Then too, a "Watch For Falling Rocks" sign had been placed adjacent to the cave on the narrowing shoulder of the highway.

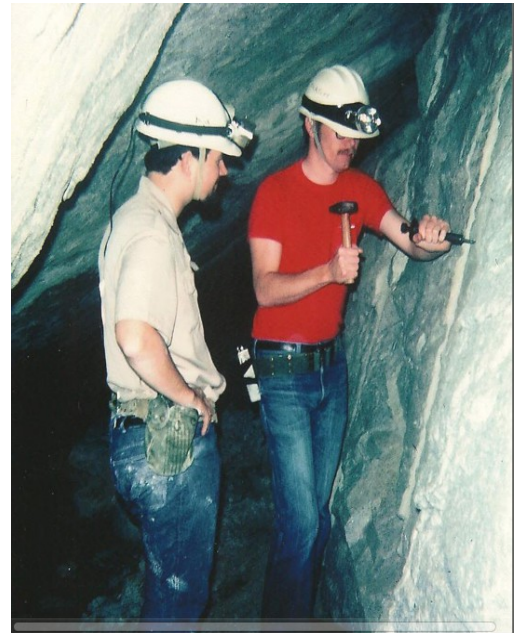
Too dangerous to walk to the cave and also illegal and by now no safe area to pull over and park close to the cave, we now left the cave alone. However, the cave was registered with the GSS and assigned number GCB 265.

By the first half of 1983 the Georgia highway department was taking steps to remove this potentiality hazardous situation to the traveling public. The wheels were now in motion to blast and drill away this entire troublesome section of granite bedrock.

The following photos in chronological order will tell the tale of the final demise of Smyrna Block-Creep Cave.



Left: The arrow imposed upon this map indicates the former location of Smyrna Block-Creep Cave, GCB 625, Cobb County, Georgia. Right: An April 17, 1976 view of the collapsed rock face along the road cut of 1-285. Note my 1972 Monte Carlo pulled over on the edge of the shoulder. You can get an idea as to just how close this granite slab was to the expressway.

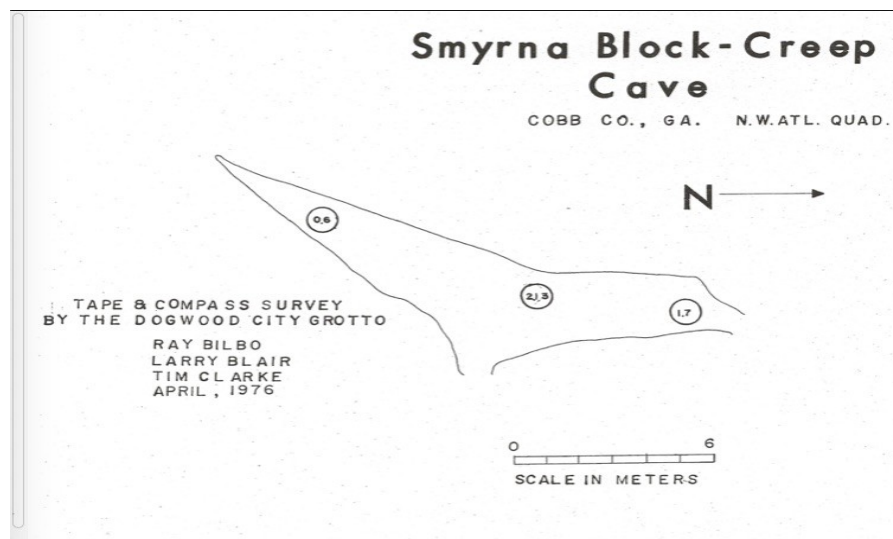


Left: On April 17, 1976, Ray Bilbo leads Tim Clarke (on the left) to the crawl cave entrance. Right: Interior view of Smyrna Block-Creep Cave. Larry Blair laboriously wields a rock hammer drilling an anchor for a cave register as Bay Bilbo looks on. April 17, 1976, photo by Tim Clarke.



