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Front Cover: Hodag postcard from Greg Brick Collection. See the article by Colleen O’Connor Olson in this issue.
CAVE MONSTERS

Colleen O'Connor Olson

Trolls and Their Kin

Trolls are a diverse bunch. These Scandinavian creatures may be giant or small. They tend to be ugly, but female trolls can be beautiful. Most trolls are dumb, but some females are quite clever. Trolls tend to malicious, but can be good. They can live under bridges, rocks, or uprooted trees, but prefer caves. Their fondness for caves is due to their hatred of sunlight; it turns them to stone.

Knowing their weaknesses can help keep trolls away. They dislike bonfires and mistletoe (a plant believed to also protect you from fairies, enemies, epilepsy, and an assortment of other dangers). Learning a troll's name can help you kill him, but that's risky; the troll might use it to kill you first!

Pesky trolls steal food and swap human babies for troll babies. If a human tot is replaced by a troll baby, the mother can threaten to throw the baby troll on the fire. The mother troll will come to rescue her baby troll, and the babies can be swapped back.

Trolls may have relatives on Orkney Isle in Scotland. The word "trow" can be used to describe fairies or spirits in general, but trows are generally thought of as small, subterranean mischief makers that wear gray clothes. Scottish trows may be good or evil, but tend to be evil. If people go into the trows' cave at night and leave in the morning, they find not just one night has passed, but several years.

One possibility for the trow-troll connection is that Scandinavian immigrants brought the idea of the troll with them when they settled on Orkney Island in the eighth century. Over time, the name changed and the creatures morphed from ogre-like beasts that ate human flesh into elfish little trouble makers more suitable to island living. Another idea is that the belief in these gray-clad little trows predated Scandinavian arrival, but the name trow began when the Scandinavian newcomers called the Scottish creatures trolls, a word they were familiar with.

Hodags

Many American cave explorers are acquainted with the legendary hodag. When cavers have a light go out, hear a strange noise, lose their gloves, or experience other mishaps, they know it's not their own fault—hodags are to blame. Though many cavers say they have experienced a hodag's tricks, few cavers have seen one. Some say the hodag's legs are longer on one side, making it easier to walk around hills. Hodags are also believed to have three eyes, one of which can move to different body parts and even different hodags.

Cave biologist Dr. Tom Barr has information on hodag's legs and other scientific stuff (note to biology students: don't cite this in your dissertation).

…a recent study… demonstrates conclusively that the right-legged Hodag (Hodagus dextrosus) and the left legged Hodag (H. "sinistris") actually belong to the same species. They are merely mutant individuals.… Although the northern Hodag is known to frequent caves, where it alarms cavers with its nasty habit of springing suddenly from behind large stalagmites while foaming at the mouth and growling ferociously, the TAG Hodag (Hodagus dextrosus meridionalis), which is
slowly becoming adapted to an obligatory cave existence, is more secretive and rarely observed.\(^5\)

Most hodags live in the Southeast, but cavers in the West occasionally see them. Caver Bruce Zerr thinks Hodags were introduced into South Dakota Caves by eastern cavers who brought pregnant females in their caving packs from back East. He's not happy with the introduction of hodags because they wreak havoc in caves:

They're wild, hard to see. But just go caving "solo" and they will set upon you like a pack of wolves. They go for your big light first. They can mess that up in a heartbeat. Meanwhile, others have gotten into your pack and trashed your backup lights. Beating your main light on the rocks to get it going only makes it flicker like a strobe light—and every second it's out they dart closer. In the weak strobe of light, you can sometimes see them coming. Those red glowing eyes catch the light just before they somehow lower the cave ceiling. That helmet you forgot to put back on your head while you were fixing your light is not there to cushion the blow. You spill your water. Your carbide light's tip is plugged. Nothing works anymore.\(^6\)

Even though hodags are a nuisance, some cavers have a warm, fuzzy relationship with them. Caving clubs have "Hodag Hunts," where cavers are given clues that lead them to caves where letters are hidden. If a team of cavers finds all the letters, they can unscramble them to reveal where in the cave the hodag is hiding. Hodag hunter James Wells told me that one year his hodag hunting team solved the puzzle revealing the name Becker's Sump. James waded into the water and found a stuffed hodag waiting on a ledge.\(^7\)

I had never heard a non-caver speak of hodags until I met a teenager from Rhinelander, Wisconsin, sporting a hodag sweatshirt. I asked if she was a caver. She said no, the hodag was her school mascot and was a popular fellow in Rhinelander. That was my introduction to the hodag's humble Wisconsin beginnings.

While walking the woods in 1893, Rhinelander resident Eugene Simeon Shepard reported seeing a scary, hairy beast with horns, fangs, green eyes, and a spiked back and tail. He claimed it breathed fire and stank like a "combination of buzzard meat and skunk perfume." Local lumberjacks told tales of weird beasts called hodags that lurked near lumber camps; this creature had to be one!

After much trying, Shepard captured a live hodag. The captive hodag was exhibited at the Oneida County fair, where suckers paid money to view its silhouette behind a curtain. The hodag was such a hit that it went to other fairs and was even exhibited at Shepard's home. Viewers could not see the hodag very well, but they saw it move behind a curtain and heard it growl. This magnificent beast brought fame and tourist dollars to Rhinelander.

Alas, this thing moving behind the curtain was just a stump covered with an ox hide and horns. Wires controlled the hodag's movement and Shepard's sons provided the growls. Yet the hodag became so popular, it lives on in Rhinelander—a.k.a. the Hodag City; there is even a hodag statue in town.\(^8\)

Some people think the whole hodag thing was a hoax, but cavers know the publicity caused the shy hodags to retreat to the dark, quiet world of caves, where they can harass cavers without being seen.

**Reptilian Cave Monsters**

A lizard-like creature called a gowrow is said to live in Arkansas caves. There may be many
gowrows, since they have been spotted at different caves. A traveling salesman named William Miller claimed to have killed a gowrow and sent the body to the Smithsonian Institution in Washington D.C. in 1897. Don't bother to ask the curator where the gowrow display is; no record of it exists.

