

Details of Caves in New Mexico in 1965-66

**Explored by
Hans and Helga
von Schweinitz**

By

Helga von Schweinitz

Released 2023
by
Helga von Schweinitz

Printed in the United States of America

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But remember, a memory is for a life time, but a good reference is forever.

Introduction

In 1964, Hans and Helga lived in Roswell New Mexico. Hans was enlisted in the Air Force and assigned to the reconnaissance lab at Walker AFB. In late December of 1964, they made friends with Barry Konneker. Barry was a Captain in the Army and was teaching German at the New Mexico Military Institute.

This book is a collection of the maps, newspaper articles, and photos that document four caves that they explored from December 1964 until Jan 1967. The collection is not complete because it consists of what was found after Hans and Helga had already passed away. This information was found in a box in the house of Hans and Helga. The comments are from notes that Hans and Helga left behind. Some additional information is provided by their Daughter, Bettina, based on recollections from family talks.

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Specific Caves

Hans and Helga and friends explored various caves. Five of the caves were their favorites and they kept information and maps. They also were asked to give presentation about their spelunking experiences in New Mexico.

New Mexico Maps



Indicates where Roswell is in relationship to Ft Stanton (near Ruidoso) and Carlsbad Caverns and Guadalupe Mountains where most of the caves were.

Cave: Cottonwood

In Fall of 1965, Hans, Helga, Duran, and a fourth unidentified person explored Cottonwood caves. They hand mapped out the cave and took multiple photos. Later Hans and Helga returned to Cottonwood with other spelunkers which included their friend Ilsa.

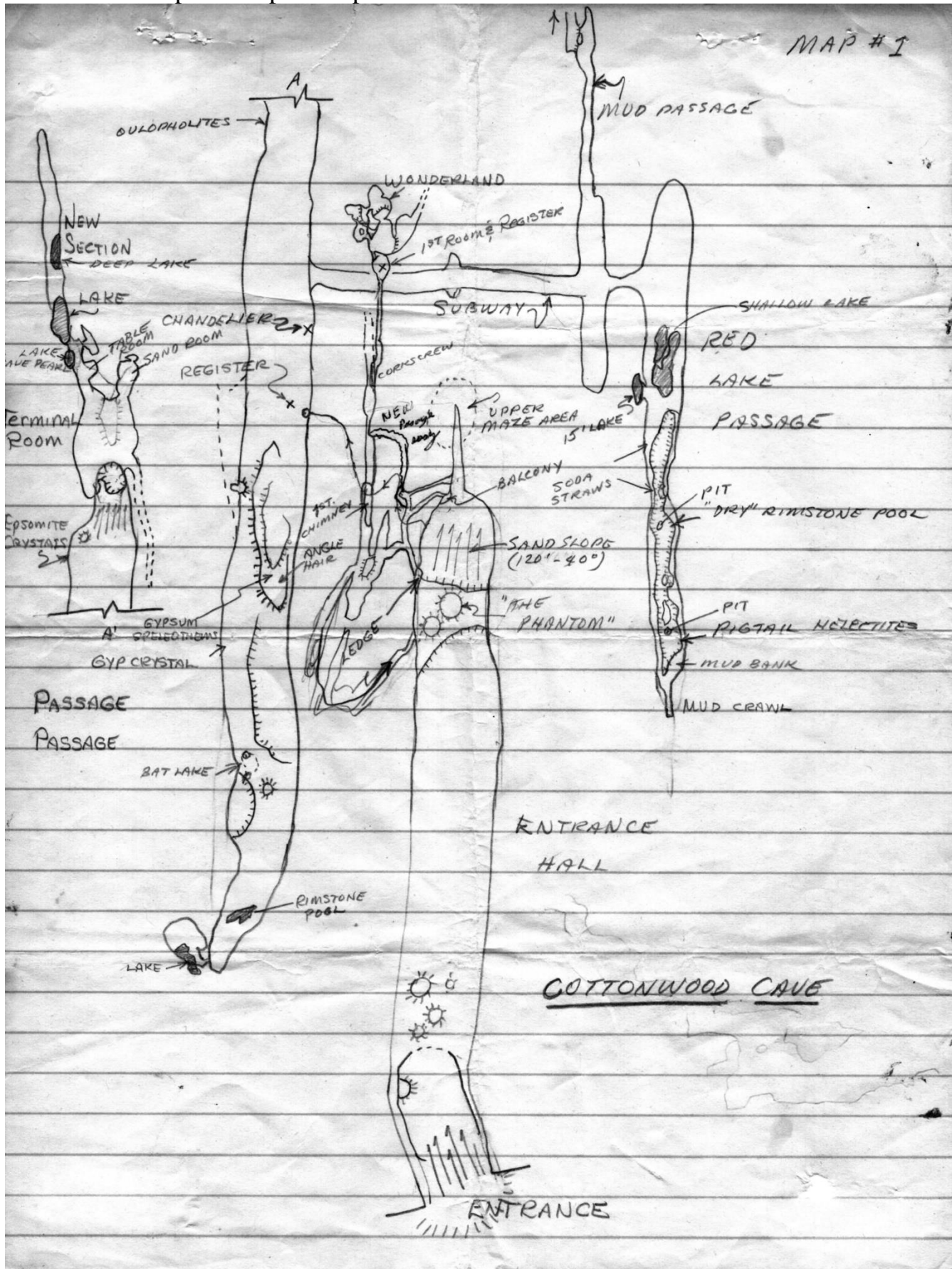
Based on information obtained via the internet in 2023, this cave system is in the Lincoln National Forest in the high plateaus of the southwestern Guadalupe.

Based on the New Mexico Bureau of Mines & Mineral Resource Bulletin 117 part 1:
Speleogenesis:

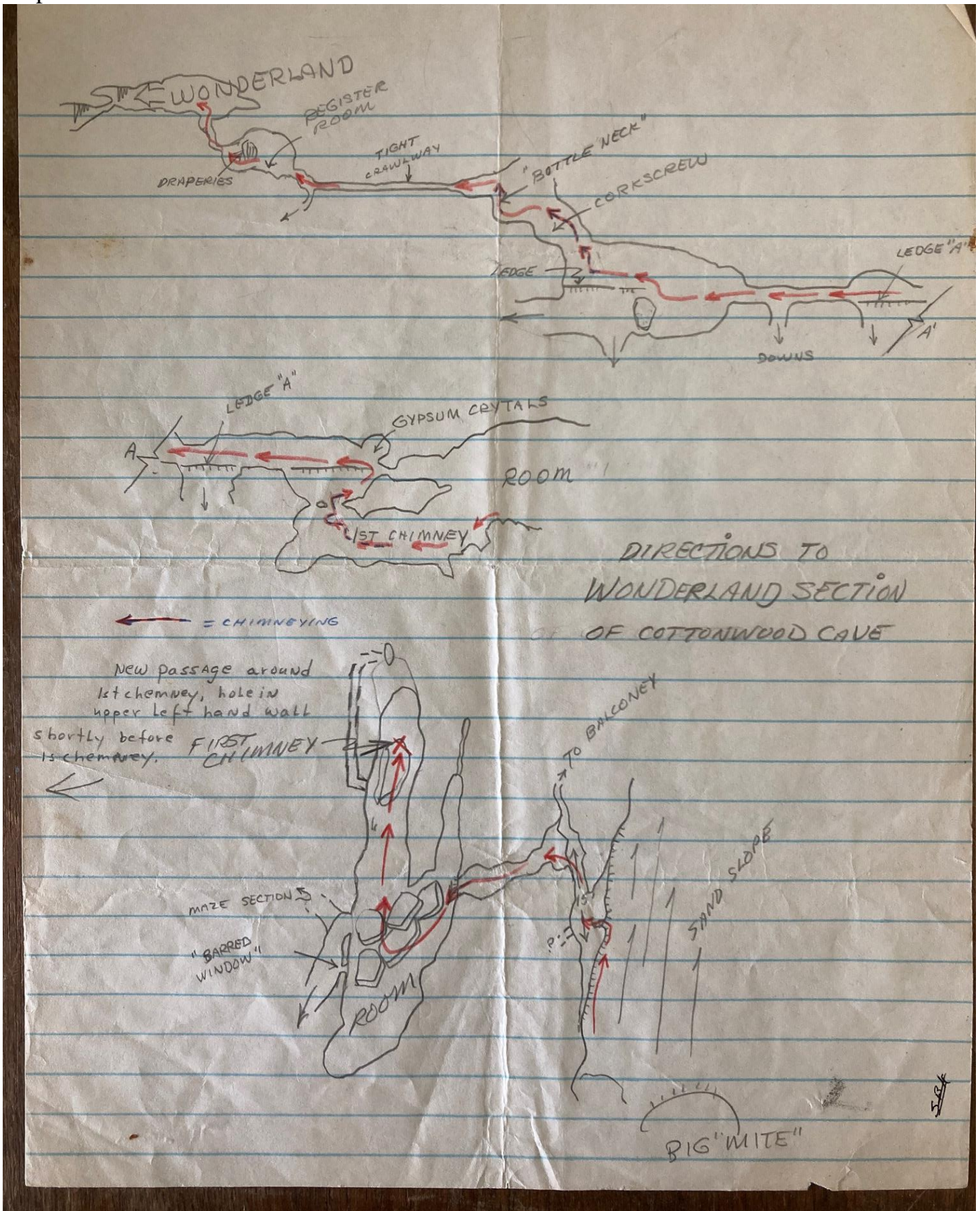
Cottonwood Cave is located between Dark and Black Canyons in a narrow limestone ridge which lies along the crest of the Guadalupe Ridge anticline. The cave is developed primarily in the backreef Seven Rivers Formation which directly underlies the pyritic Yates Formation (Sheet 5). The Entrance Hall of Cottonwood Cave is 30-50 m high and 15-20 m wide, and trends N14°W or approximately perpendicular to the reef escarpment. The sometimes rectangular to square passage cross section of the Entrance Hall represents the intersection of a flat ceiling (caused by collapse along a Seven Rivers bedding plane) with vertical walls (caused by exfoliation of bedrock along a series of parallel, vertical joints). An area of maze passage along the west wall near the very end of the Entrance Hall connects the Hall with the Gypsum Passage, a narrower, parallel, side passage which contains gypsum blocks, native sulfur, and gypsum and epsomite speleothems. Cottonwood Cave is perhaps an important cave because of its relatively extensive gypsum and sulfur deposits and also because of the replacement textures exhibited in its gypsum blocks and rinds.

Entrance

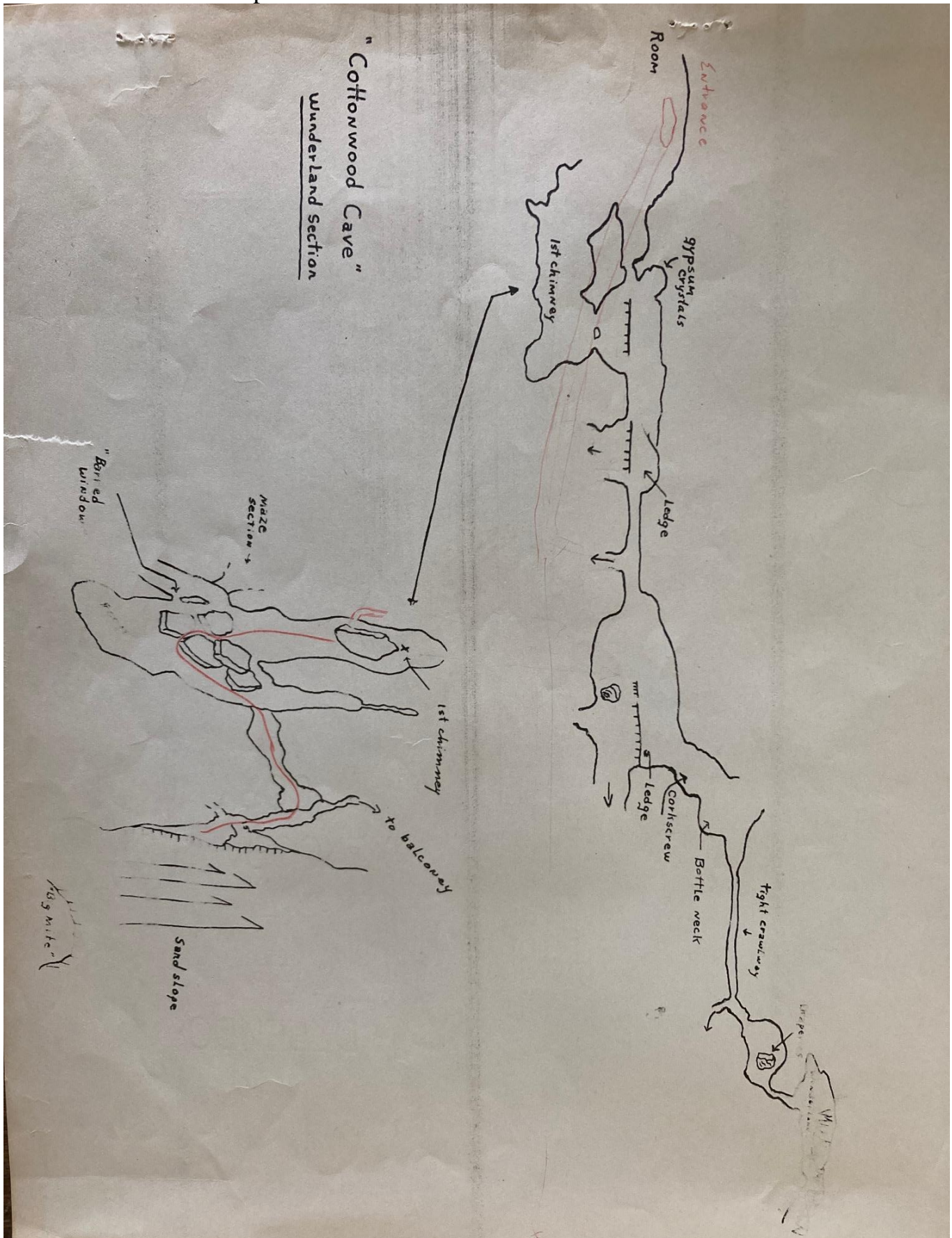
Hand drawn map of complete explored sections



