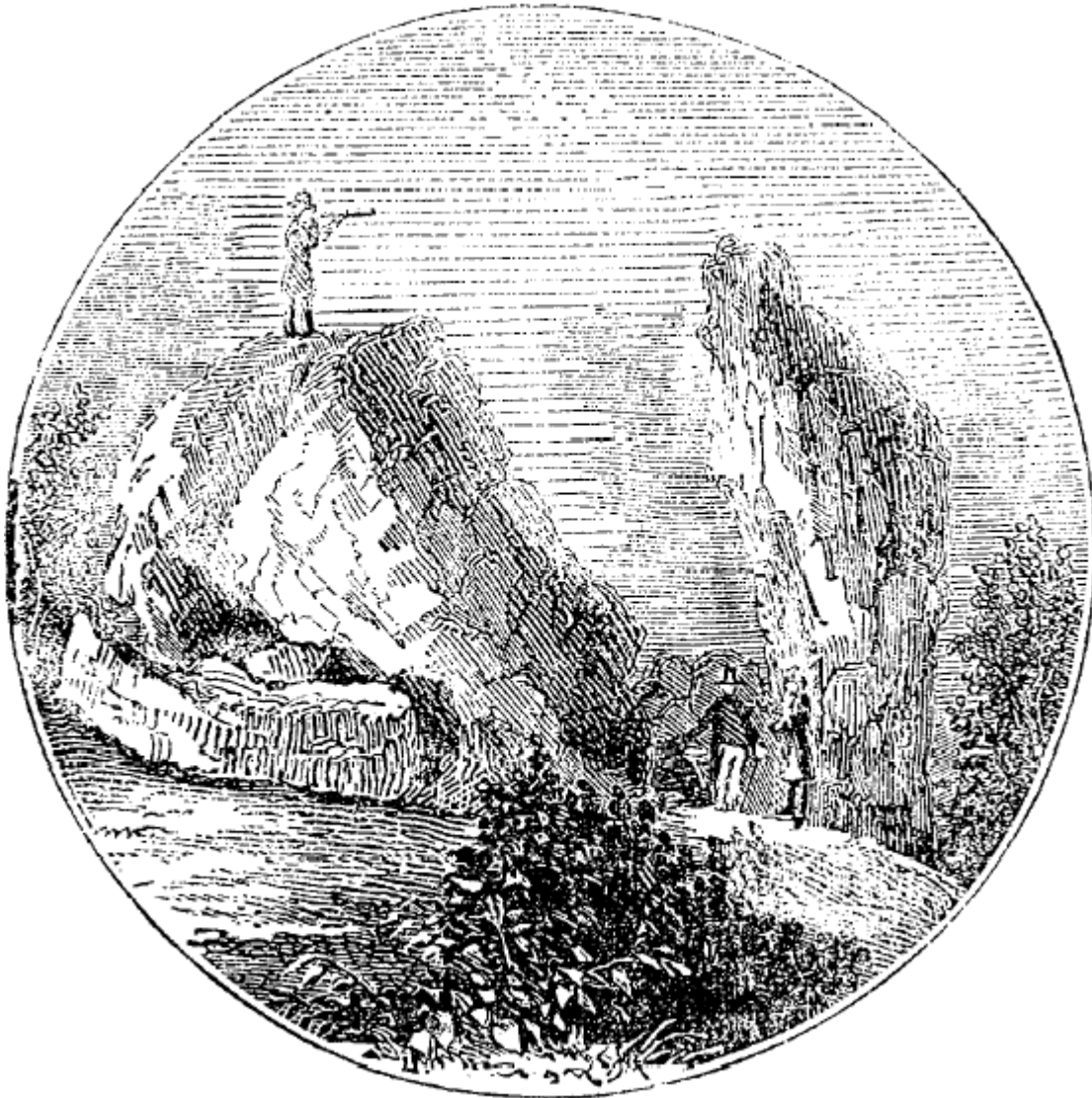


# The Journal of Spelean History



January - June 2010

Vol. 44, No. 1, Issue 137

# *The Journal of Spelean History*

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History Section  
National Speleological Society

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The American Spelean History Association (ASHA) is an Internal Organization of the National Speleological Society and exists for the study, dissemination, and interpretation of spelean history, and related purposes. All persons who are interested in these goals are cordially invited to become members. Dues are \$2 per issue of the *Journal of Spelean History*. Dues can be paid for up to 20 issues (\$40). Checks should be made payable to "ASHA" and mailed to the treasurer.

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*The Journal of Spelean History* (JSH) is the Association's publication and is mailed to all members. JSH includes articles covering a wide variety of topics relating to man's use of caves, including historical cave explorations, saltpeter and other mineral extraction, and show cave development. Members are invited to contribute material and to comment on published material. ASHA assumes no responsibility for statements made by contributors.

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<p>Front Cover: A clever “telescopic” view of Judge’s Cave, from Barber &amp; Howe, 1861. See the article by Donald Ball in this issue.</p>
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## JUDGE'S CAVE AND THE ENGLISH REGICIDES IN NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT, 1661

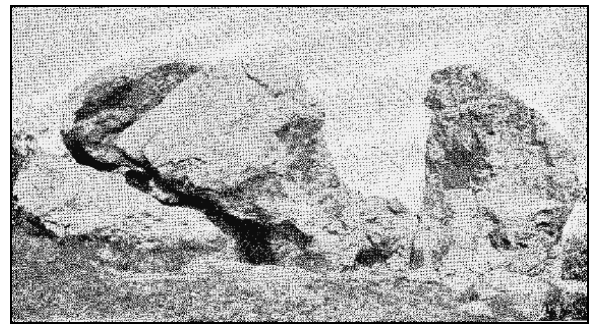
Donald B. Ball

A unique anecdote of American spelean history has its origins in England with the trial and subsequent execution of King Charles I (1600-1649). As noted by historian Eric R. Delderfield (1972:90), "...in 1648, [Charles I] was arraigned before a tribunal consisting of 135 judges... Sentence was passed by sixty-eight votes to sixty-seven, and by but one vote Charles lost his head, being executed at Whitehall." Following the death of Oliver Cromwell (1599-1658)—one of those who sat in judgment of Charles I and signed his death warrant—the monarchy was restored by Parliament. In a move intended to both heal the wounds of civil war and reestablish royal authority, following his ascension to the throne on May 29, 1660, King Charles II (1630-1685), son of Charles I, offered widespread pardons and amnesty to a number of individuals formerly allied with Cromwell but specifically excluded those who had ordered the death of his father.

To avoid being arrested by the agents of the wrathful king, three of the men who had signed the by now infamous death warrant fled to North America and took refuge in the colony of Connecticut. This would prove to be an exceptionally wise course of action. Being Puritans and supporting the Puritan regime of Oliver Cromwell, they were readily accepted by the devout Puritan population of that colony. For the remainder of their lives, Edward Whalley, John Dixwell, and William Goffe—the three judges who had escaped from England—became refugees and were placed in the position of relying upon the kindness of many strangers who were not only sympathetic to their grievances against the former king and provided them with food, clothing, and shelter over a period of many years, but also helped them elude royal bounty

hunters sent to the colony to take them into custody and see to their return to England.

During the early months of their adventures in evading arrest, Goffe and Whalley are said to have resorted to living for several weeks in the early summer of 1661 (Beers 1876:763; some sources state 1660, cf. Cogswell 1893:194) in a small grotto near New Haven which would come to be called Judge's Cave (**Figs. 1, 2, and cover illustration**; see Research Note). This widely repeated footnote to history has been disputed.



**Figure 1. "Judge's Cave" (from Allen 1899:484).**

Based upon an entry in Goffe's surviving personal diary which mentions "a cave or a hole in the side of a hill" which was being prepared for them, Cogswell (1893:194) contended "A cave or *hole in the side of the hill*, which it took two nights to dig, is not a pile of boulders on the *extreme top* of the hill." Be it fact or well intentioned fiction, this tale continues to be a tenacious piece of oral history and tradition within the state.

As fate would have it each of the three regicides escaped the king's justice (some would say spite and vengeance) and died of natural causes many years later. All of them are buried in New Haven (**Fig. 3**). The lives and times of the regicides (with an emphasis

on their experiences in Connecticut) are discussed in greater detail in sources such as Allen (1899:498), Anonymous (1847; 1853; 1860), and Cogswell (1893). Reflective of the political sentiments of the townspeople at that time, some years later an unknown individual carved “Opposition to tyrants is obedience to God” on a boulder near the mouth of the cave. The cave itself is neither spectacular nor impressive and the basalt rock in which in which it is found was the result of volcanism some 200 million years ago. Judge’s Cave is preserved in the 1,500 acre West Rock Ridge State Park located along Wintergreen Avenue in New haven, Connecticut.

### Research Note

The name of the cave was variously rendered as “Judges,” “Judge’s,” and “Judges” in the press of the nineteenth century and, presumably, in documents pre-dating that period. Modern references typically use “Judge’s” despite the presumed occupancy by two of the regicides.

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Figure 2. "The Judge's Cave" (from Anonymous 1858:8).

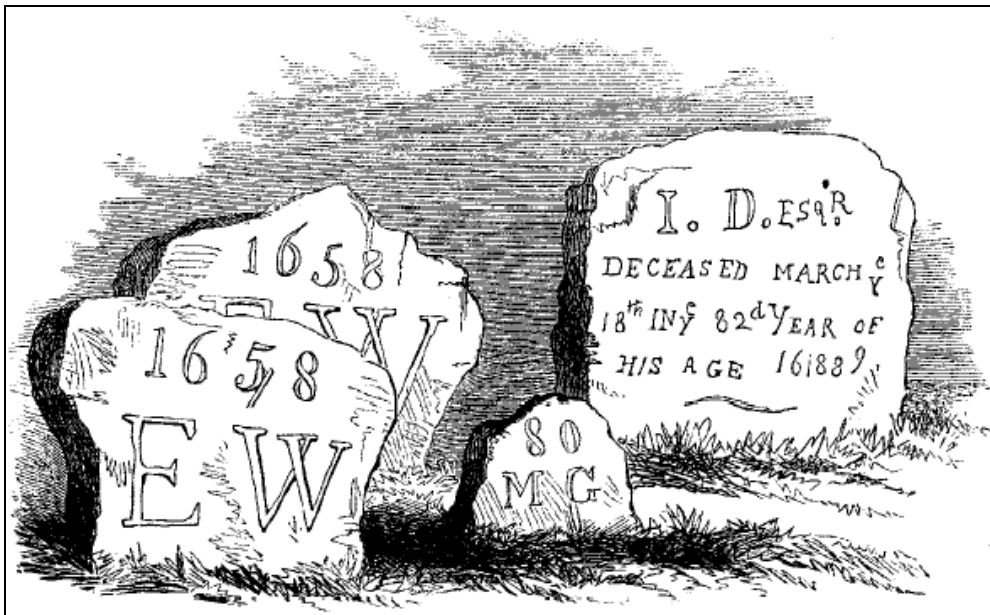


Figure 3. "Tombstones of the regicides" in New Haven, Connecticut (from Anonymous 1858:8).

