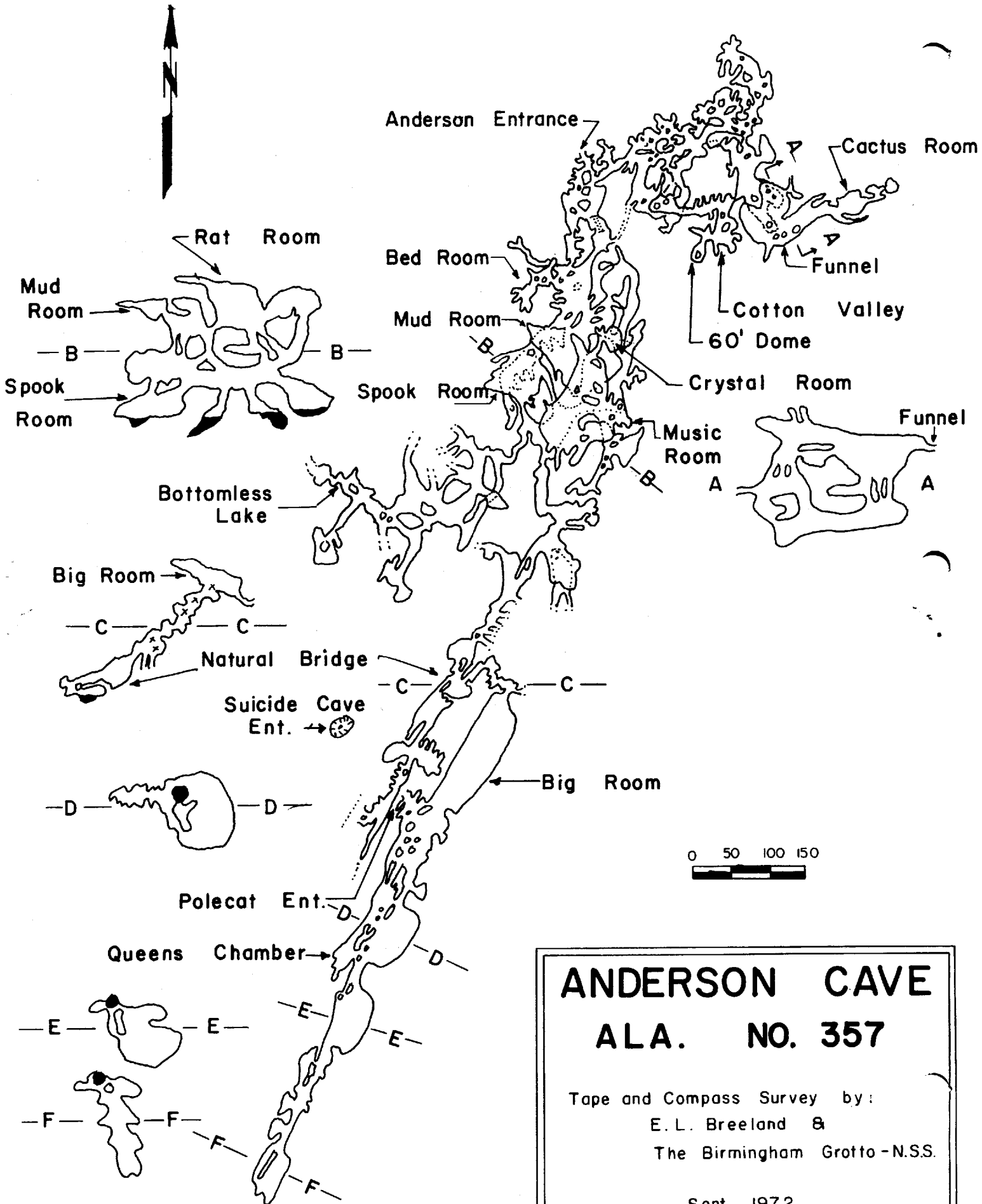


BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

NATIONAL SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

JANUARY 1976





ANDERSON CAVE
ALA. NO. 357

Tape and Compass Survey by:
 E. L. Breeland &
 The Birmingham Grotto - N.S.S.

Sept. 1972

EDITOR'S PAGE

BIRMINGHAM GROTTO NEWSLETTER

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786-6647

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798-2728

Treasurer: Joe Domnanovich

Editor: Kathy Spencer

MEETINGS: First Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Where: Alabama Gas Corp. Bldg.
1918 1st Avenue, North
B'ham, Ala. 35206

JANUARY: January 5, 1975
PROGRAM: Vertical Safety by
Chuck Lawley & Kent Burchfield.

----- DATES TO WATCH

Jan. 17-18 VERTICAL WORKSHOP
(See Chairman's Notes)

Dec. 17 Bankhead Survey Meeting
833-4773

SECRETARY'S REPORT 1

John Moore

December 1, 1975 Meeting
Reports to be given at the Jan. meeting will be presented by groups, including the SERA Planning Committee, the Rescue Squad Committee, the Constitution-By-laws Committee and the group investigating the purchase of carbide in bulk.

Announced upcoming events included the Cumberland Caverns Christmas party. It was decided not to have a Grotto Christmas party this year.

Many trips were discussed including Limrock, Bryant's Mountain, Jefferson, and Newsom Sinks.

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

At the Dec. meeting, it was decided that due to the large number of new cavers in the Grotto who are dipping into vertical work, that some sort of training is needed. Kent Burchfield and Chuck Lawley have agreed to conduct a two-day class on the weekend of Jan. 17. The class will consist of one day of fundamental instructions and then the real thing in a moderate sized pit (about 100 feet). In order to make the Sunday trip attendance on Saturday is a must! The class will be led off with a safety program at the regular Grotto meeting on Jan. 5. Let me add one word of caution--this class will give the new caver the fundamentals, it will not make you proficient which comes with experience. Don't rush out and over-extend yourself.

