

THE SLOANS VALLEY SPECIAL ISSUE

COG SQUEAKS NOVEMBER 1985

MEETING NOTICE

Annual Christmas Party

Saturday, December 21, 1985, 8:00 PM

This is the THIRD SATURDAY in December!

The annual Christmas meeting/party will be hosted by Bill and Karen Walden. The business meeting will be kept short and will be followed by the annual gift exchange and party.

The gift exchange is intended to be funny!

Gifts are frequently home-made and should in some way relate to caving or caves. The recipient of the gift must use his gift on his next caving trip! That, at least, was the original intent. We all continue in spirit.

A sampling of gifts past include:

Games	Home brewed lamps - (some even work!)	Bat Cake
Cave Cricket sculpture	Tov stuffed bats	Cave coveralls patch kit
Emergency light kits	those things can be strange!	Cave survey games
Cave rock candy	Stalactite candles	Emergency food (creates source of gas to provide light in addition to food value.)
insulated seat pad		Emergency climbing kit
gourmet cave eatery		

Got the idea? Oh yes one more detail -- the less you spend on your gift the better.

Rats, I almost forgot the most important factor regarding these gifts!

THE INSTRUCTIONS ARE OFTEN REGARDED AS THE MOST
IMPORTANT PART OF THE GIFT!

Please plan to attend. We'll have the Christmas tree up and as usual there will be plenty to eat.

Looking forward to seeing all COGer's, their friends, and our friends from all area gottos. (We will appreciate a call or note letting know that you are attending. 614-268-5865) - Bill Walden.

Notes

The Christmas meeting was postponed to the third weekend because a number of our grotto members including the Waldens plan to attend the Cumberland Caverns Christmas Party which is December 14, 1985.

Time to think of new officers. Any member who is also a member of the NSS is eligible to hold office. Help keep the COG alive and well, volunteer for office. We need you!

Because the October meeting was held late in the month, we did not have a November meeting.

My apologies for the lateness of the Squeaks. As a result of business trips and

caving trips. I was out of town for five week ends in a row. Also, I have been unusually busy at work. Sorry, just didn't have the time. - Bill Walden

OTR Caving

By Lou Simpson

While we were at the Old Timer's Reunion in Elkins, West Virginia, Sheryl and I visited three caves. The first was Seneca Caverns, a commercial cave. The cave is privately owned and costs \$4 a person. We could see the scenic shady sinkhole entrance from the back porch of the ticket office where we waited for the tour to start. Most of the cave tour consisted of a multilevel entrance area with flowstone and dripstone. I remember a high balcony with a thin floor that we could see across an overlook of the lower levels. Several times the guide took us into cul-de-sacs from which we had to retrace our steps. This general area was quite scenic. Unfortunately the guide kept pointing out shapes that looked like Princess Snowbird or an eagle or a turtle. It wasn't always apparent why he thought the formations looked like those things. We walked through a nice canyon with helictites visible through pillared windows, nicely backlit. This area had been partially excavated to make walking easier. Near the back entrance was a pool of water which the guide told me sometimes covers the bridge and necessitates backtracking the tour. We were in the cave for about 45 minutes. A bus was provided for the return trip to the ticket office. A snack bar offers frozen custard and sandwiches. There is also a train ride (no tracks) for kids.

I visited a large abandoned limestone mine along a new four-lane section of US highway 33 east of Elkins. There were several huge interconnecting rectangular rooms along a cliff face, intersected by pillars. Their floors of the rooms consisted of small breakdown. It was cool and shady in the mine.

With verbal directions, we managed to locate Bowden cave, along old US 33 not far from the mine I visited. I had visited Bowden in the early seventies, turning back only when continuing would have necessitated getting totally wet in a narrow water canyon. This time we only looked at the stoopwalk inside the muddy entrance room and took a picture. I recall reading about this cave in a caving newsletter. I recall that there are many entrances beyond the point that I turned back in the seventies and that the cave is quite extensive and mazy. Now that I have relocated the one entrance, perhaps I can plan to return and find more of the cave.

Squire Boone Caverns

by Paul Unger

Several of us decided to stop by Squire Boone Caverns on the way home from Karst Encounters. The cave is located in southern Indiana, and is well off the beaten track, back a long country road. There is a group of log houses each containing different crafts and items for sale, some nice hiking trails, and other various "tourista" attractions. A working grist mill is fed by water from the cave.