Map with directions to Wonderland section of Cottonwood cave

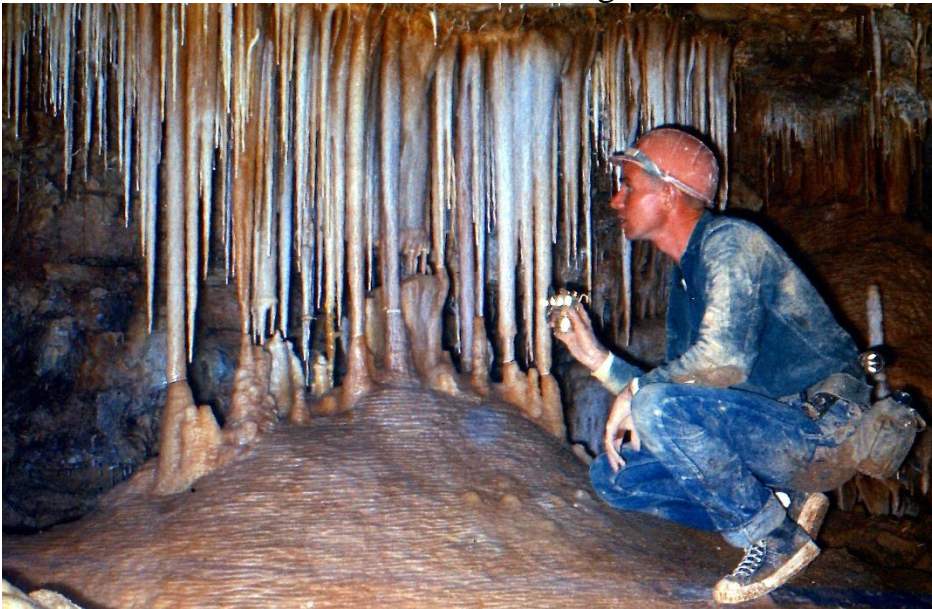


Wonderland Section map of Cottonwood cave





Cottonwood Chandelier. Duran and Helga



Cottonwood: Hans



Cottonwood Table room.



Cottonwood in Table Room. Hans



Cottonwood in Table Room. Helga



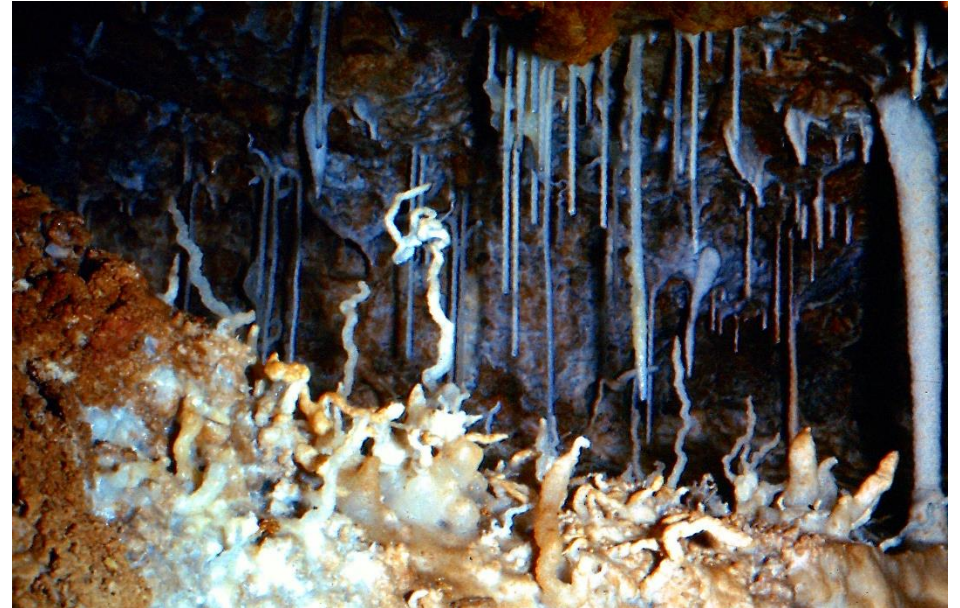
CottonWood Table Room. Duran and Helga having lunch



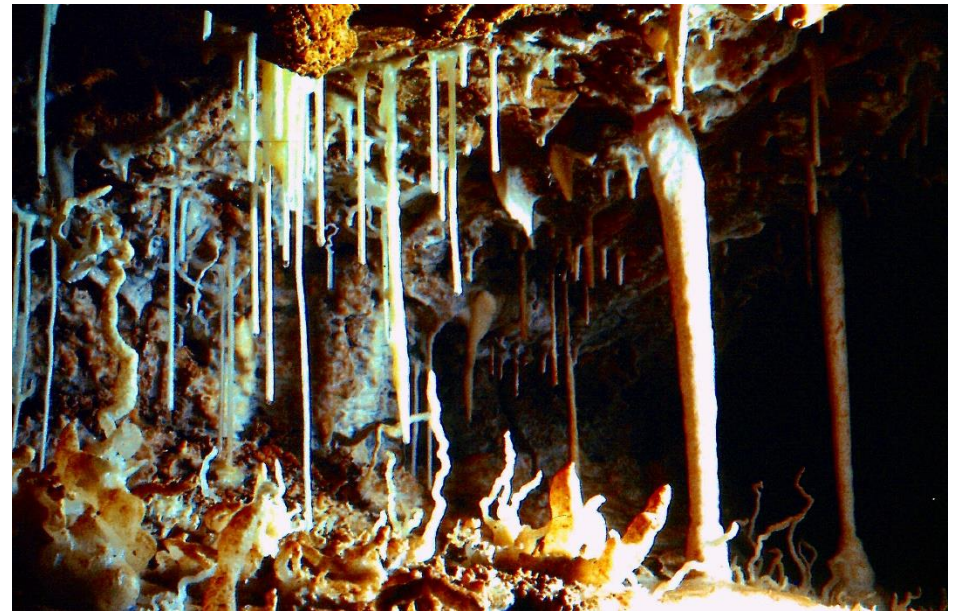
Cottonwood: Bacon formation



Cottonwood: Draperies formation in Wanderland section



Cottonwood Soda Straw formation



Cottonwood formation



Cottonwood formation



Cottonwood: on second exploration trip. Friend Ilsa and Helga



Cottonwood: Friend Ilsa an Helga in Table Room



Cottonwood: unidentified friend at Chandelier



Cottonwood cave 1965: Helga at Shallow Lake



Original photo before cropping and adjusting by Hans

Cave: Targas

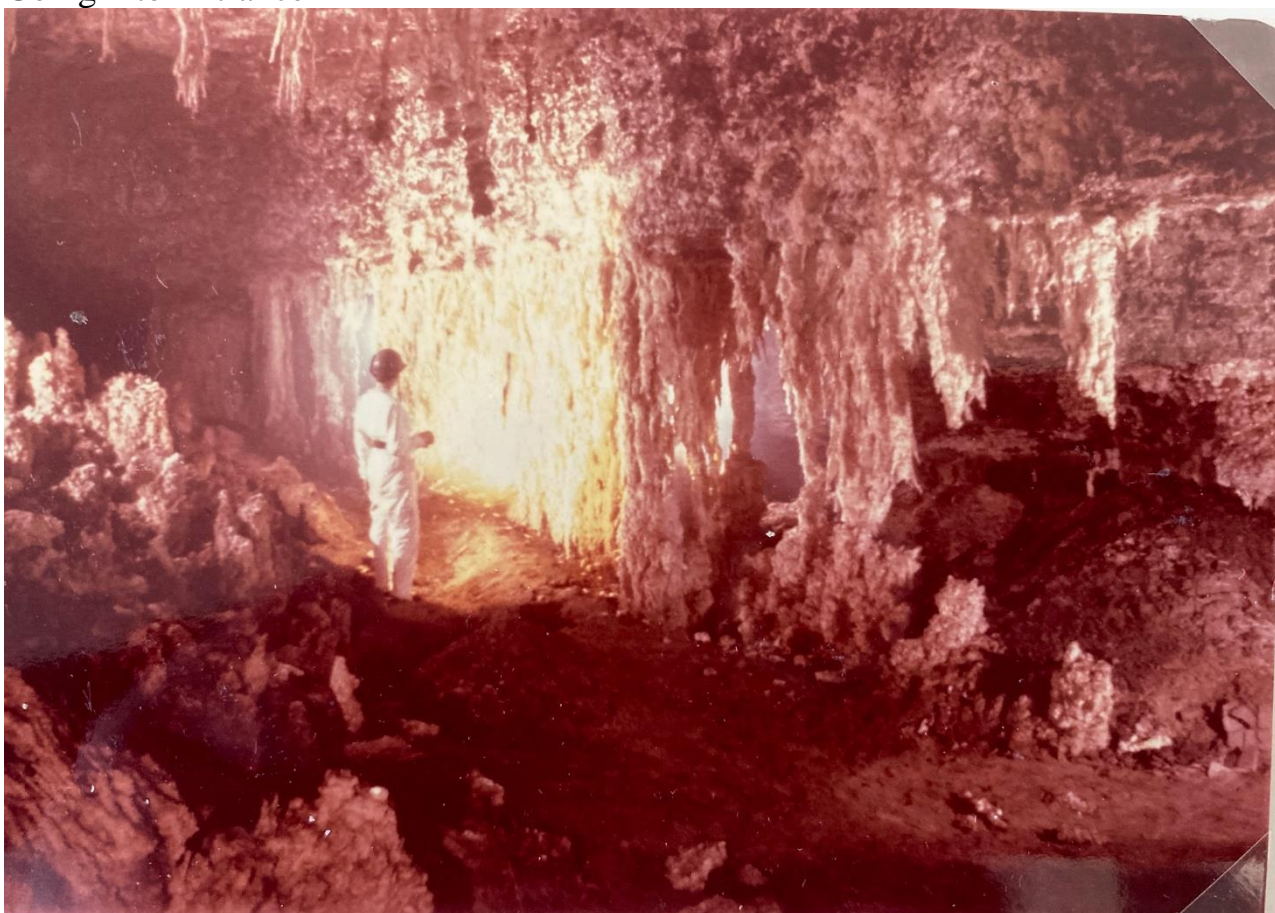
Hans and Helga with friends explored a cave they called “Targas” Cave North of Roswell New Mexico sometime in 1965 or 1966. Except for photos, there is no more information in their notes. The internet in 2023 does not list a cave with the name “Targas” or any cave just North of Roswell.