In closing let me say that I was glad to see all the new cavers at the December meeting. Let me extend the Grotto's welcome to you and invite your continued presence. STEVE SPENCER

Kathy Spencer

Editor's Page (Cont'd)

MEMBERSHIP LIST is in this issue. If there are any errors, tell me after Christmas!

CONGRATULATIONS TO CHUCK & MARLEEN LAWLEY on the birth of a female caver, Dawn, who is about 2 mos. old now. From the way she coos and goos, she will be just like her Dad (Heaven help us!)

EDITOR'S NOTES: Another grand year has passed for the ole Birmingham Grotto. Did you know that our Grotto is about 17 years old now and going strong? As usual, this caving year was concluded by a party at Cumberland Caverns and we had a great time despite the rain. Had 20 present from Birmingham, which is the best yet. To you who have been sitting around armchairing, there is a lot going on and you should get it on it. We've got SERA Summer for 1976 in the planning stages, Bankhead Survey is alive and very well, and new caves are being explored and even some new ones are being found. We are having a great time! I want to wish you all a caving New Year for 1976 and a very Happy and Merry Christmas.

Kathy

TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES, KILL NOTHING BUT TIME, LEAVE NOTHING BUT FOOTPRINTS. NSS Motto
(And Kathy's Command)

MERRY CHRISTMAS
HAPPY NEW YEAR!!

Present: Kathy & Steve Spencer; Chuck & Marleen Lawley; Tom & Vivian Lamb; David Howell; Valerie Haden; Joe Domnanovich; Bob Smith; Jim McDowell; Barbara Kifer; Kent Burchfield (and wife); Bill Siler (and wife); Ed and Tiny Balog; Ken Brown; Steve Durham; Myrna Attaway; Steve Attaway; Greg Jordan; John Calhoun. (If I missed anyone, please understand!)

What can you say about a Cumberland Caverns Christmas party except that it is wonderful! The spirit of Christmas is really evident when you look around you and join in singing Christmas Carols with your fellow cavers. Some of us took the photography tour, which visited the Crystals Palaces and the rest of us went on the Cook's Tour, which visited the Monument Pillar. In fact, on the tour I was on there was nothing but Birmingham Grotto members. Joe D. got some beautiful slides of the Crystal formations and will be showing them at the next meeting.

Even though it rained, it didn't dampen our enthusiasm though a few of us elected to leave Sat. night after the banquet since the tent leaked and wet our sleeping bags.

Cumberland Caverns Christmas Party is just plain fun and if you missed it this year, plan to go next year!

GLAD TO HEAR THAT LARRY MOORE'S MOTHER (WHO'S SUFFERED SOME HEART PROBLEMS) IS BACK HOME AND FEELING FINE!

BIRMINGHAM GROTTO MEMBERSHIP LIST

January, 1976

<u>NAME</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>NSS #</u>	<u>PHONE</u>
Aldridge, Sonny	7505 4th Ave., So., 35206		836-6326
Attaway, John	Rt. 1, Box 660, Leeds, 35094	16582	967-2509
Attaway, Myrna	Same		Same
Attaway, Steve	Same	16583	Same
Balog Family	2932 Fairway Dr., 35213	14646	871-8334
Barnes, Gary	5068 Juaita Dr., 35210	10332	595-3000
Beck, Lynn	1709 Shades Pk. Dr., 35209		871-6959
Benjamin, Charles	808 Comer Cr., 35216		822-9455
Brammer, Charles	232 Poinciana Dr., 35209		870-7707
Breeland, Lawrence	1649 Cleveland Ave., S. W. 35211		787-9468
Brown, Ken	8028 Rugby Ave., 35206	16519	252-8183(wk)
Burchfield, Kent	5521 Terrace J., 35208		786-2002
Calhoun, John C.	600 Danton Lane, 35210	14608	591-4740
Caudle, David & Edna	150 Chalkville Rd., Trussville, 35173	13995	655-3433
Chambers, Ted & Pat	900 11th Ave., Midfield, 35228		
Chamblee, Tom	71 Paris Ave., Apt. B, (Off Murphreeboro Rd.) Nashville, Tenn. 37200	B'ham #	836-1054
Busenlehner, Don	700 40th St., Fairfield, 35064		785-3730
Chamblee, Newton	528 So. 81st St., 35206		836-1054
Clark, Jay	3634 Knights Bridge Rd., 35223	3896	967-1838
Coble, Jim	2048 Shebia Dr., 35216	16465	823-5738
Coward, David	1590 Panorama Dr., 35216		
DeShazo, Tommy	3751 Spearman Dr., 35216		822-2142
Domnonavich, Joe	1424 28th St., Ensley, 35218	13287	871-3597(wk)
Durham, Steve	Rt., 2 Box 62, Dora, 35062		648-2498
Durham, Don	3050 Lake Ridge Dr., Sarasota, Fla. 33580		
Ellis, Chet	826 Dartmouth Ave., Bessemer, 35020		425-5074
Gleming, Glenda	222 West Crest Estates, Hueytown 35020	15521	491-6722
Gillis, Rod	1945 16th Ave., So., Apt. 112, 35205		933-1940
Guy, Lin	2141 Will Cummings Hwy., Lot 13, Chatt., Tenn.	37419	
Howell, David	1729F Cullom St., 35205		323-3143
Jordan, Greg	1062 Roslyn Dr., Mont., Ala. 36111	16425	288-7609
Kifer, Barbara	8029 Rugby Ave., 35206		836-9516
Kress, Albert	Tuscaloosa, Alabama		
Lamb, Tom & Vivian	1619 11th Pl., So., 35205		324-3236
Lancaster, Roy	7308 2nd Ave., So., 35206		
Lawley, Chuck	294 12th Ave., Midfield, 35064		787-4719
Masburn, Kathy	1040 14th Ave., So., Apt. 2, 35205		322-8061
Mayfield, Howard	542 Main St., Gardendale, Ala. 35071		631-3156
McDowell, Jim	1139H Greensprings Ave., 35205	4431	324-7163
McGill, Greg	429 Hickory St., 35206		
McIntosh, Bill	10 Memory Lane, 35213		879-3289
Moore, Larry, Becky		15037	
& John	2340 Forestdale Blvd., 35214	15620(A)	798-2728
Phillips, Brad	2622 Old Rock Ridge Rd., 35216		822-0926
Reames, Sam	110 Hollywood Blvd., 35210	15613	870-0386
Sevenair, John	261 Jules Ave., Apt. 38, Jefferson, La.	70121	
Siler, Bill	1163C Greensprings Avenue, B'ham		
Smith, Bob	21 Lessor Dr., Childersburg, Al.	15215	

