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THE CAVES OF VAL VERDE COUNTY

Edited by James R. Reddell

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TEXAS SPELEOLOGICAL SURVEY

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THE CAVES OF VAL VERDE COUNTY

GEOLOGY

Val Verde County occupies 3,242 square miles in the southwest part of the state. It has a mean annual temperature of 73° and an average annual rainfall of 18.6 inches. Its rolling hills of brush country are dissected by numerous deep valleys and the gorges of the Pecos and Devils Rivers. Both of these rivers are tributaries of the Rio Grande which borders the county on the south and are the only perennial streams in the county. The Pecos River is fed by springs as it crosses the county; the Devils River which arises in the central part of the county owes its entire existence to springs. The largest springs in the county are Goodenough Springs where 100,000 gallons per minute flows from an eight foot diameter hole at the base of a limestone cliff, and San Felipe Springs near Del Rio whose 55,000 gallons per minute are used to supply the city. The total relief in the county is 1300' and may be as much as 500' locally.

The majority of Val Verde County is located on the Edwards Plateau. It overlaps a little into two other physiographic provinces—the Stockton Plateau and the Gulf Coastal Plain. The Pecos River is the arbitrary dividing line between the Edwards Plateau to the east and the Stockton Plateau to the west. It runs the length of the county in a general south-southeast direction through the western part. The Balcones Fault Zone, which divides the Edwards Plateau to the north from the Gulf Coastal Plain to the south, diminishes to a monocline by the time it reaches Val Verde County. This monocline and some minor faulting are discernable immediately north of Del Rio in the southeast corner of the county.

The surface geology of Val Verde County is rather simple. Rocks of Cretaceous age outcrop over the entire county. Little geologic work has been done, however, and there is some dispute over the exact ages and equivalences of some of the formations.

These outcropping rocks and other older subsurface rocks, also Cretaceous, are underlain by a complex of Paleozoic plutonic and metamorphic rocks. In a few places possible post-Cretaceous movement of the Paleozoic strata is reflected on the surface by anticlines.

The Comstock or Kelly Anticline is an elongate dome at the town of Comstock in the south central part of the county. It is about five miles long and three miles wide with its axis trending west-northwest. The steepest dip, approximately one and one half degrees, occurs on the northeast side.

The Pandale Anticline extends northeast from Pandale across Crockett and Terrell Counties. Within Val Verde County the dip varies but does not exceed about four degrees. Another anticlinal structure occurs near Devils Lake at Lake Walk. It is known as the Lake Walk Anticline and trends east-west.

There are four principal distinct lithologically defined formations occurring in the county—the Devils River limestone, the Del Rio clay, the Buda limestone, and the Boquillas flags. The Austin Chalk forms a minor part of the outcrops in the extreme southwestern part of the county. The Devils River limestone is sometimes called the Georgetown formation. It is supposedly equivalent to the Georgetown, Comanche Peak, and Edwards of Central Texas, but the facies which occurs in Val Verde County has been designated a single formation. It outcrops throughout most of the county, but is restricted to the creek and canyon bottoms in the

western and southern part. It is the dominant formation in the northeastern part of the county and has a measured thickness of 662.5 feet near Dolan Creek. Its thickness to the southwest exceeds one thousand feet. The Devils River is mostly a dark gray massive limestone with many rudistid reef beds and some prominent dolomitic beds. As such, it is a good cave-former, and most of the caves in the county occur in it.

Just above the Devils River limestone is the Del Rio clay which lies between the two dominant cave-forming limestones. It is a dark gray and red, sandy clay interbedded with thin, sandy limestone flags. Its thickness ranges from zero in the western and northern parts of the county to 200 feet at Del Rio.

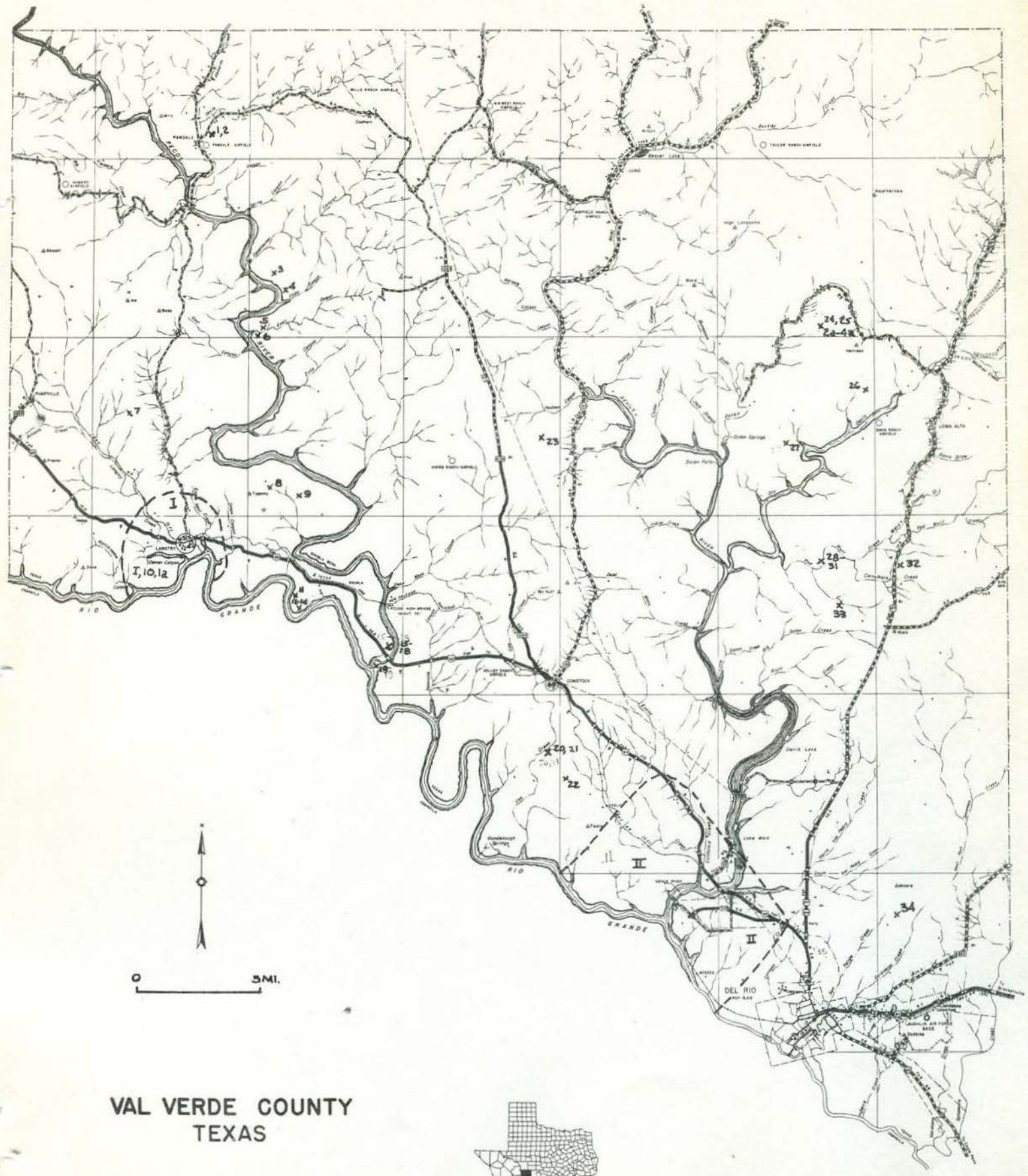
Above the Del Rio clay is the Buda limestone, the second most important cave-former in Val Verde County. It occurs in outcrops over most of the western and southern parts of the county, but is absent except as weathered remnants in the northeastern part. It caps many of the hills in the southern part forming small mesas. The Buda ranges in thickness from about 40 feet in the western part of the county to 80 feet in the southern part. It is a dense, sublithographic limestone with occasional beds of marly nodular limestone. Speleologically it is subordinate to the Devils River limestone because it is much thinner and less consistent in its lithology.

The highest formation exposed in the county is the Boquillas Formation which occurs predominantly in the western part of the county, capping the rounded hills. It is composed of interbedded shales and thin-bedded flaggy limestones. Because of its characteristic flaggy structure it is not a cave-former, although the entrance of some caves occurs in it where it has collapsed over previously formed caves in the Buda. The Boquillas has a measured thickness of 191 feet on the Fisher Ranch in the southwest part of the county. In the extreme southwest part of the county about 90 feet of Austin Chalk occurs. It is composed of chalk beds with interbedded, platy, calcareous clays and hence is of no speleologic importance.

Although intensive work has been done in Val Verde County during the last few years, this work has been limited to a few areas and, as is indicated on the location map, large parts of the county remain untouched. The known caves in the county appear in the more accessible regions, especially around Langtry, Del Rio, and near Loma Alta. Only recently has any work been done in the much rougher country along the Pecos River. The area around Shumla and much of the Pandale area remains untouched. Other caves are reported in areas already briefly investigated and the county will doubtlessly prove one, if not the most important of the speleologic areas in the state.

Because of the amount of work that has been done in the county, it has proved impractical to issue it all as a single body of work. A special issue on the Caves of Langtry has already appeared as Vol. 1, No. 2, of the Texas Speleological Survey, but is unfortunately now out of print. Two other issues are being prepared for publication. One of these will cover the Caves of the Amistad Dam Area. This area is under intensive geologic study by the International Boundary and Water Commission, and the caves are under particular study. Since these caves will either be plugged with cement or flooded by the reservoir a special attempt will be made to present complete information on each cave in a special report. The second report in progress is one on the Shelter Caves of Val Verde County. There are presently more than 200 shelters known in the county, many of which have been excavated or are marked for excavation in the near future. It is hoped to be able to complete our knowledge of Val Verde County with this issue.

NOTE: Acknowledgements are made to the following biologists for their identification of invertebrate fauna for the Texas Speleological Survey: spiders — Dr. W. J. Gertsch, American Museum of Natural History; millipeds — Dr. Nell B. Causey, University of Arkansas; beetles — Dr. Horace R. Burke, Texas A & M College; Rhadine beetles — Dr. Thomas C. Barr, Jr., University of Kentucky; cockroaches — Dr. Harry D. Pratt, Communicable Disease Center; fleas — Dr. J.S. Wiseman, Texas Department of Public Health.



VAL VERDE COUNTY
TEXAS

x 10 CAVE LOCATION
KEYED TO INDEX

KEY TO COUNTIES

INDEX TO THE CAVES OF VAL VERDE COUNTY

II. The Caves of the Amistad Dam Area

Amistad Crack Cave	Del Rio	20'	15'	
Breakdown Cave	Del Rio	50'	15'	
Brite Trash Cave	Del Rio	25'	15'	
Bulldozer Crevice	Del Rio	10'	30'	
Bulldozer Crevice	Del Rio	?	50'+	
Calyx Hole Cave	Del Rio	200'	50'	
Diable Cave	Del Rio	6,000'	0'	
Diablo Crack	Del Rio	30'	40'	
Dirt Hole	Del Rio	15'	20'	
Dusty Cave	Del Rio	300'	98'	
Dynamite Cave	Del Rio	200'	55'	
Elliot Spider Cave	Del Rio	70'	25'	
Fizzled Fissure	Del Rio	5'	20'	
Little Diablo Cave	Del Rio	200'+	0'	
Little Dusty Cave	Del Rio	50'	25'	
Popcorn Ball Cave	Del Rio	25'	25'	
Roadside Cave	Del Rio	50'	30'	
Rotting Snake Cave	Del Rio	90'	25'	
Soto Cave	Del Rio	175'	50'	
Spider Cave	Del Rio	15'	20'	
Sunset Cave	Del Rio	60'	30'	
Cave # 8	Del Rio	?	?	
Cave # 8½	Del Rio	?	?	
Ladder Cave	Del Rio	600'	150'	
Unnamed cave (41VV1)	Del Rio	25'	0'	
Castle Canyon Cave	Del Rio	200' ?	0'	
Castle Canyon Crawl No. 1	Del Rio	?	?	
Castle Canyon Crawl No. 2	Del Rio	?	?	
Figueroa Cave	Del Rio	?	?	
Johnny's Cave	Del Rio	?	?	

Caves Included in This Report But Not Numbered on the Location Map

Crevice Cave	Lake Walk	140'	12'	8
Dead Sheep Cave	Lake Walk	30'	7'	12
Dusty Bone Cave	Pandale	40'	0'	15
Fishing Hole Cave	Lake Walk	70'	0'	22
Javalina Cave	Shumla	90'+	0'	34
Oberkampf Crawlway Cave	Pandale	680'	25'	41
Oberkampf Ranch Cave	Pandale	1,528'	15'	41
Walk Crawl	Lake Walk	50'	0'	50
Whistling Wind Cave	Shumla	102'	0'	51
Unnamed cave (41VV38)	Satan Canyon	50'	0'	52

DOUBTFUL CAVES:

1a. Unnamed sink	Langtry	6'	10'	53
2a. Whitehead Ranch Cave No. 2	Loma Alta	10'	10'	53
3a. Whitehead Ranch Cave No. 3	Loma Alta	4'	4'	53
4a. Whitehead Ranch Cave No. 4	Loma Alta	?	?	53

ALTERNATE CAVE NAMES:

Bat Cave — Fern Cave
Cauthorn Cave — Desert Rose Cave
Doak Ranch Bat Cave — Oriente Milestone Molasses Bat Cave
Pecos River High Bridge Cave — Moorehead Cave
Quigg's Water Well — Quigg Sinkhole
Rose Cave — Abominable Sinkhole
Rose Sinkhole — Abominable Sinkhole
Sally Cave — Four-Mile Cave
Val Verde Sink — Abominable Sinkhole
White's Indian Cave — Murrah Cave

ABOMINABLE SINKHOLE (VAL VERDE SINK) (ROSE CAVE) (ROSE SINKHOLE) Val Verde County (# 22)

Feely 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Ab Rose

Description: The entrance to the cave is a large circular hole about 40' in diameter, located in the middle of a flat plateau. It drops 130' to the top of a mountain of breakdown sloping in one direction into a large circular room. This room is about 250' across and almost filled with breakdown. The ceiling is about 40' high and comes down to meet the floor at the edge of the room. Here a fine calcite "frost" with several helictites are found growing. No passages lead from the sink or room. The cave is quite dangerous to explore because of the nature of the rock in which the entrance is formed. The first 40' is a very loose gravel and clay conglomerate, just below which is a small ledge useful for resting; below the gravel and conglomerate level a shaly calcareous siltstone, quite loose, continues to the bottom of the cave where solid limestone begins. There appears to be no eresion or weathering at all, possibly suggesting a fairly recent origin for the sink. Total depth of the cave is estimated at 300'.

Biology: Several skeletons of the Great Horned Owl, Bubo virginianus, were found in the cave, as well as one raven skeleton. A variety of mammal skeletons were found on top of the breakdown within the cave, obvious victims of a fall. One bat, a hibernating Pipistrellus was observed, but the cave is not a bat cave. It appears to also have been occupied by the Cave Swallow, Petrochelidon fulva pallida, as evidenced by old nests found under slabs of recent breakdown.

History: The cave has been known locally for several years and is marked as a shaft on the Feely topo map. It is believed to have been first entered by Dr. Lytle Adams and other naturalists in their examinations of caves for bats to use in Project X-ray, the Navy bat bomb project. The cave and this exploration are described thusly: "Next to that /i.e. Devil's Sinkhole/ in depth is Rose Cave, which apparently hadn't been explored before. "We gathered up hundreds of feet of barbed wire fence, and with short sections of brush for rungs, improvised a ladder and reached the bottom...!" (Mohr, 1948) The cave was re-entered on January 27, 1957, by Dr. Richard Davis, Bill Helmer, Ken Baker, and Charles Whiteman. It is not believed to have been entered since that time.

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Mohr, Charles E. "Texas Bat Caves Served in Three Wars." The Caves of Texas, pp. 90-91. Bulletin Ten of the National Speleological Society. April 1948.
Selander, Robert K. and James Kenneth Baker. "The Cave Swallow in Texas." The Condor, Vol. 59, No. 6, pp. 346 and 351. November-December 1957.
Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 6. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, pp. 1-310, 311. Published by the Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May, 1959.

Ref: TSS files

CENTIPEDE CAVE (41VV191) Val Verde County (# 12)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Rufus (Bob) Williams

Description: "Centipede Cave is an intermediate-sized rock shelter having a width at its mouth of 44 feet, and a front-to-back depth of 37.5 feet. The shelter faces southeast. The roof is extensively fire-blackened and arches stongly near the rear of the shelter. It varies from 6 to 11 feet in height over the deposit. Pictographs were found on both walls near the mouth of the shelter. The rear wall is decorated with the names of local Boy Scouts. The surface of the deposit sloped upwards five feet from front to back and was dry. A relatively light accumulation of sheep dung overlay fiber and dust which was mixed, in places, with small quantities of burned rock. Fragments of wood, cordage, sandals, and quids were visible on the surface. Outside the shelter, a light deposit of burned rock trailed down the steep slope in front of the cave mouth." (Epstein, 1960, p. 10) (See map, pages 9-10)

Archaeology: Like Damp Cave, this cave was the subject of intensive treatment by the Texas Archeological Salvage Project and is completely described in the report by Epstein (1960); therefore, no attempt will be made to do more than briefly summarize their findings. The discovery of very clear and definite stratigraphic units in the cave make it of unusual interest in a cultural study of the area. A total of 516 chipped stone tools were removed from the cave. Langtry, Ensor, and Abasolo were the most common points found. The following types of artifacts and perishable materials were found in the cave: ground stone, shell and bone artifacts, painted pebbles, cordage, netting, basketry, matting, sandals, knotted fiber, pointed sticks, stakes, wedges, a split and tied stick, fire hearths, a drill, a miniature cradle (?), a cactus spine bundle, tied bundles, prickly pear internodes, and skin and leather pieces. It appears to have been inhabited from 7000 B.C. to the 16th century. The skeletal remains of two or more individuals were found, but did not appear to be burials.

Paleontology: The following skeletal material was removed from the cave:

Class Osteichthyes
- Lepisosteus sp. (gar)
- Carpoides carpio (carp)
- Ictalurus furcatus (blue catfish)
- Pilodictus olivaris (flathead cat)
- Micropterus salmoides (large mouth bass)

Class Reptilia
- Order Serpentes
- Order Lacertilia
  - Gehrronotus sp. (alligator lizard)
  - Phrynosoma sp. (horned lizard)
- Order Chelonia
  - Trionyx sp. (soft shell turtle)

Class Aves

Class Mammalia
- Order Chiroptera
  - Eumops peretis (bat)

Order Carnivora
Conepatus mesoleucus (hog-nosed skunk)
Spilogale putorius (spotted skunk)
Procyon lotor (raccoon)
Bassariscus astutus (ringtail)
Urocyon cinereoargenteus (gray fox)
Order Rodentia
Citellus variegatus (black squirrel)
Citellus mexicanus (ground squirrel)
Citellus leucurus (ground squirrel)
Citellus spilosoma (ground squirrel)
Castor canadensis (beaver)
Neotoma albigula (packrat)
Neotoma mexicanus (packrat)
Sigmodon ochrognathus (cotton rat)
Sigmodon hispidus (cotton rat)
Geomys sp. (gopher)
Erithizon dorsatum (porcupine)
Order Artiodactyla
Odocoileus virginianus (whitetail deer)
Bison or Bos (bison or cattle)
Order Lagomorpha
Lepus californicus (jack rabbit)
Sylvalagus floridana (florida cottontail)
Sylvalagus audoboni (desert cottontail)
Order Primates
Homo sapiens (man)

Bibliography: Anonymous. "News: University of Texas." The Texas Caver, Vol. VII, No. 9, p. 115. September, 1962.
Epstein, Jeremiah F. "The Amistad Dam Archeological Salvage Project." Engineering-Science News, Vol. 8, No. 1. Reprinted under the title "Cave Living -- 7000 B.C." in The Texas Caver, Vol. VII, No. 4, p. 57. April, 1962.
Epstein, Jeremiah F. Centipede and Damp Caves: Excavations in Val Verde County, Texas, 1958. Austin: September, 1960.
Frank, Ruben M. "Cave Paleontology: Part II." The Texas Caver, Vol. VI, No. 8, p. 95. August, 1961.