Left: This May 17, 1983 photo was taken from exit ramp No. 16 for South Cobb Dr. and directly across from the cave's location. Drilling work is in progress to totally remove the entire rock face. Notice that the highway department has now installed a concrete road median down the middle of 1-285. I used the powerlines as a visual reference over the next years and up to today to locate the former location of the cave. Right: In this October 27, 1983 view all of the broken up and crushed granite rock has now been removed from the site and the angle of the road cut has been extended back away from the road.

Right: Again using the powerlines as a reference no trace of any cave can be found. Pines and other vegetation now is taking over but the soil is very rocky. During this visit GPS readings were taken by Ronald Blair the readings being: longitude: W 84° 29' 30" with degrees and fraction of degrees being: W 84.49170 and latitude: N 33° 49' 24" with degrees and fraction of degrees being: N 33.82354. I used handheld altimeter to obtain an elevation of about 800 feet. Photo dated November 16, 2008.



Notes

The powerline and right-of-way used as a reference to locate the former location of the cave are that of Maner Road off of Oakdale Road. Maner was cut in two by the construction of 1-285. My photos are looking up the hill to the remaining northwest section of the road.

A Bolton, Georgia 1954 series topographical map was used in aspects of the study of this area.

All photos are by this author unless otherwise denoted.

References

1. Hand written undated article or letter by Ray Bilbo concerning his memory of the discovery and our involvement with Smyrna Block-Creep Cave, Cobb County, Georgia, written circa April 1976.
2. "Georgia Underground", Vol. 16, Winter, 1979, No. 1, pages 6-9, official publication of the Dogwood City Grotto, Atlanta, Georgia. "Smyrna Block-Creep Cave" by Larry O. Blair.
3. "Cave Logs", ledgers of transcribed field notes, directions, sketches of artifacts, minutes taken at various grotto meetings and other cave related events and etc. by Larry O. Blair. Including books numbered; 1, 2, and 7 for dates mentioned in this text.
4. Dated 35mm slides now converted to photo prints and digital format.
5. Maps: the Bolton, Georgia 1954 series topographical map, produced before the construction of Interstate 1-285 and the "Metropolitan Series Atlanta aero atlas" October 1984- October 1985, page 29, coordinates K-1.

Acknowledgement

I wish to express thanks to Terry M. Chandler for his effort in the process of transferring these images included with this article to a digital compact disc ready for publication.

2019 PETER M. HAUER AWARD

The Peter M. Hauer Award is presented annually to a member of our Association who has made a significant contribution to researching and documenting the history of caves.

This year's recipient has long been dedicated to the history and science of caves. During his 48-year career, he has taught at universities in Kentucky, Connecticut, and Virginia. He has explored, mapped, and studied the history of caves in over 40 states, primarily concentrating on Virginia, Texas, New York, and New England. He continues to write and lecture extensively on cave history and geology.

He is the author of "Natural Bridge," a history of Virginia's "Eighth Wonder of the World" and a co-author of "Living with Karst: a Fragile Foundation." He has also written and edited several other books and many papers contributing to the history and science of caves.

He is an avid collector of historical cave memorabilia and has generously provided access to that extensive collection to other authors.

It is our pleasure to present this year's Peter M. Hauer award to Dr. Ernst Kastning.

SEA CAVE "STUDDERED" WITH DIAMONDS

ROMANTIC STORY FROM NAMAQUALAND

SEQUEL TO ARREST OF SIX MEN

(The Argus Correspondent.)

Johannesburg, Tuesday.

Amazing stories have been told about the methods employed by diamond smugglers in Namaqualand to outwit the large force of police and detectives engaged in suppressing the illicit diamond trade, but for romance there has been nothing to compare with the story connected with the arrest very recently of six Europeans in a cave about 20 miles from Port Nolloth.

At this spot there is a place known as “The Cliffs.” Here the Namaqualand coast dips down precipitously to the sea, which has eaten out innumerable caves.

