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The American Spelean History Association is chartered as a non-profit corporation for the study, dissemination and interpretation of spelean history and related purposes. All persons of high ethical and moral character who are interested in those goals are cordially invited to become members. Annual membership is $5.00; family membership is $6.00; and library subscriptions are $4.00. ASHA is the official history section of the National Speleological Society.

THE COVER

"Cleopatra's Needle and Anthony's Pillar." This print from Weyer's Cave, Virginia, appeared in PICTURESQUE AMERICA. Courtesy of Emily Davis Mobley. The back cover is another in the same series.

BACK ISSUES

All copies of back issues of the JOURNAL are presently available. Early issues are photocopied. Send requests to Jack H. Speece, 711 East Atlantic Avenue, Altoona, Pennsylvania 16602. Indices are also available for Volumes 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. All issues of Volumes 1-7:2 are available on Microfiche from Kraus Reprint Company, Route 100, Millwood, New York 10546.

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The 1983 Annual History Session will be held on Wednesday, June 29, 1983, in the Science Center of Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, West Virginia, in connection with the 1983 National Speleological Society Convention.

9:00 - 11:00 **SPELEOMEMORABILIA SESSION**

A display of old convention pictures, name tags, articles, booklets, patches, etc. All are invited to participate, browse, trade and photograph.

11:30 - 1:20 **AMERICAN SPELEAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION LUNCHEON AND MEETING**, President's Dining Room in Binedum Hall.

1:30 - 4:30 **HISTORY SESSION**

Papers to be presented include:

- The Sinks of Gandy and Jack Preble, Jack H. Speece.
- Civil War Writings From the Walls of Lookout Mt. Caverns, Larry O. Blair.
- Ephemera: Its Limits and Importance to Spelean History, Emily Davis Mobley.
- Bransfords Show Mammoth Cave, Harold Meloy.
- Discovery of Spelean Saltpeter, William R. Halliday.
- Cave Usage During the American Civil War, Marion O. Smith.
- William Henry Harrison - Cave Owner, Explorer and President, John M. Benton.
- Ownership History of the John Guilday Cave Preserve Property, 1787-1983, Edward Ricketts.
AN EARLY HISTORY OF RANDOLPH COUNTY CAVES

Peter M. Hauer

The authors of the last century were fascinated with the happenings and legends of West Virginia's caves. Randolph County has maintained its share of this attention. This report has previously appeared in the preface of Medville's CAVES OF RANDOLPH COUNTY, WSS Bulletin 1.

Many Randolph County, West Virginia caves have a history of human visitation dating back over a hundred years. Their use to man seems to have been limited to a few economic activities and numerous recreational visits. Considerable research might reveal better information than what is now available. With few exceptions, the traditional, literary and physical record is limited. William E. Davies, in his classic Caverns of West Virginia (1949), lists only four short historic notes in describing 45 different caves. This author knows of no accounts predating the 19th century, as can be found in reference to caves elsewhere in West Virginia.

The more common economic use of Randolph County caves was for moonshining. The best known of these underground white lightning factories is Stillhouse Cave, located a short distance from the famed Sinks of Gandy. Stillhouse, also known as Hermit's Cave due to a six-year residence by a New York man (Preble, 1942), contains large rooms readily applicable to the trade. The moonshining activities here were found and destroyed in 1881 (Davies, 1949, p. 300). Davies also reported moonshining activities in Aggregates Cave.

Traditionally, Crawford Cave #1 was used for moonshining. Some of the dug earth in the cave is supposedly the result of searching for kegs of mash. If true, this could not have been a very discreet operation, as the cave was obviously popular for recreational use. This fact is supported by the physical evidence of clay steps to a flat area that is reported to have been used as a dance floor, in addition to numerous early wall names and dates, some predating the Civil War. In 1898, Hu Maxwell wrote that the cave "has been a favorite one with sightseers ... the best known of all the caverns of Randolph" (Maxwell, 1898). Nearby Crawford Cave #2 is a much more likely candidate for moonshining, being smaller, more secluded, difficult to find, and containing, to this day, barrel or keg hoops and remnants. Crawford Cave #1 might very well have been the ideal decoy for some enterprising bootlegger.

One cave, Big Run Cave, contains definite physical remains of a still. Located in an active, wet dome room, the still is reached by crawling and traversing a variety of passages. The remains include a gas stove, buckets, tube, framework, and other odds and ends. The coils and boiler are missing. Another part of the cave has names and dates from a C.C.C. camp of the 1930s.

Saltpeter mining occurred in two Randolph County caves. Neither of the two known operations was significantly large. In Fortlike Cave, the mining activities are verified by sift-stones, pine faggots, 2-1/2 inch mattock marks and other diggings. The mining took place in an upper level dry passage, and in the next 200 feet of main passage beyond that. The leaching activities must have been carried on outside. According to Davies, the cave was mined prior to the Civil War (Davies, 1949, p. 293).

Crawford Cave #1, although lacking written or traditional records of saltpeter mining, contains ample physical evidence of that activity. Wall inscriptions from the Civil War and pre-Civil War period are numerous. An 1847 data has been reported. This author found dates from 1857 (J.B.M.), 1859 (Jesse F. Gregory), 1860, 1861, 1864 and 1865. The small dry maze to the right of the entrance passage has been well dug, with the dry dirt and clay removed.

Other physical evidence includes, as in Fortlick Cave, mattock marks and pine faggots, the two most common physical clues to saltpeter mining. The diggings should not be confused with the aforementioned search for mash kegs, since the dirt was definitely removed, and small joints and cracks were dug clean for dry materials. The mined portions of both of these caves are indicated on their respective maps.

The earliest recorded visit to a Randolph County cave is the Sinks of Gandy report of David H. Strother, published under the pen name of Porte Crayon. Although his visit "probably occurred in 1854, according to Cecil D. Eby Jr., his biographer" (Preble, 1969, p. 11), it was not pub­lished until 1872-3, in a series of Harpers Magazine articles entitled "The Mountains" (Strothers, 1872-3).

Written as a semi-fictitious account similar to the style of Mark Twain, Strother's illustrated article gives considerable insight to the remote and wild character of Gandy country and its inhabitants previous to the Civil War. His description of the trail to the stream entrance of Gandy tells of a dense virgin forest, now gone to the saw and axe. A visual appreciation of this scene can be gained by comparing the accompanying print of the cave entrance, from Strother's article, with any modern photo of the same. Notice that the boulders in the old print correspond to their positions today, verifying the accuracy of Strother's observations.
Strother's account first describes his own pleasant visit to the entrance and exit of Gandy, a lazy afternoon of hiking, riding and fishing. Intertwined throughout this description is a fictitious story of one of his companions, Richard Rattlebrain, who falls through a middle pit entrance, lands on a ledge, and is captured by a band of cattle thieves hidden in the cave (see accompanying print by Strother). The pit is shown on the September 1, 1940 National Speleological Society map of the cave. Strother also published prints of Rattlebrain being rescued from the thieves by Peggy Teter, a daughter of a local inhabitant, and the openings at the stream exit of the cave.

Strother's fictitious story of Rattlebrain and the thieves is not the only account of vile deeds of Gandy. Jack Preble, in his little booklet on the Sinks (Preble, 1969), recounts a bloody Civil War skirmish at the cave exit on March 20, 1864, in addition to the murder of a poor Syrian peddler in 1904. Preble, a pioneer NSS member, explored and researched the Sinks in 1936 and 1940, giving the cave its first publicity since Porte Crayon. He started the "Ibinthruthesinks Club" (Preble, 1942), and led a Life Magazine photographer through the cave in addition to the first NSS survey trip a few months later, which resulted in the mapping of the cave. Since then, the Sinks have been well known, both to the NSS and to the general public. Recently, postcards of the Sinks have appeared in local stores, and the cover of the 1970 Official State Highway map is a photo of the entrance, first drawn by Porte Crayon, so many years before.

In addition to the writings of Porte Crayon, one other 19th Century account of Randolph County cave is notable (Maxwell, 1898). Hu Maxwell, in his 1898 county history, described or mentioned at least five caves known to today's cavers, and theorized on the existence of an Elk River Cave, at the Sink of the Elk River, where a pit had opened in the river bed in 1896.

Maxwell produced an intelligent outline of speleogenetic concepts, and with the exploration of My Cave and others along the Elk River, modern explorers have essentially verified Maxwell's predictions. They now seem quite close to penetrating Mingo Knob to My Cave at Elk River, by way of Simmons-Mingo (Mingo) Cave. This was first attempted by Maxwell's assistants, Charles and Claude Maxwell, in 1898. They estimated their descent to be over 500 feet, a coincidental estimate, since recent survey tabulations place the known depth at 506 feet (Williams, 1971).

It is of interest to cave historians to note that Clay Perry, who first organized the study of cave history within the NSS, visited Mingo Cave in the 1940s, and, as was acceptable practice at that time, carved his name on the wall. This interesting signature has been preserved by modern explorers.