# JUDGE'S CAVE TODAY

Danny A. Brass

Judge's Cave is a well-known monument at the summit of West Rock Ridge State Park in New Haven, CT. The small cave was formed when a crack split apart a large basalt boulder. Geologists have suggested that this huge glacial erratic may have been ripped from the cliffs of Hanging Hills in nearby Meriden and deposited by a moving wall of ice atop the West Rock Ridge. Although no more than a few meters in length and hardly worthy of the term cave—except perhaps by Connecticut standards—Judge's Cave does have a colorful history, one that is intimately associated with the changing tides of England's monarchy (see article by Donald Ball this issue).

Although Dixwell lived the remainder of his life in New Haven (and was subsequently buried in the courtyard of the Center Church along the historic New Haven Green), the ultimate whereabouts of Goffe and Whalley remain an enduring mystery and speculation abounds. At the time of his death, Dixwell expressly instructed that his tombstone simply be inscribed with his initials, age, and the year of his death. This was out of fear that his grave would be desecrated by the King's minions in this country once its identity was known. Graves of other regicides had been defiled in England.

It is widely believed that Goffe died in Hadley, MA, and was subsequently buried there; although, some believe that his body was ultimately exhumed and secretly returned to New Haven to be re-interred in the courtyard of the Center Church along with that of Dixwell. Whalley, on the other hand, may have traveled farther afield following his stay in Hadley and rumors suggest he may have eventually fled to Virginia or even further. While some historians have expressed the opinion that he, too, is buried in the courtyard of the Center Church, others consider this to be highly unlikely. Small stone monuments near that of Dixwell are considered by some to be markers of Goffe and Whalley's graves. It has been suggested that subtle

ambiguities in either the initials (MG) or the year of death (1658 or 1678) on two of these tombstones may have been deliberate attempts to disguise the identity of these gravesites; however, others believe it is more likely that they belong to other prominent individuals, such as Edward Wigglesworth and Matthew Gilbert, who died around the same time. Gilbert was the colonial governor.

Regardless of where they were eventually buried, New Haven honors the memory of the three regicide judges by having named several major thoroughfares after them: Dixwell Avenue, Whalley Avenue, and Goffe Street. These streets intersect about half a mile from the site of Dixwell's grave.

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Figure 1. Judge's Cave in West Rock Ridge State Park, CT. The chalk marks attest to the cave's current popularity as a bouldering site for local rock climbers.

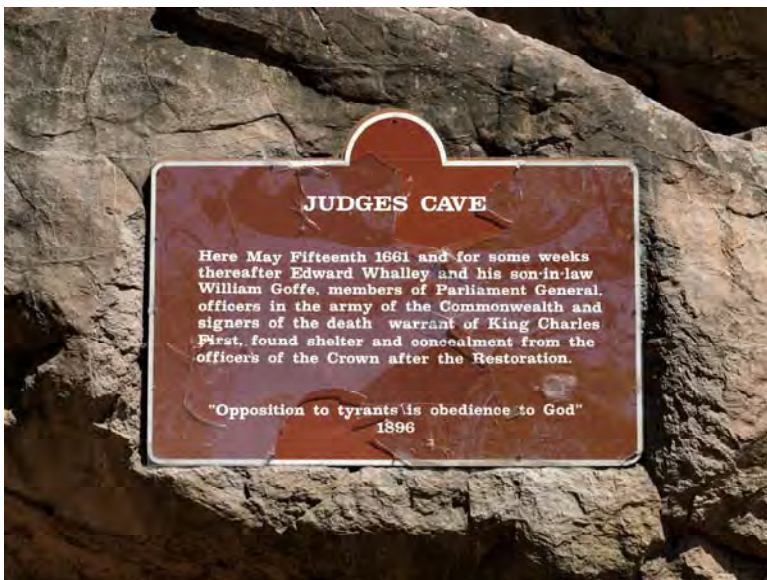


Figure 2. The dedication plaque at Judge's Cave.





Figure 3. John Dixwell's gravesite at the Center Church on the New Haven Green. This small gravestone was the original monument put in place at the time of Dixwell's death.

Figure 4. John Dixwell's gravesite at the Center Church on the New Haven Green. The large monument was erected by one of Dixwell's descendants 160 years after the judge's death. The original monument can be seen alongside of it. At the time this stone was put in place, Dixwell's remains were exhumed and carefully examined before being re-interred.



## ROBINSON CRUSOE'S CAVE, ISLA JUAN FERNANDEZ, CHILE

Donald B. Ball

Of volcanic origin, Juan Fernandez Island (Fig. 1) consists of predominately rugged terrain covering about forty square miles (cf. Sedley 1868). Its highest peak, *El Cerro El Yunque* (The Anvil), is slightly over 3,000 feet. Located in the Pacific Ocean about 400 miles due west of Valparaiso, Chile (and claimed by that nation), this remote island is best known as the rocky haven of Alexander Selkirk (1676-1723), the early eighteenth century

Scottish sailor marooned alone there for four years and four months (from September 1704 to February 1709). This island has been renamed Robinson Crusoe Island by the Chilean government in honor of Selkirk and the literary figure he inspired immortalized by Daniel Defoe in his novel, *Robinson Crusoe*. The island presently has a permanent population of about 600 persons supported largely by lobster trapping.

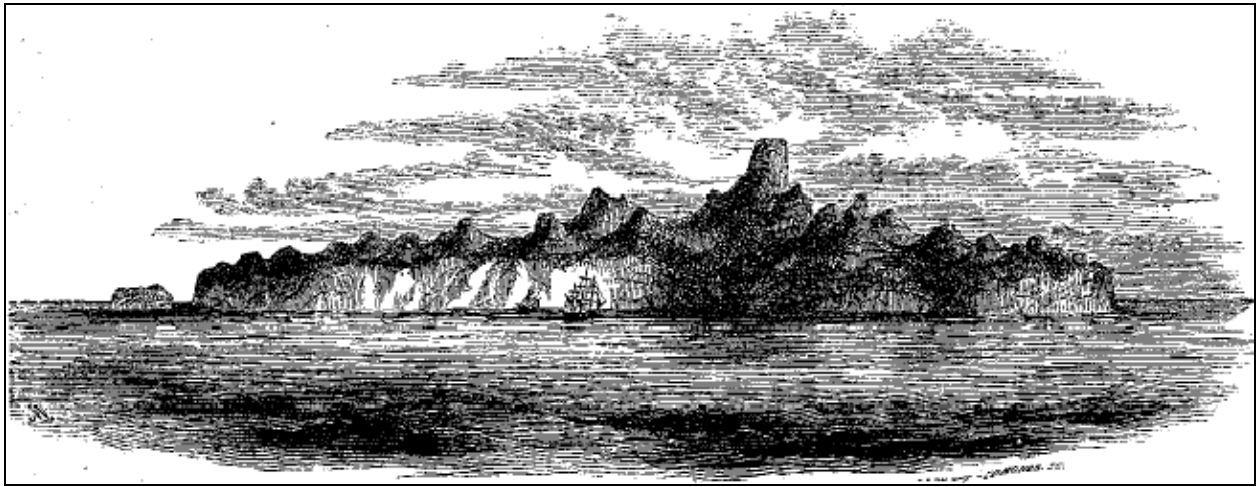


Figure 1. "Juan Fernandez" Island (from Browne 1853:305).

Historically, the island had been populated for several years in the 1600s by the Juan Fernandez for whom the island was named (cf. White 1900). It was during this abortive settlement attempt that both goats and fruit trees were introduced. By the time Selkirk elected to be left at the island, it was completely depopulated. One of the earliest accounts of visitation to the island was authored by John Coulter, MD, in the 1830's and later published in his book, *Adventures in the Pacific* (Coulter 1845). As noted in a review of Coulter's book (Anonymous 1846:43):

Juan Fernandez—the island of the immortal Robinson Crusoe—was that first touched at, the vessel anchoring on the north side in deep water close to the beach. The island when they arrived was tenantless, though some time before the Chilian [sic] government had attempted to make it a sort of penal settlement. The attempt was unsuccessful; the convicts, amounting to about one thousand, rose on the soldiers in charge of them, seized their arms, and compelled two vessels, which were in the anchorage at the time, to carry them to the mainland. [footnote inserted here in original text: The island has since been taken on lease from the Chilian government by an American, who has brought to it a small colony of Tahitians, with the intention of cultivating it, so as to make it become the resort of whalers and other vessels navigating the Pacific.] A more enchanting habitation, if we may judge from Dr.

Coulter's description, could not be wished for either by citizen or convict. It is from sixteen to eighteen miles long, and about seven in width, and chiefly consists of a succession of small hills and valleys, each with its little stream and those rivulets often uniting, came dashing over the cliffs in romantic waterfalls.

In the course of a visit to the island in May 1849, traveler J. Ross Browne (1853:309-312; see also Browne 1871:37-48) discussed in some detail the location, appearance, and topographic setting of the cave inhabited by Selkirk during a portion of his stay on the island:

Our next expedition was to Robinson Crusoe's Cave (**Fig. 2**). How it obtained that name, I am unable to say. The people ashore spoke of it confidently as the place where a seafaring man had lived for many years alone; and I believe most mariners who have visited the island have fixed upon that spot as the actual abode of Alexander Selkirk. There are two ways of getting to the cave from the regular boat-landing; one over a high chain of cliffs, intervening between Crusoe's Valley, or the valley of the cave, and the Chilian huts near the

landing; the other by water. The route by land is somewhat difficult; it requires [pg. 310] half a day to perform it, and there is danger of being dashed to pieces by the loose earth giving way. In many parts of the island the surface of the cliffs is composed entirely of masses of burnt clay, which upon the slightest touch are apt to roll down, carrying everything with them. Numerous cases are related by the early voyagers of accidents to seamen and others, in climbing over these treacherous heights. The distance by water is only two miles, and by passing along under the brow of the cliffs a very vivid idea may be had of their strange and romantic formation...

A pleasant row of half an hour brought us to the little cove in Crusoe's valley. The only landing place is upon an abrupt bank of rocks, and the surf breaking in at this part of the shore rather heavily, we had to run the boat up in regular beach-comber style. Riding in on the back of a heavy sea, we sprang out as soon as the boat struck, and held our ground, when, by watching our chance for another good sea, we ran her clear out of the water, and made her fast to a big rock for fear she might be carried away. About two hundred yards from where we landed we found the cave.