In one of these caves six men are alleged to have made their headquarters. To reach it they had to climb down the precipitous cliff by a tortuous path, partly natural and partly man-made.

EROSION BY SEA

It is alleged that these six men had discovered in the cave that erosion of the sea had disclosed a diamondiferous stratum, several feet in thickness, and it is alleged that they had been working in this gravel for some time, gathering from the interior of the cave diamonds of remarkable quality.

The sea itself, it is stated, did at high tide all the work necessary to reveal new diamonds, which remained to be picked out from the sides of the cave after each high tide.

In some way, however, suspicion fell upon the men and one day two members of the Diamond Detective Department climbed down the cliffs and entered the cave.

There they discovered the six men who were arrested and taken to Port Nolloth where, it is stated, they are to appear in court soon.

Greg Brick’s Commentary

Transcribed by Bob Hoke from an article in the Cape Town, South Africa, newspaper *Cape Argus*, dated February 4, 1930, page 11, scanned and submitted by Dr. Stephen A. Craven in response to a clipping, “Cave Full of Diamonds Found, But Discoverers Are Arrested,” published in issue #153 of this Journal. Dr. Craven added that the cave “is so far from Cape Town & Johannesburg that none of the members of the S.A. Spelaeological Association has been there!” Google says Port Nolloth is 820 miles from Cape Town and 445 miles from Johannesburg.

According to Van der Westhuizen (2012) the diamonds of Namaqualand “are won from the shallow marine environment by extracting gravel from the sea floor by means of diver-operated suction or air-lift pumps.” Wagner and Merensky (1928) present a geological cross-section of The Cliffs (their Figure 4) suggesting that the sea caves occurred in a quartzite cliff capped by a “diamond-bearing raised beach.” Cliff retreat and/or littoral drift could have supplied diamonds to the sea cave. So it’s possible that the arrested men were telling the truth, but no follow-up on the case is available.

References

Van der Westhuizen, A. (2012). Provenance of alluvial diamonds in Southern Africa: A morphological and mineral chemistry study of diamonds and related heavy minerals from the Vaal-Orange System and the West Coast. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Stellenbosch.

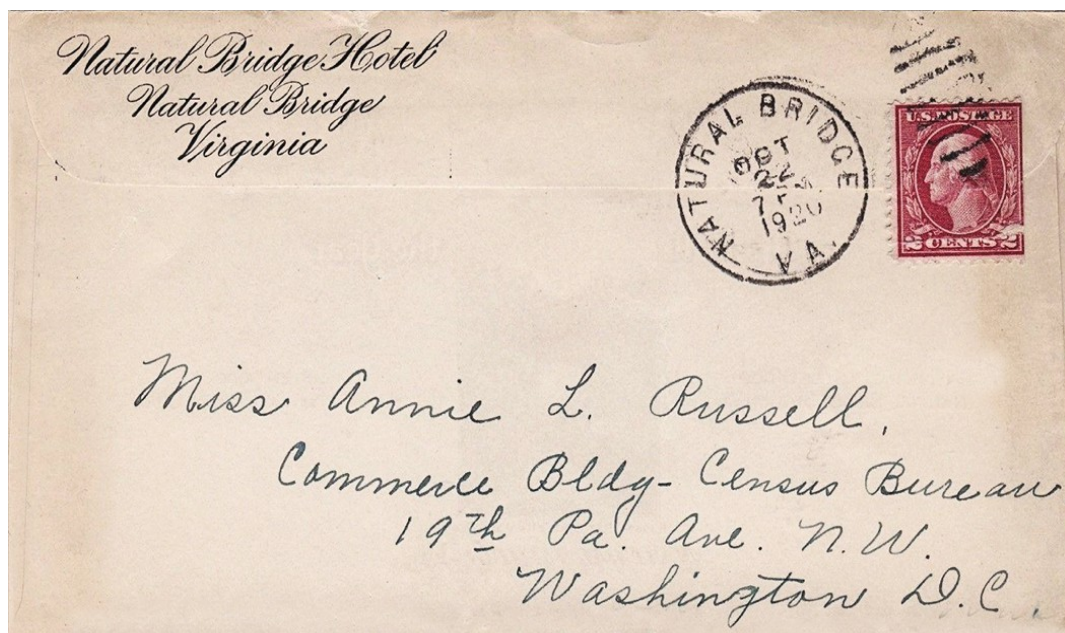
Wagner, P.A. and H. Merensky (1928). The diamond deposits on the coast of Little Namaqualand. *Transactions of the Geological Society of South Africa* 31: 1-41.