A close encounter with a gowrow supposedly happened in Devil's Hole Cave, Boone County, Arkansas. E.J. Rhodes, the cave's owner, heard noises coming from the cave. To check it out, he lowered himself on a rope 200 feet into the cave's vertical entrance. The pit became too narrow to continue, so Rhodes climbed back out. Later, some men lowered a rock tied to a rope into the same pit. Loud, violent hissing came from the cave. They pulled the rope back up to find it chewed through and the rock gone.

In 1818, the *Pittsburgh Gazette* reported a monster in Carver's Cave, in what is now St Paul, Minnesota:

... a serpent of prodigious appearance, probably fifteen feet long, and proportionately thick, with four short legs, resembling the alligator; his head was disproportionately large, with glossy eyes, situated towards the back of the head; the back was of a shining black, covered with strong, and apparently impenetrable scales: the belly variegated with different colours; its tail, on perceiving it, was coiled on its back, except when it beat the ground, which was also accompanied by bellowing. The whole party stood with muskets cocked, transfixed with terror, until it quietly glided into the cave.

No monsters were seen again in Carver's Cave until the late twentieth century, when caver Greg Brick went in to the cave to record water-quality data. He heard a splash in the underground lake. He thought it was a rock falling into the water, until he heard another splash. He knew he was not alone. With the third splash, he saw the creature swimming, but it didn't fit the snake-like description of the 1818 newspaper article. This "monster" was hairy, with big teeth and a flat tail—a beaver, an unlikely cave dweller, but more common than a four-legged giant snake.

The Sasquatch and its Relatives

Bigfoot, a.k.a. the Sasquatch, is one of America's favorite monsters. Blurry home movies, castings of huge human-like footprints, and stories of face-to-face meetings with Big Foot have kept people interested for years. Sightings of these hairy, human sized, elusive creatures are above ground, but some Big Foot fans believe Sasquatches enter caves. Sightings near cave entrances have been reported from California to British Columbia, Big Foot's favorite stomping grounds.

Big Foot Cave is on the Tule River Indian Reservation in central California. The cave walls have several pictographs (rock paintings) that some people think depict Big Foot. The creature shown is burly, with no neck. One drawing is about six feet tall; the others are about a foot and a half tall. It's difficult to tell how old the pictographs are. Some people think they were drawn as recently as 100 years ago, others believe them to be 1000 years old. The pictographs were probably drawn by the local Yokuts tribe. Yokuts lore tells of a creature called Mayak datat, or Hairy Man, a big, hairy biped that fits the Sasquatch description.

Bigfoot has some cave-dwelling relatives in the Southeast (or maybe Bigfoot travels). His North Carolina cousin, the Boojum, reputedly lives in the Plott Balsam Mountains near Waynesville, North Carolina. Like many
monsters, the Boojum avoids humans, so it is hard to get a detailed description of what he looks like, though a 1961 newspaper article described him as "somewhat akin to the Abominable Snow Man of the Himalayas." The Boojum is wealthier than your typical monster; he has a stash of rubies, amethysts, emeralds, and other precious stones hidden in stone jugs in his cave. He is not only rich, but smart, too. To hide his jewels, the Boojum fills the jugs with "pearlin' juice," or moonshine whiskey. Gem hunting locals who are wise to the Boojum's little trick say that if you find a jug of moonshine, you should drink it because you may find treasure at the bottom.12

The tale of the Boojum may have begun in the early 1900s at the Eagle's Nest Hotel on Eagle Nest Mountain overlooking Waynesville. The hotel's owner liked a good story and may have used this to entertain his guests. The hotel led expeditions to hunt for the Boojum's cave and jugs of jewels. They never found the Boojum's gems but they may have found a few jugs of moonshine without rubies at the bottom.13

A Sasquatch-like creature is also said to live in the Ozark Mountains. The monster dwells in a cave in a meadow called Peter Bottom, near War Eagle, Arkansas. He is appropriately called the Peter Bottom Cave Monster.

The first report of the monster came from an insane doctor accused of murder (not a reliable source) in the early 1960s. According to the story, the doctor had spent twenty years hiding from the law in the woods around Peter Bottom before being captured and committed. As he was dying in a mental institution, he told reporters that in his years as a fugitive, he had seen a cave monster in Peter Bottom, so people should stay away from there. The story made the local newspapers, but was not taken seriously.

That was all anyone heard about the monster until 1966, when two young men on horseback met a man driving a tractor quickly out of Peter Bottom. He stopped to tell the men on horseback to stay out of Peter Bottom; he had just seen a terrible monster. The two men felt there was little danger of meeting a monster, so they rode into Peter Bottom. As they reached the bottom, the horses became nervous and would not go on. The men tied their horses to trees and continued on foot. Then they saw it—a big furry thing lying on the ground. As the men walked closer, the thing stood up. The monster was human-like, but was eight or nine feet tall, with long, white hair covering its body except the face and hands. It reeked of old coffee grounds. The creature walked toward them, making a "beep beep" sound.

After taking time to make these observations, the men decided leaving was their best option. They ran to their horses and rode away from Peter Bottom, shaken by their experience. Curious parties searched Peter Bottom and the cave, but the monster was never seen again. But some people believe it's still around. The Peter Bottom Cave Monster has been blamed for dead cattle and chickens found torn apart, and even a human corpse with the limbs torn off.14

The Shampe of Choctaw legend is a Mississippi relative of Bigfoot. Shampes avoid sunlight and open air by living in caves deep in the woods. Like many real cave beasts, Shampes have poor vision, but a good sense
of smell. Shampes can follow the scent of any animal but are especially attracted to the smell of blood. A Shampe's terrible stench may warn you one is near, but the smell is so bad, it can kill you. Shampes like to whistle, another warning that one may be near.

Choctaw legend says Shampes followed the Choctaw people to the Southeast from the West and that the Shampes have since moved back West. But some people claim to still hear the Shampes' whistle and smell their stink in the Southeastern woods.15

References


5. Dr. Thomas Bar, pers. comm.


7. James Wells, pers. comm.


COMMENTS ON THE LORE OF JAMAICAN KARST

Donald B. Ball

Far from being a Caribbean playground for modern tourists, the island of Jamaica has a long and involved history in its own right. First “discovered” by Christopher Columbus in 1494, the island remained a Spanish colony until captured by the English in 1655. Jamaica gained its independence in 1962 and relies heavily on tourism as a mainstay of its economy. Covering about 145 miles from east to west and 20 to 50 miles from north to south, the island is about the size of Connecticut, and occupies an area of 4,181 square miles (10,830 km$^2$). Dominated by mountains, it is largely covered with lush, green forests. Blue Mountain, its highest point, rises to an elevation of 7,402 feet (2,256 m).

