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Lowell Burkhead

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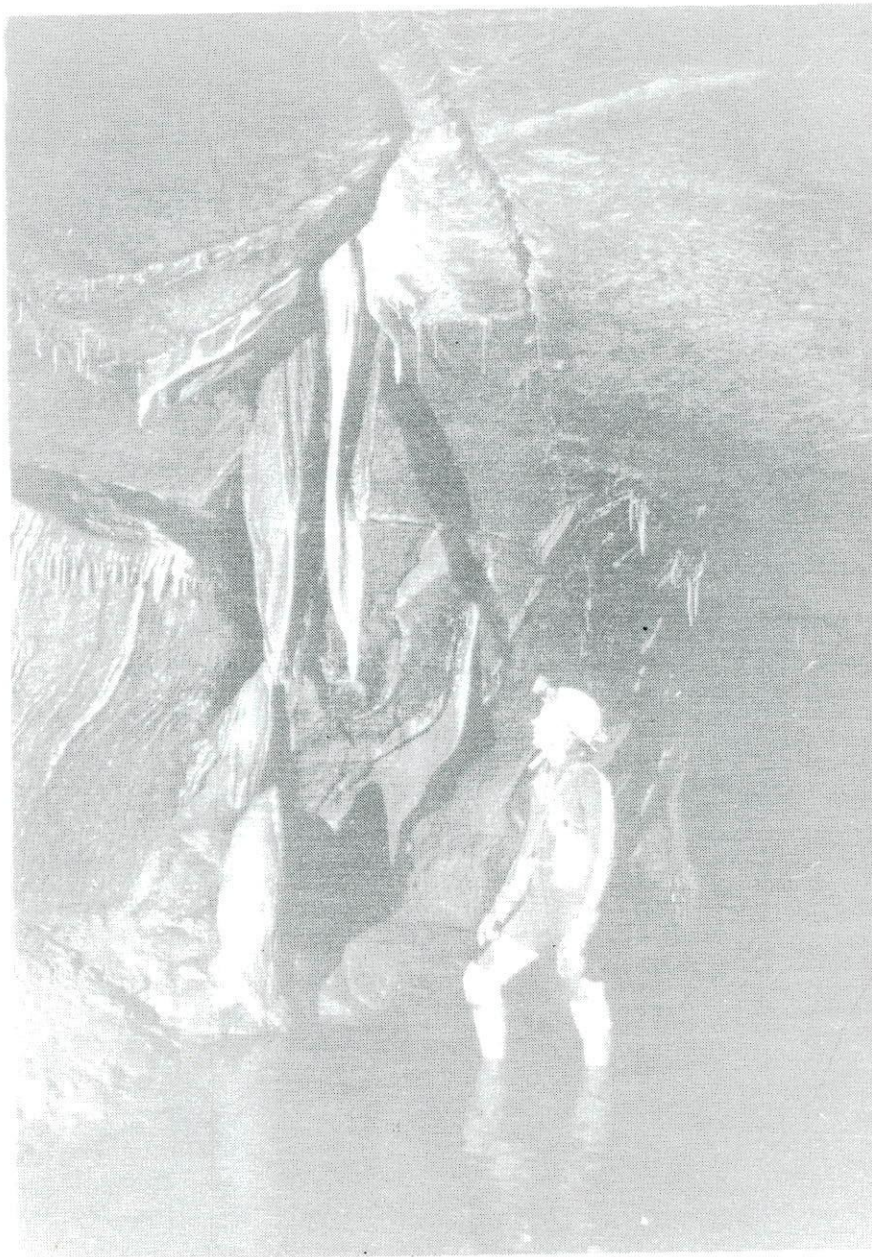
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I N T E R C O M

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National Speleological Society



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Material for the next issue of the INTERCOM is due in the hands of the Editor by May 14, 1991. Send articles, trip reports, photograph negatives and prints or slides, artwork, cartoons, etc. for publication to:

Editor and Typist: Lowell Burkhead 319-854-6650
2611 Alderman Rd.
Springville, IA 52336

INTERCOM Staff: Logistics and Legwork, Mike Lace
Photo Processing: Jim Hannon

The Iowa Grotto meets at 7:30 p.m. on the fourth Wednesday of each month in room 125 of Trowbridge Hall on the campus of the University of Iowa in Iowa City, Iowa.

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center

NCRC

1-800-851-3051

Iowa County Emergency Management

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This number calls out Iowa Grotto rescue personnel.

Cover: Marc Ohms admiring formations in downstream Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa, November 1990. photo by Scott Dankof

This issue only, edited in Kentucky for "speleological ambiance".

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IOWA GROTTO
National Speleological Society
P. O. Box 228
Iowa City, Iowa 52240

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Vice-Chairman - - - - - Marc Ohms
Secretary-Treasurer - - Jay Wells

Volume Twenty-Seven

Issue One

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IOWA GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting January 23, 1991

The meeting was called to order at 7:35 p.m. by Chairman Mike Lace with 13 members present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read. The Treasurer's report listed \$137.42 in the club treasury. TRIP REPORTS: Marc Ohms reported on a CRF (Cave Research Foundation) trip into Mammoth Cave. He also reported on a trip with Mike Lace around the Dubuque area. They checked four unrecorded caves, the longest about 80 feet. They then went to Galena, Ill. where they visited three mines. Mike Lace, Marc Ohms, Eric Winch, Stacey Cyphert, Scott Dankof, and Jay Wells went to Becker Quarry Cave and Crystal Lake Cave for a photo trip. Marc Ohms reported on a photo trip into Wonder Cave with Scott Dankof, George Huppert, Eric Winch, Al Jagnow, Bert Jagnow, and Steve Thompson. Mike Lace reported on a trip into six of the sand caves in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He also reported on a recon trip upstream in Coldwater Cave. The Tuna Sea area was wide open but the Scandawhovian was near-sumped. Steve Moon reported on a trip to Cassie Cave where they dug and chipped rocks there and at a nearby sinkhole. FUTURE TRIPS: There will be a trip to Becker Quarry Cave the end of February. The NCRC Rescue seminar will be April 6 and 7. A trip to Wonder Cave is planned late spring or early summer. There will be a trip to Cassie Cave or possibly a survey trip to Baade Cave January 27. OLD BUSINESS: The Karst Catalog has been reproduced. The Cave Index is updated using the old index, the Karst Catalog, and other data. The index shows 596 different entries. The Index Committee reported on some of their ideas for the index. A separate report will be made concerning the care and handling of the index. NEW BUSINESS: Lowell Burkhead noted that on several trip reports from the Dubuque area, it has been written about how dry and dusty some of the caves are. He noted how this differs from past years when they were wet and muddy. Mike Bounk brought up the idea of an index of different lead checks. This would be useful in the future for possible follow up trips. The INTERCOM Editor noted how trip reports have been coming in late. Reports need to be on time to keep INTERCOM material current. The due date for the next issue is printed inside the cover of every issue. An old bylaw was brought up and it was voted to rescind it. It had to do with art work and pictures in the INTERCOM. In the discussion, it was noted that it was outdated because of the way that the INTERCOM is now being edited. The Grotto has bought a 100 pound can of carbide. It was decided to sell it for \$2.00 per pound. The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.

Regular meeting February 27, 1991

The meeting was called to order at 7:51 by Chairman Mike Lace. Eleven members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved as read. The Treasurer's report showed \$382.08 in the club treasury. TRIP REPORTS: Mike Lace reported on a survey trip in Coldwater Cave with Stacey Cyphert and Larry Welch. 157 feet were surveyed in a passage off the Pig Trough. Marc Ohms reported on a photo trip to Dead Coon Passage in Coldwater with Doug Schmuecker, Scott Dankof, and Pat Schenck. Marc also reported on a trip to Ice Cave and Cave Man Cave near Decorah. A survey trip to the Ozark Spring area was reported. Marc Ohms, Pat Schenck, Mike Lace, and Doug Schmuecker surveyed Heartbreak Cave which totaled 116 feet. Mike Lace reported on a lead checking trip at Ewing Diggings near the Maquoketa River.

The meeting was interrupted to watch President Bush's announcement of the cease-fire on T.V. which ultimately lead to the end of the war in the Persian Gulf.