The two Maxwells also visited and described the Falling Spring Cavern in their 1898 searches for the theorized Elk River Cave, and explored 900 feet beyond the then known 200 feet of passage. That the Maxwells wrote their descriptions shortly after actual exploration is obvious, since they were published that same year. Their freshness is also obvious in the imaginative and romantic quality of the writing, where they describe the supposed floodtime picture

"of the fury of the waters surging and whirling through that among the vaults, galleries, precipices, and gurgling throats of the caverns subterranean reaches in time of flood, wrapped in blackness so impenetrable that Egypt's darkness was as sunshine, ... which can be appreciated only by those who have penetrated to the nameless depths and have seen the ruin and havoc wrought" (Maxwell, 1898).

Maxwell also describes Crawford Cave #1 and Ward Cave, as popular recreational caves, and made brief mention of the Sinks of Gandy and the Great Cave of the Cheat River. The Great Cave was explored by Professor George Jordan on March 18, 1855, the year after Strother's visit to the Sinks of Gandy. Jordan reported the cave to be located in mountains

"not far from a river called Black Water, being a fork of the Cheat River, in the county of Randolph, Virginia, about 40 miles from Beaverly and 76 from Romney ... desolate in the extreme ... (with) an indescribable air of wildness" (Jordan, 1855, p. 3).

The cave explored by Jordan was definitely in the Randolph County of 1856, and has been theorized as one of two possible caves: Bowden's Cave, Randolph County (Davies, 1949, p. 291), and Cave Hollow Cave, Tucker County.

Both caves are now known to be extensive and are on the "long caves list" of the International Speleological Congress (White, 1969). Bowden's Cave, a popular recreation site in the late 1800s, was closed by a quarry blast in 1945, and remained sealed for well over a decade, until reopened in an abortive commercialization attempt. This is the least likely of the two, since it resurges into Shavers Fork of the Cheat, while Cave Hollow Cave resurges into Dry Fork, as suggested by Jordan. Cave Hollow Cave also trends southwest, as reported by Jordan, whereas Bowden's Cave trends to the north. Cave Hollow is also suggested as the correct cave by Maxwell, this time writing in his History of Tucker County (Maxwell, 1886). Maxwell refers to Cave Hollow as Jordan's Cave and lists it as a half-mile long. He notes the blatantly false and exaggerated style of Jordan's book by quoting the biography of a local resident and a
contemporary of Jordan:

"On the west side of Dry Fork there is a cave, frequently
called Jordan's Cave. ... Jordan's book is as destitute
of elegance and correct composition as a narrative which
it contains is of truth. It would be but justice to his
pamphlet to say that for falsehood, nonsense and absurdity,
it has few equals and no superiors.
... Reports say that Jordan has since gone crazy...
" (Maxwell, 1884, p. 136).

The literature on this cave is quoted and reviewed in the 1941 notes of Miles D. Pillars, published
in NSS Bulletin 7 (Pillars, 1945). William E. Davies agrees with Maxwell on the Cave Hollow Cave
identification (Davies, 1949, pp. 291, 304), and this author concur with Maxwell and Davies. The
discrepancy in the Tucker County location over Randolph County, as reported by Jordan, is readily
explained. Had Jordan explored the cave after March 6, 1856, this account would have belonged in
a Tucker County history, since Tucker County was formed from the northern portion of Randolph on
that date, a few days short of one year after Jordan’s exploration.

The contents of this book record the vast amount of productive speleographic work accomplished in
Randolph County since the days of Strother, Jordan, Maxwell, and the pioneer NSS efforts. This
short history, though sketchy and incomplete in scope, should consolidate much of the readily
available data on early cave exploration, and serve as a basis for more detailed research in the
future. That future research should reveal, in addition to a more complete spelean history,
numerous extensions to known caves, inspiring numbers of new virgin caves, and an eventual
integrated scientific understanding of Randolph County's extraordinary karst features.

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Hailing from Steubenville, Ohio, "Jack" was active in caving even before the founding of the National Speleological Society. His great love for the outdoors and particularly West Virginia, led him to the "hills" every time the opportunity presented itself. He was present at the formal organization of the N.S.S. on May 29, 1940 in the Worden Hotel, Davis, W. Va. and later became the publicity chairman of the Society. The early issues of The American Caver contain numerous trip reports which Jack conducted. He served as a guide for the Society members to many of the W. Va. caves and as a leader to the Steubenville Grotto.

As an author Jack wrote about what he loved most. During the 1870's Porte Crayon wrote articles on the hills of West Virginia. Preble continued where Crayon left off with newspaper articles, magazine stories, and finally his book which was subtitled, "Plain Tales From the Mountains of West Virginia." Also within the "Land of Canaan" is the sinks of Gandy Creek where Jack was once trapped by high water but was able to survive and write about the adventure as well as the history and folklore of the area in a second book.

During the war Jack served with the 376th Bombardment Group in Egypt, Lebya, Tunisia, and Italy as an intelligence officer. During these years of active duty he was awarded 14 battle stars, the Bronze Star Medal, and three presidential citations. His book on the history of this group and their activities was never published due to his untimely death.

Preble was a dedicated conservationist who was inducted into the Conservation Hall of Fame by the Ohio Dept. of Natural Resources. West Va. also recognizes his great naturalistic efforts and has placed his name in bronze along with other contributors. Jack was a kind and gentle man who enjoyed nature, exploring and adventure. He detested strip mining and served as a director of the League of Ohio Sportsmen. Other interests included Indian lore, Masonary, art, fishing and caving.
SINKS OF GANDY CREEK

West Virginia is rich in spelean history and the folklore of Gandy Creek is one of the greatest told. Records on this geological wonder are well over one hundred years old. Although not a difficult cave or a long one, the Sinks has become one of the most popular caves in the state. The beauty of the area around it will help to attract newcomers as well as repeat visitors.

West Virginia is known throughout the country for its majestic mountain beauty and has been nicknamed the Mountain State. Perhaps the grandest area within its boundaries is the Land of Canaan at the headwaters of the Cheat River in the counties of Randolph and Tucker. In the heart of this region flows Gandy Creek, which disappears into a limestone cliff and entraps the heart of all who visit.

This land was first reported by General David Hunter Strother, using the pen name of Porte Crayon. His articles entitled "The Mountains" appeared between August 1872 and April 1873 in Harpers Weekly. Although written in fictitious Tom Sawyer style, the accurate description of the area and the Sinks could only have been obtained from a visit which he probably made in 1854.

Gandy Creek flows along a subterranean channel for about 3000 feet through a spur on the south side of Yokum Knob one-half mile west of Osceola. The south entrance is in a low ledge of limestone in the north end of a large depressed meadow. It is 30 feet wide, 15 feet high, heading north for 100 feet and then turning northeast along a fairly straight channel for 2725 feet to its northern exit. The passage averages 36 to 60 feet wide with some sections up to 100 feet wide and the ceiling is 6 to 30 feet high. Near the upstream entrance there is a water passage 200 to 300 feet long that extends west and ends in a syphon. Side passages are small short leads except at the north end where the exit passage is offset 100 feet to the east of the stream channel. Several narrow passages connect the two sections. In places the stream occupies the entire floor of the passage. In other sections it is restricted to narrow trenches while the remainder of the passage is on a ledge or gravel bank. About midway and at the northern end of the passage the stream flows in deep pools almost blocking the passage. An extensive series of underwater passages are reported to exist at the north end of the cave. About midway between the two entrances to the cave there is a dome on the east side of the passage. This connects to the surface via a third entrance about 30 feet above the stream. The cave has 3056 feet of mapped passage.

The area causes some to feel eerie and lonely as the mysteries of the past evade their minds, for within the cave thieves, rustlers, murderers and conspirators all made their rendezvous. The broken bodies of their victims have also been cared for by the Sinks. And not far away is Stillhouse, or Dead Man's Cave, which served as a site for a moonshine still. The Creek babbles incessantly but tells no secrets.

The tales and legends of the Sinks stem deep into the culture of the area. These Tom-Sawyer type accounts of adventures around the cave have been beautifully described by Crayon and Preble. One hundred years ago the stream contained vast numbers of large fighting trout and was surrounded by a primeval forest of lofty firs and a dense underground of laurel and rhododendron.

Crayon reports of an expedition to the "arched opening . . . - a gaping mouth which swallows the little river at a gulp," led by Peggy Teter. Richard Rattlebrain fell through a crack in Yokum Knob and into the cave beneath. His arrival aroused a band of thieves who were conducting business and placed his life in jeopardy. Later an unknown girl led him from the cavern downstream through a syphon and out the upper entrance to freedom. Before she disappeared into the laurel she warned him to "stick close to yer company."

