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Lowell Burkhead

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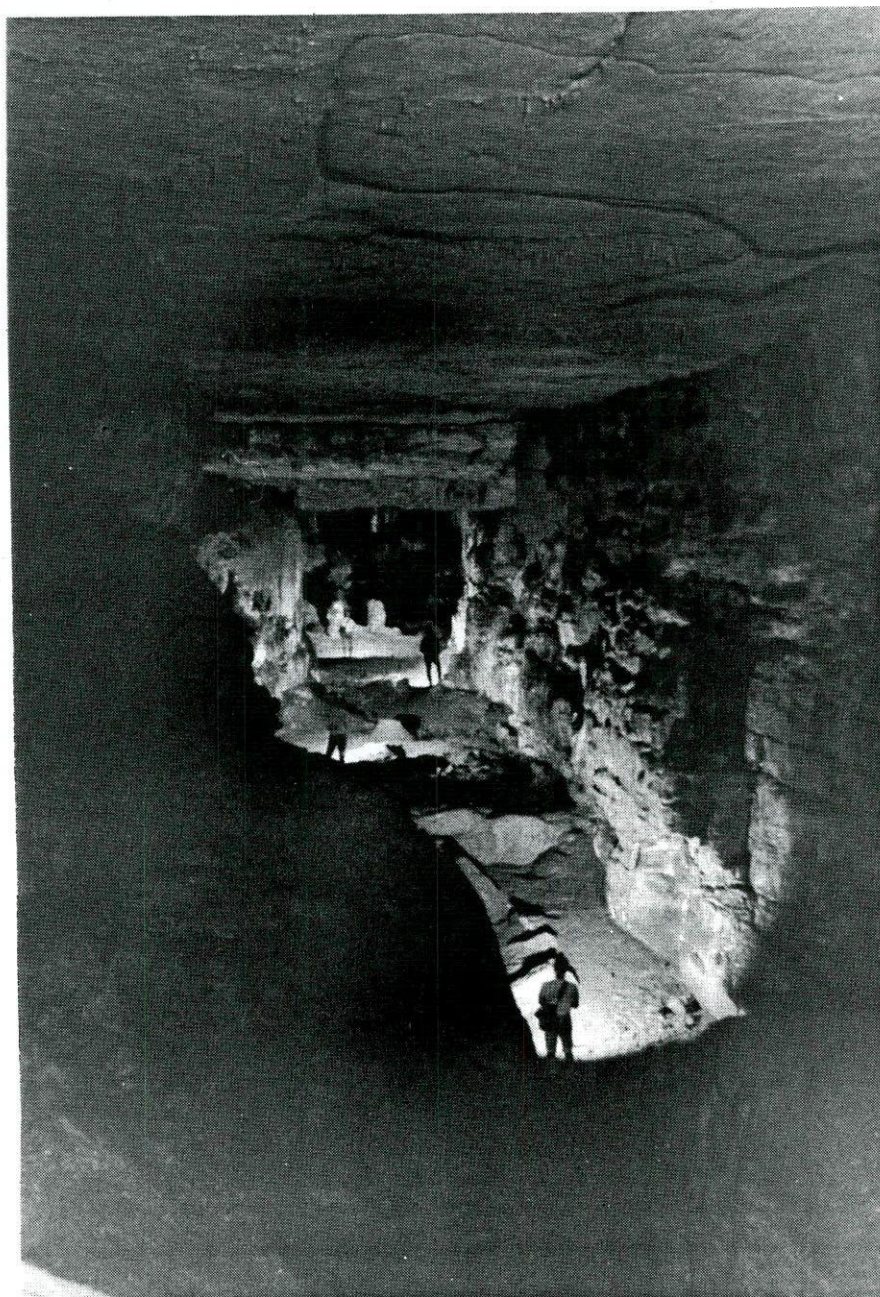
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I N T E R C O M

Published Semi-spasmodically By

THE IOWA GROTTO

National Speleological Society



Volume XXIX Issue 6

November - December, 1993

The INTERCOM is published semi-spasmodically by the - - - - - Iowa Grotto
The Iowa Grotto is dedicated to the exploration and study P.O. Box 228
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Regular membership to the N.S.S. is \$25.00 Cave Avenue
per year. Subscriptions to the N.S.S. News Huntsville, AL 35810
only is \$18.00 per year. All Iowa Grotto
members are encouraged to join our parent organization, The National Speleological Soc.

Material for the INTERCOM may be sent any time as it becomes available, but in
order to guarantee inclusion in the next issue, it must be in the hands of the editor
by March 1, 1994 with a few days grace for those later trips. This should include
material covering January and February, 1994. Send articles, trip reports, photographic
negatives, prints, or slides, artwork, cave maps, 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, third
Wednesday in November and December, in room 125 of Trowbridge Hall on the campus of
the University of Iowa, Iowa City, Iowa.

