

Ohio Cave Survey, Inc.

OCS Officers

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Mission Statement

The purposes of this organization shall be to maintain a collective and current survey database of caves within the state of Ohio, and to further the exploration, research, and conservation of our state's caves.

NEXT MEETING

Sunday, August 11th at 1pm

at

Seneca Caverns

15248 E Township Rd 178, Bellevue, OH 44811

VISITING CAVE HISTORY

BY CURT HARLER

Earlier this year, I spent a weekend at Carter Caves, Kentucky. It became a pilgrimage in honor of Horton H. Hobbs III. HHH is the late Wittenberg University professor who spearheaded the Ohio Cave Survey from the 1990s until his death in August 2016.

The highlight for me was getting into HHH Cave. After knowing and working with him on and off on survey projects, it seemed like a must-do. Our trip leaders were Steve Duncan, who discovered the cave, and Ohio Caver Don Davis. I must send out a big Thank You to Coy Ainsley of Carter Caves for allowing a special trip for several OCS and Cleveland Grotto members who wanted to see the cave.

Today known as HHH Cave, it was originally named Coon-in-the-Crack Cave by Steve. In recognition of Hobbs's extensive work at Carter Cave, the cave was renamed for him. There are three entrances to HHH Cave. Rockfall has split the cave into two sections. There is a pit entrance, navigable with an extension ladder and handline; the Claw Entrance, so named because it requires clawing one's way through a twisted upward squeeze; and a third entrance that leads to the passage beyond the breakdown. Park geologists say the western half of HHH is suggestive of how Carter's Saltpetre Cave looked prior to mining and commercialization.

Dues Information

Membership is open to all persons and similar-minded organizations interested in speleology and caving.

Regular (18+): \$15/yr

Associate (18-): \$5/yr

Organization: \$30/yr

Dues are prorated (half price) if new and joining between July - November.

Paypal, credit card, or mailed check are accepted. Follow the link below to become a member today!

[Ohio Cave Survey Membership](#)

Meeting Minutes

Miss a meeting? The minutes are available here:

[OCS Minutes](#)

Links

[Central Ohio Grotto](#)

[Dayton Underground Grotto](#)

[Greater Cincinnati Grotto](#)

[Wittenberg University Speleological Society](#)

[Cleveland Grotto](#)

[National Speleological Society](#)

We quickly learned a lesson while approaching the pit entrance: do not slide an extension ladder into a pit without securing the sections with a rope. One of the clasps that joins the sections had come loose and we all looked on in chagrin as our 16-foot ladder became a 4-foot tri-fold ladder at the bottom of the hole. Don went in the Claw entrance, worked back to the ladder and the rest of us descended in comfort. Yes, we all could have gone in the Claw Entrance but... The cave is quite nice with a mix of easy crawling and walking or stoop walking. At one end, it tapers down to low crawling that only becomes lower. That's when we turned around and hit the third entrance. A fun cave and one which does Horton proud.

To round out a weekend of HHH-centric caving, I later tail-gunned on geology hike which followed a trip Horton himself led many times back in the Crawlathon days (the maiden name of today's Adventure Weekend). The hike was led by ODNR's Erin Hazleton, a former student of HHH's.

HHH got his BA in biology at the University of Richmond, his MS in zoology from Mississippi State, and his PhD in zoology/limnology from Indiana University. In 1976, he joined the faculty at Wittenberg and dedicated the next four decades to teaching courses in biology, ecology and limnology and gathering cave data. In 1977, he founded and served as advisor to the University's Caving Club which later became WUSS (Wittenberg University Speleological Society).

May Horton Hobbs long be remembered for his contributions both at Carter Cave and to Ohio speleology.



Left: Bill Lendvay hauls out of the 15-foot pit entrance to Horton Hobbs Cave in Kentucky

Right: Nate Klein wiggles out the aptly-named Claw Entrance to HHH Cave. To get up and out requires clawing one's way through a twisted upward squeeze.

HOW DEEP IS OUR SURVEY?

BY CURT HARLER

Most cavers are interested in finding the deepest cave in a state or county. Ohio Cave Survey members might also want to know how deep the Survey's own roots go.

Turns out the answer is: Our roots run deeper than most caves in Ohio!

Way back on April 1, 1945 (no April fooling!) the Cleveland Grotto solicited the Geology Department of Ohio and those in adjoining states for their State Geological Surveys. Members were going to try to find and explore possible cave-bearing formations. So, nearly 80 years ago the Cleveland Grotto, by far the oldest grotto in the Buckeye State, had already set the wheels in motion for today's speleo-surveying.