Trip reports continued with Mike Lace reporting on a surveying and digging trip into Becker Quarry Cave. Eleven people helped with surveying 405 feet. There was digging in several passages and a couple of bags of trash were collected and taken out of the cave. Another Becker Quarry Cave surveying trip with Pat Schenck, Marc Ohms, and Mike Lace netted 505 feet in the Waterfall Passage. FUTURE TRIPS: A trip

to Wonder Cave is planned for late Spring. Mike Bounk will lead a Geological Survey trip this Spring. The NCRC Rescue Seminar will be April 6 and 7. OLD BUSINESS: New back issues of the INTERCOM are finished and ready to go to print. They should be available at the next meeting. The new postal rates will raise the cost of mailings this year approximately an additional \$76.80 over last year. The NSS has recieved the Iowa Grotto's annual report with the updated NSS membership in the grotto listed. We now have 3 votes instead of one at the Congress of Grottos. NEW BUSINESS: The annual grotto picnic was discussed. A preliminarary schedule was presented which may include trips into Becker Quarry Cave, Timmens Cave, and Timber Ridge Cave. Both vertical and horizontal caving will be available. Caving will be Saturday morning and early afternoon with the picnic and auction in the evening. Sunday there will be more caving. A picnic guidebook was discussed and tabled until the next meeting. Doc Lewis sent a meter to measure pressure differentials in and out of the cave for Mike Gerald's to calibrate. The present landowner relations problem at Coldwater Cave was discussed. The landowner and the project coordinator have closed the cave. A cleanup and damage repair trip may be sought in the future. All trips would have to be arranged by the project coordinator. The meeting was adjourned at 9:45 p.m. After the meeting Mike Bounk and Steve Moon presented slide programs.

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TRIP REPORTS

WILD WELL

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

October 30, 1990

Art Dahms and Randy Kwiatkowski

Time in: 12:30 a.m.

by Randy Kwiatkowski

Time out: 2:00 p.m.

The dive objective was to lay a new line and remove the old one in the first section. The new line was knotted every 10 feet. At 30 foot intervals heading in- to the cave, two knots were tied about one foot from the survey knot. (Entrance 10' 20' 30' 40') We also wanted to place the line so it could be surveyed on a future dive.

We started with 520 feet of 1/8 inch line. When the old line was originally layed, it frequently touched the ceiling. I couldn't find enough tie-offs to keep the line down from the ceiling in some places. When I arrived at the Big Room, I tied off with only 10 feet of line left. Art wasn't behind me, so I waited for him for a short time. When there still wasn't a sign of him coming, I started back out to find him. About 75 feet on the way out, I met up with him and he was doing fine. I turned around and headed for the Big Room again with Art right behind me.

After surfacing, Art said he was slowed down due to the visibility, trying to untie the old line, hold the reel, and hold the light all at once. On top of that, I tied the new line on right over the old in some places.

The exit was easy and uneventful. On the way home, we discussed ways to hold the line down in the first section and some possible objectives for the next dive in section two.

SEVERAL PITS CHECKED, ONE PLUMBED

Cassie Cave and sinkholes, Clayton and Winneshiek Counties, Iowa
December 2, 1990

by Steve Moon

Larry Welch, Mike Lace, Gary Engh, and Steve Moon

Gary and I joined Mike and Larry in Decorah on Sunday morning. Mike, Larry, and other Iowa Grotto cavers had been in nearby Glenwood Cave on Saturday, picking up some survey. The purpose of our trip was to check on some sinkholes in what is known as the Bugenhagen Basin which is southeast of Decorah and to enter Cassie Cave which Gary had helped me open up a few weeks earlier. The sinkholes proved to be of minor interest but did provide us with some digging practice. One of these drains a very large area but doesn't appear to be enterable. A pair of raccoons observed our excavations from inside the ceiling of this sink while I pulled out a small antique bottle and a Ball jar. A couple of these sinks are full to overflowing with decades of farm refuse. The four of us managed to do a lot of damage in one of these trash dumps but it ended in a soil plug. Peshaw! In one of the trash sinks, I managed to get into something which caused incredible itching and small scab-like hives around my neck and shoulders for about two weeks after the trip! Weird!

Next, we headed to the Farmersburg area of Clayton County which contains Cassie Cave. The name for this cave was inspired by the mythological figure of Cassandra, who is a "helper of man". My wife Cassie thought it would be a great name for a cave! Upon arrival, I talked Larry into trying to squeeze past the small restriction which I'd had a problem with on the day the cave was opened up. The restriction is at about the fifteen foot level. Even though a snowstorm was threatening Larry's return trip to Galesburg and his wife Beth didn't want him in a cave on this day because a large earthquake had been predicted for the New Madrid area of Missouri, it was more than he could resist.

I was delighted as we tied him on belay and watched him enter the large fissure. He squirmed past the restriction and kept right on going. By the time he got to the bottom, we were eyeing the amount of rope left on the surface wondering if there would be enough! The climb down involved a short horizontal traverse to the east in what seems to be an east-west treading fissure and then a chimney to the bottom through an area that widens up and in Larry's words, "gets dicey". The rope was marked and measured. Cassie seems to be about ninety to one hundred feet deep. Larry describes two domes which come together to form a fairly large room at the bottom with a possible lead about twenty feet off the floor on the east end and a drain hole which might be enterable with digging on the west end. Larry didn't see my rock pick on the bottom. That's OK because I'll want it once I get down there anyway.

Before we left for the drive home I began to dig open the sink just to the south of Cassie. This one also looks very promising. What a great place! Gary and I stopped in to talk with the landowner and then headed home through driving snow and a crosswind that was very strong at times.

COLD CAVING

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
December 15, 1990
Mike Nelson, Reno Lipo, and Steve Moon

by Steve Moon

Reno had never been in Coldwater and Mike wanted a responsibility-free tourist-type trip, for a change, so we headed into the cave on Saturday morning without a

care in the world. As we started downstream, I noticed that the water was very cold. I was in my well-used wetsuit bottoms and an ill-fitting borrowed top, all of which was held together with lots of duct tape. This turned out to be a bad idea. It seemed that I got cold right away and never did warm up. At times, I was shivering! And this only an hour or two into the trip. Reno was interested in a challenge of some sort and of course I wanted to dig, so we went down to take a look at the dig site at the end of Monument Passage.

I was real cold and losing energy by the time we got there but Reno expressed interest in the dig and slithered on in. I assisted him by passing him my shovel and light and he managed to slosh around in the mud and enlarge the passage quite a bit. This little stream channel curves gently to the right and appears to continue. The only problem is where to deposit the sludge when you bring it out. We might just have to take a five gallon bucket or two in with us the next time and transport the stuff back far enough into Monument Passage that it won't come back to haunt us. In spite of my weakened condition, Reno got my adrenaline pumping and the trip wasn't a bad one after all. I owe him one for that.

Before we headed back upstream, we looked at the well pipe in The Well Pipe Passage. I exited at the shaft while Mike and Reno continued upstream to about the Jumping Off Point. After we were all on the surface, we decided to go take a look at Coldwater Spring and one other spring entrance in the area.

VIRGIN COW

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

December 15, 1990

by Stacey T. Cyphert

Larry Welch, Mike Lace, Jay Wells, and Stacey Cyphert

The water was cold, really cold, and some of the pools behind the rimstone dams in Cascade Passage were a little deeper than I remembered. Still, it was a good day for caving and we were anxious to pick up some survey footage.

The plan was to survey leads beyond the Pig Trough and perhaps on the way back to pick up the passage Larry and I discovered last month (see Virgin Pig article). We never even made it to the Pig Trough.

At Holy Cow we noticed a small slit that seemed to open into larger passage. After spending some time digging, we confirmed that it did. Jay and I were able to fit through the eight-inch-high slit, squirm for several feet on sharp rock, slightly damaging our wetsuits, and finally drop into a small stream. The stream was flowing toward us and must have somehow made its way into Cascade. The passage size here was about three feet high by two feet wide. We were now in the largest section of this basically featureless passage.

Mike and Larry surveyed from a chip in Cascade to the opening we had created. Jay and I then proceeded to survey this virgin passage. The passage wound gently back and forth as it became progressively smaller. Lower might be a better word. At the point we stopped surveying 121 feet from the opening, the ceiling was only seven inches above the floor. Here the floor was covered with cobbles. It appeared that the passage got a couple of inches higher about 20 feet through the cobbles but we were cold from the stream and elected to save the rest of this passage for another day or another survey party. Jay and I then backed up 116 feet to where we could turn around and then slipped through the slit.

