1966-05

Gravity Meter Surveys

Saturday, May 14, A. Richard Smith, Bill Russell, Merydith Turner and Carol Westmoreland visited Inner Space (Laubach Cave, Core Hole Cave) near Georgetown to run gravity meter surveys over the newest part of the system. Gravitational attraction (gravity) is proportional to the density of the nearby material (rock, earth, people, etc.) Since a cave has a density of zero as compared to limestone with a density of about 2.5 g./cc., if the cave is at reasonable depth and of fair size it will show up in gravity meter readings over the cave.

Our good intentions were to run about four profiles over various areas of the cave, but needless to say... we began gaining experience by discarding the results of the morning readings. One afternoon profile was over a passage 40' wide, and 30' high, with its center about 45' below the surface. Interpretation of the gravity survey across the passage suggested a passage 32' square with center 37' below ground--not bad for a beginner.

The aforementioned passage ends in breakdown to the north. We ran another profile beyond the breakdown plug in the hopes of finding the caves beyond. Regrettably, the profile was nearly a straight line with no significant wiggles.

A. Richard Smith

Trip Report May 7, 1966

People--Barbara and Jim Hershberger, Don Erickson, Chip Carney, Dr. Robert Barth

We went first to Natural Bridge Cave, Comal Co., and took the commercial tour (gratis). They have done a tremendous job of commercialization. It is a thrilling experience to see a cave flooded with electric light after having explored it by carbide only.

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Our next stop was Bracken Bat Cave, about a half mile away. We went in about 5 p.m. and collected guano from various parts of the cave, for pollen analyses. Unfortunately we were still in the cave when the bat flight started. The flight lasted over an hour while we were there and was still going strong when we left.

There are an estimated 20 million bats there, during the months of March through November. They are mostly the Mexican free-tailed Bat (Tadarida Mexicana) but there are some little brown bats (Myotis Velifer). Bracken is one of the major bat caves in Texas. When the bats come out to eat at night they fly for about 10 hours and cover a radius of up to 60 miles from the cave. It is a nursery cave, consisting mainly of a single chamber 100 feet wide and 1000 feet long. The ceiling reached a height of 75 feet. Several inches of guano is deposited each year and is periodically mined. Bracken is characteristic of all the major bat caves, having a large entrance (40' wide and 12' high) with segregated parts of the cave for the rearing of the young bats. The odor of the bats can be detected before even entering the large sinkhole. During late summer the cave becomes unbearable after 5 or 10 minutes because of the strength of the ammonia.

Barbara Hershberger

A Child's First Book of Caves

or

Broken Straw Cave as seen by Dick and Jane

Once upon a time, when the world was very young (last Saturday), three little boys decided to have an adventure. These little boys were named Johnnie, Roonie, and Charlie. They were very brave.

"Hey, fellows," said Johnnie, "let's go into a cave and find a great treasure!"

"Oh boy!" said Roonie. "If we find a lot of gold we can go adventuring all our lives, and never have to work!"

"Yes!" answered Charlie, "and we can buy a lot of soda water, too!" (chuckle).

And, it was thus unanimously decided to go caving. Since they didn't have much time, they were only going to go to a nearby cave. (Besides...their mothers wouldn't let them cross the bord...street.) They went all the way to the low water bridge, and then even farther, until they arrived at a small hole in the ground. The sign read "Broken Straw Cave--Make Your Fortune Here."

In they went, and an hour later, out they came. Poor boys! They were just covered with mud. The very worst part was that the only

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fortune they had found was a collection of candle ends, cigarette ends, and bruised ends. But this wasn't the end! Not until they had gone home and faced their mothers would the end be in sight. (If you will pardon the pun.) But luck was with them and no one was at home when they arrived. Roonie gave up his allowance and they went to the laundromat and wahshed their dirty, dirty clothes. Wasn't that resourceful of them? What clever little boys. Perhaps the next cave will hold their fortune. It will probably just hold mud.

Charlie Jennings

Ramsel's Cave

Saturday afternoon, after the rite of Spring, Bill Russell, David McKenzie, and Carol Westmoreland went to Georgetown to visit the cave southwest of Inner Space (Laubach) that Tommy McGarrigle had discovered sometime previously. We first stopped by to see Doyle Clawson, manager of Inner Space, and spent two hours talking about all the problems of commercializing a cave--it cost more than one might think, and the state might decide to ban billboards on interstate highways just as they finish. Anyway, we then went to find the caveowner, who wasn't home. After waiting in vain for him to return we drove west of Georgetown to look for caves, stopped by 4-Mile Cave and then noticed a sink on the Ramsel Ranch, and so drove in to ask permission to visit it. They said that it was just a sink but that they had a cave about one-half way back to the highway, and that we were welcome to explore it. The cave was a room about 50 feet long and six feet high(maximum) and 20 feet wide, with a squeeze and short crawlway leading to a lower room. After collecting we stopped by the sink near the highway, located oddly enough in a large swamp, but although water was running in, it was too small to enter, so we returned to Austin.

