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Alaskan Caver, Volume 4, No. 1, April 1979

Richard A. Hall

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ALASKAN CAVER

The National Speleological Society

This is to certify that

THE GLACIER GROTTO

having fully complied with all the requirements established by the Board of Governors, and having accepted the responsibility which such status entails, is hereby chartered in the National Speleological Society, and is entitled to all due rights and privileges: in testimony whereof the President and the Chairman of the Internal Organizations Committee have hereunto set their hands and the Seal of the Society, this 19TH day of November, 1978.



J. Thomas Rra

PRESIDENT

Erlyn H. Brasslaw

INTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS COMMITTEE CHAIRMAN

This is the last issue of the Alaskan Caver that you will receive unless you have paid your 1979 dues or pay them before the next bi-monthly issue comes out (late April hopefully). The costs of publishing and mailing a newsletter are high and we need as many members as possible to help defray the costs. Dues are only three (3) dollars (you can't even buy lunch around here for that) and a family membership with voting privileges but no copy of the Alaskan Caver is just an extra buck. An extra three dollars (\$6 total) should be added for airmail foreign postage. So, if you are interested in caving or in reading about Alaskan cavers or just want to make a donation to a worthy cause -- please send your dues to Sydney Jenkins, Box 4-2917, Anchorage, Alaska 99509 or fill in the form inside the back cover.

The ALASKAN CAVER is a periodic publication of the Glacier Grotto of the National Speleological Society. Subscriptions are free to regular members. Membership dues are \$3 per annum. Copyright 1979 by Glacier Grotto. Material not copyrighted by individuals or other groups may be copied by other NSS publications provided credit is given to the ALASKAN CAVER and a copy of such publication is sent to the editor.

Editor: Richard Hall
Publisher: David Moll

The Glacier Grotto currently meets on the fourth Thursday of each month at the Anchorage Community Center at 325 E. Third Ave., Anchorage. Meetings are at 7:30 pm.

GROTTO OFFICERS

Pres. Jay Rockwell
VP. David Klinger
Sec. Richard Hall
Treas. Sydney Jenkins
At Lrg. David Moll

On the cover is the document which proclaims us a duly certified grotto of the National Speleological Society. The next step is recognition by the IRS which shouldn't be too hard with the size of our treasury.

RAMBLINGS IN THE BROOKS RANGE

by Ross Brockman

FORWARD

Ross Brockman's report of his discovery of an unnamed cave on an unnamed branch of an unnamed stream is probably as beautiful an account of a "typical Alaskan caving trip" as can be written. Some day we may know of "significant" caves, but for the present, the memorable part of a trip is the way to it and the return. Here, he presents the mood of a day alone in a valley of the southern Brooks Range as only a true man of the wilderness can. Brockman came to Wiseman¹ in 1946 and in the late fifties made a cabin by a stream on the east side of the Dietrich River Valley² as a refuge from Wiseman. The irony of his situation became typically Alaskan when the heroes of "progress" built a state highway within 100 yards of his cabin, mined the grayling stream in front of it for gravel, and built a 1000-man pipeline construction camp and an FAA-approved airport a mile away. He did, however, retain his compassion and took in a young couple who would rather live in his cabin than at the camp. He later returned to Wiseman and was amused to hear that his guests had sold the cabin to another couple for \$500! "It renews my faith in human nature," he chuckled, "to learn there are still those around who can and will sell the Brooklyn Bridge!" He has written several books on his life and thoughts.

J. Lockwell

1 Wiseman is the subject of Robert Marshall's "Arctic Village" (Harrison Smith and Robert Hass, New York, 1933, 399pp). It is also the setting in Marshall's more easily available "Arctic Wilderness" (University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London 1970, 173pp). When I first visited Wiseman in 1970 its population had dwindled to 7 permanent and a score or two summer residents, whose principal income was mining and pensions.

2 The stream flows into the Dietrich River in Section 26 of Township 33 North, Range 10 West of the Fairbanks Meridian. The cabin is in Section 25 (see the USGS Chaudalar (C-6) Quadrangle). The limestone (or dolomitic marble) in the area appears extensive and consolidated. Other openings can be seen on the cliffs on the sides of the valleys of the Dietrich and Middle Fork of the Koyukuk.

