

The Exploration and Mapping of Kidd Cave by Louis Simpson

Exploration

During my first summer in the Sloan's Valley fieldhouse I thought I'd go see if there were any other significant caves near Burfield Cave in Wayne County, Kentucky. Delbert Kidd told me there was an entrance in the hollow behind his farm, but that cavers had just visited it the previous weekend and declared it to end after a short distance. Nevertheless I walked out to the entrance, half a mile up the hollow, and was quite impressed. At the base of a fifty-foot limestone cliff was a stoopwalk entrance that had a dry stream bed leading to it. The hollow downstream was pasture with absolutely no stream bed. I could not believe this cave would fail to go.

I was able to entice Hartley Mays out of Louisville long enough to check it out. Unfortunately Hartley was preparing to fail a draft physical by being grossly overweight, so he was in poor condition for caving. We entered the cave on August 25, 1971. After 250 feet, the stoopwalk degenerated to an unlikely-looking bellycrawl. I had to search for a route through the leaves, dodging a tree trunk. After a hundred feet I emerged into a low, wide room. It was a real struggle for him, but Hartley managed to drag his corpulence through this "murd gate." At the other end of the room was a depression with breakdown in it. The level we came in on appeared to end in breakdown.

It took most of an hour to find a route down through the breakdown in the depression. There may have been a waterfall audible below to entice us. We descended a series of intricate climbs and found ourselves in a thirty-foot high canyon. In a side passage was a 40-foot dome with a waterfall. Very pretty. There may be a passage at the top of this dome. Some narrow canyons and crawls brought us to a stream crawl twelve feet wide. This gradually got higher for 800 feet until we came to an unexpectedly huge room! Skirting a pit into which the stream sank, we arrived at

Awesome Chasm. Rocks toosed into it were lost in the dim depths.

Hartley found the way around the left side of this pit. We found ourselves growing more and more incredulous as we entered the impressive C.O.G. Room, with fifty foot ceiling and hundred foot width. It was now obvious, from the dry, unmarked floor, that we were exploring virgin cave. A left side passage led to a deep pit. Continuing ahead, we walked through a dry canyon and came to an incredibly high dome room. At the other end was a shaft, The Abyss. I dropped several rocks and was horrified by the swish sound they made before hitting the floor! Scoop!

To the left before the Abyss we followed a comfortable walking passage to a breakdown dome. Returning to the beginning of the large room, we followed the side passage near Awesome Chasm.

Survey

In September, 1971, the grotto returned to begin the mapping. Dave Beiter and Bill Walden started surveying at the entrance after a quick tour of the cave. Bob Wood and Bob Corbin began installing a bolt at the pit in the side passage at the bottom of the C.O.G. Room. Lee Watson and Jim Sharpe rigged The Abyss and surveyed the drop. They soon found the bottom of the pit Woody was rigging, just as he had the bolt all the way in. Fred Dickey and Lou Simpson began mapping at Bob's bolt. They mapped to the Abyss, then all the way to the upstream junction of the stream passage. While attempting to explore a high passage on the south side of the C.O.G. Room, the newly purchased grotto clinometer was misplaced. Fortunately there was a spare, but this limited the number of survey parties. Corbin and Wood explored an upper level between the C.O.G. Room and The Abyss. They said the climb to the upper level was difficult and dangerous because of unstable breakdown. We triangulated