Although typically perceived as a former British colony, it is less well-known that Jamaica was previously a Spanish possession. Beyond viewing the inhabitants of any area they conquered as a labor force to be relentlessly exploited for their own gain, the Spaniards had no respect for the natives. One example of this policy is recounted by Starbuck (1864:461):

Sevilla d'Oro, the first settlement of the Spaniards in Jamaica, was founded in 1509, near the place of Columbus’s shipwreck. It soon became a splendid city. Traces of pavement are still discoverable two miles distant from the church and abbey around which the town was built. In a few years, however, it disappeared as suddenly as it had arisen. Even the cause of its destruction is not certainly known. It is supposed, however, to have been a sudden irruption of the Indians. These were of the same voluptuous and gentle race which peopled the other Great Antilles, but, like them, might have been roused to temporary madness by the diabolical cruelties of the Spaniards. If so, their brief revenge availed them little, for by 1558, the sixty thousand Indians, who inhabited the island when discovered, had been extirpated, it is said, to the very last one. Near the seashore in the east of the island are some caves, in which mouldering bones of the unhappy aborigines are still found, who had taken refuge here, preferring to die of famine rather than to fall into the merciless hands of the Spaniards [emphasis added].

Upon leaving the island in the mid-seventeenth century, the Spanish freed their former African slaves with the understanding that they would continue fighting against the English. Fearing re-enslavement by the English, they were all too willing to do exactly that. The resultant Maroon Wars are a little-known aspect of Jamaican history. In discussing the role of the island’s rugged interior in the course of this struggle, Blake (1898:559-560) noted that:

[pg. 559] ...The hills in which they [the Maroons] had ensconced themselves were well nigh inaccessible to Europeans... The Maroons gained access to their fastnesses by narrow paths known only to themselves. Such paths, or, more properly, tracks, were easily obliterated, and by bending bushes and breaking twigs the Maroons easily decoyed their pursuers in the wrong direction. Once off the track, the ground was almost impassable; the jagged and pointed honeycombed rocks tore the boots and cut the feet like razors. To force one’s way through tropical undergrowth or “bush,” as it is known to the inhabitants of the tropics, is, under any circumstances, a difficult matter; but, in the district which was the principal stronghold of the Maroons, the difficulty was increased a hundredfold by deep fissures, which traverse the limestone rock in all directions. High cones containing deep hollows, known locally as “cock-pits,” stud the face of the land in close proximity. An eye witness of the Maroon “war” of 1795 thus describes these cock-pits, into some of which it is possible to descend by climbing, while the interior of others can only be reached by being lowered into it by ropes. “After ascending and descending a number of
steep and rugged mountains, our party passed by a cock-pit of the second size, and halted for a few minutes to reconnoitre [sic] it. It seemed about five or six hundred feet in depth; the hills around it were in some parts nearly perpendicular, the breadth of the area below seemed not to exceed two hundred feet, and a narrow defile led into it on one side. It had the appearance, to the spectator, standing on the summit of one of the heights of the surrounding mountains, of a vast funnel with its focus downward. Trees of immense height grew on its sides, some of whose tops waved far beneath us.”

Every now and then, the way was blocked by an abrupt and almost perpendicular precipice, up which the invaders had to ascend in single file, assisting themselves by projections in the rock and the boughs of the trees that sprang from the clefts in the rock. Each man handed his musket or “fusee,” as the writer in question calls it, to his comrade who had gained the ledge [pg. 560] above him, and so the expedition toiled pantingly upwards; often a climb of the kind was but a prelude to a steeper and more difficult descent on the opposite side of the mountain. The cock-pit country is almost destitute of water; so porous is the rock that the rivers run in caverns far underground. In the whole district there are only one or two far distant springs, and these were carefully guarded by the Maroons, who alone were acquainted with their whereabouts.

When on hunting expeditions in pursuit of wild hogs or agoutis, the Maroons had to slake their thirst with the water stored at the base of the leaves of the wild bromelias (wild pines, as they are called in Jamaica), or with the sap of the water-witty, a species of wild grape, the stem of which contains a pure and colorless sap, wholesome and tasteless as good water. The stem is cut through about a couple of feet from the ground, and the water drunk as it flows freely from the hanging witty. If the vine is then severed about six feet higher up and the upper end kept elevated, nearly a quart of cool and refreshing water may be obtained from a stem an inch and a half or so in diameter. The white soldiers were unacquainted with the resources of the forests, and in any case water by itself would have been regarded by the soldiers of the last century as poor comfort, so a portion of the impedimenta on these expeditions consisted of huge joints of bamboo, which were filled with grog... [emphasis added].

It goes without saying that every environment is blessed (or cursed) with its own indigenous varieties of wildlife. Jamaica is no exception to this universal truth. The nature of the wildlife was the subject of discussion by a naturalist doing fieldwork on the island in the late nineteenth century. As recorded by Brooks (1893:102):

“Every laboratory in Jamaica was on the side of a rocky limestone hill, honey-combed in all directions by cracks and fissures and large caves, all inhabited by big land-crabs, which came out every night, usually in pairs, to forage around our house. They would climb the steep stone terrace, and the high steps to our door, where they would stand peeping inquisitively through the crack of the door, and waiting and watching until the house was quiet. Whenever we looked up from our work in the evening we were sure to see at least one gentleman crab, and his wife beside him, standing on tiptoe and cocking their long stalked eyes, on the watch for a chance to slip in and explore the house. As soon as we were well settled at our work they would creep stealthily in and wander everywhere, although they were especially fond of climbing up the mosquito-nets to the canopies over our beds [emphasis added].”