Air Force Rescue Coordination Center
National Cave Rescue Commission
1-800-851-3051

Iowa County Emergency Management
1-319-642-3151

This number calls out Iowa Grotto rescue personnel

Cover Photo: Main trunk passage in Pettyjohns Cave, Georgia. Photo by Scott Dankof



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

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

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IOWA GROTTO MEETING MINUTES

Regular meeting November 17, 1993

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mike Lace at 8:10 p.m. after a slide show by Al Jagnow featuring Iowa caving slides from the early 1960s. The minutes of the previous two meetings were read and approved. *TRIP REPORTS*: Greg McCarty reported on a trip to dig on a Fayette County lead. Marc Ohms reported on a trip to Clayton County to check on sinkholes cleaned up by the DNR. They also surveyed Jones Cave. Mike Lace described the completion of the Block & Tackle Cave survey. Marc Ohms reported on a digging trip to Gerda's Dig and a trip to the Fessler Mines with a DNR park official. *FUTURE TRIPS*: Caving trips to Fayette and Floyd Counties will be scheduled when there is enough interest expressed. Wonder Cave (Winnebago County) will be visited nearly every third Sunday of the month for restoration work. The 1994 Iowa Grotto Summer Picnic will be held in southern Clayton County in early August. *OLD BUSINESS*: The recent thinner than normal issue of the INTERCOM emphasized the importance of turning in trip reports, photos, and maps. The next deadline for INTERCOM materials is January 1st. *NEW BUSINESS*: Nominations for 1994 Grotto officers will be accepted until the December meeting. The following nominations were made: Mike Lace for Chairman, Marc Ohms for Vice-Chairman, and Jay Wells for Secretary-Treasurer. It was noted that the maps for Inspiration Cave, Play Cave, and Upper Room Cave in the Iowa Cave Map Book are incorrectly placed in Jackson County. They are actually in Clinton County. A total of 39 caves have been surveyed so far this year. The meeting was adjourned at 9:10 p.m.

Regular meeting December 15, 1993

The meeting was called to order at 8:08 p.m. following a slide show on Iowa caves. Twelve members were present. The minutes of the previous meeting were read and approved. *TRIP REPORTS*: Mike Lace reported on three trips in Coldwater Cave. They included a trip up to Kenny's Ballroom, a digging trip near the entrance to the Guardian Fangs Passage, and a climbing trip in the Guardian Fangs Passage. A CRF trip to Kentucky was reported on. Marc Ohms gave a report on some crevice leads in the White Pine Hollow area. He also reported on a survey trip into Engleken Cave in Dubuque County. Greg McCarty discussed his trip to Silver Springs in Florida. *FUTURE TRIPS*: Upcoming are the NSS Convention, Wonder Cave restoration project, Glenwood Cave, OTR, a Floyd County trip, and the annual grotto summer picnic. *OLD BUSINESS*: Grotto election nominations are due. No additional nominations were made so the current grotto officers will run unopposed. They are: Chairman Mike Lace, Vice-Chairman Marc Ohms, and Secretary-Treasurer Jay Wells. *NEW BUSINESS*: Chris Beck showed off his new GPS (global positioning satellite) receiver. The instrument receives accurate locations from satellites. GPS locations will be added to the Iowa Grotto Cave File. Lowell Burkhead reported that another batch of cave file updates have just been completed. Of the half inch thick stack of pages, about half are updates and the other half are new caves. The meeting was adjourned at 9:26 p.m.

TRIP REPORTS - TRIP REPORTS - TRIP REPORTS - TRIP REPORTS - TRIP REPORTS - TRIP REPORTS

BLOCK & TACKLE SURVEY

Block & Tackle Cave, Halloween Cave, Jackson County, Iowa
October 30, 1993
Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, and Gary Engh

by Mike Lace

We had begun the survey of this distinctive Jackson County cave back in early February. Heavy rains postponed the follow-up trip in this actively draining sinkhole and its stream canyon that plunges over 100 feet to a terminal sump. The bulk of the passage had been mapped though, leaving the wet entry crawl and the fifteen foot vertical drop at the end of the cave.

The passage was even wetter than our last trip in, with several cold pools that had to be bridged or slid through to get to the larger walking passage beyond. We en-

countered a couple of raccoons near the twenty foot chimney. One of them was in such a hurry to get away from us that he started screeching loudly as he almost slid down the vertical pitch but he and his buddy found a small pocket in the breakdown to hide in while we passed by. Marc took a few pictures in the large room off of the chimney then we started into the drain passage above the last vertical drop.

Bolts had been set years ago to rig the rappel. However, we anchored the rope on some breakdown and used one of the bolts as a rebelay to direct the rope away from the sharp rock lip of the drop. The second bolt had simply peeled out of the soft rock as we tightened it over one of Marc's bolt hangers. This had left us with little confidence in the other intact bolt as a primary anchor. Marc and I rappelled into a large passage that ended in standing water that had been described to us as fairly deep at the far end but with no obvious continuation through the sump. We surveyed the passage, took a few pictures, and noted a tiger salamander along the mud bank before climbing up through a persistent spray.

We mapped the entry crawl last since this was the most unpleasant part of the cave. It didn't take long though as we exited soaked and caked with mud from what I think is really a caver's cave.

After cleaning up, we went ridgewalking nearby. All we found was a small crevice 40 feet long. Halloween Cave has two entrances and a little flowstone along its single solutionally enlarged passage. There is more ground to check in this area.

A COLDWATER UPDATE

by Larry Welch

The wet weather of the summer of '93 certainly hampered progress at Coldwater but a few odds and ends have been accomplished. In May, Jay Wells and I resurveyed a portion of the Waterfall Passage starting at the junction with Dave's Tunnel of Despair. This region had been surveyed previously by the Rock River boys but no sketches had been done. It turned out to be a delightful place to survey, having to do the neat area around the twin domes. We tied off at the entrance to the Terrible Crawl - the water level was very high and we would not have been able to get through the crawl without chilling out. We did crawl ahead to see the dome which was absolutely thundering and was quite a rush to see. I had seen the dome during the winter months before and it was a mere trickle compared to what Jay and I got to see this month.