Ref: TSS files

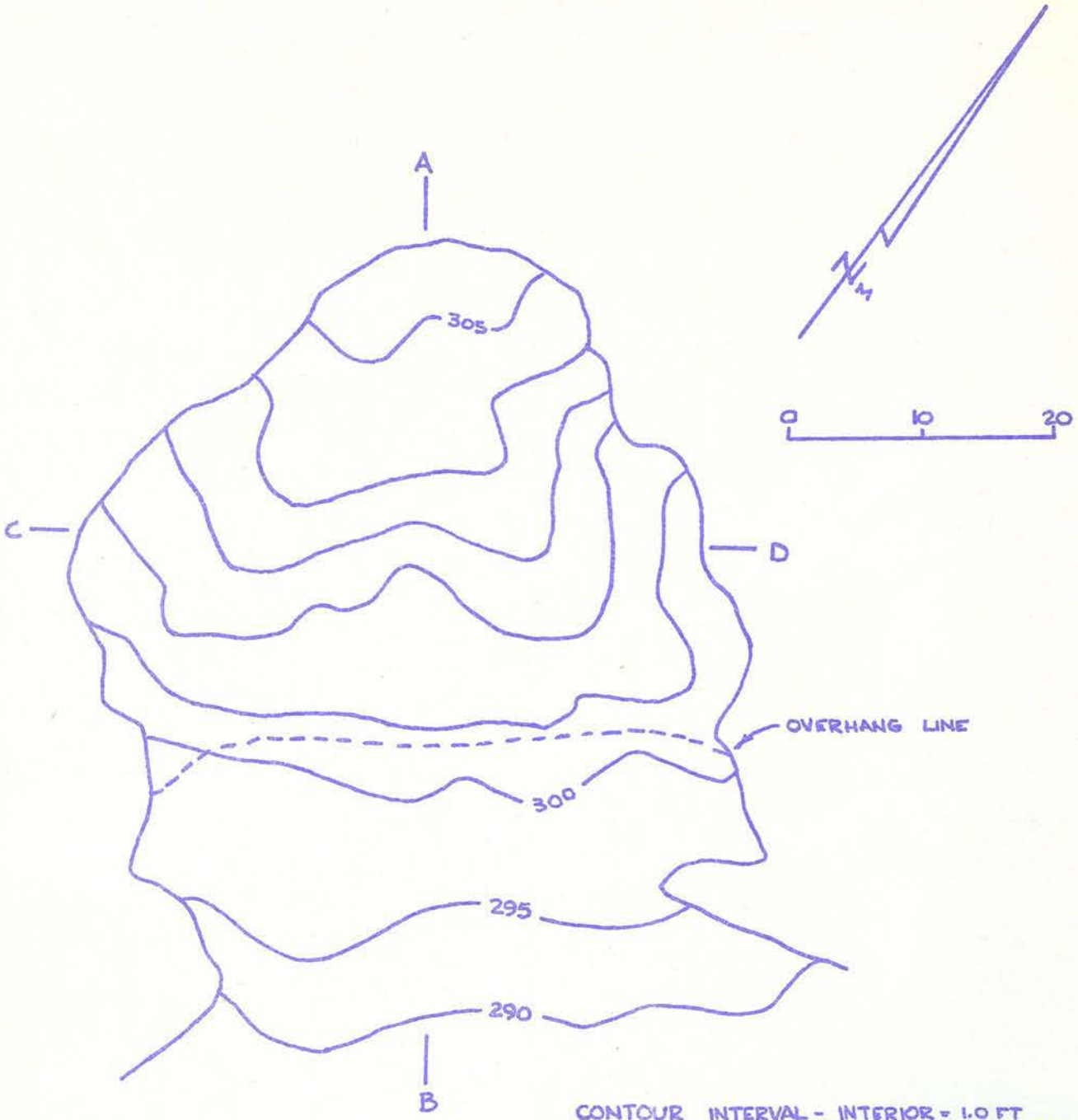
CREVICE CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

Devil's Lake 15' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The entrance is an easily climbable 10'-12' deep crevice, which drops to a gravel floor. The cave runs only about 20' southwest, but extends about 120' northeast to a second entrance on a bluff overlooking the Devil's River below Lake Walk Dam. The passage is about 5' wide and 5'-8' high. It is not possible to get out of sight of light. It was explored by Johnny Greer.

Ref: Johnny Greer

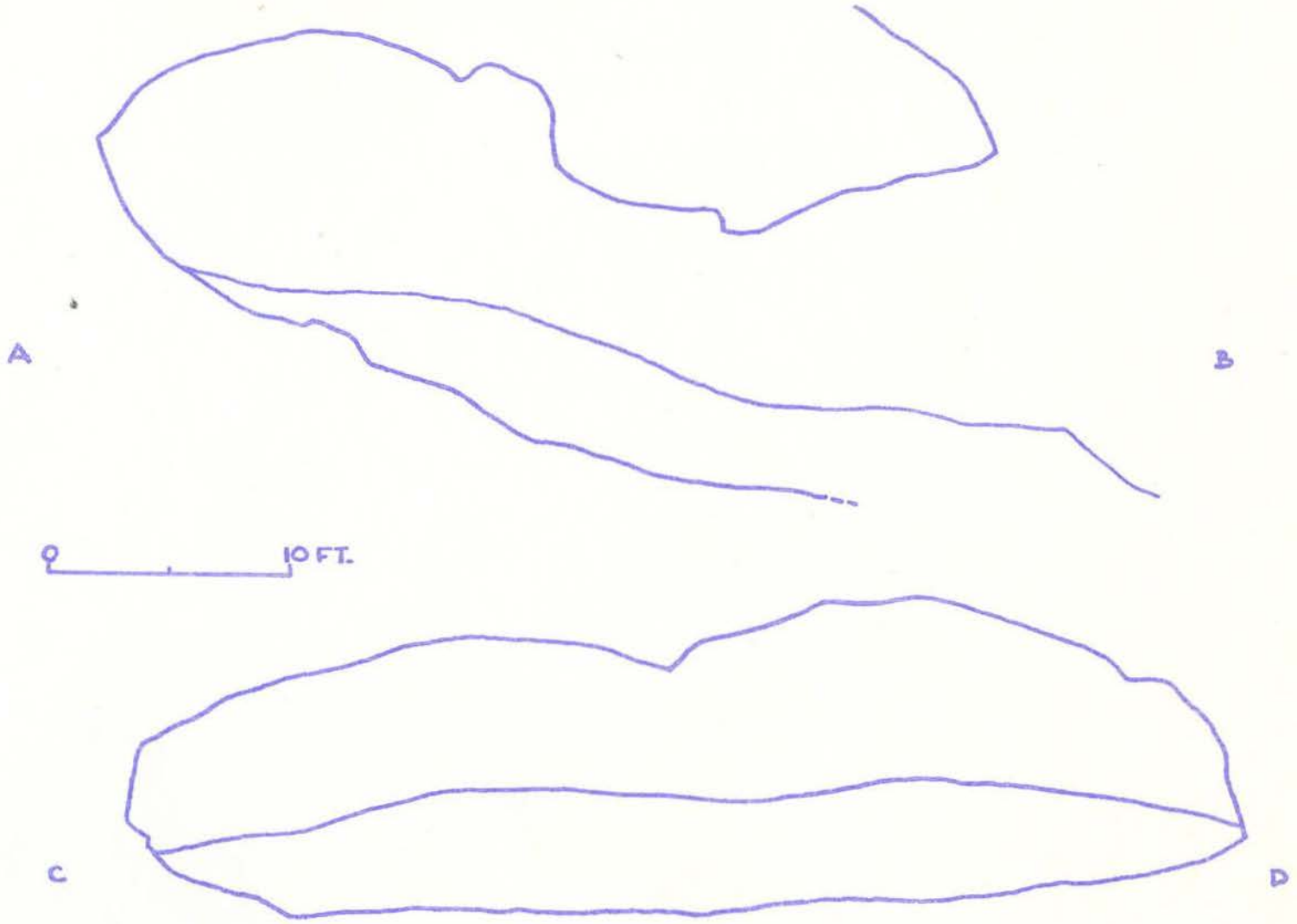


CONTOUR INTERVAL - INTERIOR = 1.0 FT
TALUS SLOPE = 5.0 FT.

CENTIPEDE CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

ALIDADE & TAPE SURVEY
FALL, 1958



CROSS-SECTIONS
CENTIPEDE CAVE
VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

DAMP CAVE (41VV189) Val Verde County (# 11)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Rufus (Bob) Williams

Description: "The mouth of the shelter faces due west and is 25.5 feet across. The long axis of the site runs north and south and is 36 feet. The roof is unblackened, deeply creviced, and has large concavities where fragments of the roof have fallen. Its average height over the deposit was between 5 and 6 feet. In several places near the mouth of the shelter water dripped from the crevices on to the deposit. The fill surface sloped downwards 4.5 feet from front to back. Outside at the cave mouth was a thick burned rock midden that clung to the steep slope outside the shelter until it reached the edge of the bluff, where it dropped 100 feet to the "vega" of the Rio Grande. With the exception of one small area underneath a large boulder all of Damp Cave was excavated." (Epstein, 1960) (See map, pages 13-14)

Archaeology: Since this cave was thoroughly treated in the report by Epstein (1960) nothing more than a brief summary of the findings made during its excavation by the Texas Archeological Salvage Project are given. A total of 548 chipped stone tools were removed from the cave, including points, bifacials and scrapers. The largest number of points were Langtry, Ensor, and Frio. Other artifacts found included: ground stone, bone and shell artifacts, painted pebbles, cordage, matting, knotted fiber, sandals, pointed sticks, a wooden knife (?), a pounded stalk, cut sticks, prickly pear internodes, and possibly a leather fragment. There was good stratigraphic evidence in the cave indicating possible habitation from 7000 B.C. to the 16th century. The cave also contains pictographs. The skeletal remains of 3 or more individuals were found.

Paleontology: A faunal list of vertebrate remains from the cave follows:

Class Osteichthyes
- Lepisosteus sp. (gar)
- Carpoides carpio (carp)
- Ictalurus furcatus (blue catfish)

Class Reptilia
- Trionyx sp. (soft shell turtle)

Class Mammalia
- Order Carnivora
  - Urocyon cinereoargenteus (gray fox)
  - Procyon lotor (raccoon)
  - Spilogale putorius (spotted skunk)
  - Mephitis mephitis (skunk)
  - Bassariscus astutus (ringtail)
  - Canis latrans (coyote)
- Order Perissodactyla
  - Equus sp. (horse)
- Order Artiodactyla
  - Ovis sp. (sheep, domestic)
  - Odocoileus virginianus (whitetail deer)
- Order Rodentia
  - Sigmodon hispidus (cotton rat)
  - Castor canadensis (beaver)
  - Citellus mexicanus (ground squirrel)
  - Citellus spilosoma (ground squirrel)
  - Citellus variegatus (ground squirrel)

Neotoma sp. (pack rat)
Ondatra zibethica (muskrat)
Order Lagomorpha
Lepus californicus (jack rabbit)
Sylvalagus sp. (cottontail)
Order Primates
Homo sapiens (man)

Bibliography: Epstein, Jeremiah F. "The Amistad Dam Archeological Salvage Project." Engineering-Science News, Vol. 8, No. 1. Reprinted under the title "Cave Living — 7000 B.C." in The Texas Caver, Vol. VII, No. 4, p. 57. April, 1962.
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Frank, Ruben M. "Cave Paleontology: Part II." The Texas Caver, Vol. VI, No. 8, p. 95. August, 1961.

Ref: TSS files

DEAD SHEEP CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

Devil's Lake 15' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave is a small crawl, 6' wide, 3'-4' high, and 25'-30' long. A small hole (1.5' in diameter) goes up 7' to an opening. The floor is covered with 2"-6" of squarish limestone rocks and no dirt. Flint artifacts were found in the mouth of the cave. It was explored by Johnny Greer.

Ref: Johnny Greer

DESERT ROSE CAVE (CAUTHORN CAVE) — Val Verde County (# 2)

No quadrangle

Owner: R. J. Everett

Description: A 10' in diameter, 30' sink drops into a large breakdown-filled room about 100' long. The cave is frequently visited by local people. The name is derived from an accumulation of desert rose crystals on the walls. A horse skeleton was found in the cave. Fauna includes bats and crickets.

Ref: Mills Tandy

DONDOLE CAVE — Val Verde County (# 1)

No quadrangle

Owner: R. J. Everett (Metcafe Ranch)

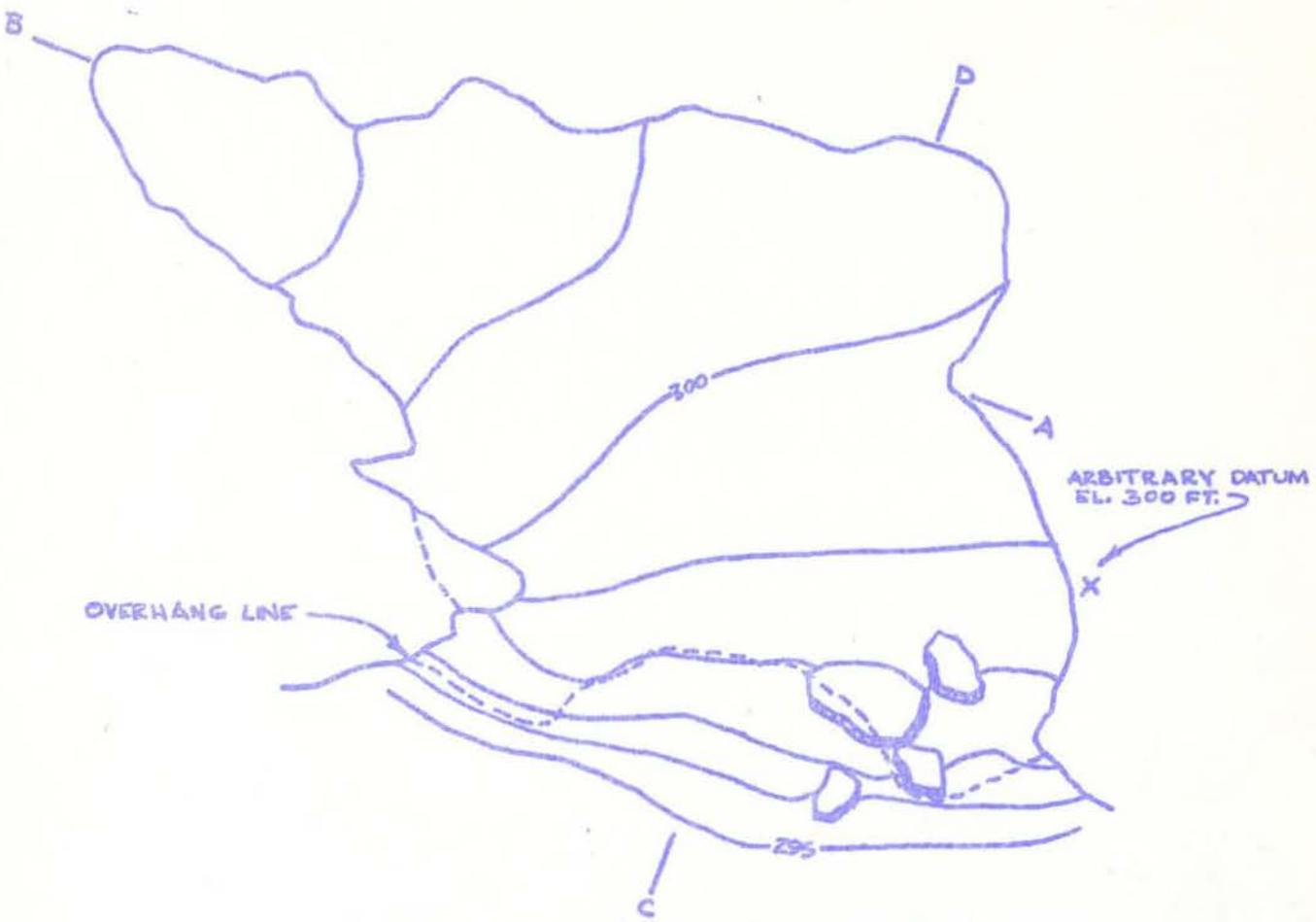
Description: The cave is entered by a 10' deep sink about 9' in diameter. At the bottom of the sink a talus slope leads down for about 10'. At the bottom of the slope the cave continues as a straight passage for about 60' before a side passage connects with the main passage. From the 10' long side passage the cave goes two ways - to the north or left paralleling the entrance passage, and to the right or south. The left passage extends about 40' to a dead-end. The right-hand passage extends as a long straight tunnel with numerous pits, some almost 25' deep, and a very high ceiling with possible upper levels. After about 150' of walking and traversing crevice-type pits, a passage extends to the

from the Bat Room leads for 150' to a junction with two other passages at a breakdown on the left. Climbing over the breakdown mound, to the right one enters a 100' wide, 10' high passage floored with large breakdown blocks and containing a few formations. After about 150' the passage makes a sharp turn to the left and drops into a clay-filled depression, ending abruptly. The ceiling height in this depression is about 20', but the ceiling remains level with that in the rest of the passage. By continuing to the left at the breakdown mound one enters a 200' long passage filled with a forest of totem poles, stalagmites, and stalactites with the ceiling covered with thousands of large Mayfield-type helictites. Breakdown on the floor of the passage is covered with flowstone. Near the end of the passage a climb down from the breakdown leads onto a flat clay-filled area. Here are to be found the largest of the helictites. A wall of formations has formed a small alcove at the end of the passage, which may be reached by crawling through the formations. From the breakdown mound the main passage, known as the Hall of Totem Poles, continues as a 50'-60' wide, 20' high passage for about 300' where it makes an acute turn to the left and continues for a few hundred feet before ending in a dirt-filled depression. A large clay-filled depression also occurs at the bend in the passage. This is by far the most beautiful passage in the cave. A line of joint-controlled totem poles and stalagmites form a wall of orange and white. The passage here is split in two by the glistening columns and totem poles. On the right side a slope leads down to a flat clay-filled area, while on the left crystal-clear pools may be found in a number of travertine dams. The first part of the cave contains little breakdown not covered by flowstone, but at the bend in the passage much breakdown is exposed and continues until the depression at the end of the passage. Near the end of the passage a beautiful snow-white pillar rises 15'. This is one of the most beautiful caves in the state and the lack of vandalism in it makes it notable. The owner has allowed few people to explore it and will probably continue to let few in. Fauna includes bats and millipeds. (See map, page 19)

Geology: The plan of Fawcett's Cave is a strange one. The large, very wide passages are obviously joint-controlled. It is formed in the Devil's River limestone of Cretaceous age. The depressions at the end of most of the passages are quite unusual. The reason for these depressions is not known, but they may indicate the presence of large, filled pits. The only passage that does not end in this manner is the lowest in the cave and it fills with clay at the end. The other passages end suddenly in large depressions containing no breakdown while the ceilings remain level with those of the rest of the passage. The main portions of the passages are floored with large, flat breakdown and have flat, regular ceilings. The appearance of the end of each passage is that of a rounded pit now completely filled.

