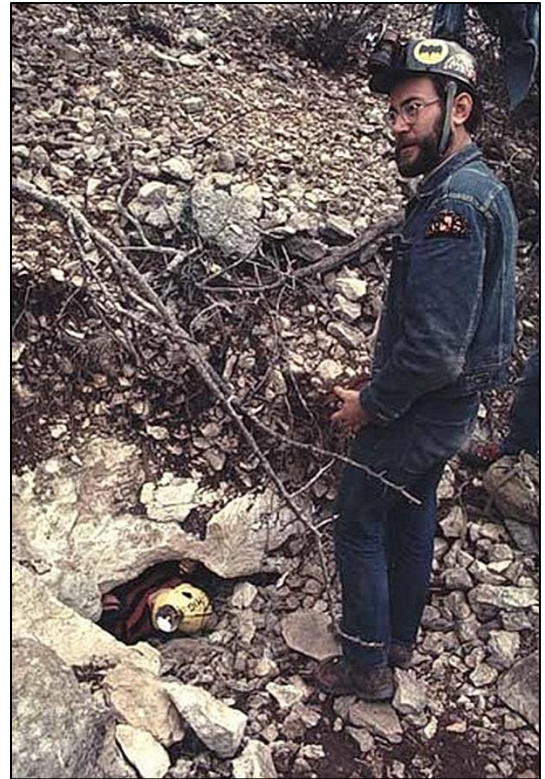


Paul Rice Boyer

6 March 1940 – 19 August 1980, 40

William R. Elliott and Susan Beaty Hardcastle, 19 January 2020.

Paul and Viola Boyer at the lower entrance of Midnight Cave, 14 February 1970. Carl E. Kunath.



Paul Boyer, caver, geologist and writer, was born in Illinois and died in Boston, Massachusetts. He got a PhD in invertebrate paleontology from Rice University in 1970 (Tom Byrd, pers. comm.). He lived in Houston for years and caved in Texas, northern Mexico and Puerto Rico with the late Barry Beck and many others. He was a member of the NSS (#8422), Rice Speleological Society and Carta Valley Sucks. We could not trace all of his movements, but we have pieced together much of his life.

TSS has a small map of **Cricket Sink**, Edwards County, mapped by Carl Kunath and Paul Boyer in 1970. That is the only Texas cave map that we know of with Paul's name on it. In 1970 he moved from Houston to Florida to teach. In 1978-79 Paul moved to Austin to go caving and enjoy life, as he apparently knew he was dying of cancer (Tom Byrd, pers. comm.). He and Viola divorced on 19 June 1979 in Okaloosa, Florida.

He went back to Florida to teach. We found several items at Newspapers.com from 1980, from Pensacola, Florida. In 1980 he was a geology professor at Okaloosa-Walton Junior College (now Northwest Florida State College) at Niceville, near Pensacola, Florida. In an article about a new Florida cave law, he was mentioned as being President of the Fort Rucker-Ozark Grotto, Alabama (Ozark is a little town near the Fort). He opined in the newspaper about drillers in Florida and faculty unionization. He was last mentioned in a book review in March 1981, "The late Paul Boyer's free verse typifies scenes and events in the North Alabama hill country." That was

in a book by 26 authors, “Scribblings One” by Poor Richard’s Press, but we could not find the book online or among dealers of rare books.

He passed away in Boston on 19 August 1980. Carl Kunath wrote, “Paul Boyer passed away after a struggle with cancer.” (Kunath, Carl E. 2007. 1980. 50 Years of Texas Caving, p. 103.)

We include some of Paul’s witty trip reports and writings.

NSS News, November 1970, p. 161:

Texas Speleological Association....Other activities saw Barry Beck, with Paul Boyer and other Houston cavers revising and updating the Comal County Survey, with a side trip to Mexico once in a while.”

The Texas Caver, 1970, 15(12), December:245.:

Rice Speleological Society

Other recent noteworthy events: Paul Boyer was elected an honorary member of RSS; he is in Florida now, teaching.

The Texas Caver, February 1972, pp. 25-27:

Caving in Puerto Rico, Adventures with The Rain God

by Barry Beck

About a week later we picked up P. Rice Boyer and “Mouth” at the Mayaguez airport and commenced ten days of bacchanalian revelry interdispersed with hung-over caving trips and a little snorkeling too...

Address: Boyer, P. Rice, NSS 8422, 801 Bayshore Dr., Niceville, Fla. 32578 [member of Carta Valley Sucks]. Viola Boyer, same address.

Kunath, Carl E. 2007. 50 Years of Texas Caving, p. 83:

“My main interests are mapping, exploring, photography, and finding a river passage with at least a 23-foot ceiling and a steady wind so I can tack upstream.”

— Paul Boyer letter to Dick Smith, 1972.