After some washout trips, we finally finished this bit of survey in September. Mike Lace was the book man, Chris Beck ran lead tape, and I got to shoot compass sights for a change. The first bit of survey was somewhat unpleasant as the water level was still high in the small crawlway. Fortunately, some creative station placements allowed us to reach the dome canyon before we froze out allowing us to survey all the way to the dome. The spray was not as thick as in May but was still quite impressive. The air in the cave was very foul this month, the worst spot seemingly being the shaft. We did some serious panting on the way up the ladder.

By October, the air had freshened considerably and the water level was down to what could be considered almost a normal summer level. This offered the first chance we'd had in ages to retrieve the vertical gear I'd left in Kenny's Ballroom last February. It was also a chance to reinitiate one Mr. Jay Wells to caving following his paternity detail. The trip was also to be considered a good training effort as we hadn't had a chance to take any long trips during the wet summer. It became even more of a training effort when we decided to drag along a piece of PMI destined for Grappling Falls. The last time we had scaled the falls, some minor damage to the rope was noted, and to minimize whatever risk it posed, Jay and I had agreed to put up a new rope the next time we get out that way. The rope was eventually deposited in Kenny's Ballroom and the vertical equipment was located in the exact spot it had been left;

this is somewhat amazing considering the degree of flooding the cave encountered this summer. The gear was only 2.5 feet above the water level, though it should be noted that this is in a very wide portion of the passage. Although the gear was still in place, there was no way to discern whether it had been under water or not during the summer.

We were also keen to look for booming borehole leads that might have washed open during the flooding. Naturally, we found none but there was evidence of a lot of fresh silting in the Pig Trough. Otherwise the trip went rather smoothly and efficiently. Upon examination of the gear that had been left in the cave, nothing had been rendered nonfunctional although most of the aluminum 'biners had some surface corrosion damage.

A LITTLE PROGRESS IN CLAYTON COUNTY

Jones Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

November 7, 1993

by Marc Ohms

Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, Gary Engh, and Eric Winch

Eric and I met Gary and Mike at a cafe in Strawberry Point and grabbed a bite to eat. After eating, we proceeded north of there to check some sinkholes that the state had recently cleaned up. Our first stop found no one home so we proceeded on to the next stop. They were home. The sinkholes are located across the road in a field. We checked several sinkholes but found no open holes of any kind even though most of them appear to take water during rains.

We then went in search of Jones Cave. The cave has not been visited in recent years by the grotto and we had little information on the cave or its location. The owner did not know where it was but gave us permission to go looking for it. We drove into the field to where we could get close to the valley and parked the trucks. We walked down into a ravine and followed it into the main valley. The ravine had a nice bedrock floor and had many vertical drops. I would like to have seen it this past summer with a lot of water running in it.

We eventually found the cave in a fork of the main valley. It is located just above stream level and has a fairly good-sized entrance. Beyond the entrance chamber, it quickly becomes a bellycrawl and remains so for 80 feet to a small room where we could all fit and sit up. There are a couple of small not so promising dig leads in this room. We surveyed the cave and it turned out to be 104 feet long. It lacks any speleothems but is a neat cave. The cave alone is not worth the walk but the valley with the rock bottomed streams makes it worth it.

A LOT OF SINKHOLES AND A FEW PITS

Bakke Pit, No Name Pit, Sponge Rock Pit, Winneshiek County, Iowa

Date unknown

by Marc Ohms

Marc Ohms, Eric Winch, Mike Lace, and Chris Beck

It was Coldwater Sunday and was rather nice out so we wanted to spend it on the surface. Mike had checked out some sinkholes some time back and found one with an open hole. This was to be our mission for the day.

After checking with the landowner, we drove into the fields close to the sinkholes. There are several sinks that take water and some with interesting rock bottoms. We reached our open hole, and after clearing a little stuff from the entrance, Chris climbed down. He reported it was only 15 feet deep and had no passage off of the bottom. We quickly surveyed it and called it Sponge Rock Pit after the sponge-like appearance of the rock which happens to be Galena Limestone. We then checked with the landowner and

told him what we had found and he told us of a pit on his neighbor's place.

We got permission from the owner and drove into the fields to the area of the pit. There were tons of sinkholes everywhere but we finally found our pit. It is a nice open pit of 30 feet and has a small amount of passage off of the bottom. We surveyed this pit and called it Bakke Pit after the landowner. We then went searching for more pits. We checked several sinkholes and did manage to find one more pit. It was 25 feet deep and easily climbable. We surveyed it and called it No Name Pit. There is no passage off of the bottom.

After checking in our cave files, we found two of these caves have sheets and kinda have names. They are called Cave 2A and Cave 3A. We liked our names more and felt our names were more fitting so we used ours.

I forgot to mention that vertical gear is needed for Bakke Pit. This area is a very interesting karst area and needs and deserves more checking. I am sure many more pits can be found. The maps will be in the next INTERCOM.

IS THIS A CAVE OR A RACCOON HOTEL?

Engleken Cave, Dubuque County, Iowa

Date unknown

by Marc Ohms

Marc Ohms, Mike Lace, Chris Beck, Gary Engh and Jacob Hugart

Engleken Cave has been on our survey list for a long time but threats of an existing map put it on the back burner. We finally decided not to wait any longer.