During the Civil War this area was split in sympathy over the cause. Sampson Snyder received a captain's commission from the Union Army and led a company of 43 men in protecting their homes and property from the Confederates and bushwhackers. The Randolph County Independent Scout Company was referred to by some as the "Swamp Angels" and by others as the "Swamp Dragons". It appears as though these men liked to handle the law in their own fashion and used the swamps of Gandy Creek as their hide-out. At times they were blind to the colors of either blue or grey and only concerned with the valuables the armies possessed, their bodies being thrown into the creek and lost in the bowels of the earth beneath Yokum Knob.

In 1904 while Sian Sulayman was making his rounds of the lumber camps, selling trinkets and knickknacks, he was killed by two mountaineers, Burley Lamb and Phares May. They took his savings of about fifty dollars and left the Gandy to dispose of the body. R. A. Starks found...
the body, however, and, knowing Sian, brought the two assassins to trial and long prison terms. While exploring the cave in 1937, George Dare found in the big room a copper coin with Arabic or Syrian markings. Perhaps this was one of Sulayman's, taken by his killers and later discarded as being of no value.

Next to Yekum Knob is the unpainted cabin of Andy Tingler, a typical West Virginia Mountainman. He too loves this wild country and the amber-tinted water which flows in Gandy Creek. These people enjoy their privacy and have been known to shoot at government mail planes flying overhead. Andy states that they don't fly over anymore and neither do the revenuers come around anymore. He enjoys a slow, quiet and peaceful life.

One can only imagine the apprehension that men like Preble must have felt as they first started to explore the mysterious Sinks. Talking to the locals brought further confusion as to what they might expect. Although many stated they had traveled through the tunnel, all descriptions were vague and ambiguous. Was the little river of forgotten souls filled with skeletons and restless prowling ghosts from the past?

Another chapter in the history of the Sinks was written on Memorial Day, 1940. An expedition escorting Life photographer Herbert Gehr was trapped by rapidly rising water. Another member of the party was rescued from the raging current as he was being sucked toward the mouth. The adventure was abandoned after five hours of fear and struggle.

The fame of the Sinks continued to grow and on September 1, 1940, a complete exploration of the system was embarked upon by many specialists in speleology. The cave was fully mapped and reported for the NSS and the West Virginia Geological Survey. Crayon's reports of 1872 proved to be quite accurate and the legends told about this secluded site seemed more real.

Jack Preble considered those who were able to make the hazardous and dangerous passage through the Sinks of Gandy Creek a rather unique group. To recognize their accomplishment he organized the Ibinthruthesinks Club, complete with membership cards. Members on the first trip recorded (9/5/37) in this organization included Neil Wilson, Jack Preble, Martin Schiller and George Dare. By July 1947 over one hundred members had been recorded.

Since his first trip in 1937, Jack Preble continued to be intrigued with the system and its legends. Numerous trips only taught him to respect the Sinks more. He wrote, "There is yet something to be found in the Sinks of Gandy. You go look for it! It's not for me!" His last desire, however, was that the land embracing the Sinks "...always remain a lone and lovely land--far from this world in a sequestered clime--preserved for future generations, unspoiled and undisturbed, where one can find beauty, peace and solitude far from the excited pace of today's restless society."

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Petroglyphs are well known among several caves and rock shelters in Europe and Western United States. Recently markings in Organ Cave, West Virginia, have been noted which appear to fall into this category. Their age and meaning are still unknown.

Along the left wall of Organ Cave, Greenbrier County, West Virginia, lies an area of strange carvings or scratches - petroglyphs of unknown age or origin.

The area described is found some 900 feet from the entrance on a shelf above the stream. The area is about chest high and head high from the floor.

On Sunday, August 10, 1980, Jim Henry, Jim and Mike Whidley and I were led to this area by John M. Rutherford of Kinnelon, New Jersey. John has been exploring Organ Cave since the early '50s.

The carvings would seem to represent a collection over a long period of time. Cracks and fractures run through the area of the petroglyphs. In one instance it would seem that the fracture has developed since the carving was created. This drawing seems to be an animal or insect of some type. The wall section where its head would have been has fallen away.

Vertical scratch marks cover the area. Although Organ Cave is famous for its saltpeter mining remains of both the War of 1812 and the Civil War, I doubt that these scratches would represent saltpeter talley marks. These scratches are smaller than the talley marks I have observed and many have a curve to them.

Another insect-like petroglyph resembles an isopod or amphipod. Many amphipods were observed in the cave's stream.

Yet another carving would seem to be either a large "D" or a bow. The bow would seem most likely in that it is much larger than the more modern script nearby.

The legible script J. HOLBROOK, MH0, and the date 1811 and number 800 are also seen scattered along this wall. Other names were seen but we were unable to read them.

All along the edges and small outcrops of the limestone were hundreds of tiny scratches. These looked exactly like the marks a house cat makes on furniture or door facing, the origin of which is unknown.

It is also interesting to note that we did not observe any saltpeter talley marks in the extensive mining and leaching areas of the cave (the Hopper Room, the Round Room or the 1812 Room).

It is hoped that anyone reading this article who may have knowledge of the petroglyphs' meanings will contact either John Rutherford or me (addresses available in the NSS Membership Manual) or contact the owners of Organ Cave, Mr. and Mrs. George Sively, c/o Organ Cave, Rt. 60, Organ Cave, West Virginia 24970.

We wish to thank the Sivelys for their kindness and for allowing us access to all parts of the cave.
ORGAN CAVE PETROGLYPHS

Wall Crack

Wall Crack

1811 J. HOLBROOK

800 MHHO

Vol. 17, No. 1 & 2
Caves were utilized for a variety of purposes during the American Civil War of 1861-1865. Besides the mining of saltpeter, caves were used as places of hiding, places of recreation, focal points in military operations, burial sites, and prisons. All of these uses can be accredited from contemporary sources.

Obviously, the most important use of caves during the war was the mining of saltpeter or niter, the main ingredient of gunpowder. When the war began the various Southern states recognized that a domestic source of this substance had to be developed and encouraged the revival of mining from caves, many of which had previously been mined during the War of 1812-15. The Confederate government also recognized the problem and Major George W. Rains was sent on a tour of the South to help organize the procurement and refining of saltpeter, and to expand existing as well as to build new powder mills, all to insure a sufficient capacity to sustain the war effort. As a part of Rains' exertions he wrote in late 1861 a pamphlet entitled Notes on Making Saltpetre From the Earth of the Caves, which was distributed widely and republished in a number of newspapers.

Although a good many caves were mined by private contractors during the first year of the war, production was in general far below expectations, despite the reports to the contrary in the newspapers. In April, 1862, as a subdivision of the Ordnance Department, the Confederate Congress created the Nitre Bureau. Major Isaac M. St. John was appointed chief and under his direction the Confederacy was divided into districts with a superintendent for each and devised a plan to explore for nitre caves; "to stimulate private enterprises by circular and newspaper publications"; and, "When advisable, to start work on Government account." A "good working" cave was described as one which contained "at least 5,000 cubic feet of earth" yielding "1 per cent. and upward of nitrates."

In the subsequent newspaper campaign a number of patriotic appeals were made for the production of saltpeter. A Knoxville writer hoped that "every lover of the country will see the importance of working every saltpeter cave in the South to its utmost capacity," adding that "A man who will engage in the making of saltpeter with energy and extensively, will do his country a more effective service than he could possibly do, were he to arm and muster on the line of battle a regiment of fighting men." Later, in response to the advertisements of Thomas J. Finnie, superintendent of Nitre District No. 7, the Jonesborough, Tennessee, Express editorialized: "The feeling of the soldier in the camp prompts him to wish to see everybody else shoulder a gun. He does not stop to think that... Without powder and lead they could never kill a yankee, as it is a fixed fact that they run so fast that they can not reach them with the bayonet. It is the duty of both citizens and soldiers to give Capt. Finnie and his corps all the aid in their power."3

In late 1862 Fred H. Smith, the Nitre officer stationed at Chattanooga, advertised for "300 Hands" to "work at the Saltpeter mines in East Tennessee." He offered fifteen dollars wages per month, "soldier's rations," and "certificates of exemption" for all "who work faithfully."4

In some districts the superintendents attempted to set certain production quotas. In Finnie's district this was "two pounds of Nitre per day for each hand"5 employed.

