

Elton Wayne Burks **NSS 11992**

22 September 1943 – 7 July 2020, 76



Wayne Burks from River Oaks (Ft. Worth) was in caving from about 1969 to 2007. His caving trips were to New Mexico, Oklahoma, Arkansas, and Texas. He probably did not cave in Mexico, but he participated in re-mapping Inner Space Cavern at Georgetown, Texas. He was on the cover of the *Texas Caver* twice, in August 1973 (photo by Bob Lloyd in Midnight Cave) and April 1982 (see below). He was the Secretary-Treasurer of the Dallas-Ft. Worth Grotto a number of times.

We are sad to report that Wayne died in a long-term care facility from Covid-19 and complications of Parkinson's Disease. This may be the first Covid-19 death among Texas cavers. He is missed by friends, co-workers, and family.

Obituary

River Oaks: Elton Wayne Burks, 76, passed away Tuesday July 7, 2020. Wayne was preceded in death by his father, Elton; and his mother, Naomi.

Wayne was born Sept. 22, 1943, in Fort Worth, Texas. He went to Castleberry High School and received an accounting degree from Texas Wesleyan University. He worked at General Dynamics for many years and later was a Deputy Sheriff for Tarrant County. His passions were in Spelunking and VW Bugs. He was a member of the DFW Grotto and Fort Worth VolksFolks Club. He was a longtime resident of River Oaks.

Survivors: Wife, Brenda Burks and her daughter, Deidra Wade; brother, Charles Burks and wife, Jan; sons, Larry Burks and wife, Jill, and Keith Burks and wife, Shalon; and grandson, Corbin Burks.

Funeral: 2 p.m. Tuesday, July 14, in Greenwood Chapel. Interment: Greenwood Memorial Park. Wayne was born Sept. 22, 1943, in Fort Worth, Texas. Published in *Ft. Worth Star-Telegram* on 12 July 2020.

<https://www.greenwoodfuneralhomes.com/obituaries/Elton-Burks/#!/Obituary>

<https://www.legacy.com/obituaries/dfw/obituary.aspx?n=elton-wayne-burks&pid=196482331&fhid=4250>

A Few Caving Trips

Texas Caver, February, 1970, p. 32.

DATE: 8-9 December, 1969

DESTINATION: Cottonwood Cave, Oklahoma

PERSONS: (All Dallas-Ft. Worth Grotto) Pete Lindsley, Mike Moody, Bob Lloyd, Steve Kwan, Wayne Burks, Ronnie Fieseler, Karen Bradley, John McNutt, Bill Murphy, Jim Morris, Autry Cox, Terry Fieseler, et al.

REPORTED BY: Karen Bradley

The purpose of this trip was to introduce a multitude of new cavers and interested would-be-cavers to an honest-to-goodness cave. Our choice was Cottonwood Cave, Oklahoma.

Arriving around noon Saturday, we proceeded into the cave. Cottonwood is a rather simple cave without such difficulties as chimneys, nasty crawlways, etc. After following some of the experienced cavers astray down a dead-end mud passage, the group finally found its way to the last room of the cave. This is the most impressive room in the cave, although not too well-decorated by Texas standards. A natural well located at the back of this room is well worth seeing. Many pictures were taken by a number of people, and as the club is still getting repeaters from the trip, it must be considered very successful.

The Texas Caver, February, 1970, p. 32.

DATE: April 24-26, 1970

DESTINATION: Endless Cave, McKittrick Cave, Boyd's Cave, Little Sand Cave

PERSONNEL: R. Fieseler, M. Moody, B. Lloyd, W. Burks, M. Mooney

REPORTED BY: Ronnie Fieseler

Departing Fort Worth Friday evening, we arrived at McKittrick Hill about four o'clock Saturday morning. After about four hours of sleep we went into Endless Cave and spent about seven hours taking pictures before leaving. Later, Lloyd, Burks, and Mooney took a tour through Little Sand Cave, while Fieseler and Moody stayed outside and took pictures of the colorful wildflowers. Sunday morning we went to McKittrick Cave where Bob Lloyd (alias the transistorized man, or the human micro-dot) pushed two tiny crawls but was stopped for lack of a shovel. Moody and Fieseler once again were taking pictures of the escapades. After about three hours we left and went to Boyd's Cave. Fieseler needed some info for an article he was writing and the rest wanted to look around. After about 15 minutes we started for home. Moody had great fun speeding over the rough roads in his new Toyota, and was sorry to arrive back on paved roads for the long trip home.