History: The cave has been known locally for over 30 years, but the first report in the files of the University of Texas Grotto was by Bob Hudson in 1951. The entrance drop was reported as 70' with 100' of rope required, so apparently it had not been entered by UTG cavers at that time. The next reported exploration was made by Mills Tandy, Scotty Moore, and James Pitts of the Ozona Grotto on March 8, 1958. At that time they explored only part of the cave. Other trips were made by members of the Ozona Grotto to complete exploration and to photograph the cave. It was mapped on March 25, 1961, by James Reddell, Dudley Roberts, Mills Tandy, and David Normand of the University of Texas Grotto.

Bibliography: Anonymous. "News of the Grottoes: University of Texas." The Texas Caver, Vol. VI, No. 4, p. 47. April, 1961.



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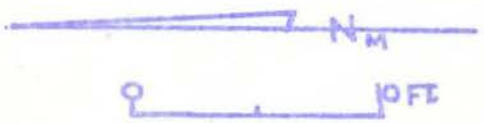
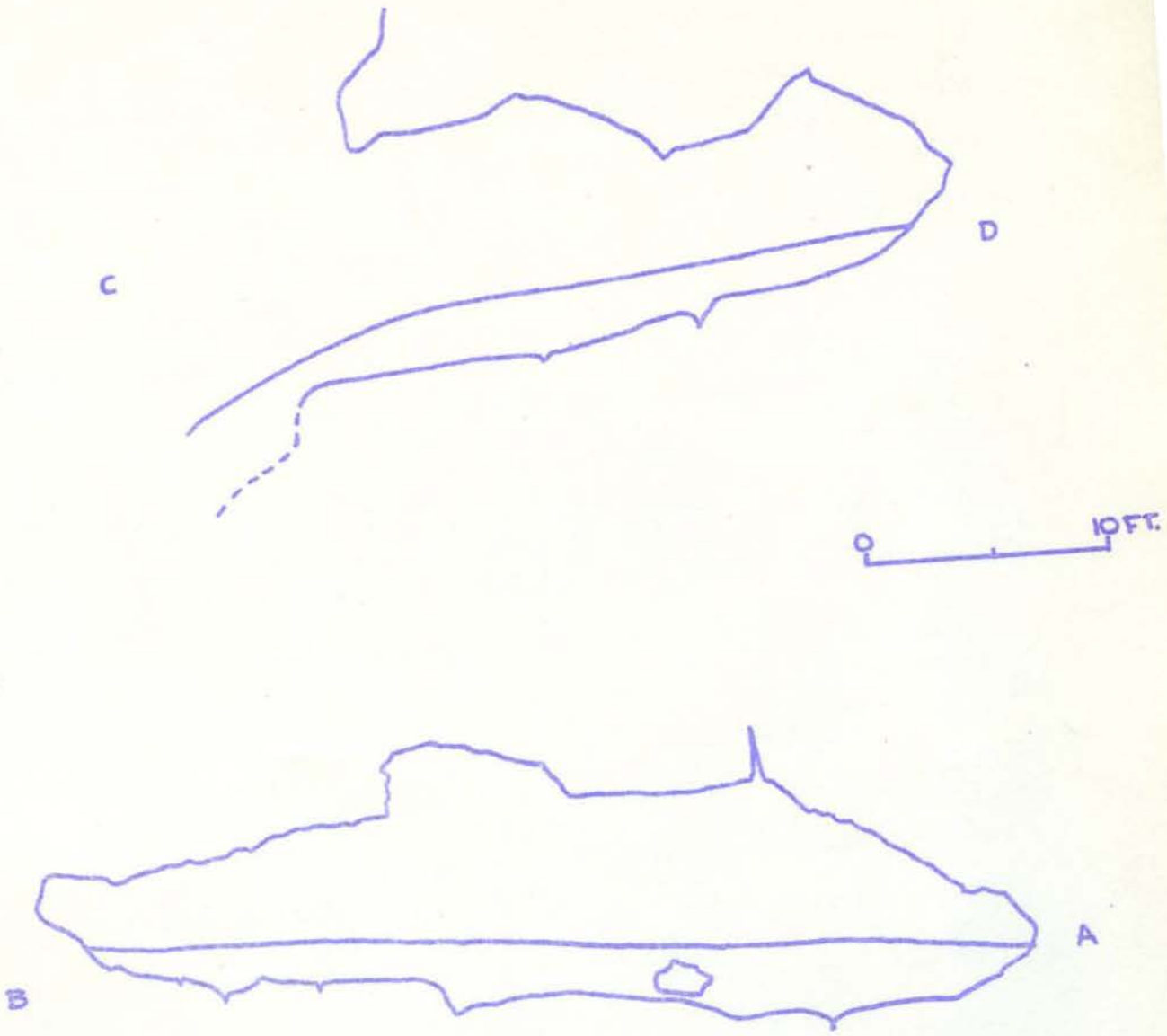


DAMP CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

ALIDADE & TAPE SURVEY
FALL, 1958



CROSS-SECTIONS
DAMP CAVE
VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

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Ref: TSS files

FERN CAVE (BAT CAVE) — Val Verde County (# 23)

Bakers Crossing 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Martin Rose

Description: The main entrance to the cave is a 35' x 50' hole in solid rock dropping a total of 54' to a breakdown mound. A ledge 27' down circles the sink. Many 6'-7' high ferns cover this slope which drops 26' to the floor of the cave. To the north a 100' wide, 30' high passage extends for about 420' to an abrupt end. Large orange calcite crystals are growing on the walls and floor of the passage near and at the end. The floor of the passage is covered with dirt and guano, while along the walls there is breakdown. A small dry stream channel runs to within a few hundred feet of the end where it sinks in breakdown. About 100' from the end a dome rises 20' above the ceiling level and beneath it a large guano mound has formed. About 30' in front of this mound a 7' in diameter, 18' high stalagmite is to be found. Two passages extend off of the west wall but end after about 75'. To the south from the entrance the cave extends as a flat-floored 40' high, 100' wide guano-covered passage with breakdown along the walls. After about 150' a small dome reaches the surface to form another entrance. A drop of 4' occurs just past this entrance and the cave makes a sharp bend to the east. Before the bend it is possible to see past the main entrance and to the opposite end of the cave, a distance of 750'. After the bend the ceiling lowers until the passage is only 15'-20' high. After about 400' of narrowing passage the floor rises along a steep breakdown slope into the Bat Room. This room is floored with much guano, and in the summer houses thousands of bats. A steep drop-off to the left leads into a passage about 50' wide and 15' high. This lowers to 7' after about 200', at which point it narrows to 20' and gradually lowers to 3' and ends after an additional 100'. The floor of this passage is covered with large slab breakdown from the walls and ceiling. To the right of the Bat Room a steep slope down the breakdown leads to the Blockhouse, a man-made "house", the purpose of which is not known. From here the cave continues for 275' to an end. The passage is 50'-75' wide and 40'-50' high. About 150' from the end a breakdown slope to the left leads to a 15' climbable drop into a passage extending to the south. This passage contains the most distinctive formation in the cave. It is an 8' high Christmas-tree stalagmite with the bottom almost completely eroded away so that it stands on a narrow stem. The formation is dry and white. The only other formation of note in this passage is a 6' in diameter, 12' high stalagmite about 300' down the passage. Several large blocks of breakdown lie near the drop and the entire floor is covered with much guano. The ceiling height in this passage averages 50' or more. This passage at 118' is the deepest part of the cave. The passage narrows about 20' before

left and goes back toward the entrance for about 100' before becoming too small to negotiate. The main passage continues through a 3' wide fissure to where a pit drops out of the floor into a lower level running directly beneath the upper level. It is possible to chimney across this pit to a landing about 20' away. The cave continues for several hundred over several deep crevices before ending. Total length of the cave is between 500' and 1000' and the total depth is about 75'. There are a few formations in the cave and much of the floor is covered with guano. A large frog was seen near the entrance and a snake was killed in the bottom of the sink. Spiders and crickets are numerous in the first part of the cave. It was explored by Royce Ballinger, Mills Tandy, and other members of the Ozona Grotto, in 1956. It was visited in 1962 by James Estes and other members of the Abilene Grotto.

Ref: James Estes,
Royce Ballinger

DUST CAVE — Val Verde County (# 19)

Mouth of Pecos 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Brotherton Ranch

Description: The cave is 6' wide and 7' high at the entrance. After a few feet it opens into the main room of the cave, which is 19' wide and 5'-6' high. A 9'-11' wide and 2'-3' high alcove extends back from this room. Total length of the cave is 40'-50'. The cave is very dusty and contains some breakdown. It appears to have been formed as solution along a joint. The first half of the cave contains most of the cultural material found in it; it also contains goat bones. The deposit is probably about 1.5'-3.0' deep. It was explored by Johnny Greer.

Ref: Johnny Greer

DUSTY BONE CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

No quadrangle

Owner: Cap West

Description: The cave is a 4' high stoopway, 40' long. It is used by goats as a shelter and contains numerous goat bones.

Ref: Mills Tandy

ERODED CAVE — Val Verde County (# 16)

Mouth of Pecos 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Fate Bell Ranch (Brotherton, Calk, Calk)

Description: Eroded Cave consists of a series of small holes opening onto a sheer cliff-face overlooking the Pecos River. These holes average 3' wide and 2' high and connect to 5'-15' long passages paralleling the cliff face. Total extent of the cave is probably no more than 50'-75' with 5'-10' between entrances. The cave is of interest in that it apparently ran parallel to the Pecos River, and as the cliff has eroded back from the river it has intersected the cave and at each bend of the cave or irregularity of the cliff face an entrance has formed.

Because of its proximity to Moth Hole it is almost certain that they at one time formed a single cave passage now almost completely obliterated by the erosion of the cliff.

Ref: TSS files

EVERT CANYON WATERFALL CAVE — Val Verde County (# 5)

No quadrangle

Owner: Gilbert Marshall

Description: The cave is a shelter formed by the cutting back of a small waterfall in the bed of a creek draining into Evert Canyon. It is located about 5' above the bed of the creek. A joint runs through the center of the cave roof. The entrance is 5' high by 10' wide. The cave becomes smaller towards the back and ends after 30'. It is used as a goat shelter.

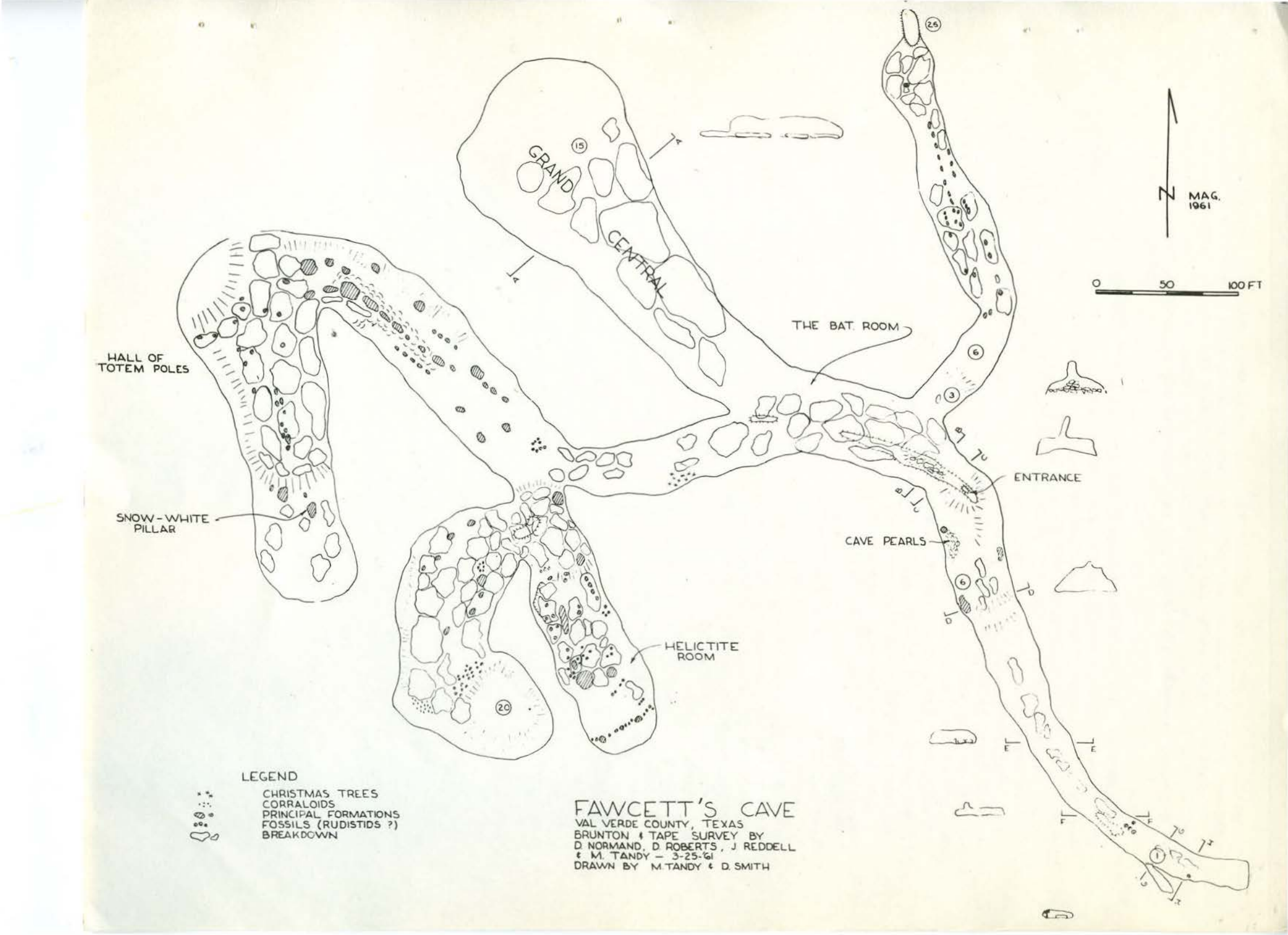
Ref: TSS files

FAWCETT'S CAVE — Val Verde County (# 27)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Lee Fawcett

Description: The entrance to the cave is a 3' in diameter circular hole formed near the head of a shallow draw. A short drop at the entrance leads to a fissure-like upper level 30' above the floor of the main part of the cave. By chimneying across the top of this fissure, it is possible to reach a series of small, short crawls and domes, but little passage is found at this level. From here it is possible to chimney about 15' down to a talus slope, leading to the cave floor. At the bottom of the slope one is greeted by the "ghost" of the cave, a 15' high, white curtain-like mass of flowstone set in sharp contrast to the much darker cave floor and walls. This formation stands at the beginning of a 25' wide, 15' high, 300' long passage extending to the southeast. Several rimstone dams containing numerous cave pearls decorate the first part of the passage, but after a few hundred feet the floor becomes covered with silt until about 100' from the end, the passage is only 1' high and finally completely fills with silt. The cave attains its greatest depth, 110', in this passage, which runs under the draw. The ceiling of this passage near the end is covered with rudistids. From the entrance room a mass of breakdown rises to the ceiling of the room. This may, however, be by-passed on either side. Halfway around on the north side a low, wide crawl extends over flat, smooth breakdown. After about 50' the ceiling rises from 3' to about 7'. The passage continues from about 250' before ending at a 26' high dome. The passage contains many beautiful stalagmites and columns. Flowstone-covered breakdown covers much of the floor. The main passage extending from the entrance is reached by circling the breakdown in the entrance room. Here is a 30' high, 80' wide room, known as the Bat Room, floored with guano-covered breakdown and inhabited by many bats. Two passages extend from this room, both quite large. Grand Central extends to the right as a 10'-15' high, 60'-75' wide passage floored with very large flat slabs of clay-covered breakdown. Cracks between the breakdown and to the sides drop about 5' but are filled with clay. After about 250' it becomes 15' high and 150' wide, ending abruptly in a filled depression. The passage contains virtually no formations. The other passage



FAWCETT'S CAVE

VAL VERDE COUNTY, TEXAS
BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY BY
D. NORMAND, D. ROBERTS, J. REDDELL
& M. TANDY – 3-25-61
DRAWN BY M. TANDY & D. SMITH

opening into a circular room 150' x 100' in diameter with a 5' high breakdown pile in the center. A large elongated dome rises above this breakdown and two entrances occur at opposite ends of the dome. Volume-wise this is probably the largest cave in the state, although only 3400' long. Its chief attractions are the beautiful ferns at the entrance and the smooth flat-floored passages. (See map, page 23)

Biology: The cave is one of the largest bat caves in the state and has been frequently mined for guano. Its remoteness and recent discovery has prevented its being as intensively studied as the better known bat caves, such as Ney, Bracken, and Frio. Ken Baker made an investigation of the vertebrate life in the cave on January 27, 1957. At that time he found about 150 nests of the Cave Swallow, Petrochelidon fulva pallida, but all of the birds had migrated into Mexico for the winter. A trip to map the cave on September 30, 1962, found swallows in the cave, as well as a large colony of Mexican Free-Tail bats. Baker found that most of the nests were on the sides of three large domes in the ceiling near the entrance, while a few were placed on walls about 20' above the floor of the cave. This is the western-most record for the Cave Swallow. During the summer months the cave houses thousands of Mexican Free-tail bats, but these all appear to leave for the winter. When Baker visited the cave in January 1957 he found no Tadarida mexicana, but did observe hibernating Corynorhinus rafinesquei and Pipistrellus hesperus. This is one of the easternmost records for Corynorhinus. Baker also found two Black Headed Snakes, Tantilla gracilipes, and one Mexican Toad, Bufo valliceps, beneath the breakdown at the entrance. He found the remains of a Great Horned Owl, Bufo virgianus, at the entrance; on a trip in September, 1962, the remains of a hawk were found. On September 30, 1962, James Reddell and Bud and Margaret Frank made brief biological collections in the cave. From this hasty examination there appear to be three fairly distinct biological "provinces" in the cave. The first is that at the entrance, where the heavy growth of ferns and the presence of small animals make it an ideal place for many epigean forms. The second is that of the extremities of the cave where bats are seldom found. No attempt has been made to collect in these parts of the cave, but the presence of guano and animal droppings without the great number of dermestid beetles make it a good place to look for true cave forms. The third and most obvious group is that associated with the large bat colony. The most predominant form is the dermestid beetle, but many parasites and other beetles were found on the guano. Because of the unusual nature of the cave from this standpoint it merits considerable attention. The following is an incomplete faunal list of material collected from the cave. Everything was collected in the Bat Room unless otherwise noted.