The cave is entered via a 17 foot steel pipe placed vertically in the entrance by the Iowa Grotto in 1965. (INTERCOM 1-18) After we all entered the cave, we regrouped at the first large place in the passage. At this point we split into two survey parties and began surveying. Mike and Chris surveyed back to the entrance and the small amount of passage beyond while we surveyed down the main passage.

The passage is quite spacious at this point and also is nicely decorated in many areas. Mike and Chris finished up the survey they were doing and caught up with us just as we were reaching the one long side passage. They surveyed the side passage as we continued down the main passage.

I must mention that the cave is grossly littered with raccoon droppings. The white and grey "hair pieces" (fungi covered) are everywhere! I was in the cave during 1990 and I do not remember this much crap; it is getting much worse. Something needs to be done to save this cave. It is very bad and will only get worse. It is a good cave and should be protected. There is a hole in the side of the top of the entrance pipe that the cover doesn't block. It should be trapped first then sealed.

As we were finishing up our survey of the last room, Mike and Chris caught up with us. They reported that they were chased out of the side passage by raccoons. The coons followed them into the main passage and headed toward the entrance. I finished sketching the room and we headed out of the cave taking some photos along the way. As we got to the entrance, there were the coons. They crawled down into a side pocket and allowed us to leave the cave.

The cave is around 450-500 feet long and is my 100th cave map that I have drawn.

NICE LEAD DOME EARNS ITS NAME

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

November 20, 1993

by Mike Lace

Mike Lace, Mike Nelson, Bret Swanson, and Al Berg

There's a dome off of the Guardian Fangs Passage with a climbing lead that had never been pushed. The four of us worked our way down the mainstream passage to the Guardian Fangs Passage to try to traverse the climb and enter the walking-size passage above.

Bret and Al had little experience in flat-out, face-in-the-water bellycrawl so they were both in luck as we pushed/slid the last 150 feet of water into the dome. The dome itself appears to be an aggressively enlarged joint that Nelson, Larry Welch, and I surveyed into more than a year ago. Dome heights reach 40 feet to a flat ceiling that continues into the upper passage leading off of the flowstone-draped twenty foot climb. The upper lead looked like walking passage for at least thirty feet but turned a corner leaving us curious and excited enough to try the lead.

Al tried the climb first finding several good hand holds but thought the last eight feet could be tricky. We tried using Lowell Burkhead's grappling hook next but the narrow crevice above was a small target that was a little too high to reach even with the best of tosses. Al thought he could make the traverse without the restriction of his wetsuit so he stripped down to his polypro and made a smooth ascent using what he described as bomb-proof handholds at the overhung lip of the climb.

Once on top, he hauled up the 45 foot rope and webbing loops we packed in with us to rig the drop. With Al's light up top, we got a better look at a fairly well decorated canyon. He moved twenty feet in from the lip to anchor the line, leaving exactly one foot of slack at the bottom of the drop then rappelled back down. He described a twenty foot high canyon, 8-12 inches wide that went 70 feet beyond the rigging point with no end in sight. The passage has no name yet but we gave Al a hard time by threatening to call it Al's BVD Passage after his climbing attire.

We packed up our stuff and left the rope in place for the survey trip to follow. We ran into the digging crew who were trying to break into a new dome closer to the mouth of the Guardian Fangs. They described being within two feet of reaching the crevice that should lead into the echoing dome ahead, however, they were too beat to dig through the last of the mud and cobbles to enter it that day.

With water levels preventing upstream Coldwater survey and exploration, it's been good to find going leads in well-trodden ground closer to the shaft and the hot pizza waiting for us after each trip.

DOWNSTREAM TO GUARDIAN FANGS DIG

Coldwater Cave, Winneshiek County, Iowa

November 20, 1993

by Bob Wahlstrom

Bob Wahlstrom and Paul Miller

Paul Miller and I joined a larger group that was going to the Guardian Fangs Passage to work on a couple of promising leads. It had been at least three years since Paul and I had been in Coldwater Cave and it was during the time of drought conditions and lower cave water levels. We made a couple of trips upstream at that time using chest waders. Things were going to be different this time since we now were trying out our wetsuits for the first time. The furthest downstream we had been was to Big Bertha in the Gallery area. We did get a pretty good workout trying to keep up with the rest of the group while navigating unfamiliar passage area. I managed to trip and fall at least three times and take a good dunking. The wetsuits definitely were the way to go on this trip.

I had problems with my glasses fogging over as I was getting a bit overheated.

We got to see a nicely decorated section of the cave that we planned to take time to photograph on the way back out. Paul and I were shown where the first good place to dig would be, which was a short distance into the Guardian Fangs Passage. We weren't used to the restricted condition that a wetsuit puts on you. Along with the trip to this spot, we were about used up before we started to dig. We were unable to make much headway into this somewhat promising looking dig. Next time I think we will take a little longer in getting to this dig site and come prepared with a couple more digging tools as a fair amount of dirt will have to be moved for this passage to continue.

On our way back to the shaft, we took time to take some pictures. We found it hard to keep our camera gear in a dry condition. Paul fell while carrying his camera and gave it a good dunking. We were counting on Ziploc Bags to keep things dry and found out too late that they do not do a good enough job when your pack is at times underwater.