It is the eleventh day of June. Time is of little importance to the person of the moment -- a shuffle of the years does place the narrative into A.D. about 1960. It is the lull erasewise that endears the order of reminiscence, and the person is lulling lazily, having awakened at a bright hour with really no reason whatever for tumbling out from the humble but comfortable bunk within the humble but well "engineered" log cabin standing quite up from the mouth of a nameless creek. There is quite a canyon accommodating the waters that extend on, an explorable length of terrain to suit the psyche, borrow a little on the fanciful side.

The outstanding "lull", so it happens, places the location to place rapture within the heart, a site of wilderness at its best with all the love for great open spaces, really not altogether a stretching of the imagination to feel that here the backyard extends as far as the eye can see, say nothing of conifer region that marches on to climate's capping deadline, borrow further if you will, on the great Arctic Divide. And, east, south or west, unspoiled contour of mountain and valley embraces the vastness. Thus the seemingly snugly forgotten area so rested, thanks, shall we say, to a chronicle of events that passed the gold mining, of better days on to monetary attractions elsewhere, as known to postwar activity.

Certainly the country knew hunting travelers from the Wiseman Alaska mining settlement as of many years back; however it is safe to say that of a more recent time, no one had bothered to pass that way excepting that one Eskimo family man had a couple of times munched through to the "Arctic Side" in search of wolves during a cycle when caribou herds had failed this section. The airplane hunting era was yet to come. So here was a place where stately spruce trees had found root, presumably about the only fair size timber that far up the river where a fair size cabin might be built. A little barbed wire to foil the bear composed all need of door or window lock.

As indicated, no sounds of the busy world, nor any alarm clock was apt to interfere at any hour, be it early morning or other time of day. You or I could plan or put off planning to suit the general run of the moment. True, it was interesting to play in gamelike manner, sort of personify the midnight sun -- not that it could be seen all night, unless you would choose to station yourself high upon a mountain. Now may I ask all to take leave with me, allow me to liken myself to feigned plagiarism as I revert to that manuscript that has lain nearly forgotten, contemporary to the date mentioned:

The day's adventures, or lack of adventures, I round out as a nightcap, and (I) drift onto a bit of thumbing over the morrow, to a thumbing over of a highland area that I like to think of and often do. In the back of my mind I will always visit the dell again that nestles quite back -- and naturally well up -- in the range. Perhaps I will not be dutifully biased another time, when the true care lies in seeing what lies over the summit, a place that I was tantalizingly near; I would camp again -- this time I would not divert my greater attentions to bedrock to see what lies under the gravels and panning the muck of "just one more creek." I used to make quite an effort at finding gold.

I will only roam -- and I hear the creek rushing on; there is the harmony of the swaying trees of the forest, where the vale reaches on and on, I see its flowing picturesqueness, I sense its delightful suggestiveness, of little nymphs of dreaminess -- I am naught but a barefoot boy....

The sun is being shouldered on its way by the mountain's rounding upper level, well, I am not so enthused at this moment with the thought of beating it in the canyon-crossing game by a wide margin. But there is nothing like an early start, and I decide it's worth the difference. After I greet the sun, quite ahead of canyon-crossing time, I enjoy the fortitude.

Just for mood enhancement bear with me as I further revert toward more "plagiarism" -- this from far-away Hawaii which does however show where the base of my dreams lay:

My mission was to make another try at locating a productive creek; but here among the alpine flowers, some of them strangers to me, among the acres of shooting star wonders spreading away toward ever higher ground --

who could not speak of the days back when;
who could not be just a boy again,
and who would let such a day pass by
and care not for the line where the hills
meet the sky?

Here and there the birds on the wing
dart and crest on the breezes of spring;
a wandering cloud like a toy overhead
changes in shape -- or may vanish instead.

Brooklets atinkle with silvery dreams
join, waits away toward far away streams;
a crown leans in to a bough close by,
secrets are whispered with nods and a sigh --

Yes, I would make the long climb again, just to wind about among the shooting stars, the golden-petaled dryades, and softly-shaded bluebells stationed on their lofting fuzzy plants, here where a strip of timber has taken root on a favorable side of the draw to seem oddly out of place to a degree of delightful loneliness as it dwindled on -- and away -- toward a high pass which a next canyon shared.