On Christmas eve, 1862, Captain Finnie composed a lengthy circular to "SALTPETRE MANUFACTURERS" which provides us some insights into the problems faced by these men. Finnie noted that he had learned by "many letters" and "personal observation" that, "In consequence of the freezing of your works the two pounds required cannot be made," there was "apprehension" that he would withdraw his protection from the conscript officers. Stating that he was not "unreasonable," he urged the men to do their best and when they could not asked them to "let me know the cause, and if your excuse is reasonable, all shall be right" and they would "be protected from other military duty." But he required "strict attention to business," and expounded that "laborers have no right to leave their work without permission," reiterating at the same time that "contractors who employ the laborers have no right to dismiss those who have been detailed to them." Employers "may remove" laborers "from one cave to another" but both were "equally bound to work faithfully." The captain closed with a plea to "stand to your posts" and with the following suggestions:

If your hoppers freeze up, of course you cannot progress in the dripping and boiling departments; but during the freeze, you can employ some hands in burning ashes, which must be hounded and kept dry, others may be employed in getting fresh dirt from the interior of the caves, and bringing it to the entrance, taking care to keep it dry; then when the freeze is over, you will be able to progress so rapidly that you will find you have lost nothing in time or in money.6

There is space here to neither trace the individual histories of the largest operations nor to list the numerous caves mined for saltpeter in the Virginias, Tennessee, Georgia, Alabama, Arkansas, and Texas. There seems to be more information available about caves which were operated by Nitre Bureau personnel, enough that short histories of many of them could be written. Information about caves worked by private contractors, on the other hand, is rare. For instance, very little is known of the activities at one of Tennessee's largest operations, Big Bone Cave, on this account.
Through a twist of fate the extant records of saltpeter caves generally are better for Alabama than for the Virginias and other regions. This is because these records, while probably no more numerous than for other areas, tend to provide more specific information. Lists of Nitre Bureau employees are available and even a few daily work progress reports. The vouchers given by Nitre officers in Alabama tend also to be more legible and to give specific reasons why the various articles listed were purchased.

Names of caves in the records are often difficult to correlate with names in use today. Nickajack and Lookout in Tennessee; Sauta and Trinity in Alabama; and Organ in West Virginia were the same in the 1860s as now. But in Georgia Kingston Saltpeter was known as "Bertow Nitre Works"; in Alabama Cuntersville Caverns was known as "Big Spring Nitre Works"; Manitou as "Pt. Payne Nitre Works," Daniel as "Little River Nitre Works," Weaver-Lady as "Blue Mountain Nitre Works," and Horse-Adcock as "Cedar Mountain Nitre Works"; while in Tennessee Monteagle Saltpeter was "Battle Creek Nitre Works." It still has not been determined which modern known Morgan County, Alabama, cave was in fact "Eureka Cave," or which Bath County, Virginia, caves were "Heaton's" and "Horner's Works."

As the Confederacy lost territory its control of many of the prime saltpeter caves was also lost. But even with the loss of major caves such as Nickajack, Big Bone, Sauta, and Kingston Saltpeter, the Nitre Bureau managed to develop many lesser known but productive caves within the areas still under Southern control. Mining was still in progress at Cedar Mountain Nitre Works, Alabama, as late as January, 1865, and work continued in some Sullivan County, Tennessee, caves until the very end of the war.

Caves as places of hiding and refuge was a common use during the war. Under this heading I have chosen to include artificial "caves" or burrows as well as natural caves. The best known use of man-made "caves" was by the civilian population of Vicksburg, Mississippi, during the siege of the summer of 1863. A woman who lived through the ordeal wrote a book about the "delights" of such abodes. Her burrow was described as being "an excavation made in the earth and branching six feet from the entrance, forming a cave in the shape of a T." In one of the wings she had a bed and she used the other "as a kind of a dressing room" where "the earth had been cut down a foot or two below the floor of the main cave" and she could stand erect. She wrote that "Caves were the fashion—the rage—over besieged Vicksburg," and the "Negroes who understood their business, hired themselves to dig them at from thirty to fifty dollars, according to size." 7

Union sympathizers and deserters from the Confederate army and various war industries also utilized artificial caves. In August, 1863, a New York Herald reporter at Decherd, Tennessee, interviewed an Irish refugee who had been "working in the mines of East Tennessee" and had "lived in a cave, dug by himself in the mountains, for nearly eight months . . . and that his wife . . . had brought his food . . . from a distance of nearly two miles." In central North Carolina a deserter's burrow was described as "Even under the best of circumstances, in the fairest, warmest weather, and in the driest soil," to be "a dismal abode . . . with a darkness, a chilliness, and grave-like silence . . . which made fire . . . an indispensable companion." 9

Natural caves saw considerable use as hiding places. In late 1861 there was a plot by a number of East Tennessee Union sympathizers to burn all important railroad bridges. A man named Alfred W. Cate with four others burned the bridge over the Nolossawee River, after which they split up and "fled to the cliffs and caves of the mountain." Cate himself hid "for eight days, in bitter cold weather, changing location as safety required, from cave to cave," before eventually making his way to Kentucky. 10

Caves were places of refuge for escaped soldiers. In April, 1862, James J. Andrews, a civilian, and twenty-two men from three Ohio regiments, all disguised as civilians, went to what is now Kennesaw, Georgia, and stole locomotive with the intention of running it north along the Western and Atlantic Railroad and destroying bridges. The plan failed and all were captured and incarcerated in Atlanta. Eight, including Andrews, were hanged, but in October that year, six or eight escaped and traveling in pairs made their way back to the Union Lines. W. W. Knight and William Brown made their way into East Tennessee where they received aid from unionist civilians. One particular family invited them to stay a week to rest, which was later chronicled by one of the raiders:

> It was now settled that we would stay for a few days. A large basket of grub was prepared, and their boy, pretending to be going coon-hunting, made ready a large torch. We were to follow a short distance behind, with quilts and provisions. We first went down the river, and there turned up the mountain and went up, up till I thought we would never get to the top. We turned into another ravine, and again went up, up, till we came to a solid wall across our ravine. . . . Our guides turned a little to the left, and among the bushes he got down and showed us a hole big enough to crawl in. He entered with his torch and we followed. There was a good sized room in the cave, and he said we could have all the fire we wanted and hallo as loud as we pleased with-out danger. . . . Then he gave us counter­signs and promised to come again. . . .

> For five days we were fed and rested in this safe retreat; then our kind friend took us down again to the river and gave us a guide whom we followed over the mountains. . . .

According to one report Champ Ferguson, the infamous Confederate guerrilla of the Cumberland Mountain region of Tennessee, "was shot through the abdomen . . . and at first secreted in a cave."
Union Colonel William B. Stokes "learned this fact from the physician who dressed his wound, and immediately sent out a scouting party after him, but his friends had received an intimation of what was going on and removed him. His bed was left in the cave."12

During the spring of 1862 several thousand Union soldiers under General Ormsby M. Mitchel captured Huntsville, Alabama. Soon thereafter a segment of this force was sent via a train to Bridgeport, near the Tennessee and Georgia lines. Private Hubner of the Third Ohio Infantry reported:

On our way... back to Huntsville two of our men got shot by some bushwackers, who fired on our train... in the vicinity of Paint Rock. Colonel [John] Beatty stopped the train and sent several detachments in pursuit of the rebels. One party... under Captain [Leonidas] M'Dougal [McDugal], Company H, Third Regiment Ohio Volunteers went into a cave... in the neighborhood of Paint Rock. A slave... led the way. The entrance... is not easily detected. It is half hidden by bushes and rocks. We had to walk some distance with heads bent; but soon the cave got wider and wider, and looked like a church with fine columns and arches, strange formations of the dropping limestone... Often we raised our trusty rifles, but we found we were aiming at some curious limestone formation. We went about two miles [in reality, about 700 feet], found signs of occasional visits by human beings, and the negro assured us it was in fact a hiding-place of a guerrilla band.13

Allowing for an exaggerated description, this is most likely what is today known as Crossing Cave, just west of Paint Rock. Captain McDugal was later that year killed at the battle of Perryville, Kentucky.

The most common involvement of caves in actual military operations were the repeated raids of the Union troops to destroy Confederate saltpeter mines. Often it is difficult to discern which modern known caves were actually "captured" during the war. Below is a report about a cave which has been identified, Montague Saltpeter or "Battle Creek Nitre Works." On August 31, 1863, the commander of the Army of the Cumberland, General William S. Rosecrans, received a report:

that a party of mounted men were sent to saltpeter cave and works in Harris' Cove, Marion County, Tenn., and destroyed the buildings and apparatus erected there by the so-called Confederate Government. They found in and near the cave the following enumerated property, which was destroyed: 7 log houses, formerly used as offices, barracks of the conscripts, &c; 1 log shed, 7 large furnace-kettles, 1 bridge, leading from the foot of the hill to the entrance of the cave. They also destroyed a large number of hoppers (about 40) and troughs, ladders, &c., in the cave. The 7 furnace-kettles were found buried near the entrance of the cave.14

A few weeks earlier, during the same advance of the Union army to Chattanooga, there was a raid on a guerrilla stronghold in Franklin County. On July 7 General Alexander McD. McCook ordered a cavalry colonel to operate against guerrillas on top of the mountain about six miles from Winchester, because he had information that there was "a large party... hidden there." His plan was to send cavalry to the rear of the camp while two regiments of infantry under Colonel Hans C. Heg were to approach the mountain directly from Winchester. McCook required no official reports to be forwarded to him but after the operation he informed Rosecrans that "They captured 12 horses, 3 mules, and equipments, and about 1,000 pounds of bacon in a cave in the mountains. The men are reported to have escaped."15 Colonel Heg gave his version of the raid in a letter to his wife:

Night before last... I got an order... to take two of my regiments and start at 2 o clock in the night and go up in the mountains to hunt for Rebels.