Bill Russell

TSA BOG

The Board of Governors of the Texas Speleological Association will meet at Cascade Caverns on May 28. All cavers are urged to attend and defend the UTSS way of life against the ultra-conservative West Texas Goldwater types. Up for appraisal and approval is legislation to limit membership in the TSA to NSS members -- sponsored by Abilene Grotto.

The issue up for debate is whether caving should be open to all--judgement based on your ability to cave -- or whether caving should be limited to a few who know each other and control access to the caves. Both open and closed caving have their advantages, but the idea behind the TSA is that it is a place where ALL cavers can talk over their problems. There are many cavers in Texas

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who have never heard of TSA, and to be effective, the TSA must reach all cavers, not discourage them with rigorous membership requirements.

Bill Russell

A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

This summer you will go on caving trips and ventures that the club will be interested in hearing about next fall. Please write up all reports right after the trips (to catch the accuracy and humor of findings and events). Keep them in a safe place and give them to the editor a week before the first meeting in September or send them to Marsha Meredith, Manchaca, Texas

The 1966 NSS Convention will be held in California at the Sequoyia National Park June 11-19. Meetings, seminars, movies, dancing, a hootenanny, a barbecue, and a banquet are on the agenda plus trips to the three largest caves in California. There will be plenty of rides out there so take a few days off from classes and work and join the fun.

M.M.

A Word from the Assistant Editor

As Assistant Editor and alternate typist I wish to say thanks to all kind contributors -- and the other sort also -- who have submitted reports for the newsletter this semester. The contributions have been of great volume and variety, informative and not a little entertaining. Quite a few contributors have shown a surprising and delightful literary ability heretofore hid under bushels. May they continue to do so. May there be a fat newsletter again next fall--may we all live great summer adventures, write epic chronicles (this chiefly) and live to see them immortalized in print (or mimeograph, as the case may be). Publish, not perish.

C.W.

The Newsletter of the University of Texas Speleological Society is compiled at least monthly by:

Marsha Meredith, editor
Carol Westmoreland, assistant editor
Merydith Turner, production manager

Box 7672 University Station, Austin, Texas

MUD, MOSQUITOES, AND MEXICO

This is the trip report that was supposed to be written a long time ago. Last month, in fact.

People on trip: C. & S. Loving, F. Chapman, B. Johnston, J. Davis, M. Meredith, and later M. Turner, who never comes back from Mexico the same way he went down.
This is during Easter vacation, with overlaps.

We left Austin one hour behind sched ule, which is good considering the army we were taking. We got to Reynosa at midnight and were delayed due to our visas being out of date or some such. Our's were white and they were supposed to be green.

We arrived at Vallas at 9 am. the next day and spent an hour at the Condesa eating. M. Turner was not with us at this time; he was leading a group of photo bugs through Tinaja (5000 ft. in two days). M. Meredith was aghast at the surroundings in which wer were drinking our COCA COLA GRANDES, but was finally forced to join in or starve and found all satisfactory and to her liking; her first Mexico trip of any duration.

First we went to TANINUL #4 and mapped it.This cave can be found very easily. It is on the road to Tampico and is on the North side of the pass immediately before leaving the pass (directions compliments of Bill Russell)We walked to the cave on the highway, feeling like we were Martians. S. Loving slept in the entrance and the rest of the crew mapped, sort of. Four hours later, we were back at the highway helping some Mexican with his broken down motorcycle. Then, we went on to Hotel Taninul where C. Loving, undoubtedly because of his fine appearance and Castillian Spanish, was told that he could not map Taninul #2. Then, back to Valles for a coke and cervezas and on to El Pujal to inquire about visiting Cueva Grande. There we spent many hours, Sweltering in the LAND ROVER, trying to get permission to go. Finally we located a guide to take us the following morning. Then, J. Davis suggested that the Nacimiento de Rio Choy would probably be a good place to sleep...and thus, we spent the next hour driving back and forth, back and forth, asking each astounded Mexican on the highway..."Uh, perdon, Senor, donde esta...." Finally, we gave up and drove toward Valles and stopped on the roadside...a pathway to the village of something and waited for sweet slumber to come...it did until about 10 pm. and that was it: the wind stopped, the mosquitoes came. Then, the camp dog jumped on Marsha and Marsha jumped on the LAND ROVER...Charlie lit all our spare gasoline... it was hot and all night long: buzzzzz, buzzzzz, buzzzz.