KIDD CAVE

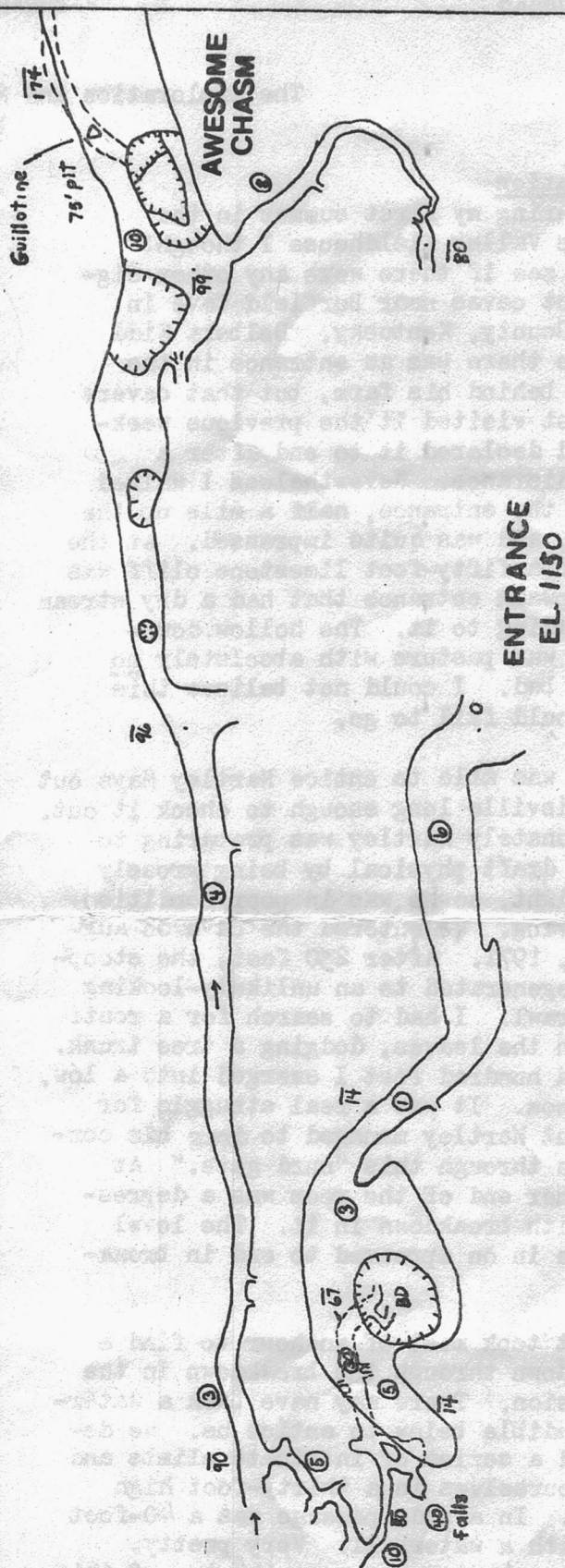
WAYNE CO., KY

TAPE AND COMPASS SURVEY

1971-1972

THE CENTRAL OHIO GROTTO

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY



Map drawn by Louis Simpson

Personnel:

D. Belter
F. Dickey
M. Flarida
C. Herel
E. Herel
S. Herel
T. Ramsey
J. Sharpe
E. Siebert
T. Siebert
L. Simpson
K. Smith
W. Walden
P. West
T. West
B. Unger