Phylum Arthropoda
- Class Arachnoidea
  - Order Pseudoscorpionida (pseudoscorpion)
  - Order Araneae (spiders)
    - Nesticus pallidus Emerton
    - Cicurina sp. (Well-devloped eyes)
    - Lycosa sp. (ENTRANCE)
- Class Insecta
  - Order Orthoptera
    - Arenivega erratica Rehn 1903 (?) (cockroach) (ENTRANCE)
    - Cave cricket
  - Order Lepidoptera
    - Noctuidae, probably of the genus Acronycta (larva) (ENTRANCE) (moth)
  - Order Siphonaptera
    - Sternopsylla texana (Fox) (flea)

Order Coleoptera (beetles)
Carabidae - Pasimachus californicus Chaudoir (ENTRANCE)
Dermestidae - Dermestes carnivorus Fabr. (ENTRANCE AND BAT ROOM)
Elateridae - Colaulon rectangularis (Say)
Ptinidae - Niptus, n.sp. (?)
Staphylinidae
Tenebrionidae - Centrinoptera texana Blaisdell (ENTRANCE)
Eleodes goryi Sol. (ENTRANCE)
Phylum Chordata
Class Amphibia
Bufo valliceps (Mexican Toad) (ENTRANCE)
Class Reptilia
Tantilla gracilipes (Black Headed Snake) (ENTRANCE)
Class Aves
Bufo virgianus (Great Horned Owl) (ENTRANCE)
Petrochelidon fulva pallida (Cave Swallow) (ENTRANCE)
Hawk
Class Mammalia
Order Chiroptera (bats)
Corynorhinus rafinesquei
Pipistrellus hesperus
Tadarida mexicana

Paleontology: Excavations were made by Holmes A. Semken in September 1958 and the material identified by Ernest L. Lundelius, Jr., in August 1962. The sediment collected from the cave contained an unusual abundance of skeletal material. Itwas dug from three different spots near the two smaller entrances. The sediment in these three places shows three distinct stratigraphic units within 18 inches. The skeletal material has not been studied but should preve interesting when studies have been completed. A partial faunal list follows:
Class Reptilia
Order Squamata
Phrynosoma sp. (Horned lizard)
Class Mammalia
Order Chiroptera (bats)
Order Rodentia
Perognathus merriami (pocket mouse)
Perognathus hispidus (Hispid pocket mouse)
Sigmodon hispidus (cotton rat)
Neotoma sp. (wood rat)
Reithrodontomys sp. (Harvest mouse)
Onychomys leucogaster (Grasshopper mouse)
Baiomys taylori (Pigmy mouse)
Order Lagomorpha
Sylvalagus sp. (cottontail rabbit)

History: The earliest history of the cave is not known, except that it was mined several times for guano, the relics of which operations can be seen throughout the cave. It was first entered by spelunkers in January 1957 when Dr. Richard Davis, Ken Baker, Charles Whiteman, and Bill Helmer discovered and explored the cave. On March 16, 1957, a joint field trip by the Abilene and University of Texas Grottoes mapped and photographed the cave. At this time it was surveyed by David Kyser, Fred Berner, Bill Helmer, and Phil Waters. A trip was made by Holmes Semken in September, 1958, at which time he made a collection of bones.

Several other trips have been made to the cave by members of the University of Texas Grotto. On September 30, 1962, the cave was re-surveyed by James Reddell, Philip Russell, and Terry Raines.

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Ref: TSS files

FISHING HOLE CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

Devil's Lake 15' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave has a 7'-8' high, 5' wide entrance and extends back into the cliff 50'-70'. A large boulder with abrasions partially blocks the entrance. Abrasions and dim remains of red paintings are at the entrance. A triangular flint knife and a few flint knifes were found on the floor. The cave has a gravel floor, although it had a dirt floor before recent floods.
Ref: Johnny Greer

FOSSIL CAVE — Val Verde County (# 18)

Mouth of Pecos 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Highway Department

Description: This cave was dissected by the highway cut leading down to the Pecos River Highway Bridge. The entrance on the right is several feet in diameter while that to the left is somewhat larger. Both holes are completely filled with what is possibly Tertiary sediments.

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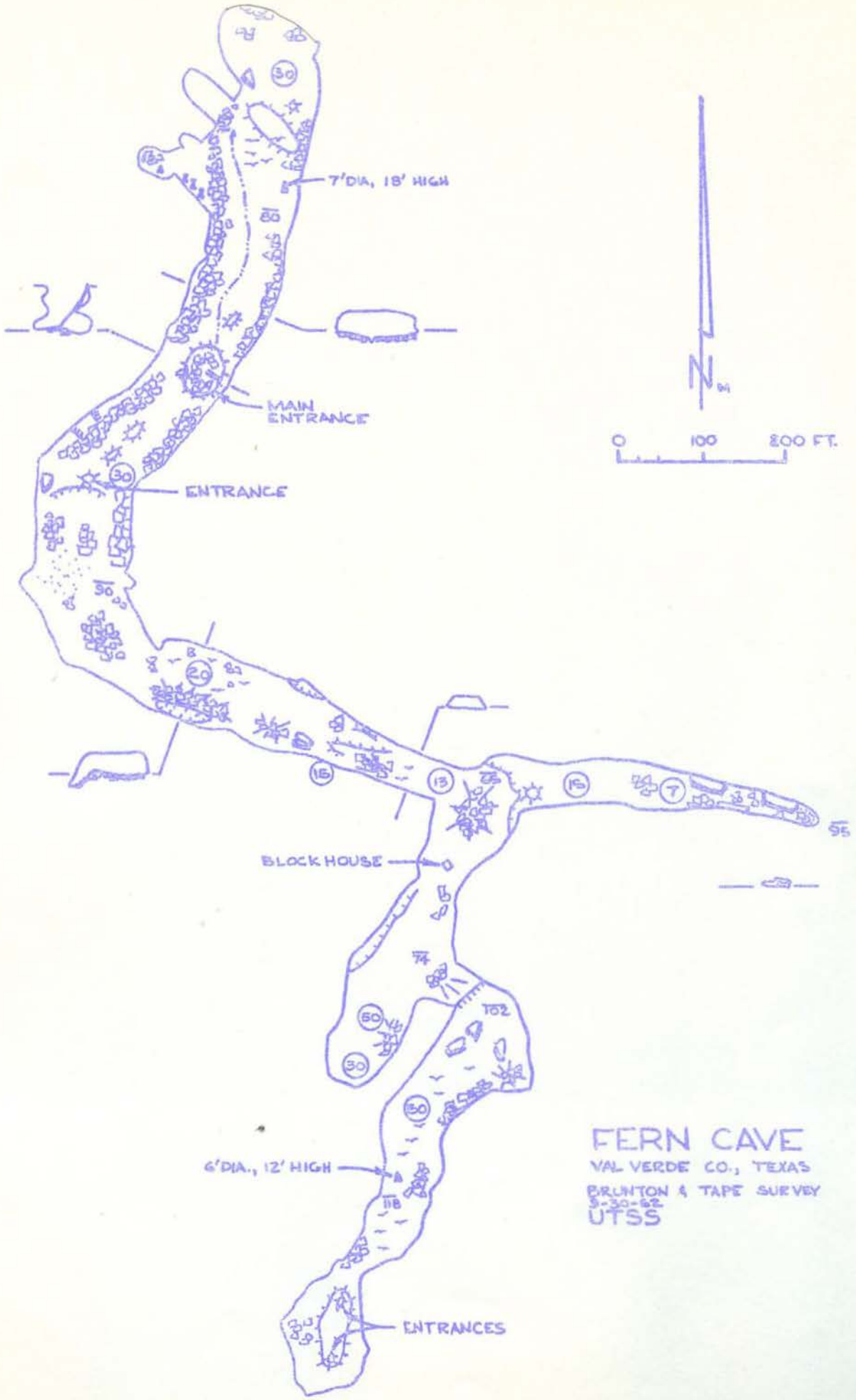
Ref: TSS files


7' DIA, 18' HIGH
MAIN ENTRANCE
ENTRANCE
BLOCK HOUSE
6' DIA., 12' HIGH
ENTRANCES
N
0
100
200 FT.
FERN CAVE
VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS
BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY
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FOUR-MILE CAVE (SALLY CAVE) Val Verde County (# 35)

Del Rio 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Gonzales; lessee: B.T. Rose

Description: There are two entrances to the cave, both climbable. The southernmost is a collapse sink about 10' in diameter and 12' deep; the other is a 3' wide, 6' long, 13' deep crack. A small intermittent stream drains into the cave, which takes considerable water in times of flood. The entrances are most directly connected by a 5'-7' high, 2'-3' wide fairly straight passage about 150' long. Besides this connecting passage, two passages extend from the southern entrance. One is a narrow crack dropping about 20' after a short crawl. This leads into a series of crawlways which were not surveyed or explored. The other passage is an 8" wide, 2' high crack which leads into a 10' high, 2' wide passage, with one passage extending to the right from it. This high passage connects to the main passage extending from the northern entrance after about 140'. From the northern entrance two passages lead to the southwest but are blocked by trash and fill after a few feet. Two main passages extend from the entrance, one to the northeast and one to the northwest. The northeast passage leads to an extensive maze of 3'-8' high passages. At the junctions of these passages small rooms, 10'-15' in diameter and 10' high, have formed from the collapse of the floors into pits connecting to the lower levels of the cave. Some of these form large pits, 15'-20' across and up to 30' deep, while others are either totally or partially blocked by breakdown. Some have holes leading through the breakdown and into the lower levels or else into now blocked rooms. On the mapping trip of January 26-27, 1963, only two of these pits were entered and only one mapped. The one not mapped was found to connect with several of the pits by means of a winding 5'-6' high, 3'-4' wide passage floored with mud and silt. Although the passage shows a water level mark 10'-15' above the floor of the pits and has been observed in the past to be completely filled with water, no water was found in the passage at this time. The other pit entered was 15' long and 8' wide and dropped vertically for 30' to a 20' in diameter room plugged with breakdown. A passage along a joint dipping 75° led from this room at this level for about 50', over large breakdown slabs and into a second small room. Two crawls led from this, one of which ended after 25', while the other extended over 30' but was not completely explored. The main pit drops through the breakdown by means of a 2' x 3' hole to a second small room from which an 8" x 12" hole in breakdown leads, after an 8' drop to a ledge and a slight offset and a 15' drop, to a muddy passage. This is a 2'-4' high passage extending for about 50' before dropping about 8' to a stagnant pool of water 6" deep and 2' in diameter. The passage may continue, but if so it is too small to enter. As in the other lower level this passage showed signs of having been filled with water in the past. At the top of this large pit seven passages intersect. All of these form an interconnected maze, with the exception of one which extends to the north. This is a 4' high, 4'-5' wide passage which runs for about 50', at which point it turns northeast. A small passage to the left connects back into the main passage about 50' farther down the passage. The passage at this point is 10'-20' wide and extends an additional 100' before turning to the north and widening to 40'. It apparently houses a fairly large colony of bats in the summer since the floor is covered with a heavy deposit of guano. A small side room on the left goes nowhere, but a tight crawl on the right side of the room leads into a joint-controlled series of small passages which were not mapped. The main room ends,

but a very low squeeze leads for 20' to a 3-way junction. To the right it extends as a 10' wide, 4' high passage for about 40' before turning to the left and becoming 30' wide and 3' high. This extends for about 90' before ending. About halfway down this passage a tight crawl to the left connects with the passage going straight from the three-way junction. This passage is 3' high and 5' wide and extends 140' to a dead-end. From the main junction pit the main passage to the southwest was mapped until it connected back into the northwest passage from the northern entrance. All passages to the left of this passage were mapped, while none to the right were surveyed. Prior exploration of these passages, however, indicates that over 1,000' of maze-like passages exist in this area, which also connects with the northwest passage leading from the entrance. Several pits to lower levels in this area reportedly have water in them all year round. The cave contains few formations and these are dry and heavily vandalized. Except in the Rat Passage, the floor is covered with small breakdown or silt. The altitude at the entrance is 1150. (See map, page 27)

Meteorology: Of some interest is the circulation of air through the cave. Although no studies have been conducted, it is hoped that one will be made in the near future. At the time of the mapping trip to the cave the temperature on the surface was in the 40's or low 50's. A temperature taken at the bottom of the north entrance, point 1 on the map, showed the temperature at 1:30 P.M. to be 71°, while the temperature at point 2 was 74°. About 110' away, however, the temperature at point 3 was 71°. A broken thermometer prevented further temperatures from being taken, but it was quite noticeable that in certain passages or even in parts of a passage a very cool breeze could be detected while only a few feet away no breeze at all could be felt and the air was much warmer. A thorough temperature study might reveal much as to the circulation of air through the cave, even without other air detection devices.

Biology: Four-Mile Cave is of special interest because it marks the westernmost locality record for the neotenic salamander, Eurycea neotenes, and because a new species of cambaloid milliped is recorded from it. The salamanders were first reported by Ken Baker and are under study by Floyd Potter of the University of Texas. The cave apparently contains bats but these have not been identified. A small collection of invertebrates was made from the cave by James Reddell on January 26-27, 1963, but all of the material has not been identified to date. This, supplemented with animals seen by David Kyser, makes up the following faunal list: spiders, phalangids (both the common harvestman and a troglobitic species), isopods, millipeds (Cambala caeca Loomis and Cambala n.sp.), collembola, whip scorpion, cave crickets, glowworms, and moths. When the cave was mapped all members of the party were found to have been bitten thousands of times, with those entering the lower levels the most heavily bitten. It is not known what caused these highly irritating bites. A bone of a cow or bison (Bos or Bison) was removed from the cave by Holmes Semken. It had obviously been washed into the cave.

History: The cave is locally well-known and is frequently visited by high school boys and boy scouts. It was first explored by spelunkers on December 28, 1955, by Wayne McAllister and David Kyser. The cave was again visited on the first weekend of 1956 by Ken Baker, Willie Kostka, Wayne McAllister, and David Kyser and a collection of salamanders made. Since that time numerous trips by members of the University of Texas Grotto have been made. A rough, very incomplete map

was made of the cave by Wayne McAllister and David Kyser on December 28, 1955. A new map of the cave was begun by James Reddell, Ruben M. Frank, and Margaret Frank on January 26-27, 1963. At that time about 1500' of passage was mapped.

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Ref: TSS files

FRUSTRATION PIT — Val Verde County (# 9)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Arnem Humphries

Description: The entrance to the cave is a round hole in the bed of a small dry creek. It drops a total of about 30' as a climbable sink. A passage about 50' long at the bottom ends in mud fill. It was explored by Tommy Evans and Jim Tennison on November 7, 1960.

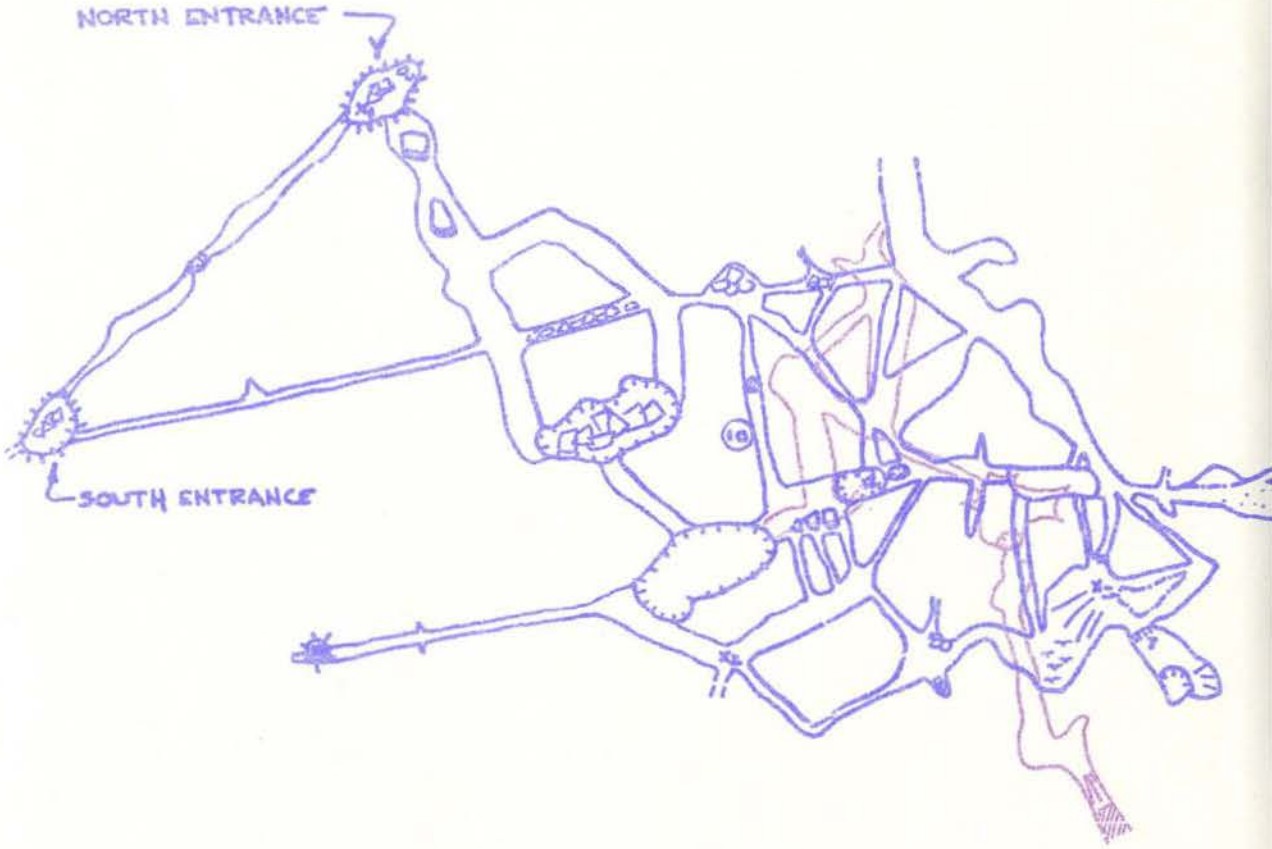
Ref: TSS files

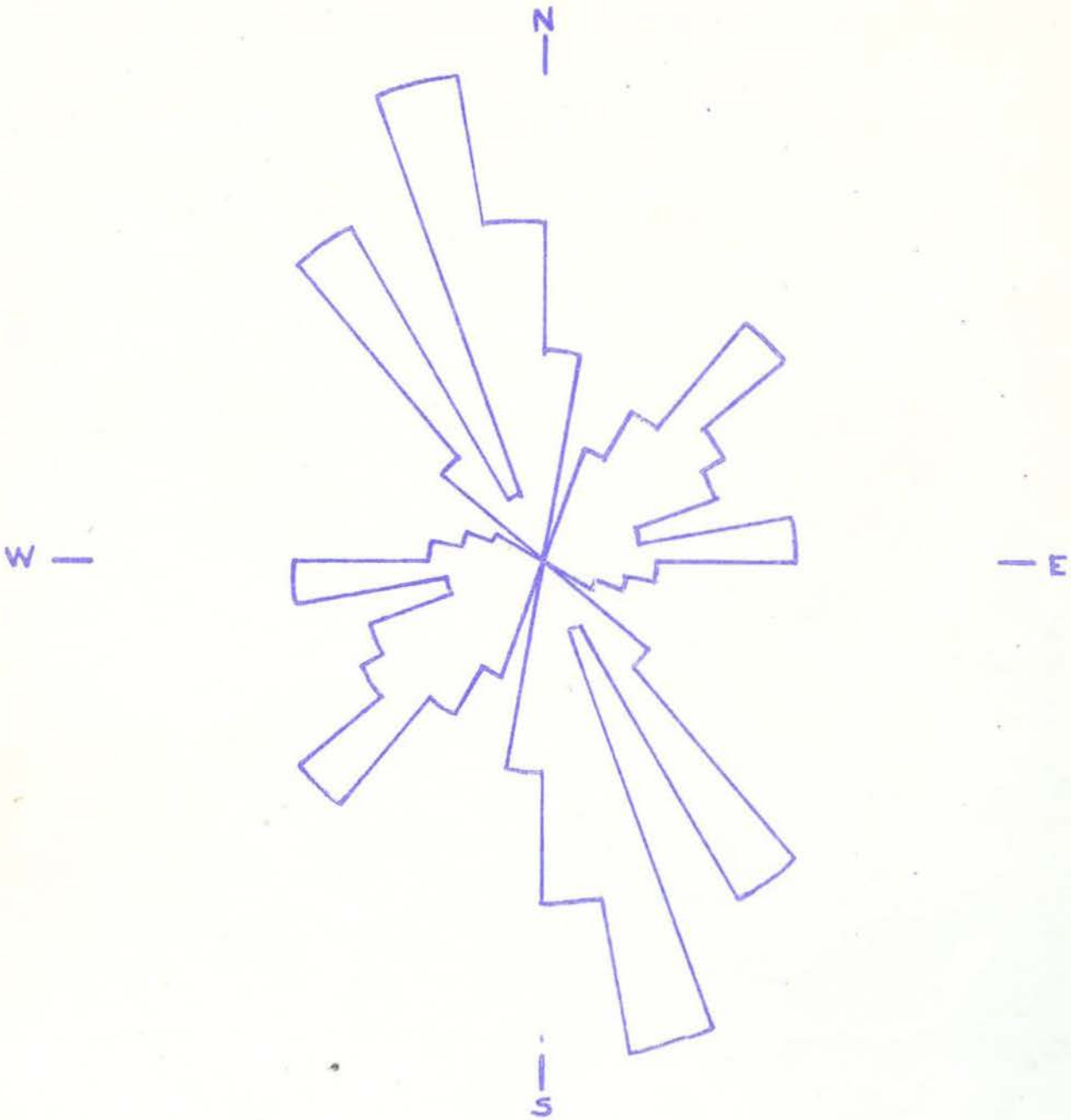
H. T. MIERS CAVE — Val Verde County (# 33)