I did so and after a pretty hard march up some of the roughest places I ever saw, I at last found a cave in the rocks where I believe there was about 10 or 13 of them. We had to get to the place but they heard us and jumped away from us. We captured 8 horses and two mules—a Lot of Hams—Cums—and clothing—and one Prisoner, and got back to camp about 4 o clock in the afternoon very tired.16

At Decatur, Alabama, in March, 1864, it was reported by a newspaper correspondent that the Ninth Illinois Infantry had "returned from its scout" and that "A squad of our boys, when traversing the mountains, came upon and captured a rebel Quartermaster, with a considerable supply of stores. Several wagons, loaded with cornmeal, and a large quantity of bacon hams. These latter were concealed in a cave."17

On the battlefield of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, is an eighty foot long boulder cave, mapped by NSSer Pete Hauer, rectangular in shape with two entrances and several skylights. During the battle, on July 2, 1863, Confederate sharpshooters hiding there picked off a number of Union soldiers on nearby Little Round Top.18

In June, 1864, Northern newspapers carried the following story about a skirmish at a cave in Missouri:

A few days ago... a company of Federal troops, while scouting in Maries county, about fifteen miles north of Rolla, came across fourteen horses
hitched near the mouth of one of the unexplored caves which abound in that region. Presuming from the appearance of the horses that they belonged to guerrillas, and that their owners were concealed nearby, they commenced a search for them. Having incautiously approached the entrance of the cavern, they were fired on by the ambushed enemy within, and six of their number killed. The Federal troops fired into the cave in return, with what result is not known, and then stationed themselves around the entrance, instituted a blockade.

Thus the affair stood at the latest accounts.19

Probably the second most common use of caves during the war was their visitation by numerous soldiers, as a diversion from the regular daily routine. At least a dozen caves in TAC, along routes of march or near where garrisons were stationed, were visited by Union soldiers, as indicated by the graffiti they left on the walls. At least half of these caves were entered in August and September, 1863, during the Chattanooga-Chickamauga campaign. Five others, including one with a fifty foot entrance pit, were visited in 1864 and 1865 by soldiers garrisoned at Scottsboro and Bridgeport, Alabama, and along the railroad in Franklin and Marion Counties, Tennessee. Another cave near Ringgold, Georgia, was visited just prior to the opening of the Atlanta campaign in May, 1864.

In his 1864 published book about his army experiences of the previous three years, Chaplain Alonzo H. Quint discussed the Anderson area along the Tennessee-Alabama line:

Anderson lies in a valley. The scenery . . . is delightful—home-like, except that in New Hampshire we have real rock, and here only limestone.

At Anderson there are wonderful springs. One pours out from under the mountain a torrent; and some hundred yards off, is an opening six feet high, into which we walked upright, until, deep in the hill, we reached the brook. Stalactites hung from the roof. The brook was coming out of the hill still deeper, but we could go no further.20

Depending on how the roads existed at that time, this may have been Ranie Willis Cave which has entrances both in Tennessee and Alabama, or possibly an entrance to a cave long-since destroyed by a large underground quarry.

On September 5, 1863, the commander of the entire Union army operating against Chattanooga, Major General Rosecrans, toured Long Island Saltpeter or Hill's Cave, on Sand Mountain near Bridgeport, Alabama. The army was crossing the mountain toward Trenton, Georgia, and there was a log jam in getting the wagons uphill. So while waiting, the general, a number of his staff, including Lieutenant Colonel Calvin Goddard, and apparently many dozens of lesser officers and privates, visited the maze-like cave, penetrating at least 800 feet from the entrance.

Among the soldiers in the cave that day was Private Baldwin (Ball) Colton of the Fifteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, part of Rosecrans' escort. Both he and a brother, Lieutenant Will Colton of the same regiment, kept diaries. Will's entry for September 5 was:

Many of the men, Ball included, visited Hill's Cave, and during a visit to this cave by General Rosecrans and staff, the General's rather bulky form became wedged in a narrow passage, and for a few minutes it was a question whether the campaign might not have to be continued under the next senior general. (Ball said, "He seemed pretty well frightened. We guided him out.")21

Nickajack Cave, Tennessee, was probably the most visited cave during the war. A saltpeter cave, its large entrance was visible a half mile from Shellmound Station on the Nashville and Chattanooga Railroad, and was seen by literally thousands of men from both sides, hundreds of whom actually ventured into its grand galleries. In numerous regimental histories mention is made of a visit to this cave, usually with a distorted description of the entrance, variously estimated at from twenty to 300 feet wide, and sometimes accompanied by unbelievable tales. In 1865, for instance, David Lathrop wrote a history of the Fifty-ninth Illinois Infantry. While discussing Nickajack he relayed the story that, 'When Buell's army was here [1862] some of his boys got lost in the cave, and were three days in finding the way out, and would not then if a band of musicians had not went in, and blew their instruments, which were heard by the wanderers, and thus discovered to them the direction they ought to take.'22

Late during the war, on December 6, 1864, the Colton brothers, already mentioned, visited Nickajack with some of their army friends. Will recorded in his diary:

After supper I went with Tony, Kirk, Ball and four men of my co. armed with candles inserted in the ends of hollow weeds for torches and explored the cave, which is very large, extending, some say, 5 miles, and has been used by the rebels as a saltpeter works. We could see their old earth hoppers still standing. A large creek leaves from the mouth of the cave and can be followed, in a boat, for a long distance into the cave. We had a very rough trip of it climbing among the huge fallen rocks, and up and down the supports of ruined bridges,
but the novelty and rarity of the enterprise amply repayed us for our troubles.23

Tourist caving by soldiers was not always safe. On the same day that General Rosecrans was in Long Island Saltpeter Cave, members of Company D, Tenth Indiana Infantry visited Nickajack:

Near the mouth . . . was a chasm and a single plank laid across. The chasm was about ten feet wide and thirty feet deep. While they were going in some were coming out. [Corporal] Samuel McIlvaine . . . stepped to one side to allow another to pass him, but missed his footing and fell to the bottom, sustaining internal injuries, which caused his death on the 8th of September.24

At the western tip of Virginia in Cumberland Gap, both Confederate and Union soldiers alternately visited and described what became known as Soldiers Cave, now part of commercially shown Cudjo's Caverns. On March 26, 1862, Colonel James E. Raines, Eleventh Tennessee Infantry, who commanded the Confederate forces at the Gap wrote his wife:

We are having great excitement here at this time, over a cave which has been recently discovered. The entrance to it is just above our house. Hundreds visit it daily. Gen. [E. Kirby] Smith & Staff visited it last week. I have been in it today. It is indeed grand, & beautiful. The stalactite formations surpass anything of the kind I ever saw. All conceivable shapes of men & animals & vegetables, are distinctly to be seen. There are towers & statues, pools of clear water, beautiful arches, & splendid chambers. Some of the rooms are said to surpass those of the Mammoth Cave. It is perhaps the most beautiful cave in the world.25

Small and even today relatively seldom visited caves were entered by Civil War soldiers. Near Stevenson, Alabama, several soldier names have been found in 230 foot long Eureka Cave. At the rear of this cave is a tight squeeze to a six foot long, three foot wide, four foot high pocket. There, Corporal John D. McCullough, Company F, Forty-second Indiana Infantry scratched his name. His pension record indicated that he was born in 1845, was wounded at Missionary Ridge in November, 1863, and lived until 1936. Interestingly, he was five feet seven inches tall, which meant he probably had little trouble with the squeeze.

References in the Civil War literature to the use of caves as burial sites are rare. An excellent example is the legend of the mummified soldier of Grassy Cove Saltpeter Cave, Tennessee. The story is that a few years after the war two men took a group of boys on a tour of the cave when they found on a rock bench the body of a man, seemingly about thirty-five years of age, "lying on a struggle woven of hickory bark," and clothed in full Confederate uniform. There were no marks of violence, and it was assumed that he had died of natural causes while passing through the area and was buried by comrades. The body was removed from the cave and buried in the local Methodist cemetery, but superstitious persons, afraid he was some sort of ghost, dug him up and reburied him in a place known only to themselves.26

When the Federals occupied Chattanooga, it was reported that a woman Unionist refugee had starved to death at the entrance to Lookout Cave. There her grave was made with a "rough headboard" upon which was inscribed, "An unknown woman, a victim of rebel barbarity, buried by the members of the 5th Ohio."27

Although not actually a cave, it was reported in a Chattanooga newspaper in May, 1864, that a murdered soldier had been "found in a sink-hole" near "the Chattanooga Creek bridge, on the road to Lookout Mountain."28

Two January, 1865, references have been located in which caves were used to house Federal prisoners, one in western North Carolina, and one in Tennessee. In "Dead Man's Cave," somewhere in the Smoky Mountains, were confined "about one hundred and fifty . . . Union prisoners" who were "guarded by Indians." Although "shut out from the world" for ten months, "they were treated very well by their jailers" who "frequently brought in venison and other game," and divided it with them. "They were supplied with plenty of corn meal, and were permitted many liberties not accorded to Union prisoners in any other prison in Dixie."29 Meanwhile, west of Nashville, in the vicinity of Dickson County, it was reported that the "rendezvous" of Confederate guerrilla chief Duval McNairy "was a large cave, where he had . . . prisoners guarded with capacity of secreting 150 men."30

The above pages have, I hope, illustrated that caves had a variety of uses during our Civil War, and involved men from only a few minutes' or hours' pleasure seeking to months of labor, fear, isolation, and even death. The bulk of my sources have been from the TAG area, but a person with access to the sources for the Virginias and other areas could compile many similar examples of cave usage.