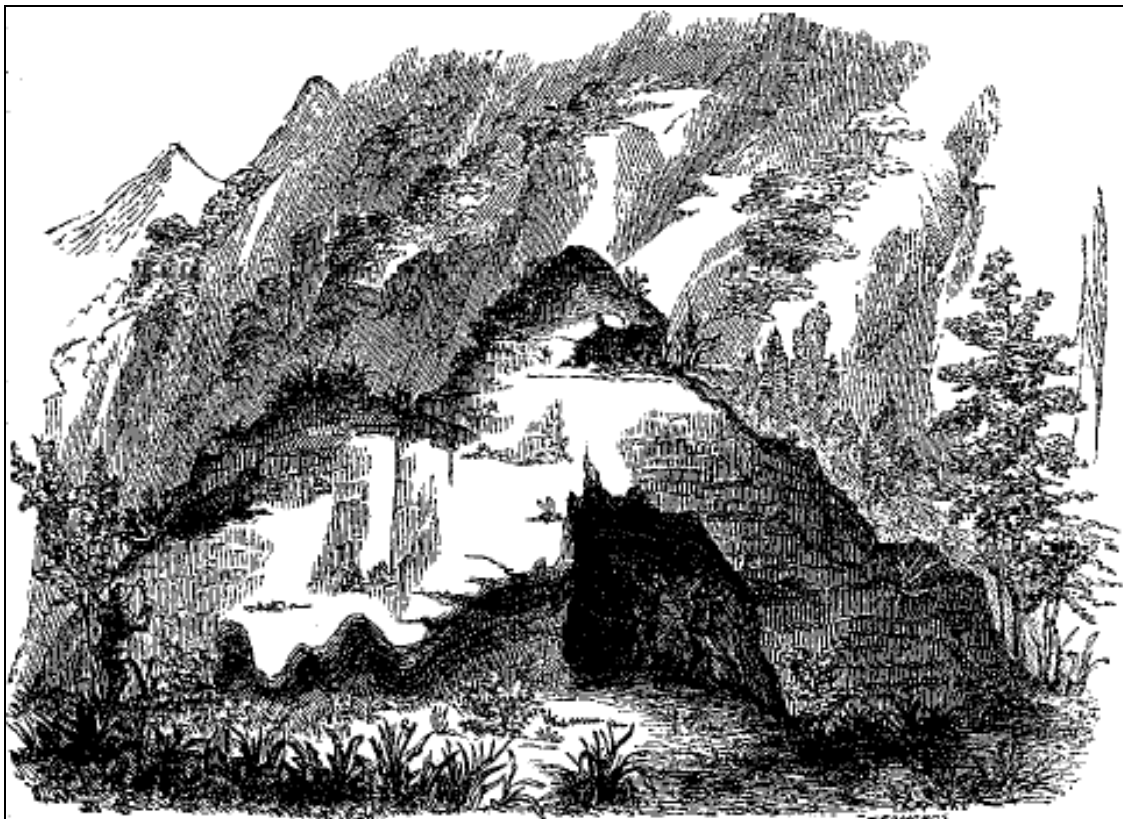


Figure 2. "Crusoe's Cave" (from Browne 1853:310).

It lies in a volcanic mass of rock, forming the bluff or termination of a rugged ridge, and looks as if it might be the doorway into the ruins of some grand old castle. The height of the entrance is about fifteen feet, and the distance back into the extremity twenty-five or thirty. It varies in width from ten or twelve to eighteen feet. Within the mouth the surface is of reddish rock, with holes or pockets dug into the sides, which it is probable were used for cupboards' by the original occupant. There were likewise large spike nails driven into the rock, upon which we thought it likely clothing, guns, and household utensils might have been hung even at as remote a date as the time of Selkirk, for they were very rusty, and bore evidence of having been driven into the rock a long time ago. A sort of stone oven, with a sunken place for fire underneath, was partly visible in the back part of the cave; so that by digging away the earth we uncovered it, and made out the purpose for which it was built. There was a darkish line, about a foot wide, reaching up to the roof of the cave, which by removing the surface a little, we discovered to be produced originally by smoke, cemented in some sort by a drip that still moistened the wall, and this we found came through a hole in the top, which we concluded was the original chimney, now covered over with deposits of earth and leaves from the mountain above. In rooting about the fireplace, so as to get away the loose rubbish that lay over it, one of our

party brought to light an earthen vessel, broken a little on one side, but otherwise perfect (**Fig. 3**). It was about eight inches in diameter at the rim, and an inch or two smaller at the bottom, and had some rough marks upon the outside, which we were unable to decipher, on account of the clay which covered it. Afterward, we took it out and washed it in a spring nearby, when we contrived to decipher one letter and a part of another, with a portion of the date. The rest unfortunately was on the piece which had been broken off, and which we were unable to find, although we searched a long time, for as may be supposed we felt curious to know if it was the handiwork of Alexander Selkirk. For my own part I had but little doubt that this was really one of the earthen pots made by his own hands, and the reason I thought so was that the parts of the letters and date which we deciphered corresponded with his name and the date of his residence, and likewise because it was evident that it must have been imbedded in the ground out of which we dug it long beyond the memory of any living man. I was so convinced of this, and so interested in the discovery, that I made a rough drawing of it on the spot, of which I have since been very glad, inasmuch as it was accidentally dropped out of the boat afterward, and lost in the sea.



Figure 3. "A relic of Crusoe" (from Browne 1853:311).

[pg. 311] We searched in vain for other relics of the kind, but all we could find were a few rusty pieces of iron and some old nails. The sides of the cave as also the top had marks scattered over them of different kinds, doubtless made there in some idle moment by human hands; but we were unable to make out that any of them had a meaning beyond the unconscious expression of those vague and wandering thoughts which must have passed occasionally through the mind of the solitary mariner who dwelt in this lonely place. They may have been symbolical of the troubled and fluctuating character of his religious feelings before he became a confirmed believer in the wisdom and mercy of divine Providence; which unhappy state of mind he often refers to in the course of his narrative.

This cave is now occupied only by wild goats and bats, and had not been visited, perhaps, by any human being, until recently, more than once or twice in half a century; and then probably only by some deserter from a whaleship, who preferred solitude and the risk of starvation to the cruelty of a brutish captain.

In front of the cave, sloping down to the seaside, is a plain, covered with long rank grass, wild oats, radishes, weeds of various kinds, and a few small peach-trees (Fig. 4). The latter we supposed were of the stock planted in the island by Lord Anson. From the interior of the cave, we looked out over the tangled mass of shrubs, wild flowers, and waving grass in front, and saw that the sea was covered with foam, and the surf beat against the point beyond the cove and flew up in the air to a prodigious height in white clouds of spray. Large birds wheeled about over the rocky heights, sometimes diving suddenly into the water, from which they rose again flecked with foam, and soaring upward in the sunlight, their wings seemed to sparkle with jewels out of the ocean. Following the curve of the horizon, the view is suddenly cut off by a huge cliff of lava that rise directly out of the water to the height of twelve or fifteen hundred feet. It forms an abrupt precipice in front, and joins a range of rugged cliffs behind; which all abound in wonderful ledges, overlooking the depths below, dark and lonesome caverns, and sharp pinnacles piercing the clouds in every direction. Goat-paths wind around them in places apparently inaccessible, and we saw herds of goats running swiftly along the dizzy heights overhanging the sea, where we almost fancied the birds of the air would fear to fly. They bounded over the frightful fissures in the rocks, and clung to the walls of cliffs with wonderful agility and tenacity of foot, and sometimes they were so high up that they looked hardly bigger than rabbits, and we thought it impossible that they could be goats.

Looking back into the valley, we beheld mountains stretching up to a hundred different peaks; the sides covered with woods and fields of golden colored oats; and the ravines fringed with green banks of grass and wild flowers of every hue. A stream of pure spring water rippled down over the rocks, and wound through the centre of the valley; breaking out at intervals into bright cascades, which glimmered freshly in the warm rays of the sun; its margins were fringed with rich grass and fragrant flowers, and groves of myrtle overhung the little lakelets that were made in its course, and seemed to linger there like mirrored beauties spell-bound. Ridges of amber-colored earth, mingled with rugged and moss covered lava, sloped down from the mountains on every side and converged into the valley as if attracted by its romantic beauties. Immense masses of rock, cast off from the towering cliffs, by some dread convulsion of the elements, had fallen from the heights, and now lay nestling in the very bosom of the valley, enamored with its charms. Even the birds of the air seemed spell-bound within this enchanted circle; their songs, were low [pg. 312] and soft, and I fancied they hung in the air with a kind of rapture when they rose out of their silvan homes, and looked down at all the wondrous beauties that lay outspread beneath them.

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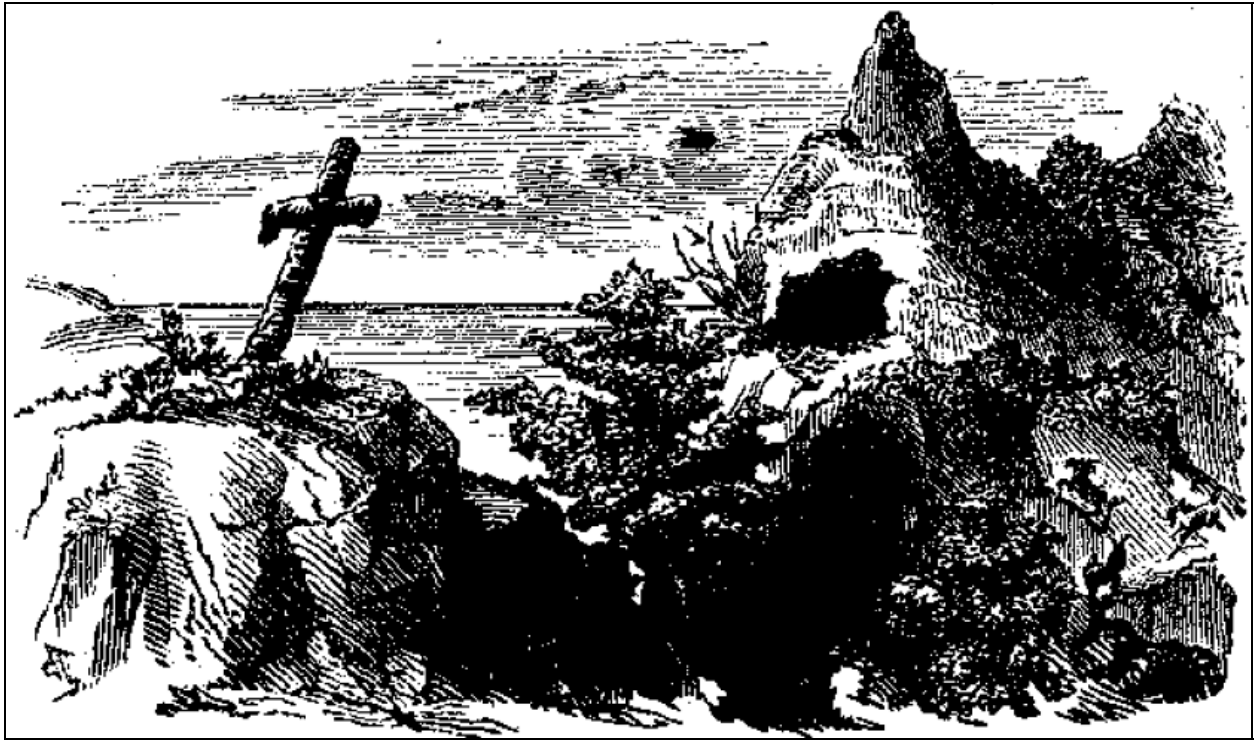


Figure 4. "The valley with the cave and cliff" (from Browne 1853:311).