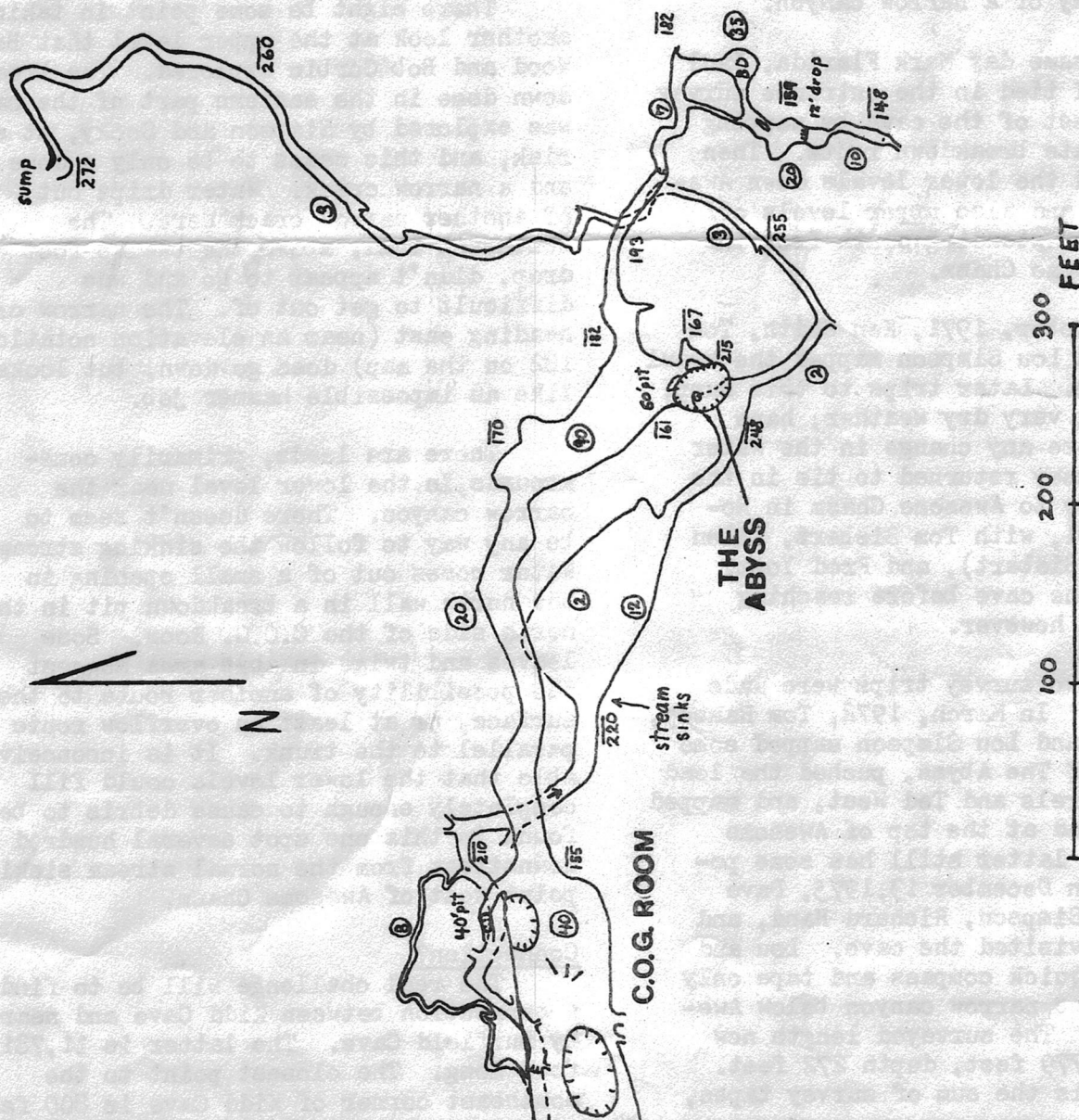
Legend:

159 = feet below entrance

(20) = ceiling height

Length: 4779 feet

Depth: 272 feet



Kidd Cave (Cont.)

on their light when they appeared at an overlook to find the ceiling height of 90 feet in the dome room before The Abyss. Sharpe and Watson reported reaching the sump at the end of a long crawl. Then they followed the canyons on the lower level and were able to climb out of Awesome Chasm without vertical gear.

On a later trip that same month, Ed, Carolyn, and Suzanne Herel and Ted West mapped the walking passage to the left of The Abyss. They found a crawl past the breakdown dome which led to a twenty-foot high room. A high lead twelve feet up the far wall was enticing. I climbed up using Ed's head for my last foothold. It only continued fifty feet except for a tight lead. I found another route back, by way of a narrow canyon.

That same day Mark Florida, Paul West, and I tied in the entrance survey with the rest of the cave by mapping the intricate breakdown route. Then we explored the lower levels down Awesome Chasm and also upper levels off the passage extending south from the top of Awesome Chasm.