Dry Devils 15' Quadrangle

Owner: H. T. Miers

Description: The entrance to the cave is located about 3' above and slightly to the west side of a normally dry streambed. An impressive sink, it is about 20' wide and 50' long, dropping 20' to a breakdown-covered floor. To the south a 10' wide, 5' high breakdown-floored passage slopes down to a room out of which a hole leads a few feet to a 15' unclimbable drop. At the bottom of the drop there is a 20' long, 20' high room floored with breakdown. At the end of this room there is a 28' unclimbable drop. There is a climbable 8' drop about 15' farther on, followed by a 6' unclimbable drop. A narrow slot has formed at the top of this drop, where the water running into the cave is channelled during floods. This drops into a gravel and small breakdown-floored circular room at the back of which a 3' high, 4' wide hole admits one into a narrow fissure running perpindicular to the length of the room. This fissure is 20' high and it is necessary to chimney up it and onto a large breakdown plug in the fissure. Here the ceiling rises an additional 20' to a flat ceiling. The passage at this point is about 5' wide. The breakdown plug is about 15' long. At this point the passage drops 70' into an elongated room about 10' wide and 30' long. At the bottom of this pit a small crawl leads a few feet to two pits, one about


NORTH ENTRANCE
SOUTH ENTRANCE



PASSAGE ROSE
of
FOUR-MILE CAVE
1 inch equals 5%

20' deep and the other about 15' deep. At the bottom of this, the cave drops an additional 40' into a room containing two 70'-80' high domes. What appears to be a passage on the wall above the floor of this room goes nowhere. A passage leads from the room as a 6'-7' high, 4'-5' wide passage resembling a sewer pipe and extends back towards the entrance as a lower level parallel passage. After about 150' a crawl to the left extends to a small room from which another crawl leads, roughly paralleling the main passage of the cave, but it remains unexplored. After another 200' down the main passage, a 20' wide, 70' long, 30' high room, the Junction Room, with two high domes in the ceiling, is encountered. Continuing along the main passage there is a 15' climbable drop over breakdown into a 5'-10' wide, 5'-20' high passage which extends for about 300' to a 50' high, 60' long, 25' wide mud-filled room. From the Mud Room a small passage extends for 100' where a tight muddy crawl leads about 20' to a tiny room containing an intermittent pool. From the Junction Room a passage leads to the right at the entrance of the room over and down a double pit of 15'-20' before coming to an unclimbable 20' drop into the Big Room. This room is floored with large slabs of mud-covered breakdown. It measures about 40' high by 60' long and 40' wide. On the left side, an extension of the room about 30' wide leads over large boulders for 70' before ending in mud fill and breakdown. Chimneys at the end of this extension lead to what appears to be a passage but is plugged with mud. Cracks between the blocks of breakdown drop 15' but lead to no passage. On the opposite side of the room from the drop into it a 15' pit in the breakdown leads to a 6' high, 4' wide passage which extends for several hundred feet and contains several drops of 6'-15'. Several pools of water along the passage contain amphipods. This passage ends in fill, but a few feet before the end a small hole leads up into a 40'-60' high, 10' wide fissure passage running perpindicular to the stream passage. It is floored with much large breakdown and mud. After about 200' large slabs of breakdown block the passage at floor level, although the ceiling is 20'-40' above the blocks. It is, however, impossible to climb over the breakdown without special equipment. The cave takes much water during floods and the unexplored passages are quite promising. Care should be taken in exploring the cave because of sudden floods to which it is subject. Sticks wedged on the highest ceilings of the cave, over a hundred feet above floor level, are evidence that the cave fills completely during heavy floods. The total depth of the cave is about 300'. Temperature taken in August, 1959, at the entrance was 77°F, while the temperature of the first room was 68°F. (See map, pages 31-32)

History: The cave has been known to the rancher for many years and during the foot-and-mouth disease epidemic thousands of dead goats and sheep were dumped into the cave. There is no sign of these now until you reach the lower levels where mud banks are filled with bones. The cave was first reported by Floyd Potter, a University of Texas biologist, but he did not explore all of it. It was entered in the first part of 1959 by Bill Russell, Roger Sorrells, and Thomas R. Evans of the University of Texas Grotto. On this trip they explored all of the cave with the exception of the crawl to the left after the drops and the Big Room and passage leading from it. The same group, with the addition of Tom White, returned to the cave in mid-August to finish exploring and map the cave. They mapped the cave to the top of the drop out of the Big Room, a total surveyed distance of about 1500'. The next trip to the cave was made on June 9, 1962, when James Reddell, Sharon Woolsey, David McKenzie, and Terry Raines visited the cave. At this time they explored the "passage" leading off of the top of the Big Room. Of considerable interest was a sudden rain occurring while the members of the exploration party were in the cave. Upon arriving at

the bottom of the chimney on the way out of the cave, water was found pouring over the 28' drop and running into the breakdown floor of the room. Where the water goes from here is not known since it did not appear at the bottom or along the sides of the 70' pit. Although heavy dripping had been noted in the Big Room nothing was thought of it. The map, however, shows that this room runs directly under the creek and, therefore, is probably connected by fairly open joints to the surface. Although much water ran into the cave and the creek was found to be running over 3' deep, the location of the sink prvented heavier flooding.

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Evans, Thomas R. "H. T. Miers Cave." The Texas Caver, Vol. IV, No. 6, pp. 5-8. November-December 1959. Reprinted in Speleo Digest: 1959, pp. 1-282, 283, 284. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, April 1961.

Ref: TSS files

HORSESHOE RANCH LEFT HAND CAVE — Val Verde County (# 20)

Feely 15' Quadrangle

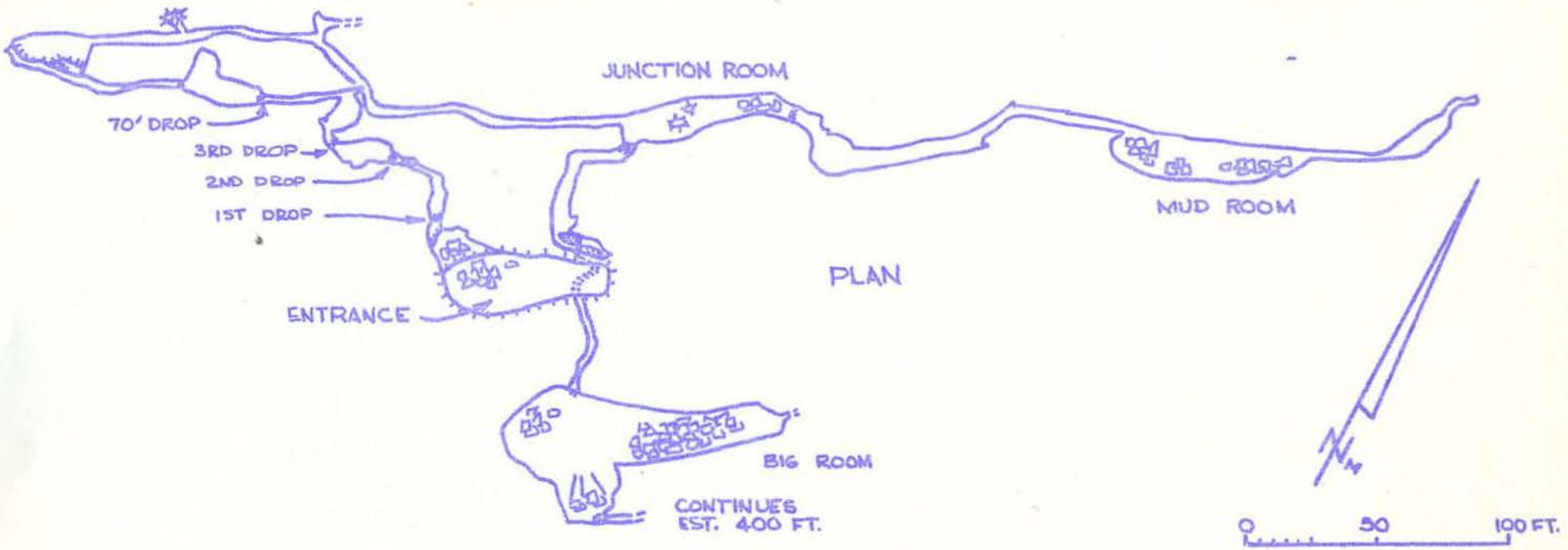
Owner: R. C. Robertson Ranch

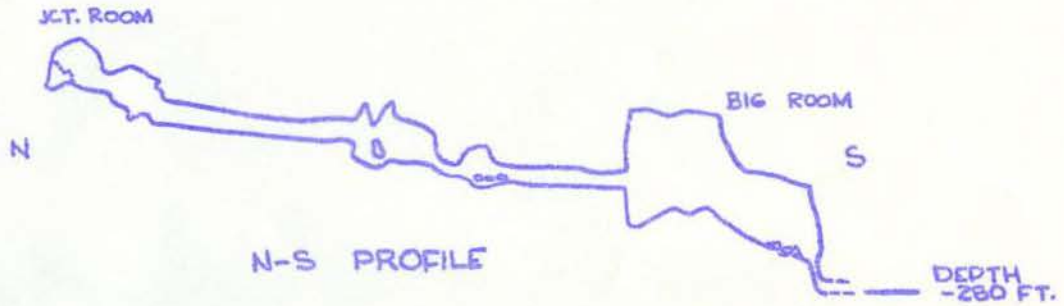
Description: The entrance to the cave faces almost due north and overlooks the east branch of Cow Creek. It is in a massive limestone bluff about 80' high, formed of the Edwards limestone of Cretaceous age. The stone the cave is in has a gray to buff-brown color. The bluff is capped by a thick member of alternating flaggy limestone and chert which comes in only a foot or two above the opening of the cave. A 60'-70' steep talus slope lies at the base of the bluff and must be climbed to reach the cave. The cave is one passage about 20' wide and 12' high, extending back into the cliff at a decided upward pitch for 60'-75' at which point the ceiling more or less reaches the floor. There is much fill of flaggy limestone which appears to have fallen off the ceiling in more recent times.

Archeology: The cave was excavated February 13-19, 1936, under the direction of A.M. Woolsey of the University of Texas. It was only partially excavated, however, since it was "soon discovered that what material was accessible had been badly disturbed by pothunters and could be of little if any significance. A total of only twenty-seven artifacts came from this part of the excavation. At the entrance of the cave there was a deposit of typical midden material thirty to thirty-six inches in depth. It consisted of dust, ashes, bits of rock, sotol quids, fragments of matting, and lechugilla fiber. This deposit yielded the twenty-seven artifacts which were taken from this side of the excavation." (Butler, 1948)

Bibliography: Butler, Charles Thompson, Jr. A West Texas Rock Shelter. MA Thesis, University of Texas. May, 1948. vii plus 95 pages.
Graham, John Allen and William A. Davis. Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Diablo Reservoir, Val Verde County, Texas, page 6. Prepared by Archeological Salvage Program Field Office. Austin, August 1958.
Reddell, James. "The Amistad Dam Reservoir." The Texas Caver, Vol. VII, No. 4, p. 47. April, 1962.
Woolsey, A. M. "Field Notes, Horseshoe Ranch Cave, Mrs. Martin Kelly Cave, Val Verde County." Unpublished ms on file in the Anthropology Department, University of Texas. 1936.

Ref: TSS files

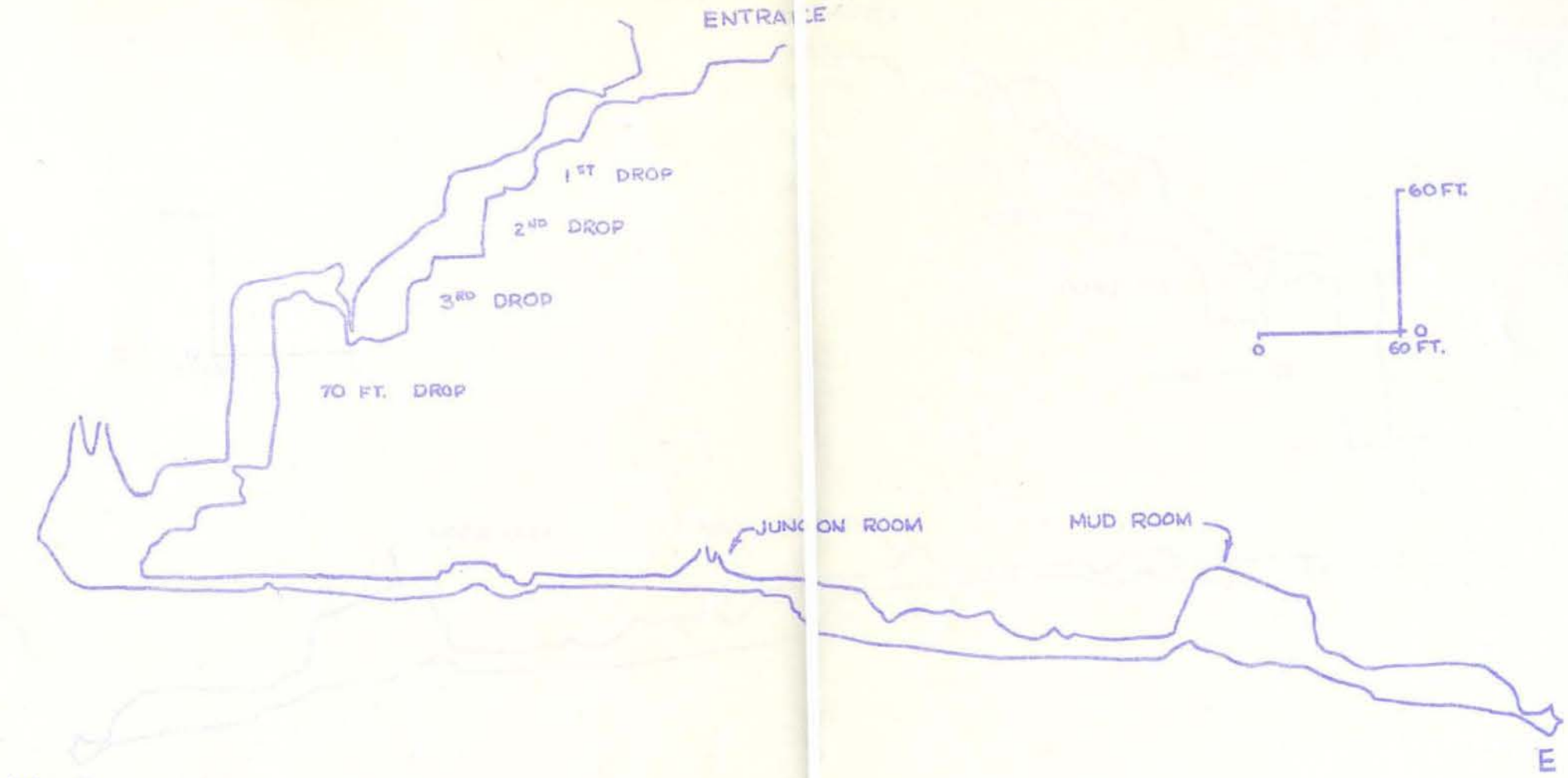




H.T. MIERS CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY
1959
UTSS



H. T. MIERS CAVE
EXTENDED E-W PROFILE

HORSESHOE RANCH RIGHT HAND CAVE — Val Verde County (# 21)

Feely 15' Quadrangle

Owner: R. C. Robertson Ranch

Description: The entrance to the cave faces almost due north and overlooks the east branch of Cow Creek, an intermittent stream running northeast-southwest. It is in a half-mile long, eighty foot high bluff composed of Edwards limestone of Cretaceous age. The bluff is capped by a thick member of alternating flaggy limestone and chert which comes in only a foot or two above the actual opening of the cave. The cave consists of a large, fairly level room about thirty feet wide, 42' long and averaging 5' high. "The room contains one or two very large blocks of limestone which fell from the ceiling apparently at some time during or after its period of occupancy. There is midden material beneath these blocks and the undersides show signs of smoke... Low down to the left in the rear wall of this front room is an opening eighteen inches high and about two feet wide. This is the entrance to a kind of narrow passage two to four feet wide and ten to twenty feet high which may extend back a considerable distance. There is some indication that the two caves may have been connected at some time prior to human occupancy. This possible connecting passage shows no signs of human habitation..." (Butler, 1948)

Archaeology: The cave contains a typical midden deposit reaching a depth of 36" at some points. A total of 466 specimens were taken from this cave as compared with only 27 artifacts from the left-hand cave. The artifacts which comprise the collection were all taken from the debris of the front room of the cave. The cave was apparently thoroughly excavated and little remains to be taken out. "The primary observation of Horseshoe Ranch Cave reveals the fact that it must be regarded as a unit site. Such stratigraphic data as were collected during the excavation reveals no perceptible change in culture throughout the entire period of occupation. There is no clue as to the length of the period of occupation other than the fact that it was sufficiently long to allow the accumulation of some thirty-six inches of midden debris. It is possible only to suggest the remote extremes which could serve as temporal boundaries to the period of habitation. As only the remains of now living plants and animals were found, it seems reasonable to assume that the cave was not occupied prior to the Recent. There is no trace of any sort of white contact, which would indicate that occupancy terminated prior to the end of the sixteenth century..." (Butler, 1948) A study of the cultural material indicates that it is probably a late Pecos River Site.