## SOUTHERN COMFORT FOR WEARY TRAVELERS: BELL'S TAVERN IN BARREN COUNTY, KENTUCKY

Donald B. Ball

Beyond any reasonable doubt, there is no particular lack of information on the pre-Civil War development of Kentucky's Mammoth Cave as one of the world's premiere show caves. Students of spelean history are well aware of the various guide books (e.g., Anonymous 1850; Bullitt 1845; Davidson 1840; Wright 1858) and personal accounts (e.g., Ellet 1853; Horstmeyer 2005; Murray 1856; Taylor 1860; Stuart-Wortley 1851) of the era designed to inform, amuse, and impress the numerous tourists who not infrequently came from considerable distances to see for themselves this wonder of nature and time. Seeing the cave was one thing—but where did the weary traveler stay prior to and after touring the cave? One option was staying at one of several hotels which were sequentially constructed and operated near the mouth of Mammoth Cave (cf. Anonymous 1864). Another option was staying at Bell's Tavern situated about nine miles from the cave near present day Park City (formerly known as Three Forks), Kentucky. Offering transportation to and from Mammoth Cave, the tavern served as a stop for a stagecoach line established in 1827 which operated between Nashville and Louisville. From the time of its construction by William Bell in the late 1820s until it burned in the summer of 1860, this venerable facility provided food and lodging to a wide array of travel weary patrons ranging from the famous (e.g., Henry Clay, John J. Crittenden, Charles Dickens, and Ralph Waldo Emerson) to not so famous.

Following the death of William Bell, the tavern was inherited by his son, Robert Bell, and daughter-in-law, Maria Gorin Bell. Following the death of Robert, his widow married Gorge Proctor, a successful local farmer. George also became the proprietor of nearby Diamond Caverns in 1859. His brother, Larkin Proctor, was manager of the Mammoth Cave Hotel and also owned a stage line that serviced Bell's Tavern, Diamond Caverns, and Mammoth Cave.

The remarks appearing in one early account vividly describe both the arduous journey to the tavern and the sights and accommodations which awaited the road weary traveler. As recounted by Hall (1840:140-141):

### Three Forks, Bell's Tavern

I arrived here [at Bell's Tavern] just as the monarch of day was beginning to veil his glories in the umbrageous foliage of the western wilderness. I [pg. 141] rode hither in a one-horse wagon, without springs, seated in an old straight-back kitchen chair, fastened to the clumsy frame work by cords. The road was horrible—being recently made, not worked at all with the plough, filled with a million of the stumps of small trees, cut low down; that is, six or eight inches above the surface, and over which it was quite impossible for the driver to prevent his wheels from passing. You have seen people harrowing in grain, on new and rough land, when the toothed instrument was, every instant, jerked hither and thither, and never moving ahead with a steady pace. So it was with our vehicle. I need not tell you, that in this ten mile jaunt, I have been thoroughly jolted, and pommeled.

I am now seated at my chamber window, feasting my eye in the early twilight, on a charming landscape, which spreads itself out before me. Fields, and orchards, and meadows stretch away, almost to the

limits of vision, and the whole are the property of a single individual. The farm is one of the largest, and is said to be one of the best cultivated, and most productive in Kentucky. It surpasses, not only in fructuosity, but in extent of surface, the domains of most of the English lords. Its owner is a Mr. Bell, who might exclaim, as Cowper makes Selkirk do,

“I am monarch of all I survey,  
My right there is none to dispute,  
From the centre all round to the sea,  
I am lord of the fowl and the brute.”

Mr. B. is a very intelligent, obliging inn-keeper, and is well known to all respectable travellers, who, during the last twenty years have visited this part of the State. He has kindly engaged to furnish me with everything I shall need in the accomplishment of my favorite object. Fatigue and drowsiness press hard on me, and as soon as supper is over, I shall hasten to the place of dreams.

But one anecdote associated with the tavern was recorded by Knox (1876:478) who relayed the following tale of ill-fated braggadocio on the part of two of the tavern’s guests:

In 1835 two men from Bourbon County, Kentucky,—their appearance indicated that they had for a long time quaffed the fiery beverage of that region,—arrived at Bell’s Tavern, and declared that they could go all through the cave without a guide, and come out safely. They even laid wagers to that effect, and though they were warned against such folly, they started upon their expedition. They certainly went in, but they have never come out; and as thirty-seven years have elapsed, it is highly probable they have deferred their return indefinitely. It is supposed that they got lost in some of the windings off the main route, and starved to death.

In her volume entitled *Summer Rambles in the West*, Mrs. E. F. Ellet (1853:256) all too briefly remarked, “‘Bell’s Hotel’—the proprietor of which, with his snow-white locks, and rough, but kind manners, is a curiosity in himself—is on the stage road from Louisville to Nashville, seven or eight miles from the [Mammoth] cave.

The demise of the tavern<sup>1</sup> was reported (Anonymous 1860) in the August 24, 1860, issue of the *Daily Gazette & Comet* published in Baton Rouge, Louisiana:

Burning of a Famous Resort.—The Louisville Journal announces that “Bell’s tavern,” in Kentucky, kept by Mr. Proctor, was destroyed by the fire last Friday night, and adds: For two generations past, and since the beginning of the present century, it has been the stopping place for all visitors to the Mammoth Cave, and there are thousands from every nation and clime who have enjoyed its boundless hospitality, its luxurious comforts, its well-spread table, and its snow drift sheets at night. It is the removal of an old landmark, the death of a loved friend, the sundering of a strong tie of attachment. We have not as yet received any particulars as to the origin of the casualty, but we learn with regret that the destruction was complete, involving not only the capacious mansion but all its contents.

Though efforts had begun to rebuild the tavern on the eve of the Civil War, the inalterable events of the era terminated such plans and the substantial hand-cut limestone remnants of the envisioned replacement structure were destined to remain forever unfinished (Anonymous 2000).

The history and site of Bell’s Tavern is today commemorated by a state historical marker proudly proclaiming:

Erected by Wm. Bell, 1830. Stage stop for his lines that brought visitors to Mammoth Cave when first promoted. Famed in U.S. and Europe for elite patrons, cuisine, and magic peach and honey brandy for “Joy

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<sup>1</sup> Following the destruction by fire of the Bell Tavern hotel in late 1860, the Proctor family moved to another residence adjacent to Diamond Cave. The Proctor’s were ardent secessionists and supporters of the Confederate cause. Burnett (1863:275-277) relates an intriguing story of a group of Union soldiers camped nearby who helped Mrs. Proctor extinguish a fire in the second home. Despite this act of kindness, Mrs. Proctor adamantly refused to feed or entertain any of the “hated Yankee” troops in her home.



before the journey's end," until it burned 1860. Civil War doomed completion of new tavern begun by grandson Wm. F. Bell and his stepfather, George M. Proctor (Wells, comp. 2002:93).

The property is now listed on the National Register of Historic Places and its weathered walls are preserved as a city park.

Despite its widespread fame and enviable reputation, relatively little information is readily available concerning the more mundane day-to-day operations of the tavern and the social life associated with the luminaries it hosted. In this regard, the following account authored by Rhoda Hite King (1874) and originally published in the October 3, 1874, issue of *Appletons' Journal: A Magazine of General Literature*, provides a rare glimpse into this respite from the rigors of early travel and the nature of the renowned accommodations awaiting those who came to visit the mysteries of Mammoth Cave. Various remarks within the text (e.g., comments on going to visit nearby Diamond Cave known to have been discovered on July 14, 1859, the presence of the nearby and recently completed Louisville-Nashville Railroad [cf. Anonymous 1860b:671], and lively discussions concerning the then-pending presidential election in which Abraham Lincoln was a candidate) indicate that this narrative reflects an extended stay at the tavern just weeks prior to its destruction by fire late in the summer of 1860.

#### **Bell's Tavern; A Reminiscence of Ante-Bellum Days in Kentucky**

Who that visited the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky before "the cruel war," does not remember the rural, vine-covered inn, "Bell's Tavern," where travelers and tourists sojourned for an hour, a day, or days, perhaps, for rest and refreshment previous to the brief coach-journey to the underground wonder, where each little

torch, borne through the darkness, reveals more splendors than ever did Aladdin's lamp?

The year before the firing at Sumter (who could foresee the lowering storm-clouds of the future?), I passed a season at this tavern—three summer months, about which "the scent of the roses" will ever linger. Here I met many of the brave and beautiful, the fair and gifted, from Maine to Florida—from abroad. From this quiet little inn there went out into the world of fashion and *ton* one of its leaders, Mrs. Senator Gwynn, of California.

Here Sallie Ward Hunt, the belle, par excellence, of the Southwest, gathered roses, and made radiant with her beauty the simple little parlor of the tavern.

Here I met General Leslie Coombs, the one living man whom I know who has actually found the elixir of youth. Hair black as a raven, and no dye; white teeth, with no dentist's bill behind them! He was, and is even now, at an advanced age, the most youthful, vigorous, and charming of men.

Hither, one sultry July day, came Lovell H. Rousseau, handsome, gallant, and genial; he who so soon after won his double golden stars amid "shot and shell," as the hero of Perryville.

In this delightful retreat I met Tom Marshall, the eloquent (of whom so charming a paper was written in a late number of the *Galaxy*). He was affable, almost boyish, amid the roses and strawberries, and brilliant after his "peach-and-honey."

*A propos* of peach-and-honey: The bees dallied with the roses and lilies in the garden, I and honey, "with a flavor so sweet one could scarce distinguish it from an odor," was created. In the old-fashioned orchard the peaches grew, and blushed, and were gathered. Down in a mysterious cellar they were placed, and prepared by skillful hands, and lay there for years in darkness. Then, lo and behold! there came up nectar fit for the gods; a delicious, amber-colored liquid, not yet perfect until the golden honey was added.

And this was peach-and-honey!