The cave tour itself is about one hour long and offers some extremely enlightening insights toward speleogenesis. Jim, our guide, explained outside the cave that the entrance tube was nearly filled with rimstone pools, caused by flowing water. Jim asserted. A few feet further we were treated to a large room with a classic tension dome. We were told that the breakdown was caused by the water dripping from the ceiling...The stream flowing around the room was devoid of life, no fishes, because the water sank into a farmers field, some three miles away, and the water lost all of its oxygen flowing through the cave. At the other side of the room was a small stream flowing over a chert layer. This was Lost River, which was coming up from deep underground, as there were no surface streams in the area which sank and could account for its source.

Of the big room, was a canyon which carried the water from the stream to the natural

exit. Visitors stay on a iron walkway several feet above the water, which obviously floods above the walkway at times. One small formation was quite interesting as it was 250,000 years old. It seems that a dinosaur bone was imbedded in the formation and thus the age of the formation was known! The "onyx" formations were remarkably similar to formations in Kentucky I've seen.

Formations are a "redepositing of limestone". Carbon dioxide in the cave air causes the limestone, previously dissolved by acid from decaying organic matter, to become heavier and attach itself, making a "limestone" formation.

The tour contained some conservation messages. Jim was asked what "11" (obvious survey station) on the wall was. "It's vandalism - someone wrote numbers on the walls throughout the cave. They even tried to spilt a formation apart by driving 'nails' into a formation leading to a higher passage, and then attaching rings to it. The rings (bolt hangers) were to be used for carrying the formation out of the cave." Jim asserted that cavers routinely remove formations for later sale. That is why they visit caves.

Lights were predictably turned out in one of the larger rooms, demonstrating why you never cave alone. If you were to cave alone, and were to loose your flashlight, after three days you would become totally and permanently blind. Hence, you must take a friend along with his flashlight as your spare. "Wouldn't want to go blind, would ya".

An integral part of the whole tour was Squire Boone's coffin and presumably his remains, the bat formation, and Dracula's stone coffin, with blood on it (iron oxid deposit). We must have been on the Halloween trip.

The best part of the whole trip was the exit as were reminded of what underground explorers were called - spelunkers - and I now have gold foil shield that proclaims to the world that I am an "OFFICIAL SPELUNKER". It is now proudly pasted to my hard hat.

A return trip is definitely planned to the cave, as I want to tape record the trip. All of us would recommend the cave tour if you want to be amusingly entertained.

SLOANS VALLEY CAVE REMEMBERED

Profile of Sloans Valley Cave
from the Kentucky Geological Survey
Exerpts from A Geologic Profile of Sloans Valley
Clyde A Malott and Preston McGrain

Sloans Valley, located in southern Pulaski County, 5 miles southeast of Burnside, is a karst valley near the dissected western margin of the Cumberland Plateau. It is adjacent to the deeply entrenched valley of the Cumberland River into which the drainage of the watershed is discharged through a cavernous route. The trunk route of the subterranean system is a highly unified drainage course. Its bearing on the manner of development in a limestone terraine is of special importance because the cavern features and the relationship of the older and younger parts of the system clearly reveal the importance of developmental work of invading storm waters.

Sloans Valley Cave and the associated karst features were mapped and studied by Clyde Malott and Floyd Malott during the years 1940, 1941, and 1942, prior to impoundment of the Cumberland River. More than 40,000 feet of the cavern system and many of the surface features were carefully mapped by plane table or traversed with steel line and compass by the Malotts. Almost all passages measured were subject to periodic flooding.

Before impoundment of the river, the elevation of the Cumberland River at the mouth

of Sloans Valley Cave was about 640 feet. Consequently, not only are portions of the cave periodically flooded by storm waters but the lower passages are now permanently inundated by the waters of Lake Cumberland. Normal lake level is 673, maximum power pool is 723, and the top of the flood control pool is 760 feet.

Sloans Valley consists of about 9.8 square miles of drainage area. The surface drainage system was formerly a fine, open, well-balanced dendritic system descending from ridges capped by Pennsylvanian sandstones through Upper Mississippian shales, into a trunk valley a little more than 3 miles in length. The subterranean system is completely hemmed in, and apparently only the waters which were gathered by the surface valley system could have affected it. The floor of this former trunk valley is developed in Mississippian limestones at an elevation of approximately 800 feet, about 160 above the waters of the Cumberland River before it was impounded.