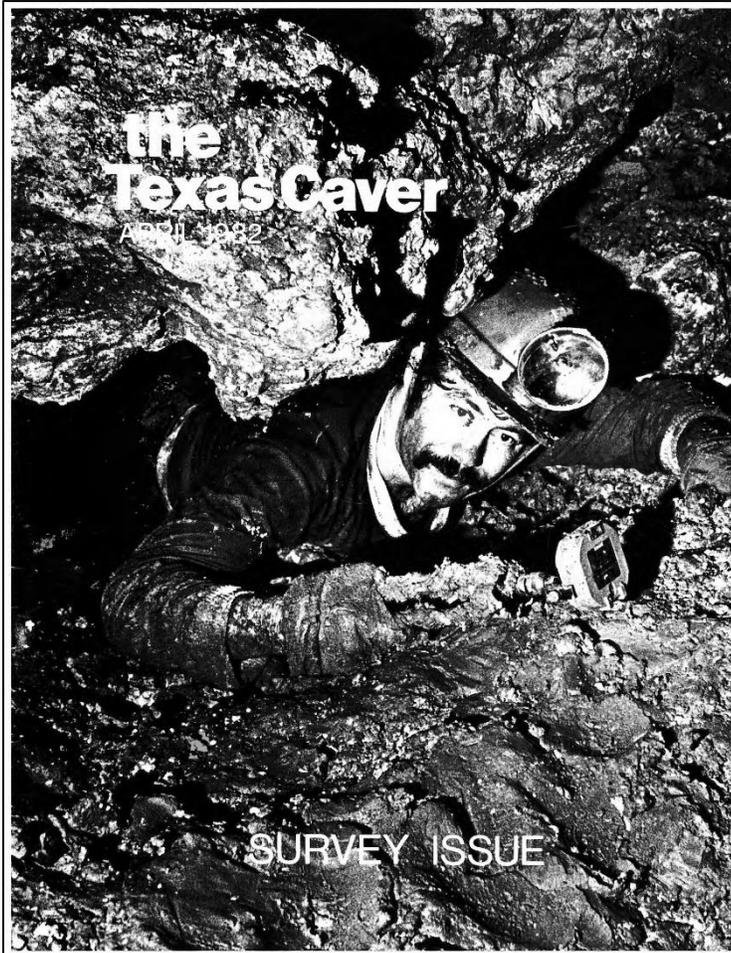
DATE: April 24-26, 1970

DESTINATION: Endless Cave, McKittrick Cave, Boyd's Cave, Little Sand Cave

PERSONNEL: R. Fieseler, M. Moody, B. Lloyd, Wayne Burks, M. Mooney

REPORTED BY: Ronnie Fieseler

Departing Fort Worth Friday evening, we arrived at McKittrick Hill about four o'clock Saturday morning. After about four hours of sleep we went into Endless Cave and spent about seven hours taking pictures before leaving. Later, Lloyd, Burks, and Mooney took a tour through Little Sand Cave, while Fieseler and Moody stayed outside and took pictures of the colorful wildflowers. Sunday morning we went to McKittrick Cave where Bob Lloyd (alias the transistorized man, or the human micro-dot) pushed two tiny crawls but was stopped for lack of a shovel. Moody and Fieseler once again were taking pictures of the escapades. After about three hours we left and went to Boyd's Cave. Fieseler needed some info for an article he was writing and the rest wanted to look around. After about 15 minutes we started for home. Moody had great fun speeding over the rough roads in his new Toyota, and was sorry to arrive back on paved roads for the long trip home.



Cover photo of Wayne Burks with Brunton compass in Inner Space Cavern.

Texas Caver, April 1982. Photo by James Jasek.

Texas Caver, May 1970, p 94.