MEMBERSHIP LIST(Cont'd)

Smith, Marion O.	1632 Clinch Ave., Apt.#3, Knoxville, Tenn. 37916	
Spencer, Kathy & Steve	938 South 80th St., 35206	13629(K) 9389(S) 833-4773
Turner, Rob	821 Sherwood Forest Dr., 35236	
Washington, Milo	8333 9th Ave., No., 35206	252-3924(wk)
Weldon, J. B.		252-3924(wk)
West, R. B.	#34 Old Mill Building, Blacksburg, Va. 24060	
Wilhite, Steve	Rt., 3 Box 72, Jasper, Ala. 35501	

COVER PICTURE:

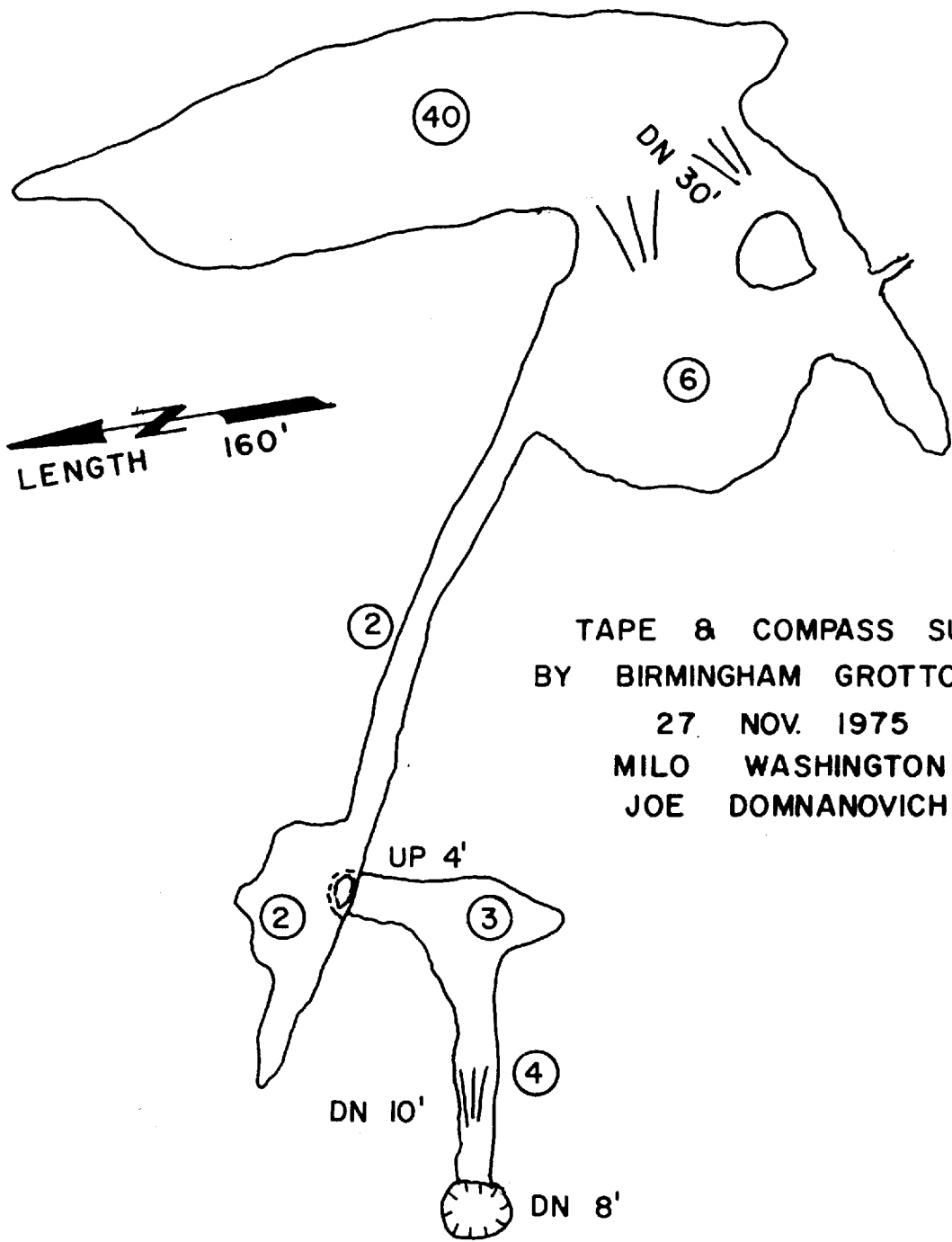
Another Attawy picture græes
our cover. This picture is of
the roof in Glory Hole Cave
Ga.