Structurally, the area is on the east flank of the Cincinnati arch and is part of a monocline that dips gently to the southeast.

If you are interested in reading the complete report it is available from Greg Erisman or at the University of Kentucky.

Kentucky Geological Survey

Series X, 1977

A GEOLOGIC PROFILE OF SLOANS VALLEY, PULASKI COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Clyde A. Malott and Preston McGrain

Louis Simpson's Story

By Lou Simpson

COG mapped Sloan's Valley between 1969 and 1972. This was not the first effort to map the cave, but it was the only one that produced a map that would be available to cavers other than the mappers.

DAVE BEITER

Crazy Dave started the survey, with the help of the Bluegrass Grotto. Soon many COG cavers were helping Dave with the survey while Bluegrass involvement continued on an occasional basis. Dave lived in a rented house in Sloan's Valley and went caving every day, usually alone. His compass and pace surveys were the first version of the map from Grand Central Spaghetti to Great Rock Sink, but this work was later repeated using compasses, tapes, and clinometers. Dave preferred using the inexpensive Silva Ranger compass. This made it easier to equip survey parties, since most people could afford to own one. Once, at an NSS convention workshop on cave mapping, Dave demonstrated the sturdiness of the Silva compass by throwing one to the front of the room, where it fell on the floor and cracked.

Actually, Dave never intended the map to be available to anyone but himself, having the opinion that the map would encourage greater vandalism to the cave. He doled out bits and pieces to people who helped, but never assembled a usable system map. Only when he moved temporarily to Wyoming in search of romance did he give me all the survey data, maps, and printouts. I quickly put together a 50 foot/inch map and later a 250 foot/inch map which I presented at the 1971 NSS Convention. Dave showed up at the convention and I thought he might raise a fuss, but I gave him plenty of credit in my talk and he seemed to like that.

Dave has a bachelor's degree in chemistry and either completed or dropped out of a master's program in Geology at UK. Dave was, and is, a paranoid recluse who surrounds his remote Wayne county, KY farm (1/2 Fast Farm) with electric barbed wire and greets visitors (infrequent) with a firearm. There have been a number of incidents involving the law, and we were never quite sure whether to believe Dave's

statement that he once killed somebody, just as we were never sure whether to believe anything else he said. Dave is a survivalist, eating any plant that isn't poisonous and even insects and having little to do with the rest of society. He once told me, "When all the little pieces of paper in the world won't buy you anything to eat, don't come knocking at my door." Movies about nuclear war remind me of Dave. Once, when he visited me at my home in Kettering, Ohio, Dave expressed amazement that anybody could live in a city with so many strangers so nearby. He said, "Whenever I see homes like this in the suburbs, I tell myself 'There but for the grace of God go I.'"

THE FIELDHOUSE

Before we had the fieldhouse, we used to camp on Burnside Island and later at a primitive spot along an abandoned railroad right-of-way we called "Chigger Flats" for obvious reasons. In 1971, when Tom Cottrell saw light from the inside of a dome at the Lunchroom and some of us excavated Screamin' Willy pit entrance, I decided to ask the owner of the nearby trailer if I could rent it. Bob Daulton, the owner of the property, wanted to keep the trailer for his own use, but offered the use of the barn and the other building behind the trailer. I made some improvements to this building, clearing it of decades of chicken manure and broken mason jars, putting in electricity, a window, and a concrete floor in the basement. About that concrete floor--Ken Smith and I were trying to smooth out the wet concrete on a ninety-degree day. We got so hot and tired that we went upstairs to rest while it partially set. Smith went back down and scraped around for a while, but the concrete had set in its present meringue texture.

Later, in 1973, Paul Unger, Bill Walden, and Bob Wood (Woody) built a new room and a front porch. Ken Smith built a window, which he laid flat on the porch while he worked on the window frame. Bill Walden accidentally stepped through both panes. Walter Foust, a caver who is an electrician, came to help with the electrical wiring, looked at my previous wiring, said "Oh my God!", and started from scratch. Since my name had become synonymous with a hack job, I was only permitted to help with the interior decorating.