The Texas Caver, 1978, 23(6), December:92:

Fern Cave, Texas

October 7-8, 1978

Bill Cobb, Paula Good, John Cradit, Marcia Cossey, Robert Green, Barbara Gordon, Mike Mennessey, Bobby Mundane, David Persha, Mike Ploema, Alan Johnson, Madonna Grim, Coleen Clark, Kim James, **Paul Boyer**, Paul Fambro, Mark Shumate, Mike McKee, Keith Reuss, Katy Knighton, Mona Knighton, Gill Ediger, Michel Siffre, Gerard Cappa, Randy Lantz, Tom Hayes, Darryl Watson, Mike Watson, Charlene Seedel, Dave Guerrero, Dann Flower, and two others from San Antonio. *This is what I like a small trip!*

Reported by: Paul Boyer

There, I hope I got the names right! We all met at Pecos River highwater bridge during the drizzly night of Friday, ate breakfast there on the next drizzly morning. We spent an hour trying to locate the key to the ranch gate and by the time we got everybody through the mud holes to the pit, we was drizzling. The 54-foot entrance drop was rigged with two ropes and a cable ladder, with a third rope belaying on the old wooden ladder.

The cave is a large borehole extending several hundred meters to several other skylight entrances and a guano mine. At the back of the main passage a few thousand bats made it difficult for us to explore much. Various groups wandered around without seeing much of each other in the large rooms. Gill Ediger went in after most of the mob had gone back out, to take some special photos?

More about weather. We climbed out in the drizzle, and at dusk we watched a fine bat flight. Around the campfire that evening we debated whether it was still drizzling or raining. The next morning, we awoke inordinately late and decided we didn't have enough time to get into Langtry Lead Cave or any of the others in that area, so most people wanted to go back to Austin for a late lunch in Mexico.

Unfortunately, one of the cars developed a hemorrhage of the fuel pump, so some people went on to Acuña and some didn't. This mighty meeting of the minds involved four grottos plus a French expedition. Basically, it was organized by Bill Cobb as a trip from San Marcos.

Bill Stone, Sump Diving, AMCS Activities Newsletter 9, 1979, pp. 72-77:

The evening of September second [1979] found our two vehicles laboring up the dirt road from El Limoncito to the trail cutoff for **Hoya de las Guaguas**. Things were running smoothly. A letter of permission had been obtained in Aquismón in record time allowing for a cool dip in the Río Huichihuayan before the sun faded behind the Xilitla Plateau. Though Guaguas was considered to be finished as far as conventional exploration was concerned there still remained an unpushed lead — the sump at -465 meters. Having sharpened our diving skills over the summer this became the focal point of the trip. Eleven of us were along for the adventure: Hal Lloyd, Mark Minton, Terri Treacy, Sheila Balsdon, Andy Grubbs, Lisa Wilk, Jerry Atkinson, Rick Blevins, **Paul Boyer**, Mike McKee and I...[The report goes on to **Nacimiento del Río Sabinas**.]

The Texas Caver, May-June 1979, p. 35:

An Occurrence of Humans in Our Cave

by The Frio River Colony

On two recent occasions several groups of male humans have shuffled down the entrance of our cave and spent eight or nine hours off in the small passages to the left of the main room. Brothers stationed in the "office" area heard one individual scratch his beard, and scribble numbers in a book announcing in their language "Well, I hope this closes back on the main room. I'm getting damn tired of breathing ammonia, and the flight is about to begin". Their activities include holding a light up to a small metal object and squinting through it with one eye, stretching a tape between various points (perhaps a crude nonsonic form of distance location?), and moving their lights around into every nook and cranny big enough to accept their gigantic bodies. Frankly we have not been so disturbed since that awful Dr. Adams tried to send us against Japan with incendiary bombs strapped to our bodies. That era was followed by gangs of humans digging in our nice soft floors for guano until two of them caught rabies, and then a pile of metal cages with surface animals was positioned under our roost until they sickened and died. Not satisfied with that, the experimenters tried other cases full of animals. Still later, gangs of humans conducted activities with metal boxes and tapes, very much like the latest incidents. Why can't they complete their mapping once and for all, if they write information in books instead of remembering it from generation to generation as civilized creatures do? I think something ought to be done about these constant invasions of our privacy. It's a serious matter to find them still at it when we returned from Mexico last week. The little ones will be clinging to their mothers soon, and even though many should fall in the normal course of events, the pesticides

have also taken their toll. One of the humans provided an idea that might be of use. They were shuffling back up the entrance slope when one of them shone his light up toward the ceiling and said, "look how thick they are. It must be the beginning of the flight", and the other said, "don't do that, they might think it's an entrance and try to fly into it. Imagine a solid cone of bats converging on your light!". It's worth a try next time. A solid cone of bats right in their pale sweaty faces. The one called "Ernst Kastning" seems to be leading this mapping activity. Let's get him, and maybe the others will quit.