References


Beyond any reasonable doubt, Cave-in-Rock is among the better known caves in the State of Illinois. Situated in a bluff immediately adjacent to the right bank of the Ohio River in Hardin County, it long served as a landmark to those who navigated the river. Fred Grady (1984) has presented evidence suggesting that the cave was first recorded by Chaussegros de Lery, a young engineer accompanying the Baron de Longueuil on an expedition to New Orleans in 1739. The following year (1740) some of de Lery’s notes concerning the location of the cave were incorporated into a map of the Mississippi and Ohio rivers prepared by Philippe Mandeville. The location of the cave—labeled “Caverne dans le Roc”—was soon thereafter noted on an 1744 map drawn in Paris by Frenchman Jacques Nicolas Bellin (Grady 1984) and an English map (thereon labeled “Cave in a Rock”) prepared in 1754 by Sylvanus Urban of London (Speece 1979). Visitation to the cave increased rapidly thereafter. As early as 1803, traveler Thaddeus Mason Harris reported that “The sides of this cave are filled with inscriptions, names of persons, dates, &c.” (Torode 1993:36).

One of the lesser known extended early descriptions of Cave in Rock was recorded by Christian Schultz, Jr. (1810:I, 200-202) in his engaging travelogue entitled Travels on an Inland Voyage:

After having passed the Battery Rocks, you descend about seven miles further, and arrive at a very curious cavern called ‘The Cave in the Rock,’ situated on the right bank of the river, in the Territory of Indiana. The entrance to this singular excavation is immediately on the margin of the river, the whole of which, at this place, presents a solid mass of perpendicular rocks. The door, or mouth, which is of a semicircular form, is twenty-seven paces in width, and about three or four and twenty in height, but partly obscured by the foliage of some trees and brush, now growing in front. It lies twenty or five and twenty feet above the surface of the river at present; but when the water is high, I presume it may be entered in a canoe. After having entered a few yards, you find yourself in a large and spacious room, sixty-two paces in length, and almost the same in width, with a projection, something like a bench, nearly all around; and the ceiling, or roof, which is of an elliptical form, is about [pg. 201] thirty feet in height. In many places you may observe several rude attempts with chalk or charcoal to trace some kind of a device or figure, but I could find no-resemblance to anything “in the heavens above, in the earth below, or in the waters under the earth.” In some few places you may learn the names of former visitors, which they have left inscribed on the rock. I could not help observing what a very convenient situation this would be for hermit, or for a convent of monks, as it is large enough to accommodate several hundreds of them. From an examination of the cave, I have no doubt that it has been the dwelling of some person or persons, as the marks of the smoke, and likewise some wooden hooks, affixed to the walls, sufficiently prove. Formerly, perhaps it was inhabited by Indians; but since, with more probability, by a gang of that banditti, headed by Mason and others, who a few years ago infested this part of the country, and committed a great number of robberies and murders.

Near the centre of the roof you discover an aperture, which is sufficiently large to admit a man, and, at first view, has the appearance of being intended to carry off the smoke; but, as I have been informed, leads to another cavern above. I intended to make some contrivance to ascend to it; but, in consequence of the storm which blew on shore, and a heavy swell which threatened to [pg. 202] dash our boat to pieces against the rocks, I was under the necessity of hastening my departure. Had I, however, discovered any thing that promised further amusement, I should not have regarded walking back four or five miles, after having secured the boat to a place of safety.
As a landmark of note to those traveling the course of the Ohio River, Zadok Cramer (1817:123) felt compelled to describe this formation at length within the pages of his well received *The Navigator, Containing Directions for Navigating the Monongahela, Allegheny, Ohio and Mississippi Rivers:*

**Cave-in-Rock or House of Nature.**

Here you are presented with a most stupendous, curious, and solid work of nature. For half a mile on your right before you reach the cave, you have a front view of a beautiful, perpendicular, smooth limestone wall, a solid mass of rock, with regular horizontal strata, of about 100 or 120 feet in height above low water mark, and whose summit is handsomely clothed with a growth of small red cedars, the roots of which springing through the close fissures, and apparently receiving their nourishment from the rocks. The cedars on the top of these rocks appear to be peculiarly the haunt of birds of prey, for what reason I know not.

This Cave or House of Nature, opens to view fronting the river a little above high water mark, its mouth is about 60 feet across at the base, narrowing from both sides as it ascends, forming an arch of about 25 feet in its highest part, and running back to a point of about 120 feet deep. The top and sides of the cave bear the names of thousands who have visited it from time to time, and the dates of the year, &c. There are in the walls of this cave the same appearance of marine shells as those found in the rocks of Kentucky, and other parts of the western country. This cavern sometimes serves as a temporary abode for those wanting shelter, in case of a ship wreck, or other accident, which happen on the river near it. Families have been known to reside here tolerably comfortable from the northern blasts of winter. The mouth of this cave was formerly sheltered and nearly hid by some trees growing in front of it, but the rude axe has levelled them to the earth, and the cavern is exposed to the open view of the passenger.

Emigrants from the states, 7 years ago, used to land here and wagon their goods across the Illinois country, it not being more than 120 miles from this place to Kaskaskia on the Mississippi.

The most enduring legacy of Cave-in-Rock has been its association with the river pirates who used it as a base of operations and preyed upon unwary travelers in the early years of the nineteenth century. This chapter in the history of Cave in Rock is examined in much greater detail by Rothert (1924). A selection of nineteenth century accounts of these social outcasts provides an intriguing picture of this cave’s less than pristine history. Certainly one of the earliest detailed descriptions of this landmark was prepared during the course of Thaddeus Mason Harris’s 1803 journal. As recounted by Daniel S. Curtis (1852:252-254) in *Western Portraiture, and Emigrants’ Guide:*

[p. 252] The Cave in Rock is well known to all navigators of the [pg. 253] Ohio river; it is situated on the bank of the west river, about 30 miles below the mouth of the Wabash. It is a large cave, supposed by the Indians to be the habitation of the Great Spirit.

The following description of this cave was given by Thaddeus M. Harris, an English tourist, who visited there in the spring of 1803:

For about three or four miles before you come to this place, you are presented with a scene truly romantic. On the Illinois side of the river, you see large ponderous rocks piled one upon another, of different colors, shapes, and sizes. Some appear to have gone through the hands of the most skillful artist; some represent the ruins of ancient edifices; others thrown promiscuously in and out of the river, as if nature intended to show us with what ease she could handle those mountains of solid rock. In some places you see purling streams winding their course down their rugged front; while in others, the rocks project so far, that they seem almost disposed to leave their doubtful situations. After a short relief from this scene, you come to a second, which is something similar to the first; and here, with strict scrutiny, you can discover the cave. Before its mouth stands a delightful grove of cypress trees, arranged immediately on the bank of the river.
They have a fine appearance, and add much to the cheerfulness of the place.