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Vol. 17, No. 1 & 2
William Henry Harrison was born in 1773, near the James River in Virginia. To my knowledge, there exists no record that Harrison explored any caves in Virginia. He was not born in Virginia's cave area, but did extensive traveling. As a young boy with a sense of adventure, and given Virginia's numerous caves, the possibility exists, that he was introduced to caves or at least learned of their existence at an early age.

At age 18, Harrison came west to Ohio where he embarked on a career of dealing with the Indians on the frontier. He was appointed governor of the Northwest Territory and arrived at Vincennes, Indiana in January 1801. During the decade that Harrison resided in Vincennes, he made numerous trips through southern Indiana from Vincennes to the Falls of the Ohio at Clarksville. He made friends and became well acquainted with sparsely populated settlements along the way. One of those friends was Harvey Heth, a U. S. surveyor, who was running township lines in what is now Harrison County, Indiana, well known to present-day cavers. Harrison, it seemed, engaged in much land buying and speculating. His surveyor friend Heth guided him to choice locations in the area.

Much of what is recorded on Harrison’s land deals points out the fact that he seemed attracted to large springs. Of course, a good water source was important to the early settlers, but was it only a coincidence that caves and cave springs were there also?

Harrison purchased four tracts of land in present-day Harrison County from the U. S. Government and individuals. One of those tracts was purchased from Squire Boone (brother of Daniel Boone). Boone owned land and operated a grist mill on Buck Creek, in southern Harrison County. On that site was Boone’s Mill Cave, the present Squire Boone Caverns. The “burial” cave, also on the property, is where Squire earlier had hidden from hostile Indians, and he requested he be buried there after his death, a request that was carried out. So Harrison and Squire Boone already had one trait in common—their dealing with Indians. It’s also likely that a discussion of caves came up between the two men.

Another tract Harrison purchased was a section of land at the junction of Big and Little Indian Creeks, where the town of Corydon now stands. This area was described by present-day Indiana historian Fred Griffin as “a luscious valley fed by springs at the base of surrounding hills.” A considerable amount of the flow of these springs is from the Binkley Cave System, to the south, where the ISS has charted 18 miles plus. Of course, when William Henry Harrison purchased the land, Binkley’s Cave was unknown to him, as it was the mid-1900s before the sinkhole entrance was opened up. But when Harrison bought the land did the possibility of finding caves beyond or near the springs enter his mind? It’s still unclear, but the evidence builds.

Harrison’s fourth and largest purchase was 640 acres on Blue River in western Harrison County, which included Big Fish Spring (known today as Harrison Spring). Harrison Spring is one of the largest and deepest U. S. springs known. There have been several dye tracing projects done on the spring. The large drainage area of this spring comes from the north, east and southeast. There are other caves nearby on this tract and it is likely Harrison and friends at least partially explored them. A few, like Harrison Cave, have large openings and invite exploration. Some are pits. Pitmans Cave was visited by early explorers and many dates and names are etched on its walls. These need to be recorded for history, but so far this has not been done. If William Henry Harrison ever covered this 640 acres, he undoubtedly noticed and was aware of the caves he owned. Most of this area is undeveloped today, with few homes in the area.

Less than five miles from Harrison Spring and this tract of land is Wyandotte Cave. According to Jackson’s STORY OF WYANDOTTE CAVE, Dr. Henry McMurtree’s “Sketches of Louisville and its Environs”, published in 1819, reports that William Henry Harrison visited Wyandotte in the summer of 1806, along with a Major Floyd. Old stories have it that Harrison wrote an account of his visit to the cave, but it has never been found, if true. According to Rothrock (original owners of Wyandotte and family owned until State of Indiana bought cave in 1966) legend, Harrison visited the cave to look at saltpeter deposits. This explanation seems plausible, but it also could have been that Harrison had seen (on his land) many smaller caves and went to explore the “Mammoth Cave of Indiana”, as it was then known.

In the early days of Rothrock ownership (circa 1819), William Henry Harrison’s signature was said to have been found in the cave, but today, no one knows of its exact location. Jackson reports that George Jones, a long-time Wyandotte devotee, found the signature in 1920. Although interested in the find he became fascinated with other aspects of the cave and years passed.
When he later tried to pinpoint the signature he was unable to do so. According to a letter to George Jackson from the State of Indiana, he was still looking for this signature as late as 1971.

Wyandotte Cave was not called Wyandotte in print until sometime after 1853. No one has ever explained who named Wyandotte Cave, or why the name Wyandotte was chosen. The Wyandotte Indian tribe lived mainly in the northeast section of Indiana. According to Jackson, there was a rumor that during the early days of Rotrock ownership a lone Wyandotte Indian lived nearby, and befriended the family—thus the name. Other stories vary—a wounded Indian (Wyandotte presumed) was nursed back to health and showed his white "friend" the cave, etc. (Mr. Houchens bear, where are you?)

I have found evidence that possibly William Henry Harrison originally called Wyandotte Cave by that name, and it stuck. Harrison is given credit with naming the town of Corydon (Indiana) from a song he liked. Harrison County and a Harrison Township are named after him, but it is unclear if Harrison named these himself. It is doubtful, but it points out his influence in the area was strong. According to Indiana Historical Collections Vol. 14, Harrison had many treaties and negotiations dealing with the Indians, among which was the Wyandot tribe. (Note spelling difference) The collections mentions a handful of Wyandot Indians remained faithful to the government throughout the War of 1812. It is known that Dr. Benjamin Adams mined saltpeter from Wyandotte and nearby Saltpeter Cave during the War of 1812. Could Harrison have given the name Wyandotte to the cave because of this trust? Possibly the Indians themselves did some of the saltpeter mining. And thus the name Wyandotte originated? History does not tell us for sure—it is only speculation. Perhaps if Harrison's lost recorded account of the cave is ever located?

One other note concerning William Henry Harrison and caves. Harrison had dealings with a George Croghan at Ft. Stephenson, Ohio. I could find nothing to relate this to, but was this Croghan any relation to the Croghan heirs or family at Mammoth Cave? If so, it could provide another link to Harrison and caves.

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ADDENDUM: It has just been reported by Alma Jackson that Harrison's initials had been discovered by her late husband, "Wyandotte George", on the Old Cave Route around 1976. Efforts are currently being made to confirm this finding.
The history and legends of this small West Virginia cave extend back to the turn of the nineteenth century. The cave is said to have been used for mining saltpeter for the War of 1812. Some say the cave extends for five miles and contains a lake. Several interesting tales were revealed to early NSS visitors to this area.

Dyers Cave with its picturesque setting in a large valley sink has been known since before 1800. It is located between Warden Ridge and Pine Ridge, about seven miles west of Wardenville and 200 feet from an old schoolhouse. Currently owned by the Combs, the landmark was formerly a part of the Dyer homestead. This is in the same vicinity where Lost River loses itself near Sandy Ridge next to the Virginia-West Virginia border.

The sixteen-feet-wide by ten-feet-high entrance located in a limestone outcropping opens into a passage four feet wide by six feet high sloping downward in a southwestern direction. Small passages on the right lead into a saltpeter maze. Large icicles have been known to form about 100 feet from the entrance which last until the end of July.

Although Davies did not notice evidence of any saltpeter mining, such items as pine faggots, mattock marks, remnants of a shoe and a metal-headed mattock have been found along some of the side passages near the entrance. An 1835 date lies beyond these diggings and gives credibility to earlier reports that mining was conducted here before the War of 1812.

While a student in the seventh grade, Zenith Miller wrote about several of the legends concerning the cave. These were published in a 1942 edition of the Moorfield Examiner. One story tells of how the early settlers took refuge in the cave to keep from falling into the hands of savage Indians and another of how a pack of hungry wolves came out from its depths and devoured a group of saltpeter miners who were making gunpowder near its entrance, leaving only a few remnants of clothing and their tools to tell the tale. A small room in the cave is still referred to as the wolf's den and contains evidence of inhabitation by wild animals.