So it is only 9:30 and I arrive to look down into a (right) side creek quite up the canyon; this is the fork in quest; here I will decide whether to turn right, toward the harking grounds nostalgically -- or should I "explore" on ahead up the main canyon? It is fine to rest here on the falling ridge and think of both. And my eyes keep returning to the tantalizing cave with its guarding tree that withholds the secret of its true delineation. And I should like to learn more of the main canyon and its precipices -- a hollow-crashing sound down that way somewhat startles me; rock of Ages unknown yields to the very recent.

For no great reason I have been thinking that I have been too slow to observe an unopened bud of rhodocentron lapponicum, but here the snowbanks have allowed me to steal upon an unhurried beauty. The bottom of this fork side-canyon has its own little nook, the small stream touching here and there to finally excuse itself into its own little gorge; during a later picking my way up the main canyon I discovered that a lovely polished formation presented a ten-foot falls -- and a deep pool turned me back after a rather reckless hip-boot journey. Directly across, the toy basin at the foot of its own little wending pass, among hillocks with a scattering of evergreen trees, is joined to the right with mountain country's claim to rock-bound breaks and ledges that bound on above and diffuse into the rolling lands of vast acreage. I ponder this side; to hike ahead along the main canyon looks inviting, although I know that last-minute sheerness persists in guarding the creek to great extent; and the unseen slope is steep enough.

In restful gesture I allow my gaze to center straight afloat; well! The rough landscape there lets me discover that I am not alone amidst domain that seeks to guard secrecy as secrecy may -- I know that I spontaneously accept the prevailing ambience, but even so much as a turn of the head has not gone unnoticed; there just across, posed

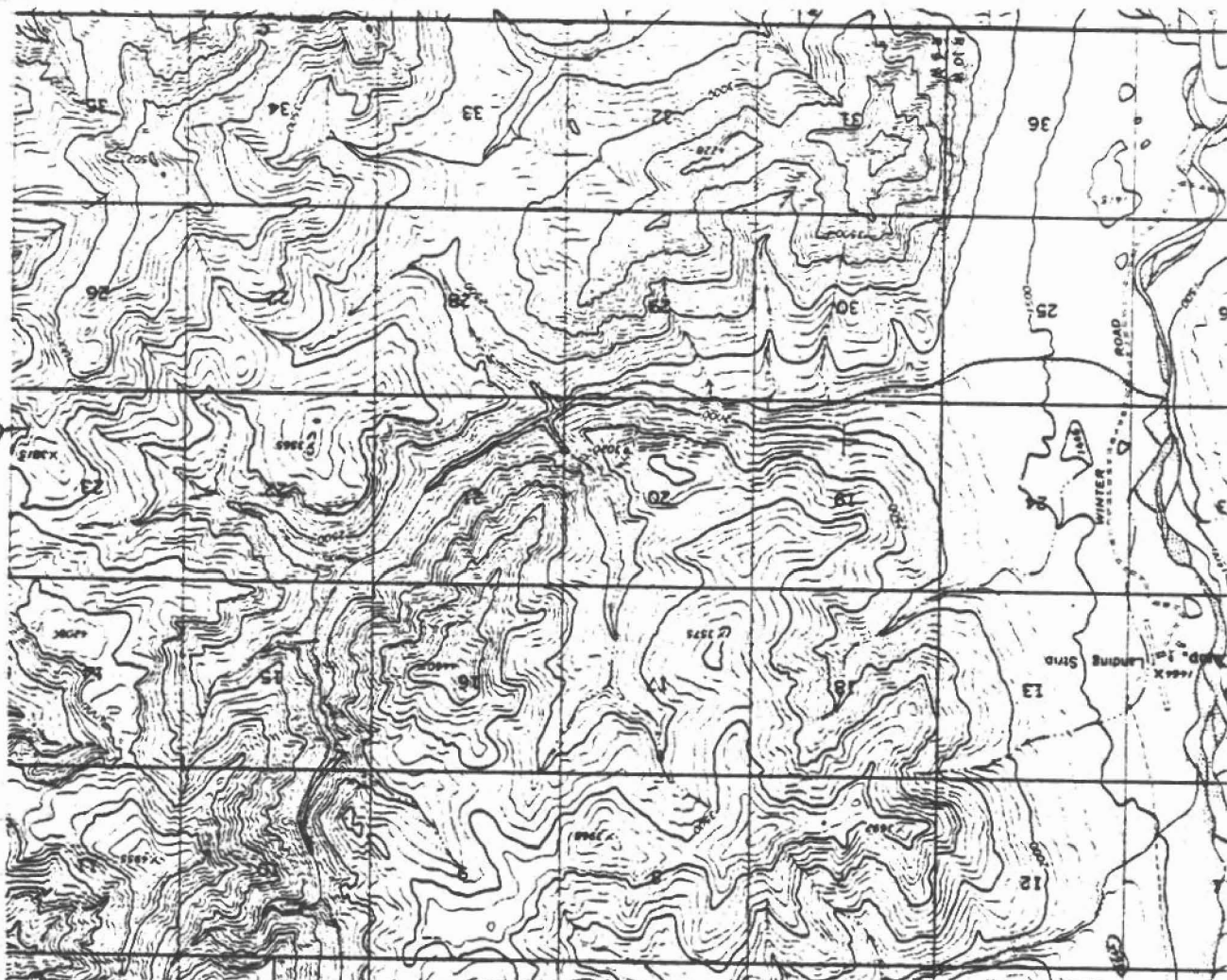
as a statue to wariness itself, a sheep stands as inconspicuously as his rock pedestal. I study the animal through my glass: am I sure it is a ram? Only once have I ever noted a lone ewe (if this sheep is without companions, -- but no, I am sure the growing horns belong to a yearling (I'll call it), trim and confident. He goes his way, ascending a rocky ridge and turning off as I stir, I catch a glimpse as he threads a brush-timber opening.

