

CEDAR GROVE CAVE
Rockcastle County, Kentucky

by Gary O'Dell

The survey of the cave, now named Cedar Grove Cave, was begun on the 18th of November by Larry Peterson and myself. From the entrance into the dome complex, 528 feet of true horizontal passage were mapped; the survey was halted in the area of the giant stalagmite, named the High Castle, to check leads in the upper domes. A high crawl was pushed, carefully and with difficulty due to massed speleothems, and on a ledge 25 feet above the High Castle the complete skeleton of an animal was found. Many of the bones were cemented with a pure white crystalline growth, probably gypsum. The skull, 18 cm long, from the teeth apparently a carnivore, was removed for positive identification.

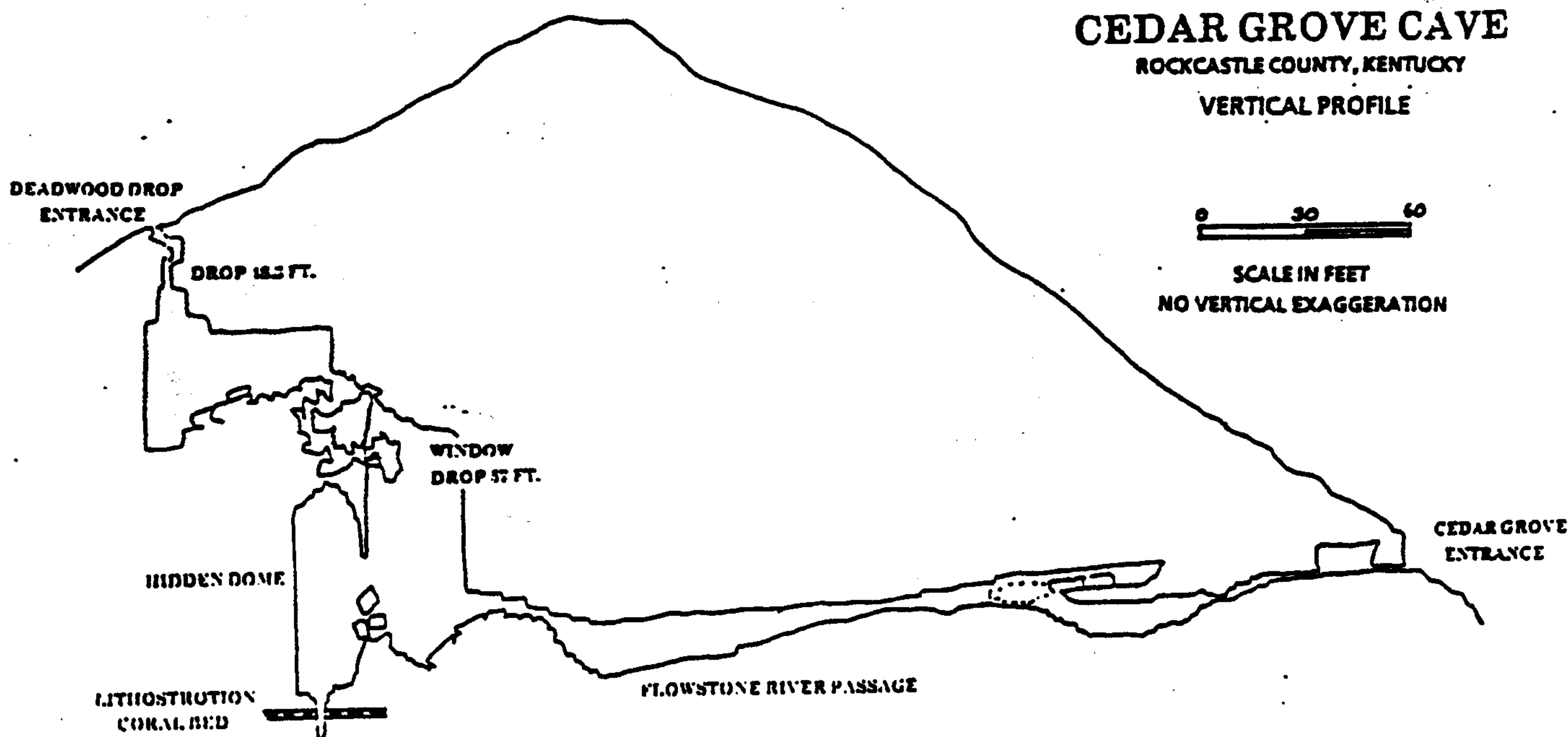
Cedar Grove Cave has been an interesting cave to interpret and fun to explore, with many impressive speleothems, the large domes, the vertical drops totalling nearly 120 feet, and the door-to-door trips. And best of all, of course, that it was all undeniably virgin, both from the Cedar Grove and the Deadwood Drop entrances.

There have been 1,091 feet surveyed thus far in the cave; although there are a few small passages left there are no plans to add these to the map at present. At this time I do not believe that there is potential for much more in this particular cavern. It appears that the caves in this particular ridge, judging from the four examples we now have (Miller's Pit One, Eureka Cave, Cedar Grove Cave, and Monolith Cave) are essentially rapid drains. Water enters through a number of surface inlets and drops vertically through

the Ste. Genevieve limestone into the Louis. In the lower portions of each we have found the distinctive Lithostrotion corals, with limited vertical development below that particular index bed. Water travelling through these caves generally emerges nearby as hillside springs; thus horizontal development is limited. Millers Cave shows evidences of this trend, although it has over 10,000 feet of passage; there are numerous domepits and terminal drains in that cave, which are linked by horizontal segments.

The ridge we are now working in is at the confluence of two separate major drainage divides, those of Dry Fork and of upper Crooked Creek. The sandstone cap has been nearly eroded away over this ridge and is entirely absent near the southeast end. As most of the caves in the area show development parallel with the edge of the sandstone caprock, the lack of this sandstone may account for the lesser amount of horizontal passage; or rather, that there are a number of short, unlinked caverns rather than large, multi-mile systems as has been prevalent in adjacent ridges.

Future long-range plans are for investigation of cave locations and passage trends in this and adjacent ridges of the two watersheds.



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