An oil burning furnace that Woody bought provided both heat and smoke, often more of the latter than the former. Sometimes, when the chimney pipe became clogged with soot, it would belch forth a sooty cloud into the room. When the fire would go out, we sometimes rekindled it by igniting the excess oil that had overflowed into the bottom chamber. This was scary, since it tended to boil the oil in the upper chamber. Three cavers from Yellow Springs who were also part-time firemen pronounced the fieldhouse unsafe and slept in the barn. Later, their apartment in Yellow Springs was destroyed by fire, along with all the fields notes from their survey of Neely's Creek Cave. Fortunately they had given me a partial map that was OK except that it had jelly on it.

The first outhouse was a one-holer, built on a cold January day in 1972 completely from barn boards and used nails. That's why there were boards missing from the barn. The outhouse was built up a hill from the back of the fieldhouse. Walking up the path to it was hazardous because of copperhead snakes and chiggers, and, in wet weather, slippery mud. I remember an incident in which Bill Thoman, who was deathly afraid of snakes, shouted from up the hill, "Does anybody know anything about snakes?!" His voice cracked on that last word. A snake had slithered between the wood and the enclosing black plastic. I tapped on it with a hammer and it dropped into the pit below. Bill no longer had to go, now that it had been scared out of him. This outhouse lasted until 1984, when a new, two-hole structure replaced it. The new building has a level floor, the roof doesn't leak, and it generally lacks character compared to the original.

There was a green easy chair that was fought over. If you were sitting in the green chair, nobody would bring you a beer or anything to eat. Actually, sometimes the

strategy was to bring you plenty of beer so your bladder would fill and you would have to get up. The new owner of the green chair would shout a victorious "Snarf!" as he or she plopped into it. Food was also a snarfbable item, although there were certain house rules like not taking somebody's last beer or only taking things from open containers.

WHAT WAS IT LIKE TO MAP SLOAN'S?

Was it interesting to map such a well-known cave? What discoveries happened during the survey? For the most part, mapping the cave was drudgery after we finished mapping the easy stuff. I wouldn't count the Big Passage, Appalachian Trail, and the Big Room among the easy part because to map such a wide breakdown passage well requires considerable scrambling around and radial survey shots. While most of the cave had been known and the entrances connected before our survey began, we did encounter some virgin cave. Of course there were occasional short extensions here and there that were virgin, but the main new discoveries included some upper levels in Left Cave, the Twenty-Mile Room and Insanity Dome, Cross Canyon Extension, northwest from Railroad Tunnel entrances, and the Rocky Horror Crawl. Nothing of major importance, but enough to keep our interest. Rocky Horror Crawl was discovered in 1980 and resulted in about a mile of survey that hasn't been added to the map. This consists of a route from Railroad Tunnel river that almost connects back to the cave near the Scowling Tom's entrance. I guess the real motivation for mapping Sloan's was not the anticipation of discovery but the desire for an explanation of how the cave fits together.

Sloan's is a long, horizontal cave with 16 entrances. Because there are so many entrances, survey trips were rarely longer than 12 hours. Sloan's has mazes, but these are generally of the unobvious type, where you might be at a place where there are number of key intersections and not realize it. The map looks more complex than the cave seems, except for certain areas. There are few pits, practically none that you can't avoid. The most obvious obstacles are mud, breakdown, and water. The mud is the indirect effect of water, since the worst mud is the legacy left behind when Lake Cumberland recedes briefly and you can enter the sublake levels. As much as seventy feet of the cave that we have explored has been flooded by the lake. There are still parts of the cave that haven't been seen since the lake was impounded in 1954.

Parts of the Sloan's system can flash flood. This is compounded by lake level, since a high lake level can cause passages which do not normally flash flood to do so. On several occasions, cavers have managed to leave Minton Hollow during a flash flood. On one occasion, Bill Walden and I swam across Dread Pool when we had skirted it dry on the way in. The falls across from the Round Room was renamed Niagara Falls that day. The crawlway that we always thought might provide an escape route if the Duck Under flooded was flooded worse than the Duck Under. Another time I entered Minton for flood observation during a rainy weekend when all the surface streams were flooded. Strangely, there was no water flowing in the streambed in front of the entrance. We had just crossed this streambed when a sudden rush of noisy water flowed down the valley and into the Left Cave Sink. My party cautiously looked down into the Rotunda Room of Left Cave. I went down to see the pool of water forming. When it gave a sudden surge, we beat a hasty retreat. I don't think I could repeat that trip; I'm getting nervous writing about it!