The mouth of the cave is but a few feet above the ordinary level of the river, and is formed by a semicircular arch of about 80 feet at its base, and 25 feet in height [sic], the top projecting considerably over, forming a regular concave. From the entrance to the extremity, which is about 180 feet, it has a regular and gradual ascent. On either side is a solid bench of rock; the arch coming to a point about the middle of the cave, where you discover an opening sufficiently large to receive the body of a man, through which comes a small stream of fine water, made use of by those who visit this place. From this hole a second cave is discovered, whose dimensions, form, etc., are not known. The rock is of limestone. The sides of the cave are covered with inscriptions, names of persons, dates, etc. Part of the trees have been cut down, and the entrance into the cave exposed to view.

In 1797, this cave was the place of resort and security to Mason, a notorious robber, and his gang, who were accustomed to plunder and murder the crews of boats, while descending the Ohio; and has been a place of concealment, resorted to by thieves and robbers, even at a much more recent period, as the pioneers in that region, and unfortunate boatmen on the river, often attest to their loss...

John W. Barber and Henry Howe (1867:248; see also Barber and Howe 1865:334) observed in *All the Western States and Territories*:

On the Ohio River, in Hardin county, a few miles above Elizabethtown, near the south-eastern corner of the state, is a famous cavern, known as Cave-in-Rock. Its entrance is a semi-circular arch of about 80 feet span and 25 feet in height [sic], and ascending gradually from the bed of the river, it penetrates to the distance of nearly 200 feet. This cave, in early times, was the terror of the boatmen on the Ohio, for it was one of the haunts of Mason and his band of outlaws... The pioneers of the west suffered greatly from the desperadoes, who infested the country in the early stages of its history...

The relationship between the river pirates and some of their neighbors was discussed by James T. Lloyd (1856:39) in *Lloyd's Steamboat Directory, and Disasters on the Western Waters*:

The river men were generally on the most friendly terms with the hordes of robbers who infested the neighboring country. In fact, these “land rats and water rats,” as Shylock would call them, were allies and associates, assisting each other in a variety of nefarious undertakings. A beautiful and romantic spot, called Cave-in-rock, on the Ohio river, was the general place of rendezvous for freebooters and boatmen. Here they held their grand councils, divided their plunder, and formed plans for future depredations.

Additional details of the nefarious illegal activities undertaken by Mason are recounted by John C. Van Tramp (1879:99-100) in *Prairie and Rocky Mountain Adventures, or, Life in the West*. Van Tramp (1870:99-100) unashamedly extracted this description word-for-word from Thorpe (1855: 32):

One of the most noted desperadoes of those early times was a man by the name of Mason. He first established himself at the “Cave in Rock”—a remarkable limestone formation about one hundred miles above the mouth of the Ohio—where, under the guise of keeping a store for the accommodation of boatmen and emigrants, he enticed them into his power. After murdering these victims of treachery, he would, by the hands of his confederates, send their boats to New Orleans for sale. He finally disappeared from his old quarters, and established himself on the great “trace” made through the wilderness of Mississippi and Tennessee by the flat-boatmen and traders while returning, by land, from New Orleans to their homes in the West. Mason increased in power, and, with his organized band, became so celebrated for his robberies and murders that he was dreaded from the banks of the Mississippi to the high lands of Tennessee. Over all this vast extent of country, if the buzzards [pg. 100] were seen high in the air, circling over any particular spot, the remark was made, “Another murder has been committed by Mason and his gang.”

A lesser known aspect of the life and times of the cave’s notorious river pirates would be their inspiration to an early poet of the Ohio
Valley, Charles A. Jones. As noted by William T. Coggeshall (1860:203) in The Poets and Poetry of the West:

Charles A. Jones—One of the least known of Western writers, to the present generation of readers, is a poet, who, in 1835, gave promise of much activity and distinction in metrical literature. He had then written his name high in the newspapers; published his volume [Jones 1835], and taken his first literary degree. Between the years 1836 and 1839 he wrote frequently for the Cincinnati Mirror, and in 1840 contributed several of the poems hereafter quoted for the Cincinnati Message, but about that time the inexorable law of bread-and-butter necessity drew him from the flowery slopes of Parnassus to the dry regions of Blackstone and the bar. After he began the practice of law he touched the harp but seldom, and then in secret.

Charles A. Jones is to be honored above the generality of Western writers, because he explored extensively, and made himself well acquainted with Western character, and in the West found the theme of his essay, the incident of his story, and the inspiration of his song. His principal poem is a stirring narrative of the exploits of the bold outlaws, who, in the infancy of the settlement of the West, had their common rendezvous in the celebrated Cave-in-Rock on the Ohio. The subjects of many of his lesser productions are the rivers, the mounds, the Indian heroes, and the pioneers of the Mississippi Valley...

With the demise of the pirates and their kindred spirits, perhaps J. Calvin Smith (1855:360) in Harper's Statistical Gazetteer of the World best expressed the changing times in succinctly remarking:

CAVE IN ROCK, p. o., Hardin co., Ill., 196 [miles] S.S.E. Springfield, on the right bank of the Ohio r. The cave from which the place derives its name, is noted as the former residence of a gang of thieves & counterfeiters. It is now an object of attraction to the curious traveller [sic].

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“Cave-in-Rock, near Shawneetown” (reproduced from Sears 1876: 544).
COLD AIR CAVE, NORTHAMPTON COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

Jack H. Speece

Cold Air Cave is located in the scenic Delaware Water Gap in Northampton County, Pennsylvania. It was discovered by Mr. Frear in 1872. During the early 1900's it was a tourist attraction for the thousands who visited resorts in the area. A large cold blast of air continues to emerge from this small 70 foot cavity among the boulder scree along the flank of Mount Minsi, located across the river from the famous "Indian Head" on Mount Tammany. Today it has become a part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area and has all but been erased from the area's attractions.