Smith

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TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY
 BY BIRMINGHAM GROTTO, NSS
 27 NOV. 1975
 MILO WASHINGTON
 JOE DOMNANOVICH

TARRANT HTS. CAVE
 AL 684

WASHPOT

ACS 1353

PRINCETON QUAD.

JACKSON COUNTY, ALABAMA

LENGTH = 1,694.9 Feet

DEPTH = 453.2 Feet

TAPE & COMPASS SURVEY, JULY 15, 1972 - SEPTEMBER 27,
OCTOBER 4, 1975 BY:

CHARLES CLARK

ANNE KNOX

GERALD MONI

MARY SAUNDERS

MIKE SAUNDERS

PLOT AND SKETCH BY:

MARION O. SMITH

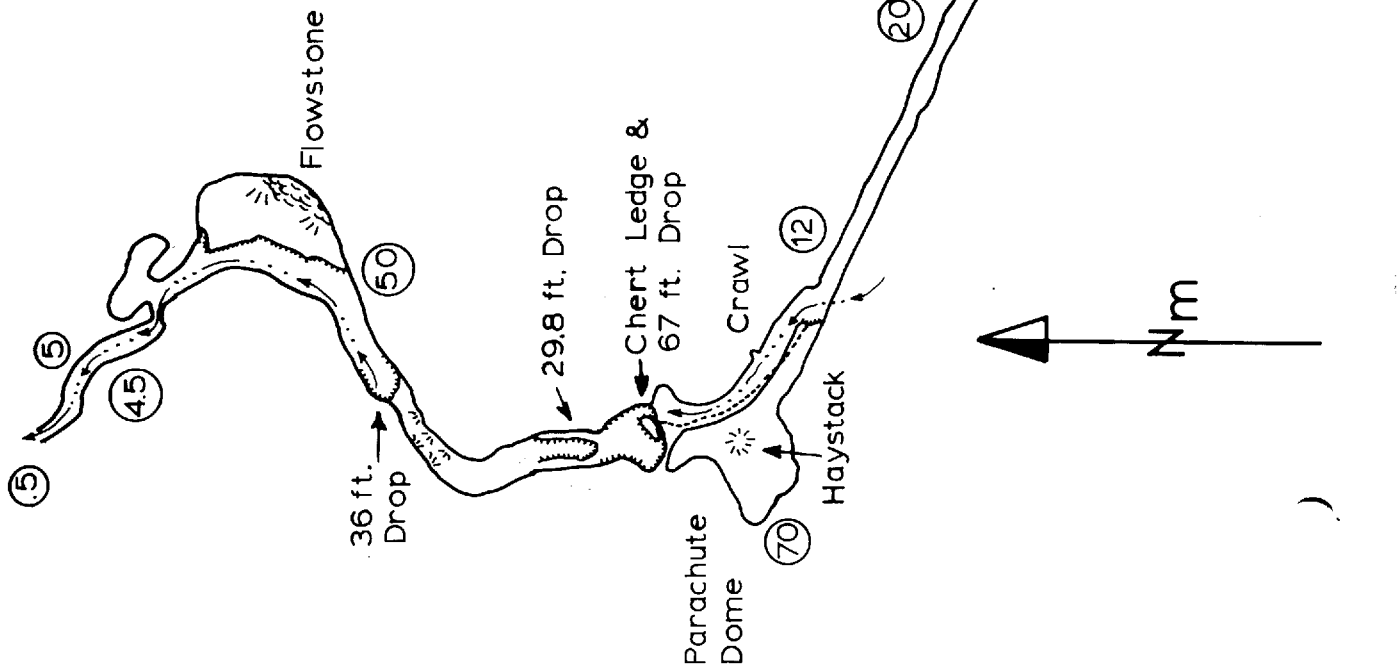
JAMES H. SMITH

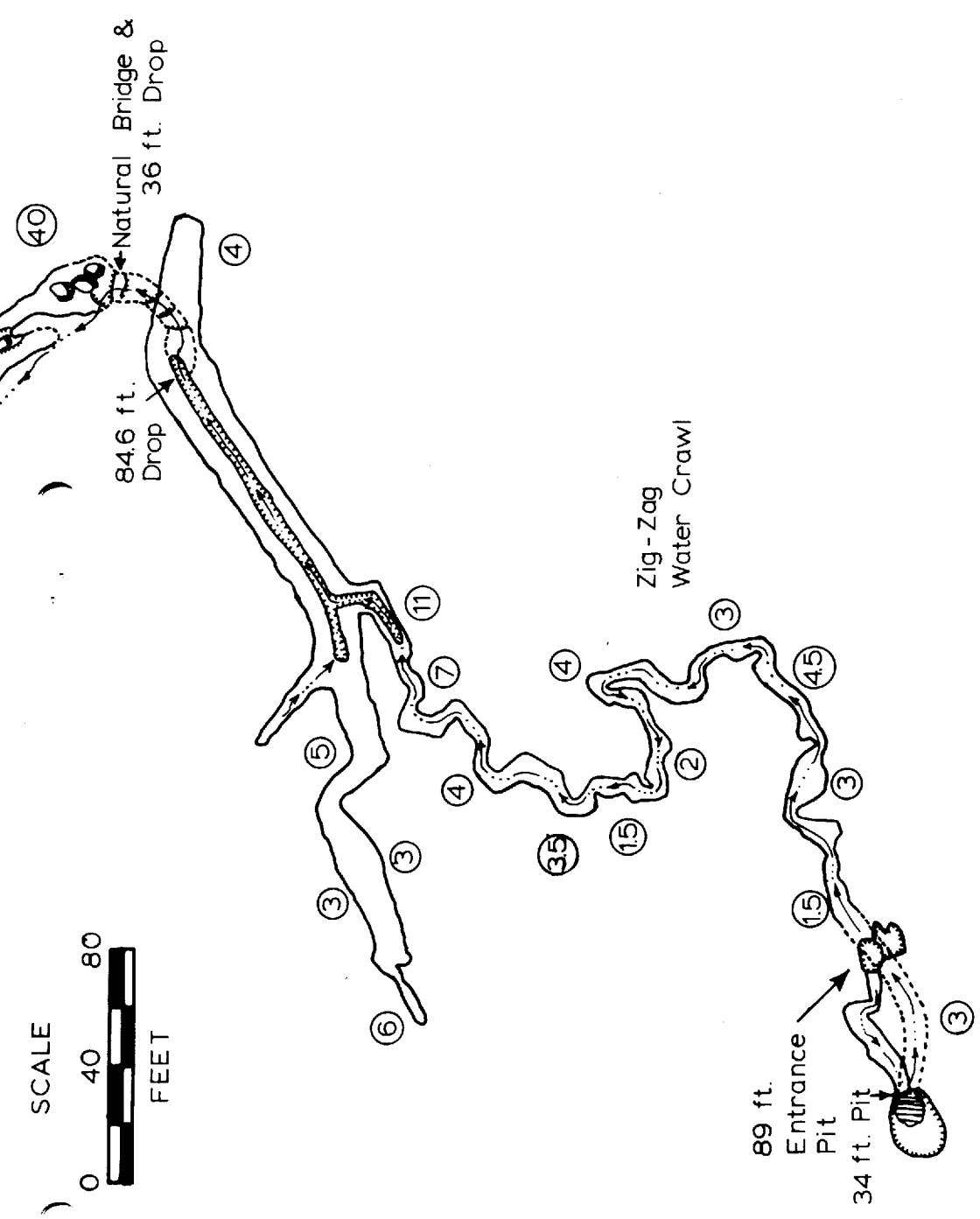
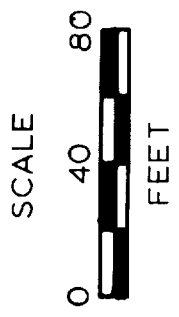
MARION O. SMITH

MARK STOCK

DOUG STRAIT

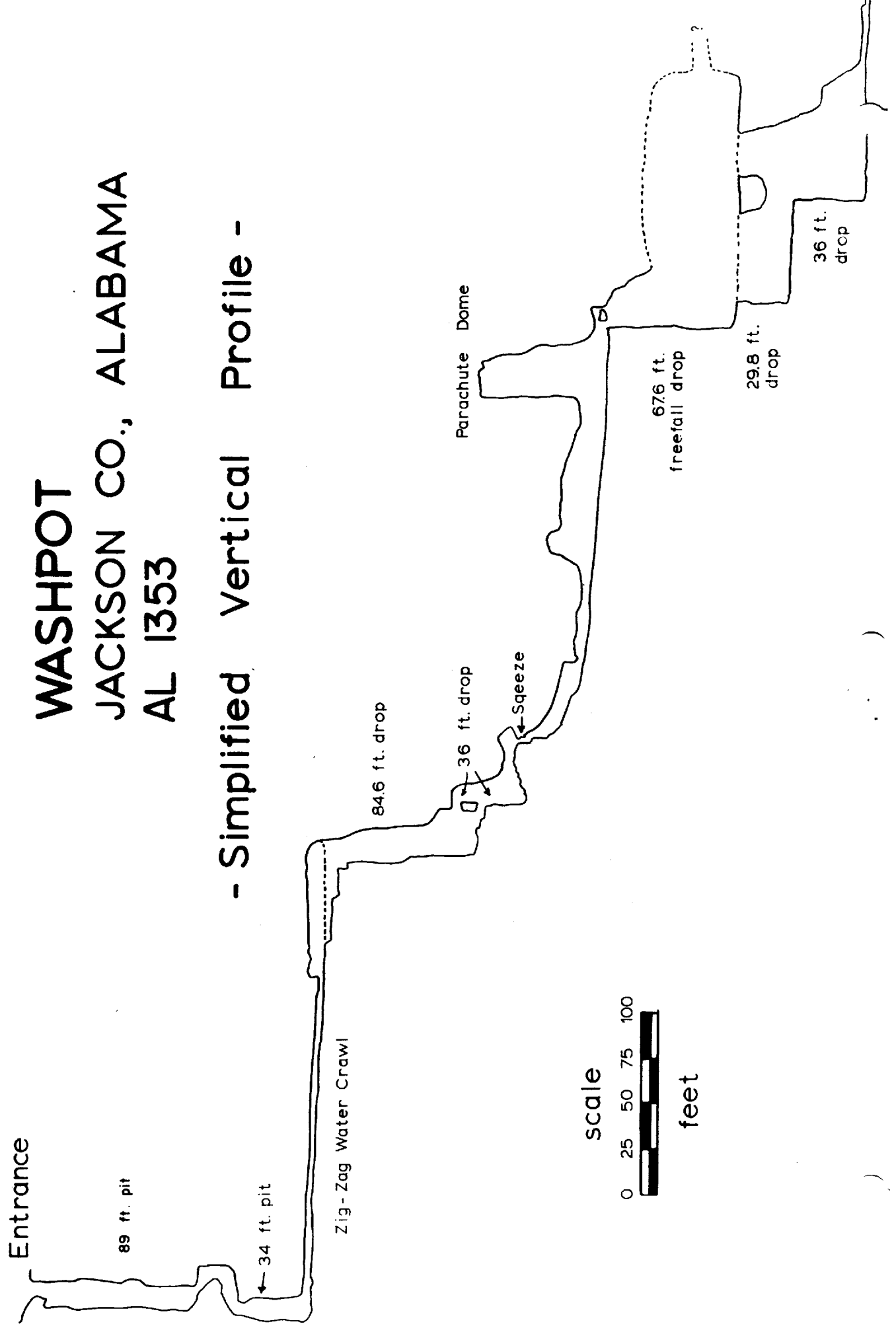
JANICE WILLIAMS





WASHPOT
JACKSON CO., ALABAMA
AL 1353

- Simplified Vertical Profile -



Chapel, etc.