In those pre-Woody Hayes\Bo Schembechler days, there must not have been much of an Ohio\Michigan rivalry. The CLEVE-O-GROTTO NEWS reported that the Ohioans got a response from the Michigan Department of Conservation on April 5. Would that today's bureaucracies and post offices be that responsive and efficient! For the next few years, the survey work that continued in Ohio was mostly under individual impetus with grotto members going out as groups or individuals to explore. But there was considerable communication between and among the state's cavers. Sound familiar?

By March 18, 1953, the Cleveland Grotto newsletter recorded that Sgt. Roger Brucker (NSS 1999) of Yellow Springs, Ohio reported on his work with the State Geology Department on a Cave Survey of Ohio. Yes, the same Roger Brucker of Mammoth Cave fame who was to participate in the Floyd Collins Crystal Cave (C-3) Expedition in Kentucky about a year later. While the C-3 Expedition did not make the desired connections in the Mammoth Cave system, eventually cavers who participated in C-3 and others were able to make the connections that established Mammoth's record-setting length. Brucker wrote *THE CAVES BEYOND* and *THE LONGEST CAVE* based on that work. Brucker was stationed at Wright-Patterson Air Force Base at the time. Despite his involvement in a record-setting cave (or, perhaps, because of his work in Ohio) Brucker was interested in Ohio's underground. Hey, if Ohioans don't care about Ohio caves, who will?

Right: Gretchen and Bill Lendvay check the map while on a trip to Reif's Cave in Ross County. A bit more push work by Ohio Cave Survey members could make Reif's the second longest cave in Ohio.



In the 1960s, Warren Luther (NSS 2438) and his brother did yeoman work on Ohio Caves, driving around the state and publishing their research in several cave venues including PHOLEOS.

Lou Simpson published in COG SQUEAKS an extensive article and map of Freeland's Cave based on exploration he and Bill Walden did in 1969 (thanks to Mark Swelstad for a copy of the article via Gary Bush). Simpson and Walden recognized Freeland's as "one of Ohio's more significant caves due to its length," then known to be 1300 feet. Carbide cavers will sympathize with Lou losing his light and needing a fire kiss to light up the low crawl in the back of Freeland's. On a subsequent trip, Carolyn Herel joined the effort. On one push trip, Lou had to dig his way into a low crawl – and dig his way out again! By November 1969 Lou and Bill had drafted a map of Ohio's longest known wild cave, now surveyed to 2,323 feet.

Throughout the 2000s, Horton H. Hobbs III coordinated the research done by the several active Ohio grottoes and his students at Wittenberg University and the members of WUSS. These surveys were heavy on the biota of Ohio Caves.

Yes, our roots are deep. The seminal work was being done nearly 80 years ago. There have been several fits-and-starts as the survey continued. The most recent Survey was organized by Mike Hood (NSS 24166) who, in an odd historic coincidence, also has ties to Wright-Patterson AFB; Curt Harler (NSS 22735) and Frank Vlcek (NSS 21484), both of Cleveland Grotto; and others. Today's work on Ohio caves is pushing the frontiers of Ohio speleo-knowledge while expanding and polishing the work done by those who first conceived the idea of surveying Ohio's caves and worked the project decades ago.



The author emerges from one of the Breakfast Caves in Adams County.