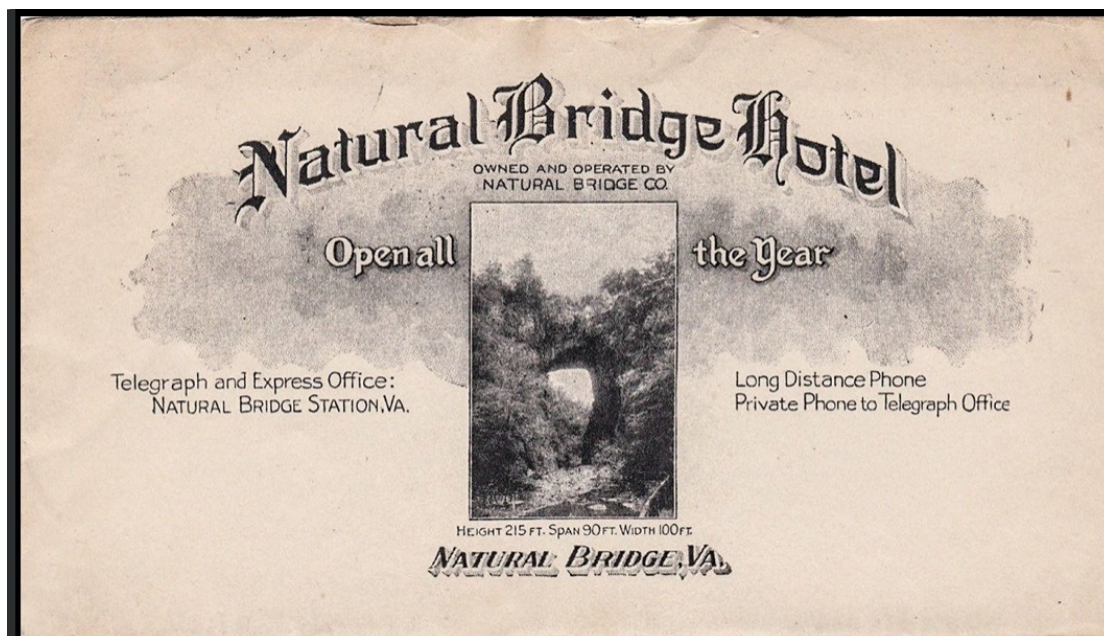
RECENTLY DISCOVERED CAVE POST OFFICE ITEMS