Entrance



Going into Entrance



Targas cave: Brenda Bonham



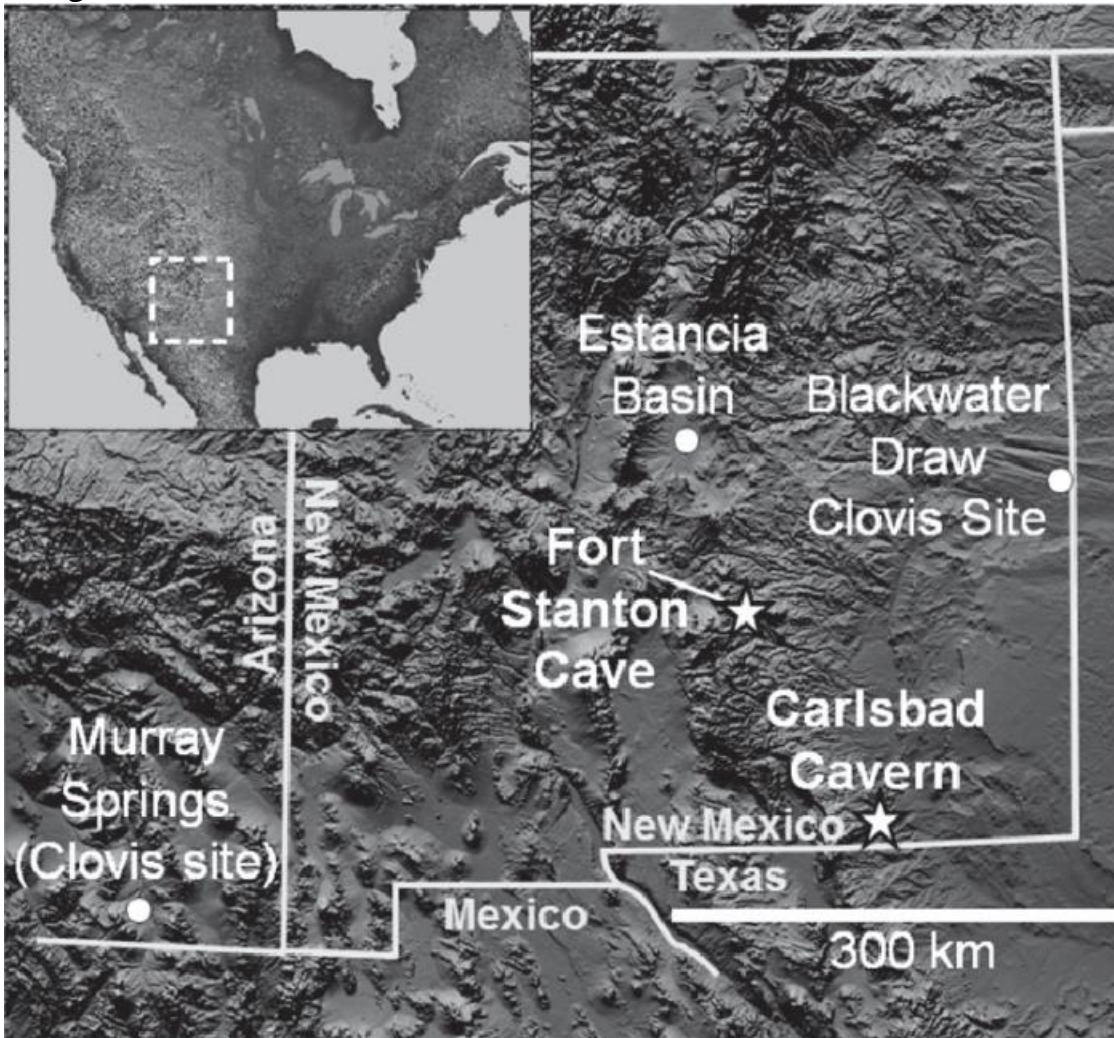
Targas Cave: Helga in a squeeze



Targas Cave: Gypsum formations

Cave: Ft Stanton

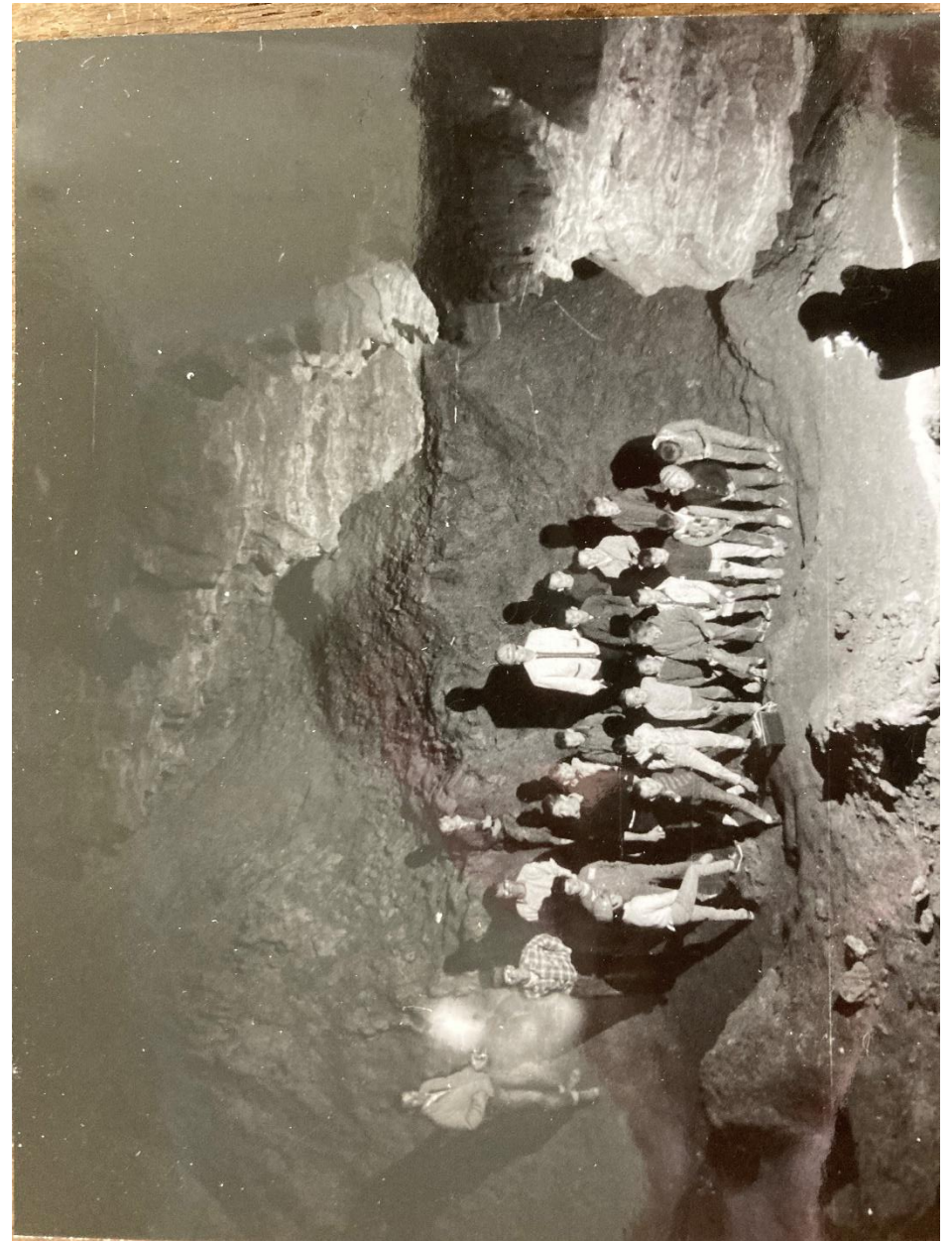
In the fall of 1965, Hans guided a group of Boy Scouts into Fort Stanton Cave. The Troop leader was Richard Weeks. Because Hans was the guide, he also took his daughter, Bettina, along.



Another time afterwards, Hans and Helga and some friends explored a new section of the Fort Stanton cave. Included is their hand drawn map and their photos.



Boyscouts hiking up to entrance to cave. Bettina in hard hat leading the walk

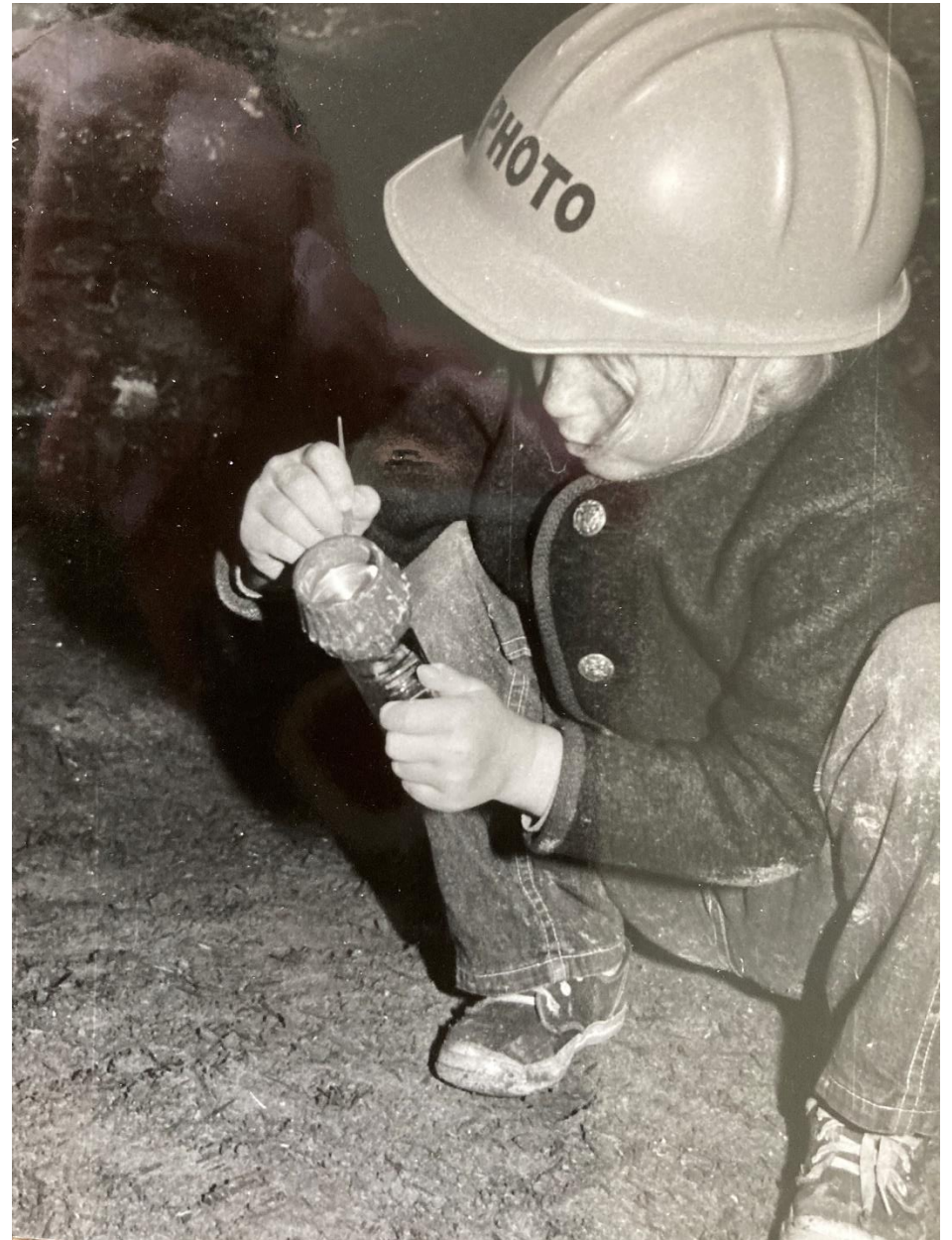


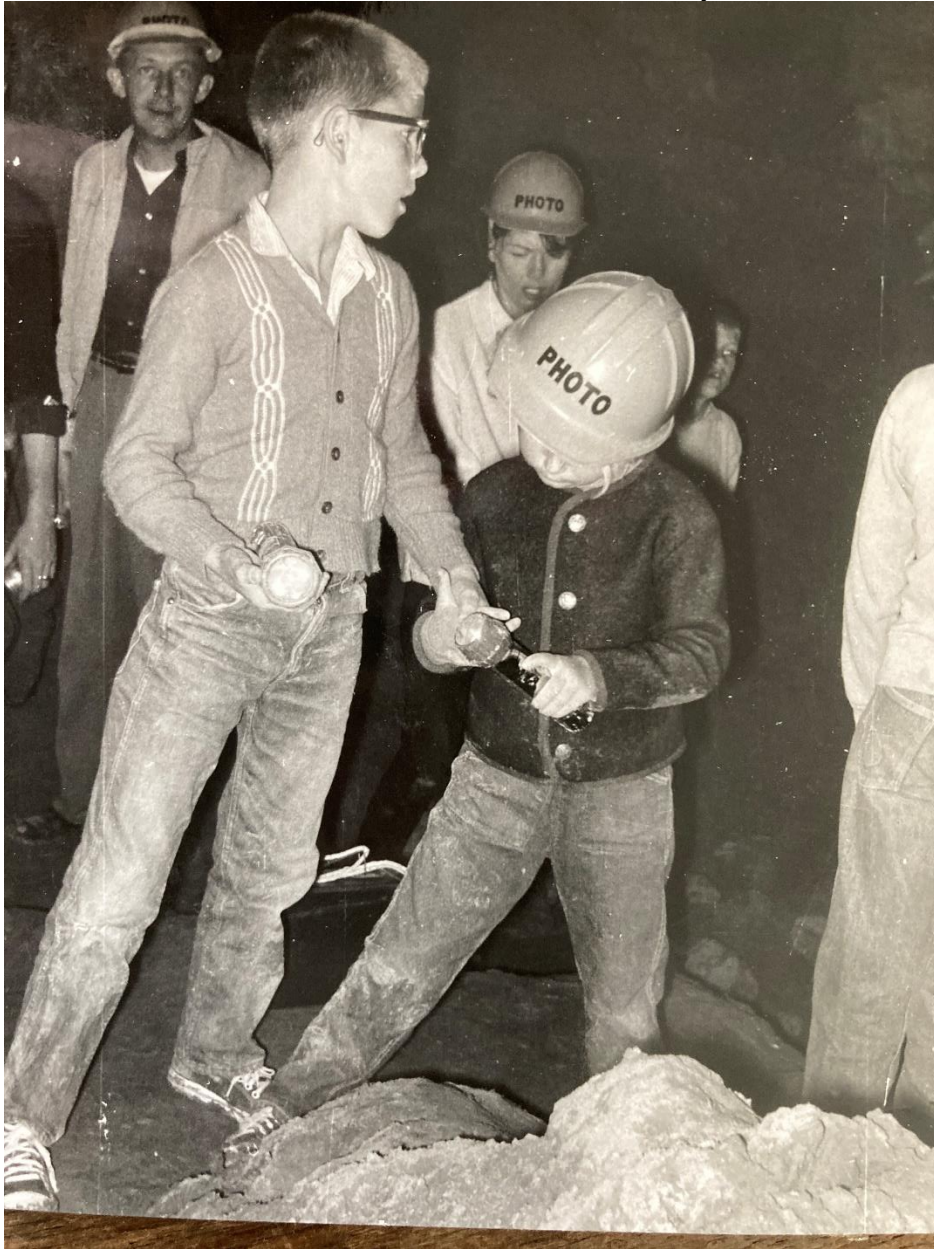
Boyscouts in cave at beginning of exploration