Mike and Larry had gone exploring upstream while Jay and I surveyed. They were still exploring when we exited the passage, Traci's Passage, which was named in honor of a movie star we had all heard of. Since Jay and I were extremely cold at this point, we wrote a note on a piece of paper saying we were exiting the cave and left it by a Cylume light stick near the slit. Jay and I then exited the cave, as did Larry and Mike a short time later.

WILD WELL

Wild Well Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

December 17, 1990

Randy Kwaitkowski and Art Dahms

by Randy Kwaitkowski

Time in: 11:35 a.m.

Time out: 1:20 p.m.

We used 40 c.f. tanks for the first 510 feet. To hold the new line down from the ceiling, we placed concrete anchors in four places. We put a dorf marker on the line to correct where the directional knots were tied wrong. At the Big Room, we dropped the 40's and continued on with 80 y's. We took the Northwest Passage around the Big Room, through the Nutcracker, to the second section. Here we started the new line, removing the old as we proceeded. We went through the Side Squeeze Room and on through the next room, running about 10 to 15 feet short of line before the Second Big Room. I tied off to the old line and surfaced in the Second Big Room to regroup with Art. There was no time left for surveying air rooms, so we headed right on out. The line placement in the second section looks sufficient for surveying.

The visibility was not very good. We believe the levels of CO₂ were higher than normal. We both experienced shortness of breath, slight headache, and slight nausea. There was scum floating on the water, along with a bad smell.

There appears to be a new sink opening up in the gulley by the farm. It is about four feet in depth, four to five feet wide, and six to seven feet long. It was snow-covered with no indication of an opening.

SUNDAY IN DUBUQUE

Crystal Lake Cave and Becker Quarry Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa

January 6, 1991

Scott Dankof, Mike Lace, Stacey Cyphert, Jay Wells, Marc Ohms, Eric Winch, and Rosemary Wilmoth

by Scott Dankof

I picked up Jay at 7:30 a.m. on Sunday. A visit to Crystal Lake Cave and Becker Quarry Cave was planned. We met everyone at Hardee's on the south side of Dubuque. After a mid-morning snack, we headed to nearby Crystal Lake Cave.

Our first order of business was how were we going to get into the frozen door at the entrance building of the cave. After some unfriendly persuasion we got inside. We walked down a short concrete stairway into the cave. The passages in the main tourist section are all walking height and anywhere from four to five feet wide. I've never visited this cave and was amazed at the beauty of some of the formations.

The cave owners are in the process of installing a new lighting system in the cave. From what I saw, it should be a big improvement over the old lighting, as it is designed to blend in with the cave surroundings.

We spent two to three hours taking pictures and poking around. Mark, who is a tour guide at the cave, gave us a good tour, but we sure would have liked to have heard some corny tour guide lingo. We then proceeded to Becker Quarry Cave. I'll never remember the way to get there; Dubuque has the strangest street plan I've ever seen. We parked on a residential side street, hiked up the hill, and slid in to the small entrance. The main passage is all walking except for a short crawl of twenty feet. Numerous side leads were noticed on the way to the end of the main passage. Dimensions of the main passage vary from eight to thirty feet high and about twenty-five feet wide. A few sleeping bats were seen along with some very nice ice stalagmites which were photographed on the way out.

GIANT BUILDERS - NO JOB TOO SMALL

Cassie Cave, Clayton County, Iowa
January 12, 1991
Steve Moon and Mike Bounk

by Steve Moon

Mike and I headed up early Sunday morning, and arrived in the Farmersburg area around 9:30 a.m. The snow was quite deep and it was a lot of work just getting to the cave. Mike was very impressed with Cassie Cave and we quickly cleared snow from the entrance and rigged a belay. Our main purpose that day was to enlarge the restriction and to explore deeper into the cave. I also intended that we work on the dig which I had started previously, which is located about one hundred feet south of Cassie Cave.

It took no time at all for me to chip off the knobs of rock which formed the restriction and proceed downward. After traversing over to the widest part of the fissure, I descended down another fifteen feet or so, scoping out a good spot to place bolts in the wall. This was something that Larry Welch had suggested a few weeks before and it seems like a good idea. Besides, I need the practice. Once in place, the bolts will provide a rigging place some forty feet down from the entrance where a rappel or self-belay will allow easy access to the bottom. A rock can be dropped the final sixty feet or so without hitting a wall. After moving about in the cave for a while, I realized that a handline is all that's needed for the first forty feet of the cave. It's an easy climb and a belay rope gets in the way. It's a bit tight here and there, but a lot of fun!

Mike entered the cave on belay and moved up and down a few times from the entrance, penetrating about twenty feet or so and enjoying it immensely.

After exiting Cassie, we walked over to the next sink and resumed that dig. We had to chip our way through a thick layer of frozen soil before any real progress could be made. Before too long we had loosened up what Mike estimated to be about a three hundred pound limestone block and it was in our way. The block was about two feet from the surface, occupying most of the space in our dig. Try as I might, I couldn't budge the son-of-an-escarpment. Try as he might, Mike couldn't break it up with a sledge. I tied my Goldline onto it and we combined our efforts. Still no go. I threw the rope over a tree at the edge of the sink using the tree as a crude pulley and Mike pulled on it while I tried to lift. Then Mike got a brilliant idea! Throw the rope over the tree which is laying directly over the dig, tie loops in it so he could stand on the rope thus placing his weight opposite the rock on the other end and also take advantage of the friction of the rope on the tree to hold the rock if we made any progress, while I tried once more to lift. It worked! And I found out that I'm hernia resistant. We struggled to roll that block off to one side and then just sat there looking at it. We couldn't believe that we had actually moved it! It still sits right next to the hole we extracted

it from. We moved quite a lot more rock and dirt out of the hole before quitting for the day. Mike spent a while sitting in the hole in order to warm up his frozen feet. We keep opening up air space in there. It will be a prolonged dig because of the amount of fill that needs to be removed but it looks very promising.

We were exhausted as we struggled through deep snow to return to the Subaru. With frozen fingers we peeled off our clothes and cleaned up for the trip home. After a word with the landowners, we stopped at Elkader where I made several phone calls to local historians. I'm doing research on Big Spring. At the time of this writing, I seem to be having some success at finding a source or two for photographs and oral history of the spring before it was a fish hatchery. I will publish an article on this subject soon. Mike and I continued on to Cedar Bluff, dog tired, but very satisfied with our day's efforts.

TROMPING THROUGH THE SNOW

Ice Cave, Cavein Cave, Clearwater Cave, and Marked Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa
January 12, 1991
by Marc Ohms
Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, Eric Winch, and Pat Schenck

The temperature was in the thirties and it had snowed the night before making it perfect for walking ridges looking for caves. The past year we have been taking small sections of Dubuque at a time and combing it for caves. With the help of geology maps, mining records, and a lot of walking, we have discovered many unrecorded caves. Today was no different.

Today our search area was a large wooded ridge with a small intersecting valley. The first cave we found was Cavein Cave. It is a mined-out crevice of about 35 feet long and was very close to the surface as tree roots were hanging down. The next cave was Ice Cave, another mined crevice. This one was about 80 feet long and ended in breakdown. The passage was high and narrow. We then found Clearwater Cave, a natural cave with no signs of mining. It was about 20 feet long. We then hit the intersecting valley and walked into it. We found Marked Cave. It is a mined crevice of 45 feet. It is shaped like a "T" with a shallow pit at the junction. A little ways past that, we found another hole. Pat crawled down into it and reported it got real small real quick but could be dug. Further on, we found a 20 foot mine shaft. We had no vertical gear so saved it for a return trip. We then left this area to check another.

At this location we were searching for an opening to the Langworthy Mine, which according to mining records, was fairly large. Pat knew of one shaft in this area and took us right to it. He did not think it had passage off the bottom and he was right. I climbed down into it. It was about 15 feet deep with no leads off the bottom. We didn't find anything else. At this point we had all had enough walking for one day and called it quits. Overall, a very successful day. We have covered a lot of ground in Dubuque but still have plenty to keep us busy for a long time.