In October, 1971, Ken Smith, Tom Ramsey, and Lou Simpson mapped the crawl to the sump. Later trips to this sump, even during very dry weather, have failed to see any change in the water level. Ramsey returned to tie in the crawl survey to Awesome Chasm in November, 1971, with Tom Siebert, Ellen Evans (now Siebert), and Fred Yost. Fred left the cave before reaching the survey, however.

Only two survey trips were made after 1971. In March, 1972, Tom Ramsey, Paul West, and Lou Simpson mapped some overlooks of The Abyss, pushed the lead found by Herels and Ted West, and mapped the side lead at the top of Awesome Chasm. The latter still has some potential. On December 13, 1975, Dave Socky, Lou Simpson, Richard Hand, and Barb Unger visited the cave. Lou and Barb did a quick compass and tape only survey of the narrow canyon below Awesome Chasm. The surveyed length now stands at 4779 feet, depth 272 feet. The length is the sum of survey tapes,

including some vertical shots.

Potential

There are leads that go. There is easily a thousand feet of clean-up to map in the many leads shown west of Awesome Chasm. Most of these are short, dendritic segments. Upstream has been pushed through some tight squeezes, under a breakdown block, to a wet crawl that hasn't been explored. There is a dry upper level in the lead south of Awesome Chasm, but it doesn't appear to extend very far. A high lead on the south side of the C.O.G. Room ended shortly in breakdown. The possibility of a lead at the top of the waterfall dome near the entrance was mentioned already. Examination of this with a superlight suggests further vertical extent.

There might be some point in taking another look at the upper level that Bob Wood and Bob Corbin explored. The breakdown dome in the eastern part of the cave was explored by Simpson and Socky, at some risk, and this seems to be only a dome and a narrow crack. Water drips out of another narrow crack here. The southeast lead, above the twelve foot drop, didn't appear to go and was difficult to get out of. The narrow crack heading east (near an elevation notation 182 on the map) does go down, but looks like an impossible hammer job.

There are leads, primarily come-arounds, in the lower level near the narrow canyon. There doesn't seem to be any way to follow the sinking stream. Water comes out of a small opening in the north wall in a breakdown pit in the north side of the C.O.G. Room. Some leaves and twigs in this area suggest the possibility of another route to the surface, or at least an overflow route parallel to the trunk. It is inconceivable that the lower levels could fill completely enough to cause debris to be found in this one spot several hundred feet downstream from the normal stream sinking-point west of Awesome Chasm.

Connection?

The real challenge will be to find a connection between Kidd Cave and nearby Burfield Cave. The latter is 11,781.5 feet long. The closest point to the southeast corner of Kidd Cave is 800 feet

Kidd Cave (cont.)

east and 640 feet south of Kidd. Unfortunately vertical control in Burfield is almost totally lacking. The elevation at the southeast corner of Kidd is a hundred feet below the valley floor, so this would be no obstacle, presumably. The part of Burfield that is closest to Kidd is the highest, driest part, featuring very high domes and breakdown. There is definitely some potential in this section of Burfield, but it is a difficult place to explore because of the vertical relief.

Even more challenging is the prospect of an undiscovered major cave system draining Blue Hole Hollow, the mile-long karst valley south of Burfield Cave. Only minor caves are known in the valley. Many caves are known in the valley north of Kidd, but these have failed to develop into much. However, there are many apparent entrances along KY1729 between Burfield and Barrier that haven't ever been looked at.

CROSS-CANYON CAVE

BY Dean Redshaw

This cave was first visited by COG members in November, 1975, when Paul Unger led a group to Hammons Camp on Lake Cumberland, beyond the Cave Creek area. Said group included Carolyn Herel, Ken Smith, Bruce Warthman, and the Redshaws. We first explored a pit near the camp, where we required the use of a cable ladder which enabled Ken and Paul to determine that the pit was self-limited, approximately 60 feet in depth. The top 25 feet or so were free climbed, the bottom part required the ladder. We then crossed the canyon below the camp where Bruce and Carolyn entered a crawl entrance. Then began a comedy of errors. Bruce, at the suggestion of Carolyn, pushed a side lead near the entrance which led back out to the canyon wall on the left of the "main" entrance, but Bruce required at least a half hour of hard crawling and digging to come out. I had meanwhile gone to the outside of the second entrance, and hearing Bruce, assumed that the cave was a simple come-around