I will forego my semi-notion of revisiting the waiting lands and see where I wander to on an excursion that evolves a bit of exploring the main canyon. I find my way down to cross this side creek, a sugar-scoop dale leads me over a carpet of moss and out into a maze of tiny hills. Among the interlocking shadows of needled branches I come upon the lovely phlox Silene acaulis, the often display-in-symmetry flower is well-worthy of its cushion pink common name. Now I gain some higher ground alongside this creek and I trip out upon a finger of grass-capped gorge wall just because it might give a view of a passable way, which that main canyon has always foiled me in getting through. I learn little of that direction, so I turn my eyes upon a side creek on the other side of that canyon; it too is abruptly reminding except for scenery and I admire how a crystal clear belt rolls over its time-worn brim into a polished bowl that spills the turbulence on; that fork is for the water ouzel and other birds as concerns myself; swallows seem to shun this upper-river country, I have seen but one during my rambles.

The view up the main creek lays out a landscape in pleasing contrast as it swings around the great limestone masterpieces just opposite me; a valley holds forth up that way, if one would include the lazy slopes of relenting ground that seem rather unexpected amid hanging-contour views. And now that cave, from here it looks so close! By now it seems I am only following my toes in going anywhere. So I move on to a slide-stripped incline, and yes, I can get down to the canyon floor by use of hand-hold willows. I map the steepness of some solid rock parallel to the creek over there; no way to get around it near by -- but there is a thread of sheep trail over it! And from there on up the climb presents no undue hazards -- as I had sort of compared things, the grade does look less impossible from a closer viewing point.

And now I stand upon ice; great slabs lie tilted and show depths of glacier blue at broken junctions; overflow ice melting after winter's layered buildup. At my feet, the waters pour over "molds" of smooth marble; a short distance farther along a polished whitened section streaks across beneath the shimmer of the clear creek. Adornment draws me to such "intrusions" which of course the first glance would bring to mind "quartz" if you have fancied the gold prospecting bug -- well it would need to be a great percent gold by assay to work here at this corner of the world. Of course the "ledge" is more marble, beautiful with whirling water's tireless buffing of this mosaic bit of stonework in its long and weary course.