Charles Dickens wrote his name on the register of Bell's Tavern, acknowledged his peach-and-honey very good (this in a marginal note), went over to the Mammoth Cave, and returned for another glass.

I came to “mine inn” in this wise: A little dove-eyed invalid called me “mother.” The physician ordered me to leave the city for fresh air, cream, new-laid eggs—in short, for all we may expect in Arcadia—and I found them. My family party, including myself, was my baby-girl; Lucy, a brown-colored maid; and an immense doll, in gorgeous array, christened by some godmother as “Pee wee.” When we sallied forth, Pee-wee was always a member of the party. We lived *al fresco*. We were out in the sunshine morning and noon; and, in the sweet twilight hours, we lingered under the trellised arbors until the dews grew too heavy.

Native celebrities, of course, had Bell’s Tavern. First, there was Uncle Jim, the colored centenarian, who had received a “quarter” from Washington, and held Jefferson’s horse once upon a time. He had grown crescent-shaped, walked with a huge cane, but was active, bright, and always honored by the guests. His reminiscences, if a little tedious, were listened to with interest, and many a piece of silver was slipped into his hand. He had one accomplishment that was the delight of the little folks. He could imitate the chirping of a squirrel in a marvelous manner. He rather prided himself on this gift, which, I imagine, he considered special. He had also the gift of “second sight.”

Next in interest came “Shad.” Now, Shad was not a piscatorial delicacy by any means. She was the blackest little girl, with the whitest teeth, I ever saw. I made her acquaintance in this manner:

One June morning, soon after our arrival, we strolled into the strawberry-beds. How aromatic and delicious they were, redolent of all summer fragrance and sweetness! As we walked down, I heard a sweet child-voice singing a quaint plantation melody; and nestled among the strawberry-vines, with a basket almost filled with berries, was a little black girl about ten years old. She was not at all disconcerted at seeing us, but stopped her singing, and exclaimed, “What a pretty little white gal, and what a doll!” I asked her her name. She said, “Shad.” The strawberries were tendered the “little white gal;” the doll was placed in Shad’s hands for temporary nursing, and a friendship cemented.

From this time until we parted, Shad’s devotion to me and mine was marvelous. It was like that of a faithful, loving dog. She followed me everywhere—such an affectionate heart under the dark breast! This summer I had a “hobby” as most idle women have. It was

geology. I had only a meagre [sic] school ignorance of the subject, but I rushed in practically. This portion of Kentucky abounds in peculiar geological specimens, not only in the caves, but outside, above-ground. And there is scarcely a farmer who has not a cave in which to keep cool his milk and butter. Such jaunts as I had, such specimens collected! I lived out-of-doors, and grew of a nut-brown tint, to the horror of my city friends, who dropped in now and then. In all of my excursions Shad accompanied me, in her little bare feet and uncovered head. I had a sun-bonnet made for her, but her rueful face under it excited my pity. Shad, however, removed any difficulty by speedily filling it with *spec’mens*, as she had caught the word, and enjoyed using it. She was a perfect little mimic, and an absolute genius. Sometimes, in these rural wanderings, I would be accompanied by an elderly *savant*. Shad, an eager listener to our conversation, or rather to his disquisitions, would make the most ludicrous use afterward of her recollections. In time, my little rooms became a perfect “curiosity-shop” of shells, pebbles, mosses, ferns, and all kinds of stones, to the disgust of my tidy chamber-maid. When other duties or pleasures kept me in-doors, Shad made a point of collecting for me; and such things, considering me omnivorous in my tastes! One evening, as I sat on the piazza, talking to a nervous old lady, my little Topsy walked up, and placed in my hand a carefully folded paper, looking herself very exultant. “Spec’men,” she said. I opened the paper, and there was a live bat, glad enough to be [pg. 435] emancipated. Now, I have a terror of bats (always thinking of a vampire); but when the old lady shrieked, and Shad looked so disconcerted, I controlled my nerves. By-the-way, bats do greatly abound in this section, and in the caves they are purely white.

At nine o’clock in the morning the trains loitered an hour for breakfast (and such breakfast—roses and strawberries, with cream, broiled chicken, fresh eggs, etc.!). The Louisville and Nashville trains met, and there was always a pleasurable excitement, for one familiar face at least beamed on us daily.

This was the summer preceding the presidential election that made Mr. Lincoln chief magistrate. There was a vast deal of feeling in Kentucky, and my sympathies were strong.

One dewy, ambrosial morning, with my little “Duchess of Wonderland” and her nurse, I seated myself in the

coolest arbor of the beautiful old garden. Roses, and honey-suckles, and the clematis, shielded us from the morning sun, and the morning dew and freshness were as incense from heaven. My little girl lay on a rustic seat, and was fed, in Sybarite style, with strawberries. Idly I read some dreamy volume. I heard footsteps, and before me stood a handsome, courtly old gentleman—no, not old in appearance. He raised his hat and blandly said:

“Do you think I could have a few roses? or would it be petty larceny?”

My answer was:

“I have *carte blanche* here, and will gather you roses and violets too.”

This pleasant, genial gentleman took my little girl in his arms, and was evidently touched by her fragile beauty. We talked of many things, and drifted into the presidential campaign.

“How are your sympathies?” asked this charming gentleman.

My enthusiasm in regard to John C. Breckenridge was very intense, and I so expressed myself at length.

“What do you think of Douglas?” he said.

My reply was to the effect that, knowing Mr. Douglas personally, I admired and honored him, but Mr. Breckenridge was the one man whom I should like to see President.

The next question was:

“What do you think of Bell?”

My answer was in the exhaustive, emphatic manner of half-informed young women. The burden of my sentiments was this:

“Mr. Bell is the exponent of political principles in which I have no faith, and I consider him personally an unscrupulous man,” etc.

A curious smile played around the mouth of my auditor. Footsteps approached. A venerable clergyman of note and merit stood before us. He looked surprised at seeing my companion, and said:

“I was not aware that you knew Mr. Bell.” And this was Mr. Bell!

For a moment I was disconcerted, but Mr. B—’s hearty, contagious laugh met its response, and how we did laugh, to be sure! He bade me good-by, saying:

“If I am elected President, I shall certainly give you an office, for you are a very brave champion.”

So we parted, and never met again. It strikes me curiously now how utterly we ignored, in our conversation, the possibility of Mr. Lincoln’s election. I think there was no electoral Lincoln ticket in Kentucky—I may be mistaken.

One lovely summer Saturday I had a telegram from our poet-editor—the late George D. Prentice—that he would arrive on the evening train. I communicated the intelligence to my charming hostess and her hospitable husband. Then began our preparations to give a fitting reception to our honored guest. A cool little chamber, white-curtained and draped, was all wreathed in flowers—bouquets on chimney-piece and dressing-stand, wreaths on the mirror, and a huge flower pot in the fireplace, where wood was burnt during the winter days. A very charming nook we made for our beloved editor.

Far and near, as the farmers came in for the daily “mail,” the news spread that Prentice was coming, and everybody who had taken the *Journal* for years felt it incumbent on him to contribute his share in doing honor to the expected guest. At 9 P. M., with a shriek and a whistle, the train came thundering up. On the platform the country-people loitered for a glimpse of the editor whose “pen was mightier than the sword” (for these election-times were full of excitement, prescient, too, of tragedy and bloodshed, and in these days the *Louisville Journal* wielded a wondrous influence). Always reticent, averse to being lionized, Prentice made his way swiftly to the little parlor, where we met him. Thence he was conducted, by the delighted colored waiter, to his chamber, to remove the dust of an August day’s travel. Here, on a white-covered table, awaited him a goblet of peach-and-honey, crowned with luscious red strawberries, quite enough to tempt the gods. A hasty toilet, and Prentice was ready for supper. A supper at Bell’s Tavern—it was a theme fit for poetry, and our poet did justice to it, practically at first, poetically afterward. Broiled

chicken, of the right crisp brown; coffee, strong and dark, made golden with delicious cream from cows that fed on clover, new-mown hay, and all things fresh and nice; then there were waffles that only a Southern negro can make; rice-cakes, and all those hot, delicious dishes that people persist in calling “indigestible.” Prentice, if not a *gourmand*, was certainly an epicure, and how he did enjoy that supper! We were a quartet party, at a little round table, snowy white in its covering. A vase of roses, and lilies, and crab-apple blossoms (the most dainty and delicious of perfumes), lent their fragrance, and wax-candles shed their softened light. Prentice was brilliant, and after we adjourned to the parlor he wrote an impromptu (I have it yet) as exquisite as any of his printed verses. I don’t generally believe in impromptus so called. They often come after sleepless nights and hard-working brains, but this was as fresh and sparkling as a glass of champagne. Before we separated for the night, the next day’s programme was arranged. We were slightly Sabbatarian, so there could be no excursions for the morrow—Sunday—but our guest must be presented to the lions of the place—Uncle Jim and Shad. The day, first of all, was to be inaugurated by a morning walk while the dew sparkled on every flower and blade of grass. We were up and out-of-doors with the matinal singing of the earliest birds, and, as “the early bird catches the worm,” so we had our recompense. Such a morning—such a walk! Dewy freshness on every leaf and blossom; the air redolent of a thousand per fumes; the fragrance ascending like incense to the sky; and such a sky! Aurora from the east, all gold and red, and not far off the deep, cloudless azure whispering of the meridian heat to come! A perfect day, bringing health, exhilaration, and vitality, to say nothing of appetite for a delicious breakfast! These meals at Bell’s Tavern were “miracles” that did “repeat” themselves. After breakfast, seated on the veranda, we summoned Uncle Jim. He came, gorgeous in a huge scarlet cravat, that was always the chief ornament of his state-dress. In due form he was presented, and, removing his hat—for Uncle Jim was a true Virginia gentleman—he acknowledged the introduction in this manner:

“God bless you, massa! I hears you print a newspaper. You must be a great man.”

“Not so great as you,” answered Mr. Prentice, “for you have seen Washington and Jefferson, and I have not. Tell us about it.”

Uncle Jim was in his element, and, with a wave of his hand, seated himself on the steps of the piazza and began his legends—a little garrulous, perhaps, but not a bore by any means. After his reminiscences, he closed with the squirrel-chirping for the delectation of the little one, and when he gracefully retired, with a silver half-dollar in his palm, he evidently felt that he had acquitted himself with honor. Shad was now solicited to grant an interview. She had been earlier notified that her presence would be desired, and her toilet was something marvelous. She had on a clean, flax-linen dress, that the little slaves were wont to wear. Her head was crowned with a gay-colored turban, borrowed from her “mammy.” One day, in arranging “things,” I had given her a pair of half-soiled, pink-satin slippers that struck her fancy. From these peeped out now the little black feet, for Shad repudiated stockings.

