



COG SQUEAKS

GROTTO INFORMATION

The Central Ohio Grotto of the National Speleological Society meets the second Friday of each month at the Worthington Presbyterian Church. The Church is on the north west corner of the square in Worthington, Ohio (intersection of High Street and SR 161). The meetings are in the Woodrow Room at 8:00 PM. Please contact a grotto officer or committee person for information and caving trips.

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The COG Squeaks is the official newsletter of the Central Ohio Grotto. Subscription is \$10.00 per year per address. The Central Ohio Grotto publishes the COG Squeaks ten times per year. The club welcomes articles on cave exploration and study, cave trip reports, cave fiction, cave poetry, cave related cartoons, or cave related art. Please send to Bill Walden. Free disks and mailers are available from Bill at the meetings. Contact Bill for information on modem or fax transmission.

NSS organizations may reprint information from the COG Squeaks. Please give credit to the author and the COG Squeaks.

KARST CALENDAR

- March 12 COG meeting 8:00 PM Worthington Presbyterian Church, Woodrow Room.
March 13 Scout trip led by Bill Walden.
March 20 Hidden River Cave Workday sponsored by the Cleveland Grotto and the American Cave Conservation Association 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM (Central Time) Hidden River Cave Sinkhole, Main St., Horse Cave, KY. Call 502-786-1466 (ACCA office) for information.
March 20 Indiana Karst Conservancy meeting 7:00 PM Indiana War Memorial Monument. Enter north door. (Center downtown Indianapolis)
March 27 Scout show at new convention center. Pat Kelly requests that the grotto assist with this. Please contact Pat Kelly for information.
April 3 Scout trip. Contact Pat Kelly for information.
April 9 COG meeting 8:00 PM Worthington Presbyterian Church.
April 17 Scout trip. contact Pat Kelly for information.
May 14 COG Meeting 8:00 PM Worthington Presbyterian Church.

1992 Annual Report

by Karen Walden, Treasurer

INCOME	EXPENSES
Dues .. \$290.00	Postage .. \$200.00
Auction .. \$35.50	Room .. \$120.00
Contribution .. \$15.00	Envelopes .. \$110.00
Interest .. \$9.27	Printing .. \$20.28
Patch .. \$3.75	IKC dues .. \$15.00
	Bank fees .. \$14.00
Total .. \$353.52	Total .. \$479.74

Balance December 31, 1992 .. \$191.21

The above does not include the Xerox and paper costs at OSI. (WDW)

CAVE FICTION

The Strange Fate of David Perry

By Lou Simpson,

Writing under the pseudonym of M. S. Lewis

First published in COG Squeaks, Vol 20, No 1, January 1977.

[Dr. Martin Seymour Lewis is professor emeritus of anthropology at The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. His NSS number is 9666.]

(Note: Any resemblance between characters in this story and actual persons, living, dead, or otherwise unaccounted for is coincidental.)

Many in speleological circles will remember that independent, eccentric geologist/explorer David Perry, whose devotion for many years to the thirty-mile-long Stone's Valley Cave System bordered on obsession. During the years 1968-1971 Perry lived near the cave and, indeed, did little else except explore and map it, often with no other companion than the darkness itself. Although Central Ohio Grotto cavers eagerly helped him survey, David seemed curiously reluctant to share the results of the research, even among those who helped, citing the need for secrecy to "protect" the caves. Often Dave made solo forays into the caverns at night, staying underground until dawn. He seldom explained what he was doing there all night, however. There is no doubt that Perry suffered from extreme paranoia, since he customarily answered his door with a weapon, even when it was plain the visitor was friend and not foe. His unkempt hair, his disorderly beard, and his wild-eyed stare did little to allay suspicions that he was mad.

My first contact with David Perry was in 1969 when he wrote to me, having gotten my address from one of the grotto members, about something he had found that "might interest you." Perry was unwilling to be more specific. "If you don't want it, I'll just give it to somebody else or forget about it altogether." Knowing Perry's volatile nature by reputation, I hastened to reply that I'd come down to Kentucky at first opportunity to see what he had.