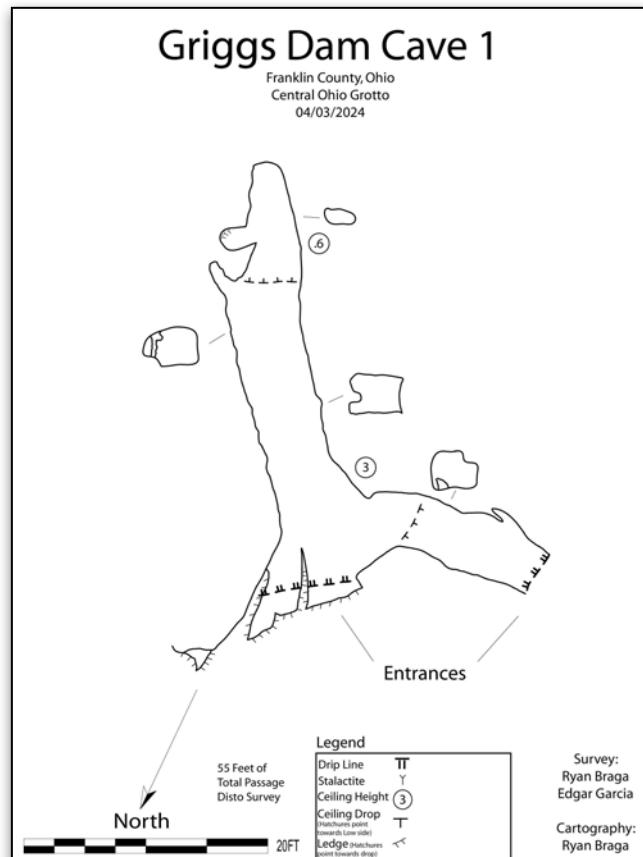
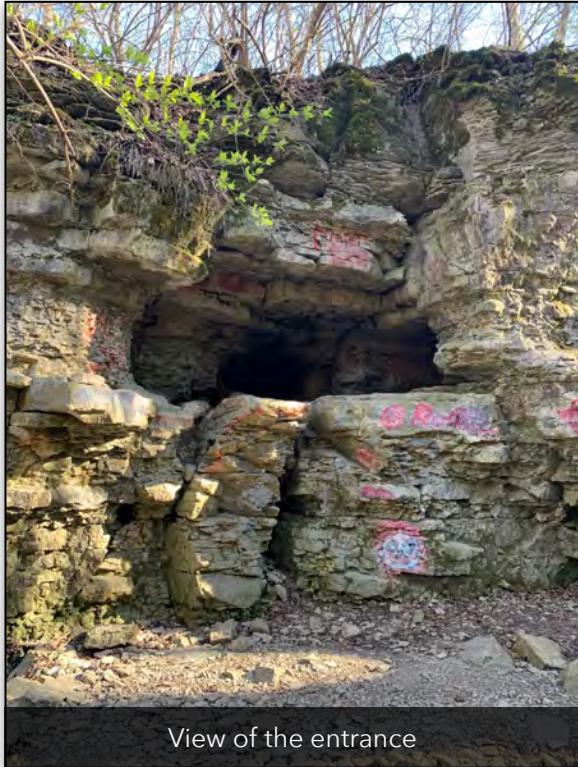


Right image submitted by Brittany Parrick, Ohio Geological Survey. Found in the Survey's slide catalog, the photograph was taken as part of the Ohio Cave Survey project in 1952. The slide comes from a presentation by Philip M. Smith titled "Exploring Ohio's Caves: An illustrated discussion of Ohio's underground caverns prepared for the information program of the Ohio Division of Geological Survey."

GRIGGS DAM CAVE 1

RYAN BRAGA - NSS 72371

Earlier in the month I, with the help of my non-caver best friend Edgar Garcia, surveyed Griggs Dam Cave 1 in Franklin County, Ohio. After this survey and putting data into the computer, I realized I forgot cross sections, so I went back a week later and met up with Joe Hayes where we talked Ohio caves while I grabbed cross sections. With this ensued my first endeavor to do my own cartography. With this I've had zero experience so luckily Beau Gergel from the Greater Cincinnati Grotto has a multi part series on getting started with cartography up to the halfway point. After that, I had to work through the final steps which, being in a version of Adobe Illustrator that came out in 2005, was not very intuitive. With this and many hours of clicking every button and option on the screen, I wrapped up my first ever cartography project. While I don't love my first work, it's good enough to serve as a base point and push on to more cartography. My goal is to continue working these smaller Ohio caves so I can get my feet wet and then hopefully jump into some of the Kentucky survey projects I have brewing.