Around her waist was a girdle of corn-colored ribbon that some visitor had given her. In her hand she carried an immense bouquet of poppies, which seemed her favorite flower. I can see the tiny figure now, in its grotesque grace! With the gravest air she approached Prentice, made a courtesy, and presented him with the nosegay, making a little set speech, that I had amused myself in teaching her. Then, seeming quite relieved of the regulation duty, she exclaimed, “Mr. Prentice, your pig’s all done and put away.” My vistor [sic] looked quite curious in regard to his porcine friend. The truth is, that the delightful hostess, in arranging a bill-of-fare, had decided that a pretty little roast pig (ah! shade of “Elia,” you knew what a *bonne bouche* it is!) would make a pleasing central figure for the Sunday dinner. Shad having watched its preparation, and [pg. 436] knowing in whose honor it was done, felt enchanted at giving “the earliest information.”

The Sunday passed in sweet serenity that was not monotony. With the perfume of flowers, the singing of birds, “heart affluence in discursive talk,” could there be monotony? Monday’s sun rose gloriously. A delightful little party had been arranged for the Diamond Cave. You don’t know this bijou of a cave perhaps, but you should. Scarce a mile in extent, but glittering with gems, radiant with beauties, brilliant in wonders—well you might call it a mile of fairy-land. Beautiful bit of poetry, magical mile of romance, you still exist, while my tavern is gone! A short drive, and not a long walk, from the inn, our merry party went, some in carriages, others strolling through the

ambrosial forest. Now, that was “a day to be marked with a white pebble.” We took flowers, we decorated shrines; we christened chambers and bowers with names we loved; we wove fancies, and were altogether a dreamy, lotus-eating party. We came back, however, to delicious, real life, when the aroma of the dinner greeted us on our return.

I need not dwell on the next day’s excursion, nor the two days’ lingering at the Mammoth Cave, where, between sublimity and awe and fatigue, one is almost overpowered. Prentice left us. When next I saw him, he was heart-stricken, mourning the loss of a gallant young son, who fought under a flag of scarlet and white, and so gave his life.

The next visitor who came to us, whose memory I cherish, was John J. Crittenden, the statesman beloved in life, revered in death.

How these reminiscences sadden me! How many, who brightened and briefed for me that eventful summer, have “gone before!” “Ah! for the woeful change ’twixt now and then!” Crittenden and Bell, Rousseau and Prentice, sleep in their respective family burying-grounds. Others fell on the battlefield, bravely fighting. Some lay dead in the gray-and-gold — some in the blue uniform; wherever they are, may their graves be covered with perennial flowers!

Years after, I went back to the old place. Bell’s Tavern lay in ruins, the victim of a destructive fire. I wandered into the garden. The tangled roses bloomed in fragrance and beauty. The strawberries grew at their own sweet will, but a spirit of desolation reigned. Down in the orchard the apple-trees were pink and-white with bloom. Under the spreading boughs of one, Uncle Jim lay sleeping peacefully. By his side a tiny mound covered the dead body of Shad. The little tireless feet were at rest forever. I was not ashamed of the tears that fell on the flower-petals covering these graves.

A new Bell’s Tavern has arisen from the ashes—but it is not my tavern, with its memories bright and now sacred. To-day, my baby-girl of that summer stands in sweet maidenhood, “where the brook and river meet.” And I—my heart is buried in a far-off grave, o’ergrown with myrtle, violets, and jasmine. With Tiny Tim I say, “God bless us all!”

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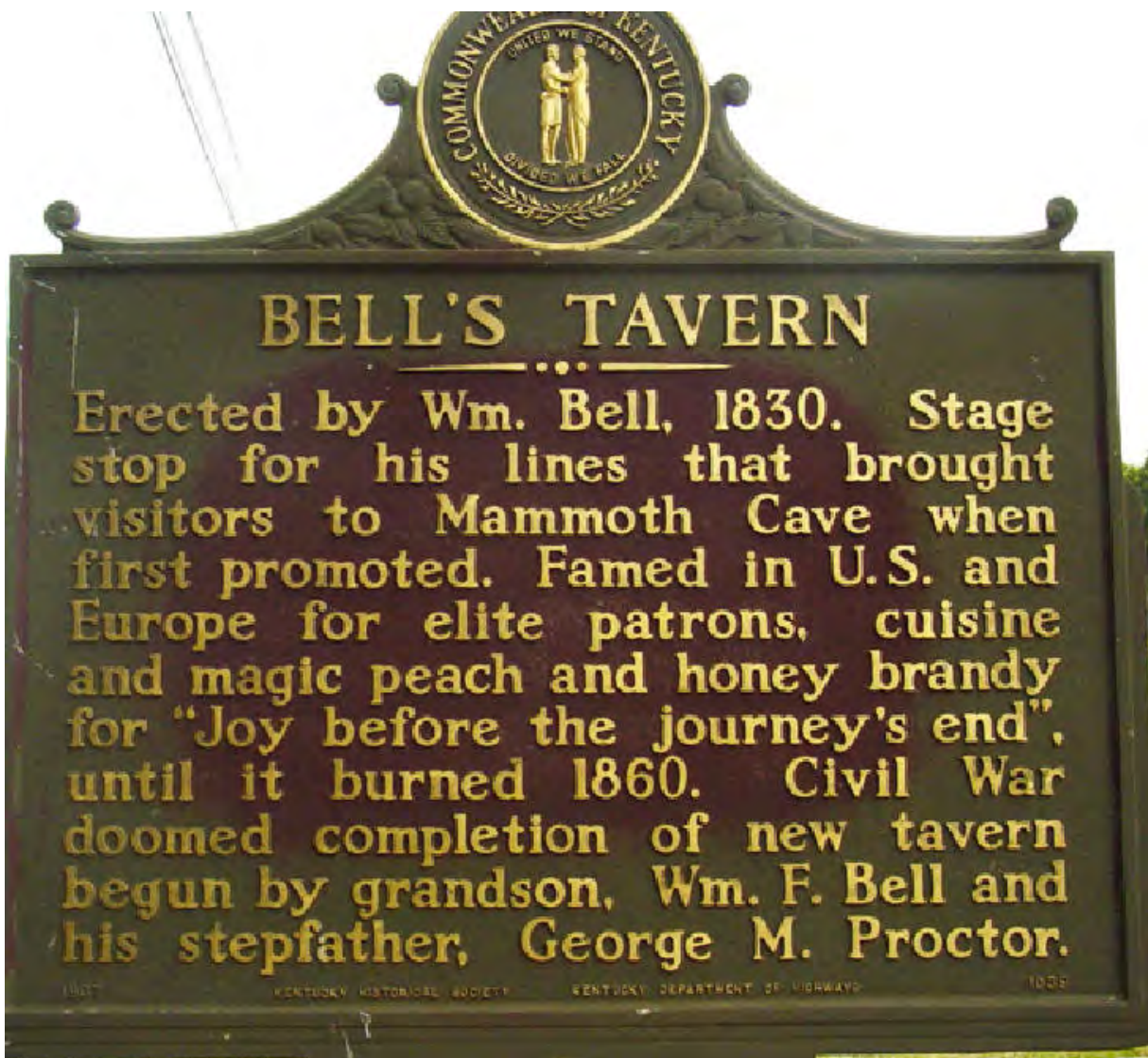
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## UNION SOLDIER NAMES IN GODWIN CAVE, MAURY COUNTY, TENNESSEE

Marion O. Smith

During much of the last three years of the Civil War Columbia, Tennessee, was occupied by the Federal army. Within that time a number of units were stationed there and many more passed through. It was only natural that some of the men sought to satisfy their curiosity, as well as to break their routine, by visiting the largest and best known cave in the area, which is today known as Godwin Cave. Located some two or three miles north of Columbia not far west of Rutherford Creek before it joins Duck River, this two-entranced grotto is estimated to have 10,000 feet of passage with a vertical extent of forty feet. At some time, probably by early settlers, it was mined for saltpeter. Currently, the cave appears "guttled out" and heavily spray-painted by wave after wave of thoughtless intruders, with most of the damage occurring during the twentieth century.<sup>1</sup>

Although a careful wall search would probably locate others, at least four legible names of Union soldiers have been found in Godwin Cave:

Isaac N. Arnold Co E, 69<sup>th</sup> O V Infantry

Jaysville, O 1862

Wm H. Fisher Co. D. 17<sup>th</sup> IND. VOL.

F Sullivan Co F 17 IND

Oren S. Hadley of Clermont Ohio Co H 175<sup>th</sup> OVI<sup>2</sup>

These men have been identified to various degrees of completeness.

*Isaac Newton Arnold* (c1840-October 12, 1880), a son of Noah Arnold (b. c1816) who resided near Jaysville, Darke County, Ohio, was before the war a school teacher. On November 8, 1861, he enlisted in Company E, 69<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, gaining promotions to corporal the following December 20 and sergeant June 13, 1863. At Chattanooga November 19 he reenlisted as a veteran and was entitled to a bounty payment. He went home on furlough February 23 until about April 18, 1864. Starting some ten days later through May he was the regiment's ordnance sergeant and June-July he served as its sergeant major. On August 11, 1864, near Atlanta, Georgia, he was hit on the left arm by a shell fragment which so fractured the bone that amputation was necessary. His arm was taken off by the regimental surgeon, Louis Slusser. Then he was sent to a series of hospitals to convalesce: Vining Station, Georgia, for three days; Kingston, Georgia, until September 2; Chattanooga for twelve days; Hospital No. 8 at Nashville until September 17; Jefferson Hospital at Jeffersonville, Indiana, until November 27; and Seminary Hospital at Columbus, Ohio, until March 18, 1865. Finally, he went to Camp Dennison, Ohio, where he was discharged from the army on April 13, 1865. He qualified for an invalid pension, and six days earlier was notified that the government would provide him an artificial arm made by D. W. Kolbe of Philadelphia, which he ultimately received the following October 16. From Camp Dennison Arnold returned to Darke County, but by September, 1865, he obtained a clerk's job in the third auditor's office of the U.S. treasury department, and lived in Washington, D.C., until May 29, 1880, only making annual visits back to Ohio. During his home stay about 1866 he unsuccessfully ran for probate judge. On September 7, 1870, in District of Columbia, Arnold married Laura Hibbard McConnell (c1833-June 24, 1892), widow of Robert McConnell of Freeport, Illinois. She

had at least three children by McConnell but none by Arnold. In 1880 Arnold's health declined and he went back to Ohio to live with his father, and there after several months he died. The cause was generally given as "nervous prostration," although some in his family hinted that a contributing reason was "domestic trouble."