The next morn we were visited early by a very,very friendly Mexican named Angel...who told us of many big caves in the hills; reluctantly, we left him for our previous engagement.

All set for at least a 15 km. hike, we found out that we could drive practically to the entrance of grande Cueva. We began mappin immediately...but, soon found out that mapping and

scratching at the same time is a trick. But, we persevered. In the large passage we encountered two skylights..one of which had vines growing down from it. We amused ourselves for about 45 minutes playing Tarzan. Beyond this, we came to David McKenzie's 40 ft. "handline" drop...but, we weren't spiders. Only those whose derrieres could fit in S. Loving's seat sling went down. On the other side of the cave, in the crawlway, S. Loving and B. Johnston refused to proceed after listening to the fruit bats flutter in the domes, but they were finally forced ahead by taunting and more physical means. Both collections: one of bugs, one of dirt, were somehow lost in the LANDROVER, no one knows ju st how. Feeling very satisfied for our afternoon of hard work we went on to Cueva Chica and washed some of the dirt off our faces. Then, after unsuccessfully looking for "a cave in a field" (compliments of AMCS) we returned to the Pemex Station for a bath and then, to La Candesa on the Square for a steak. There we met a herd of gypsies... the Hershberger mob, and later Jim Duke and his crew. C. Loving and B. Johnston got stinko in a bar on the square, B. Johnston diplomatically throwing a cigarette butt into a neighboring table's water glass.

That night, we miraculously found our way to the road to Los Sabinos...and graced those premises with a camping gear and terrifying specimens...a welcome site for the Church-bound devout the next morning.

After trying unsuccessfully the next morning to obtain permission to enter Arroyo, we went back to Valles and spoke with Senor Martinez who told us to find out what happened to the boys in Tinaja. So, back to Tinaja where we met a weary bunch who gave us the only lead left in that monstrous tunnel: The muddiest, wettest crawlway in all of Mexico. Eight hours after entering, we started back...shivering, hungry and ingognito. Bits of Faye's clothes and probably some of Faye were left behind. Back at the LAND ROVER , we christened a "groad box" into which went bits of material peeled off our bodies.

The following morning we told Senor Martinez of the fine water passage and started North. We decided to stop at Nacimiento of Mante for a nice swim when Merydith suggested that we could go to Nacimiento de Rio Frio which was much nicer. Five hours later we were still looking for it...and settled on the Rio Frio instead. Merydith was drowned; he died and went to hell. The rest of the trip, nobody really remembers, except Faye kept saying something about her food box.

Anonymous

OLD MAN WISDOM

FINAL VOL. FOR SPRING 1966
OLD MAN WISDOM IS RETURNING
FOR THE SUMMER TO SAUDI ARABIA
WHERE THE HUMIDITY IS LOWER
THEN IN THIS DAMN TOWN..

ON TYPES OF CAVERS.

GOOD CAVER

WISE GUY CAVER
ALSO CLEAN CAVER

NURD CAVER

SUPER CAVER

VERTICLE CAVER

NAME DROPPING
CAVER (ALSO -
PUBLIC RELATIONS - PROMOTER
CAVER)

POOR CAVER

U.T. CAVER

NEXT WEEK NAKED GIRLS

U T S S

Department of Research

Report

For the first three months of the 1966 term, Feb.16 to May 18.

LIBRARY

USE. During the period the library loan received a use of 713 book-person-days.

ACQUISITIONS. The library has acquired a copy of Homes of Primeval Man by Josef Kunsky. It is mainly beautiful sepia prints of caves of Czechoslovakia, calcite and ice formations, artifacts, ca. 300 pp.

Also the library has a copy of the Feb. 1966 TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE which contains the article "Look out below!" featuring Orion Knox, John Fish, Judy Handley, and the UTSS in caving activity.

With the acquisition of the 15 immediate back issues the file of Texas Cavers has been brought up to date. I believe we now have one of the few complete files of the Caver from its birth. The binding of the early ones is Highest Priority.

FILES

LIBRARY. We now have an author card catalogue on 51 books and pamplets.

MAPS. Also we now have a card file on 46 Maps.

FILES. One filing draw full of material has been separated to the the extent of separation into NSS, TSA, and UTSS stuff and broaken down to some further catagories.

MISCELLANEOUS

Acquisition of some stenographic supplies. Disposition of surplus maps. Continual acquisition of old file and library material. If you have any thing please let me know.

Merydith Turner

Research Chairman

May 18, 1966