

July 1975

Alaskan Caver, Volume 2, No. 2, July-September 1975

Alice Iliff

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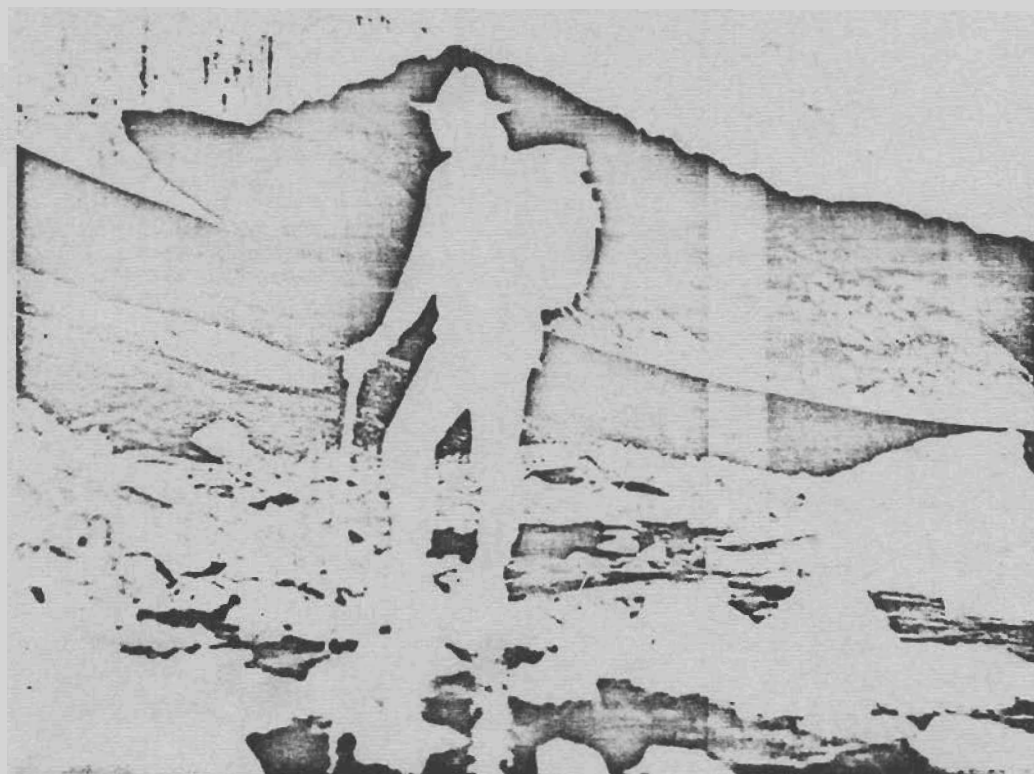
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T H E A L A S K A N C A V E R

Volume II, Number 2

July - September, 1975



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ALASKAN CAVE AREAS CONSERVATION TASK FORCE
(National Speleological Society)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Editor's Note.....	1
Chairman's Corner.....	2
Task Force Update.....	3
Pamphlet Review.....	4
From the Cave Files: Rumor Reports.....	5
N.S.S./Task Force Members in Alaska.....	11
The Trail Creek Caves-A Short Look.....	12
Some Glacial Caves in Central Alaska.....	13
Newspaper Note.....	15

Cover Credit: Photo of Byron's Glacier Cave, by Harvey Bowers

EDITOR'S NOTE

The first issue of The Alaskan Caver (Vol. II) drew favorable response from Task Force members and local, interested people to whom it was distributed. "Outside" Alaska response has been nil, partly because of mailing delays (I am not sure of current addresses of several people slated to receive copies). The N.S.S. News local editor has informed me that there will be mention of the Task Force in the October or November issue. Hopefully, that coverage will elicit some response and provide us with additional information. We will endeavor to catch up with people by sending this issue and the previous one. There will also be more distribution to appropriate local organizations here in Alaska.