The 69<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry arrived at Nashville April 22, 1862, but was soon sent away. On May 1 its colonel, Lewis D. Campbell, was ordered by Brigadier General Ebenezer Dumont to set up headquarters at Franklin and to distribute the regiment at five and later six stations from there to Columbia to guard forty miles of the Tennessee and Alabama Railroad. Companies A and E were placed at Rutherford Creek. This duty continued until June 8, when the regiment was pulled back to Nashville. No doubt it was during this thirty-nine day period when Arnold toured Godwin Cave.<sup>3</sup>

*William H. Fisher, Jr.* (October 15, 1840-1913), a native of Johnson County, Indiana, was a son of William H. Fisher, Sr. (1813-1885) and Mary J. Henderson (b. 1818). He, his father, and four brothers, James, John, Thomas, and Joseph, served in the Union army. James and Thomas died from their wounds and John's left arm was amputated. William H., Jr., joined Company D, 17<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry (which was mounted in January 1863) as a corporal on May 15, 1861, and was mustered in a few weeks later, June 12, at Indianapolis. He "participated in thirty-one fights, and was in the hospital only one night," earning promotion to sergeant by late 1862. Reportedly, from January 1 until his muster-out on June 20, 1864, William was with a detachment of his regiment "at Columbia whose term of service expired June 12/64." However, in actuality, he was part of that time, especially February, at Mooresville, Alabama. It is fairly certain that sometime during the first half of 1864 Fisher made his foray to Godwin Cave.

Soon after he returned home from the army, probably late in 1864, he married Sarah J. Good, and eventually they had no less than five children. During 1866 Fisher went to Iowa, but he returned to his home county January, 1870, where in Franklin he "engaged in the meat business." In 1913 he was still in the same town, residing at 401 N. Main Street.<sup>4</sup>

*Franklin Sullivan* (b. c1841), a laborer and a native of Pottsville, Pennsylvania, enlisted May 23, 1861, at Indianapolis as a private in Company F, 17<sup>th</sup> Indiana Infantry. He was mustered in at the same city the succeeding June 12, and was described as five feet six inches tall with a light complexion, blue eyes, and light hair. On October 17, 1863, he was listed as a deserter at Bell Factory near Huntsville, Alabama. But he must soon have returned, because beginning January 7 to March 1864, he was absent with leave at Mooresville, Alabama. On April 28 following he was transferred to Company K, and apparently spent the remainder of his enlistment, until June 20, 1864, on detached service at Columbia, Tennessee. During this time he found an opportunity to see Godwin Cave. Later in 1864, for money received on October 6 at Indianapolis, he agreed to serve in the army as the substitute for William J. Morgan of Liberty Township, Hendricks County, Indiana.<sup>5</sup>

*Oren S. Hadley* (b. cJanuary 1841), a resident of Clermont County, Ohio, was a farmer in Stonelick Township. On October 4, 1864, he enlisted at Boston, Ohio, in Company H, 175<sup>th</sup> Ohio Infantry, and was mustered in a week later at Camp Dennison. He was then described as five feet nine inches tall with blue eyes, dark hair, and a fair complexion. A few days later he was advanced to corporal. He was consistently present for duty, and apparently was not mustered out with his regiment at Nashville on June 27, 1865, but at Huntsville, Alabama a few weeks later on July 12. From October 20 until November 24, 1864, the 175<sup>th</sup> Ohio was at Columbia, Tennessee, on garrison and railroad guard duty. During General John Bell Hood's Confederate advance it was withdrawn and took part in the battles of Franklin and Nashville. Then December 25, 1864, until



June 23, 1865, the regiment resumed its Columbia duty station. Hadley entered Godwin Cave during one of these two periods.<sup>6</sup>

#### SOURCES

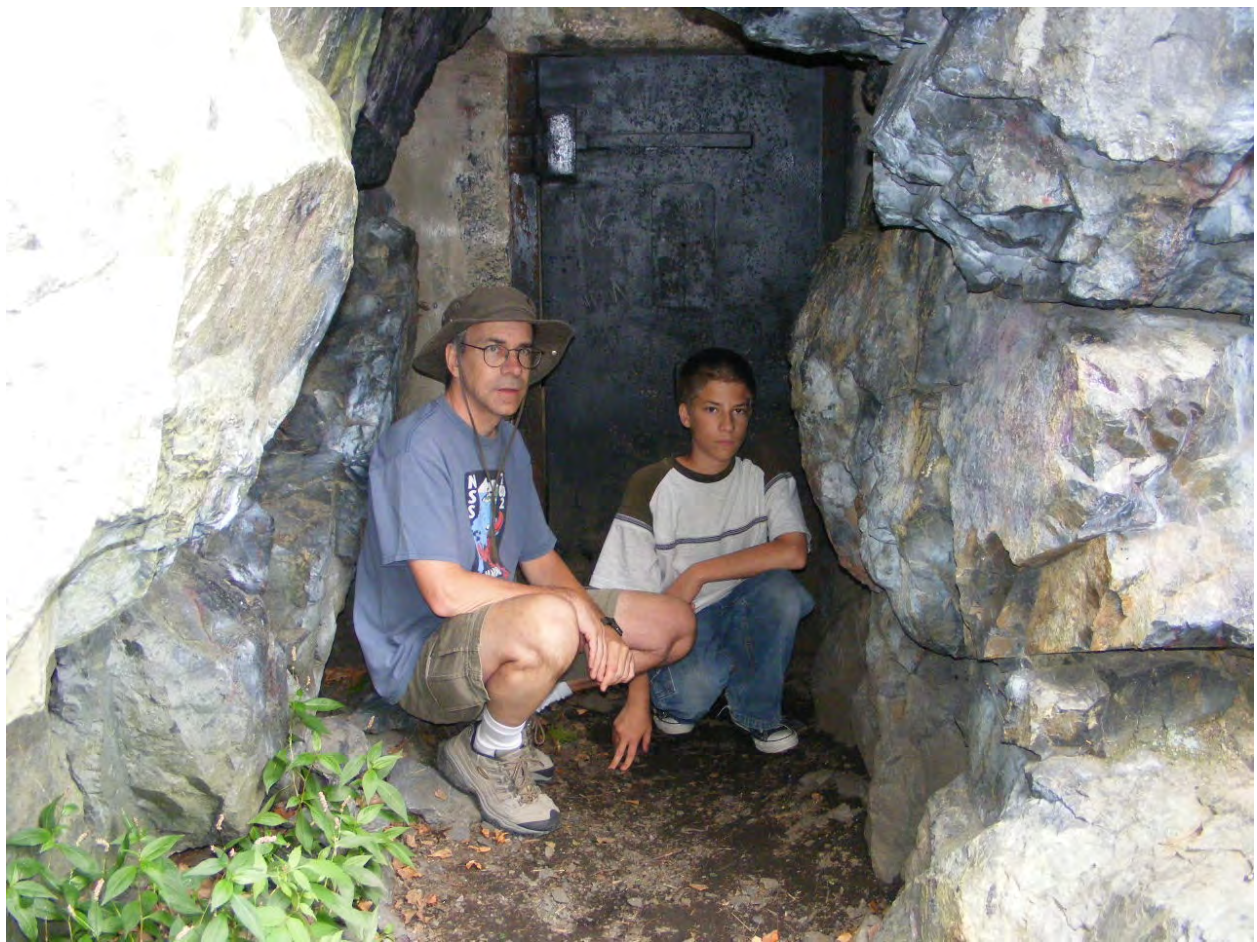
1. Tennessee Cave Survey; Diary of Marion O. Smith, March 11, 1989.
2. Ibid.; Undated notes by Gerald W. Moni, Nashville.
3. Compiled Service Records, RG94, National Archives, Isaac N. Arnold File; Pension Records, RG15, National Archives, Laura H. Arnold File; Janet B. Hewett, ed., *Supplement to the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (100 books, Wilmington, N.C., 1994-2001), Pt. II, Vol. 53, Serial No. 65, pp. 538-48; *The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (70 vols. in 128 books, Washington, D.C. 1880-1901), Ser. 1, Vol. 16, Pt. 1: 76; Frederick H. Dyer, *A Compendium of the War of the Rebellion* (DesMoines, Iowa, 1908), 1529.
4. CSR, RG94, NA, William H. Fisher File; *History of Johnson County, Indiana* (Chicago, 1888), 607-9; *Souvenir. The Seventeenth Indiana Regiment. A History From Its Organization to the End of the War* (Elwood, 1913), section *re* corporals and surviving members.
5. CSR, RG94, NA, Franklin Sullivan, Franklin P. Sullivan Files.
6. Ibid., Oren S. Hadley File; Dyer, *Compendium*, 1553.



## LETTER to the EDITOR

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I enjoyed the last issue of the Journal. Concerning pirates and treasure of the Northeast, there's an excellent booklet (47 pages) entitled *Pirate's Glen & Dungeon Rock, the Evolution of a Legend* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition, 1987), that goes into greater details, including photographs, about the Lynn pirates, Pirate's Glen, and Dungeon Rock. You can purchase this booklet from the Saugus Historical Society ([www.saugus.org](http://www.saugus.org)). I explored Dungeon Rock, depicted on the cover of the last issue, a few years ago. It's gated now, see photograph.—Paul Steward



Paul Steward and son at the entrance to Dungeon Rock.

# CAVE CLIPPINGS

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As a salutary antidote to the ubiquitous Jesse James caves, the following clipping seems appropriate!

## **THAT ROBBERS' CAVE IN MINNESOTA.**

**Frank James Denies That It Was Ever Occupied by His Gang.**

*Dallas News:* A story was abroad yesterday to the effect that somebody—nobody knew just exactly who—had discovered a cave up in Nicollet County, Minnesota, which was a rendezvous for the James and Younger boys during the stormy days of their career. Out of this proceeded all sorts of fantastical air castles, some taking the form of a vast underground cavern litterly filled to overflowing with gold, rivaling in quantity the riches of Capt. Kidd or the pirate Lafitte. Other persons might have pictured it as a cave where "the bandit kings," as they are called in the 10 cent novels, carried captives to let them starve and endure all sorts of other horrible things.

However these things were or might have been a *News* reporter saw Frank James on the streets yesterday afternoon and asked him what there was in the story.

"As to our hiding in a cave," and he laughed as he said it, "why that's the most preposterous thing I ever heard of. I am not egotistical or inclined to brag, but those that know me will be witness that I am too good a general to lead my men into a hole where somebody might slaughter us. If we had used a cave for a meeting-place or a hiding-place all the other fellows would have to do to get us out would be just to raise a little smoke," and he laughed again.

"No, sir; no caves for me. I have never liked them and never will. My place for a fight is the wide, open plain, where you have got just as much room to move about in as though an enemy was not within a hundred miles of you. Somehow or other you feel easier on the plain, for when you are in some fortification you feel like some one had the drop on you, for you know that all they have got to do is to starve you out. So much for the hiding-place part of the story. Now as to our having any money to hide in caves over and above what we needed, why that's funny. We don't have such enormous amounts of money, and if we did a cave was the last place on earth we should have gone to hide it in. I hate to break up all these nice fairy stories," concluded Frank, "but what I am saying is hard fact. There is absolutely nothing in the story."