GALENA LEAD MINES

January 13, 1991
by Mike Lace
Marc Ohms, Eric Wench, and Mike Lace

Dubuque wasn't the only area that was mined for lead ore. Galena, Illinois, still bears ample evidence of past mining activity with open crevices and some tail-

ing piles the size of small houses. Marc and Eric knew of three mines along the Mississippi that were accessible and all within walking distance of one another.

The first had an inviting walk-in entrance that led to fifteen foot high crevice passage complete with rusted metal rails that at one time must have carried many ore carts. The passage remained walking size throughout the several hundred feet we traversed. We finally reached a point where the floor became inundated with two feet of water that stretched all the way to the blunt end of the mine, according to Marc. We turned around at this point and made our way back to the entrance.

The second crevice was a duck-in entrance with another several hundred feet of mostly walking-size passage. The third crevice was reached by climbing down a shallow entrance pit and into - Yup, you guessed it - walking-size passage. This one was different from the other two in that water-filled pits, some up to 20 feet deep, had to be chimneyed across. The pits in fact opened to a submerged lower level that had been pumped out during the mining operations. The water table is apparently high enough to keep this level water filled normally. The water was clear, greenish colored, and very uninviting. Once you fall into one of these holes, it would be difficult at best to climb out on your own.

We made it all the way to a wide pit with smooth walls and a going passage on the other side. Vertical gear is definitely required to continue. That was enough for us as we then back-tracked to the entrance. We also noted two pits along the bluff face near the entrance to this third mine. Both need vertical to be explored and more than likely have some passage at the bottom. I don't know if any of these mines have been mapped but perhaps Illinois cavers should be the ones to tackle them.

We rounded out the day by checking a couple of leads in the city of Dubuque. One was an opening in an old quarry that led a grand total of six feet into the rock while the second looks like a low opening at the base of an outcrop and will have to wait for another time to be explored.

JANUARY TOUR TRIP

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
Januray 19, 1991
Marc Ohms and Eric Wench

by Marc Ohms

We started off the trip by going upstream with Scott Dankof to take photos. We went up to Pete's Pipe and turned around. Eric and I then went downstream. This was only my fourth trip so I am also still a tourist. We went down to Monument Passage and up to the Pillar of Light. We then wandered down to the Well Pipe Passage to the pipe. At this point we turned around and went out. After this trip I am sure we will see Eric's face around the shack more often.

DIGGING AND SURVEYING - DOWN UNDER

Cassie Cave, Clayton County, Iowa
January 27, 1991
Steve Moon, Mike Lace, and Stacey Cyphert

by Steve Moon

It was 10:00 a.m. before we arrived on site. By 10:30 I was in the cave, 30

feet down from the entrance preparing to set two bolts over the final 60 foot descent to the bottom. As I chipped away at the rock Mike and Stacey kept warm on the surface, standing over a small fire which they started using the last two sheets of one of Larry Welch's survey books. The bolting operation went very smoothly and was completed in about an hour and a half. Rock had to be chipped away in order to provide a flat surface in which to drill, but the dolomite worked easily and no tools were dropped to the bottom in the process. Once the hangers and carabineers were in place I exited and enjoyed the fire for a few minutes before gearing up for the climb down.

I took a minimum of equipment in, using only a diaper sling, chest harness, and single ascender. While providing me with the protection I needed for a self-belayed climb, this setup allowed for the greatest freedom of movement. Digging tools were lowered to the bottom using the Goldline, which was rigged from the surface as a handline for the initial 30 foot climb. The ledges, which provide for a horizontal traverse at the 30 foot level, are offset from one another by about six or eight inches, suggesting some faulting. A large chock-stone at the 30 foot level provides a platform for the staging of gear, which can then be reached from the other side of the horizontal traverse that leads to the rigging bolts and the final drop. The Blue Water II was tied into the bolts using a French boline. This knot self-adjusts between two rigging points and proved to be ideal. The bolts are set one directly above the other, about 18 inches apart. Having not been in Cassie before today, Mike and Stacey went in loaded for bear. As it turned out, we all used a single ascender for the climb in and out. The 90 foot climb to the bottom is pretty easy. For the final twenty or so feet you have a choice of two routes to the bottom, one at either end of the first room which follows the dominant east-west trending fissure which opens to the surface.

Once on the bottom I tidied up the ropes, took off most of my gear, and began to dig. Mike and Stacey followed, and after some climbing and exploring, got down to the business of surveying. The drain hole for the cave is at the bottom of a small dome which is entered to one side of the main room. This dome evidently fills to the ceiling with water from time to time, and the lead is gooey and filled with water. A lot of mud was removed and placed directly above the drain hole on a sloping mud bank from which it will probably drift right back in. A five gallon bucket is needed for the removal of gunk to another part of the cave. A wetsuit will be needed to continue digging. It is worth it, however! The dig entrance is plenty big enough to enter so far. One more effort will tell the hole story (Pun Intended)!

With a lot of squeezing through two small windows of mud-caked rock, I managed to climb about fifteen feet into another fairly large dome room which is situated just above the dig site. I wondered whether or not I was looking at the bottom side of the dig that I started just south of Cassie in an adjacent sink.

Before preparing for the climb out I dug around in a few likely looking spots for my rock pick. I have another idea of where it might be though, so the search will continue on the next trip in. Mike and Stacey got a good start on the survey which will need to be completed on a later trip. At least, now we have a good sketch map of the cave. We climbed out of the cave and hauled up our gear on the end of both ropes without a single snag. This seemed like a miracle to me! I took a lot of color slides of the trip. Before making the final climb out, I sat on the large chock-stone at the 30 foot level and just looked at the cave for a few minutes. It is a most extraordinary place! I really didn't want to leave. We exited the cave at around 3:00 p.m. and headed for the landowners farm. The trip was a great success!

TOO NICE TO BE UNDERGROUND

Three Boys Cave, Cracked Cave, Nice Day Cave, and Mumble Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa
February 2, 1991
Marc Ohms and Pat Schenck

by Marc Ohms

It was in the 40's and sunny. We had planned a trip in Becker Quarry Cave but decided to spend the day mostly above ground. Years ago I hunted on a farm north of Dubuque and recall seeing some signs of mining. The landowner gave us some details and locations and we were off. We walked for a while before seeing anything. We first found a 10 foot deep shaft, which I climbed down into but found no passage. On the other side of the ridge we found them.

The hillside looked like it had been bombed; it had depressions all over. The first we entered was Cracked Cave. There was no snow in a 20 foot radius of the entrance. The cave turned out to be only 20 feet long. There was a 6 to eight inch wide joint which went down and away as far as I could see, but was not enterable. It was blowing warm air like crazy

Twenty feet away we found Three Boys Cave. This one was more like it. It is a tricky climb and if you're not six feet tall, I would recommend a handline. It is not a straight shaft but is shaped like an "S". At the bottom we found 100 feet of walking passage, 10 feet high and 6 feet wide. After climbing out we walked 50 feet and found Nice Day Cave, which is about 35 feet long and not too exciting. There were many small steam holes all over this hillside but only three enterable ones.

We then left and grabbed lunch. We only had a short time left so we decided to survey Mumble Cave. It was 7 meters long.

BECKER QUARRY SURVEY AGAIN

Becker Quarry Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa
February 3, 1991
Marc Ohms, Pat Schenck, and Mike Lace

by Mike Lace

We gathered once again to try to take a bite out of the Becker survey project. A party of three was really all that the passage we planned to survey could comfortably fit. The last side passage to be surveyed is, of course, the longest as it leads to a distant section of the cave that was once connected to the adjoining Level Crevice Cave.

The previous survey trip saw a few of our survey chips removed in between visits. We were all concerned that more might have been lost since then but fortunately found them all still sitting in the concealed nooks and crannies where we had set them. No one had apparently visited the cave as there were no signs of string laid out along the passages, new beer cans, or any other trash.

We set to work, tying in a hanging survey at the beginning of the Level Passage and pushing on in a direct route toward the Level Section. The crawls were tight and frustrating in spots but we managed to collect over 400 feet of survey before tying it off at an intersection with a walking size cross passage. I think eight chips in all were set, marking the numerous cross joints with small crawlways leading off, usually in both directions.