DATE: 17-19 July, 1970

DESTINATION: Dry Pot Cave, New Mexico

PERSONNEL: Ronnie Fieseler, Bob Lloyd, Mike Moody, and Wayne Burks

REPORTED BY: Ronnie Fieseler

We arrived at the Dry Pot Campground to find that we had punctured a hole in the gas tank of Bob's Rambler station wagon at the last rock we hit. Several wooden plugs were carved until one finally stopped the leak. Saturday morning Bob and Ronnie went back to Carlsbad and got the hole patched. Heading back to the hill they found a shock absorber they had dropped on the way out. They continued merrily on their way until the right A-frame and hub became separated and the right wheel assumed a horrendously crooked position. Attempts at repair failed, so Bob started walking the five miles to the highway to catch a ride into Carlsbad while Ronnie began the nine-mile trek to Dry Pot to tell Mike and Wayne the news.

Bob got a wrecker to pull him in and found he couldn't get his car fixed that weekend. He rented a 1970 Pontiac Catalina and drove to Dry Pot in air-conditioned comfort. We went into the cave at 8:00 PM Saturday night and spent seven hours in the cave. Bob rappelled into the pit we had found last trip and observed three or four levels, all virgin. The pit was about 100-110 feet deep, making it the deepest in the area. We left Sunday morning in the Catalina and made it easily, proving regular passenger cars can drive to McKittrick Hill, if taken slow and easy. The Rambler was an exception and was probably on the verge of collapse due to its trip up to Cottonwood Hill two weekends before.

DATE: 24-26 July, 1970

DESTINATION: Large cave in Arkansas

PERSONNEL: Ronnie Fieseler, Bob Lloyd, Mike Moody, Wayne Burks, Mary Jane Lloyd, Debbie Cawthon, Angeline Churchill and Kay Burkhalter.
REPORTED BY: Ronnie Fieseler

The troop made it to the cave with little difficulty and entered the cave about 10:00 AM Saturday morning. Stopping to take an occasional picture, we arrived at the Out Room where Angeline and Kay decided it would be best if they went out. Kay made a flying trip with Ronnie to see the gypsum flowers. Bob and Mike took the two girls out, while the others waited. In about 2½ hours Bob returned, as Mike had decided to take some pictures near the entrance and then leave. Bob made it from the Manhole to the Out Room in 18 minutes, surely a record time. The remaining five went to the gypsum flowers and took many pictures. Turning back at the Tennouri Room, the group left the cave after 12½ hours.

On the way back to Dallas we stopped at Robbers' Cave State Park to meet another group from Dallas and do some rappelling.

DATE: 12-13 September 1970
DESTINATION: Gorman Falls and Gorman Cave
PERSONNEL: Walley Hughes, Calvin Hurst, Billy Rath, Scott and Michael Hurst, Bob and Gary Lloyd, Mike Mooney, and Wayne Burks.
REPORTED BY: Bob Lloyd

We left Saturday morning and arrived 3½ hours later, surely a record short drive for a Dallas caving trip. Upon arriving, we found Terry Raines was there with his bus full of UT cavers. We experienced bad air and several people left the cave with the rest continuing. We showered in the falls and were rained on, but happy.

DATE: 23-25 October 1970
DESTINATION: Cottonwood Cave, N. M.
PERSONNEL: About 30 Dallas-Ft. Worth and El Paso cavers.
REPORTED BY: Ronnie Fieseler

Seven carloads met in the Guadalupe for the weekend. Five of them were 4WD vehicles and these carried the crew to the top of the hill. We entered the cave in several groups. Pete Lindsley and his team did some mapping in the upper levels. Our team concentrated on photography while the rest of the cavers just had fun seeing the cave. On the way home, Fieseler took a side trip to Sitting Bull Falls and managed to have a flat tire, but did see the cave behind the Falls. The really hard luck crew was Mike Mooney, Wayne Burks, et al who managed to have FOUR flat tires during the weekend. A close second was Pete Lindsley, whose alternator went out. Pete and Bob Lloyd switched batteries occasionally, allowing Bob to recharge them after Pete had drained their power.