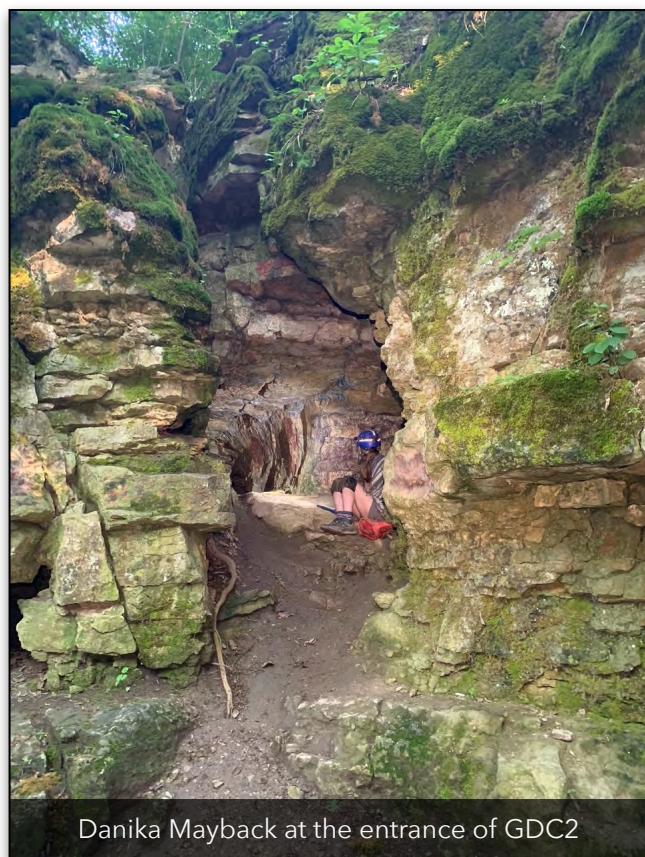
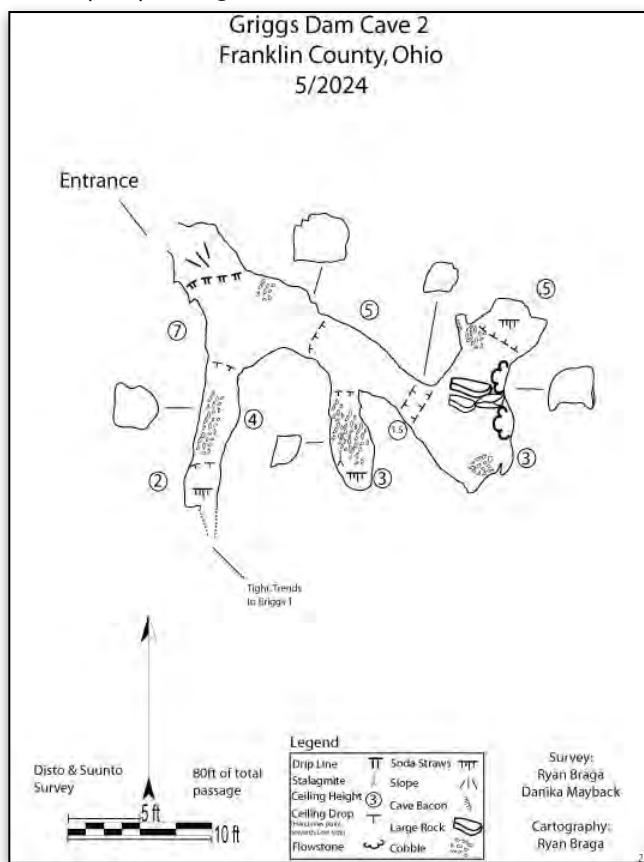


GRIGGS DAM CAVE 2

RYAN BRAGA - NSS 72371

Wrapping up this 80ft cave in our backyard, it made me realize how nice it truly is to have caves so close to home to explore and have fun in on a weeknight. After surveying Griggs Dam Cave 1, I opted to continue in the same canyon and do the other cave right next door before moving on to other locations around Columbus. After the initial reconnaissance I did of the canyon, I returned to do a solo survey of this cave with a Disto. There is a particular fish store close by that I just adore so while surveying, I could not stop thinking about how after the survey I'd swing by and pick up some new friends. With this I committed the ultimate sin... I surveyed and got the data for the cave, but I didn't sketch and opted to come back later. After over a month later, I finally returned with Danika Mayback to do some sketching. While sketching it was apparent that my last survey shot was much off so with only having my Suunto tandem and a distance laser with me, we reshotted the final passage.

Now onto the cave info! While being a small typical Ohio cave, this cave still has the most character out of any of the small Ohio caves I've visited so far! When entering this cave, it feels like - for my Rockcastle people - a baby Goochland. You are immediately hit with a split in the passage just like the main Goochland entrance. To the right is 20ft or so followed by a subhuman crawl that trends to Griggs Dam Cave 1. To the left is a long hallway with a tiny passage breaking off to the right filled with cobble that has an interesting stump of a stalagmite and some baby bacon pieces surrounded by a billion tiny flies. Continuing in the main hall you'll slip under some dangling rocks and into a little room that turns left. To the left is some nice flowstone and further in is some subhuman crawl that is believed to circle on itself and go nowhere. To the left of this is a tiny cubby hole with some more nice, tiny cave bacon. With that you've seen the whole cave! The multiple passages and cave formations makes this truly a nice cave for Ohio standards.



ADDITIONAL GRIGGS DAM CAVE 2 PICTURES