On our way out we ran into a group of woefully unprepared "wanna be" cavers near the main passage. We quizzed them as to the disappearance of our chips and,

being somewhat convinced of their innocence, led them from the cave and told them to pick up at least helmets and three lights apiece before even thinking of doing something like this again. I don't know if any of it will do any good but at least we tried.

The survey total stands at almost one half mile of passageways. Wish us luck on finishing the survey by June.

GIANT BUILDERS II - NEW DEPTHS

Sinkhole, Clayton County, Iowa
February 11, 1991
Steve Moon and Ed Nellis

by Steve Moon

Ed and I took our time on the trip north, stopping in Elkader for breakfast/lunch. We were on site by about noon. After clearing snow and rock away from the entrance of the dig which Mike Bounk and I had started a few weeks before, it became obvious that the easiest way to proceed would be to continue digging below ground, and not to work on the surface if we could help it. After chipping away at the frozen dirt which I dubbed the "tundra layer", I was once again very impressed with the work that Mike and I had done. It's hard to begin a dig in the wintertime!

We brought out the heavy artillery for this one and used every bit of it. The two shovels, crowbar, sledge, chisel, double pulley system, safety rope, and bucket all came in handy. The great thing about this little pit is that there is a large tree laying almost directly over the dig, about six feet off the ground. This provides a perfect place to tie the pulley system for hauling buckets and rock, and the safety rope, which seems to be a good idea. As I dug down into the loosely packed dirt and rock, small air pockets kept opening up. This dig is very much like the one that became the entrance to Cassie Cave. This sinkhole has apposing rock walls and is really quite large structurally. The width of the working area leads me to believe that there might be a lot of digging needed to get down through all of the fill. Winter can be a great time to dig in a sink like this because the frozen "tundra zone" offers surface stability, allowing a dig to proceed vertically, without having to remove very much surface material.

As I excavated a room which became six feet long by four feet wide and about six feet deep, I handed it all up to Ed, who engineered a beautiful rock wall to contain many buckets of dirt. Giant Builders: no job too small! The entrance hole stayed the same size as Mike and I had left it, about two by three feet. Inside, the ceiling was gently arched and seemingly, very stable. This dig is producing some very interesting debris. For a while, there was a light bulb hanging in the wall near the ceiling. While Ed wondered whether it still worked, I fantasized about running a power line to it. I found a clear glass bottle which looked like a fish with little tiny bears around the top of it. Bear Bottle Cave?

The deeper I dug, the larger the rocks seemed to be. In order to get them to the surface, it became necessary to use the chisel and sledge to break them into manageable pieces. The double pulley system worked very well for lifting buckets of dirt. By about 5:00 p.m. it was starting to get dark, so we packed it up. After dropping a few rocks into Cassie, we headed for the Subaru. After checking in with the landowner, we hightailed it for Coralville. We were very sore but pleased with our progress. The bright blue and violet sunset was incredible!

BALACLAVA BOYS

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa
February 16, 1991
Larry Welch, Mike Lace, and Stacey Cyphert

by Stacey T. Cyphert

The virgin passage Larry and I found late last year off of the Pig Trough (see "Virgin Pig" in the Sept-Oct issue of the INTERCOM) was begging to be surveyed. Being suckers for surveying low, muddy passage, we jumped at the chance to add this passage, now called Balaclava Boys Passage, to the map.

The water level was .5 feet at the platform, the lowest reading in quite some time. This contributed to our surprise when we noticed abnormally high amounts of water flowing out of a lead a few hundred feet downstream of the Pig Trough and out of the Pig Trough itself. There may be some basis to the discussion that this section of the cave is a different drainage system than most of the mainstream passage.

After determining the water level was not sufficiently high to endanger our survey plans, we set about our task. Twenty-six feet into the survey marked the completion of the low, muddy passage. We were left with mainly tall, walking-size passage. While not the same challenge, we had managed to collect enough mud on our equipment to make the surveying interesting.

After carefully surveying under some hairy breakdown, we arrived at Balaclava Dome. This dome, about 30 feet tall with running water and a climbable lead at the top, was named in honor of the balaclavas Mike and I were wearing. These warm little coverings are great at keeping the mud out of your hair and ears and will become a standard piece of equipment in my cave pack.

The cave continued beyond the dome but soon became 56 feet of hands and knees crawl in passage covered with white nodules. This passage ended in breakdown. We had added 157 feet of surveyed passage to Coldwater Cave. A small lead going off to the right appeared to drop down deeper into the cave. From this location the sound of running water could clearly be heard, most likely from downstream Wanda's Walkway. It will be interesting to see if we can actually make the connection.

BECKER QUARRY CAVE SURVEY TRIP

Becker Quarry Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa
February 23, 1991

by Marc Ohms

Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, Pat Schenck, Jay Wells, Jim Sinning, Mark Jones, Loren Schutt, Doug Schmuecker, George Stewart, Brian Keller, and Tammy Stewart

A good number of people showed up for the scheduled survey trip. Our problem was we had only one set of compasses, but we kept everyone busy. Due to my slow recovery from the night before, I wimped out on surveying. Mike Lace kindly led a survey party consisting of himself, Jim Sinning, and Pat Schenck. They headed into the Waterfall Passage to pick up a few side leads. They surveyed 127.69 meters/418 feet, bringing the total length to date to 3,010 feet. The cave should reach one mile when finished.

Jay Wells and Mark Jones went into the Air Passage to dig on a lead. They reported getting about 15 feet into the lead but still needs more work. I led the others around the cave as we picked up all the cans and other garbage that is throughout the cave. It now feels strange to crawl around in the cave and not see

a can. After finishing this task we went into the Waterfall Passage to dig on another lead. Doug Schmuecker is part mole, at least he looked like it as he dug away. We all took a turn digging and got about 20 feet in. It also needs more work.

Another very successful trip into this cave. This cave will be visited during the summer picnic, and I plan on having the map completed by then.

A SOLO JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

Sinkholes and historical research, Clayton County, Iowa
February 4, 1991

by Steve Moon

It was noon before I could finally head north. It took most of the 2½ hour drive to decide just what to ask Mary Bankes about Big Spring later that afternoon. I wrote out about two pages of questions while managing to stay on the road, and chew gum! I hit Clayton County in plenty of time to check out the doline of sinkholes in which Cassie Cave is located. After gabbing with the landowner, I walked over several acres hoping to see water running in small temporary surface streams. This was about the third or fourth day in a row of unseasonably warm temperatures over the whole state and water was running like crazy in Iowa City, so this Monday seemed like a perfect time to interview Mary. Although there was more dripping than usual in cave entrances, I was a little early for any real melting in that part of the state. I decided that the sinkhole in which I've started a new dig just south of Cassie Cave, is not situated over the top of the large dome in Cassie Cave that I had climbed up into the week before. This draw seems to be dense with dome-pits! The dig will continue!

Proceeding on to the Bankes farm, Mary Bankes welcomed me into her home for what turned out to be a very pleasant and informative hour of laughter and conversation. Mary knows a great deal about the area, and of course Big Spring. She and her husband Otto became part owners of the property containing the spring, and, along with their partners, developed the spring into a fish hatchery between 1938 and the early forties. The Bankes farm is situated high on Chicken Ridge near Osborne, looking south over the Volga River valley and Silurian escarpment. It is truly a beautiful corner of the planet. After the interview, I bade Mary farewell, happy to have made a new friend and feeling very enriched by the experience. And it's nice to have a weather spotter in Clayton County! The following is an edited transcription of the interview. An unabridged version will be placed in the Iowa Grotto Library.

**** AN INTERVIEW ** AN INTERVIEW ** AN INTERVIEW ** AN INTERVIEW ** AN INTERVIEW ****

MARY BANKES ON BIG SPRING

by Steve Moon

The interview which follows took place on Monday, February 4, 1991, in Mary Bankes' farm house on Chicken Ridge near Osborne, Iowa. Mary, her husband Otto, and two partners developed Big Spring on the Turkey River near Elkader into a "fishing club" beginning around 1938. The hatchery was sold to the State of Iowa in 1961 and Otto ran the hatchery for the state until his retirement in 1973. Otto passed away about six years ago.

Mary and I sat at her kitchen table and discussed the history of Big Spring for about an hour. Toward the end of our talk, Mary showed me photographs of the

spring during its many stages of development including historic photographs of the spring before it was developed. The interview was transcribed from a tape recording. An unedited version of our talk, which includes details and descriptions of some of these photos as well as many other interesting stories not included below, will be placed in the Iowa Grotto Library.