The Delaware Water Gap has impressed man ever since it was first sighted. The area was known by the Minisi tribe of the Lenni-Lenape nation as Minisink (the water is gone). Tradition tells that there once was a large lake that burst at the Water Gap. The Minsies were peaceful people and coexisted with the white man until a rebellion in 1755. This is believed to have been caused by various injustices and the notorious "Walking Purchase" of 1737 that led to their being forced from their land. The "Indian Head" on Mount Tammany still reminds us of these Native Americans.

Prior to the western expansion, the Water Gap was one of the best known natural wonders in the eastern United States. The Gap was the place where the crews changed and tied up their huge log rafts (at Gap Eddy) while floating timber to Philadelphia. The laying of the Lackawanna and Western Railroad along the river in 1856 gave support to this great natural attraction. From the early 1800's until the advent of the automobile the wealthy men in the big cities would escape the summer heat and vacation at beautiful resorts and retreats.

Antoine Dutot first laid out the town of Dutotsville (renamed Delaware Water Gap in 1879) in 1793 and built the first cabins. In 1829 the Frenchman built the first Kittatinny House when the first carriage road was built, but the town never grew. The property was purchased by the Brodheads who further developed the resort. The famed Kittatinny House attracted the elite from the big cities. They vacationed here during the summer months with their families. The Kittatinny was first built in 1829, renovated twice and rebuilt in 1884. It had accommodations for 275 guests before it burned to the ground in 1931.

Cold Air Cave is located 1.5 miles south of the borough of Delaware Water Gap and the old Kittatinny House (now just a parking area called Resort Point Overlook) on the west side of Route 611 (between Point of Gap Overlook and Arrowhead Island Overlook). There are no signs, just a pull-off along an old stone wall several feet high. It lies in the heart of the gap, just south of the Monroe County line, at the base of steep talus scree along the flank of Mount Minsi. Across the river is the famous "Indian Head" on Mt. Tammany.

The cave was discovered in 1872 by Mr. Frear. An article in the July 10, 1873, issue of the Philadelphia Inquirer describes the discovery although it may be a bit exaggerated. D. G. Beers noted the location of "Cold Cave" on his Atlas of Northumberland County in 1874. The cave soon became a popular site and was described in the Hartford Times Supplement, September 30, 1876, as being "in the rocky base of Mt. Minsi...a natural curiosity known as Cold-Air Cave. It is said to freeze ice-cream, but that is doubtless an exaggeration, though it really merits its name, - for on the hottest day a violent draft of cold air is emitted. Much speculation indulged in as to where the air comes from; and this place it is supposed that the cold air from it escapes by a crevice into a cave." An August 11, 1880,
article in the New York Times reported that the Kittatinny House, owned by the Broadhead family, charged $4.00 per day or $21.00 per week. The article went on to say "at one place there are some curious crevices in the rock, out of which ice-cold air pours on the hottest day."

By the turn of the twentieth century, the cave was commercialized to the public. Using Frear's original idea of enclosing the entrance, stone walls were constructed in front of the cave, given a roof, and joined to a wooden structure. This building captured the cold air emerging from the cave so it could be used for cooling purposes, and also added some length to the cave tour.

Being next to the main highway, it was an ideal location for tourists traveling from Philadelphia and New York to resorts in the Poconos. This was a stop where they could purchase refreshments and cool drinks. Those who traveled by train visited the cave via a short trolley ride from Delaware Water Gap. Nearby was the "Bear Stand" which also sold souvenirs and displayed several caged brown bears, and deer.

Mrs. Phillip Sigafuss operated the "cool" attraction for Charles Nightingale in its early years of commercialization. Part of the building contained a kitchen that served hot dogs, ice cream cones, soda, milk, and buttermilk. The cave was entered through a double door inside the building. A storage room for soft drinks was built in front of the entrance to conserve the cold air for cooling purposes. First illuminated by lantern, in later years a string of electric lights was installed inside the cave. No admission was charged at this time. Another report stated that five cents was charged to see the cave but you could have a soda for free.

After the death of Mrs. Sigafuss in 1918, Myrtle Williams, who also operated the Indian Head Lunch and Grounds at Delaware Water Gap, and her son-in-law Arthur Cox, continued the enterprise. An open sided lunch pavilion was built adjacent to the entrance building, along with a trail that led to a picnic area on the talus slope on the side of the mountain. An enclosed covered passageway connected the lunch stand with the cave. Later, the lunch pavilion was enclosed and gas pumps were installed by the road. The cave was shown to tourists for ten cents admission.

After World War II, the tourist business gradually declined in the Delaware Water Gap area. Dr. Ralph Stone, Pennsylvania State Geologist, reported that the cave was closed in the winter of 1952-53. Sometime afterwards, a fire of suspicious origin destroyed the building. Some reports state that Myrtle operated the store until 1960.

Cold Air Cave is not a true cave. It is composed of large blocks of Shawangunk Conglomerate, almost pure quartz. The cave basically consists of two rooms, one above the other. A hole in the ceiling gives access to the upper room, which is offset to the west. Light enters this room from both the north and south, in fact no part of the cave appears to be in complete darkness. Leaves and surface debris that have blown in provide nutrients for mushrooms in the cave. Millipedes and spiders are abundant near the entrance. The total length of Cold Air Cave is only 70 feet.

The most interesting feature of the cave is its low temperature and the cold air which blows from the entrance. It is interesting to note that the cave was not mentioned by Edwin Swift Balch in his well-known work, Glaciers or Freezing Caverns, published in 1900 at Philadelphia. Dr. Stone did not report the cave in his 1930 edition of Pennsylvania Caves, however, the cave was visited on November 6, 1931, and a full description appeared in his 1932 and 1954 editions. He explained the cold air as originating from winter frosts stored in the talus. Soil and vegetation serve as insulation as the cold air moves slowly.
downslope through the spaces between the talus to emerge in summer.

The cave has been reported to have a constant temperature of 38°F while other caves in the area are between 50°F and 60°F. Recent records show that the temperature does vary with the season but is still much colder than normal cave temperatures. Ice can be seen in the winter and early spring.

Dean Snyder reports that 17 different postcards depict the cave. The earliest card was postmarked 1905. The cave extended into the mountain at the rear of the structure. These cards show how the souvenir stand changed over the years. There are no cards known that show the "rock entrance" to the cave.