Hans and Bettina

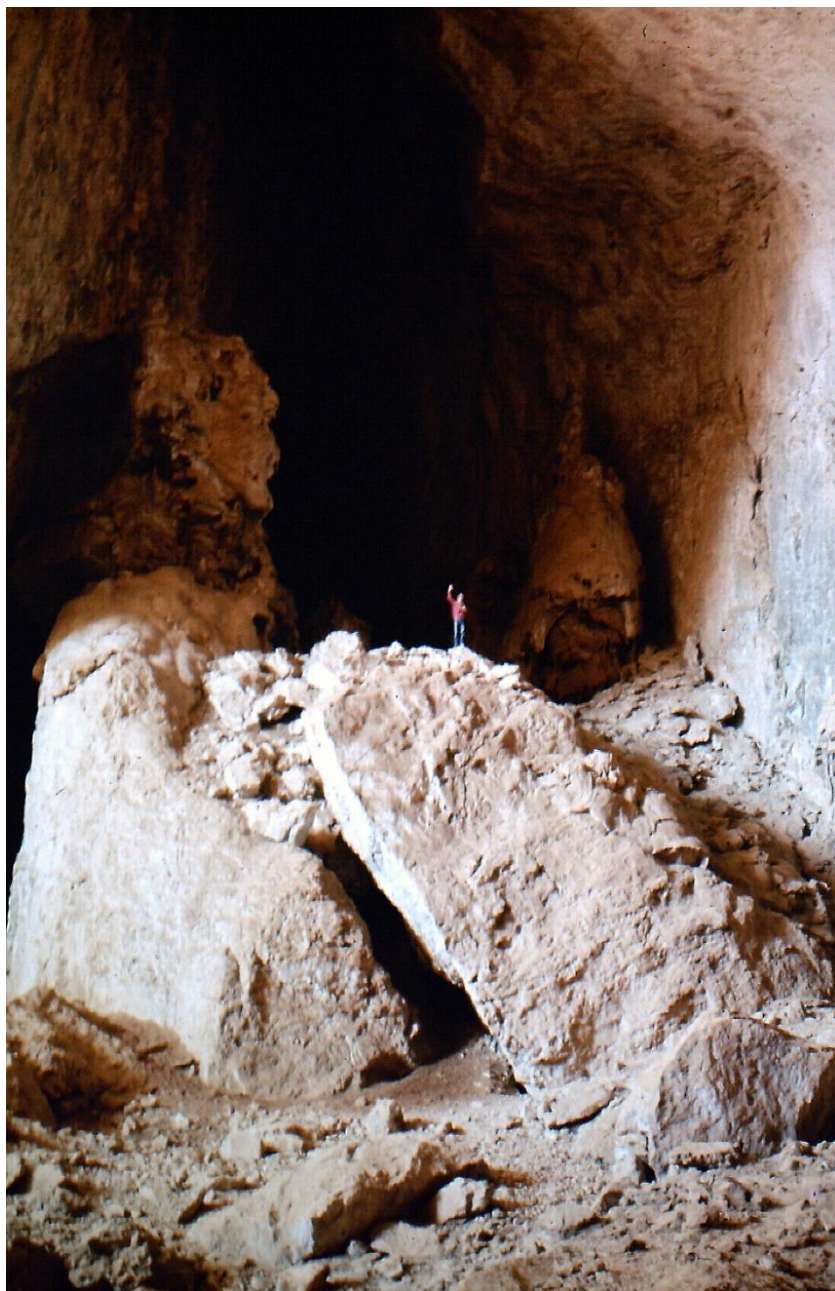




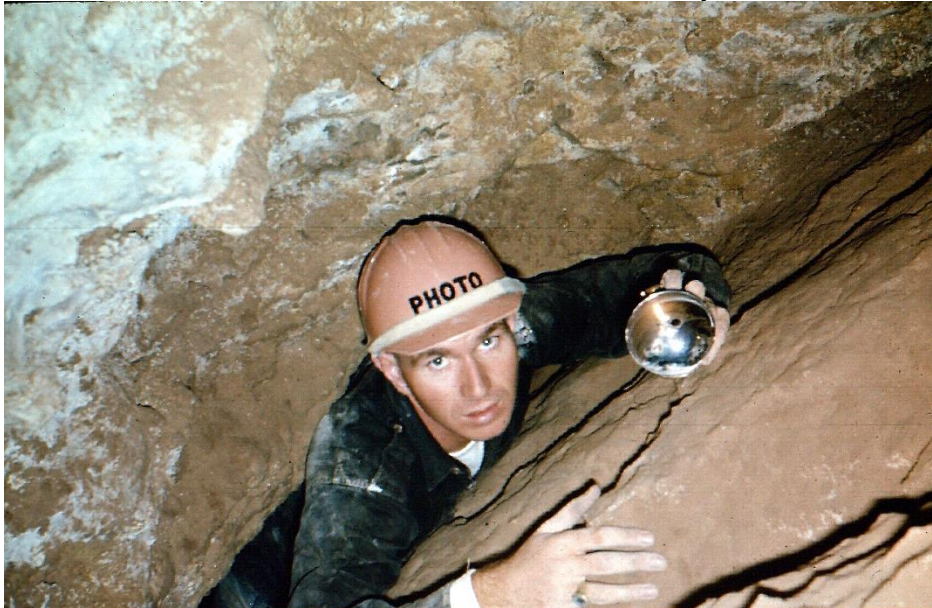
Picnic after the cave exploration



Map drawn by Hans, Helga, and friends in 1965 while exploring additional sections of the cave in Fort Stanton.





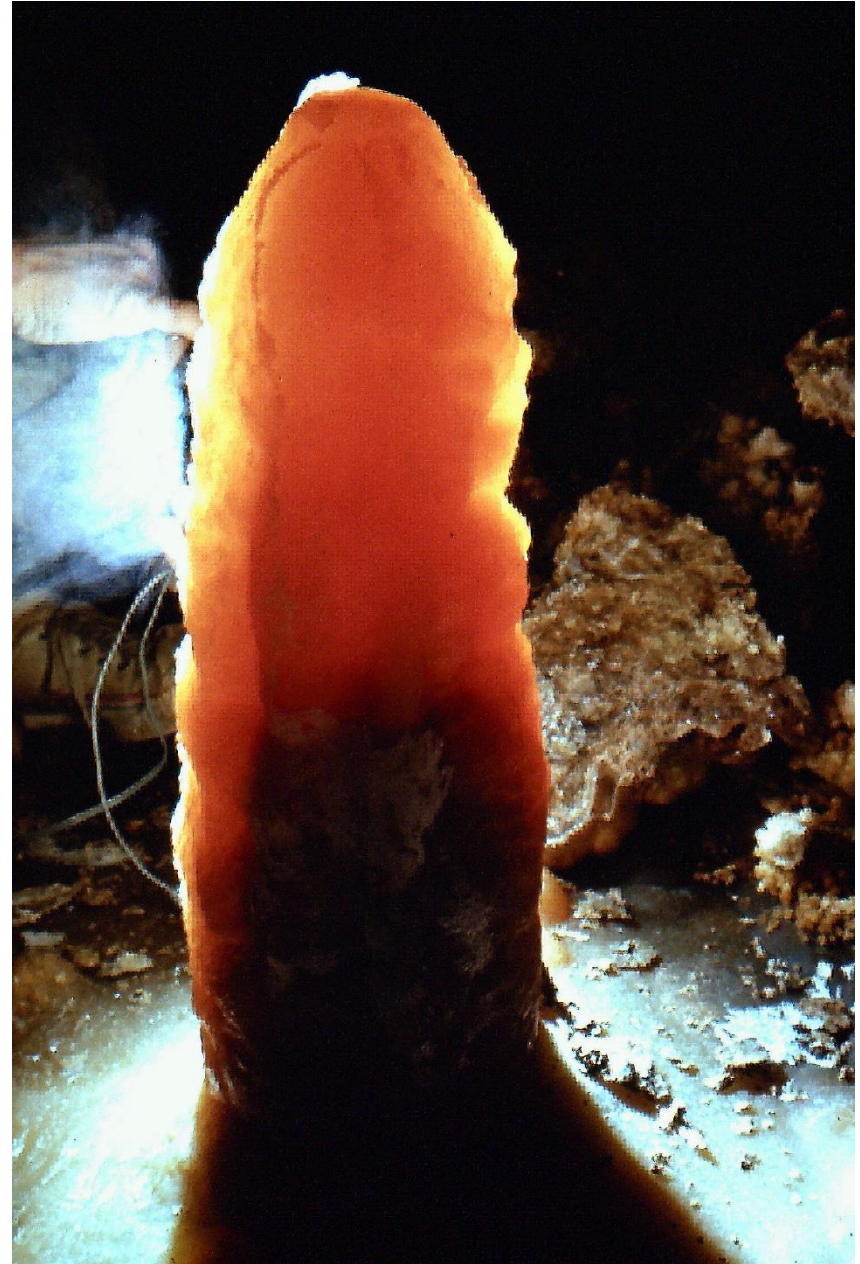


Some areas are for skinny people only. Hans above, Helga below



Soda straw formations

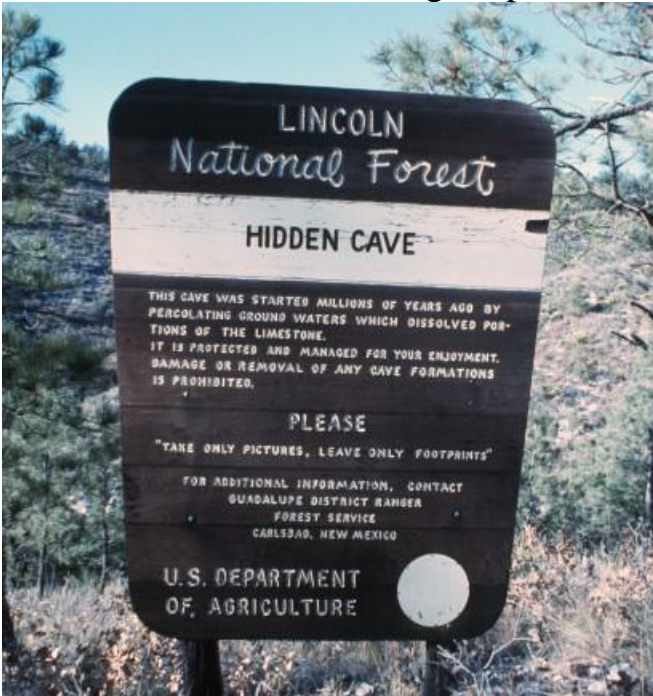




Un-named formation

Cave: Hidden Cave

In 1965-1966, Hans and Helga explored Hidden Cave in the Lincoln National Forest.