My first visit was disappointing, first of all, because when I arrived about 10 p.m. Perry was not home, but probably off in the cave doing something he'd likely not account for when he returned. I entered his unlocked shack, recoiling in disgust as I encountered a most unbelievable stench. The entire floor was covered with chicken droppings, which wasn't surprising, since about six or seven of them were freely walking about. Also, since there were no screens covering the open windows, the insects could freely enter. One window was almost completely covered with flies. The explanation for this

was that they were caught in a thick, dusty web, which completely covered the window. The floor was littered with various incomprehensible pieces of oily machinery, much of it very muddy, and the whole place reeked of decay and putrefaction. I decided to wait for my host in my car. In my haste to retreat, I nearly tripped over a white, round object that looked vaguely like a human skull.

I must have fallen asleep. I thought I heard a scream and woke up, heart pounding. Since there was a light in the house, I got out of the car and walked toward the unstable-looking porch. A man, presumably Perry, appeared in the doorway, shotgun in hand. "Well, it's about time you got up! Who the hell are you?"

Feeling like I'd made a horrid mistake, I introduced myself and asked if he were Perry. He smiled, or leered might be a better word, and said, "Oh, you must be the guy in Ohio that wanted to see the bones."

"Bones! Oh, yes the bones," I replied, recovering from my disorientation. I wondered if the curious artifact I'd stumbled over in the doorway were in fact what I'd been summoned to see.

Perry appeared to be about twenty-five, with curly, matted black hair and strangely large blue eyes which seemed to stare right through me. He was covered with mud--apparently just back from a cave. His scraggly black beard, mud-encrusted, concealed most of his face, which was probably a good idea.

Ducking into the gloom of the house, Perry motioned for me to enter. "Here," he said, thrusting that object I had already encountered into my hesitant hands, "and there's a lot more in this box." I shuddered to think that he'd simply removed these things from a cave without documenting their location and position. Then I examined the "skull" I had in hand. It was smaller than that of an adult human, but the most striking thing I noted was the singular eye socket. There was only one eye socket on one side and none on the other side of the "face!" While I racked my brain for any prior knowledge of this condition, Perry let out a maniacal laugh and popped something buzzing into his mouth. A fly flew out of his hand. He took a swipe at it and missed. He licked his lips. "Well, take them all and I don't care what you do with 'em. There's plenty more where they came from."

"And where is that?" I asked.

"I can't tell you, but I can show you," he said, staring straight at me.

"Well, when do you want to do that, tomorrow morning?"

"What's wrong with right now? You just had a nap, and I've got other things to do tomorrow."

"Well, it's dark..."

"It's always dark...in the cave...ha ha ha ha ha!" The maniacal laugh again. Against my better judgment, my curiosity piqued by the cyclopid skull, I agreed to let him take me to the site.

"It's pretty far in the cave for an old man," he muttered. "If you think you're up to it, we'll go."

I put the box of bones and the skull in the trunk, eager to examine them under less hostile conditions.

"What's the name of this entrance?" I inquired, wanting to dispel the uneasiness I'd felt since meeting my capricious host, a feeling of dread intensified by the deathly stillness of the cave passage.

"Graveyard! We'll be passing right under one, you know." His carbide lamp went out. "Make some f_____ light!" he screamed, throwing his lamp against the wall. To my amazement, the lamp relit and seemed to be working perfectly.

I tried to remember the turns, but some were quite subtle. Fortunately the passage was easy, for Perry was setting a brisk pace. "Come on, old man, we've got a lot farther to go!" he yelled back. "Now we come to the hard part." To my horror, he then jumped across a deep pit onto a narrow ledge and scrambled up a slippery slope.

I shook my head. "no way! Isn't there another route? Do you really expect me to follow you that way?" I was panting and perspiring heavily.

"Sure, there's another way! Straight up the wall! I'd have taken you that way, but you can't fly! Ha ha ha ha ha. Well, I won't wait all day. Are you coming or not!"

"No, I can't do it."

"OK, go home then. I've got work to do in here anyway." Then he disappeared.

At first I couldn't believe he'd actually abandoned me, but I finally decided it wasn't inconsistent with his other behavior. I just hoped I'd be able to find the way.