Paul Boyer

p. 37:

LETTERS

Dear James [Jasek],

Good to hear from Charlie Loving again in "The Good Old Days". It may well be true that cavers nod out on drugs more these days, but the good old days aren't over yet. There are still some notorious caver neighborhoods in which older degenerates tank up on Lone Star, Shiner, or homebrew. Would you believe in Austin? And some of us still enjoy taking novices to Gorman Falls. And this sometimes leads to mapping a Texas cave! Even yet, right now in 1979! The organization of the Old Timer's reunion in Texas got off to a good start at the BOG last February. A group of about 10 people considered possible locations, financing, officers, beer, swimming holes. But our plans to get the group back together on a more definite basis have been postponed a couple of months, and now Gil Ediger has escaped to Brinco for God knows how long, so it's up to us to keep up the momenta. Persons interested in working on the OTR this year should contact me or Pete Strickland, or Chuck Steuhm. Let's have another meeting at the TSA this month. And may the next OTR be up to Charlie's expectations. I noticed that the picture of "Devil's Sinkhole" in the No. 1 issue of *Caving International* doesn't much resemble the real Devil's Sinkhole as pictured in the last Texas Caver. Where is that other hole?

Paul Boyer

pp. 45-46:

Bear Cave, Hays County, January 27, 1979

Cavers: **Paul Boyer**, Martha Meacham, Mike McKee, Bill Rupley, Mark Shumate.

Reported by: Paul Boyer

Following information from the San Marcos Cavers, we set out to find a cave to get into. First, we tried Boyett's Cave, only to find the owner out of town (and the cave is closed anyway). Mike called up a rancher who wanted a hole checked, but he gave us the brush off. Then we tried to locate Fisher's Fissure, with no luck. Finally, we found the Williams Ranch and were deeply grateful that the owner offered to take us right to it. The cave is about 2 miles off the road, and somewhat obscure. The entrance drops into a small trash filled crawlway, and then to the left in a wider crawlway, from the back of which a crawlway leads about 60 feet into a standing room. Another room is behind that one, but smaller still. To the right, a crawl full of broken rock continues low and wide for another 40 feet. Somewhat smaller than we expected, but at least we got underground. One feature of the cave worth mentioning is the occurrence of bones in the dirt, of small animals, possibly raccoons and mice.

Devil' S Sinkhole, Edwards County, March 2, 1979

Cavers: **Paul Boyer**, Tom Byrd, Maureen Cavanaugh, Steve Robertson

Reported by: Paul Boyer

We spent Friday night camped at the roadside park out of Rocksprings, and enjoyed the thunderstorms that swept the area (as they swept Barry Beck in Anderson Spring Cave Georgia that same night). The next morning, we showed our liability release to Mr. Whitworth, and drove to the sinkhole. It was cold and windy, but beautifully clear all day. We rigged two ropes off the axles of our compact cars and spent a couple of hours fooling around taking pictures on the bottom. An attempt to take a direct route into the Lake Room was foiled when one of us dislodged a chunk of breakdown weighing at least 200 kg that rumbled down the slope and crashed against the entrance to the crawlway. Tom Byrd danced out of the way as it came by, giving his respects. After exiting the cave, we hurtled down to Bulverde to visit Jon Everage in his new digs, and attend a party.

Hitzfelder Bone Cave, Crystal Cave, Bexar Co., March 3, 1979

Cavers: **Paul Boyer**, Randy Waters, Jay Jorden, Banks Smith, Carol Wright, Edmund James, Kathrine David, Noel Sloan, and others after surviving Jon Everage's party the night before.

Reported by: Paul Boyer

The Bone Cave was rigged with a cable ladder and a rope. The entrance drops about 35 feet into a mud-covered room in which there has been a lot of excavation in a reddish clay. A small hole below that drops 25 more feet into a fissure decorated with flowstone, in which more excavations have been made. Some of us went into nearby Crystal Cave, which had been excavated from a calcite vein to a depth of about 40 feet. Thanks to Randy Waters and Gary Poole for showing us these caves. We next checked a couple of holes recently exposed by a road grader near Leon Springs, but they didn't go.

Indian Creek Cave, Uvalde County, February 10, 1979

Cavers: **Paul Boyer**, Martha Meacham, Mike McKee, P. McCall, Mark Shumate

Reported by: Paul Boyer

We drove out to Brackettville to check a cave reported by a woman in town. She said it went back under a ledge, and had animal bones in it. We spent the night camping in front of the entrance around a lovely bonfire and a full moon. The cave didn't go but 2 meters, but the camping was fine.

Next morning, we tried to find Rambie's Cave but got onto the wrong road and ended up near the Mason Ranch. Martha and Mark talked with some of the Mexicans up and down the road, and one led us to a grating in the axis of a stream channel, which Mark recognized as Indian Creek Cave. I climbed 6 m into it, and pushed a crawl until it got into a tight fissure, still blowing air. The Mexican took us past the ranch house to a cave with two gratings over the entrance about 4 miles upstream from the first cave. This was quickly identified as the real Indian Creek Cave. The other one turns out to be Grating Cave. Since the weather looked clear, we climbed down the ladders into the second entrance and rigged a rope from the concrete platform below, which is a 25 m drop. The passage extends downstream for about 3000 m before it is necessary to wade up to one's armpits. Beyond there an upper level opens up, with ladders climbing another 20 m above the stream. At this time the stream flow, low and the pools did not require swimming, Mike and I turned around at Camp One, while the others explored upstream from the entrance. It was a satisfying trip, followed by a long visit with the caretaker at the ranch.

Thanks to Tom Byrd, Carl Kunath and Russell Harmon for their contributions to this piece.