so I urged and encouraged Bruce until he emerged, dusty and breathless. From thence Bruce did hurry lakeward to wash the sand from his beard. Meanwhile, Phyllis had followed Carolyn and together they went into the interior of the cave where they found a lead to the right and down, which gave them access to the criss-crossing main canyon trunk of the cave at a lower level. An intersecting canyon was found full of water. On the way to the lower water passage considerable drapery, flowstone, and other formations decorate the cave, although much is muddy from being sub-lake part of the time. Meanwhile, back on the surface, Unger and Smith are looking for other surface leads and after ten to fifteen minutes Bruce was persuaded to admit that there was indeed a cave in that hillside, and that when he left her, Carolyn was following the main passage which had opened up. With this bit of knowledge to spur us on, Unger and I prepared to enter the cave and Bruce followed us. We soon found the girls in the lower canyon, changing carbide. We retraced their lead toward the lower water canyon, and then ~~returning to the upper entrance passage,~~ pushed it to its termination. We noted a second left-leading crawlway which promised to connect to the outside canyon at a lower level. Not much more was seen in November. We returned to the surface and followed a grouching Ken back to the vehicles.

In January, 1976, when we returned to Cross-Canyon Cave, we were accompanied by Carolyn Herel, Bruce Warthman, and Dave Socky. We first visited Link's Cave, a small but pleasant cave north of Burnside, KY. Since it was bitterly cold outside, we lingered much longer than necessary in Link's Cave, enjoying our lunch, and reluctantly leaving its pleasant warmth to face the freezing wind outside.

Remembering the waterfilled canyon in Cross-Canyon, we took with us 100' of 3/8" rope and a 40' length of nylon clothesline. With the latter we sounded the bottom of the canyon and knotted the line for later measurement. At the point of measure, the water was 28' deep and the ceiling of the canyon was about 10'

Cross-Canyon Cave (cont.)

above the water. We then belayed Dave across the water-filled passage and he pushed some distance until he again faced more water to cross. We agreed that a team effort and lower water level would be needed in some future survey trip; wet suits and flotation gear would be helpful.

Following the main lower lead back upstream, we found an estimated 50' of vertical relief above the water passage, and while Phyllis and Carolyn pushed one lead, we found an upper level side lead which breathed cold air, which may be a potential entrance. While most obvious leads have been explored, there are more to be pushed, especially in the downstream area where the deep water passage limits access. Since the entire cave is yet to be surveyed, Cross-Canyon cave will afford some interesting future suck-ins. The name is derived from the interesting pattern of 3 or 4 levels of canyons intertwining repeatedly across each other.

While we explored, we had left our jackets a little way inside the entrance. Coming back, we saw a cave rat, for whom we left some gorp as a neighborly gesture. The ingrate! - Phyllis found he had chewed the elbow out of her sweat jacket.

RAFT TRIP ON THE CHEAT RIVER, W. VA.

On May 8, we will make a raft trip on the wild and beautiful Cheat River. Plans include camping near there Friday night, meeting for the raft trip at 11:00 a.m. at Albright, camping Saturday night and return home Sunday. This will be under the leadership of the Mountain Streams and Trails Outfitters, experienced guides. Send \$25 to Phyllis Redshaw, Route 1, Amanda, Ohio 43102, as soon as possible to assure your space. Cancellation and refund is permissible up to 2 weeks before the trip, so send dough even if you think you might go. Absolute, utter deadline for reservations is March 29 (to Phyllis) but make it earlier if possible.

CONGRATULATIONS TO Mr. and Mrs. Paul Rowley for their new little caver, Christopher William, 7 lb, 12 1/2 oz., born April 6.

Central Ohio Grotto
of NSS
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