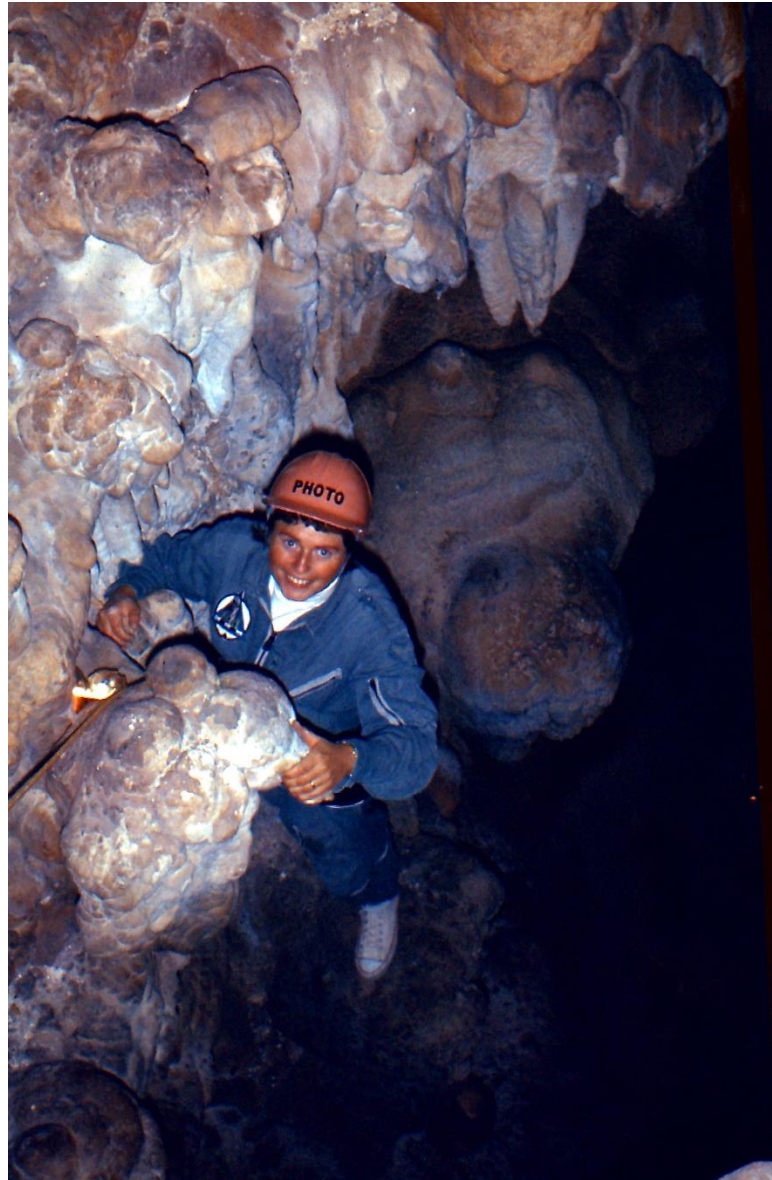




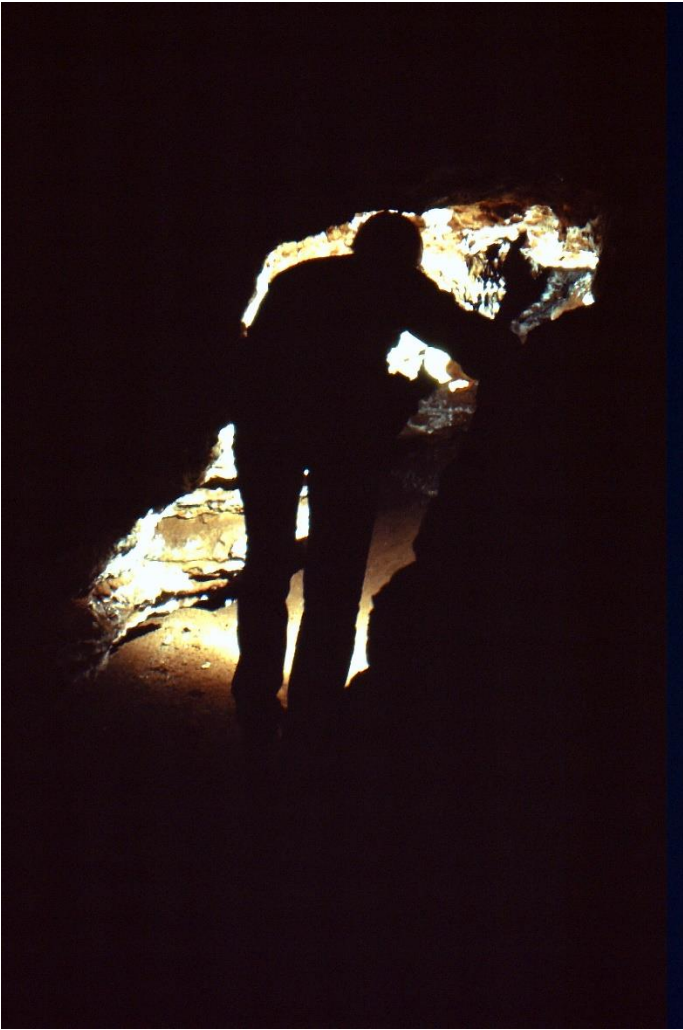
Gary and Barry Konneker



Looking back to entrance



Helga



Lake in Hidden cave

Presentation and Articles

In 1965 Hans had a booth to promote "Spelunking by the Pecos Valley Grotto of the National Speleological Society". Later, about 1967-68, while stationed in England, the base Newspaper wrote an article about Hans' Spelunking in New Mexico and giving presentations to promote spelunking. Later (after 1974) when stationed then retired in Austin Texas, both Hans and Helga would give presentations about their caving experiences. The notes for the presentations after 1974 are contained herein.



1965 booth with Hans presiding

NCO's Underground Hobby

By AIC Scott Burnside,
Sports Editor.

Spelunking—the sport of mountain climbing in reverse, has taken TSgt. Hans L. Von Schweinitz of the 18th Tactical Reconnaissance Sq. through many caves in the American Southwest. This hobby of underground exploration has led the sergeant to the discovery of 30 new caves in the New Mexico region.

The exploration of caves in Great Britain (it's called pot-holing here) isn't quite as extensive as it was for the sergeant around Walker AFB, N.M., where he was last stationed.

He was introduced to this sport by one of his friends at Walker. At first, Sergeant Von Schweinitz entered into these excursions for the photography end of it, but now he is intrigued by all aspects of Spelunking.

He and his fellow explorers have investigated more than 100 caves in and around New Mexico. The largest was Fort Stanton Cave, which has 36 miles in passages.

One of their discoveries proved to be the largest cave in the West. The first drop in this find is 284 feet deep. Some of its passages are nearly two miles long. Experts are hoping that they can eventually link it up with the famous Carlsbad Caverns in that state. Sergeant Von Schweinitz had to

leave before they completed the exploration of the cave.

Due to the work-load on base, the sergeant and his co-workers had to do all pot-holing after dark. They would enter the cave in the evening and come out in the morning. There was always a possible chance of danger, but it was only slight as long as they took the necessary safety precautions. While working on their "find," his group engaged the help of mountain climbers to help them on their deep descent.

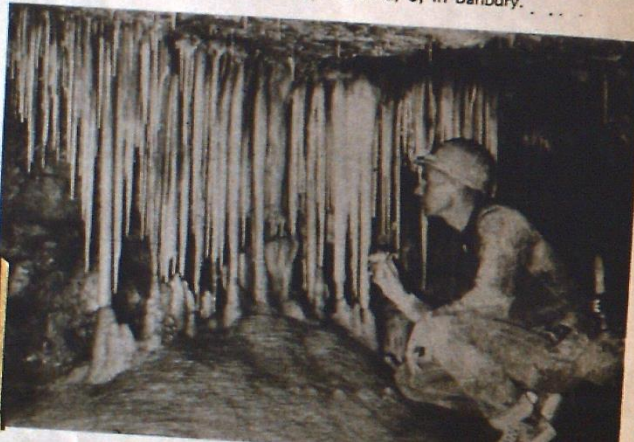
As he did in the states, Sergeant Von Schweinitz has given many interesting slide briefings to local English clubs and groups. Most of the British pot-holing is done in Derbyshire, Yorkshire and Northern Ireland,

and he hasn't had the opportunity to further his hobby over here, but he plans to take it up again in the states.

Born in Germany, Sergeant Von Schweinitz came to America in 1957 and joined the Air Force that same year. He is now a precision processing technician with the 18th squadron.

While stationed at Walker, he participated with their skiing team in the Air Force Ski meet held at Hill AFB, Utah. He learned to ski in Austria and is a Senior in the National Ski Patrol, which establishes the patrolling procedures for the winter resorts in the United States. A Senior rating is tops in the patrol.

He and his wife Helga live with their two children, Christopher, 3, and Bettina, 8, in Banbury.



Fined £1

Robin Beacroft, of 4 Withycombe Drive, Banbury, was fined £1 by Banbury magistrates on Friday after he had pleaded guilty to urinating in a public place.

About 1968 article in Upper Hayford base Newspaper.

Notes for Presentations given after 1974

HANS L. and HELGA VON SCHWEINITZ

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 AUSTIN, TX 78745
 E-MAIL hans@jumpnet.com
 FAX (512)441-3121
 MOBILE (512)415-7041
 Home Phone (512)441-2089

GERMAN TEXAN CAVEMAN.

INTRODUCTION: WRONG TITLE ALL TRUE

WHO HAS BEEN IN ROSWELL NEW MEXICO

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1947

WHAT HAPPENED IN 1961/62

WALKER AFB, MISSILES

ROSWELL INCIDENT

HIGH STAKE POKER LIR

CUBA, CURTIS LEMAY, JFK

B52 ATLAS MISSILES

FIRE POWER

HOW I GOT THERE AND WHAT I DID

FROM GERMANY PHOTOLAB INTELLIGENCE TARGETS

UFO BLUE BOOK TS CLEARANCE PROCESSING OF FILM WITH GUARDS ETC.

REMEMBERED DRESDEN SAME BOMB WING ELBE TO RHINE 2HRS ARTWORK RADAR

WHAT I WILL NOT SAY: NO SECRETS AF PENSION, B52 PILOTS HAD STILL CAMERAS, ALIENS CAVES?

WHY: PHOTOLAB CONNECTION, NEEDED DIVERSION FROM STRESS. MANY SUICIDES, PEOPLE BECAME INSANE, KILLINGS AND MURDER. OTHER SUBJECT AFTER FBI FILES PUBLIC.

WHO: GARY DAVIS, PECOS VALLEY GROTTO
 NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY
 SPELUNKING

SMALL GROUP
 EXPLAIN PURPOSE

WHAT: EXPLORATION OF UNKNOWN CAVES TO HUMANS ALIENS FIRST IN THESE CAVES?
 DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COMMERCIAL AND VIRGIN NEW CAVES.

DISTANCE JUDGING

TIME, DARKNESS

WATER, FOOD

SOUND, SILENCE, BREATHING OF CAVES

LIGHT SOURCE

GETTING LOST, NAVIGATION

NO WEATHER, DAY OR NIGHT

NO PLANTS, LIFE, MAYBE ALIENS FORMATIONS MILLION YEARS 1" 30YEARS

CONTAMINATION HUMANS

DAMAGE FROM LIGHT

TEMPERATURE HUMIDITY

EXPLAIN AND BRIEFLY SHOW EQUIPMENT

CARBIDE LAMPS

LIGHT FOR 6 DAYS

FOOD

3 DAYS

WATER

3 DAYS

ROPE

200FEET HEMP CANNABIS NEXT GENERATION SMOKES IT NOW

CAMERA BOX

START SLIDES

START OF SLIDES

MAPS OF NEW MEXICO
 CAVE PLANS
 DID ALIENS LEAVE SIGNS, WHERE THEY FIRST, DID I TALK TO THEM, SEE THEM,
 OR PHOTOGRAPH THEM?
 YOU WILL KNOW THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS IN 2 MINUTES

EXPLAIN

EXPLAIN WHERE WE GO 20 TO 30 MILES

SLIDES PROBING FOR ENTRANCES

ANSWER TO QUESTIONS ABOUT THE ALIENS OF ROSWELL NM.

FBI CIA OSI FILES BLANK OR BLACK OR NOT RELEASED UNDER FREEDOMS OF INFO ACT
 NOT WHAT YOU EXPECT, CLOSE YOUR EYES AND OPEN WHEN I TELL YOU
 OR LEAVE IF YOU HAVE A WEAK HEART. IF YOU ARE WITH THE INTELL
 COMMUNITY YOU HAVE NO TIME TO CALL, DON'T WORRY I WILL NOT TELL
 SECRETS YOU DON'T KNOW.

BLANK SLIDE

SHOW SLIDE OF HELGA ILSE THE CARD CARRYING LEGAL ALIENS OF ROSWELL
 THEY CARRIED ALIEN REGISTRATION CARDS.

START SLIDES

LETS GO SPELUNKING INTO THE
 NON PUBLIC CAVES OF NEW MEXICO

RANDOM SUBJECT MATTERS COVER WITH SLIDES

NAVIGATION
 DAMAGES CONTAMINATION
 SLEEP AND TIME
 PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS
 PAST AND PRESENT LIMITS
 TEMPERATURE, HUMIDITY, BREATHING OF CAVES
 SAFETY
 FOOD, WATER, LIGHT
 PHOTOGRAPHY
 SOUND
 MOVING ABOUT IN CAVES
 MISC

FINNISH WRAP-UP

CAVE OF MADONNA	TRAINING	INITIAL EXPLORATION
LECHEDIA MOST BEAUTIFUL	THEN WE LEFT FOR ENGLAND	
THE CAVES TO-DAY	GATED SPECIAL PERMISSION, STATE CONTROLS	
ROSWELL TODAY	BASE CLOSED SILOS CLOSED BUT TOURISTS ALIEN	
	MUSEUM, BUT READ THE BOOKS TERRY ISAACS	

NOW ROSWELL IN AS IN THE PAST THE TUMBLEWEEDS ARE STILL ROLLING DEATH AND LIFE
 GOES ON AND YOU CAN STILL SMELL THE FLOWERS LIKE THE ALIENS HAVE NEVER
 BEEN THERE.

NAVIGATION

ARROWS TO EXIT
 NO STRINGS
 LOG BOOKS
 ROCK PILES LIKE INDIANS
 CAVE MAPS AFTER SURVEYS

DAMAGES, CONTAMINATION

BREAKING OF FORMATIONS HARD TO AVOID
 COMMERCIAL EXPLOITATION OF CRYSTALS
 VANDALS CLOSING OF CAVES
 CARBIDE
 OPENING OF NEW PASSAGES AND SURFACE ENTRANCES
 LIGHT DAMAGE IN PUBLIC CAVES
 GLOVES, BOOTIES INTERACTION WITH MINERALS
 FOOD, EXCREMENT, FUNGUS MIRACLE GROWTH FROM MINERALS

SLEEP AND TIME

NO DAY OR NIGHT PORCUPINE CASE
 RELATIVE TO ACTIVITY
 LOSS OF CONCEPT OF TIME
 SLEEP WHEN TIRED

PSYCHOLOGICAL AND PHYSICAL PROBLEMS

ONE CASE ONLY PHOBIA
 PRESSURE AGAINST BODY
 FEAR TO BREATH
 STRENGTH WEIGHT
 TRUST AND DEPENDENCE WHEN USING ROPES

PAST AND PRESENT LIMITS

PAST	PRESENT
200 FEET ROPES MAX	1000 FEET PLUS NYLON
ASCENDERS OLD PRUSSIC KNOTS	MODERN METALS LIKE WALKING
CLOTHING DAMP	LIGHT CLOTHING THERMOS TYPE
CARBIDE	LONG LIFE BATTERIES
TYPE FOOD	BETTER SPACE FOOD
PHOTOGRAPHY FLASH MAGNESIUM	LOW LIGHT VIDEO
3 DAYS MAX	WEEKS

TEMPERATURE , HUMIDITY, BREATHING OF CAVES

CAVES BREATH DEPENDING ON SIZE AND TIME OF DAY/YEAR
 DRY AND WET CAVES 90 TO 99% HUMIDITY
 MEAN ANNUAL TEMPERATURE ABOUT 65F
 DANGER OF HYPOTHERMIA THERMOS BLANKETS OF ALUMINUM