CAVERS

Besides Dave Beiter and myself, some of the most active COG cavers in the Sloan's Valley project were Jo Beiter, Ken Smith, Bill and Karen Walden, Jack Sigafos, Richard Hand, Bob Wood, Alan Henning, Paul West, and Rick Day. What did they do then and where are they now?

Josephine Yankauskas met Dave Beiter at Chigger Flats when Dave, Ken Smith, and I were camped there at Christmas time. Dave had a wood stove in his tent, which is what must have been the attraction. They were married a few months later on the last day that the marriage license was valid because Dave didn't want to have to take the blood test again. He hated blood. Jim Sharpe was the witness and that afternoon they went caving. Jo and Dave lived for a time on a farm in Wayne County. After they were divorced, Jo lived on a Wayne county mountaintop and now is married to Harrison Green and lives in Illinois.

Ken Smith is listed on the system map as having the third most survey stations. I still remember his first cave trip, in Garbage Pit and out the Hughes entrance. Beiter and Sigafos were along on the trip. Ken was so out of shape and overweight that his glasses never cleared. Beiter called him Santa Claus and even abandoned him in the exit chimney and went home. I pushed Ken up the narrow chimney and thought he'd never want to go caving again. I was surprised to see him at the next COG meeting. But Ken was very interested in the mapping effort and consistently came along on survey trips for the duration of the project. Ken dropped out of caving around 1977 but still belongs to the NSS. He completed advanced degrees and works at University Hospital at Ohio State, last I heard.

Jack Sigafos was Ken Smith's friend when they started caving. He got married and moved to Marietta, Ohio, where he owned an insurance agency. My last contact with Jack was at least seven years ago.

Bob Wood, known for his inventions and ability to fix anything, specialized in fieldhouse construction projects and caving projects involving a lot of technical equipment. He really didn't get involved in the Sloan's project until we were already starting to map Cave Creek. On his first trip into Sloan's with Alan Henning and me, he got stuck between two rocks on the floor of a narrow canyon and it took forty minutes to free him. Bob, an Army veteran, completed training at Ohio Institute of Technology and got a job maintaining helicopter simulators at Fort Campbell, Tennessee. I haven't talked to him for a couple years. At that time he had a girlfriend, was buying an apartment building, and repaired TVs in his spare time. I don't think he goes caving very much any more.

Paul West was a student of mine in Circleville Junior High School. At age 14, he was a skillful caver and learned how to survey after a few disastrous attempts. He also snarfed all my beer until I started buying him his own. Yes, the suck-in techniques for carrying on a cave survey are numerous and varied. I know Paul went to college in Alabama and got himself an electric guitar, because he called me in 1975. No contact since then.

Rick Day was a reluctant surveyor because he found it boring. His specialty was cave photography, especially 3-D, and all who helped Rick with his photography felt the same way about that experience as Rick felt about surveying. His painstaking photographic technique has paid off, as he continues to be the outstanding cave photographer in the NSS. Rick is originally from Connecticut, but I have never met anyone else from that state who talks fast like Rick. Rick put together the popular Sloan's Valley Slide Series, with contributions from other COG cavers. Rick got his PhD in astronomy from Ohio State and took a job teaching physics at the University of Arizona, but his entrepreneurial nature led him to private enterprise and now he is self-employed, selling diamonds from the far east and whatever, hopefully all legal.

I haven't written anything about some of the others I listed above either because I don't have much information or because they are currently very active in COG. As for myself, my experience with a cave flood in 1982, my third cave flood, did nothing to fan an already fading interest in a high level of caving. I still go caving half a dozen times a year, usually to Zarathustra's Cave, Sinks of the Roundstone, or a commercial cave. Although I am not in the same shape as I was when I went caving

(more of a pear shape than a hot dog), I can handle a fairly strenuous (non-flooding) cave trip. I haven't mapped anything for several years. When I first got involved with the Sloan's Valley survey, I thought it would be a lifetime project. At least, I felt committed to see it to completion. It is difficult to define when a cave map is complete. Many cavers never draw a final map, always marking the maps "preliminary" and limiting distribution to the active survey group. I feel that our survey of Sloan's is about as complete as it needs to be. I would like to see somebody add to the survey if they really want to. To me, it is as exciting to hear about a new discovery in an "old" cave as it is to hear about the survey of a newly discovered cave. The former is certainly more surprising.