Bibliography: Butler, Charles Thompson, Jr. A West Texas Rock Shelter. MA Thesis. University of Texas. May, 1948. vii plus 95 pages.
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Woolsey, A. M. "Field Notes, Horseshoe Ranch Cave, Mrs. Martin Kelly Cave, Val Verde County." Unpublished ms on file in the Anthropology Department, University of Texas. 1936.

Ref: TSS files

JAVALINA CAVE (41VV109) Val Verde County (#)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Rufus (Bob) Williams

Description: "This shelter is located in a high bluff of the Rio Grande canyon several miles above the mouth of the Pecos. It measures about 60 feet across and has a depth of 30 feet. A high ceiling adds considerably to the size of the shelter. There is a very extensive burned rock talus in front of the shelter, suggesting long and intensive habitation of the site. The deposits within the shelter are dry and may be expected to be very productive. The midden soil probably attains a depth of 5 feet or more." (Graham and Davis, 1958) A crawlway at one end was not fully explored because of the presence of javalina in it at the time; it was estimated to be at least 40'-60' long. The entrance to the crawl is 6' wide and 3.5-4.0 feet high.

Archaeology: The cave was of particular interest as it represented one of the relatively few outstanding shelters with a minimum of looting. It was excavated by the Val Verde County Archaeological Society in 1959-1960. Of interest is a zigzag petroglyph carved in the rear wall of the shelter. There is no evidence of pictographs.

Bibliography: Graham, John Allen and William A. Davis. Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Diablo Reservoir, Val Verde County, Texas. A Project of the Inter-Agency Archeological Salvage Program, page 57. August, 1958.

Ref: TSS files
Johnny Greer

MCBEE BEND CAVE Val Verde County (# 31)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: H. T. Miers

Description: The entrance to the cave is located along the side of Red Bluff Creek, about 20' above the bed of the creek. It is a 6'-8' in diameter hole dropping vertically for 40'. Near the bottom it is 10'-20' and circular in shape. A joint at the entrance strikes N30°E. Any possible passages from the bottom are now filled with mud. A cable ladder or rope is necessary for the exploration of the cave. A rattlesnake on a small ledge a few feet below the entrance struck a caver and, missing, fell into the cave. It was not seen, however, at the bottom so apparently crawled away. A dead tarantula was found at the bottom of the cave. It was explored by T.R. Evans in the summer of 1961.

Ref: TSS files

MARSHALL BAT CAVE Val Verde County (# 6)

No quadrangle

Owner: Gilbert Marshall

Description: The entrance to the cave is 90' above Evert Canyon and about 150' back from the canyon walls along a 50' wide breakdown slope obviously representing an unroofed portion of the cave. The passage is about 3' high and about 40' wide

with a 6' high crack in the ceiling near the left wall. The floor of this passage is covered with dirt. After about 100' the passage narrows to 6' at the Wind Tunnel, where a strong breeze blows. Beyond the Wind Tunnel a steep breakdown slope leads up from the bottom of The Gulph for a total of 90'. Two wooden ladders have been placed here to facilitate the ascent. At the top of the climb out of The Gulph the passage is 50'-75' wide, 5'-7' high and floor covered with a white limestone dust. On the left side of the passage it slopes off steeply and drops 10'-20' at a steep angle. After 200' a small breakdown slope leads up to a square 6' in diameter artificial shaft rising 135' to the surface above the bluff. About 50' beyond the shaft a steep drop-off leads down into the Bat Room. Large slabs of breakdown line the left wall while the center and right part of the passage is covered with guano. This room is about 50' wide, 150' long, and 20' high. At the end of this room the ceiling drops steeply and the cave floor becomes more steep. A breakdown slope leads down for about 40' to a 2'-3' high, 50'-60' wide passage about 10' above the elevation of the entrance. The floor of this passage is covered with a crust of gypsum which when broken reveals gypsum flowers, needles, and gypsum hair lying under the crust. A layer of chert nodules has been exposed and the ceiling is covered with nodules protruding several inches from the ceiling. A large, beautiful gypsum flower was found growing on one of these nodules which had fallen from the ceiling and been covered with the gypsum crust. After about 350' a 3' rise occurs to a shelf, which extends back about 30' before dropping off along a steep breakdown slope which descends for a total vertical distance of 15'-20' before becoming too small. (See map, page 36)

Biology: Although the cave had a very large bat population as late as the 1940's the drilling of the shaft resulted in a very strong air circulation and the subsequent leaving of the cave by the bats. Several thousand bats probably remain in the cave, but when the cave was mapped on January 1, 1963, only two or three bats were seen. A preliminary collection of invertebrate fauna was made by James Reddell and Bill Russell at this time. Only the beetles and spiders have been identified to date. A faunal list follows:

Spiders:
- Selenops sp.
- Drassyllus sp.
- Psilochorus sp.
- Filistatinella crassipalpis Gertsch

Thysanura
Cave crickets
Moths
Ants
Beetles:
- Tenebrionidae - Cryptoglossa granulifera Champion

Bats

History: The cave has been known locally for a number of years because of the large number of bats seen coming from the entrance. In 1945 the owner, Gilbert Marshall, excavated a shaft into the back of the cave and removed 250 tons of guano from it. Although still open, no mining is presently being done in the cave. It was first entered by spelunkers on March 10, 1957, by members of the University of Texas Grotto. The cave was mapped by Dick Smith, Bill Russell, and James Reddell of the University of Texas Grotto on January 1, 1963.

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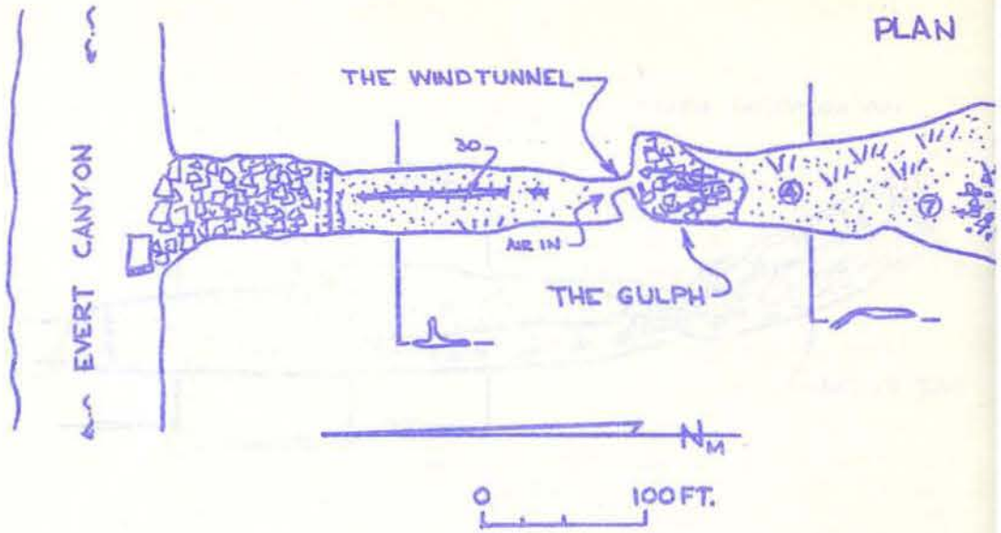

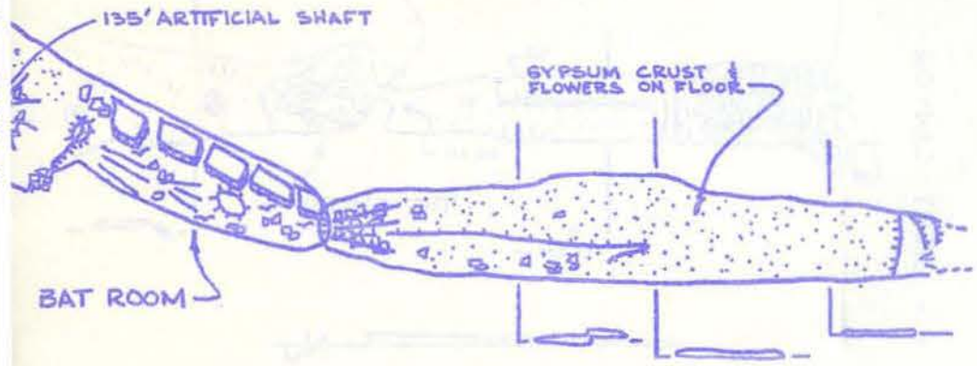

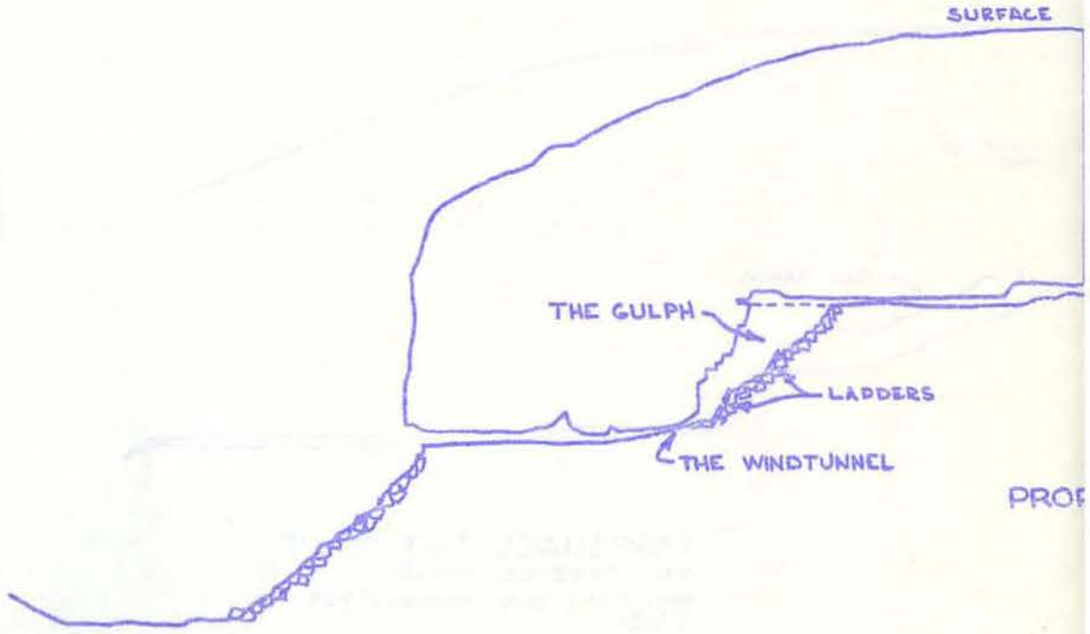

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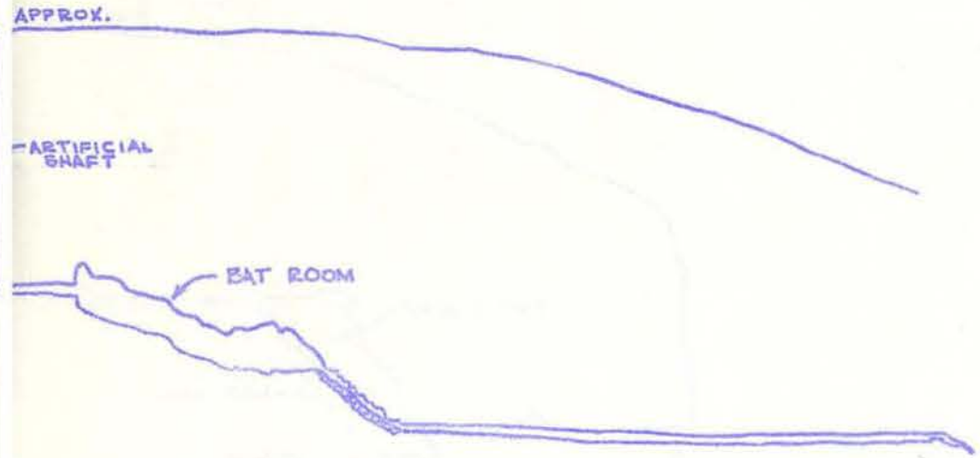

MARSHALL BAT CAVE
VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS
BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY, 1-63
TSS

MOOREHEAD CAVE (PECOS RIVER HIGH BRIDGE CAVE) (41VV55) Val Verde County (# 17)

Mouth of Pecos 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Fate Bell Ranch (Brotherton, Calk, Calk)

Description: The entrance to the cave is 40' wide and 20' high; the overall length is 235'. There is a second entrance about 100' south and 25'-30' above the main entrance in a sheer rock face. The back of the shelter is covered with gravel and small breakdown. About 150' inside the cave the passage widens to 60'-80' and a steep breakdown slope leads for about 50' and up about 30' to the second entrance. The ceiling height in the back of the cave is from 25'-45' high. At the end of the cave a passage 10'-12' above the floor was not explored, but it is rumored to extend a considerable distance.

Archaeology: The front half of the shelter is filled with gray, ashy cultural debris, full of fiber and burned limestone rocks. In the mouth are boulders containing abrasions and mortar holes; the latter range 1 inch to 2 feet in depth, and 4 to 4½ inches in diameter. Mortar holes are also abundant in boulders and on the limestone ledges below the shelter. Concentrated talus extends at least 45 feet below the entrance. The cave was excavated by the Smithsonian Institution under the direction of Frank M. Setzler from February to June, 1933. The following is Setzler's report on the cave: "In the large one, known as Moorehead Cave, a very interesting burial was disclosed. Near the west wall, just below the surface of the deposit, was a thick stratum of yucca leaves and debris which rested on and around large limestone blocks. Under the stones were small branches from the persimmon, shin oak, and mountain laurel, with the leaves still attached. Beneath this covering of limbs were several complete mats somewhat similar to fragments found during the previous two seasons. Five large mats, some of them painted, were in a rather good state of preservation and were wrapped around a body and tied with lechuguilla cordage and split leaves. When the mats were folded back we found the articulated bones of a middle aged woman. Beneath the bones encircling the midriff was a narrow band of matting. This, woven in practically the same manner as the large mats, may have served as a belt. Beneath the pelvic bones was what appeared to be a small skirt or pad made of either fur or apocynum. Several strands of lechuguilla cordage served as apron strings. These were the only objects found with the body. Directly beside this woman, enclosed in a beautifully woven mat, painted on one side with red squares and dots in the center of each square, were fragments of a disarticulated adult male skeleton. The bones had been broken and then burned before burial in the mat. Both bodies had been placed in a large pit lined with grass. Such a combination of cremated and flesh burials lying adjacent to each other in the same grave is very unusual... Numerous similarities and a few variations are significant when a comparison is made between the cultural material from these caves [i.e. Moorehead Cave and Goat Cave] and those dug in the previous seasons. No evidence of corn was found in either of the two caves, which was rather surprising since there were such large quantities of corn cobs farther west. Over 300 various types of complete flint projectile points were recovered, whereas only a few were found in the Chisos Mountain region. The typical split-stitch type of coiled basketry farther west is not the dominant type in the Pecos, although it does occur. It is superseded by a type known as the interlocking stitch with a single-bundle foundation. The accouterments associated with the adult burials in the Moorehead and Goat Caves excel the few artifacts associated with child burials uncovered in Brewster and Presidio Counties." (Setzler, 1934)

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Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. I, No. 2, page 15.
Ref: TSS files
Johnny Greer

MOTH HOLE — Val Verde County (# 15)

Mouth of Pecos 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Fate Bell Ranch (Brotherton, Calk, Calk)

Description: The cave is located about 225' above the Pecos River on a line of vertical cliffs about 20' from the top. It may be reached by following a small ledge formed along the bedding-plane that the cave is formed on. The entrance to the cave is 6' high by 3' wide. After about 30' the ceiling drops to 3' but it remains the same width. It continues this size for an additional 50' where a perpindicular cross joint occurs. At this point the ceiling height is 5'. Shortly after the cross joint the ceiling drops to 2' and continues for about 15' before it becomes higher. Here a 2' wide, 4" high hole leads 5' to the cliff face. Excavation in soft dirt on the floor would allow entrance to the outside. From here the cave continues for about 20' as a 1'-3' high crawl, ending in dirt fill. The floor is covered with a fine, powdery dust, and when it was explored on September 30, 1962, thousands of moths inhabited it. The cave appears to parallel the cliff face about 5' from it. The total length of the cave is about 125'. It was explored by James Reddell, Philip Russell, and Ruben M. Frank.
Ref: TSS files

MURRAH CAVE (WHITE'S INDIAN CAVE) — Val Verde County (# 4)

No quadrangle

Owner: Ted White

Description: "A number of caves of varying sizes are found in this bank /I.e. of the Pecos River 7, but Murrah Cave, the largest of them all, is the only one with evidence of prehistoric occupation. It is located approximately two hundred feet above the water level of the river, and sixty feet from the top of the cliff. It extends back into the cliff one hundred and twenty-four feet, is twenty-four feet wide at its mouth, thirty-five feet wide at a distance of forty-five feet from the entrance, thirty-seven feet wide at sixty feet from the entrance, and forty-five feet wide at one hundred feet from the entrance. Toward the back it narrows down abruptly to a passage-way only a few feet wide which extends some twenty-four feet farther. The floor has only a slight dip downward for fifty feet where the decline becomes approximately thirty persent to the rear. The ceiling in the mouth of the cave is nine feet and six inches from the floor. It is almost level for about eighty feet back where it begins tilting downward. Toward the rear it is approximately twenty-five feet from the floor. Human occupation was confined largely to the comparatively level stretch of floor

in the front fifty feet. Behind this the bats have lived, and the guano is from two to three feet deep." (Holden, 1937) (See map, page 40)

Archaeology: "The ash heap in the forward fifty feet of the cave varied from eighteen inches to fifty-two inches in thickness. The ashes were light, dry, and dusty. It was necessary for members of the party to wear respirators while working... No burials were found, however, it is possible that some may be found in the area still to be excavated. The only evidense of human bones was an articular end of a lower jaw. It is significant that this fragment was charred. This might denote one of three facts: attempts at cremation, cannibalism, or carelessness in handling of skeletal material by the ancients... All the evidence indicates that the inhabitants of Murrah Cave were prehistoric. Nothing was found to indicate they had ever come in contact with European civilization. If the last persons to live in the cave left before the arrival of the white race, one may surmise from the amount of ashes that the first inhabitants date back a considerable period before the beginning of historic time. The people had primarily a sotol culture, and were entirely without pottery. Their skill lay in the making of cordage and exquisite flint artifacts." (Holden, 1937)

Paleontology: The following vertebrate remains were found in the cave: buffalo, raccoon, jack-rabbit, cottontail rabbit, ring-tail cat, badger, kit-fox or "swift" coyote, wolf, deer, antelope, turtle, terrapin, rat, squirrel, coatimundi, ocelot, several kinds of fish, and several kinds of birds. A mummified rat was found on a narrow ledge of the wall just below the ash level. Several fragments of horned toads (Phrynosuma cornatum) were found at various depths. Snail shells and several species of mussel shells were also found.

History: "The existence of the cave was first reported to the Department of History and Anthropology [of Texas Technological College] by Mr. Wylie Puckett... In March, 1936, Mr. W. G. McMillan and the writer, accompanied by Mr. Puckett, visited the cave for two days. A survey convinced us that the site was rich in materials and had been molested very little... The expedition was sent out under the auspices of the West Texas Museum..." (Holden, 1937) The cave at that time was owned by Jim Murrah. Members of the Ozona Grotto entered and partially explored the cave several years ago. They were unable to complete exploration, however, because great hordes of insects continually got in their eyes.