I wasn't an inexperienced caver by any means, but I hadn't done much lately, and certainly not at the

breakneck rate we came into this section of Stone's Valley today. Fatigue was catching up with me, too. After a full day at the university and the long six-hour drive, I had hoped to rest comfortably in one of the modest motels in nearby Broadside. I certainly had not intended to stay at Perry's miserable hovel, even if he'd offered it.

Not far back from the pit my lamp sputtered and went out. I reached for my flashlight and discovered that, in my haste, I'd forgotten it. Oh, well, this wouldn't be the first time I'd changed carbide in the dark.

The cave was as silent as a grave. Or was it? There seemed to be a rhythm to the white noise, almost like the low-frequency beating of a huge heart. Just as I was about to strike the lamp and relieve the tense blackness, I heard a liquid thrashing, like somebody was swimming. "Perry?" I called out. "Is that you?" The sound stopped. I returned to the pit and peered down into the inky void. My calls echoed down the shaft. I dropped a small pebble, not wanting to injure Perry if it were he down there. It splashed in the pool of water at the bottom. Suddenly there was a roar of water! Out! Got to get out! I didn't think I was in any immediate danger, but I wasn't sure of the route. Never mind Perry--he knew the cave. He didn't care what happened to me, anyway. Somehow, with a few wrong turns, I arrived at the entrance, rather breathless from the exertion.

That's curious! It wasn't raining, nor did the ground or trees seem wet. What could account for the sound of rushing water? I decided to have nothing more to do with Graveyard Cave and David Perry, at least for now. I spent the night at the Satellite Motel and returned to Columbus the next morning with the bones. I didn't even look at them until after I was home.

Only the humanoid skull had the single eye socket. The others had two. All three, however, were curiously shrunken and some marks suggested that the flesh had been gnawed away. Various other bones were also in the box, but I'd have to sort through them to determine which belonged to which individual. There was no way to tell, due to the haphazard collecting, whether the bones belonged to one or a number of individuals.

It wasn't too long after that when some cavers in the grotto complained that Perry was becoming even more of a recluse and they ceased trying to work with him on the survey. All the work might have been lost except that one day Perry thrust the whole collection of fieldbooks into a caver's hands and said, "Here, take the damn things. I'm getting out of here before it's too late." A curious remark: too late for what?

Return to Graveyard Cave

By Lou Simpson

(Any resemblance between characters in this story and actual persons, living or dead or otherwise unaccounted for is purely coincidental.)

Apparently soon after that Perry did indeed vacate his place in Stone's Valley and was said to have moved across Keefauver Lake to a rundown farm near Joker, Kentucky, where he hoped to "homestead." The local newspaper, the Hermitage Herald, confirmed reports from cave-owners that Perry had been interrogated about a number of thefts and incidents of vandalism. None were proven, however. It is unfortunate that outsiders moving into an area are often scapegoats for whatever crimes go unsolved. I find it absurd that an educated man like Perry, even though somewhat eccentric, would be blamed for acts of senseless vandalism like slitting the throats of cattle or wringing the necks of chickens. Reports that these animals had been drained of blood are unconfirmed. And what use would Perry have for a large quantity of sulfuric acid and the veritable arsenal of weapons that were reported stolen from farmers in that remote part of rural Wyant County? And I don't see anything extraordinary in Perry's purchase of three cases of dynamite. He probably wanted to open (or, more likely, close) a cave entrance.

But a month ago, out of the blue, I received this cryptic note from Perry:

Lewis: The thing is HUGE! I was right! If I can just hold it off while I finish my work—but maybe that's asking too much. You can come and see it for yourself. If you don't it may be lost. I may not be able to help you later.

—Dave

Remembering my chilly reception in 1969, I was loth to investigate, but my curiosity was aroused, nevertheless. I wanted to find out more about the curious one-eyed skull and the unusual assortment of bones which seem to assemble naturally into something so monstrous that I took it apart again and again, hoping I was mistaken. The monstrous two-headed crocodilian skeleton.

Now it's too late. I read in the Herald that Perry's homestead was the scene of a devastating fire and explosion. Investigators found almost nothing. Almost. I am at a loss to explain the lone artifact the authorities agreed to send me. It seems almost familiar, this curiously flattened glass eye.