Remembrances of Sloans Valley Cave.

by Bill Walden

During my last year at Ohio State, Louis Simpson introduced Karen and me to cave exploring. The cave was the Minton Hollow entrance of Sloans Valley. Louis was relatively new to cave exploring and uncertain.

We camped at the General Burnside Campground in the open. We were lucky, it did not rain. Our small party included Frank Damm, a graduate astronomy Student at Ohio State.

That Saturday morning Louis led the way into Minton Hollow. The path in those days dropped down the hill on the west of the old bridge abutment, a steep trail, then west along an old road. The path from the old road to the cave entrance was nothing like it is today, only a narrow, easy to miss footpath.

Louis was a gracious tour guide. He paused at the entrance of the cave to light our borrowed carbide lamps and allowed us to become adjusted to the dim light.

I was facinated with the cave. Louis led us to the beginning of the big passage, to the helictite passage, and to the fountain room. He had not been to the end of the big passage and when I pushed on toward the end of the big passage, Louis began to get nervous so we left the cave. It was a good trip and a good introduction to cave exploring.

Karen and I returned to the Sloans Valley cave regularly with Louis to explore. We didn't carry a compass, yet we tried to connect the various portions of the cave. I remember crawling for hours, probably all under the corn field that was at the garbage pit entrance. Finally we came to some passages where we could walk and then to a dome. Louis was crawling around somewhere above me when I reported that I could see light. Louis replied that it was just his carbide light because he was above me. I don't think he understood when I retorted that it was to blue. Anyhow before Louis could respond again I scrambled out of the cave and into sunshine! Louis followed shortly. We tried to figure out where we had come out. That entrance is Scowling Tom's. Subsequent trips out Scowling Tom's seemed much easier and shorter.

We continued to camp at General Burnside Island State Park year round. By this time we had purchased tents. In the winter Louis tried using a Coleman catalytic tent heater but with unpredictable results. Karen and I tried a electric heater in the coldest of nights. One cold February morning we heard a crash. The heater had been pulled over and burned a hole in the floor of the tent. We found the extension cord chewed in two and spotted a fox running wildly about! What a surprise he bit into. Bet he never tried to chew an electric cord again. During the summer months fellow campers gave us strange looks as we dressed in heavy warm clothes on a hot mornings. One ventured to ask after having watched us for several mornings. He seemed much relived when we explained that we were cave explorers.

We had our favorite eating places. For breakfast it was Walden's Restaraunt and for

dinner the Lakeview Inn which had an incredibly cheap family style meal. The waitress brought bowls of vegetables, rolls, chicken, ham, etc. Once a bowl was emptied, she would bring more on request. Don't know how many meals we ate there, and straight from the cave too! (with a stop at the roadside park to wash the obvious mud from our hands and faces.)

Walden's Restaraunt is long gone but the Lakeview still serves an incredibly inexpensive buffet style meal which includes fish, ham, chicken, meatloaf, barbaqued pork and much more. Only now they have entertainment!

Other favorites of the time included the beach at Burnside Island State park and for some the golf course at the park. For Louis golf was the diversion from cave exploring.

The next year I bought my first four wheel drive car, a 1967 International Scout. Seemed to me at the time that a four wheel drive car was required for cave exploring! At least it proved valuable as a camping vehicle. Today I'm on my third four wheel drive car, another Scout.

One of the early cave trips in the Scout was with Louis and a student of mine. We went to Tarkiln Cave. The steep hill down to the cave was solid enough on that January morning but on leaving the cave that evening, such was not the case. We were up to our hubs in mud! After laying the Scout over on its side and righting it again, we got up the hill without further difficulty or damage.

Louis was sufficiently impressed that he soon located an older used scout, the famous Blue Scout, at a bargain price, \$750. (The Blue Scout replaced the famous fording Ford!) And, oh, the stories we can tell of Louis and his Blue Scout!

Now properly equiped, we began weekly trips to the Sloans Cave. On one trip out of Minton we found a note someone had left on Louis' windshield. It was a note from Dave Beiter. This was, at least in my mind, the beginning of the mapping project.

As school teachers it was easy for Karen and I to join Louis and Beiter for many cave trips. We spent a good part of one summer camped in Beiter's back yard. Beiter, at first had no use for women, in time he learned to appreciate Karen's cooking and her occassional cleaning of Beiter's kitchen. Now Beiter was not neat! Chickens roamed through the house and of course left their droppings. Get the idea.