SAFETY

NO JUMPING UP OR DOWN CAN'T JUDGE DISTANCE
EQUIPMENT CHECKING ROPES LIGHT FOOD WATER
NO MOVING OF ROCKS COORDINATE TRAPPING OF OTHERS
WE NEVER HAD SERIOUS INJURIES REQUIRING HOSPITALIZATION
NO BODY PERMANENTLY STUCK CARBIDE LAMP HELPS
LATER PEOPLE DIED OR BROKEN BONES
TOOK 2 WEEKS OR MORE TO GET THEM OUT OF MADONNA & LECHEDIA
RAN OUT OF WATER YES URINE
NEVER LOST ANYBODY
HYPOTHERMIA THAT IS WHY WE TOOK THE GIRLS/WIVES

FOOD, WATER, LIGHT

FOOD 3 DAYS CAVE FOOD GAS, GRANOLA BARS WEIGHT/CRUSHING
WATER BIG PROBLEM CAVE NO OR BAD WATER 1 QUARTS
LIGHT CARBIDE NEEDS WATER OR ???
SMALL FLASH LIGHT FOR SLEEPING AND SHORT PERIODS

PHOTOGRAPHY

EXPLAIN FLASH PHOTOS IN STADIUMS
DAMAGE TO EQUIPMENT AND WEIGHT
FLASH LIMITS 50 FEET PAINTING MULTI FLASH
CARBIDE LIGHT BULBS MAGNESIUM POWER SMOKE PROBLEM
LATER HEAVY ELECTRONIC FLASH UNITS 15 POUNDS PLUS
NEW CAMERAS CANT MOVE FLASH, NEW LOW LIGHT VIDEO
TRIPOD IS A MUST 2HRS 20 FLASHES ONE PHOTO/SLIDE
SELF TIMERS OPEN FLASH

SOUND

ECHO LARGE ROOMS
TOTAL SILENCE HEAR YOUR OWN HEART/BLOOD PUMPING
SOUND CAN TRAVEL LONG DISTANCE OR NONE TYPE FORMATION
DISTANT SOUNDS FROM SURFACE CARS, DOGS, TALKING
WATER FALLS, WHISTLING FROM BREATHING OF CAVE
DRIPPING WATER, HITTING FORMATIONS
IMAGINATION MUSIC, CHANTING

MOVING IN CAVES

DUCK WALK
CRAB WALK
ROPE WORK CHECKING OF ROPES AND BELAY
CHIMNEY CLIMBING
CRAWLING 3 YARD AN HOUR
ROCK CLIMBING
NO JUMPING EVER
SWIMMING IN MUD OR WATER

MISCELLANEOUS

INDIANS ONLY AT ENTRANCES FORT STANTON LEGEND
TO-DAY CAVES GATED PROTECTED BY STATE

Thank you notes. Based on the handwriting style, these are probably from Middle School children in Austin Texas after 1974.

Dear Mrs. Von Schweinitz

I'm very glad that you came
Because i think it was real
good. and i beleave that those
strips that you came and
show us, teached us something
about caves and etc.
and i beleave that you know
a lot of things about caves,
and i beleave you are carefed
and safe about caves and moutains.
Good bye for now.

Sign

Sandra

Villegas,



Dear Mrs. von Schweinitz,
Thank you for coming
to see us. I am intrisied to see caves
that I can not wate. We liked the cave
that you and your hausken disucer.
We all want to know if they
close the engaters you are throu
that if they brake of the formaks in
the caves,

Love
Love's
Friedrich

Barry Konneker

Barry Konneker was the friend that encouraged Hans and Helga to become Spelunkers. Barry and Hans would spend days walking through the Guadalupe Mountain range looking for arrow heads and cave entrances.

Stanley B. Konneker

Stanley Barrick "Barry" Konneker, 68, of Carbondale died at 4:09 p.m. Friday, June 18, 2004, at Oak Grove in Carbondale.

He was born Feb. 28, 1936, in Carlinville, a son of Stanley Oscar and Adelle Barrick Konneker. He was preceded in death by his parents.

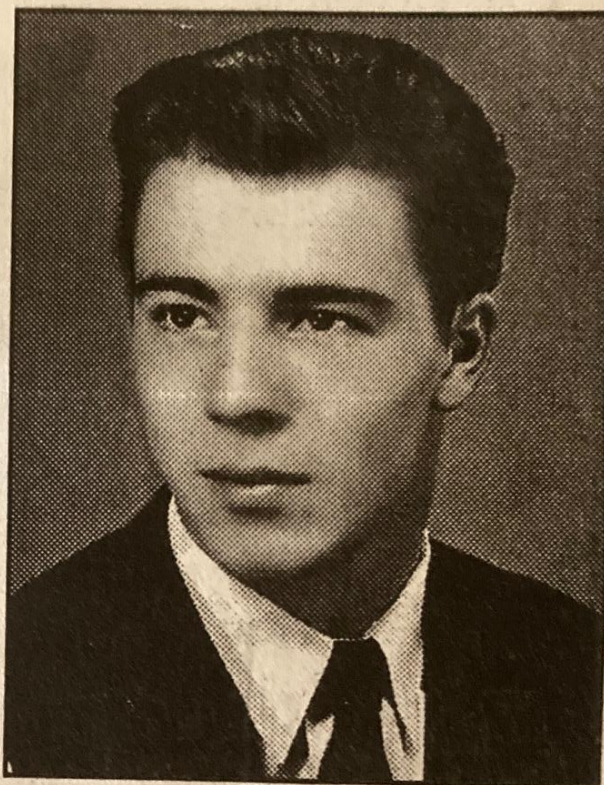
Mr. Konneker was a graduate of Carlinville High School, Blackburn College and Southern Illinois University in Carbondale. He served in the U.S. Army Airborne Division as a paratrooper. He was an instructor of high school and college German at the New Mexico Military Institute in Roswell, was assistant field supervisor for Del Monte Corporation for 15 years and was a self-employed construction worker in the Carbondale/Murphysboro area for the last 25 years. He was a collector of antique furniture, arrowheads and antique tools. He was also a cave explorer and ski patrol.

The body was cremated.

Visitation: 9 a.m. Tuesday, July 6, Rural United Methodist Church.

Memorial services: Tuesday, July 6, Rural United Methodist Church.

Surviving are a son, Clayton



Barry Konneker; two brothers, Gregory P. Konneker and Douglas Konneker; and three sisters, Carolyn Hallbauer, Martha Jean McCormack and Judith Hilst.

* Memorials may be made to S. Barry Konneker Memorial Scholarship Carlinville High School or S. Barry Konneker Memorial Scholarship Blackburn College. Memorials may be sent to Carolyn Hallbauer, 18584 Barnett Road, Carlinville, IL 62626. *

In August 2004, Barry's sister sent Hans and Helga the caving maps that she found in Barry's house. These were hand drawn maps by Barry. Hans and Helga lived in Austin Texas in 2004. In 2007, they moved to Pflugerville (near Austin). Soon after a friend came to visit Hans and Helga. They got to talking about spelunking and how large the maps were that came from Barry. Hans and Helga did not have a way to copy such large maps, and this friend offered to take the maps to the local office supply store to have them copied. She took the maps and never returned. She also stopped responding the emails and phone calls from Hans and Helga. Now in 2023, there is no way to recreate the maps that were hand drawn by Barry.

August 29, 2004

Dear Hans and Helga,

Wow - what a job. We finally have the antique furniture appraised - now to decide what to do - sell - when - and how! Over 200 of them!

Since school started, I was able to make copies of Barry's maps, etc. My sisters and I wanted to have a copy of them for ourselves.

We hope to get the recordings and some of the German books sent before too long. As we can't read (or speak) German, I hope the books we send you will be okay.

I do hope your trip north was a good one. We have been at Barry's at least 2 or 3 days a week since June; so, I haven't been able to go anywhere else - but it has been worthwhile -

we have a better understanding
about who Barry was. He
had so many friends - here -
in Texas, Colorado, ~~Germany~~^{New Mexico},
Murphysboro and Germany.

Guess I'd best close for
now ~

Do keep in touch

Sincerely

Carolyn
(Hallbauer)

Col 149/72

These hand drawn maps were part of Barry's estate and per his will they were to be distributed to Hans and Helga von Schweinitz. Although a copy of Barry's will was not in Hans and Helga's paperwork, the following court documents concerning probating Barry's will and listing Hans and Helga as legatees were found.

8 Jul 2004
 IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
 JACKSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

FILED
 2004 JUL -8 AM 8:13

IN RE THE ESTATE OF)
)
 STANLEY BARRICK KONNEKER,)
)
 Deceased.)

No. 04-P-

59 *Clint H. Sorensen*
 CIRCUIT CLERK
 JACKSON COUNTY, IL

PETITION FOR PROBATE OF WILL AND LETTERS OF OFFICE

Carolyn M. Hallbauer and Gerald S. Reed, on oath states:

1. Stanley Barrick Konneker, whose place of residence at the time of his death was Murphysboro, Illinois, died on June 18, 2004, at Carbondale, Illinois, leaving a will dated June 12, 2004, and a First Codicil dated June 15, 2004.

2. The approximate value of the estate in this estate is:

Personal: less than \$300,000.00
 Real Estate: less than \$75,000.00
 Annual Income from Real Estate: 0

3. The names and post office addresses of the testator's heirs and legatees are set forth on Exhibit A and made a part of this Petition.

4. The testator nominated Carolyn M. Hallbauer and Gerald S. Reed as Co-Executors, who are willing to serve.

WHEREFORE, Petitioners asks that the Will be admitted to probate and that letters testamentary issue.

Carolyn M. Hallbauer
 CAROLYN M. HALLBAUER

Gerald S. Reed
 GERALD S. REED

EXHIBIT A

Clayton B. Konneker-son-H/L

_____, Florida

Carolyn M. Hallbauer-sister-L
18584 Barnett Rd.
Carlinville, IL 62626

Judith Hilst-sister-L
327 S. High St.
Havana, CT 62644-1425

Martha J. McCormick-sister-L
200 W. Easton St.
Gillespie, IL 62033-1716

Gregory P. Konneker-brother-L
5 Pond Brook Rd.
Newtown, CT 06470

N.
Douglas P. Konneker-brother-L

Marlen Becker-L
Lortzing Strasse 3
7530 Pforzheim/Baden
Germany

Marianne Hammer-L
Am Trappenkreuz 21
50259 Pulheim
Deutschland

Duane Howell-L
1711 S. Newport Way
Denver, CO 80224-2211

Hans and Helga Von Schweinitz-L
2319 Village Circle
Austin, TX 78745

8 Jul 2004

FILED

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF THE FIRST JUDICIAL CIRCUIT
JACKSON COUNTY, ILLINOIS

ON JUL -8 AM 9:34

IN RE THE ESTATE OF

STANLEY BARRICK KONNEKER,

Deceased.

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Christine S. Reed
CIRCUIT CLERK
JACKSON COUNTY, IL
No. 04-P- 59

ORDER ADMITTING WILL TO PROBATE

On Petition for Admission to Probate of the Will of the Decedent and for issuance of Letters of Office, the Will having been proven as provided by Law;

IT IS HEREBY ORDERED:

1. The Last Will and Testament and First Codicil of Stanley Barrick Konneker, deceased, dated June 12, 2004, and June 15, 2004, be admitted to probate.

2. Letters of Office issue to Carolyn M. Hallbauer and Gerald S. Reed as Co-Executors.

DATED: 7/8, 2004.

T. J. Power
JUDGE

In 2005, Helga wrote the following description of their friendship with Barry and sent this to his sister.

*Sent to Barry's
sister Carolyn*

4-25-05

Barry Konneker

Barry walked into our lives (Hans and Helga von Schweinitz) in late 1964. The following narrative is a short version of what I - Helga - remember about those years in Roswell, NM, when the three of us were close friends.

Barry came to us with a letter of introduction from a friend of mine, Gerda von Paleske, who was teaching at Southern Illinois University. She had been his German teacher. My husband was an airman stationed at Walker AFB, we lived in a modest home with two children. When Barry came into our living room, I was just feeding my recently born son. Barry seemed to feel at home right away in that family scene. He most likely started teaching German at the New Mexico Military Institute in January 1965. He had the rank of Army Captain. Since he often had time between classes, he had time to get into all sorts of trouble, and he also came to our house during the day quite often. One of the reasons for his frequent visits was the fact, that he could converse in German with us, discuss German literature and philosophy with me. He also put up his record player in our house so we could listen to German music together (I still have the record player). Barry would often discuss problems he had with some of his students, because he wanted to make sure they actually learned something from him. He also worked on a thesis for his Master's Degree. I don't remember what the topic was, but I remember that he came up with new excuses through the years for not finishing it. (I don't know if he ever received a M.A.).

In his ample spare time Barry often went into the desert all by himself. One of his hobbies was looking for arrowheads for which he had a trained, keen eye. He knew at what time of the day the light was just right to spot the arrowheads. He always had a hand gun with him against ferocious animals. One afternoon he came into our kitchen and put a grocery bag on the table and said he had brought some meat for dinner and would I fix it please. That was not unusual, so I grabbed the bag, and then the contents started to wiggle. After I had calmed down, Barry took a long rattle snake out of the bag and said he had shot it in the desert in self defense and it was dead but still moving. Barry and Hans skinned the snake and pinned the skin and rattler like a trophy on a board, while I rolled the delicate filets in flour and fried them in butter. We had many meals together, and with Barry's help we made a home brew which is worth remembering, especially since most of the bottles exploded in our kitchen when the brew had reached a certain pressure.

