

UNDERGROUND OHIO



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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.

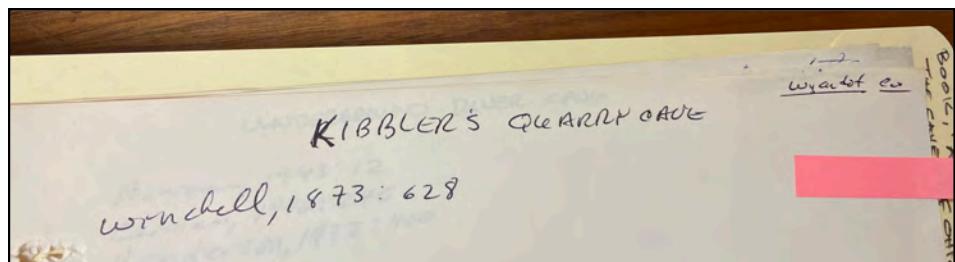
**DON'T FORGET TO
RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP**

SCANNING THROUGH CAVE HISTORY

by Curt Harler

In addition to the muddy, crawly fieldwork being done by Ohio Cave Survey members there is a major project to scan all of the existing survey data which dates from the first time Ohio cavers recorded cave locations and noted geological and biological features in those caves.

The condition of the survey data is as varied as the people who did the work and the caves they visited. Much of the information is hand-written notes. Some data follow a typical recording of key items like county, landowner address, directions and surveyed cave length. There may be topographic maps with the (approximate) cave location marked. Other files are collections of random notes - notes which can be put together with other information to glean some data on the cave's location.



Some of the data is preserved on the green-and-white track-feed paper that was common in IBM computer shops back in the day. Some follows a standard format - like that on the forms generated by Horton H. Hobbs for his students to record cave data. Some files have nicely drawn maps. Others are a puzzle to the casual

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?

Minutes are available here:

[OCS Minutes](#)

Links

[Central Ohio Grotto](#)

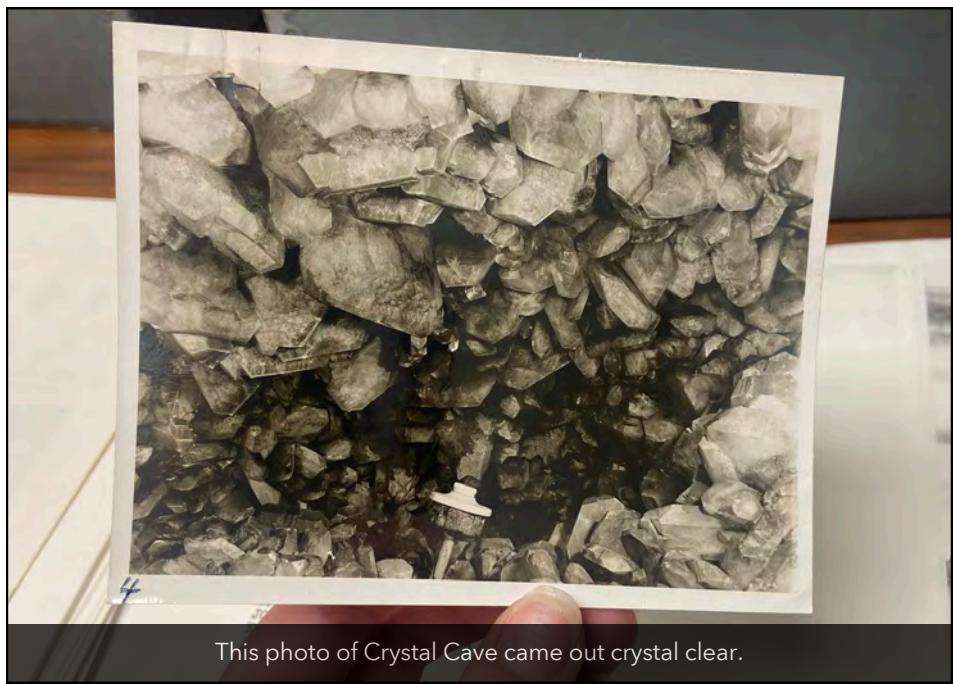
[Dayton Underground Grotto](#)

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[National Speleological Society](#)



observer. There are a number of black-and-white photos in the files...most too dark to tell much about the cave. There also are more recent color photos; many of them, too, are too dark to tell much about the cave!

Notes are on yellow notebook paper or on slivers of paper with each line hand-numbered. Sheets look like they were cut from printer paper or are on copybook paper that obviously was all a student had handy. In many cases scrawled notes have been transcribed in a neater form. Some of those notes are typed on the old foolscap typing paper. Occasionally, there are handwritten corrections added after the fact by a team member or someone who came along later and clarified the original work.