If you have any information pertaining to caves, cave areas, or Alaskan geology, please contact:

EDITOR, ALASKAN CAVER
2944 Emory Street
Anchorage, AK 99501.

This issue contains some of our "rumors" from the cave files. When checked out by the Task Force, these will become part of the N.S.S. cave list. We will try to publish all rumors (significant ones) to avoid duplication and to encourage clarification of known areas. Many rumors come from both recent and historical publications. Scanning books here could be a full time job!

Perhaps our biggest frustration in trying to record the wealth of cave-related information that exists in Alaska is that people here do so much. It is hard to put everything down in writing. Most of us have so many activities and demands of jobs/families, that there is never enough time to "get it all together." Some of us have commented that almost everything we do in Alaska could somehow be related to the Task Force. We will persevere!

Alice Sliff, Editor

CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

During the fall quarter, streams in Alaska diminish and clear up. Snow replaces rain at higher elevations. Lowering temperatures freeze water in place and harden remaining snow. In glacier caves, formation of speleothems that rival those of limestone caves in beauty and variety occurs.

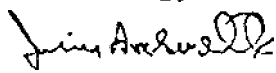
Glacier caves, unlike better-known caves in rock, are easily accessible to Alaskans. Most glaciers probably have caves of some sort, but the best caves are found in areas where the ice is stationary. A number of glaciers relatively easy to reach by highway from Anchorage or Fairbanks are listed in this issue, starting on Page 13.

Insuring safety requires not only sensible caving techniques, but also some knowledge of the history and geology of the glacier being visited. Glaciers with "dumping" lakes should be avoided, except in their "off" years. The company of someone familiar with the area is, perhaps, more important than in more conventional caving.

The autumn, after freeze-up and before new snow becomes too deep, is the best time to glacier cave. In some years, entrances are open for a short period in the fall after residual snow has melted and before new snow avalanches down. In some caves, this period is narrowed to the time when issuing water flows are low and the snow is not too deep.

For spelunkers who have not tried it, glacier caving is highly recommended. But, remember: the most dangerous part of safe glacier caving is the automobile drive there and back!

Good caving,


Julius Rockwell, Jr.

TASK FORCE UPDATE

Task Force activities this quarter included regular monthly meetings, addition of some new faces (see membership list), and field trips to Hope and the Portage glacier areas. We have all been more aware of areas visited even on individual outings, noting both cave and non-cave areas. Preparation for this issue of the CAVER was in progress, and the cave files accumulated a few sheets of rumored caves. After repeated correspondence, the N.S.S News local editor said to watch for a notice about the ACAC Task Force in the October or November News.

The June meeting was short, due to the absence of the chairman. William Godbey gave a slide show on several different caves and answered our questions on cave photography. There was a short discussion on the question of land easements in conjunction with the Alaska Native Land Claims Settlement Act. The concern is with caves and cave areas that will come under private, Native control (ownership) after December 15, 1975. The Task Force is hoping that permission to cross, explore, and report on caves/cave areas will be forthcoming to us as a scientific group on our own merits. We will not, as a group, file easement requests with the Bureau of Land Management, since one requirement for easement requires proving that we had used all such areas prior to December, 1975. Such prior use admission has overtones of trespass in certain cases.

The July meeting included a pot luck dinner and a program by Sue Wrenn on her expedition to Greenland in 1972. There were several slides of glacier caves. The first issue of The Alaskan Caver (Vol.II) was distributed. It was decided to continue to limit the Task Force pretty much to N.S.S. members until we get more extensive field trips organized. The core group is still getting to know one another. However, we will try to encourage non-members to provide cave rumors and other relevant data.

The August meeting featured a report on the July 4th weekend trip to Hope (this was a trip, since an expedition has been defined as "a long line of everybody"). More than 10 caves were explored, photographed, and mapped. We plan to publish the trip findings in the December issue of the CAVER. Harvey Bowers reported his find of ice worms on the Byron Glacier. He brought in several specimens - the first that most of us had ever seen. Chuck and Alice Iliff gave a slide show on ice formations in New York state caves. Perhaps Alaskan caves will yield similar forms.