Sometime after the above incident, a band of men used the shelter to hide from the Indians while counterfeiting coins. The natives finally caught them and burned them at the stake. But, the legend continues,

"Several years afterward a group of men who had heard of the making of money in the cave decided to search for it. After making full preparations for the adventure they drank a good bit of whiskey to give them courage and then, with hopes soaring high, they started on their way. After searching for some time they found the spot where the money was supposed to have been hidden. Here they set to work with spades and picks and, after working for quite a while unearthed the old money molds. Now they were sure of success and began working harder than ever. At last they struck a metal box and as one member of the band struck the lid a heavy blow with his pick, a black, hideous form approached them. They were spellbound for a few moments, until one braver than the rest sprang at the approaching phantom. Instantly, every light went out and all were in total darkness. What were they to do? They could not find their torches and all were badly frightened and confused. After a while they decided on a plan, the oldest man leading and the rest following on hands and knees they crawled along in what they thought was the right direction. Thus for several days they wandered until by chance a rescue party found them and brought them out to the welcome sunshine once more. Never since has this treasure been molested, and, if this legend be true, and a great part of it has been proven to be true, the treasure is still there for someone to find and claim."

Davies describes the cave as consisting of a series of passages two to six feet wide and three to ten feet high which alternately trend southwest and southeast. There are a number of small drops in the passage and the average slope of the floor is 15° down from the entrance. There is a dry saltpeter maze to the west, within 100 feet of the entrance. 375 feet from the entrance a stream flowing southwest joins the passage. From here the cave is on two levels. A dry passage is parallel to and 15 feet above the stream passage which lies on the north. The passages, three feet high, two to four feet wide, are connected at several points and slope 5° to 8° in this section. The passages are blocked by clay fill and a small pool to the ceiling 675 feet from the entrance. A number of side passages, clay filled or too narrow to permit traverse branch from the main passages and apparently form a maze which is rectangular in plan. Another parallel passage leads to a high

continued on page 26
For years it had been rumored that many old Civil War era signatures were to be found on the walls of the Lookout Mountain Caverns, Tennessee. This is a lower level of the famous Ruby Falls, a nationally known show cave.

Although over the years many guides and tourists may have seen some of these writings, little if any research was ever conducted. This paper deals with the results of the as of yet uncompleted research on many of these signatures and other bits of writings that do in fact still exist in this closed and controlled lower level.

Two points of special interest were to be proven if possible. First, to try to prove the story that a military field hospital or aid station was established in the cavern and secondly, if signalmen did in fact visit the cave. With this information, therefore, it may be possible to authenticate the drawings of the signal flags in the "Signal Flag Room".

The lower passageways of the Lookout Mountain Caverns are virtually covered with signatures. In fact, in some areas these writings are several layers deep; this is quite evident in the area of the historic Masonic ballot boxes, for example. In this area are several signatures of troops from the Civil War; however, the bulk of these Civil War era writings are in the Canyon Passage beyond the "spiral staircase."

This short study will be concerned with the Civil War writings from both the Rebel and Yankee soldiers who left their record here during these violent days of the first half of the 1860s. In some instances, a great deal of information was obtained on several individuals, while on others I only researched deep enough to prove that this soldier did in fact exist and did belong to his specific military unit.

During two trips into this section of the cave to record this data, I got the impression that the soldiers from one side would try to "but do" the troops from the other side with their unit's prestige, all to the good of the historian. In one specific instance, I discovered an attempt to mark over the letters CSA. Evidently this place of safety, refuge, and pastime changed hands more than once during the pre-battle, battle, and later occupation of the city of Chattanooga by the Federal troops. I became almost overwhelmed with a sense of the presence and the feelings of these young men, some who would live and some who would shortly die.

Unfortunately, in many cases, modern day Kiltrays have defaced these historic writings so that perhaps only a name or unit could be described thus rendering the entire information almost useless for this type of research.

During these two recording trips mentioned, two points came to mind that I would try to substantiate with my research that would follow. The first point was to that of the story that this lower level was used as a military field hospital during the battles in and around Chattanooga, i.e., "Missionary Ridge," "The Battle Above the Clouds," etc. Secondly, during these recordings, I found one area I named the "Signal Flag Room." Here drawings depict signal corps flags or semaphore, and in one case a signal flag itself. These are drawn on both walls of the canyon here -- I would try to verify these signalmen's names. This was of special interest to me for two reasons: (1) I myself spent six years in the U.S. Army Signal Corps (several units), and (2) also because my great-grandfather, William Byrd Blair, was a signalman and courier in Georgia's Co. A, 9th Regiment, 2nd Brigade (Militia Artillery), Confederate States of America (CSA).

Many of the names recorded were extremely well preserved and easy to read. All the signatures and associated writings were fashioned by using charcoal or by scratching; I would like to believe that in some instances this scratching may have been accomplished by the skillful use of the tip of a bayonet.

The existence of this cavern to the Federal Army can be easily established. The cave's location, referred to as "Salt peter Cave," was marked on U.S. military maps of the day. The cave's location, along the shore of the Tennessee river, appears to have been marked as having two entrances.1 Also as a proof to Federal knowledge of the cave's existence, I refer to the personal diary of William Wrenshall Smith, personal friend of Major General Ulysses S. Grant and first cousin of Grant's wife.

At Grant's invitation, Smith, an established businessman of Washington, Pennsylvania, travelled to Chattanooga via military pass to visit his friend. Most of his time was spent in the company of military men only. On Thursday, November 19, 1863, Smith and Grant were to go for a ride. I quote... "The General had ordered the horses and we were about mounting when despatches (sic) are received from Burnside - so the General can't go, and we order the horses back - and I spend the morning on the knob or prospectory overhanging (sic) the river and about the ruined Iron works - reading and throwing stones into the river. The mouth of a great cave is said to be just under me."2

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The cave's existence to the Southern Forces is evident by the fact that the cave was in fact mined for saltpeter used in the manufacture of black powder. Also, it is felt that a visit to such a strange natural wonder would have been a pleasant diversion to the military life of soldiers from both sides. Also, it may have been a necessary retreat during extremes of weather or while under fire during battle.

In two instances, signatures and information were recorded that may have been left on the cave walls by persons revisiting the cave after the war's end. This assumption was not proven but would appear as such. The first evidence was found in the following: A J RATTIMER W + AR NOV 7TH 1873 MY HOME ATLANTA GA 17H INFANTRY. This person may have been an employee of the W&A (Western & Atlantic Railroad) which ran to within just a few feet of the cave's original natural entrance.

The next possible evidence of a revisit by veterans of the war is a list of seven names followed by: MEMBERS OF U.S. ENGINEERS COR -- this last phrase may be CO F and the date JUNE 12TH 1891. Perhaps veterans on a reunion or perhaps a unit of that particular era.

Of the two points I was most interested in finding evidence of, i.e., the field hospital and authenticity of the Signal Corps flags, I found the signature M. E. WEBB 33 MASS VOL. This was discovered to be Melville E. Webb, Thirty-third Regiment Massachusetts Volunteers. He was an assistant surgeon in the infantry falling under the Field and Staff commands. He was from Saco, Maine, and was twenty-one years old on August 7, 1863, when he was commissioned into the U. S. Service. He actually mustered in on August 13, 1863, and was discharged June 11, 1865. He survived the war.

In the Signal Flag Room, several names were recorded, including: J H PATON U.S. SIG CORPE, CAPT. TOM CONELEY, SAM KIRKPATRICK HICKMAN KY, JB WARE, and CBW. JB PATON was followed by a signal flag. On him, I found . . . "By general orders issued from the War Department, Jan. 14, 1864, the following men were transferred to the Signal Corps on the recommendation of the officers who had acted as an examining board of the department" -- "John H. Paton." Research on Paton gave some insight into the hardships of the times . . . During this period of time (close of November, 1863, to circa January, 1864), Capt. E. H. Russel under orders, made a careful inspection of the Signal Corps in the department . . . "We could not go all the way by water from Bridgeport, but landed some miles below Chattanooga, and went by land, crossing the 'Moccasin,' and thence by pantoon to the Chattanooga shore." . . . "We found the Army at Chattanooga subsisting on one-fourth rations, which were brought on a crazy little steamboat from Bridgeport to the place I mentioned, and thence hauled on wagons to Chattanooga." "Had it not been for such help as onions, etc., from the Sanitary Commission, I don't know where the health of some of our men would have been just then." Russell also wrote . . . "It so happened that my duties could not be finished at once, and I thus had the privilege of serving there during that short, but magnificent, season of victories."

On the opposite wall from these signatures and flags are a couple more flags and one simple statement . . . "WE ARE STILL GOING" . . . not only accompanied by the flag but also with the drawing of a female clad in a long dress and wide brimmed hat as was the fashion of that era. Her arms are stretched out, hands pointing up and down the narrow passageway. "We are still going."

Data on Capt. Conely was not found in the material at my disposal. I am sure he can be readily traced. His name appears several more times in this area of the cave. The main, larger signal flag is flanked on the right by a U.S. flag and the date SEPT 7th 1863.

I now had more or less proved my two points of greatest interest. Surgeons did at least visit this site as did the signalmen. This fact would lend credence to the story of the field hospital usage and to the flags on the walls of the Signal Flag Room.