Many files have multiple, identical copies of the same document, especially printed documents. In the interest of time and space, we've opted to scan only one copy of each document. For example, there are about 20 copies of the final version of the Phantom Cave map in the ODNR file. I have no clue why.

There is an assortment of sources over many decades: individuals like Adam Batson, Ryan Bragga, Lee Gillman, Erin Hazelton, the Kidder brothers, Warren Luther, Larry Lynch, Frank Vlcek, and the author; institutions like Ohio Department of Geological Survey's Chief John H. Melvin, Whittenberg University's Horton H. Hobbs, the Ohio Department of Natural Resources, the Central Ohio, Cincy, Cleveland, and Dayton Grottos.

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The files at ODNR, all hard copies, are neatly stored in two dozen gray library boxes that are 12x11x7 inches...the size to fit a collection of standard manilla folders. Every box is labeled "Accession 2022_D44 Ohio Cave Survey Collection," followed by the county name and Box number. Inside the gray boxes, every folder (perhaps 30-40 per box) is neatly labeled, too, making it easy to scan and label PDFs. A typical file might read: Assorted Material/Spider Cave, Highland County, OH/Ohio-122, 1986. The records are kept by Lisa Long, the librarian at ODNR. She has generously made them available, a couple of boxes at a time, to a team of Cleveland Grotto members for scanning. The scanning team job is to take raw pages and turn them into searchable PDFs.

The scanning was slow going this summer since the weather was perfect and outdoor stuff (like hiking, caving, and camping) took precedence over sitting inside to run a scanner. Many of the documents scan easily but a sufficient number are over-sized and require special handling. Some are spiralbound. These, ODNR will take care of. Having professionals do the job means that the documents are less likely to suffer damage as bindings are removed and replaced or tears happen as big maps are folded and unfolded. The Cave Survey purchased two 2TB SSD drives to copy and store data pending agreement on establishing a secure site in the cloud (landowners do not want their information floating around the Internet and neither do we).

Work continues. At the moment, I'd guess we are about 15 percent of the way through the ODNR files. If you have a scanner and a few hours to donate to the project, let us know. We sure could use the help.

SHOW AND TELL

by Brittany Parrick



Geologists Douglas Aden and Brittany Parrick from the Ohio Geological Survey joined field staff from The Stream And Wetlands Foundation, Ohio Division of Natural Areas and Preserves, and Arc of Appalachia to visit a shelter cave in Gallia County over the summer.

While doing a biological survey this past winter, ODNR field botanists discovered the sandstone cave with carbonate speleothems. The bedrock geology of Gallia County is the Pennsylvanian-age Conemaugh Group, which is dominated by sandstone and shale.

These speleothems formed after a small rockfall when a chunk of the sandstone separated from the ceiling of the cave, allowing carbonate-rich groundwater to slowly percolate through the rock and onto the fallen chunk. The source of the minerals likely comes from a discontinuous calcareous shale layer overlying the sandstone.



Adam Batson found this Kentucky Spring Salamander deep inside a southern Ohio cave. The presence of the salamander in its eft (terrestrial juvenile) stage indicates a breeding population, which is good news for this uncommon newt!



SEARCHING LAKE ERIE CAVES FOR CRITTERS

by Curt Harler



Our relentless pursuit of cave isopods and amphipods continues. After a successful outing in the Summit Metroparks, we set our sights on the Lake Erie islands and specifically, Put-in-Bay.

As Frank Vlcek and I drove to Marblehead to meet Erin Hazleton of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources and Chad Waffen at Chad's marina, one of our concerns was Cedar Point traffic jams. Little did we expect that our only slowdown would be the Immigration and Border Patrol staking out the highway...both with their signature green-and-white cars and a helicopter. Actually, other than a slowdown to 65mph, la migra had little impact on us.

Once on Put-in-Bay, we were ready to look for cave critters. Any cave with water is a likely habitat. Those of you who have read "Caves of Lake Erie Islands" know of my thesis that the fresh water in Perry's Cave was a contributing, if not decisive, factor in the American fleet's victory in the Battle of Lake Erie in the War of 1812. If you haven't read the booklet, get a copy; proceeds go to the Cleveland Grotto Science Fund. In addition to Perry's, Paradise Cave, Kindt's Cave, and Cedar Forest I were on our hit list since each features water which could be home to obligate amphipods.



Don't all Ohio cave trips involve a ride in a golf cart? Here, Chad Waffen and Frank Vlcek worry about surviving Curt Harler's driving...far more dangerous than the caving.

