

LASSIE CAVE (ROCKCASTLE CO., KY.)  
by Martin Hackworth

Lassie Cave is a small cave entered by an interesting dig.

The first attempt to enter this cave was made by myself on Saturday, July 21, 1973. The entrance is very noticeable from the front door of my spelechnut, so one Saturday morning while waiting for some fellow cavers from Lexington to arrive, I decided to take a look. The cave, located approximately one-third of the way up the hill, was a small opening which became about 4 inches high after a few feet. There was enough cold air coming out to make it look worth digging. After a short preliminary helmet-dig I was able to see what looked like fairly sizeable passage after a few feet of mixed rock and dirt fill. Not really being inclined to dig any further at the moment, I went back over to the spelechnut, forgot about it, and went to sleep until the cavers arrived.

After a short Saturday afternoon Blue Hole trip, Tom Seibert, Charlie Bishop and myself headed up to take another look at my illustrious dig. We determined that it was definitely worth the effort...some other time. End of trip one.

The next weekend on Saturday the 28th I decided to see if I could reach human-sized passage. I started out armed with shovel, carbide lamp and determination. 20 minutes later the shovel was still there and the lamp was going strong but my determination had been reduced to mere drooling (some of those little dirt-covered rocks aren't so little once you start to dig them up). Finally I was stopped by a huge rock square in the middle of the passage. End of trip two.

On Saturday night, August 11, Dave Kelley, Charles Bishop, Tom Seibert and myself took another trip back up to the dig with the intention of getting through. A very much horrified Charlie informed me that the object in a dig is not to enlarge a too-small passage to just barely big enough, but to have room to breathe as well as work, etc. A few minutes later Cat and Ellen trudged up and after about 3 hours the 6 of us managed to dig into cave (we got lazy about the last 15 feet and for a while there was a big rock you still had to squeeze over). Tom, Dave, Charlie and I went on past the squeeze armed only with two carbide lamps so our exploration was cut short.

The next morning all 6 of us decided to spelunk the cave before our Blue Hole trip. We were joined by another spelunker, Lassie (the owner's dog) for whom the cave was named. We discovered that we had not missed much of the cave on our ill-equipped trip the night before. There are three small domes connected by canyon and crawlsy. Some small formations can be seen near where the cave ends in breakdown. The most interesting part of the cave, however, is the SHARP popcorn and rimstone which covers the entire cave floor from the entrance trench. The cave is almost all crawling over this crap which makes any trip interesting and surveying a hideous pain as I discovered 2 weeks later on August 24. It took me about 3 1/2 hours of pure hell (and no help from Lassie) to map this hole. Total mapped distance was 138.0 feet.

This cave is on the the property of Mr. and Mrs. Morris. According to Mrs. Morris, her father and brother used the cave as a refrigerator way-back-when. Permission should be obtained from Mr. or Mrs. Morris before entering.