enjoy viewing an occasional

formation, some very attractive

dome architecture, and a water-

fall which is fortuitously lo-

cated to the right. An old still

at the bottom adds a touch of

Morgan County spirit to the cave.

A hole in the wall opposite the

rope involves the caver in a

muddy, winding stream slot with

an abundance of duck unders and

crawl overs. A 50 foot crawl at

the end of this passage leads in-

to the Sky Room, apparently so

named for the white patches

which give the appearance of

stars on the smooth, domed

ceiling. We chose not to push

the remainder of the cave which

is a muddy crawl of such magni-

tude as to make Grave's seem a

wind sprint. The climb out is

easy and enjoyable all the way to

the lip. There the rope lies

flush on the smooth flowstone

for about 15 feet which as Larry

says, helps one to maintain his

respect for the pit. For you

vertical people interested in

something innovative, ask Ken

about the Brown Break. In

addition to some superfluous hard-

ware, the technique requires

two turns of rope around one's

right wrist. The advantage of

the system is the rappeler's

ability to remove break bars

from the rack with very little

effort and apparently with even

less warning. Fortunately,

only the bottom break bar is

affected.

Lunch was late and much appre-

ciated.

Having previously familiarized

myself with reports on some of

the caves in the Newsom's area, I

suggested that we try to find Log Cave

(Al. #223). The terrain to be covered

was fairly steep, and we were accord-

ingly motivated to locate the easiest

walk down. In acquiring permission

to cross the area we selected, we were

informed that there was not a cave in

the direction we wished to go and that

the only cave in Newsom's Sinks was

"that a way" (appropriate gesture.)

Despite this sage advice, we managed to

locate the cave with great alacrity.

The 100 foot duck walk in was not bad---

the first time. The second trip in

carrying the large log which we intended

to use as a rope pad was somewhat

less enjoyable. The log for which the

cave was named is now less than sub-

stantial. Our anchor and pad admitted-

ly did not look as secure as it actually

was. As I was to descend first, and

as my technique required a short drop

before the rope came taut, I was more

than slightly concerned with the rigging

of the 30 foot drop. The anchor was

proven sound when my "short drop"

turned out to be a little over 3 feet.

From the bottom of the pit, a leaf-choked

crawl leads 50 feet to the first large room.

This area and the area accessed by the

lead to the front are very well decorated

with travertine. One of the additional

points of interest is the presence of

water drop excavated holes in the mud

floor forming negative stalagmites.

The cave generated sufficient enthusiasm

in our group to persuade us into some

barfoot caving. Back at the first

room a squeeze-through was rewarded by

a lot of very beautiful cave, and

amazingly enough, a fine deposit of

imported Anderson mud. Ten o'clock

Saturday night found us creeping out

the entrance and wishing that we could

stay in. This cave is very high on my

revisit list, but is definitely for the

VOICES FROM UNDERGROUND

LOST CREEK CAVE(White Co., Tenn)
Tom Chamberlee

On Saturday, November 22, 1975, I entered the Lost Creek Cave 15 miles S.E. of Sparta, Tenn. The entrance (100' wide x 40' high) is in the bottom of a huge cliff rimmed sink in the Ste. Genevieve-Gasper limestone. Across from the cave is a beautiful 90 foot waterfall which flows through the cavern. This waterfall(Lost Creek) subsides into a sink on the Highland Rim at the base of the Cumberland Plateau, flows under the plateau butte and flows out of an entrance at the top of the falls. As one enters the cavern the passage averages in width from 80' to 150' wide and 30' to 100' high. The first large chamber encountered is approximately 1,000 feet from the entrance and measures 220' long x 150' wide x 100' high. From this point the cavern continues as an impressive stream conduit, clean and with a boulder strewn floor.

At approximately 2,200' from the entrance the passage forks; to the left it drops into a maze leading into an enormous, flat roofed breakdown chamber 150' wide x 300' long x 50' high. The roof is remarkably solid and unjointed. At the end of this room are several large falls and high dome pits. If one follows a huge hall off to the right of this chamber he will encounter the main conduit back at the fork. This is very awesome system giving glory to the Master's hand.

The cavern is tributary to the Carey Fork of the Cumberland River and has quite a steep gradient.

CHAPEL, LOG, AND LAMON'S CAVES
Greg Jordan Nov. 8 and 9

Steve Attaway
Ken Brown
Larry Moore

After much planning and postponing, the Great Newsom's Expedition for Neophyte Pit Plungers achieved reality. The evening of Nov. 7, I picked up Steve and called Larry to arrange a primary and secondary meeting point. As usual the first place did not exist and the second could not be found---at least not until after Larry and I had taken simultaneous but separate tours of the countryside. We met an hour and a half late; drove to our camping area at Lynn Dam; and settled down for a meal, a laugh or two, and a good night's rest.