Other campsite served us well - Waitsboro, and later Chigger Flats. Chigger Flats was accessed from a jeep trail leading west off US27 just before reaching Alpine.

One cold January morning at Chigger Flats found me cooking breakfast inside the Scout with six other people including Louis who was drawing out the map of that which we had surveyed the day before!

Following Chigger Flats Louis obtained permission to use the barn and chicken coop which is now the field house used by the MVG.

Survey trips continued. One lovely August day Louis and I departed on a survey trip beyond the fountain room. We had spent some six hours surveying and pushing. Louis did most of the pushing while I took a nap on the soft gypsum sand. On leaving and approaching the fountain room I remarked to Louis that the fountain sounded louder. He replied that it never changed. On reaching the fountain room, we found the fountain to be gushing! Without saying much we hastened on down the crawlways. All was quiet so we gradually slowed our pace. Through the walking passge and on to the Corkscrew. On coming out of the Corkscrew we heard a strange noise, sort-of-like waves hitting a beach. We hastened our pace throught the big passage, through the breakdown, the Sand room, the jigsaw room to dread pool. All was quiet. Dave and Jo Beiter were sitting on the opposite side. But all was not right, for the safety line

strung across the pond was not to be seen! And it had been strung some fifteen feet above the normal pool level of the water. I floated across on my camera pack and Louis followed swimming and making some remark about having practiced swimming with full cave gear.

The four of us decided we had better make a run for it. Little Niagra was not to be heard, for the water was level with the top. We waded through thigh to waist deep rapidly flowing water fearing that the duckunder would be flooded shut. We hoped that two known bypass routes would lead us to dry cave. The bypass passages, long thought to be escape routes, were full of water. Our concern increased. I was the first to reach the duckunder. Four inches of air remained and we exited safely from the cave into bright sunlight! The rain gauge back at the field house indicated 5 inches of rain had fallen that sunny August day.

Several of us were full of pranks. One New Years several cavers were doing a survey in the Great Rock Sink area while the rest of us were partying. Ed Herel got the idea to go to the cave and wall in our explorers. FUN! We left the field house in our street clothes to do our appointed task. The wall completed we awaited in the dark. On returning from surveying and confronted with the wall, Smith did not find it funny, and a flurry of profanities as only Smith could say it was heard. We left not turning our light on till we were clear of the area and very dissapointed that Smith did not see the humor of our ways. None-the-less it had been fun.

Smith seemed to get the worst of it on all to many occassions. When the Sloan's project was pretty much wrapped up and the Cave Creek Project under way we put an addition on to the field house. The work was complete and we had a pile of junk to burn. Paul Unger and others piled up the junk well away from the field house and, since it was raining lightly, doused it with gas. They waited for the more volatile portion to evaporate before lighting the fire. The pile was ignited and burst into flames. Then there was a tremendous explosion behind us. Turning we saw Smith blackened with soot run from the basement releasing his usual stream of profanities. Smith had been in the basement of the field house minding his own business. When the fire burned down we learned the cause of the explosion. The trash had been piled over the drain outlet from the basement. The gas fumes must have travelled up the drain pipe and into the basement. No damage resulted. Smith, though angry, washed up just fine.

Sloans? I still enjoy my occassional trip to almost any section. As it was a good beginners cave for me, I feel it is a good cave for introducing new COGer's to the hobby of caving.

C. O. G. SQUEAKS OCTOBER 1971

We're Still Mapping--and Scooping-- in Sloans Valley

by guess who? -- Louis!

Paul West and I mapped some of the waterfall maze at remote Spitting Rock Extension on Sept. 19. (1971) Then, since we were leaving earlier than we had planned, I excavated a dubious crawlway and it went! After fifty feet of bellycrawl it got big enough to walk around. Unfortunately it was not virgin. But the crawlway definately was. For the next hour we followed numerous walking passages and became frustrated because there was too much to see in the time available. Finally, a crawl over breakdown brought us out at an overlook of a room that was familar and it was apparent that the earlier cavers had come that way. I moved some rocks and got into a virgin room. A narrow canyon led to an impressive forty-foot dome with big leads up one side. I had to leave them for another trip.