It seemed like more of a workout than normal getting back up the ladder. When I got home, I weighed all my wet gear and it was 40 pounds plus. Maybe this had something to do with it. We are both looking forward to the next chance to go back down and do some more digging and take a few more pictures.

ST. OLAF SPRING

St. Olaf Spring Cave, Clayton County, Iowa

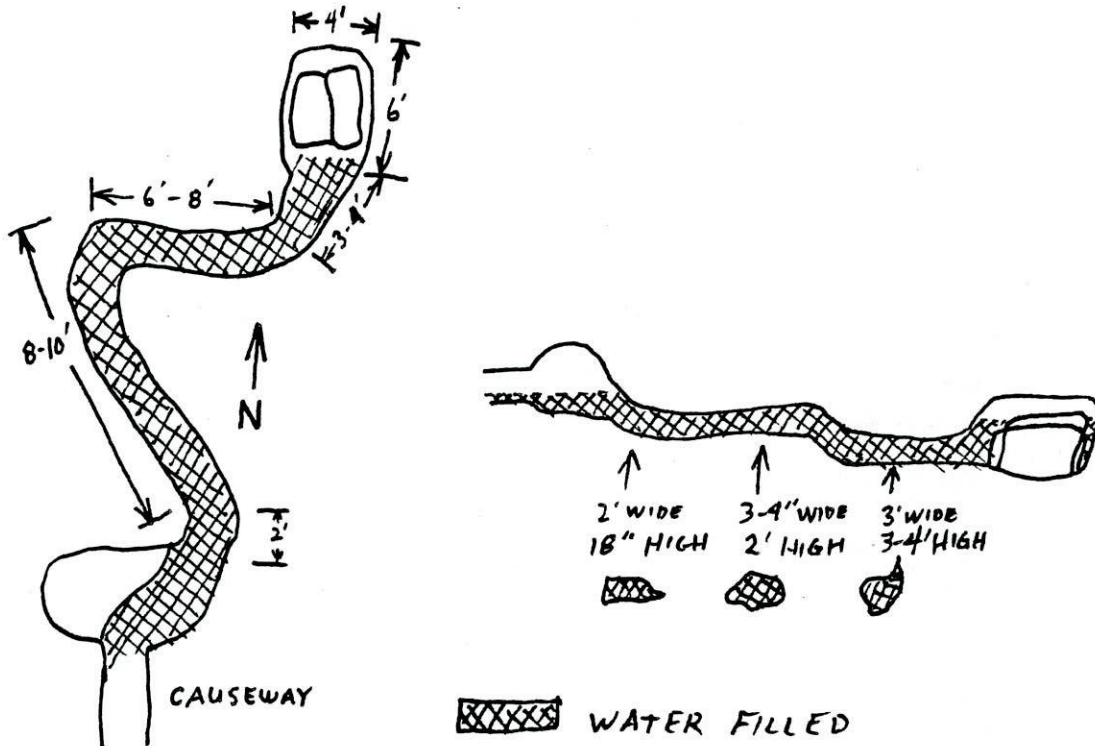
****NEVER TOO OLD TO PRINT! November 1, 1987****

by Mike Nelson

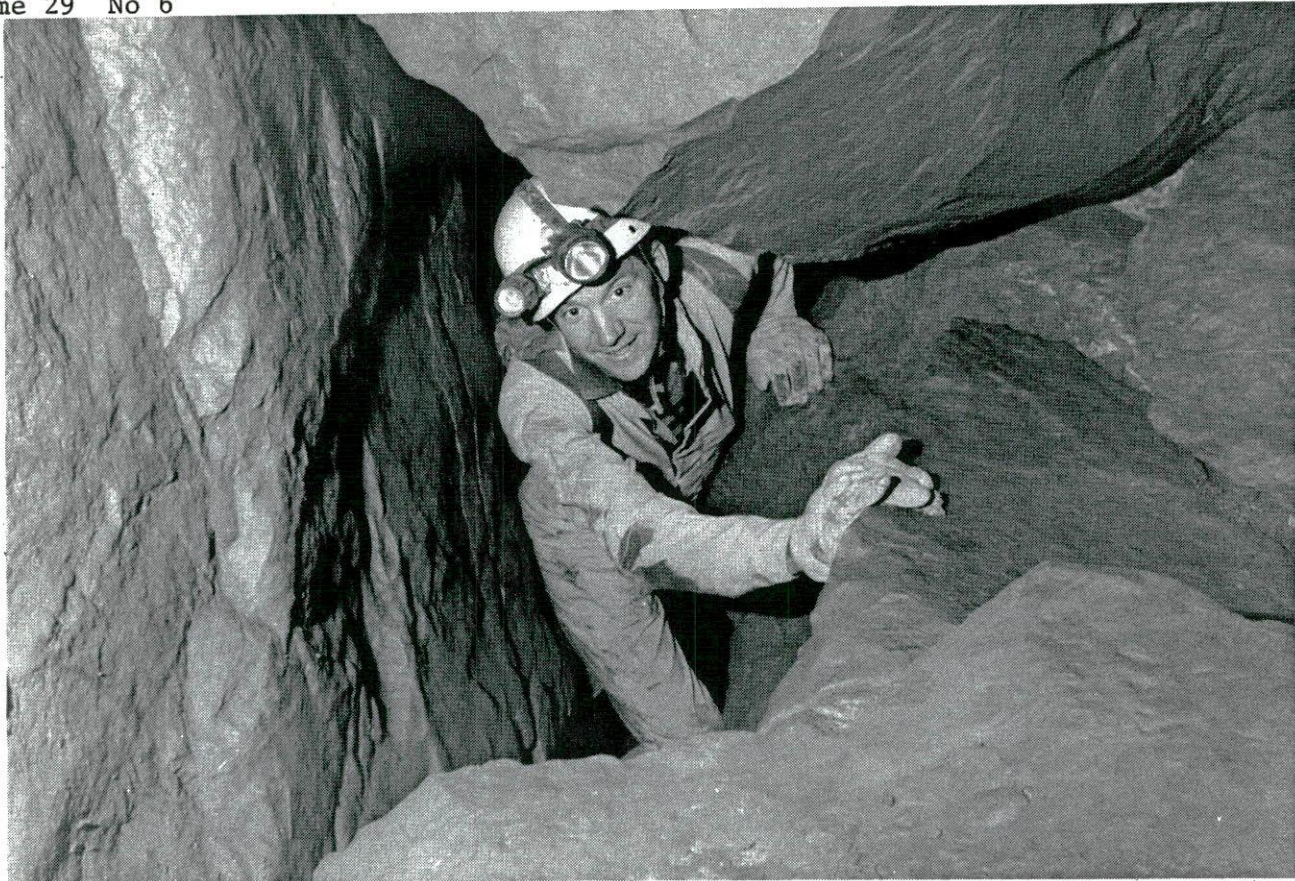
This spring had the good fortune of being right where the county decided to put a road. It now resurges through a 30 foot long, 2 by 2 foot culvert. I crawled up this slick cement causeway to the small hollow of natural cave and poked my head into the actual resurgence. The cold of the water took my breath away. With my second breath, I pushed into it around a tight corner to the left. I was in it most of a body length and saw enough passage to get my curiosity going. I retreated to get the scuba gear.