Thomas Lera

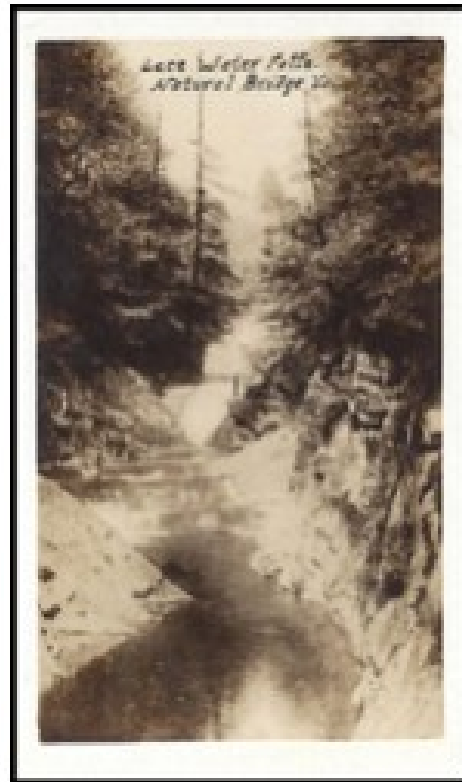
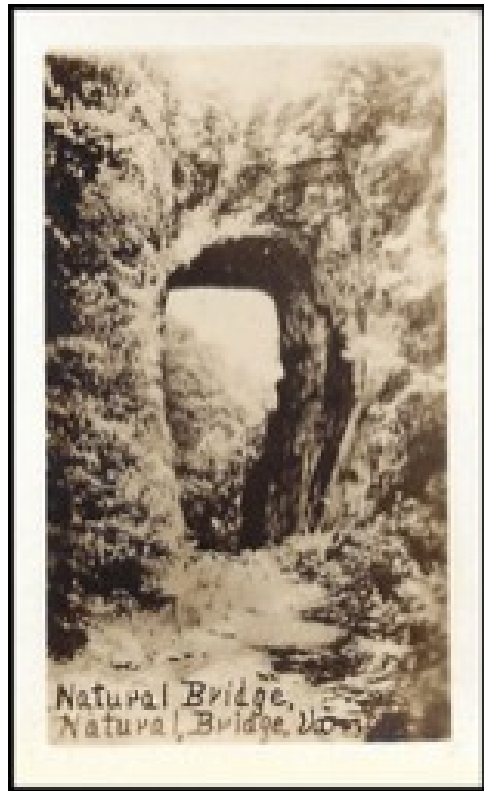
Auctions and flea markets are always great places to find something new, like these two items I found. The first is a letter mailed from Natural Bridge, Va. to Washington D.C. October 22, 1920. The envelope has the Natural Bridge Hotel return address and a circular date duplex with elliptical handstamp.

The reverse of the envelope is a beautiful advertisement for the Natural Bridge Hotel and an image of the Natural Bridge itself. The details of the text state that the hotel, owned and operated by the Natural Bridge Company, is open year-round with long distance phone and private phone to the Telegraph and Express Office is at Natural Bridge Station, Va. (2 miles southeast), and the Natural Bridge itself is 215 feet high, span 90 feet, width 100 feet.





The second item is a small Natural Bridge Mail Bag which was sold at the gift shop and mailed on November 8, 1938 to Goldsboro, South Carolina. Inside the mail bag were four $1\frac{3}{4} \times 2\frac{3}{4}$ sepia photos of the Natural Bridge, the hotel, and the surrounding area. Finding one of these with the mail tag still attached was exciting.