Ken met us early Saturday morning (apparently he is a better navigator than some) and we were off to Chapel Cave(AI #208). As I can find this cave with my eyes closed, I naturally became engrossed in conversation and walked about one hundred yards beyond it. After this minor course correction, we descended the entrance sink to the Chapel.

The entrance is a large arch with a climb down to a sloping ledge of flowstone and breakdown. From the ledge the dome pit extends up about 40 feet and down 60 feet. Two talus blocks provide rappel anchors on the ledge, but a 120 feet of rope are needed to rig the drop safely. The rappel is initially down the face of a flowstone drapery and requires particular care, especially as bats occasionally dangle between the folds of the drapery.

After a few feet against the rock, the rappeler is free to rotate and

conservationally concerned only.

Larry suggested that we move over

to Lamons Cove and try to work

Lamon's Cave (Al.#214) from the

upper entrance and out the spring

entrance. The cave is very well

decorated and has some interesting

structural aspects too. I have

never seen such large quantities

of such massive breakdown in any

other place; above or below ground.

We spent 5 or 6 hours looking at

formations and still left entire

rooms unexamined. The length of

this cave is rather impressive,

especially as one has the opportunity

of covering the same distance above

ground on the return trip.

The long wading and swimming sec-

tion at the end can be navigated dry

by some aggressive climbing. For

those who begin to believe, as we

did, that they might stay dry there

is a great disappointment awaiting.

The last 25 feet requires swimming,

not wading, through a tunnel with

as little as 4 inches of air space

in places. Admittedly, it was

raining when we exited; but there

is little evidence that the water

level significantly drops at any time.

Once again, the Newsom's Sinks area

has provided an extremely fruitful

and rewarding weekend. Few trips

have been as enjoyable in my es-

timation, as this one.

Alabama, cave

Marion O. Smith

WASHPOI, a second deep Fowler Cove,

When the survey notes of Fowler

pit #2 (See Birmingham Grotto

Newsletter, Nov.-Dec., 1975) were

plotted they showed that the 9th

7

beneath Washpot, ACS 1353, about

500 feet southwest. Consequently,

on September 6, 1975, E.T. Davis,

Marion O. Smith, Doug and Anne

Strait went on a reconnaissance

trip. They spent about 3 hours in

the cave and went through a 380 foot

water crawl (which Doug had seen half

of on his solo July 15, 1972,

entry). Anne didn't do the second

pit on that occasion. This led to

a short segment of walking passage

with a slit in the floor allowing

water to cascade down short climbs.

Following the water, they came to

a staircase 40 foot pit which stopped

further progress.

A few weeks later a wet suit clad

crew consisting of James H. Smith,

Mike Saunders, Charles Clark, Mark

Stock, Janice Williams, and Marion

Smith started up the mountain for

Washpot, supported by "Teddy Bear"

Thurman and Michelle -----(a

French Georgia Tech student), who

were planning to ridgewalk. Pass-

ing by the entrance to Fowler pit

#2, they got slightly off course and

stumbled upon a sink none of them

had seen before (this was the same

sink that D. Strait had seen the

previous winter but hadn't gotten

around to checking out). Stopping

to look, Jim crawled 15 feet past

a tight entrance and quickly returned,

exclaiming that he had found an 80

foot pit. He resolved to bolt this

pit and to scout the new find. Mark

remained to help him. Charles,

Marion, Janice, and Mike continued

down the very wet 89 and 34 foot

entrance drops, the amount of water

having been augmented by 3 1/2

inches of rain the previous week. The survey was commenced and the next five and one-half hours were spent placing 56 stations in the Zig Zag water crawl beyond the second pit. After mapping all passages

