

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

The fortunes of the Cascade Grotto have been at a rather low ebb this past year. We are, so to speak, buffeted by a vicious circle. "No caves, therefore lack of public interest. Lack of public interest, therefore not enough membership to effectively seek out the caves."

I am convinced that Washington may yet be found to have at least one large, and perhaps spectacular cave. We should derive encouragement from the fact that even in areas quite heavily populated for several hundred years, such as the New England States, where one would think that every square foot of ground would have been explored time and time again, new caves occasionally turn up. Remember, 1952 was the centennial anniversary of the founding of Seattle. Academic interest in caves is hardly more than embryonic in this the "Evergreen State."

It is this very Evergreen that hinders us most. The dense forest that covers the slopes of western Washington's mountains - the cave areas - makes chance discovery impossible. One could pass within a few feet of a full headroom cave opening, and never be aware of its existence.

With winter the resultant thinning of the vegetation offers no solution, since these areas are then buried with five to fifteen feet of snow.

Since we have virtually exhausted all outside sources of information regarding the existence of caves, our course of action is clearly defined if we wish to pursue our purpose. Our only remaining avenue is the systematic exploration of the limestone regions of this state basing our efforts on geological study and reasoning. By this means we must surely succeed in opening such as the still unlocated Dolan's Cave.

Caving received good publicity when we were allotted a booth at the Mountain Rescue Council Benefit in Bellevue this last fall. Carbide lamps, hard hats, and other equipment peculiar to caving, maps of cave areas of Washington and Oregon, National Speleological Society literature, and photographs of cave interiors were displayed. A goodly number of visitors to the Benefit seemed to be quite interested, a few even expressing the desire to accompany the cavers on a field trip.

One of our newest members, Tom Steinburn, and his wife Arne, have actually entered a cave located on the saddle between Mount Snoqualmie and Guy Peak. It is believed that this may be one of the Rimored caves listed in CCR No. 4. It definitely is not Dolan's Cave, which according to all indications is about a mile and a half upstream from the mouth of Denny Creek, in a narrow box canyon.

FIELD TRIPS: Mount Snoqualmie Caves

Thomas Steinburn reports that in mid July of 1952 he and his wife, Anne, decided to search for a small cave that had been reported to them by Robert Clark. The cave was reported to be in Snoqualmie Pass on the shoulder between Mount Snoqualmie and Guy Peak.

"We arrived at the foot of the Snow Lake Trail about noon on Sunday. At 2 p.m. we were at the mouth of the cave which was located exactly as it had been described. The stream bed emerging from the mouth of the cave was now dry and the entrance sloped back into the hill for about twelve feet. Shoving gravel to the sides of the passage, I wriggled in, only to be stopped at the first bend by a sliver of limestone. I was able to break this off and continue a few feet abruptly to the right where the passageway ended. At my feet was a clear pool of water which dripped down and out of sight under a part of the wall. The floor of the pool was gravel of undetermined depth which led me to believe that the pool may dry up later in the summer.

"After emerging from the cave, we walked up the stream bed possibly 100 feet and discovered the entrance to a narrow dirty crack at the rear of which descended a hole possibly wide enough to admit a thin person. Because of the unstable look of the rock and the small size of the party, I decided not to attempt exploration.

"The Second Trip and Exploration of the Caves

"In late September, George Adair and I returned to the caves, while enroute to the summit of Mt. Snoqualmie. The first cave was rapidly entered and when no water was encountered in the rear, I dug out the gravel floor under the back wall and piled it in near by cracks and corners. After completing a "dog under the fence" hole, I crawled under and emerged into the inner chamber, which lies approximately parallel with the stream bed and is about 20 feet long, 2 to 6 feet wide, and 2 to 5 feet high. A narrow hole (6 to 12 inches) descending into the rock at the far end was the only visible continuation of the inner portion of the cave. The walls are of a white and gray limestone with bands of dirt running through them. In general, the interior was dirt covered and in one spot there seemed to be evidence of slumping of the ceiling. Bits of wood, bark, and twigs were stuck 2 or 3 feet up on the walls, evidently deposited there by high water during the spring melt.

"After leaving this cave we proceeded on to the other one Anne and I had discovered earlier that summer. I entered the narrow crack at the far end and proceeded down about 8 feet to the horizontal part of the crack. This continued with great difficulty for 5 or 6 feet, then it went upward and slightly to the left. At this point it broadened to dimensions slightly more than those of the bodies cross section. By judicious maneuvering, I was able to turn around and continue on head first for the first time. In 2 of 3 feet the passageway entered a hole similar to the one in the first cave. These holes are round and look almost like an overgrown rabbit hole.

On return to the surface, we searched the hillside for more entrances. There are many depressions in the hillside suggesting sink holes of some sort.