William A. Watson - was a bugler, Company E, 1st Florida Infantry.

"In August 1862, the 3rd Florida Regiment reached Chattanooga and with the 1st Florida, 3rd Louisiana, and the 41st Mississippi were formed into a brigade and placed under command of Brig.-Gen. John C. Brown, Maj.-Gen. Patton Anderson's Division. In this brigade the 1st took part in the Kentucky campaign. On their return to Chattanooga on December 18, 1862, the 1st and 3rd was so decimated that they were united . . ."

C. R. King - Private, Co. A, 13th Battalion, Louisiana (Partison Rangers). He enlisted on October 11, 1862, in Providence, Louisiana. He was present on all rolls from November 1862 to April 1863.

W. D. Kendall, 5th Regt. T.V.I., Sept. 6th 1863. This company was known at various times as Captain Long's or Captain Bowman's Company. A wealth of data was brought to light concerning W. Devereaux Kendall. His position as 2nd Lieutenant and later to Adjutant presented him with much paperwork. Many CAS forms, including Form No. 3 (Officer's Pay Account), Form No. 40 (Special Requisition, No. 38 (Voucher to Abstract I), etc., were received from the National Archives located in Washington. These forms gave much insight into camp life during those war years. In many instances, the forms were not available so Kendall had to write out the entire form by hand. For example, on a requisition Form No. 40, dated from October 3 to 26th 1863, drafter, shoes, caps, pants, and other items were received at Chickamauga, Georgia. While still at Chickamauga on the 15th of November 1863, stationery including envelopes, paper, one lead pencil and two pen holders were distributed.

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Kendall was mustered in to the C.S.A. Army May 20, 1861 at Camp Brown in Obion County, Paris, Tennessee. Towards the end of the war on Inspection Reports of Strahl's Brigade, Cheatham's Division, commanded by Brig. General O. F. Strahl, dated September 15, 1864, Kendall was wounded on September 1, near Jonesboro, Georgia.\footnote{11}

Thomas Dillon, Co. K 5th Regt. - Tom Dillon was discovered to be from Company K, 5th Tennessee Infantry. He was mustered in as a 1st Corporal and later was promoted to 4th, then 3rd Sergeant. Dillon enlisted September 6, 1861 at Union City, Tennessee. He was elected Sergeant on May 6, 1862. The last military document found was dated March to April 1864; Dillon was present (2nd) Company K, 5 Regiment T.V.I. This company held various names as did most C.S.A. units, among which was Lauderdale's Company and Captain Ward's Company.\footnote{12}

It was also found that later his widow, Sarah L. Dillon, (Smith) received a C.S.A. widow's pension for her husband’s service. Her accountant was numbered 9855.\footnote{13}

J. K. Ball, 3rd Tenn Regt CSA - John K. Ball enlisted in the Confederate Army in Lynchburg, Virginia June 26, 1861. This 3rd Regiment was known as Lillard's Regiment and was a mounted infantry unit. He was in Company G and obtained the rank of 2nd Sergeant. Ball was captured by Federal troops during the siege and fall of the garrison of Vicksburg, Mississippi. Company muster rolls, dated September 1 to December 31, 1863, show Ball -- "Has not reported since paroled at Vicksburg." The last muster roll obtained, dated January 1 to June 30, 1864, lists Ball as "Absent without leave."\footnote{11} Later documents reveal Ball was again captured on May 8, 1865 at Washington, Georgia.\footnote{14} Papers filled out at that time described Ball as residing in McMinn County, Tennessee, having fair complexion, dark hair, and grey eyes. He stood five feet nine inches.

A copy of the actual Oath of Allegiance form Ball signed was obtained from the National Archives.

E A Godsoe, Co. B 12th Tenn 1863 - E. A. (Ed) Godsoe was a Private in the C.S.A. Army. He enlisted May 24, 1861 at Jackson, Tennessee. This unit was known at various times as Captain's Wyatt's Company.

Godsoe served as a ward master in several military hospitals. March 1863 saw him on the rolls of the Johnson Hospital, Cleburne's Division, A. of T. (Army of Tennessee) at Tullahoma, Tennessee. Around July 1863, this hospital moved to Tyner's Station, Tennessee. From the research material at hand, it would seem that Godsoe was also sick during his tours of duty at these stations, perhaps as a "walking-wounded."

Records of the Ocmulgee Hospital, Macon, Georgia dated September 24, 1864 show him as having a "N.S." disease. "Non-specific" is still a term used in military hospitals today. He was transferred November 19, 1864 to yet another station. A hand-written letter from the Cairns Hospital, Columbus, Georgia dated December 25 (year unknown), states that on the 25th Private Godsoe died. His personal effects were "two -- books -- containing, $1.75, one jacket, one package of letters, one pair pants, and one cloth cap."\footnote{15}

Calvin Frederick Co. D. 49 Reg OVI April 6, 1864 - Calvin S. Frederick, rank Corporal, age 18. He entered the service on January 4, 1864 for a period of service of three years. He was appointed Corporal on December 4, 1864. He mustered out of service on November 30, 1865.\footnote{16}

Charles S. Ball Co. B. 49# Reigt OVI April 6, 1864 - Charles S. Ball was a Private in Company F (must have been a reorganized unit as many were). He was 24 and entered the Service on January 3, 1864 for a period of three years. He also mustered out of service on November 30, 1865.\footnote{17}

Frederick and Ball were undoubtedly friends. They were probably from the same general area in Ohio and the same general age. On this day in 1864, they visited the cave together. During this period of time, the 49th Regiment of the Ohio Volunteer Infantry was in a lull between the fierce struggles of Missionary Ridge, Tennessee and Rocky Face, Georgia.\footnote{18}

L. F. Smith Co. 8 1st Mich - Lewis F. Smith, Co. B. Engineers and Mechanics. Smith was discharged but reenlisted as a veteran on January 1, 1864. He resided in Kent County, Michigan.\footnote{19} He mustered out of the Union Army at Nashville, Tennessee on September 22, 1865.\footnote{20}

R. B. Ralston, Co. E 36 ILL. Vol., Dec. 11, 1863 - Robert B. Ralston was a Sergeant from Bristol, Illinois. A conflict exists as to his enlistment and date of muster. The earlier of the two dates from the same source states that Ralston enlisted on August 1, 1861; his mustering-in date was August 20, 1861. He reenlisted back into the Union Army as a veteran\footnote{21} and was transferred to the First U. S. Engineers on August 1, 1864.\footnote{22} Verification of Ralston's unit and rank were also found.\footnote{23}

What appeared to be JLF 55 Ohio was felt to be John L. Fleaharty, a Corporal of Company E.\footnote{24} He enlisted into the Ohio Infantry December 10, 1861, and was mustered-in on December 31, 1861 at Camp McClellan, Norwalk, Ohio by Captain Henry Belknap of the Eighteenth Infantry. He was twenty-two years old when he entered the service for three years. He was mustered-out of service on July 11, 1865 at Louisville, Kentucky by Captain Edward A. Wickes, of the One Hundred Fifth New York Volunteer Infantry. He survived the war.\footnote{25}
REFERENCES TO OTHER MILITARY UNITS, NAMES AND DATES OF THE PERIOD

NOTE: These are by no means all the names, etc., representing the period 1860 to 1865 that are to be found in the cave.

J. I. Nelms (or Neims), 46th Alabama Reg.
H. H. Spear, Fla 1862
A Aron Walborn 1865
Clark, 27 reg Tenn Vol
S. F. Williamson, Ala July 27 1862
D. H. McKay 1862
Bart Pringle 1862
H. S. 1864
R. J. White September 4, 1862
S. Newsom 1862
Oscar A. Cantrell 1862
W. I. Barron 1862
J. H. Cockorobe (?) So. Ca. 1865
J. C. Alford 1863
R. L. Jones 1863
W. Bohanon 1863
P. Gillespie 1863 CSA
M. C. Clark Co D
E. R. King Sept. 6th 1863
Signal Corps USA
H. J. Hit Jan. the 18 1864
J. M. Miller Co. D 25 I (?)
24th Wisc.
CSA

Much research remains to be done in this area of the cave. Many names and other bits of information have not been recorded. I felt that I must at some point stop recording and begin research for this article. A fifteen-foot climb down in the narrow passage provided a good opportunity to stop and begin the "hard part."

REFERENCES


3. Clear evidence of mining activities may be seen in a grotto just off the right-hand wall in an area just before the "spiral staircase" in this lower passageway.

4. All stated and quoted signatures and other recorded information from the walls of this lower Lookout Mountain Caverns are copies from personal field notes and transcribed from 35mm color slides of Larry O. Blair, NSS 13921, Marietta, Georgia.


DYERS CAVE

continued

room with a 35-foot waterfall. Total length of passage is about 2,000 feet striking 210° in Tonoloway limestone.

REFERENCES


THE GEYSER