Barry and Hans often came up with ideas that made others shake their heads. In February of 1965 they decided that the highest mountain in the region, Sierra Blanca Peak, called Old Baldy, above Ruidoso, needed a wooden cross on top like respectable mountains in Europe have. After thorough preparation and accompanied by photographer Airman Bingham, they carried a cross of Redwood four-by-fours to the 12000' top, secured it with wires and attached a weatherproof box to it with a book inside in which other climbers could write their names and thoughts. A year later we looked into the book and were happy to read all the expressions of pure joy at being on top of that mountain and enjoying the view. Another year later the cross and the book was gone, the cross seemed to be struck by lightning. The erection of the cross had made it into the newspapers.

The Sierra Blanca area is part of the Mescalero Apache reservation. In the 1960s a new ski resort was developing on the slopes. Hans, Barry and I became members of the Rocky Mountain Ski Patrol which required good skills on skis and passing several Red Cross courses. I think Barry was a novice skier, but it did not take him long to master the handling of a rescue toboggan on often icy slopes. This was a weekend activity, gave us free lift tickets and was close enough to Roswell that we made it a day trip. One winter Barry stayed in Ruidoso for the occasional night. Her name was Linda.

Another organization that the three of us joined was the Pecos Valley Grotto, a group of dedicated spelunkers. The leader was Gary Davis, also an airman, who knew a lot about caving and techniques, mapping and documenting. Gary and Barry worked together on several exploring projects. We usually went into caves in New Mexico and West Texas which were not accessible to the public, only to members of a recognized group. Hans had access to special camera equipment since he was in charge of the photo lab on Walker AFB. This way we created a valuable slide collection of the caves at that time.

Sometimes we hiked into remote areas and had to sleep outside wrapped in sleeping bags and keeping a fire going to protect against curious beasts. Those nights were uncomfortable, but in memory they are very special.

Barry was an agile, skilled climber and could get to places in a cave where I couldn't. He liked to scare me by hanging on to a ledge or a protruding rock with one hand and no other secured point of his body. That is actually a no-no, but he told me that he wanted to prove to himself that he was safe even in situations that were often fatal for others. I often was cross with him for toying with death and upsetting me.

Barry took part in mapping a previously uncharted part of Carlsbad Caverns before that part was opened to the public. Another exploring venture took Gary, Barry and Hans into various unpopulated valleys of the Guadalupe Mountains to look for entrances to caves that were not yet known to modern man. They found a few and were especially interested in one of them, did not have time to go deep inside and came home all excited with plans for another trip there. A few weeks later, in November of 1965, seven of us spelunkers (including Gary, Barry, Hans and me), set out to investigate the cave a little deeper. We were all loaded with ropes and other equipment. I suspect that they took me along as a pack mule and to have somebody to hike back to civilization should help be needed. We had no electronic communication in those days. I stayed close to Barry because he had a gun to take care of rattle snakes. After venturing into the wrong valley at first, we finally found the entrance to which is now known as the Cave of the Madonna. I was placed on the guano inside the entrance hall, while the guys crawled along a dark passage and wound their way to a deep drop. Later I learned that the drop opens into a pitch dark bell shaped cavern and goes very deep down. Barry and Gary descended on ropes for quite a distance, and tried to shine their lights at the walls. Then Barry's rope began to spin and swing. He realized the terrible danger he was in and feared that he might not be able to climb up the rope or be pulled up before he was hurt by slamming against a wall. He did make it out. While the other guys were busy collecting all the gear at the drop in the dark, Barry crawled to the cave entrance and collapsed close to me, shaking and sobbing. This time he had not been toying with death, this time death had been toying with him.

In the following spring the guys were joined by a trained mountain climber and a geologist and practiced serious climbing and rescue techniques and bought up-to-date ropes. A well prepared exploration trip to the cave took place of which Barry was a part. The event was written about in the Roswell Daily Record and other publications. A year or two later another group of spelunkers tried their luck in the cave, and one of them did not make it out alive.

Although Barry was often in a gloomy state of mind bordering on manic depression, he found great pleasure in riding his motorcycle. A fast ride through the open country would really perk him up. I never got on the bike with him, nor did I let my children ride with him, only pose for pictures.

Roswell was a small town, but it had a symphony, a little theatre and an active bar scene. Barry was not very involved in any of this. Due to his position at the Military Institute he was at times involved in events of the upper class social scene.

He was not celebrate in those years, when women had discovered the pill and enjoyed a new kind of freedom, and many became quite generous with their favors, which made some of

them rather aggressive in search of men. Barry's relationships usually did not last very long, I think that was so because he looked for more than a body and a home maker in a woman, he was looking for somebody with whom he could share his philosophical thoughts and emotions, she had to be somewhat of an intellectual. There were not many of those in Roswell that were single.

Barry gave me the honor of serving as one of my character witnesses in court when I became a naturalized American citizen. My other witness was the conductor of the Roswell Symphony Orchester, and Barry went to visit him and his German wife later on occasionally.

In the summer of 1966 Barry spent a few weeks in Germany because he had been selected by Southern Illinois University to participate in advanced studies of German in Berlin and other towns. At the same time, he told me, he would look around for a wife. He spent some time with my family, but my sisters were either too young or too married.

I think it was in the spring or summer of 1966, when Barry's son, Clayton, spent a few weeks in Roswell. He spent quite a lot of time at our house and played with our children. He was a lovable, very sensitive and intelligent boy. Barry was trying to think of a way to get himself more involved in Clayton's life. At one point he asked us if the boy could live with us in a real family until he, Barry, had found a good wife. At that time we thought we might leave the Air Force and settle in Roswell permanently. However, we did not want that responsibility, especially since we did not know the boy's mother and about her relationship with Barry, and we did not know how Clayton would take it. Barry was rather burdened by his inability to be the father he wanted to be. We disappeared out of that picture in January of 1967 when Hans re-enlisted in the Air Force and we had to move to England.

We stayed in contact with Barry by mail and phone and visited him on his farm in Illinois in 1987. We saved most or all of his letters and have many pictures

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Cave: Madonna

On 29 October 1965, Hans, Barry Konneker, and Gary Davis found what they later called the “Cave of the Madonna”. It is west of Carlsbad Caverns National Park in the Guadalupe Mountains. During their first visit they had to drop down twice about 50 feet, then they found a drop of about 176 feet. Because of the depth of this last drop, the team could not continue on the first visit. But they had already found the formation of the “Madonna” for which they named the cave. The team learned how to repel properly before returning to the cave a second time on 6 and 7 November 1965 for further exploration.

Articles about both trips were written Roswell Daily Record.

Searching for caves which eventually led to finding the entrance of Cave of the Madonna



Guadalupe Mountains valley where entrance is



Hans in search of a new cave in Guadalupe Mountains



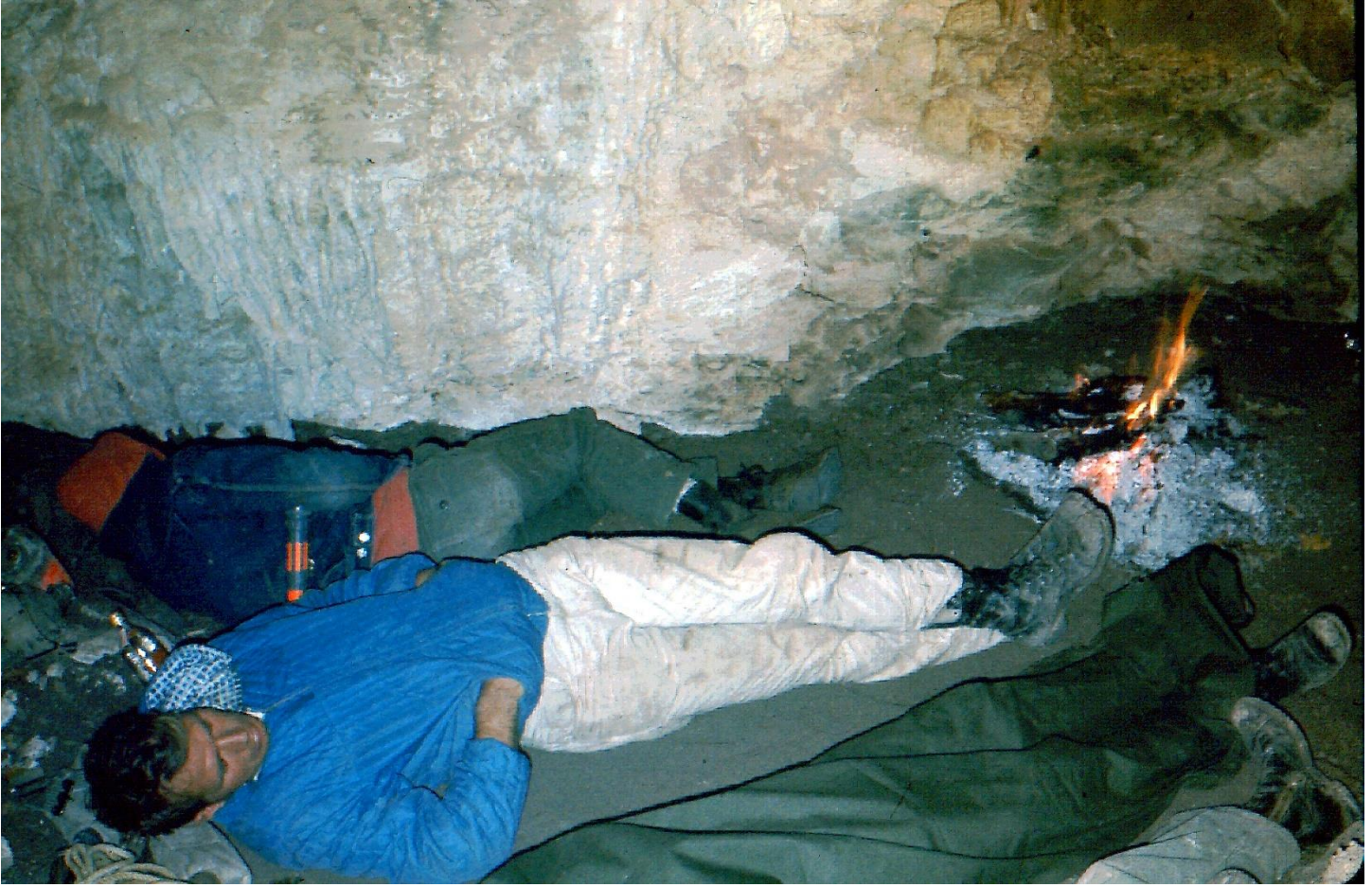
Barry Konneker, exploring the Guadalupe Mountains, NM.



Entrance to Cave of the Madonna



Hans and Barry Konneker in “base camp” in the Guadalupe Mountains, possible “Double Canyon”



Hans on a bed of guano at entrance of newly discovered “Cave of the Madonna” in first trip October 1965.

Preparing for second trip – learning to properly use repelling gear









Practicing rope climbing for the descent and return into and from the Cave of the Madonna, Fall 1965





Hans

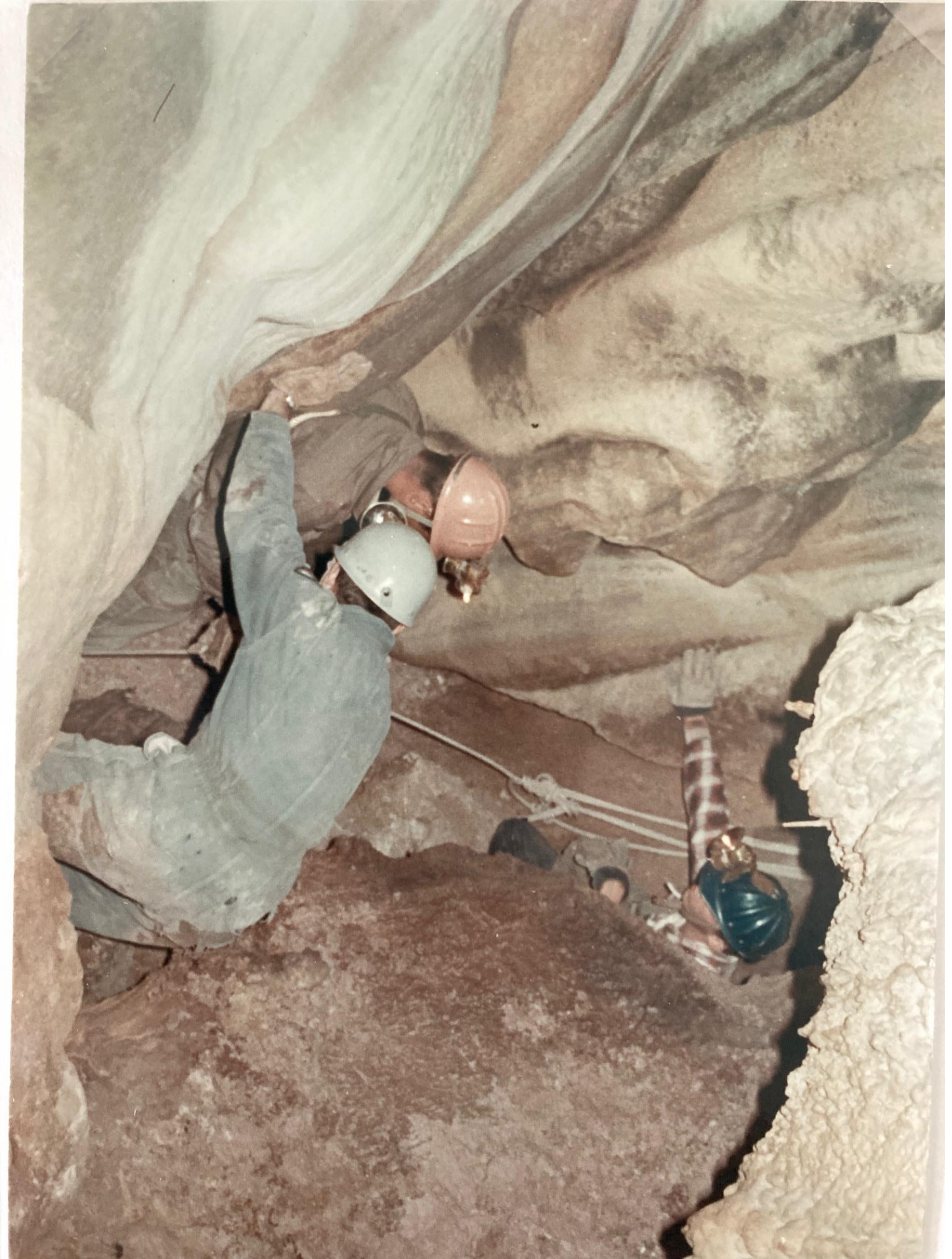
Second trip on 6 and 7 November 1965, better prepared



Hans, Barry Konneker, Gary, and ??