DATE: 24-25 October 1970
DESTINATION: Cottonwood Cave, New Mexico
PERSONNEL: 24 DFWG cavers.
REPORTED BY: Mike Moody

To give our new people a taste of New Mexico caves, we decided to visit Cottonwood. Bill Murphy took one group and Bob Lloyd took another on a sightseeing tour and visited the majority of the cave. Mike Moody and Ronnie Fieseler photographed their way through the cave accompanied by Mary Jane Lloyd, Mike Mooney, and Wayne Burks. They ended their trip in the -Mud Passage where a fantastic mud fight was held. Pete Lindsley led Karen Lindsley, Jim and Joyce Morriss, and Wally Hughes on a mapping trip in the upper section.

Texas Caver, Sept. 1971, p. 185.

Dallas -Ft. Worth Grotto

Dallas-Ft. Worth has been busy the past month. There have been two trips to Carta Valley, a trip to Arkansas and an upcoming trip to New Mexico. Several people are planning on going to the World Chili Cookoff at Terlingua, Texas.

The grotto is going to make a project of finishing the mapping of Longhorn Caverns as much is left to do. Bob Lloyd, Mike Mooney and Wayne Burks made a trip there in September and found some new cave. Women's Lib has struck the grotto as two ladies were elected to grotto offices in the past elections. The new officers are:

| | |
|---------------|-----------------|
| Chairman | Mike Moody |
| Vice-Chairman | Mary Jane Lloyd |
| Secretary | Karen Lindsley |
| Treasurer | Wayne Burks |

The grotto meets the 4th Thursday of each month in Room 101 of Carpenter Hall, University of Dallas, Irving, Texas at 3:00 PM. The grotto address is DFWG, c/o Karen Lindsley, 5507 Boca Raton, Dallas, Texas 75230

Texas Caver, Feb. 1972

Burks, Wayne, NSS 11992, 4909 Thurston Rd., Ft. Worth 76114

Texas Caver, April 1973, p 121.

DATE: January 6-7, 1973

DESTINATION: Carta Valley, Midnight Cave

PERSONNEL: Calvin Hurst, Ed Van Dalsom, Wayne Burks, Renate Racher, Bob Lloyd

REPORTED BY: Bob Lloyd

Picture taking was the main objective this trip. Spent all of Saturday morning getting everyone into the cave and it seemed the rest of the day trying to get everyone out. All used the vertical entrance and we had only one set of jumars. Spent two hours setting up a vertical shot at the entrance only to later find that my camera was grossly out of focus. Bah Humbug! Oh well, had a neat time cavorting about Acuña, Heh, Heh. Quick trip over to Punkin [Cave] Sunday and off to Dallas.

Texas Caver, Dec. 1980.

E. Wayne Burks was a Dallas-Ft. Worth Grotto rep. to Texas Speleological Association B.O.G., Reimer Ranch near Hamilton Pool, 21 September 1980

A Flea Market Treasure, E. Wayne Burks [*Texas Caver*, Feb. 1982, p. 10.]

Last year I visited one of the many flea markets held in Dallas. While browsing through the many booths, I came across one that had several tables of old books. I asked the man if he had any books on caves. After scratching his head for a few seconds, he said he didn't, but he had some old slides showing the rescue attempt of **Floyd Collins**.

He opened a glass cabinet that was lying on one of the tables, and handed me a small brown box measuring 2 X 2½ inches. On top of the box were the words: ILFORD ALPHA LANTERN PLATES. Trying to conceal my

excitement, I carefully opened the box. Inside were 20 stereo negative glass plates. In the center of each plate was written a description of each picture.



After carefully examining each plate, noting only four duplicates were included, I paid the man and carried my treasure find to my truck and returned to Ft. Worth. While caving with James Jasek one weekend, I told him about the glass plates. We decided to share these rare pictures with other cavers by publishing some of them in the TEXAS CAVER.

By consulting the book *Trapped* by Murray and Drucker, identification of some of the plates were clarified: **Ready to enter Onyx Cave [on left]**, Entering where Collins went in, Only photograph of Collins taken after death, Profile showing location of Floyd's body.

Texas Caver, June 1982, p. 56.