Geared up, I pushed into the two foot wide by 18 inch high opening down into about two feet of water. I had visibility after rounding the corner of 10 to 12 feet to the apparent end of the cave. At this point, though, the cave turned even sharper to the right and dropped into about four feet of water but a joint in the ceiling had air in it. It was too small to be of any use to me though it did seem to convince me that there should be more air somewhere along the way. Six to eight feet past the right turn, the cave veered to the left again for three or four feet before coming into a small breakdown room. The room was approximately four feet wide, six feet long and 5½ feet high with one foot of air space. It was almost totally filled by two large breakdown blocks. With the scuba gear on, the best I could do was to lay out across them on my back and feel around them for continuing passage. None was apparent. I couldn't have pushed past the blocks anyhow. I left the cave, writing off this lead.

ST. OLAF SPRING CAVE



From memory by Mike Nelson. 11-1987



Chris Beck squeezing through breakdown in Pettyjohns Cave, Georgia
Photo by Scott Dankof



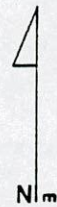
Chris Beck and Doug Schmuecker in Ship Cave. Photo by Scott Dankof



A formation in Ship Cave, Tennessee. Photo by S, Dankof

Jones Cave

Clayton County, Iowa



T.S.L. - 32m/104 ft



compass and tape survey

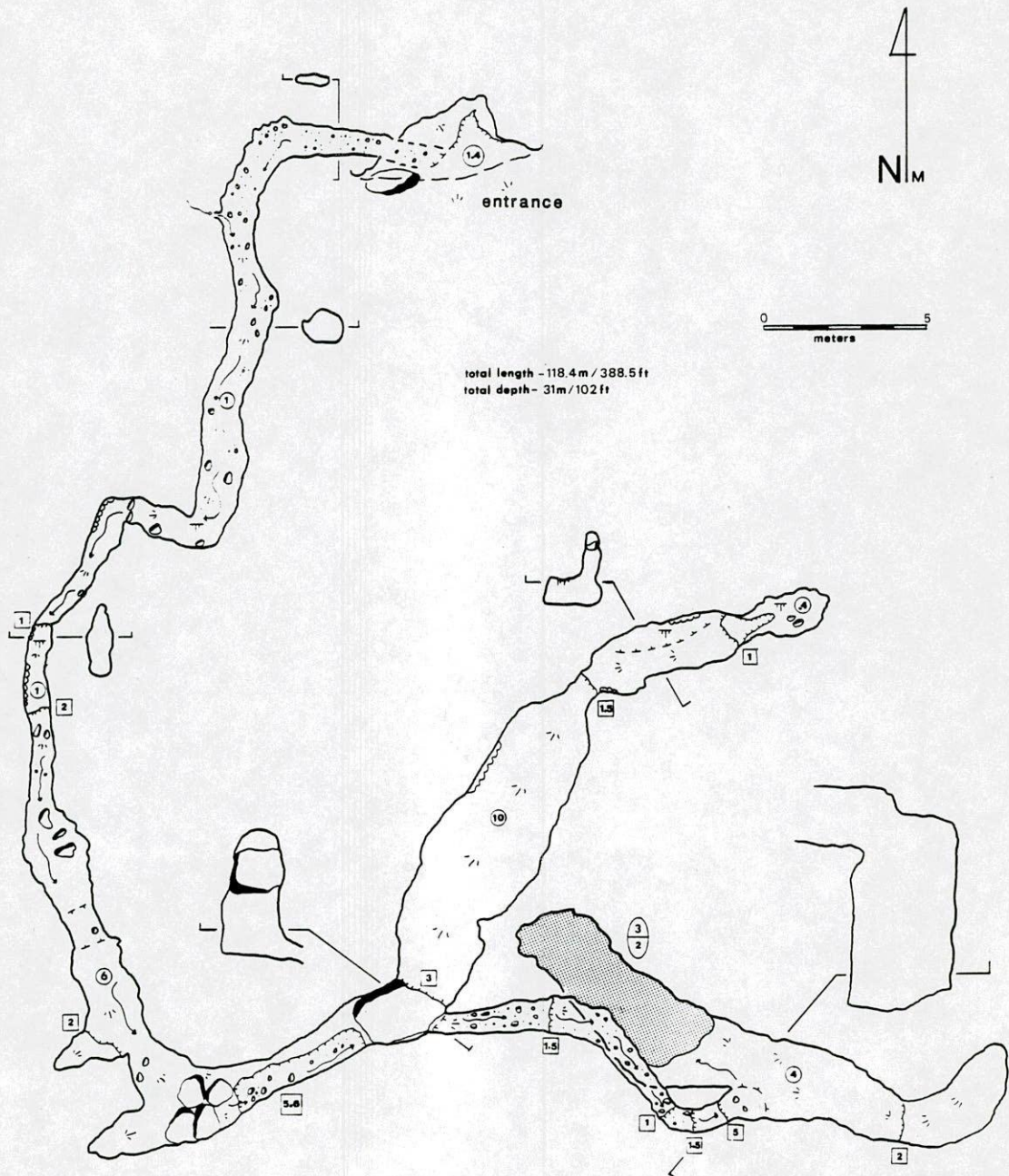
Marc Ohms 11/93
Eric Winch
Mike Loe



Ohms

BLOCK AND TACKLE CAVE

JACKSON COUNTY, IOWA



compass and tape survey

Marc Ohms Mike Lace
Chris Beck Gary Engh
1993



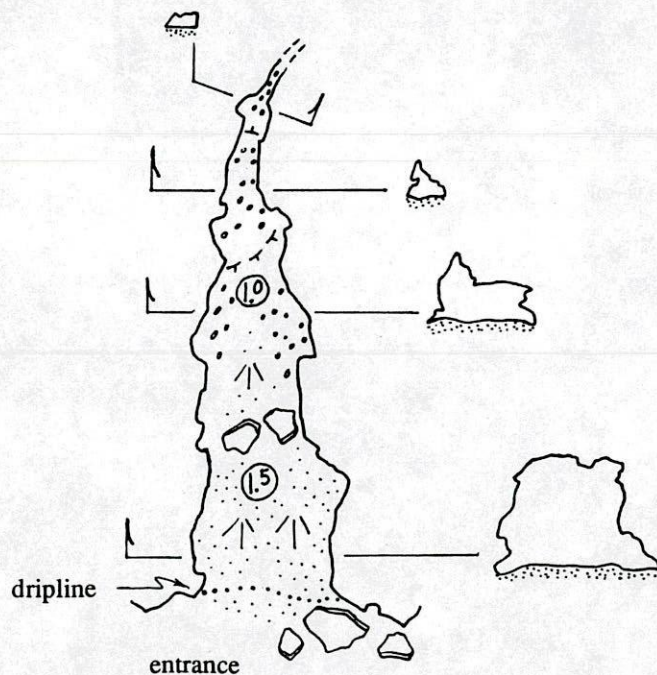
Marc Ohms

Feldt Property Cave #1

surveyed length = 7.80 meters/ 25.59 feet
Mitchell County, Iowa

ceiling height in meters

surveyed by: Mike Nelson
Delores Nelson
Mike Lace



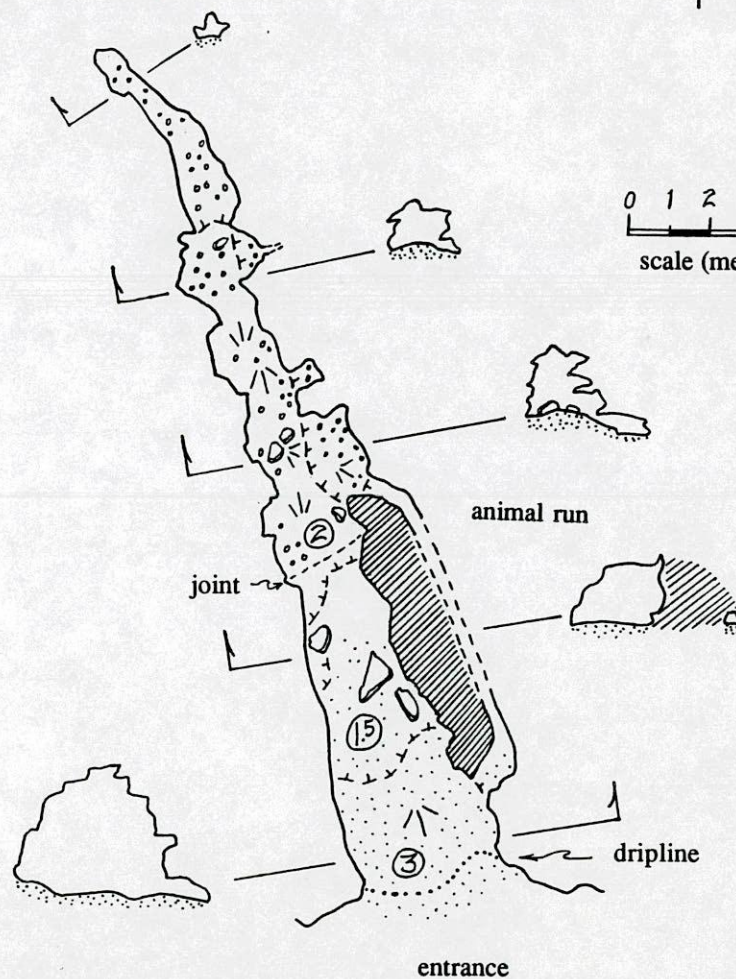
0 1 2 3
scale (meters)