"High on the hill (approx. 100 feet) I spotted freshly disturbed dirt and upon investigation by George and I we discovered a depression dug or blasted into the hill. Some of the rock contained traces of galena. At the edge of the depression was a hole which led directly into a crack about 20 to 30 feet long, 10 to 15 feet deep, and about 6 to 24 inches wide. In the floor of the cave were two holes that opened into what appeared to be two tubes running at right angles to the length of the crack. Since the entrance was too small to admit even me, we examined it for weaknesses. The narrow part extended only about a foot or less along the crack and seemed to consist of a fairly stout flake projecting downward. Once removed, there would be no difficulty continuing on into this cave. Tools and possibly blasting will be necessary, in our opinion, before this cave could be entered. We plan to return next summer and open this constriction."

FIELD TRIPS: Mount St. Helens Cave

William E. Hanson writes that he has finally lead a party through the tunnel on Mount St. Helens:

"The party consisted of William E. Hanson, Mrs. Hanson, Mrs. Lillian Bently and daughter Lillian, and Gasper de la Chica, an exchange student from Spain.

"This tunnel was formed in 1843 but, to all appearances most of it looks as though it has just cooled. I am not familiar with the terminology of lava tunnels and consequently cannot properly describe what I saw. I am sure however, that the trip is well worth the time of anyone interested in this sort of thing.

"Two exciting incidents occurred on the trip. The first when Mrs. Bently stopped suddenly and exclaimed, "There's a body." I carried my gas lantern to where she was pointing and sure enough, there it was, huddled among the rocks. As I put my light closer for a better look, the "body" got up and laughed at me. At the same time on a ledge above us several flash lights turned on and a group of boys laughed long and hearty at our amazement.

"The second incident occurred when Gasper de la Chica became lost. He had continued a little beyond the breakthrough where we emerged and came out through another opening and promptly became lost. The poor fellow had a rather panicky time for a while. He is now back in Spain to do another year in Franco's army.

"The best time for this trip is spring or fall. The fire hazard cancels off a lot of the summer and snow part of the winter."

Mr. Hanson further writes that if and when any of the other members of the Grotto care to look over this tunnel to please let him know and he shall endeavor to be free that day to act as a guide.

FIELD TRIPS: Granite Falls Cave

A photograph of this cave was first found in a thesis* in the library of the University of Washington. From the thesis the description of the cave is as follows: Cave in limestone quarry one-half mile S. W. of tunnel No. 2 of the Everett and Monte Cristo Railway, about six miles east of Granite Falls. Quarry idle in 1910 when photo of two large openings was made. A geologic map of the area located the probable site of the quarry and the cave.

A trip to locate the cave was taken June 22, 1952 by Warren Gibson and Peter McLellan. Following landmarks as given on the map, the area was approached with high expectations of a limestone cave to explore. However, since 1910 the vegetation had become so dense that it was difficult to follow the abandoned railroad bed leading to the area. Abandoned cabins were found that may have originated in 1910. From newspapers found on the walls of some of the cabins we may assume that the cabins were last occupied in 1947.

A lime kiln was located near one group of buildings that may have been used in connection with the quarry we searched for. This lime kiln, in its long cold ovens, contained a considerable covering of flowstone, and amazingly--stalactites. Some flowstone and stalactites (a few nearly six inches long) covered parts of the outside of the old stone masonry.

The Alders and Cottonwoods being thinner in this area, Warren was able to locate a quarry about a quarter of a mile south of the kiln. No cave was found in the hole which was about 75 yards long and 35 yards wide. The cave may be there however, hidden in the foliage.

It should go on record that this particular location may be a Botanists paradise due to the extreme dampness and nature of the quarry hole which resembles a sink. An algae covered lake covers three-quarters of the floor with a quarried bridge dividing the hole into two sections. Persons interested in algae, lichens, liverworts, mosses, horsetails, etc. should go provided with color camers, flash equipment and tripods.

A larger party, with the aid of machettes, may well locate the opening reported if this is the right quarry.

REPORTS:

Concerning the caves near and under the City of Tacoma, Washington, referred to in CCR No. 4, J. Ernest Knight, Executive Editor of the Tacoma News Tribune reports as follows:

"The explanation of the old story about the smuggling cave under the old Tacoma Hotel was given in a Sunday magazine feature last summer (1950). The actual facts about the so-called cave are these:

"While the hotel was being built, a tunnel was dug through the bank to test the ground upon which the foundation was to be built. At the same time, in the vicinity of Fircrest, there was a natural cave that opened into a gulch. Somehow or other the myth got around that the two holes were connected.

"Our story also dealt with a tunnel which was dug for a distance of about a mile in the period from 1906 to 1910 by a railroad in a competitive struggle with another. The digging was abandoned after the two roads reached an agreement, and the tunnel was filled up with cord wood.

"There are no natural caves known of at the present time in Tacoma."

PROJECTS:

The 1952 summer's work of the University of Washington Archeological Survey of cave shelters of the state has been completed. A detailed report will be given in the next CCR when the information will be available to us.

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Distribution List - Cascade Cave Report

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- (3) Robert H. Flack, Apt. E, 619 Beacon Road, Silver Spring, Md.
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