** ** ** ** **

PAMPHLET REVIEW

"Alaska Glaciers and Ice Fields," by Lloyd W. MacDowell (published by the Alaska Steamship Company, Seattle, WA., 1907; facsimile printed 1965) is a delightful turn-of-the-century view of the wonderment of Alaska's glaciers:

"Have you ever trudged over one of the mighty and far-extending ice fields of Alaska, beholding the multitude of pinnacles and spires...?"

Glaciers often visited by tourists included the Taku, Muir, Denver, Davidson, and Mendenhall. There is a brief discussion on glacier formation, movement, and proper ways to climb:

"Persons intending to climb on a glacier should provide themselves with alpine sticks and creepers."

Local curio shops and photography stores would furnish the necessary gear for tourist glacier hikes. Visitors are encouraged to take "snap shots" of the overhanging cliffs and to note the ice colors:

"Surfaces of glaciers that have been longest exposed to the atmosphere are always white and glittering while the caverns below reveal the intense blue of the crystal mass to be seen within."

A copy of this pamphlet can be borrowed from the Iliffs.

-Alice Iliff

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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: *Rumored since 1930-1933 - South eastern Prince William Sound*

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

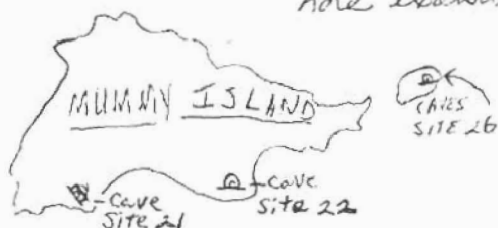
MUMMY ISLAND

Is in S.E. Prince William Sound (boat access), South of Hawkins Island, West of (abandoned) Point Whittaker Radio Station. Island is isolated by mud flats at low water - no permanent channel in 1930's.

Site 21: In the small bight on S. of island, just east of Holtzschel Cannery dock - small cave, 50' above the water.

Site 22: on S. shore 25' above beach & directly below the island's highest point. Cave is 100' wide. Huge sloped form 3 chambers. A 4th hole extends below tide (need a ladder).

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



Site 26: Several caves & rock shelters on the eastern end of small island. One cave is 50' above the water, 12' long, 3' wide, 4' high - contained mummies & wood coffins.

WAS THE SOURCE OF THE RUMOR A

PERSON: (Give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area, etc.)

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

CHUGACH PREHISTORY (The Archaeology of Prince William Sound) by Frederica DeLaguna, U of Wash. Publication in Anthropology, Vol. 13 (in U. of A. Library - Alaska Section)

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)

OTHER: *Chapter 2 of this book list many caves as archeological sites: burials, rock paintings, mummies, etc., on Hinchinbrook, Hawkins, Glacier, Knight, Bainbridge Islands.*

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)

Book written before 1964 earthquake - land features & water levels may have changed. Owner is Chugach National Forest but there is all possibility of Native claims in the area by 3 Eskimo groups.

YOUR NAME: ALICE ILIFF

ADDRESS: 1306 W. 6th Ave. #2, Anchorage 99501

PHONE: 279-4729

DATE Sept. 2, 1975

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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: 1906

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

AMAKNAK
CAVE

Amaknak Cave: *cave*, under Cave Rock, on SW coast of Amaknak I., in Unalaska Bay, 1 mi. W of Unalaska village, Fox Is., Aleutian Is.; 53°-53'10" N, 166°33'12" W; (map 23).

Name probably derived from Amaknak Island. This cave was an old Aleutian burial place (Baker, 1906, p. 95). According to R. H. Geoghegan the name means "burial place" from amiknaq (place of impurity).

DIRECTIONS: (Give

SWATH
HARBOR
AIRFIELD

Amaknak, Ostrov: *island*, see Amaknak Island.