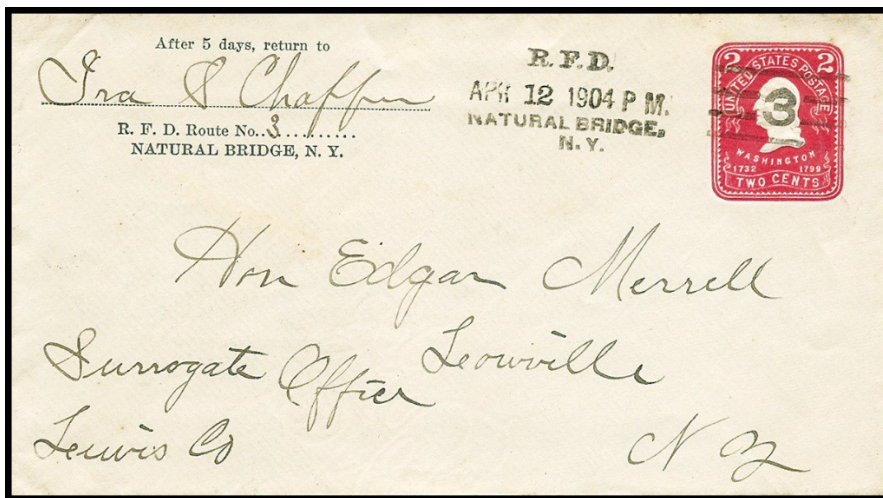




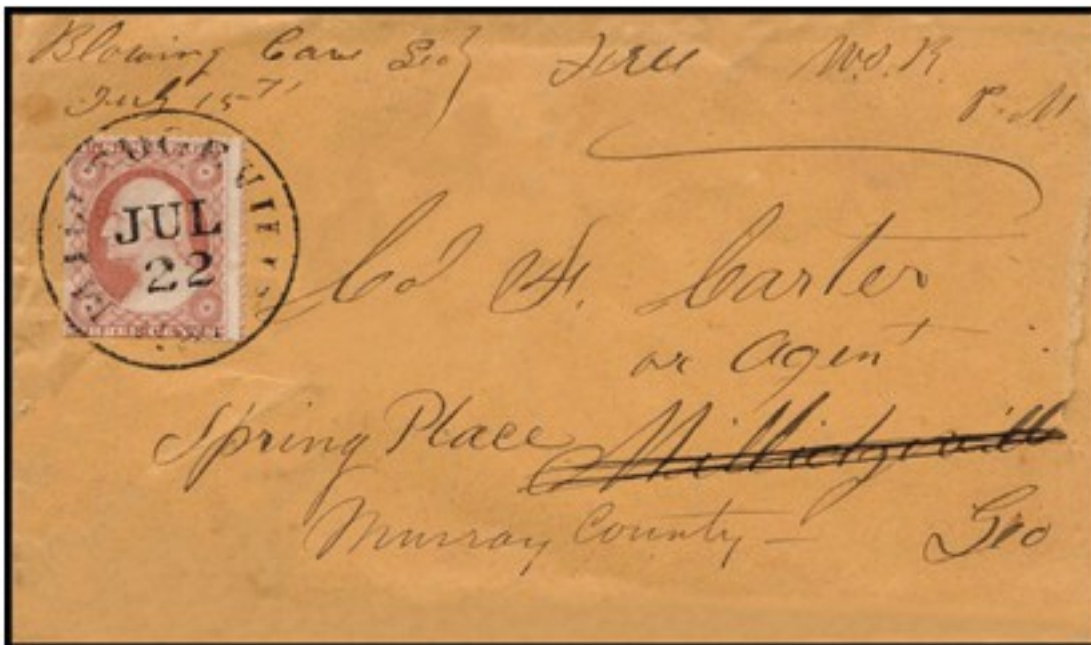
From a postal history viewpoint, these items are important because they show us how using the mail for advertising continued to draw visitors to Natural Bridge.

The next items, the first from Natural Bridge New York, shows Rural Free Delivery envelope from Natural Bridge. Natural Bridge had three different routes. Route 3 was the southernmost RFD and Lowville was 26 miles from Natural Bridge.

The second item is a Blowing Cave, Georgia 1857 manuscript postmark and "Free" rate cover mailed by postmaster William S. Rackley and forwarded by Milledgeville postmaster T. M. Cook to Spring Place in Murray County. The post office charged 3¢ to forward the letter.



Natural Bridge Rural Free Delivery (R.F.D.) Type 2H handstamp showing Route No. 3. Ira S. Chaffee was the Route No. 3 Rural Free Delivery Clerk.



Blowing Cave Geo manuscript postmark and "Free" with W.S.R. [William S. Rackley] P.M. [Postmaster] initials dated July 15, 1857; 3¢ stamp added on July 22 for forwarding fee.

My updated book, *Cave Post Offices – Second Edition*, is at the printer. This edition updates my first book with post office location maps, lists of postmasters with dates service, and over 400 envelopes, postal stationery, and postcards illustrating examples of the postmarks, handstamps and cancellations used by these postmasters. Availability will be announced shortly.