The Army Corps of Engineers purchased the property in 1967. It is now a part of the Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area. Except for the original stone walls leading to the cave, little physical evidence of the buildings remains. There is no longer a mention of the site and the stop here on the historic trolley tour has been deleted. Although there has never been any bats reported in the cave, the White Nose Bat Fungus was enough for the park service to close all caves in the state of Pennsylvania in 2007. There is a gravel pull-off along the highway in front of the old stone wall from which the entrance can be seen.

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Courtesy Dean Snyder Collection.
TRAVERTINE GROTTOES AT ITALY’S TIVOLI

William R. Halliday

While working on the section on travertine caves of my pseudokarst book, I was acutely reminded of the difficulty of finding illustrations of the much discussed grottos of Tivoli, in the famed travertine deposits just east of Rome. When I visited Tivoli several years ago, it seemed that current tours featured the newly reconditioned Villa d’Este and I found that the celebrated grottos were not there (although some other interesting artificial caves were in evidence).

When all else fails, I turn to my personal library. Sure enough, I had a copy of Gustavo Coccanari’s 1951 165-page paperback guidebook entitled (believe it or not) “Tivoli,” published by Aldo Chicca in (would you believe?) Tivoli. In guidebook Italian, of course, which I can handle well enough to determine that it is not exactly definitive about the grottos. But it includes reproductions of two old prints of the Grotta della Sirena or Sirens’ Grotto (see below) and the Grotta di Nettuno or Neptune’s Grotto (see back cover of this issue). The former appears to be simply a rustic arch and stairway which Coccanari states was constructed by a Napoleonic general by the name of Miollis, but the other (Neptune’s Grotto) may be a natural feature although probably not a true cave. It is said to be at the Villa Gregoriana, and speleovisitors to Tivoli are hereby encouraged to visit that Papal villa rather than that of the d’Este family and see if they can learn more about it.

Grotta della Sirena,

Villa Gregoriana.
A CURIOUS BEETLE AND ITS ROLE IN SPELEAN HISTORY

Danny A. Brass

While working amid the uncurated beetles in the Entomology Division collections at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History, Ashley Carellock, one of the museum’s volunteers, happened upon an unusual and interesting find: a specimen of *Leptodirus hochenwartii*, a slender-necked cave beetle from Slovenia. Apart from its rather unusual, almost ant-like, appearance, this species has played a unique role in the history of cave biology.

Beetles are members of the insect order Coleoptera (from the Greek koleos meaning sheath and pteryx/pteron meaning wing). The sheath refers to the hard pair of outer wings, or elytra, that cover and protect the delicate and membranous inner pair of wings that are used in flight. With approximately 400,000 species described, beetles are the largest of the insect orders. Even in subterranean environments, they are the most heavily represented group, with more than 2,000 known species.

*Leptodirus* was first discovered in 1831 by Luka Čeč, a poorly educated, local cave guide in Slovenia’s spectacular and world-famous Postojna Cave. Like Stephen Bishop, the famous guide of Kentucky’s Mammoth Cave, Luka Čeč also explored the depths of the Postojna system. Although the many passages that he discovered were certainly exciting and added to the overall understanding of the cave system, it was his discovery of a small (7 mm long) beetle that would eventually lead to a revolution in our understanding of cave ecology and, ultimately, to the development of an entirely new scientific discipline.

Retrieving the beetle from deep within the cave, he turned it over to the Count Franz Josef von Hochenwart. At the time, Hochenwart was writing the first guide to the cave. Hochenwart, in turn, gave the insect to the Austrian beetle specialist, Ferdinand Schmidt. In the course of studying this beetle, Schmidt realized that this was not only a species new to science, but an animal that was uniquely adapted for life underground. He named the creature *Leptodirus hochenwartii* (from the Greek lepto meaning thin or slender and deiros meaning neck).

In addition to its rather unusual shape (including a slender head and thorax and a large, dome-shaped abdomen), the beetle’s most notable features include a thinning of the cuticle and a loss of pigment (resulting in a reddish-brown coloration), long and slender legs and antennae (the latter providing for a greater number of sensory receptors), and an absence of eyes. In highly cave-adapted beetle species, flight is no longer useful; the membranous wings may be completely lost and the elytra may actually be fused together. In *Leptodirus*, a large, air-filled compartment is located beneath the elytra, accounting for the insect’s bizarre shape. It is believed that the air chamber is used to help the insect adjust to humidity levels in the cave. The dome-like shape is referred to as false physogastry.

Today, this suite of anatomical characteristics would be recognized as an unmistakable example of troglomorphy and the beetle itself identified as a troglobite (or troglobiont). In the early- to mid-1800s, however, the terms troglobite, troglophil, and trogloxene did not yet exist, and wouldn’t be coined until almost a quarter century after the discovery of *Leptodirus*. Indeed, the very concept of animals adapted to surviving in the harsh, nutrient-starved environment of a cave was unheard of at the time. Adaptations, such as those present in *Leptodirus*, are now known to be fairly typical of troglobites, and especially troglobitic arthropods. They are typically related to the
eternal darkness, microclimate, and scarcity of energy resources available underground.

*Leptodirus* was the first cave-adapted animal to be described as such. Sixteen years would pass before a second specimen was found, also in the depths of Postojna Cave. Today, *Leptodirus* is a symbolic cave beetle, its likeness appearing on the cover of several scientific journals and even on postcards in Slovenia. Threatened by overcollecting and habitat degradation, it is a protected species in Slovenia. A permit is required for specimen collecting.

At the time of its discovery, no one believed that any animals could live their entire lives in caves. Even though the now-symbolic eyeless and non-pigmented cave salamander, *Proteus anguinus*, had been found in Postojna and described more than 60 years before the discovery of *Leptodirus*, no one recognized it as a cave-adapted species. It wasn’t until the discovery of *Leptodirus* and Ferdinand Schmidt’s publication of his finding that caves were first recognized as viable animal habitats. And with a growing attention of scientists now kindled and focused squarely on cave-dwelling animals, the new science of speleobiology (biospeleology) was born. In fact, with its enormous diversity of cave-adapted species, which eventually attracted a large number of naturalists, Postojna is generally regarded as the birthplace of speleobiology.