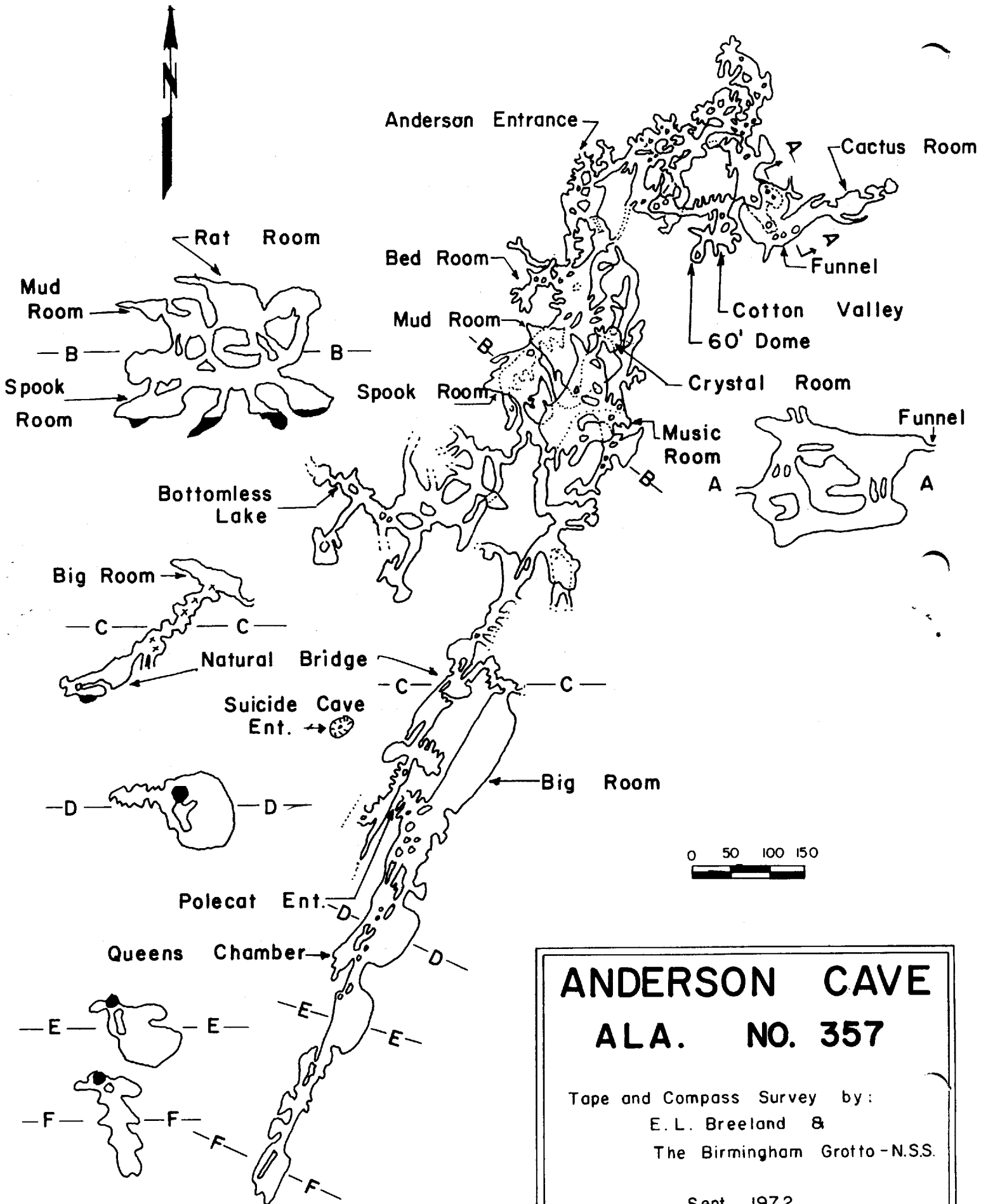
Washpot

No leads led from Parachute Dome, consequently, a low stream crawl about 40 feet down passage was entered. This led to a chert ledge adorned natural bridge below and parallel to the dome, above a fifth drop estimate at 60 feet. While the rest surveyed, Jim installed a bolt.

The pit plummeted 67.6 feet and was a beautiful freefall to a well-washed solid limestone floor. Immediately there was another 29.8 foot pit. While Jim and Marion were rigging and checking this, the girls started movement toward the surface. Stopping the survey at the bottom, Jim found yet another pit, which was measured at 36 feet. By 3 a.m., everyone was out of the cave, as usual getting trounced by the waterfalls in the 34 and 89 foot pits. This was the most productive day in the exploration of Washpot.

The mop-up trip came on October 25, when Jim and Marion Smith, Mike Saunders, Janice Williams, Mark Stock, and Gerald Monti entered to descend the 7th drop and to try to connect it to Fowler pit #2. About 150 feet beyond the last drop the passage got too low for even the avid stream pushers themselves, Mark and Jim, to get through. The survey was declared finished even though Mark said that there was a lead (which he couldn't climb into) over the vicinity of the 7th pit from the level of the bottom of the 67.6 foot pit. The length of washpot stands at 1,694 feet and the depth at 453 feet, neither a record, but challenging enough to negotiate.

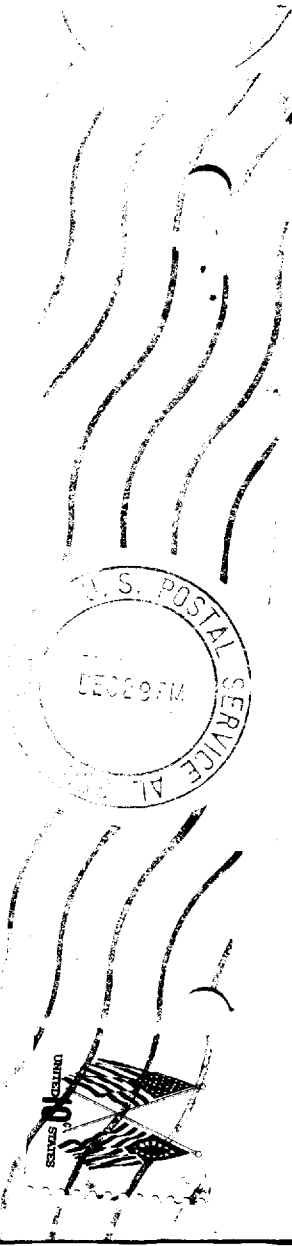
Found on September 6, and not yet having the bolts and ropes brought in for the virgin third drop by Jim and Mark, the survey team decided to exit the cave. They returned to the trucks by 10:15 p.m., just a few moments after Jim and Mark had arrived from their adventures in the new cave. (This is properly another story. They had explored an estimated 1,000 feet of cave and had reached a depth of about 300 feet, including rope drops of 68, 97, 33, 24, and 26 feet. Jim called in Bleedin' Ghyll). The following week, October 4, Mary Saunders, Janice Williams, Jim and Marion Smith optimistically re-entered Washpot, this time laden with six ropes, three of which were not yet known to be necessary. In a 14½ hour trip this quartet pushed the depth to over 400 feet. Jim installed two bolts near the ceiling of the upper passage above the third pit, making the drop 84.6 feet deep and relatively free from the waterfall. From there the stream dropped down 3 short cascades, flowed under a wall, and fell about 20 feet down a fourth drop. This was rigged above on a natural bridge, making the rapnel 36 feet. Beyond, the stream disappeared into breakdown at the bottom of a small room. After surveying across the room and poking around a bit, Jim found a way to continue ahead. A tight squeeze downward led to a walking passage which rejoined the stream. The survey followed several hundred feet to a nice 70 foot high dome, which because of some of the flowstone formations, was named Parachute Dome.



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