SM: I'm doing a lot of caving up north of Big Spring around Farmersburg. Those sinkholes, as you know, drain right into Big Spring.

MB: I know. And I know where most of them are, too.

SM: I'm trying to get some background on the spring itself. Any knowledge I can gain on the spring and on that whole area helps me out because I'm trying to get into the system.

MB: You know, a few years ago I made a mistake, because I had all this stuff. I had it charted where every sinkhole was and the ones that we filled, and I thought, "heavens, what am I keeping all of this stuff for", and I threw it. (laughter) It's just about two years ago.

SM: How long did you own that property over there?

MB: We bought it in 1938, that is Mr. Ames and Mr. Walker bought the property, and Otto and my uncle Earl Hubbard and I formed a partnership. We didn't have any money so they bought the property and that's when we started Big Spring.

SM: Did you go down to the spring a lot? Was it a center of activity at all?

MB: No. Big Spring was a very isolated place. We worked on a farm across from Big Spring and we was kind of tryin' to find a spring. My uncle had a little tiny pond down here by Mederville and was raising fish down there but he could only stay open two weeks out of the year and he always said if he could just find a big enough spring where he could raise more fish he could stay open a lot longer. So we kept talking about it and the man we was working for said, "Well, there's a big spring right across the river. Did you ever know about that?" And we said "no". So we went over and looked at it, and gee, (laughs) it was Big Spring.

SM: Big Spring is right! So it was a real isolated spot.

MB: Oh yes, it was very isolated. There was no road in to it or anything. The only way you could get to it was either to come down over the bluff or go across the river.

SM: And people really didn't know about it?

MB: Well no. Only the neighbors around there's the only ones who really paid any attention to it. Way back in history it was an old reference point, you might say, on the maps, way back. Way back. Indians, I suppose used it as a reference point. (laughs)

SM: I suppose. It was a big enough spring that it was significant.

MB: Yeah. And the old settlers used it as a reference point, you know, when the country was settled. I don't know if the map is still in existence or not, but way back in the forties, up at Fort Atkinson, I run across an old, old territory map and it was shown on there.

SM: So you came to Northeast Iowa about 1936 or so?

MB: No, we've always lived here! I was born and raised over there on the hill. (pointing, laughing) When I was a year old we moved right across this ridge here and that's where I grew up.

SM: How many acres did you farm over there by the spring?

MB: 160 acres. Oh, up at the spring we farmed nothing. We just bought 27 acres and that all went into fish pond and hillside.

SM: So you bought that area just to develop...

MB: We bought it just to develop the Big Spring. No, we developed it from scratch (laughs).

SM: And then the state bought it from you as a hatchery?

MB: Not until '61.

SM: Big Spring here flows according to the surface conditions. If you've got a lot of rain, then it flows quite a bit.

MB: OK. When we started Big Spring, that was at the bottom of the, at the end of the drought years, and I mean we've had a lot of years of drought. And at that time it flowed 5,000 gallons a minute. The Geological Survey came up and measured that. That was the year we started getting the rains again, and of course, they kept coming back, and the flow just increased and increased, and by the end of the second year it really had increased. I only measured it for a number of years after that. Then Hershey measured it for a couple more years, I guess three more years, but not consecutive years, but then it was always 10,000 gallons a minute. They used to call him 10,000 gallon Hershey (laughs) cause they didn't really believe him down to Iowa City. It pretty well stayed that way all through the years. And there were times when it flowed much heavier than that. If we had a series of wet years it flowed heavier than 10,000 gallons.

SM: It probably averages about 10,000 now.

MB: They averaged it at 10,000. The thing of it is, now, they can't get an accurate measurement on it from the way the state set it up (laughs). The take-offs are in different places, or anyhow that's what they told me.

SM: What about the little springs up the river from it there? I think they're called Hike Springs.

MB: There's a lot of little springs along the river there. They all have different names, I mean different people call them different names.

SM: I think they're related to the Big Spring system...

MB: No. Because when Big Spring floods and is muddy, they stay clear. That's the reason I know they're not related. I've never seen them muddy when the spring was muddy.

SM: Right above the spring, are there any places where water would flow out when it was flooding?

MB: The only overflow spring is right back of the house, which is the back of the house there now. When we raised the spring nine feet, then it comes out back there. It's all one spring. We fought for years for people say'n "Big Springs". (laughs) It is not Big Springs, it's one spring! (more laughter)

SM: So it's not raised up nine feet now, is it?

MB: No. It's raised up uh, probably about twenty-two.

SM: So that other smaller spring?

MB: So it runs, yeah. Yeah they control it with a control dam. After we raised it nine feet we had to put a control dam back of the house. Well, I was just tryin' to think whether it would be twenty-two feet. No, it wouldn't be twenty-two feet. The dam is twenty-four foot.

SM: So the ground right in front of the spring has been built up a lot, is that right?

MB: The spring came out in the bottom of a crick. I've got pictures of that here if you want to see them.

SM: I'd love to!

MB: The spring came out in the bottom of a crick. We had to raise it twelve feet to get it on an operating level with the surrounding ground.

SM: So there was a rivine there?

MB: Yes. It was a crick!

SM: And then the rest of the creek was filled in?

MB: (laughs) Well we filled it in. What it looks like now and what it looks like when we operated it are two entirely different places. When we used it as a fishing club, we had it in a different setup. After the state bought it we put the raceways in, or the state put the raceways in. I keep saying "we". When the state bought it I was out. Otto was still in but I was out (laughter). He run hatchery for 'em for thirteen years till he retired.

SM: Have there been years where it rained tremendously with a lot of flooding?

MB: You bet! There was many times! Many, many times. Many, many times.

SM: Did the character of that area right in there change at all from flooding? Did the Turkey River leave its banks and tear up the area at all?

MB: Well, the flooding would flood our ponds of course...

SM: Your fish would be gone?

MB: It would flush altogether, you know, and there were a few times when they got away on us too. (laughs) This year is the first time that I ever seen it come over the big, high dike. I've seen it within four inches of the top of that dike but I never had seen it come over, but I was up there that morning when it was over it. It sure was a mess. I mean, it was all one sea of water. (laughs)

SM: (Was) that dike there when you had the place?

MB: We put the dike in. Yeah, we built the dike.

SM: When you first went to that area, before you put in the dike and started to develop it, was there still a fairly high and dry area there or was it wetland?

MB: No, it was dry. Just bottom land. It was a bottom land, and, (drawing on the table with her finger) and your hill was right like back here, your crick came down through here, and this was just flat land on each side. Just bottom land. Really wasn't any farm land to it. It was just grown up in trees, and... Beautiful place! (laughs)

SM: Yeah, I can imagine.

MB: We kind of ruined it! (laughter) We sure changed it! (more laughter)

SM: Besides the trout, was there any other wildlife that was associated with the spring? Did deer come down there a lot?

MB: Oh yes! We had oodles of wildlife. All kinds of it.

SM: There's quite a lot of wildlife there now but it's pretty much high school kids on Friday night.

MB: Yeah. I was gonna say... Even after the state took over, it changed. The deer didn't come down any more and things like that, I mean the coon, and the possum, and, and there was a lot of wild game that would come down before that, but once the state took over and we changed the whole setup there, it wasn't...didn't appeal to 'em any more (laughs).

SM: Yeah, all that cement. Were there a lot of sinkholes real near the spring that aren't there today?

MB: Not right close to the spring. You can find sinkholes any place after you get up to Muf Koehn's. From there on, you can find old remnants of sinkholes but none that took water just right in that area. You don't find the ones that really took the water until you get up into Roberts' Crick, Silver Crick, and off up in there. Those are the ones that, that took a lot of water. And then there was... I don't know the names of some of these other little cricks, we didn't even ask. But there's a couple other little cricks there that took the entire flow of the water.

SM: Yeah. A lot of little dry valleys in there.

MB: There are dry runs and that, and they just take the entire flow when it comes down.

SM: So there was a lot of filling of sinkholes just like there are today?