Dallas-Ft. Worth Grotto

Joe Giddens is the newly elected Chairman, and Wayne Burks is the Secretary-Treasurer. Meetings are the fourth Wednesday of each month...Recent trips have been to the Guads with trips into Three-Fingers, Hidden, and the entrance section of Cottonwood. There have been large Grotto trips to Oklahoma for trips into Wild Woman Cave.

Texas Caver, August 1982, pp. 80-81.

GUADALUPE MOUNTAINS, NEW MEXICO. April 23-25, 1982

Cavers: Russell Hill, Wayne Burks, Steve Huddleston, Tia Huddleston, Donna Anderson

Reported by: Donna Anderson

Friday morning, we were greeted with four inches of snow at the top of Three Mile Hill. We shoveled snow out of the fire place and gathered wood in preparation for a fire that evening. The first cave we visited was Hidden Cave. The floor of the cave was so smooth we thought we were in a commercial cave. We came to about a 25-foot pit and lowered the cable ladder. Steve, Tia, and I had never been on a cable ladder before. Russell belayed us and the tension on the rope made us feel secure. We had been told that it was good experience to have been on a cable ladder. I am personally glad that experience is behind me. We went back to camp and watched the rain clouds gathering. It rained rather hard that night and Steve and Tia found out that their tent leaks.

Saturday, we hiked for about three hours looking for Three Fingers. We rigged the ropes and Russell was the first to go down. About 100 feet down he stopped on a slope and derigged and called for more rope. We had a 200-foot Goldline with us and let down all we could. Russell dropped the rope over this last pit and said that it touched the floor and off he went. Tia and I just looked at each other as we saw the 200 feet of rope disappear. We had been mentally prepared for about an 80-foot drop. Tia had rappelled approximately 40 feet a year before at the

Grapevine Dam and a week before the trip she had rappelled from a 20-foot tree. My only experience had been the 20-foot tree. Somewhat dismayed but not shaken we rigged up. Wayne went down second and derigged at the slope and waited for us to join him. We made it down to the slope without any problems and now had to face an 80-foot free fall. Going over the edge was, of course, quite unnerving but then it turned into sheer ecstasy. The beauty around us was incredible.

We were coming through the ceiling of a spacious room and the view was breathtaking with the huge stalactites and stalagmites. We descended past a huge bell canopy and landed at its base. Steve came down last and we all picked up our cameras but had trouble deciding where to start in this beautiful wonderland. There were massive formations in Three Fingers but there were also delicate speleothems. We found one wall covered with helictites and a large number of dog tooth spar. There were also several small crystal-clear pools of water. After wandering around for some time and after innumerable pictures were taken, we sat down amidst the towering stalagmites and ate our meager supper. As we were all tired after this incredible journey to the near center of the earth (Tia and I thought it was incredible) we decided to begin the long, long ascent to the top. We all rigged up and Russell started up the rope and was gone from sight in an instant. We all made very good time and we were at the top by midnight. We hiked back to camp beneath the brilliant stars trying to avoid the deadly lechuguilla and with the excellent leadership of Russell we found somewhat of a trail and arrived in camp shortly after 2 am. We started the camp fire and cooked steaks and potatoes. We went to bed about 4:30am and woke up by 9:30 Sunday morning.

We had a wonderful breakfast and started packing up. With the truck loaded we were off to our last cave which was the entrance hall to Cottonwood. We parked the truck by the Ranger Station and hiked about 15 minutes to the cave. Being an electric caver, I reluctantly borrowed a carbide lamp from Wayne when all of my batteries went dead. As we entered Cottonwood, we saw many large formations and there was one stalagmite which looked larger than the giant one at Carlsbad. During the picture taking session **Wayne knocked his camera over** and dumped his lens, flash unit, film and other items into a small crevice. He leaned over and was able to fish out some of the items but his lens was just out of reach. Not being used to my borrowed carbide lamp I innocently leaned over to watch the progress. Shortly thereafter I heard a sizzling sound and then smelled something burning. Wayne had heard and smelled it at the same time and looked up. **To my utter amazement I saw flames atop his hair. I yelled "your hair's on fire"** and proceeded to beat his head until the fire was out. Feeling forlorn with his lens down in a crevice and his hair singed and a headache from my beating out the flames I tried to cheer him up. Being a small person, I was able to squeeze further down into the crevice than he had been able to and I rescued his lens. He quickly left the cave a happy but singed caver.