Chad Waffen provided ferry service to the island where we rented a golf cart and went caving. Unfortunately, we were not able to get access to Mammoth despite having made earlier arrangements. Tourists were simply swamping the island and business was too brisk to interrupt. We took our golf cart over to Cedar Forest 1 and proceeded to search for critters. No luck.

Kindt's Cave, however, proved to be delightful and rewarding. Kindt's certainly has one of the more picturesque and whimsical entrances: down through a wishing well. The well sits only yards off the road and I'm sure 100 people pass it every day with no clue what lies below. Mr. Bob Kindt was a delight, as always – but had lost the key to the lock. He went into his barn, grabbed a rotary grinder, and cut the lock's hasp so we could get in. How much better can landowner relations be? There still are wires in the cave connected to lights from an early effort at commercialization. Mr. Kindt ran a long extension

cord from inside his house to the cave and helped us place a ladder from his barn (the cave has about a 15-foot-vertical drop-in). We were in! As fate would have it, the only critter we found that whole day was in Kindt's Cave. Be that as it may, Kindt's is worth seeing. Erin heralds it as the nicest cave on any of the Islands. I'd put it in my Top 5 in the state for formations and cave-ness.

Next up was Paradise Cave. Again, the owner provided access and a ladder to drop in. Paradise's drop is a bit more than Kindt's. It's a nice cave with the same crystal-clear water we found in all the others. It was so clear that once, when I was trying to flip over a rock with my fingers, I found out the hard way that the water was elbow deep. Our only find in Paradise was a freshwater snail shell.

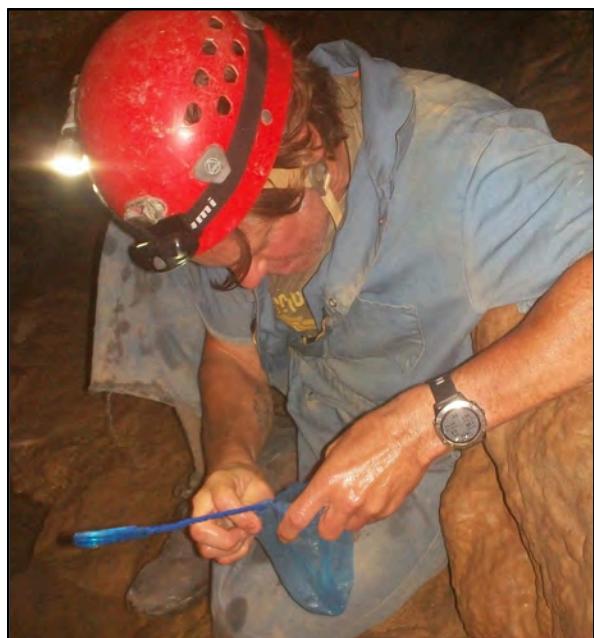
We made a quick sightseeing stop at the now-sealed Larcomb Cave. Erin had been in the cave before it was sealed and assured us we were missing nothing. So, it was off to Perry's Cave.



Erin Hazleton checks the crystal-clear water in Paradise Cave for any sign of life.

Perry's is a commercial cave. They graciously let us do our work between cave tours. The place was super busy. We found nothing. Later, the manager and a group of guides confirmed our lack of success: a group of biologists from Ohio State had gone so far as to SCUBA the cave pool without success.

Our last stop was Duffs Cave in the Dodge Woods Preserve. This was not a bio-stop since there is no real water in the cave. Rather, it was a chance for Chad, Frank, and me to see a cave we hadn't visited. It is a typical domed island cave like the Cedar Woods caves or Coil's on Green Island. What was remarkable was the amount of thick, rich, loamy soil in the entrance drop-slide. On the way out, I was able to kick steps in the soil to get up and out of the cave just as one would kick steps in fresh snow. There wasn't a lot to see in the cave. Chad grabbed a set of GPS readings, as he had at all the other caves, and we headed back to the dock for the crossing back to Marblehead. The Lake had laid down nicely from the morning's bumps (the previous two



Chad Waffen removes his catch preparing to drop it into an alcohol vial Frank is carrying. The specimen from Kindt's Cave will be sent off for identification and classification

days had seen serious storms with power outages all over Cleveland).

Erin has sent the samples off to Florida for identification and analysis. Chad headed back across the Lake to his place on Kelley's Island. Frank and I drove home - this time in a car, not in a golf cart.



Frank Vlcek checks the water in Cedar Forest 1 for signs of life. Unfortunately, we all came up empty. It was our first stop of the day and proved a harbinger of the way things mainly went.



Bob Kindt with his certificate presented to him by the NSS for promoting outstanding landowner-caver relations. He allowed cave explorers/biologists access to document the Kindt's Cave Isopod, a species new to science.