When my uncle Seymour disappeared in 1978, his house in Columbus was closed up. He lived alone in that old mansion on North Broadway and had only my brother and myself as heirs. We kept waiting for him to return or something and we set up an escrow to pay the taxes on the old place. Finally, just this past month, I received an envelope in the mail from the bank. They were remodeling their vault and apparently saw my name on the envelope, with instructions to send it to me if anything happened to my uncle.

In the envelope I found a letter to myself, neatly typed, and signed by my uncle, Martin Seymour Lewis, from whom I received my first name. It was printed on Ohio State University stationery.

March 4, 1977

Dear Lou,

In case anything happens, I hope you get this. I don't know whether you will be able to do anything about what I am about to tell you, but I need to tell somebody. You may recall that I received some bones in 1969 from David Perry, who then lived in Stone's Valley, Kentucky, near the cave system of the same name. Since you, like myself, are a caver, you were the logical choice to receive this information.

When I assembled the bones that Perry gave me, which he unfortunately collected without proper documentation, I was appalled at the monster it revealed. Its body resembled a crocodile, but it had an extra head. I know this sounds weird, but it all fit together. I tried to follow Perry to the site in the cave system where he found it, but the route was too difficult and so was Perry, for that matter. I was rather put off by the whole affair and then I learned that Perry had apparently died in an explosion in 1976 at his home near Joker, Kentucky, where he lived alone as a recluse. I was sent a glass eye, which I assume might have been Perry's. There was one other thing—Perry also gave me a skull that had only one eye socket. It looked human, but smaller, and I guess it was just a weird mutation or something.

Anyway, I decided to just forget about the whole business. It made no sense and I was starting to have nightmares, so I put the bones in the attic and turned my attention to my other anthropology projects. Then I got this map in the mail, apparently mailed by Perry before the accident. It was torn and damaged in the mail. The map shows the Graveyard

section of Stone's Valley Cave. I'm sure you know all about it, since you mapped the whole cave, but maybe it's of historical interest. Anyway, I made a copy of the map to take with me and I want to just take a last look in there to see if I can find that pit in there where I last saw Perry. Maybe I'll notice something that will relate to those bones. I probably shouldn't go.

Your uncle,

Martin Seymour Lewis

Enclosed was the tattered original copy of Perry's map of Graveyard Cave section of Stone's Valley. I wasn't familiar with that entrance name, but there is a graveyard near the Baptist Church. I got out the map of the system and laid the two maps side by side. It took me a while to realize why I couldn't identify the section of cave on the map. This was a section unknown to me! If the entrance is in the graveyard and the notation "P Passage" could mean Paradise Passage, then this must be an extension of the Post Office section. Wow! How could we have missed all this? It looked quite extensive.

I remember Perry claiming that he had dynamited access to the Paradise Passage so it would be preserved and that the only remaining access would be across a really high ledge after coming in a new entrance he'd found. But when I went into Post Office back then, I found nothing had changed, so I figured he was just bluffing. Could there really be an extension and even an entrance in the graveyard?

I called Harry Goepel and told him I had heard about a possible extension of Post Office and he readily agreed to go there with me on a quick one-day trip to check it out. No sense in taking a larger party until we could confirm that there is something to see. It could just be another David Perry hoax.

When we arrived at the north end of the Paradise Passage we encountered the usual breakdown choke. "We've been hoaxed. I expected this," I said disappointedly. Then I noticed that in one corner the breakdown appeared quite fresh-looking, with sharp shattered edges. We moved some rocks, but it looked really hopeless.

Harry said "Maybe we should look for the entrance to Graveyard Cave."

"You know, this does look like it might have been blown up to conceal a connection. Yes, let's do it."

But by the time we got out of the cave, it was dark. We went to the graveyard and walked around it a little, but didn't see anything all that promising.

Back in Ohio, I decided to drive to Columbus and go to Uncle Seymour's place. When I opened the front door, I was amazed at the amount of dust and cobwebs. I went straight to the attic where I found not one, but many boxes of bones. One of them proved to be the ones Perry had given Uncle Seymour. Boy, that skull with one eye socket was weird! I left the bones there and descended to the basement. I saw Uncle Seymour's cave gear room and his Wheat Lamp charger, but the lamp wasn't there. He must have taken it with him. What happened to him? Could he still be in Graveyard Cave, wherever it is, if it exists?