Not too sure of myself I locate a break in the bordering rocky bank and gain my way to the sheep trail...which I do find to be rather deserting at the far end for clumsy patrons -- but I scramble across. A few yards farther I reach the tree-and-grass "stairway" that I had mapped for a possible route to the cave, its exact location now hidden from direct view. I need to use "all fours" but little, although such progressing calls for frequent sessions of turning one's back to the hill, to at least see where you have been, and thus



CHANDALAR (C-6) QUADRANGLE

ALASKA

1:63 360 SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)

Outside I note a sharp or two of limestone. The cave has provided a mineral lick. The nature of the formation that caused the two feet from the front. I can reason that the to the cone-shaped end of the cave, which is about have bedded down or occupied the space all the way the cave foot are imbedded in the quartz. The sheep depending, rocks, having over the years plucked from haven't any compound layers in stages of decomposition. The mountain sheep have sought out this dense -- I wonder how many years, or perhaps rather brings me up, and no wonder; from the very portal of the cave the floor is deep in vegetation. The comparative richness of the cover the grassed family; of certain, the plants are weeds, the freshly-green lobed leaves bring to mind welcome that there are two types of lushly growing plants. A mossy grass-grown little frontage lies as a

as I face the opposite incline who would I see matching me? Three sheep are working toward higher ground and they reach a suitable place and the down, not falling to keep me and my course under surveillance. I wonder if one of the trio may not be "Growthform" as I resume my way. The going is not difficult; spring; distance across the belt the cover. Spruce trees are set in patterns-on curtains suggesting that this to the sheltering effect at an unbecome level, all in all, a man-ment to vastness and geographic diversity. I have actually become conscious of the object of my climb, as below, the starting level receives the falling landscape at my feet, across, as comfortably survey my corresponding level it seems that I could almost lift over to where the sheep are actually waiting my progress. I feel a little footed, now could that cave actually greet me with anything more interesting than cold granite walls and a rocky floor? No one, recent era or primitive would have ever visited it. I watch the quadrant border of my climb as I reach an estimated proximity of my object....could I have passed the site? No, the rim to my right changes...the broad facade appears masonry struck as compared with the coarse effect of adjacent rock masses. The steep footing of my route rounds off to an easy grade and there is an appropriate cave before me....I am eyeing the deep arch that surmounts the cave and here I am!

I thought I would put this old but unpublished cave rumor in this issue because it was from near the area of the feature article. Then I thought it was kind of odd to say it was near when in fact it is about 250 miles away; but I guess that's Alaska. Ed.

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be checked

Please be as complete as possible, so that someone else trying to follow your lead will have specific information. One rumor per sheet; attach extra pages if you run out of space.

DATE OF RUMOR: 8/12/75 2pm

LOCATION/NAME: (If possible give map name and coordinates; type of cave - limestone, littoral, rock shelter, etc.; access, etc.) Give as much description of the cave and area as you can:

Near Red Hill Spring near Canning River near Kaktovik, AK
69° 37' 37" 146° 01' 38"

DIRECTIONS: (Give specific instructions, landmarks, etc.):

Cave nearby spring

SOURCE OF RUMOR: Was it a person (give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area?), a publication (give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.), a visual observation (give coordinates, topography description, was the cave entered?) or other source.?

Charles Sloan, Hydrologist for USGS W.R.D.
218 E St Anchorage, AK

Visual observation of water from spring
cond 950 temp 29°c PH 8.2

OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION: (Owner, on federal land, animal denning area?)