Feldt Property Cave #2

surveyed length = 21.90 meters/ 71.85 feet
Mitchell County, Iowa



0 1 2 3 4
scale (meters)



drafted by M. Lace 11/93



N_m

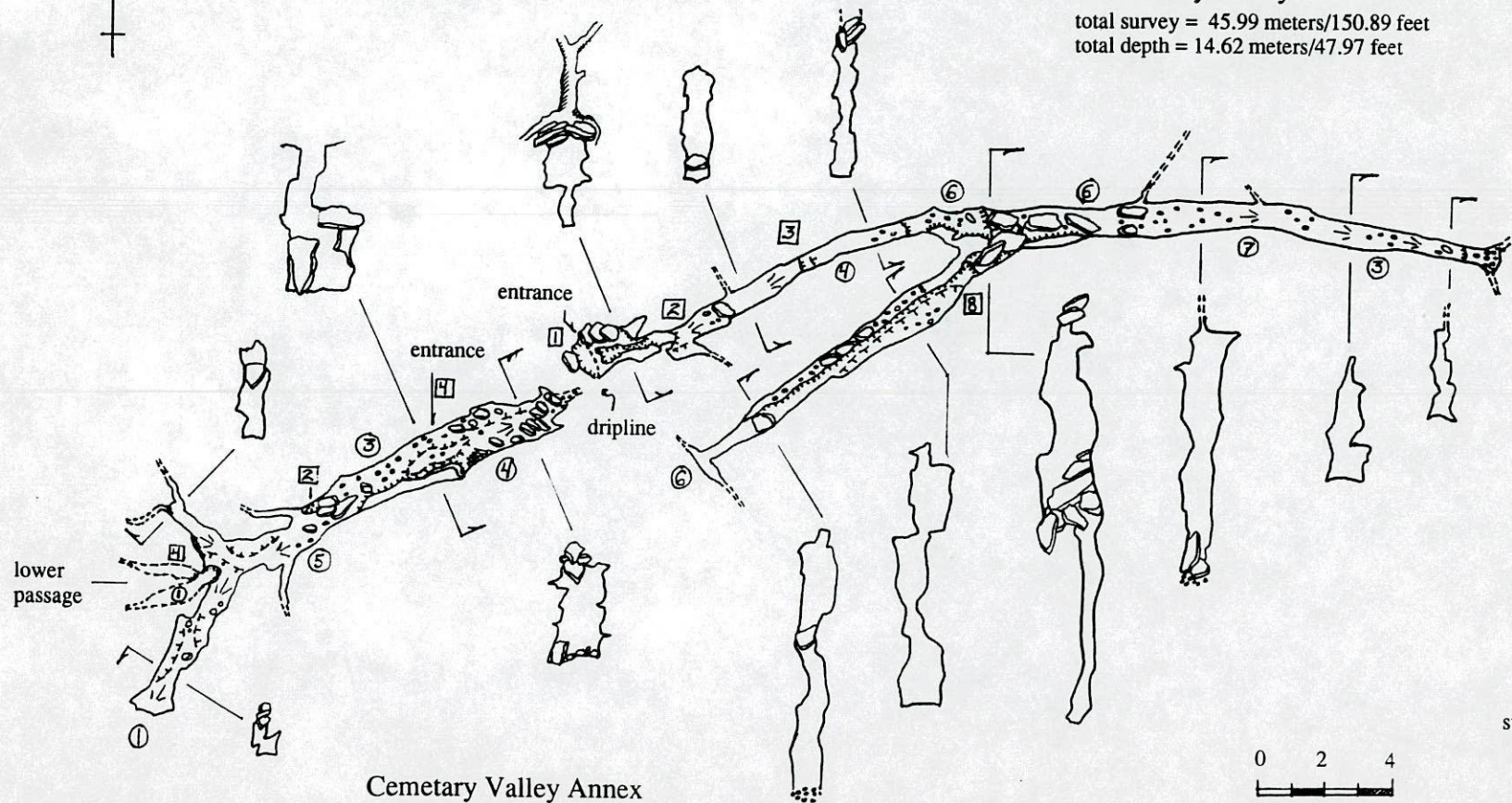


Cemetery Valley Cave & Annex Jackson County, Iowa



Cemetery Valley Cave

total survey = 45.99 meters/150.89 feet
total depth = 14.62 meters/47.97 feet



Cemetery Valley Annex

total survey = 17.02 meters/55.84 feet
total depth = 12.98 meters/42.57 feet

0 2 4
scale (meters)

surveyed by: Chris Beck
Jacob Hugart
Mike Lace
Marc Ohms

drafted by M. Lace 11/93