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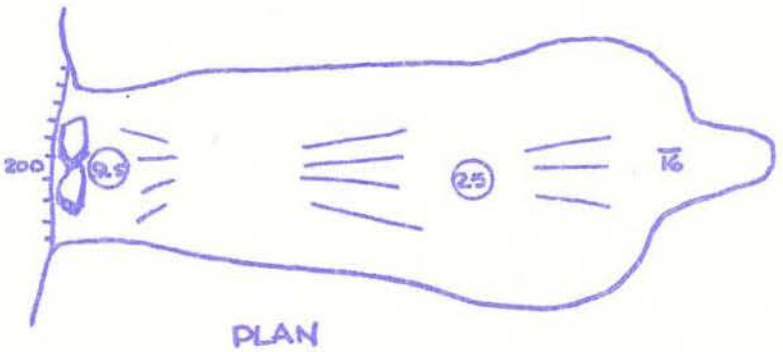
Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, pp. 15 and 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-314. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.
Widener, Donald L., ed. Ibid, Vol. 1, No. 4, p. ii.

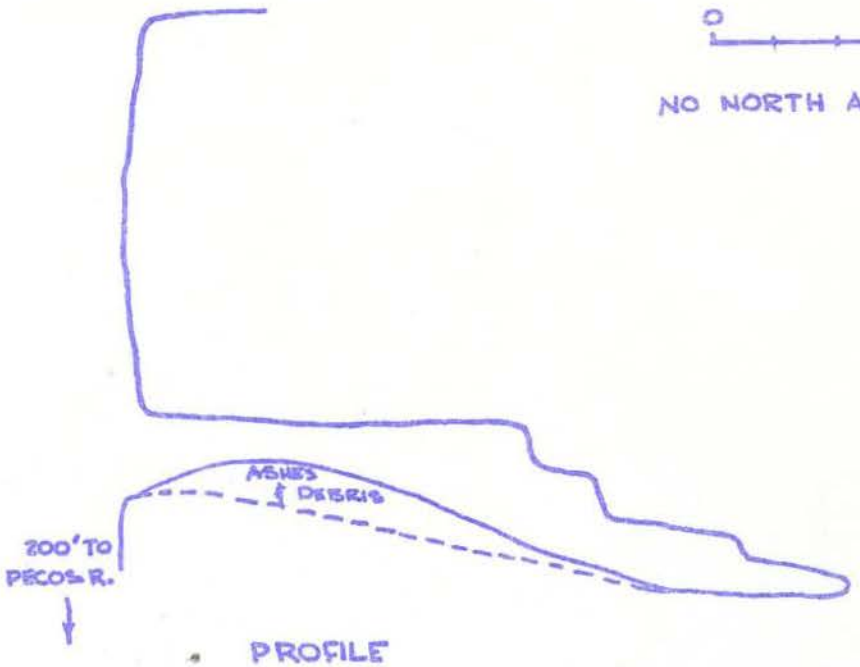
Ref: TSS files



PLAN

0 30 FT.

NO NORTH ARROW



PROFILE

MURRAH CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

SURVEYED 4-'36

OBERKAMPF CRAWLWAY CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

No quadrangle

Owner: Oberkampf Ranch

Description: Oberkampf Crawlway Cave is located about one mile north of Oberkampf Ranch Cave. It is entered through a very inconspicuous sinkhole 3' in diameter. This sinkhole drops 15' to the top of a mound of breakdown in the center of the entrance room. The entrance room is 200' long, 15' high and up to 70' wide. Along the south wall breakdown is piled to near the ceiling, but the east and north sections of the room are open and contain several impressive columns and flowstone banks. A low passage leading east from the entrance room ends after about 50' in slab breakdown. From the west end of the room the passage extends for which the cave is named, a crawlway 2'-3' high and 30'-40' wide. Just before the end of the crawlway, about 250' from the entrance room, there is a 17' high, 30' in diameter room. West from this room a walking passage extends for 40' to a dead-end. The floor of the crawlway is composed of an upper layer of clay, gypsum, and brown organic material underlain by a white crystalline gypsum sand. In places there are deposits several inches thick of the brown organic material. This material does not appear to be guano. It is quite light and can easily be crushed into a powder. The cave is quite dry and no animals were noted when it was visited on January 27, 1963, but a careful search should produce some. It was explored and mapped by Bill Russell, T.R. Evans, Bill Bell, and Terry Raines. (See map, page 42)

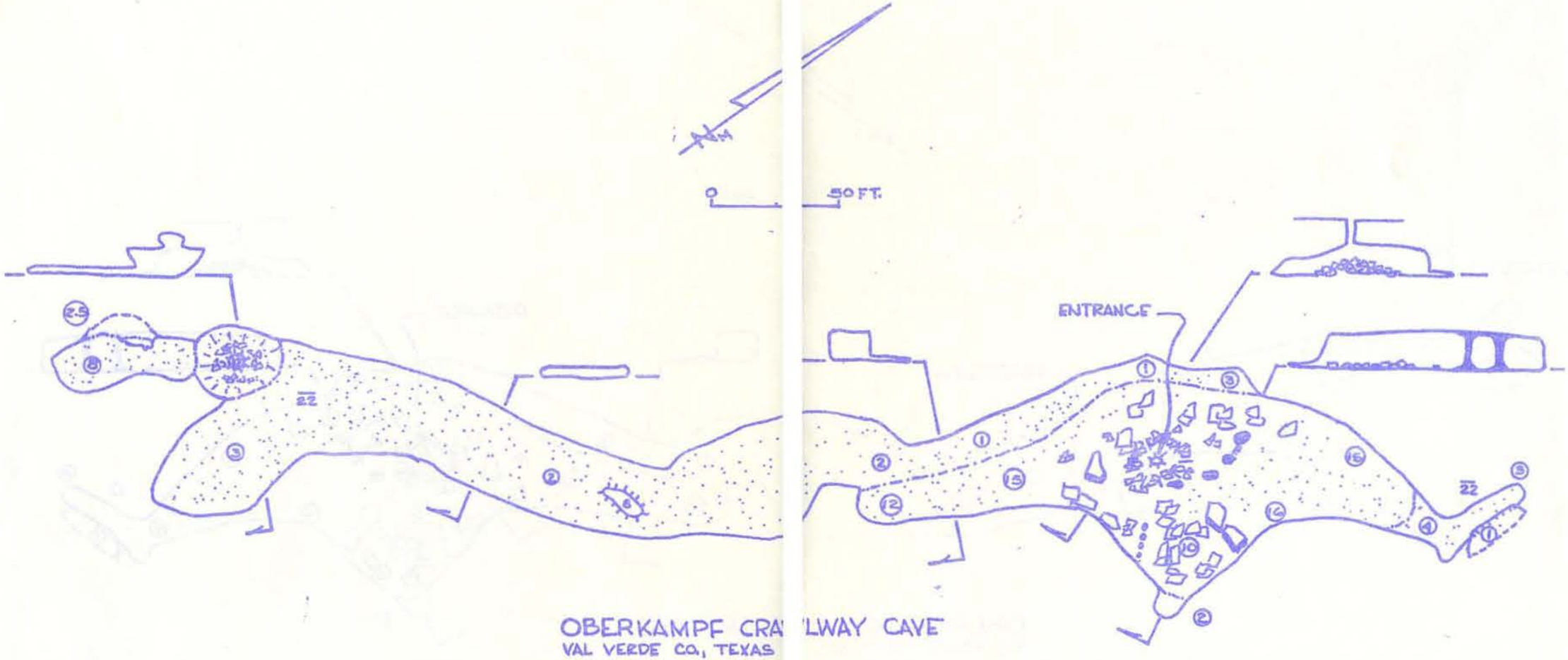
Ref: TSS files

OBERKAMPF RANCH CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

No quadrangle

Owner: Oberkampf Ranch

Description: Oberkampf Ranch Cave is located on the high divide between the Pecos and Devil's Rivers at an elevation of about 2100 feet. The cave is entered through a 4' x 5' sink dropping 13' into a small room. When the cave was first discovered by the ranch foreman a large tree grew from the entrance almost completely blocking the cave. The foreman was interested in caves and upon climbing down the entrance drop he found a too-small hole which he enlarged to a crawlway. This short crawlway opens into a dirt-floored passage 10' high and 15'-40' wide. A right branch leads south 120' from the entrance. This 10' high, 15'-20' wide passage ends after 150' in an oval room 50' long and 25' wide. Further into the cave, along the entrance passage and past the branch leading to the oval room, there is another south-trending passage. This second south passage is connected with the oval room passage by two short connecting stoopways. Beyond the connecting stoopways the second south passage trends southeast and leads to a 50' x 40' room. East from this room a passage leads for 40' to a smaller room and then under a low arch to a terminal room. The entrance passage, still 15'-40' wide, continues east past the second south passage to its end in a formation area 500' from the entrance. The total length of passage in the cave is 1528' of which all but about 100' is at least 10' wide and high. The floors are dirt, flowstone, or small breakdown. It was completely dry when visited on January 27, 1963, during a dry period, but the presence of gypsum in the cave dirt would indicate that the cave is usually dry. It was mapped with brunton and type on January 27, 1963, by Bill Russell, Terry Raines, Bill Bell, and T.R. Evans. (See map, page 44)



OBERKAMPF CRA LWAY CAVE
VAL VERDE CO, TEXAS

BRUNTON & TAPE SURVE 1-27-68
UTSS

Geology: The cave passages have two typical cross-sections: those in which the floor makes a right angle with the wall, and the ceiling is gently arched; and those in which the ceiling is almost flat and the walls slope inward, leaving a floor that occupies only about half of the passage. In several places where the passages pass under low arches the ceiling is covered with small bowl-shaped depressions about 1' deep and wide. This scalloped ceiling appears to have been formed while the cave was below the water table. Early in the history of the cave the whole ceiling of the cave was probably scalloped, but as upward solution reached a relatively insoluble zone or the top of the water a flat ceiling was formed. These areas now scalloped are sections of the cave that were drained before this process was completed.

Biology: A collection of fauna was made on January 27, 1963, by Bill Russell. The collection includes Trichoniscid isopods, spiders, cave crickets, millipeds, and beetles. The millipeds have been identified as Cambala caeca Loomis; while the beetles are Agonum (Rhadine) babcocki Barr, a semi-cave form. The discovery of this species of Rhadine beetle marks an interesting range extension since heretofore it was recorded only from caves near Sonora and Iraan. The remainder of the material collected awaits identification.

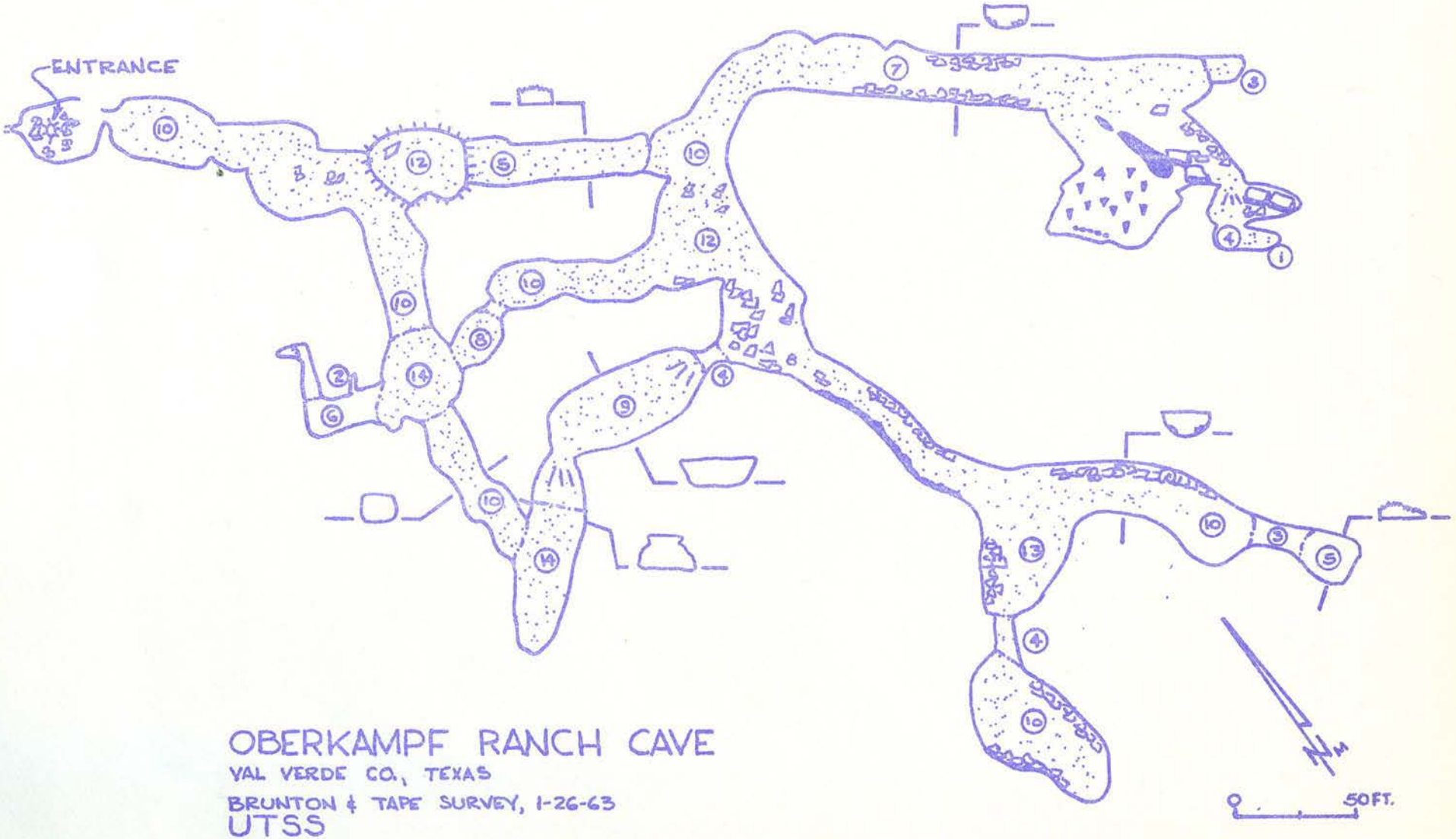
Ref: TSS files

ORIENTE MILESTONE MOLASSES BAT CAVE (DOAK RANCH BAT CAVE) Val Verde County (# 34)

Devil's Lake 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Sparks Rust, Jr.

Description: "The entrance is in a shallow sink about forty feet in diameter, with a heavy growth of brush and several large trees in the bottom. The cave leaves the sink on the south side as a horizontal passage about ten feet high and twenty-five feet wide. Fifty feet in, where the passage has narrowed to ten feet by ten feet, there is a lower passage which apparently carries some of the run-in water when it rains. This passage is small and is blocked by washed-in trash after about thirty feet. Past this branch the passage narrows, then emerges into the main chamber of the cave. Here, for three hundred feet, the passage is about twenty feet wide and thirty-five feet high. Many bats live in the domes in the ceiling, but there is not much guano. One of the bats was captured and found to be a Myotis. At the end of this passage the cave drops about ten feet and turns right as a small crawlway. There is a deposit of sticks and mud all through the fifty foot crawlway; evidently it forms a siphon in wet weather. After the crawl, the cave makes a right angle turn and emerges in a small room. The passage leaves the room about seven feet high and six feet wide, makes a right angle turn, squeezes down to three feet high, and passes by the cave's only formation, a heavy two foot long stalactite. The passage then enlarges to six by six feet and goes a hundred and fifty feet to an eleven foot drop. A cable ladder is necessary here. After the drop the cave goes back under itself in a straight line for one hundred and seventy-five feet as a five foot by six foot passage. At the end of this passage, the floor slopes down ten feet into a room. This room is about twenty feet long and fifteen feet wide. Dirt covered ledges near the ceiling lead only to dead-end crawlways. From this room the main passage continues through a small hole for about ten feet, where it angles to the left as a small crack, goes down two small drops, and finally ends after a very rough crawlway going through a six inch hole. This would be a bad place in wet weather, as tractor tires have washed in from the entrance through holes smaller than the tires. The total length of the cave is one thousand feet including side passages. Surveying was done with a hand compass and a one hundred foot steel tape. The surveying and exploration took about four hours, including a



OBERKAMPF RANCH CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY, 1-26-63

UTSS

trip out for a cable ladder." (Russell, 1959) It was mapped by Roger Sorrells, Tommy Evans, and Bill Russell of the University of Texas Grotto on May 7, 1959. It had been located on a previous trip. The total depth of the cave is 60'. The name derives from several historic landmarks. The old Mexico Oriente railroad grade ran near the cave, but the tracks were never laid; at the turnoff to the cave there is a milestone and a large molasses tank; and the cave is inhabited by bats. (See map, page 46)

Bibliography: Estes, James H. "Noteworthy Caverns of Texas." Texas Almanac: 1961-1962, p. 63. A. H. Belo Corp., 1961.
Russell, Bill. "Oriente Milestone Molasses Bat Cave." The Texas Caver, Vol. IV, No. 3, pp. 8-9. May-June, 1959.

Ref: TSS files

PUTRID PIT — Val Verde County (# 8)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Arnem Humphries

Description: The cave entrance is a round 3' in diameter hole dropping vertically for 10' into the center of a 20' in diameter circular room. A large pile of trash covers the floor of the cave. No passages lead out of the room, which is about 20' deep. It was explored by James Reddell and Tommy Evans on November 5, 1960.