From the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, December 26, 1890.

# REPRINTS

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## The Ice-Cavern of the Peak of Teneriffe

This cave is at a height of 11,040 feet above the sea, and is therefore not far below the snow-line of the latitudes of the Canary Isles. The entrance is by a hole 3 or 4 feet square, in the roof of the cave, which may be about 20 feet from the floor. The peasants who convey snow and ice from the cave to the lower regions, enter by means of knotted ropes; but Professor Smyth had caused his ship's carpenter to prepare a stout ladder, by which photographic instruments and a lady were taken down.

On alighting on a heap of stones at the bottom, the party found themselves surrounded by a sloping wall of snow, 3 feet high, and 7 or 8 feet broad, the basin in which they stood being formed in the snow by the vertical rays of the sun, and by the dropping of water from the edges of the hole. Beyond this ring-fence, large surfaces of water stretched away into the farther recesses of the cave, resting on a layer of ice, which appeared to be generally about 2 feet thick. At one of the deeper ends of the cave, water dropped continually from the crevices of the roof; a fact which Professor Smyth attributed to the slow advance of the summer wave of heat

through the superincumbent rock, which was only now reaching the inner recesses of the loose lava, and liquefying the results of the past winter. There would seem to be immense infiltration of meteoric water on the Peak; for, notwithstanding the great depth of rain which falls annually in a liquid or congealed form, the sides of the mountain are not scored with the lines of water-torrents.

Though occurring in lava, this cavern is quite different from lava-tunnels, such as the Surtshellir, which are recognised formations, produced by the cooling of the terminal surface-crust of the stream of lava, and the subsequent bursting forth of the molten stream within. This, on the contrary, proved to be a smooth dome-shaped cave, running off into three contracting lobes or tunnels which might be respectively 70, 50, and 40 feet long, and were all filled to a certain depth with water: in the smoothness of the interior surfaces, Professor Smyth believed that he detected the action of highly elastic gases on a plastic material.

The astronomer takes exception to the term 'underground glacier' which had been applied

to this cavern. He represents that the mountain is abundantly covered each winter with snow, in the neighbourhood of the ice-cave, which is nearly within the snow-line, and the stores of snow thus accumulated in the cave have no great difficulty in resisting the effects of summer heat, since all radiation is cut off by the roof of rocks. The importance of this protection may be understood from the fact that in the middle of July the thermometer at this altitude gave 130° in the sun, but fell to 47° when relieved from the heat due to radiation. At the time of this observation, there were still patches of snow lying on the mountain-side, exposed to the full power of direct radiation; and, therefore, there is not anything very surprising in the permanence of snow under such favourable circumstances as are developed in the cave. Mr. Airy, a few summers ago, found the rooms of the Casa Inglese, on Mount Etna, half filled with snow, which had drifted in by an open door, and had been preserved from solar radiation by the thick roof.

Humboldt remarks, that the mean temperature of the region in which the Cueva del Hielo (ice-cave) occurs, is not below 3° C.

(37·4° F.), but so much snow and ice are stored up in the winter that the utmost efforts of the summer heat cannot melt it all. He adds, that the existence of permanent snow in holes or caves must depend more upon the amount of winter snow, and the freedom from hot winds, than on the absolute elevation of the locality.

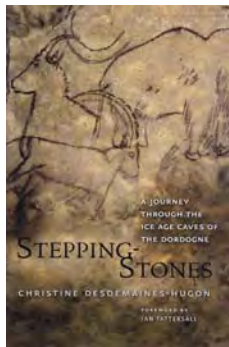
The natives of Teneriffe are men of faith. They have large belief in the existence and intercommunication of numerous vast caverns in the Peak, one of which, on the north coast, is said to communicate with the ice-cavern, notwithstanding 8 miles of horizontal distance, and 11,000 feet of vertical depth. The truth of this particular article of their creed has been recently tested by several worthy and reverend hidalgos, who drove a dog into the entrance of the cavern on the sea-coast, in the belief that he would eventually come to light again in the ice-cave: he was accordingly found lying there some days after, greatly fatigued and emaciated, having in the interval accomplished the 11,000 feet of subterranean climbing. How he could enter, from below, a water-logged cave, does not appear to have been explained.

Reprinted from *Ice-Caves of France and Switzerland, A Narrative of Subterranean Exploration*, by the Reverend G.F. Browne, M.A., 1865. The complete book is available online at the Project Gutenberg website, [www.gutenberg.org](http://www.gutenberg.org).

# BOOK REVIEWS

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***STEPPING-STONES: A Journey Through the Ice Age Caves of the Dordogne* (2010) by Christine Desdemaines-Hugon. Yale University Press. New Haven, CT. Hardcover, 222 pages, 6" x 9¼" format, ISBN 978-0-300-15266-1. Available for \$30.00. Reviewed by Danny A. Brass.**



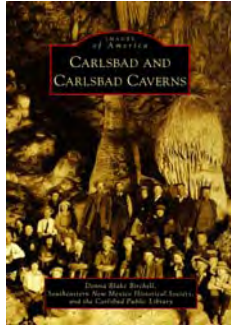
Concentrating primarily on four decorated caves and one rock shelter in the Dordogne region of France, Desdemaines-Hugon paints a verbal portrait of Ice-Age cave art. Consideration is given to polychrome paintings, bas-relief sculpture, finger tracings, and engravings, and includes examples that are both realistic and abstract in character. A representative selection of portable artwork found in caves (notably Venus figurines, beadwork, and small engravings) as well as associated artifacts (including various tools and hunting weapons) from different cultural periods across Europe is also presented.

Highly descriptive in nature, this text is essentially a guided walking tour through these sites. The many examples of cave art found at each location—and to a more limited extent, the caves themselves—are described in considerable detail. Although only minimal discussion is devoted to interpretation of Upper Paleolithic art and culture, the author does touch on issues related to tectiform signs and to the close similarities between ancient cave art and more contemporary art forms...a more inclusive discussion of which can be found in Barbara Alpert's (2009) *The Creative Ice Age Brain: Cave Art in the Light of Neuroscience* (Foundation 20 21).

Because the principal sites selected for discussion are all open to the general public, this text nicely complements Paul Bahn's (2007) *Cave Art: A Guide to the Decorated Ice Age Caves of Europe* (Frances Lincoln Ltd.), which provides practical information on guided tours through publicly accessible decorated caves. As such, *Stepping-Stones* will provide readers contemplating a visit to any of these sites with an excellent appreciation for what can be expected. However, the author's detailed descriptions of this artwork—only a small portion of which is actually illustrated—often read like a directory listing. General-interest readers may find wading through such an inventory to be somewhat tedious, while readers interested in a more in-depth discussion of cave art may be disappointed by the relatively scant coverage.

Desdemaines-Hugon's discussion encompasses caves with large walking passages and cathedral-like rooms as well as those with predominantly narrow or tight passageways. Compared to a somewhat more clinical approach to describing the actual artwork, the author's writing style is often quite vibrant when discussing the caves and the artists. I found it to be somewhat reminiscent of Barbara Hurd's (2003) *Entering the Stone: On Caves and Feeling Through the Dark* (Houghton Mifflin Company). In this regard, her unbridled enthusiasm and appreciation for both the caves and the ancient artistic treasures hidden within them are readily apparent. An appendix, providing information on local museums and availability of tours through decorated caves, as well as a short list of recommended readings are helpful additions.

**CARLSBAD AND CARLSBAD CAVERNS—*Images of America* (2010) by Donna Blake Birchell in association with the Southeastern New Mexico Historical Society and the Carlsbad Public Library. Arcadia Publishing, Chicago. Paperback, 128 pages, 6½" x 9¼" format, ISBN 978-0-7385-7884-2. Available for \$21.99. Reviewed by Danny A. Brass.**



Arcadia Publishing's *Images of America* series is a diverse collection of several thousand books celebrating the colorful history of neighborhoods, towns, and cities across the nation. Each volume provides a detailed historical record—as told in a collection of annotated archival photographs—of the development, culture, and heritage of a particular location. Several books in the series are devoted to areas around caves, since the discovery of a spectacular local cave system has often had a profound influence on shaping the future growth and economy of the region. Other cave-related volumes in the series include *Mammoth Cave and the Kentucky Cave Region*, *Wind Cave National Park: The First 100 Years*, *Vail and Colossal Cave Mountain Park*, and *Jewel Cave National Monument*. These outstanding books will be of interest to anyone who enjoys reading about speleohistory, commercial caves, the national park system, or Americana in general.

In this interesting volume, Birchell explores the early history of Carlsbad, NM, from its modest beginnings as a tent city along the Pecos River through more modern times. In doing so, she ties the birth and early expansion of Carlsbad to development of the land, the adventurous and indomitable spirit of people who have called it home, and the discovery and subsequent commercialization of the remarkable, world-renowned Carlsbad Caverns.

Images from photo archives help tell the story of Jim White's discovery and early exploration of Carlsbad Caverns—which had originally been named the Bat Cave because of its huge population of Mexican free-tailed bats—as well as some of the unique features of early tourism in the cave. Initial interest in the cave was related primarily to its vast deposits of guano, which was used as fertilizer. With continued exploration, however, the cave's unsurpassed beauty was eventually recognized. It was declared a national monument in 1923 and a national park in 1930.

Consideration is also given to Carlsbad's Potash mining operations, which have created extensive underground tunnel systems; the 1961 Project Gnome subterranean nuclear detonation study; and the eventual development of underground storage sites for the disposal of nuclear waste.

An interesting account of Carlsbad's military role is also presented. This includes information on the very secretive training facility at the Carlsbad Army Air Field, at which WW II bombardiers from across the nation learned how to use the Norden bombsight. Note: Although not mentioned, readers may also be interested in the absorbing account of yet another secret wartime undertaking—Project X-Ray—that was conducted at Carlsbad's nearby Auxiliary Army Air Field. In a test gone awry, the buildings at this site were accidentally burned to the ground by bats carrying tiny incendiary explosives (see Jack Couffer's *Bat Bomb: World War II's Other Secret Weapon*, 1992).

In highlighting little-known details about Carlsbad Caverns and the city of Carlsbad this interesting book complements Lois Manno's award-winning treatise on the history of artistic expression in Carlsbad Caverns (*Visions Underground: Carlsbad Caverns through the Artist's Eye*, 2009, Rio Grande Books). *Carlsbad and Carlsbad Caverns* will be enjoyed by anyone with an interest in the early history of this grand cave and its surroundings.



Self portrait by J. Ross Browne (1821 – 1875), visitor to Crusoe's Cave.