Amaknak Island: *island*, 4.3 mi. long, in Fox Is., in Unalaska Bay, on NE coast of Unalaska I., Aleutian Is.; 53°54'30" N, 166°32'00" W; BGN 1931; (map 23). Var. Amakhnak, Amaknax, Amoknak, Ostrov Amaknakh.

Aleut name published by Lt. Sarichev (1826, maps 14-15), IRN, as "Ostr[ov] Amaknakh", meaning "Amaknak Island." Spelled "Amakhnak" by Capt. Lutke (1836, p. 281), IRN; "Amaknak" by USBF in 1888. According to R. H. Geoghegan, the name means "burial place," from "amaiknag" meaning "place of impurity".

WAS THE SOURCE OF

PERSON: (Give name of person been to rumored area, etc.)

Amaknax: *island*, see Amaknak Island.

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

DICTIONARY OF ALASKA PLACE NAMES, Donald J. Orth, 1967, USGS PROFESSIONAL PAPER 567, p. 69. Copy at Anderson Main (Louisac) Library.

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)

OTHER: CAVE MENTIONED ON PAGE 95 of GEOGRAPHIC DICTIONARY OF ALASKA, 2nd Edition, Marcus Baker, 1906, USGS BULLETIN 299, prepared by James McCormick.

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)

YOUR NAME: Julius Rockwell, Jr.
ADDRESS: 2944 Emory St., Anchorage 99504
PHONE: 277-7150

DATE July 30, 1975

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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: 3/75

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

west Chichagof Island

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

in to Don McKnight, "The entire island is honey-
year is a problem at deer season, when
hunters fall into 40-foot pits hidden by dense
ground cover & vegetation."

WAS THE SOURCE OF THE RUMOR A

PERSON: (Give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area, etc.)

DON McKnight, Assistant Director, Game Division, Alaska
Dept. of Fish & Game, Juneau, AK.

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)

OTHER:

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)

YOUR NAME: C. H. ILIFF
ADDRESS: 1306 W. 6th Ave. #2, Anchorage 99501
PHONE: 279-4729

DATE 8-20-75

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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:

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

TRAIL CREEK CAVES: some 50 kilometers south of
Deering, Alaska. There are 9 caves, primarily of
archeological importance
(On the Seward Peninsula.)

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

Publications have pictures + descriptions.

WAS THE SOURCE OF THE RUMOR A

PERSON: (Give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area, etc.)

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

THE ARCHEOLOGY OF CAVE DEBITION, J.R. EDDINES, BROWN UNIV.
PRESS, 1964, pp. 8, 208, 235, 246, 255; in U. of A. Library

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)

OTHER: Publication: Eskimo Prehistory, Hans-georg Bandi, U. of Alaska
press, 1964 (English 1969) p. 38, 60, 61.

Publication: "The Trail Creek Caves on Seward Peninsula,
Alaska," by Helge Larsen; AKTEN des 34. Internationalen Amerikanisten kongresses,
pp. 286-291, Copenhagen, 1962.

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)

Publications are available from U. of Alaska library or
from Dr. Nancy Y. Davis, Diamond Dr., Anchorage. (except Helge
Larsen article, which is in Danish.)

YOUR NAME: ALICE ILLIFF

ADDRESS: 1306 W. 6TH AVE. #2, Anchorage 99501

PHONE: 279-4729

DATE 9-2-75

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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: 7-4-75

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

BURNT ISLAND

SEWARD (D-8) Quadrangle
USES TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

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

WAS THE SOURCE OF THE RUMOR A

PERSON: (Give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area, etc.)
CARL CLARK, HOPE, ALASKA (he used to hunt ducks on the island)

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)
SEWARD (D-8) quad: T. 10N., R. 4W., NE QTR. of NE QTR. of Sec. 24 of Seward Meridian
OTHER:

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)
Burnt Island is assumed to be on Forest Service Land.