MB: We spent two thousand dollars filling sinkholes. We couldn't get anybody interested at that time, and this I'm talking about 1940 (laughs). '39 and '40. And we couldn't get anybody interested but we contacted a lot of farmers up in there and they said, "well, if you want to fill 'em, fine. We don't object. We just don't want no part of doing anything about it". (laughs) So we did. We filled an awful lot of 'em, but like I say, "you fill 'em, two years later on down the line, they break through again". It didn't really do that much good.

SM: Kind of a losing battle.

MB: It was. It was, only we thought we had to do something because it flooded us out so bad we thought maybe we could do something about it. But (laughs) it was a losing battle.

SM: When you did fill sinks, did you find that it did keep it from flooding out?

MB: It did for a couple of years. A little! We made a map. You know the area, it's a kind of a fan shaped area, and no matter where it would rain up in there, we contacted a whole lot of people up in there and if it rained very much, we'd ask 'em to keep track of how much it rained or where it rained. Sometimes there were just local showers, and then there were big showers or big rains. When you get up on the upper end of, of Roberts' Crick and Silver Crick and you'd get a

heavy rain off way up in there, it took just about four hours for the water to reach Big Spring. That's what we was tryin' to find out. At that time, "we" were trying to find out where this water was originating from. We didn't have any help but was only on our own (laughs). But that was our only way of doing it was to contact the farmers and ask them if they'd let us know how much rain they got up there in that area and how far it extended, you know. That's all the records that I threw away and I am so sorry that (laughs) I don't have 'em! Maybe it wouldn't do 'em any good now, but... (more laughter)

SM: How long did it take you to find out how big that area is?

MB: It took us about a year.

SM: That's not bad! You had quite a network!

MB: We had it pretty accurate too, along side of what I'm seein' the maps nowadays.

SM: Now they use dye tracing.

MB: It's marvelous what they can do nowadays.

SM: Yeah, but it sounds like you were doing just about as much (laughs)...

MB: (laughs) Doin' it the hard way!

SM: I don't know, it's not easy to get a fire truck in there and dump hundreds of gallons of water down a sinkhole! (laughter) Maybe you were doing it the easy way! Was there a time... I do a lot of caving over by Maquoketa also, over in Jackson County, and there have been a lot of sinkholes filled over there. I'm trying to get an idea of when farmers started filling sinkholes. Do you have any idea?

MB: I couldn't tell you about over in there. We were the only ones that I know of up in our area, you know, in the Big Spring basin. We were the only ones that I know of that even made an attempt to fill them.

SM: Is that right! And then other farmers did, though?

MB: They could have. Some of them had junk in there and they covered the junk, and that was their way of sayin' that they filled a sinkhole. But they didn't go in and fill like we did, go in and go down to rock. We used old scrap metal that we could find, bars and what have ya, and lay 'em across and made a cement cap on 'em.

SM: When you opened those up, did you ever find any good sized holes down there?

MB: Yes sir! That scared you clear to the hilt! (laughs) Otto and Earl were working on one... Well, let's see, I can't just tell ya. It's over toward Gunder. Over in that area. I couldn't take you to the place now 'cause it's been a lot of years. (laughs) Places kind of change in your mind when you go back over 'em, I've discovered. But anyway, it was quite a good sized place and they had dug out the dirt and stuff that had gathered in there and trash that was in there, and just before they was ready to... He said "well, we'll just leave our stuff here and come back in the morning." And Otto just took his pick and (motioned, throwing) like that and the thing fell and he straddled out. Well, Earl happened to be off to the side just enough that he could grab his hand. And the next day when they went back, well that dirt... They stood and waited for it to hit! (laughs) The next day they got an old steel wheel and threw down in there and you could hear it way off. So that was a big place. But from then on, they tied a rope to them back to the truck! (laughs) They did not fill any more without tying a rope. Up to that point, they hadn't done that. That scared me.

SM: Was there ever water at the bottom of those?

MB: No, we couldn't hear any water or anything, no. It was just a big cavern. And I'm sure there are many of 'em all through there.

SM: But you go down in them and they all seem to pinch off? They don't seem to go into the main cave?

MB: You asked me about this crevice at Big Spring. I mean that you said that you thought that you could go back into. There is no crevice big enough to go back into. The crevice was... It was on the back side of the cliff. And the crevice was approximately that high (gesturing about two and a half feet from the kitchen floor). And it was about this wide (gesturing about one and a half feet wide) at the mouth. Heavens knows, I tried! (laughter) But I could wiggle into it sideways, you know, but you go back, oh maybe from here to that chair (about three or four feet) and then it narrowed. It just narrowed right up. So it was nothing. It was just a

crevice. That's all it was. Just a crevice. But I never seen water come out of that. Even when the spring was flooding, I never seen water come out that crevice.

SM: Where did the water come out?

MB: The water came up from the bottom. The water came up from, well, it was an area about like this room here, you know. (About an eight by ten foot area.) And the water just bubbled up. Just bubbled up all over that.

SM: Out of a pool?

MB: It was no pool. It was gravel. Coarse gravel. There was a ledge of rock and then this coarse gravel was on top of this ledge of rock. And the spring just bubbled up through that gravel.

SM: You say that some spelunkers came and looked at it one time?

MB: Yes, those famous ones that found (laughs) the big cave.

SM: Steve Barnett and Dave Jagnow?

MB: Yeah, they were all there, way back. Way back! They were there before the state owned it. They were there before '61. I think there were just three.

SM: I'll be darned. Did they do any digging in there?

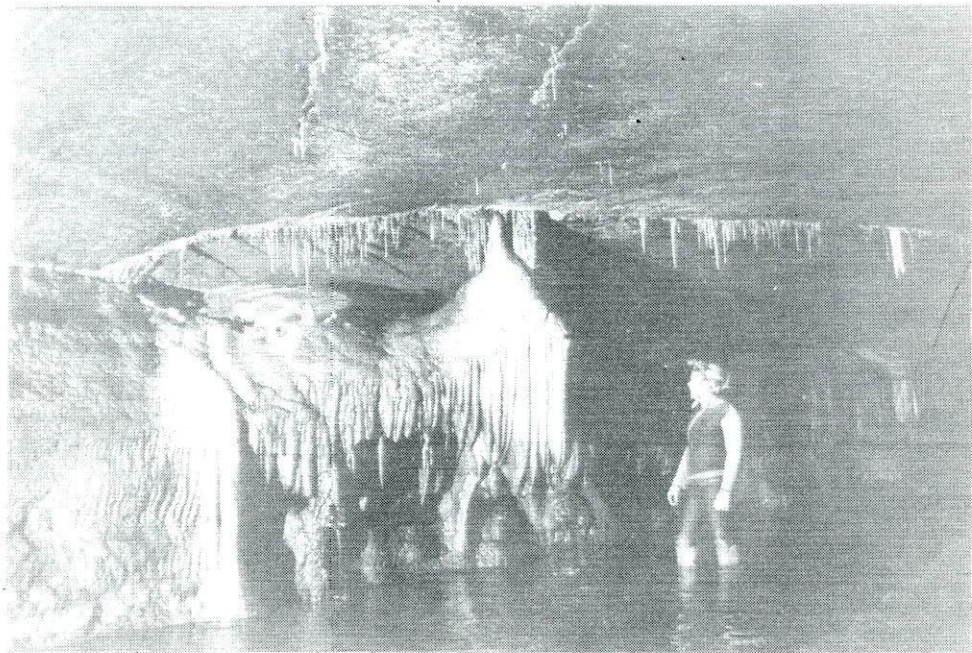
MB: No, they just came and looked at it. The water was at operating level and there was nothing that they could see. (laughter) Just like there is now. I would be very interested to see what it looks like down underneath there now but I have an idea that that mud is all (gesturing to form a cone shape with both hands) filled in all the way around and that there's probably just a small place down there where it's bubbling up. (laughs)

SM: So the state bought the spring from you.