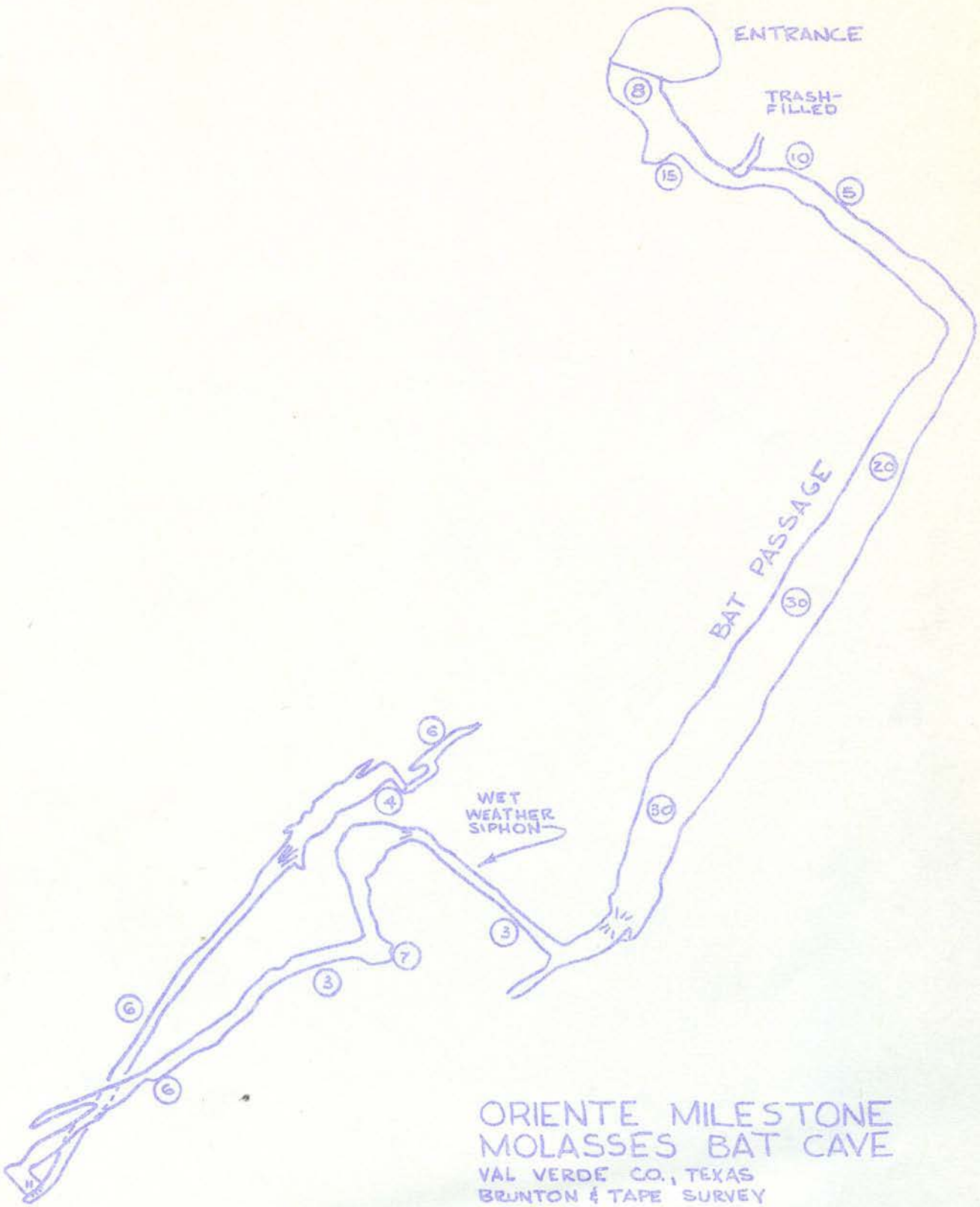
Ref: TSS files

QUIGG SINKHOLE (QUIGG'S WATER WELL) — Val Verde County (# 26)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Poochie Quigg

Description: The entrance to the cave is located in a shallow draw and is about 12' in diameter. A windmill sits over the entrance and the rancher pumps water for cattle from the cave. The water flow is about 8 gallons per minute. The cave drops vertically for 40', where a ledge, slick and rotten with moss, breaks the drop. At this point it is possible to look up at the ceiling several feet above the ledge, which appears to at least partially circle the room. From the ledge one drops along one wall of the room and beside the windmill pipe for an additional 80'. The last 20' or 30' are free from the wall. Sheer, fluted cliffs rise on one side for about 150' from the bottom of a breakdown "moutain" lying beneath the entrance, while on the other side a steep breakdown slope leads to a narrow vertical fissure near the top of the room. The room is 220' long, 100' wide, and over 100' high. At the bottom of the drop, the windmill pipe enters a 10' deep, 5' in diameter metal tank. A small pipe leads from the tank along the breakdown slope to the top of a fissure at the opposite end of the room. In all other directions from the tank, breakdown slopes lead down to sheer walls with no outlets. A few small holes in breakdown lead into small breakdown crawls and rooms, but all were not explored. Water overflowing the tank drains into the breakdown and goes through no known enterable passages. By working a way through breakdown blocks the size of automobiles and larger, it is possible to reach the bottom of a 125' high fissure. Following the bottom for about 100', the end of the fissure on this lower level is reached. It ends



ORIENTE MILESTONE
MOLASSES BAT CAVE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS
BRUNTON & TAPE SURVEY
UTSS

in beautiful orange flowstone, with a crystal-clear pool at its base. A few feet from the end, a rotten wooden ladder leads to a ledge 15' above the cave floor. It is necessary to lasso a stalagmite on the ledge to climb it. The passage continues over the flowstone for about 30' before ending. Great rolls of rusted wire were found on the ledge, as along the fissure, and 40' above the ledge, hooked onto a pinnacle of rock projecting from a crawlway, is a washtub. The walls at this point are unclimbable. At the bottom of the ledge, beside a rotten log, there lies an ancient gallon canteen still filled with water. By following the water pipe from the tank at the entrance, it is possible to climb along and up the breakdown slope to the top of the fissure at the end of the entrance room. Here the pipe has been laid along the top of the 125' deep fissure, itself 3'-5' wide and completely unchimneyable. Apparently an upper level passage has collapsed into the lower level and a pit 30'-50' long has formed. The pipe was laid by chiselling out places on the sides of the pit and laying boards across it, the remnants of which may be found at the bottom of the fissure. How far back it is to the source of the water is not known. A photograph taken of the room revealed a large log placed over a gap in the ledge at the 40' level indicating that this may have been the way the original explorers of the cave reached the stream. The following animals were seen in the cave: one frog, beetles, and cave crickets. A well drilled one-half mile from the cave, at a depth of 60' broke into a 90' void filled with water. The well pumped 60 gallons per minute for several weeks after which it pumped a consistent 8 gallons per minute. Quigg Sinkhole appears to head in this direction. At the ranch house an oil well struck a cave at about this same level. They lost the drill stem, so a man was lowered into the cave to recover it. He reported that he could not see the walls in any direction with a 3-cell flashlight. The cave is formed in the Devil's River limestone. (See map, page 49)

Meteorology: A series of temperatures were taken in the cave on September, 1960. These are as follows:

Time	Air Temperature	Water Temperature	Place
12:30 P.M.	68°F	68.5°F	Bottom of entrance; water in tank
1:10 P.M.	66°F	65°F	Old ladder; water in pool
3:30 P.M.	66°F	68°F	Bottom of entrance; water in tank
5:30 P.M.	67°F	68°F	Bottom of entrance; water in tank

History: Legend has it that sometime in the 1800's seventy-five jackloads of silver were hidden in the cave, a treasure which remains unfound. These early explorers and others brought back wild rumors of a huge cave containing a river. In 1910 a windmill was built over the cave and a pipe laid back to the river, which carried the water into a cedar tank placed at the bottom of the 120' entrance drop. The cave was not entered again until 1942 when one man rode a metal tank to the bottom of the drop to replace the old, rotten cedar tank. From this time until 1960, all attempts to enter the cave failed because of the owner's reluctance to give permission. In September of 1960 five members of the University of Texas Grotto obtained permission from the owner to enter the cave and find out what condition the water pipe was in. The group consisted of James Reddell, Bob Benfer, Mills Tandy, Alice Hirsch, and Patsy Watson. The cave was as thoroughly explored as possible in the limited time available, although an unsuccessful attempt was made to explore the fissure. The cave has not been entered since.

Bibliography: Reddell, James R. "Quigg Sinkhole Explored." NSS News, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 42-44. April, 1961.
Texas Board of Water Engineers. Val Verde County, Texas, pp. 17-18. March 15, 1940. Reprinted March 1950. The cave is cited as Well No. 236.

Ref: TSS files

RED BLUFF CREEK CAVE — Val Verde County (# 30)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: H.T. Miers

Description: The entrance is an 18" in diameter hole on the south side of Red Bluff Creek and across the creek from McBee Band Cave. It opens into the top of a small room about 20' high. To the right there is a small dome, containing several small stalactites. To the left it drops 20' as a 10' in diameter funnel into a room about 20' in diameter. Any passages leading out of this room are now filled with mud and silt. Harvestment and cave crickets abound. It was explored in the summer of 1961 by T.R. Evans, James Reddell, and Bud Frank.
Ref: TSS files

RED BLUFF SHELTER CAVE — Val Verde County (# 28)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: H.T. Miers

Description: The entrance to the cave is 40' high and 20' wide and lies about 15' above the bed of Red Bluff Creek. About 20' in, the cave becomes a narrow chimneyable crack 30' high. A 1' high, 20' long crawl floored with large, white calcite crystals extends to a dead-end. When explored in the summer of 1961 the cave contained thousands of flies, mosquitoes, and moths. About 100 yards downstream from the cave there is a 10' high, 40' long, 5' deep shelter in very white limestone and containing numerous red pictographs. It was explored in the summer of 1961 by James Reddell of the University of Texas Grotto.
Ref: TSS files

ROAD CUT CAVE — Val Verde County (# 32)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Highway Department

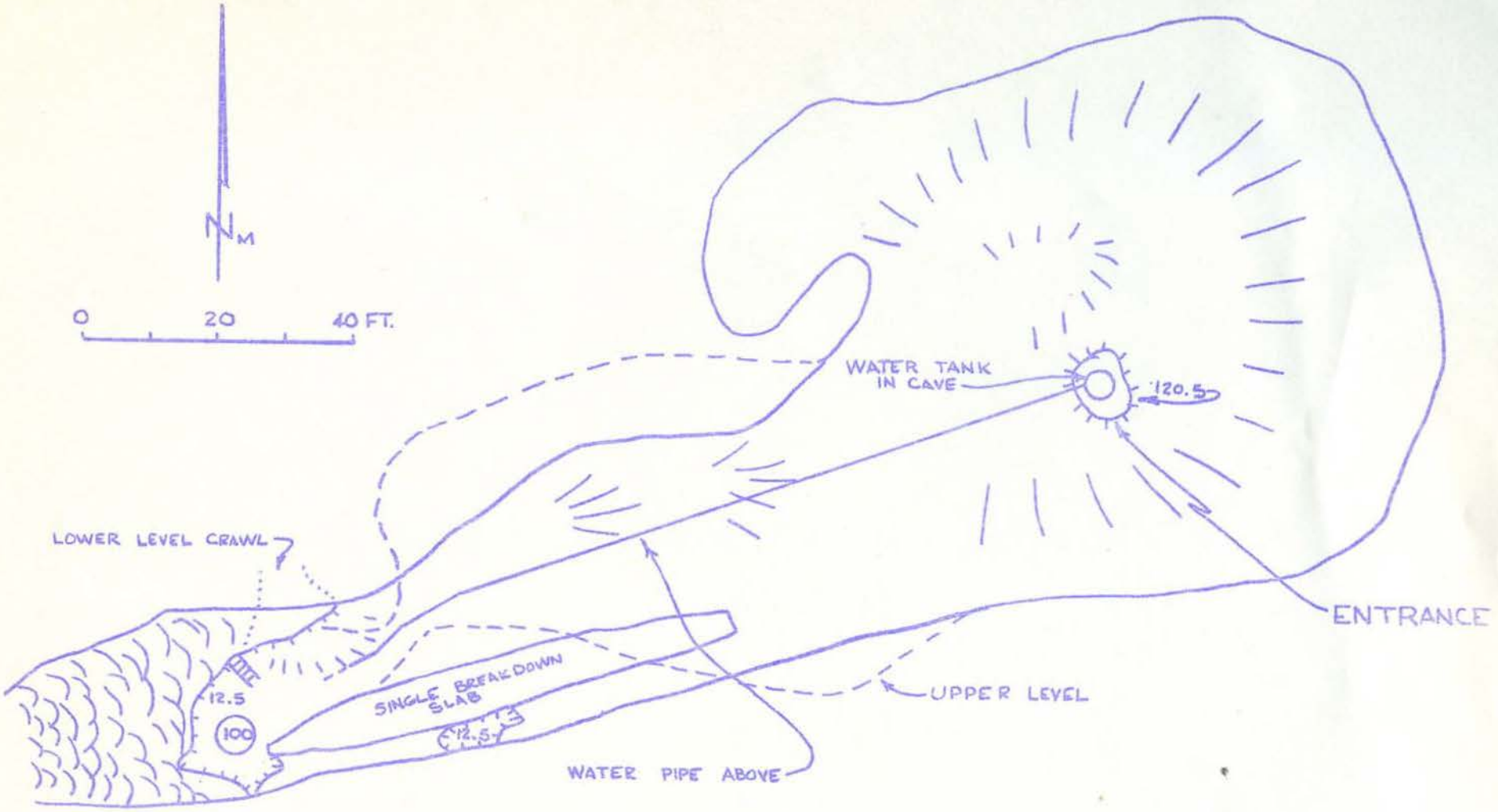
Description: The entrance is in a road cut and measures about 2' x 5'; it immediately opens into an 8' high, 10' in diameter room. A talus slope at the back of this room leads to a passage about 5' long, which in turn leads to another room about 7' in diameter. A small passage from this room extends a few feet before ending. The ceiling of the first room is very unstable. Fauna includes millions of flies and a few beetles. A small tree goes in front of the entrance.
Ref: TSS files

SHUMLA CLIFF CAVE — Val Verde County (# 14)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Rufus (Bob) Williams

Description: The cave entrance is about 15' wide and 10' high and opens onto a cliff overlooking the Rio Grande. A large breakdown slab has fallen and extends



PASSAGE ENDS IN FLOWSTONE

FLOOR IS COVERED WITH BREAKDOWN.

QUIGG SINKHOLE

VAL VERDE CO., TEXAS

BRUNTON & CORD SURVEY
BY UTSS, SEPT., 1960

from the entrance for a considerable distance back into the cave. The floor is very dry and dusty, with many small pieces of rock lying in the dust. Light extends back for 60' where expleration was stepped. The passage is 6'-10' high and 5'-10' wide with flowstone formed along part of the right wall. It was explored by James Reddell on September 29, 1962.

Ref: TSS files

SHUMLA TALUS CAVE — Val Verde County (# 13)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Rufus (Bob) Williams

Description: A large block has split away from a cliff overlooking the Rio Grande and small rocks filled the upper part of the crack to form a ceiling. About 15' below the top of the crack, solution has widened it to form a 3' high, 3' wide crawlway which runs along the side of the crack for about 20' to a second entrance. The crack itself drops as a 1'-2' wide chimney for 50' to a third entrance. From this entrance the cliff drops vertically for 30'-50'. It is impossible to approach the cave from any but the easternmost entrance. Popcorn and flowstone have been deposited along the walls. It was explored on September 29, 1962, by James Reddell.

Ref: TSS files

TWIN SHELTERS CAVE — Val Verde County (# 29)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle

Owner: H.T. Miers

Description: The cave is located on the south wall of Red Bluff Creek and about 150' above its bed. A 10' high, 10' wide, 20' deep shelter is connected to the surface above the bluff by a 6" wide, 30' high fissure largely filled with small rocks. At the back of the shelter the fissure continues for an additional 15'. A chimney leads up a few feet on the left wall of the shelter and connects it, by way of a narrow passage, to an almost identical shelter about 10' away. It was explored in the summer of 1961 by James Reddell.

Ref: TSS files

WALK CRAWL — Val Verde County (#)

Devil's Lake 15' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave is a 50' long, 5'-6' wide, 2'-3' high rock-floored crawl. The entrance opens into a cliff overlooking the Devil's River below Lake Walk Dam. It was explored by Johnny Greer.

Ref: Johnny Greer

WHISTLING WIND CAVE — Val Verde County (#)

Shumla 15' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave is located 15' above the railroad tracks on the old Shumla spur. It is 3' wide and 8' high and extends about 40' to a junction. The passage to the left extends an additional 40' to a dead-end. The passage to the right extends as a 2' high, 2' wide passage for 15' to a cemented rock. The passage continues beyond this point and a strong wind current issues from it. It was explored by Johnny Greer, Terry Raines, and T.H. Evans in December, 1962.

Ref: Johnny Greer
Terry Raines

WHITE SINKHOLE — Val Verde County (# 3)

No quadrangle

Owner: Ted White

Description: The cave is a small sink dropping 30' to a dead-end.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-314. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.

Ref: TSS files

WHITEHEAD RANCH CAVE NO. 1 — Val Verde County (# 24)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Whitehead Ranch

Description: The cave is a 60' sink to a 500' long passage containing pits. Rattlesnakes were killed in the entrance. Nothing more is known about the cave, which was explored by Mills Tandy and other members of the Ozona Grotto.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-316. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.

Ref: Mills Tandy

WHITEHEAD RANCH CAVE NO. 5 — Val Verde County (# 25)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Whitehead Ranch

Description: The cave is entered by a 10' in diameter sink about 20' deep. It consists of a 60' in diameter room with several short passages leading from it. Rattlesnakes were found in the cave when it was explored by Mills Tandy and other members of the Ozona Grotto.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-317. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.
Ref: TSS files

YELLOW HOLE — Val Verde County (# 7)

Langtry 15' Quadrangle

Owner: C. R. Schnaubert

Description: The entrance to the cave is about 20' in diameter and drops vertically for 77'. The total length of the cave does not exceed 30'. Located on the side of a hill in the Boquillas flags the walls of the cave are made up of very loose rocks, some of considerable size. It is, therefore, quite dangerous. The cave is located near a large yellow mineralized zone, hence its name. It was explored several years ago by geologists who also dug a core hole near the cave. The cave is unclimbable and since there is no tie-off nearby an expansion bolt is needed to supply one. It was visited on November 5, 1960, by Bud Frank, James Reddell, Jim Tennison, and Graham Bell.
Ref: TSS files

UNNAMED CAVE (41VV38) — Val Verde County (#)

Quadrangle:

Owner:

Description: "Site VV38 is an interesting site on Satan Canyon. Part of the ceiling has collapsed, leaving an entrance only about 25 feet wide. Inside, the shelter widens considerably and extends back about 50 feet. The interior of the shelter is dark, which will make excavation rather difficult. Midden material is present at the mouth of the shelter and the interior shows evidence of numerous fires. This shelter is excessively dry and should be productive." (Graham and Davis, 1958)

Bibliography: Graham, John Allen and William A. Davis. Appraisal of the Archeological Resources of Diablo Reservoir, Val Verde County, Texas, pages 51-52. A Project of the Inter-Agency Archeological Salvage Program. August, 1958.
Ref: TSS files

UNNAMED CAVE — Val Verde County (# 10)

Langtry 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Walter Babb (?)

Description: The entrance to the cave is located on the side of a cliff overlooking a small draw. It measures 3' x 6' wide and is elliptical in cross-section. It was visited by Bill Bourbon, but was not explored. It could be seen to extend 30'-40' into the cliff before making a bend.
Ref: Bill Bourbon

DOUBTFUL CAVES

WHITEHEAD RANCH CAVE NO. 2 — Val Verde County (# 2a)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Whitehead Ranch

Description: The cave is entered by a 10' deep, 10' in diameter sink. It is not known if it is more than a shallow sink. A rattlesnake den, a tree grows out of it and barbed wire covers it.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-317. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.
Ref: Mills Tandy

WHITEHEAD RANCH CAVE NO. 3 — Val Verde County (# 3a)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Whitehead Ranch

Description: The cave is used as a trash dump and is now full of tin cans. The entrance is 4' in diameter and drops 4' to a pile of rubbish.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-317. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.
Ref: Mills Tandy

WHITEHEAD RANCH CAVE NO. 4 — Val Verde County (# 4a)

Dry Devil 15' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Whitehead Ranch

Description: The cave is a shallow sink with a too-small-to-enter crawlway at the bottom.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. 1, No. 2, p. 17. Reprinted in Speleo Digest 1958, page 1-317. Pittsburgh Grotto Press, May 1959.
Ref: Mills Tandy

UNNAMED SINK — Val Verde County (# 1a)

Langtry 15' Quadrangle

Owner: Guy Skiles

Description: The cave is located on a hill overlooking Mile Canyon. It is about 4' wide, 6' long, and 10' deep, but is blocked with trash and rocks. What appears to be a passage along one side might be opened by excavation. Two rattlesnakes were seen in the sink when it was investigated by members of the University of Texas Grotto in 1960.
Ref: TSS files