YOUR NAME: Chuck ILIFF
ADDRESS: 1306 W. 6th Ave. #2, Anchorage 99501
PHONE: 279-4729
DATE 7-4-75

ALASKA CAVE RUMOR -- To Be Checked Out

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: 7-14-75

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

SEWARD (D-8) QUADRANGLE: Sink

USGS TOPOGRAPHIC MAP

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

WAS THE SOURCE OF THE RUMOR A

PERSON: (Give name, address, phone, has person been to rumored area, etc.)

PUBLICATION: (Give title, author, publisher, date, pages, where can the publication be found, etc.)

OBSERVATION ON USGS QUAD

VISUAL OBSERVATION: (Give coordinates, topography description, etc.)

SEWARD (D-8) T. 9N., R. 3W., NW QTR. of
NE QTR of Section 35 of Seward meridian

OTHER:

ANY OTHER USEFUL INFORMATION (Owner? On Federal land? Animal denning area? etc.)

Sink is on Forest Service land; access is via Resurrection Creek Trail to Gold Gulch at Pearson Mine. Gold Gulch to 3500' elevation to

YOUR NAME: C.H. Iliff water-filled sinkholes.

ADDRESS: 1306 W. 6th Ave., #2, Anchorage 99501

PHONE: 279-4729

DATE 7-14-75

N.S.S./TASK FORCE MEMBERS IN ALASKA

September, 1975

BEATY, WILLIAM

30-302 G Cherry Dr.
Elmendorf A.F.B.
Anchorage 99506
753-0250

BOWERS, WM. HARVEY (12088)

PO Box 4-488
Mile 2, O'Malley Rd.
Anchorage 99509
344-1677
277-2644, 279-1563 (work)

DUNCAN, MERRIE (14833)

DUNCAN, PHILIP (13202)

2626 N. Tahiti Loop
Anchorage 99507
344-5625

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274-8511 (work)

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HALLINAN, THOMAS (6329)

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272-5522, ex.135 (work)

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688-2149

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272-3422 (work)

SMITH, WARREN G. (5601)

Dept. of Chemistry
Univ. of Alaska
Fairbanks 99701
479-3239

STAFFORD, KENNETH K. (15051)

c/o Oil and Gas Supervisor
PO Box 259
Anchorage 99510
333-0509

STREET, DAVID (8257)

STREET, NANCY (9080)

STREET, KATHRYN (9960)

STREET, JENNIFER (13762)

STREET, MICHAEL (15327)

2510 Foraker Dr.
Anchorage 99503
272-5648

THE TRAIL CREEK CAVES - A SHORT LOOK

The Trail Creek Caves, located some 50 kilometers south of Deering, Alaska, on the Seward Peninsula, are mentioned in three fairly recent publications (see footnotes below). There are some photographs. There are nine caves, excavated in 1949 and 1950 by Helge Larsen, which consist of several fissures and small caves in limestone hillside deposits (Giddings, 255).

The focal point of the Trail Creek Caves excavation involved the find of prehistoric Eskimo arrowheads and points. According to Dr. Nancy Y. Davis, University of Alaska anthropologist (personal discussion, 3/73), Trail Creek dates back to 30,000 B.C. Carbon dating has shown willows, possibly with charcoal, dating deep levels of the caves back to 4042 B.C. (Giddings, 246). Middle levels of the caves have yielded diagonally flaked blades similar to those on Cape Krusenstern, which lasted in the Bering Strait region until 1,000 years ago. Some quite recent Ipiutak objects were found at top levels by Larsen.

Cave #2 measures approximately 21 meters in length and about 2 meters in width at the entrance. The lowest part of the sediment consists of clay yielding antler arrowheads with insert blades of flint. Similar finds were made in Cave #9, in which Ipiutak arrowpoints lay on the surface sediments.

The Task Force should be aware of studies and activities that may take place at this area. There are rumors of people trespassing and carrying on activities without proper permission.