Inside of the “Cave of the Madonna”





Barry and Gary



Madonna

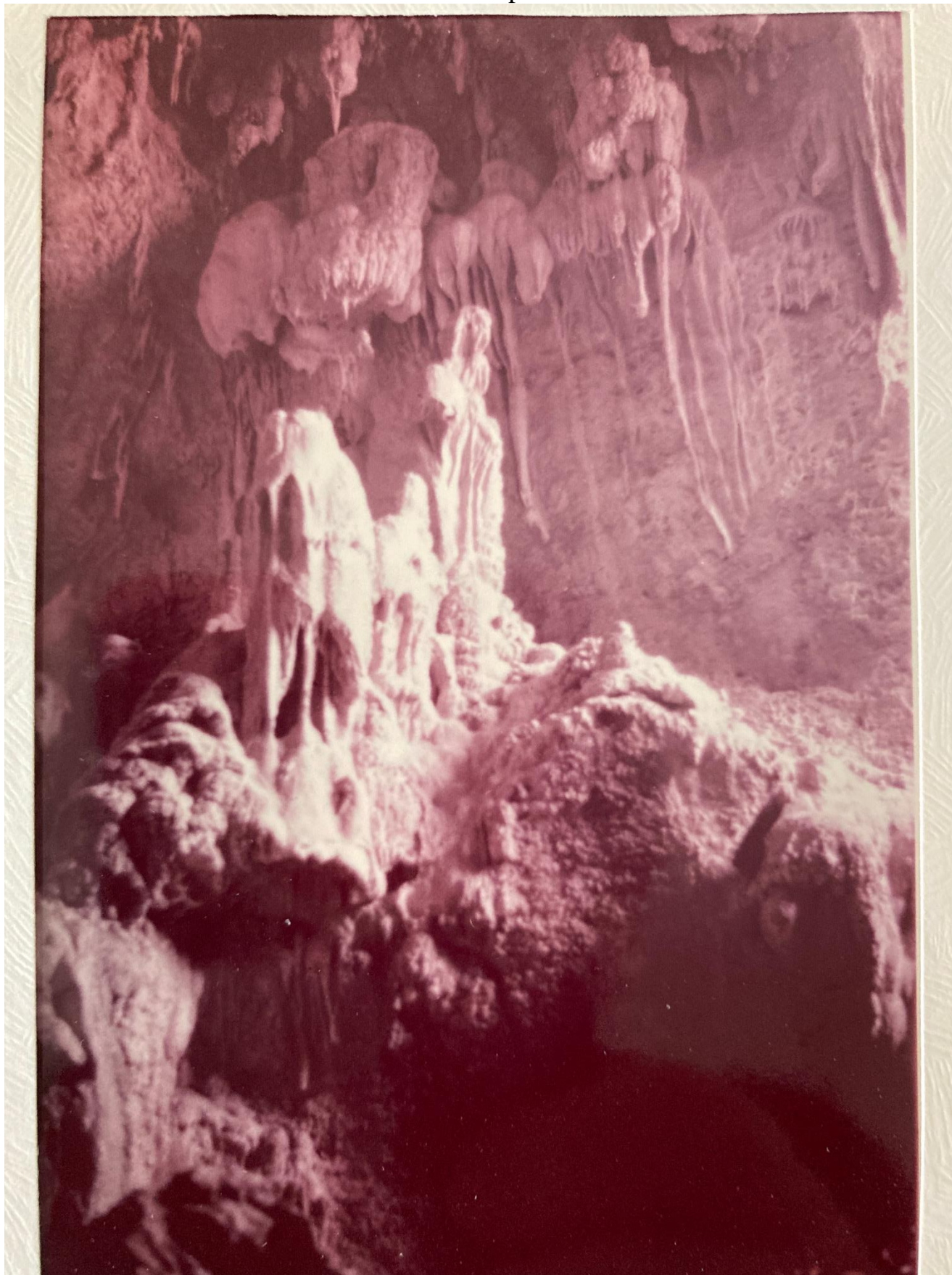


Photo of Madonna in cave (not artist impression)

Articles about the finding of the "Cave of the Madonna"



TRAINING PROBLEM -- Gary Davis (l.), and Hans Von Schwienitz of Walker train for their future ascent into the Cave of the Madona, which the men discovered Oct. 29. The cave may go to a record depth of 236 feet, and is in the Guadalupe Mountains, Southern New Mexico. Both are members of the Pecos Valley Grotto Club. (STRATEGIAN PHOTO BY GEISSINGER)

Base Speleologists Discover Deep Pit

SSgt. Hans Von Schweinitz and AIC Gary Davis, Walker men who are members of the Pecos Valley Grotto of the National Speleological Society, recently discovered a cave which may be the deepest vertical pit in the western part of the United States.

A Roswell man, Barry Konneker, was the third member of the party when the cave was found during a recent surface exploration expedition for the National Speleological Society in the Guadalupe Mountains, west of Carlsbad National Park, N.M.

Exploring was being done to catalog all caves in the area for the organization and they located six unexplored caves when they found the big one, which may drop to 236 feet.

A maple tree marks the entrance to the cave, formerly named Maple Grotto. An upper room, with a steeply sloping floor, is found inside the entrance, high on the face of a cliff. At the back of the room, the trio found a small opening or keyhole, to lower rooms, in an area of breakdown or crumbling rock formations.

Airman Davis, smallest of the three, explored the catacomb-like formations beneath the upper chamber when the group opened the keyhole on their first trip to the cave.

Returning, the keyhole was opened more, and the three descended into the lower chamber

with their equipment and discovered two pits during a superficial exploration. They explored the pits to a depth of about 50 feet, noting that both pits had a very deep drop.

A force of seven members of the Pecos Valley Grotto was organized for a second trip to explore the pits and do mapping of the area.

The group spent the night in the upper chamber of the cave. They awoke at sunrise and discovered a rock formation high in the wall of the room, spotlighted by the morning sun. The formation resembles a statue of the madonna and small child silhouetted against the darkness of a small grotto. This brought about their decision to rename it the Cave of the Madonna.

Explorers Davis and Konneker named the larger of the two pits the Tüfel's Grube, German meaning Devil's Pit. It was explored to a ledge that was found to be 176 feet from the bottom, by use of ropes with a heavy object tied on. This, when added to the distance they had chimned down from the opening in the catacombs area, results in the 236 foot vertical depth figure.

The group believes that the two pits are connected, but have not investigated the relationship of a third pit found in the cave.

Two groups of cavers are planning the next exploration trip to examine the pits thoroughly, according to Sergeant Von Schweinitz.

Newly Found Cave May Be Deepest Vertical Pit in Western Part of U.S.

By JANIE MORICONI
Record Staff Writer

A possible record depth for a vertical pit in a cave in the Western United States has been discovered in the rugged Guadalupe Mountains west of the Carlsbad Caverns National Park according to its discoverers.

A vertical drop of 236 feet is suspected in a cave recently discovered by Barry Konneker, Hans Von Schweinitz and Gari Davis, members of the Pecos Valley Grotto of the National Speleological Society.

The three accidentally discovered the cave Oct. 29 during a three-day surface exploration expedition for the NSS. They had set about to catalog all caves in the area for the caving enthusiast organization and had located six unexplored caves when they found this possible record setter. The group believe that they are the first humans ever to set foot in the cave.

Marked by a large maple tree at the entrance, the cave was initially dubbed "Maple Grotto". The cavern consists of the entrance, high on the face of a cliff, and an upper room with steeply sloping floor. At the back of this upper room is a large area of break down or crumbling rock formations where the trio found a small opening or keyhole to lower rooms.

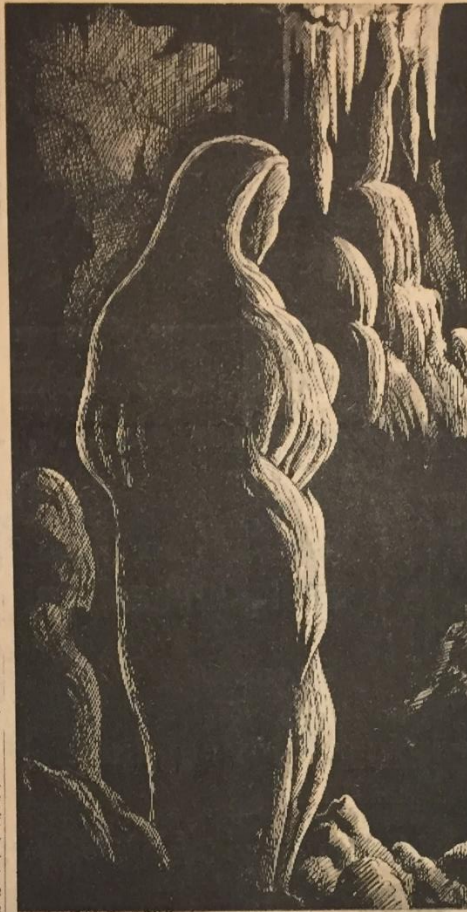
FIRST TRIP

On their first trip to the cave, the explorers opened this keyhole and Davis, the smallest of the three, explored an area of catacomb-like formations beneath the upper chamber. Returning, Davis and his fellow adventurers opened the keyhole more and descended into the lower chamber with their equipment.

There they made a superficial exploration and uncovered two pits. However, neither was explored any deeper than approximately 50 feet. It was noted that both pits had a very deep drop and the three immediately made plans to return and check them out.

Davis describes the interior of the cave as unusual for this area. There are numerous crystallized rock formations in the cavern and other formations of great beauty, according to the discoverers. Davis, however, doubted that there was any commercial value in the cave because of its inaccessibility.

On a second trip to the cave, made Nov. 6 and 7, seven members of the Pecos Valley Grotto went to check out both pits, completely explore the area and map the underground chambers. During this trip, the



CAVE MADONNA

... Artist Gari Davis' impression of formation

explorers spent Saturday night inside the cave in the upper chamber.

At sunrise, they awoke to discover a rock formation high in the wall of the room. The morning sun spotlighted a rock which bore amazing resemblance to a statue of the madonna and child silhouetted against the darkness of a small grotto. Noting this visual phenomenon, the cavers decided to rename their find "Cave of the Madonna". One of the explorers made a quick sketch of the unusual formation which was later translated to a more refined drawing.

SEARCHING DEPTHS

In searching the depths of the cave this second time, a third pit was found which the group was unable to examine further. The larger of the two pits dis-

covered earlier was named the Tüfel's Grube, German meaning Devil's Pit, by Davis and Konneker and was explored to a ledge 176 feet from the bottom.

The two descended to this point by chimneying down the narrow opening from the catacombs area. At this point, however, the pair was forced to stop, because of the lack of proper ascent equipment.

Depth soundings were made from this ledge using both time-of-fall estimates from objects dropped into the abyss below and with a light-weight rope tied to a heavy object. Both methods revealed a depth of between 160 and 180 feet. Actual measurements of the weighted line showed 176 feet to the bot-

tom of this room of unknown dimensions. This depth plus the distance already covered by the two into the pit totals 236 feet vertically.

The group also believes that the first two pits they discovered are connected, however, they were unable to investigate the relation of the third pit.

TRUE NATURE

The true nature of the room below can only be surmised. The pit opens to a width of about 30 feet just below where Davis and Konneker were forced to stop descent. Beyond this point the width increases. The two cavers could see no bottom with the lights available, although a rock dropped into it resounded with a faint crash as it hit the bottom. The explorers

have found no water as yet.

The experienced cavers believe that at least the first two pits widen to a larger room at the bottom. They note that many caves in this area have major rooms in which crevices appear in the ceilings. These crevices usually narrow at the top as these two pits appear to do.

The drop resembles in nature that of the famed vertical cave, Hell's Below, also in the Guadalupe range, although the initial drop is much greater, the discoverers report.

Plans are now being made for another trip into the cave with two teams of cavers to thoroughly examine the pits.

ROSWELL DAILY RECORD-8

MONDAY, NOV. 15, 1965

EXPLORERS BELIEVE



Eingang zur Madonna