I looked at his extensive library of anthropology journals and texts. He also had a number of paperbacks, especially books by horror fiction authors like H. P. Lovecraft. One of Lovecraft's books was lying on the desk with a bookmark in it. I opened the book and saw that someone had underlined the words "it had a single eye socket" and "underground race." In the margin were penciled the words "Graveyard Cave." I grabbed the paperback and left the house.

Back in Stone's Valley, a group of five of us decided to try to find the alleged Graveyard Cave entrance again. Besides Harry and me, there were Andy Niekamp, Colin Gatland, and Bruce Warthman. We arrived at the cemetery at about twilight. We searched, but there didn't seem to be anything obvious. We all sat down to rest on a large slab of limestone at the back of the lot, down under some trees. It did appear to be a shallow sinkhole. Colin said, "Hey, there's something scratched on the rock. We lighted it up obliquely, and some of the letters were more clear than others:

DP __76 G_D H_LP US_LL

It was now quite dark. Could there be an entrance under the rock? Did we dare risk moving the rock? The inscription, apparently from David Perry, seemed to be warning us not to. No question. I had a come-along in the car that I bought at a Greater Cincinnati Grotto meeting and was itching to use it. We hooked it up to a tree and started winching. It was remarkably easy to move. It almost seemed like the rock was hinged. Below the rock was revealed an opening into the ground. Graveyard Cave!

We got our lamps lit and climbed down the narrow canyon. It T'd into a larger canyon. We could hear a waterfall ahead. The passage opened up into a room with obvious passages leading elsewhere. I got out a copy of the Graveyard Cave map. We were apparently in a room that Perry had noted as "Jumping Off Place". We scattered into several directions, each caver moving quickly through the extensive maze. This was great! What a scoop! It's kind of nice that this was saved for

later, actually. We all returned to the Jumping Off Place to share our finds. Andy said he'd come to a deep pit with water in it. There appeared to be a passage on the other side of it, and there was a rope already there that looked like it had been rigged as a handline.

This sounded like the place Uncle Seymour had described in the COG Squeaks when he had tried to follow Perry in here in 1969. We all quickly moved to the brink of the pit. I hate heights, but I started crossing the pit, holding onto the handline. I was able to cross over what looked like a really deep drop, then climb up a steep slope beyond. The others followed. We moved through more passages, over a period of two hours, following Perry's old map. We seemed not to be on the map any longer, actually. There appeared to be much more here. At length, we crawled through a small hole in breakdown into a huge, black void. "It's probably one of the large rooms in Stone's! Scoop, connection!" I cried.

In the distance, there seemed to be something moving. We could see points of light, like a rather large caving party, all with carbide lights like a single large eye above their heads. They were approaching us. "Hello!" we shouted. "Is this the Big Room?" No response. Again we called, "Hello! We think we just connected from a new entrance!" The party didn't respond. Then they stopped moving, still some distance away. One of their number approached us. "That isn't a carbide lamp. It looks too dim. It looks more like a reflection of our light." I thought. "In fact, it looks like an eyeball!"

The next few minutes are a blur in my memory. I think we reacted instinctively and somebody said "Oh my God, run!" We weren't pursued, I don't think, but I guess we covered the distance back to entrance in ten or twenty minutes. We maneuvered the large entrance rock back into place.

I burned the Graveyard Cave map. There are some things that man was apparently not meant to know. I didn't go caving for quite a while after that. I still don't feel comfortable in caves. I guess I can't really accept what happened. We should be content with what we already know of the cave system. My psychiatrist says it must have been a mass hallucination, brought on by mold spores or something. One thing bothers me though. That caver, that creature that approached us in that huge room-- it kind of reminded me of Uncle Seymour.

CAVE POETRY

GHOSTS

by Katie Walden

In a world of black and silvery grey
A pair of shifting humanoid shapes
With glowing eyes
Stand on ghostly rocks
Beyond a rainbow
That fades
With the setting sun.

A dull roar emerges from
The empty cave
Filling tunnels and caverns
Drifting over the warped dance floor
Past rotted and rusted chairs
Piercing the darkness
That fills the old ballroom.