The next Sunday, I returned with Paul, Richard Hand, Jack Sigafos, and Bob Hood. After we surveyed a loop through the two accesses, much pushing was rewarded by

considerable discovery. A narrow canyon went several hundred feet to a maze room. A bit of major rock surgery made it easier, but not safer, to enter the forty-foot dome. It still looks like large slabs could fall, so we named it "Floyd Collins Pass." Jack and I both saw some of the big upper level. I found a difficult alternative route down; however, there was an old carbide dump up there and I haven't figured out how the creator thereof made it up. An even higher level lead beckoned, but I was unable to figure out a safe way to attempt the climb. This passage would head farther up the valley, a good place for more cave. Good Old Sloans! Boy, am I psyched!

The connection is made.

The high route, Sloans to Minton.

COG SQUEAKS MAY 1969

W E M A D E I T !

I hadn't planned to go caving that weekend, but the death of General Eisenhower changed my vacation days, so I drove to Columbus where I easily persuaded Hartley Mays to go. Arriving late Saturday night at the end of the abandoned railroad bed, we spent the night sleeping in the car. Palm Sunday dawned bright and warm, and as we looked down at the greenfields along Martin Hollow we could hear the chimes and organ at the church in the valley.

After a hearty breakfast we pitched the tent and drove south on Rt. 27 to look for the overlook at Three Forks of Beaver. We didn't know what to expect, but the topo map shows quite a canyon. We took a few wrong turns and finally found the way, which is clearly marked with signs. A rugged car could be driven to within a thousand feet of the overlook itself. What a sight! A drop of at least 100 feet into a Kentucky version of the Grand Canyon. Not so very high, but impressive enough. Towering trees below failed to teach the level of our feet. From much farther down beyond the bottom of the cliff face came the gurgle of a river and beyond this were impressive bluffs.

Joyously, we made our way down the trail to the bottom by the only apparent route down for a mile. We descended through a shaded gorge lush with moss, passing huge rocks and finally entering a forest in which trees only began to branch fifty feet overhead. The trail brought us to the creek where a side stream bubbles into it. We waded into the creek with the intention of following it downstream to the left, but the water was too cold, and soon we were fighting our way up the opposite bank through dense briars and shrubs. When we reached the bluffs, we walked along them, as there seemed no way to climb them. As we followed the the forty foot overhang cliff, it became even higher, but at length a way up did present itself. The last twenty feet would have been almost impossible, but there turned out to be an old wooden ladder. Predictably, as I began to climb this ladder and ventured to remark, "It seems to be solid," one rung snapped under foot. Fortunately no others broke and we were able to reach the top. Shortly after this we started back and made it without incident. We saw a helicopter several times--apparently a fire patrol. Since it was still early, we went to see Cumberland Falls.

The next morning, Monday, we entered Minton Hollow Cave and proceeded directly to the end of the big passage, most of which Hartley had never seen. Dread Pool was at low level again, so we were able to cross dry. Chimneying up the Crevice, we headed for the virgin passage area and checked it out pretty thoroughly. The unchecked end of a canyon is about the only lead left. The bottom level pinched out, and it drops thirty feet. Another passage we checked came out at this place, so there is a short-cut to it. Another deep canyon was found to pinch out. I induced Hartley, who loves to push the most doubtful leads, to follow a tube, but he was unable to reach the end.

Then we went on to Twin Domes, the place where there is a waterfall and twin domes beyond it. Since Harley was tiring, we skipped the White Grotto. I climbed down a series of three ten--foot drops to look once more for the lead to the connection--I was fairly sure it was down there--and found it! I had completely missed it on the trip when Mark and I had to swim out at Dread Pool. There was even an arrow pointing into the lead, a narrow crevice which you cannot see unless you look right at it. The route from there was straightforward, with few side leads, and we came out in the breakdown room exactly above the pit lead to the flooded lower connection route. The water level in this pit had risen another five or ten feet, so I did not recognize the pit. Leaving Hartley in the passage to find it again for me, I ventured down the walking passage and saw a familiar side lead with a circular cross section. What a moment of realization! To think that I had been in that very spot a dozen times without noticing the passage we had just come from! Hartley, however did not recognize anything until the very end, so he felt new weakness.

This connection route takes a minimum of three hours, and I would not want to do it that fast. We did it from Minton to Sloans, and that is the easier way, because some of the crevices are tight and slope downward in that direction.

The end for this month!