We then drove to Carlsbad and had Mexican food for supper. We arrived back at Ft. Worth at 5 am Monday morning just in time to make a pot of coffee before going to work.

Texas Caver, June 1983, p. 64.

BEAR'S DEN CAVE, Oklahoma

February 20, 1983 Cavers: Todd Wilson Brooks, Ann Lawson and friend, Wayne Burks.

Reported by: Jay Jorden

A return trip was made to Bear's Den for the purpose of pushing a boulder choke at the end of the cave. Explorers with sledges and come-alongs entered the cave Saturday afternoon and spent the next several hours straining at rocks weighing as much as 100 pounds or more at the end of the cave. A call was sent out for someone to go outside and get more tools. That call was obeyed and another hour or so passed with Burks, Brooks and others making significant progress and moving several large rocks. A crack between two large rocks, beyond which more cave can be seen, was widened, and plans have been made to return with reinforcements and perhaps some

“instant cave”. At a restaurant retreat for some R&R after the excursion, a local said he knew of several more caves in the area.

Texas Caver, Nov. 1983, pp. 120-122.

LARRY’S CAVE, WILD WOMAN CAVE, BITTER ENDERS, and other pits on the east side of Spade Cattle Co. lease [OK]

Date: August 6-7, 1983

Cavers: John Brooks, Terry Holsinger, Donna Anderson, Raalen Brown, Jerry Chisum, Joan Reinhart, Jay Jorden, etc.

Reported by: Jay Jorden, John Brooks and Raalen Brown

After much cussing and discussing, a trip was organized to the Spade Ranch near Ardmore, Okla., for the purpose of continuing exploration and mapping of caves already known there and possible leads.

Jerry was contacted by phone Friday and agreed to meet the Dallas-Fort Worth contingent at the gate to the west side of the ranch, where Wild Woman and Bitter Enders are located, at 11:30 am Saturday. A group of cavers from Oklahoma City was then in the process of exploring Wild Woman in a sort of reunion trip, while a dentist from Gainesville —a friend of Jerry’s —and a group from the Southwestern Oklahoma Speleologists (SOS) searched leads in the vicinity.

Since Jerry was to also lead a church group into Wild Woman in the afternoon, it was elected that the Dallas-Fort Worth group could continue work on the less crowded, east side of the ranch. A stop was made by the ranch headquarters to greet the amiable Bruce Lord, foreman, before continuing on past the trash sink to the hilly area near a windmill where a cave was found by **Wayne Burks’ son** on the last trip...

Texas Caver, Oct. 1986.

Carlsbad et al. by Terry Holsinger

Destination: Carlsbad Caverns, Doc Britto Cave, Wind Cave, Ft. Stanton, Torgac’s Cave Personnel: Donna Anderson, Jim Goodbar, Terry Holsinger, Tammie Lenert, Sharon Lytle, Ed Poynter, Jerrald Saulsberry, Michael Twery.

Dates: Spring, 1985

Six o’clock Friday afternoon found me riding to Donna’s house with Jerrald driving nicely through the post rush-hour traffic on north 820. As we pulled up, we noticed that we were the first to arrive and that Donna was busy packing that wonderful device: the small travel trailer.

Soon all our gear was loaded and we began to speculate as to what was keeping Sharon and Tammie. As 7:00 arrived, so did Sharon and Tammie. They had been doing some last-minute shopping and had received some help from **Wayne Burks**. By 7:30 we were off, driving (as it was) into the sunset...

Texas Caver, 2007 First Quarter, TSA Members Directory, p. 4.

Burks, E. Wayne 4805 Black Oak Lane, River Oaks, TX 76114, 817-624-4707; w817-884-2913; c817-925-5593, wayneburks@hotmail.com; EWBurks@TarrantCounty.com DFWG

Compiled by William R. Elliott and Susan Hardcastle Beaty, 28 November 2020.