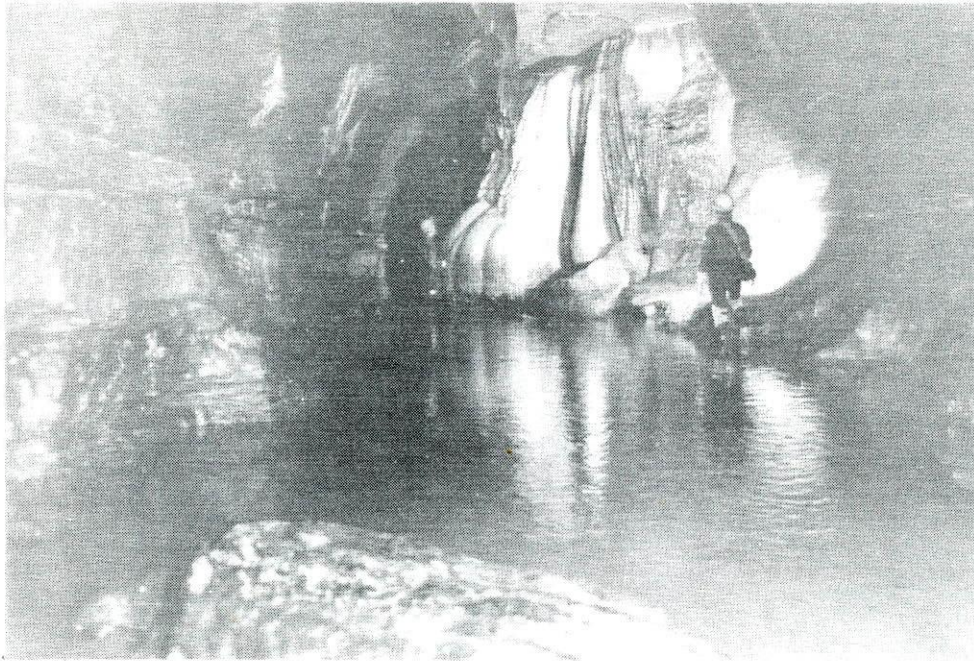
MB: They bought the spring from us. Yes. They bought the trout hatchery and all.

SM: So as a fishing club, how did that operate?

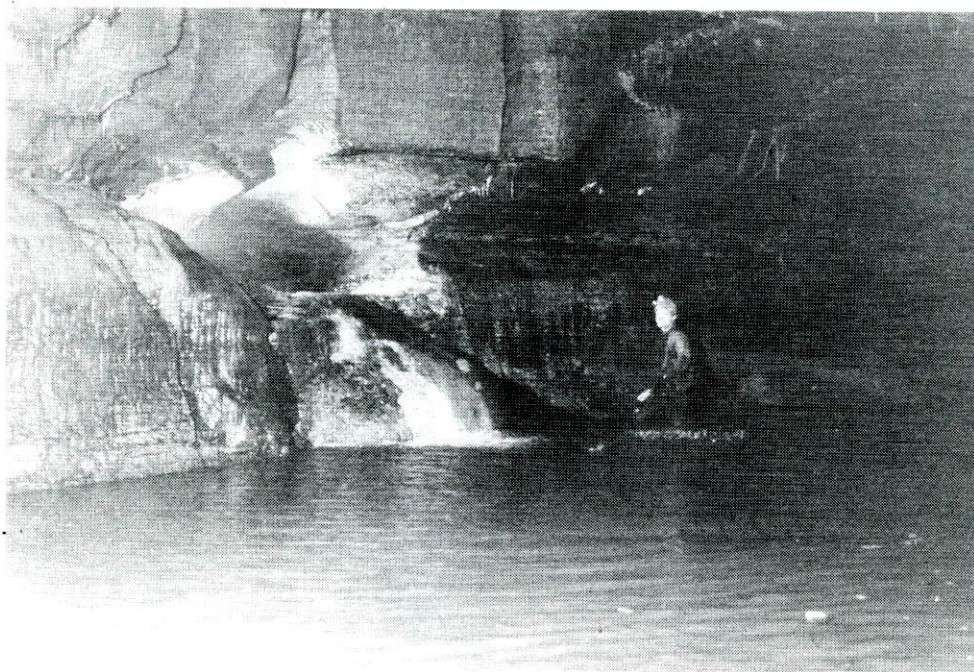
MB: Well, we raised the fish and then we stocked them into this big pond and they fished 'em out so much a pound. It was a beautiful spot.



Scott Dankof in Pothole Country, Coldwater Cave, Iowa
photo by Scott Dankof



Mike Lace and Stacey Cyphert at Big Bertha, Coldwater Cave
photo by Scott Dankof



Stacey Cyphert at the entrance of Cascade Passage, Coldwater
Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa photo by Scott Dankof

HEARTBREAK CAVE

JACKSON COUNTY, IOWA

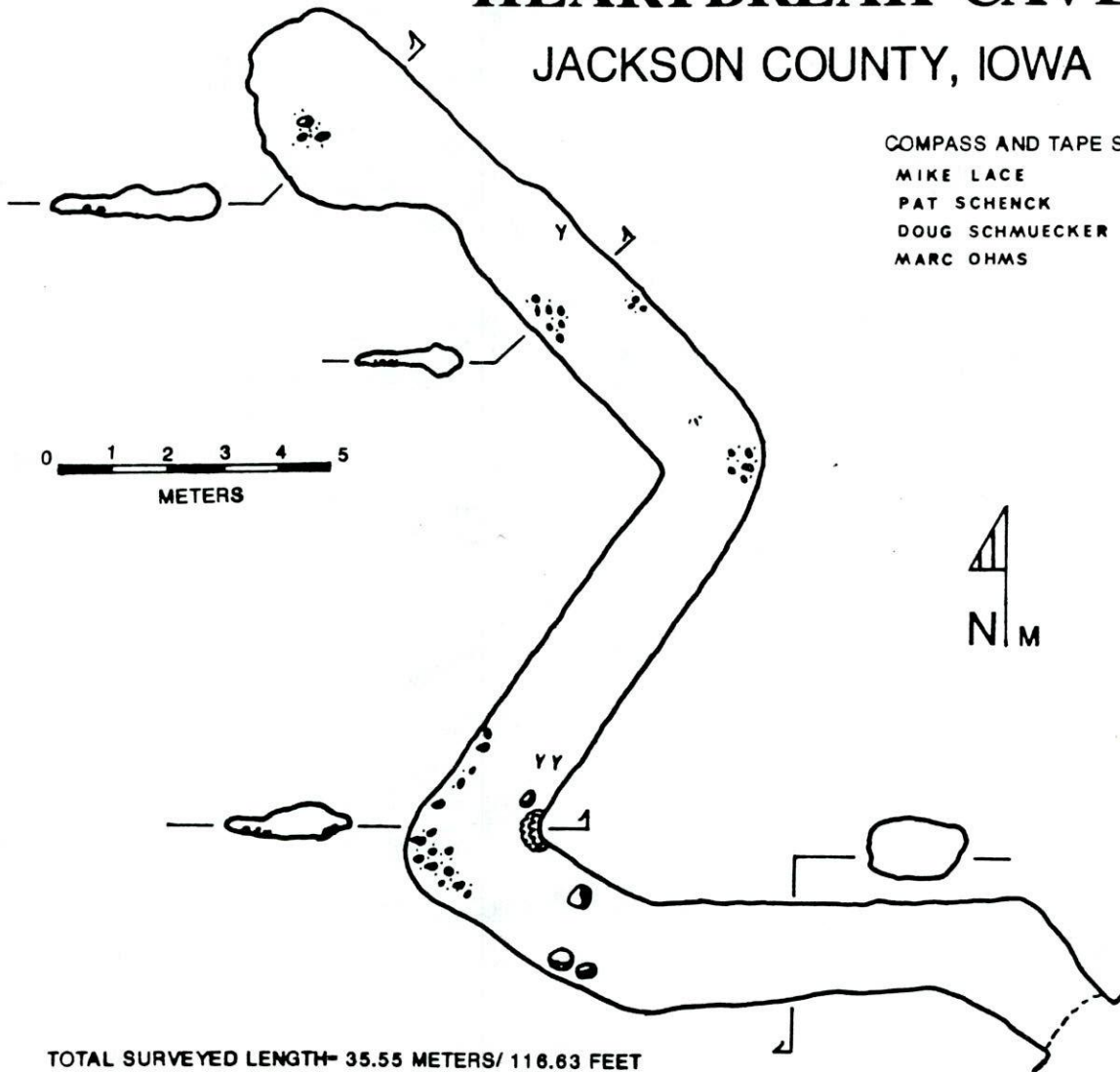
COMPASS AND TAPE SURVEY

MIKE LACE

PAT SCHENCK

DOUG SCHMUECKER

MARC OHMS



MARC OHMS