Bandi, Hans-georg. Eskimo Prehistory, U. of Ak. Press, 1964 (English, 1969), pps. 38, 60, 61.

Giddings, J.R. The Archeology of Cape Denbigh, Brown U. Press, 1964, pps. 8, 208, 235, 246, 255.

Larsen, Helge. "The Trail Creek Caves on Seward Peninsula, Alaska," AKTEN des 34. Internationalen Amerikanisten Kongresses, Vienna, 1962, pps. 284-291. (In Danish.)

SOME GLACIAL CAVES IN CENTRAL ALASKA

EASILY ACCESSIBLE GLACIERS AND CAVES:

1. Byron Glacier System - one mile southwest of Portage Lake; 6 miles WSW of Whittier, Alaska; 3/4 mile hike from the west parking lot of Portage Lake visitors' center. System composed of several minor fields, each with its own cave system; partially mapped.
2. Middle Glacier - in the next west-side valley north of Byron Glacier System. Reportedly used by mountaineers in ascent of the mountain; 1/2 mile from campground on trail; not yet visited by N.S.S.
3. Eklutna Glacier - 23 miles southeast of Palmer, Alaska; easily reached by leaving Glenn Highway on Eklutna Basin Recreation Area road and driving about 2 hours to the end of Eklutna Lake. Glacier is a 1/4-1/2 mile walk. Large opening at end of glacier; according to some reports, glacier can be heard to move.
4. Matanuska Glacier - northeast of Palmer at Mile 102 on the Glenn Highway. One access point is through Glacier Park, privately owned land at the toe of the glacier. Said to have caves.
5. Gulkana Glacier - 14 miles north of Paxson, Alaska; at head of the Gulkana River and Phelan Creek. Turn east off Richardson Highway at Isabel Pass, go past pipeline camp to end of road. Said to contain caves.
6. Castner Glacier - 26 miles north of Paxson, one mile upstream from Richardson Highway. Too much water coming out to enter stream entrance in July, but October 1, 1975, flight over area

showed substantially reduced water flow and many side entrances.
Unexplored by N. S. S.

7. Canwell Glacier - 2-3 miles south of Castner Glacier; 2-3 miles up Miller Creek from highway. Not visited; appears more extensive.
8. Valdez Glacier - 4 miles northeast of Valdez from road past airport and campground. Cave reported by George Perkins, extent unknown. Not as easily accessible as others, but promising.

II. LESS ACCESSIBLE GLACIERS AND CAVES:

9. Black Rapids Glacier - on opposite side of Delta River from Richardson Highway, 37 miles south of Delta Junction, 8-9 miles north of Castner Glacier. This "galloping glacier" last moved in 1938 and has been stationary since. It challenges the spelunker with a $2\frac{1}{2}$ x 6 mile area of pseudo karst with several emerging streams and many openings. Not in our records, it may have been explored by glaciologists.
10. Tazlina Glacier Caves - 43 miles north of Valdez; 1 mile south of Tazlina Lake (charter float plane to lakeshore). Cave reported by John Williams, who said it was extensive.
11. Snow Glacier Cave - 12 miles northeast of Seward, at the head of Snow River and Paradise Valley. Cave may be 6 miles long, a tube kept open by the lake which dumps about every 3 years. Photographed, but has not been explored.

12. Caves have been reported in the Malaspina and Bering glaciers.

13. The Lemon Glacier in the Juneau Icefield (Southeast Alaska)
has been explored.

-Julius Rockwell

** **

NEWSPAPER NOTE

The Anchorage Daily Times newspaper, on Tuesday, September 30, 1975, page 2, had a short (AP) article about a continuing search for a downed pilot in the Adak Island area of the Aleutian Chain. The focus of the search was on Amlia Island, near Adak. The article said that a Navy landing party would "search abandoned shelters and caves on the remote island."

This clipping is being kept in the Task Force files.

-Alice Iliff