Federal Land - North Slope

YOUR NAME: Harvey Bowers
ADDRESS: Box 1069, Wasilla, AK 99687
PHONE: 376-2294
DATE: 10/16/75

NEW MEMBERS AND FRIENDS

David Copeland, 1890 24th Ave E, Anchorage, AK 99501
phone: 272-3127 H

Brian Fitzgerald (NSS #19364) and Michele, 1200 Woodside
Apt C-4 Ketchikan, AK 99901
phone: 225-4732 H

William Halliday (NSS #812HF), 1117 36th Ave E, Seattle,
WA 98112

C. R. Pease Jr. Box 547 APO NY 09057

Rusty Rubeck, S.R. Box 9127, Eagle River, AK 99577
phone: 694-3571H

Mitch Wise 2611 W 29th Ave, Anchorage, AK 99503
phone 272-5307 H

ADDRESS CHANGES AND CORRECTIONS

Ross Brockman: phone: via Northwind

Charles Evans 123 E 11th, Anchorage, AK 99501
phone: 277-2396 H 274-8032 W

Dr William Godbey Star Route L 1605, Palmer, AK 99645
phone: 745-2337

Nancy Hallinan phone: 479-7454 W

Gary Halsey phone: 276-7450 H

Joseph Head phone: 479-7494 W

John Jansen phone: 272-6414 W

David Moll phone: 479-5287 H

Edward Nelson phone: 486-3672

Jay Rockwell phone 271-3129 W

Erik D Westman Box 1313, Seward, AK 99664
phone: 224-3516 H 224-3019 or 3023 W

David Streett phone: 243-4829 H 271-3484 W

GLACIER GROTTO IN THE NEWS

In case you haven't noticed, Alaska caving has seen a lot of publication lately. The most noteworthy example being Stan Jenkins' article on Byron Glacier ice caves in the February 1979 Alaska magazine. It is a short well-written account of the beauty and danger of ice caves; plus three color photos. We also received a two-liner stating our existence in the 1979 NSS Member's Manual, a newly published membership list with twenty-two additional pages explaining the organization, administration, publications and activities of the NSS. When I read it I was amazed to see all that the NSS is involved in. A perusal of the February NSS News will also bring to light a synopsis of our recent cavehunting expedition to the Chitistone River.

The most extensive reports however are by a Japanese team who did some glacier caving here last summer. They sent us a copy of the magazine article they wrote (in Japanese), a set of cave reports (in English) and a copy of their official trip report (in Japanese and English). We also have some information from a Spanish group that was here (in Spanish of course). The Japanese material will be in an upcoming issue of the Alaskan Caver.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO CONSTITUTION

The IRS requires that no one in the organization benefit if it folds so Article X needs to be changed by exchanging "Glacier Grotto property" for "NSS property". The constitution also says that two-thirds of the members must vote in favor of the amendment for it to pass, in writing. Therefore, members should vote on the next page. Mail the form in or bring it to the April 26 meeting.

Thank You

Proposal to amend Article X of the Constitution of the Glacier Grotto 1/25/79

The undersigned propose to read: Article X - Glacier Grotto Property

Any Glacier Grotto property shall revert to the N.S.S. in the event of dissolution.

Richard A Hall NSS 16556

Charles H. Heston NSS 16557

Richard H. Heston NSS 15232

Tad Rockwell NSS 17556

Jay Rockwell NSS 11308

BALLOT

To be completed by members having paid 1979 dues or including dues with this ballot.

Please bring this ballot to the April 26 meeting or mail it to Richard Hall, 4607 Klondike Crt., Anchorage, AK 99504 by that date.

President Jay Rockwell

V. Pres. David Street

Do you agree with
the proposed con-
stitutional amendment?

yes

Secretary Richard Hall

no

Treasurer Sydney Jenkins

At Large David Moll

More than one member may vote on the same form.

	DUES	NSS#	
Regular or Associate Member		@ \$3.00	
Family Members		@ \$1.00	
Total			

Mail this form with remittance to Sydney Jenkins, Box 4-2917, Anchorage, AK 99509 OR mail it in with the above ballot OR bring it to the April 26 meeting.

Please make any address corrections on the other side of this form.

ELECTIONS

The nominating committee has nominated the following slate for officers for 1979:

President	Jay Rockwell
Vice President	David Street
Secretary	Richard Hall
Treasurer	Sydney Jenkins
At Large	David Moll

Elections will be held at the April meeting. If you do not expect to attend the meeting please vote on the other side of this page and mail it in. You may enter the name of someone else as long as they are current NSS members and are willing to serve in the post.

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The Alaskan Caver
A.A. Hall, Editor
4607 Klondike Crt.
Anchorage, Alaska
99504

News - Dated Material