**References**


*Leptodirus hochenwartii*, the slender-necked cave beetle. Photo by Danny A. Brass.
When suitably backlit, the beetle’s relatively flat abdomen can be seen in the lower portion of the translucent, air-filled dome formed by its arched elytra. Photo by Danny A. Brass.

Her work station cluttered with specimen boxes, Ashley Carelock helps identify beetles in the Entomology Division collections at the Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History. Photo by Danny A. Brass.
CAVE CLIPPINGS

"CONSMÉ OF CAVE BEAR."—There is something at first sight rather ridiculous in the idea of eating a fossil. To be sure, when the frozen mammoths of Siberia were first discovered, though they had been dead for at least 80,000 years (according to Dr. Croll's minimum reckoning for the end of the great ice age) and might, therefore, naturally have begun to get a little musty, they had nevertheless been kept so fresh, like a sort of prehistoric Australian mutton, in their vast natural refrigerators, that the wolves and bears greedily devoured the precious relics for which the naturalists of Europe would have been ready gladly to pay the highest market price of best beefsteak. Those carnivorous vandals gnawed off the skin and flesh with the utmost appreciation and left nothing but the tusks and bones to adorn the galleries of the new Natural History Museum at South Kensington. But then wolves and bears, especially in Siberia, are not exactly fastidious about the nature of their meat diet. Furthermore, some of the bones of extinct animals found beneath the stalagmitic floor of caves in England and elsewhere, presumably of about the same age as the Siberian mammoths, still contain enough animal matter to produce a good strong stock for antediluvian broth, which has been scientifically described by a high authority as pre-Adamite jelly. The congress of naturalists at Tübingen a few years since had a smoking tureen of this cave-bone soup placed upon the dinner table at their hotel one evening, and pronounced it with geological enthusiasm "scarcely inferior to prime oxtail." But men of science, too, are accustomed to trying unsavory experiments, which would go sadly against the grain with less philosophic and more squeamish palates. They think nothing of tasting a caterpillar that birds will not touch, in order to discover whether it owes its immunity from attack to some nauseous, bitter, or pungent flavoring; and they even advise you calmly to discriminate between two closely similar species of snails by trying which of them when chewed has a delicate soupcçon of oniony aroma. So that naturalists in this matter, as the children say, don't count; their universal thirst for knowledge will prompt them to drink anything, down even to consommé of quaternary cave bear.—The Corkhill Magazine.

From The New York Times, August 9, 1885.
For a long time it was warm on the wooded
hills, but after a while it began to grow cold.
The ground was covered with snow and ice.
Cold winds swept over the wooded hills.
Snow beat into the rude brush huts, and cold
winds whistled through the branches.
People shivered with the winter’s cold.
They needed a warmer shelter, but they did
not know how to make one.
Many of them had been in caves, but they
did not dare stay very long.
Some caves were the homes
of big cave-bears, others
the dens of hyenas.
Sabre-tooth also lived in a cave.
People knew that these animals were dan-
gerous creatures.
Many a time they had barely escaped from
the claws of a cave-bear.
Many a time they had been chased by a pack
of hyenas.
They did not want to enrage these creatures.

Least of all did they want to enrage old
Sabre-tooth.
He was the fiercest creature on the hills.
When he came out of his cave
the forest was still.
Scarcely an animal dared stir.
Even the rhinoceros and mam-
mouth feared to attack him.
He was as sly as a cat and as powerful as
a rhinoceros.
He had two sabre teeth that were sharp and
strong.
No such animal as Sabre-tooth lives now.
There were only a few animals like him then,
but they were more feared than any other
creature.
He was something like a lion and something
like a tiger, but he was more powerful than
either.
He did not like to live in the cold, so each
winter he went to the south.
Each summer he came back again.
BOOK REVIEWS


A wide array of imagery has been depicted on cave walls by modern humans (Homo sapiens) during the height of the last Ice Age. An even more staggering array of portable art from the same time period is known to have been created.

Interpretations of the underlying meaning of prehistoric art vary widely, ranging from simple representational art to complex symbolism, whose significance we can only guess at. Suffice to say, we will never really know with any degree of certainty what these works of art were meant to depict. However, informed speculation fuels ongoing debate.

In Deadly Powers, Paul Trout introduces us to the many marauding animal predators that stalked the Pleistocene landscape and especially to the influence that they had on the evolution of human culture and intellectual development (ultimately helping to drive the so-called intellectual/creative explosion in human cognition that led to the development of language, cultural myths, and possibly even cave art). In doing so, Trout underscores the abject fear experienced by ancestral humans coming face-to-face with any of the various deadly predators that roamed the countryside. He pulls no punches in emphasizing the horrors of being ripped apart and eaten alive, followed by the humiliating fate of being converted into and passed out as animal excrement—a destiny few aspire to. Prior to the explosion in human cognition, ancestral humans were weaponless and largely defenseless in a world filled with death at every turn, and there is no doubt that before the existence of man-the-hunter, there was man-the-hunted. It has been suggested, for example, that the well-known fossil-rich caves of South Africa known as the Cradle of Humankind actually represent a predator-rich killing ground, ironically more of a graveyard than a cradle.

In considering why so many human cultures celebrate deadly predators in longstanding myths and stories, Trout takes readers into the distant past—to a time when our ancestors confronted these predators on a daily basis. He argues that the creation of predator myths, hunting ceremonies, and the emergence of a rich storytelling tradition was instrumental in helping our ancestors to manage their primal fear of being torn apart and consumed. He draws examples from mythic, storytelling cultures worldwide in support of his thesis.

Dangerous predators, he suggests, were mythologized in one of four fashions: monsters, gods, benefactors, and role models. He considers the creation of fanciful monsters, creatures even more frightening than their real-life counterparts, as yet another strategy for coping with the never-ending fear of being eaten alive. Such creatures not only exist among modern cultures but are known from Paleolithic cave art as well, including the various examples of half-animal/half-human creatures called anthropomorphs (zoomorphs), such as the famous “lion man” from Stadel Cave in southwest Germany (http://www.loewenmensch.de/lion_man.html).

Deadly Powers is a well-written and thought-provoking book, quite suitable for general readers. It offers an intriguing view of human evolution for anyone interested in paleoanthropology; archaeology; development of early human culture; or the origins of language, myth, and storytelling.
VILLA GREGORIANA: Grotta di Nettuno e cascata