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THE CAVES OF BEXAR COUNTY

PART I

Edited by James R. Reddell and Orion Knox

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Editors: James R. Reddell
William H. Russell

Geologist: Ruben M. Frank
Cartographer: A. Richard Smith

THE CAVES OF BEXAR COUNTY

GEOLOGY

Bexar County has an average mean temperature of 69°, the hottest months being July and August and the coldest January. The average annual precipitation is 28 inches. Rain falls principally in isolated thundershowers and is well distributed throughout the year.

The county is divided from northeast to southwest by the Balcones fault zone. The southern part of the county lies on the Gulf Coastal Plain and ranges in altitude from 425 to 700 feet. It is composed of upper Cretaceous and Tertiary sands, marls, and clays. These formations are poorly consolidated and contain no caves of any consequence. The northern third, part of the Edwards Plateau, is topographically higher and stratigraphically lower than the southern two-thirds. This part of the rugged and hilly Edwards Plateau on the upthrown side of the fault zone ranges in altitude from 1100 to 1900 feet. Many small spring-fed streams drain the area running generally southeast. The major creeks are the Cibolo, Balcones, Culebra, Leon, and Salado. The San Antonio River, the principal stream in Bexar County, together with the Medina River and other smaller streams drains the area occupied by the fault zone and the rest of the county.

The lower Cretaceous Edwards Limestone is the principal cave former in the county. Caves do occur, however, in the Glen Rose Limestone and the Austin Chalk, also of Cretaceous age.

The Edwards Limestone crops out in a west-southwestward trending belt in the northern third of the county. This belt is about 7 miles wide in the eastern part of the county, only 1.5 miles wide at the narrowest point about midway across the county, and a little less than 4 miles wide at the Bexar-Medina County line. North of this belt in the western part of the county it caps the hills and uplands. Its thickness ranges up to about 500 feet in the outcrop area. Lithologically it consists of a gray to white, hard, dense semicrystalline limestone and dolomite.

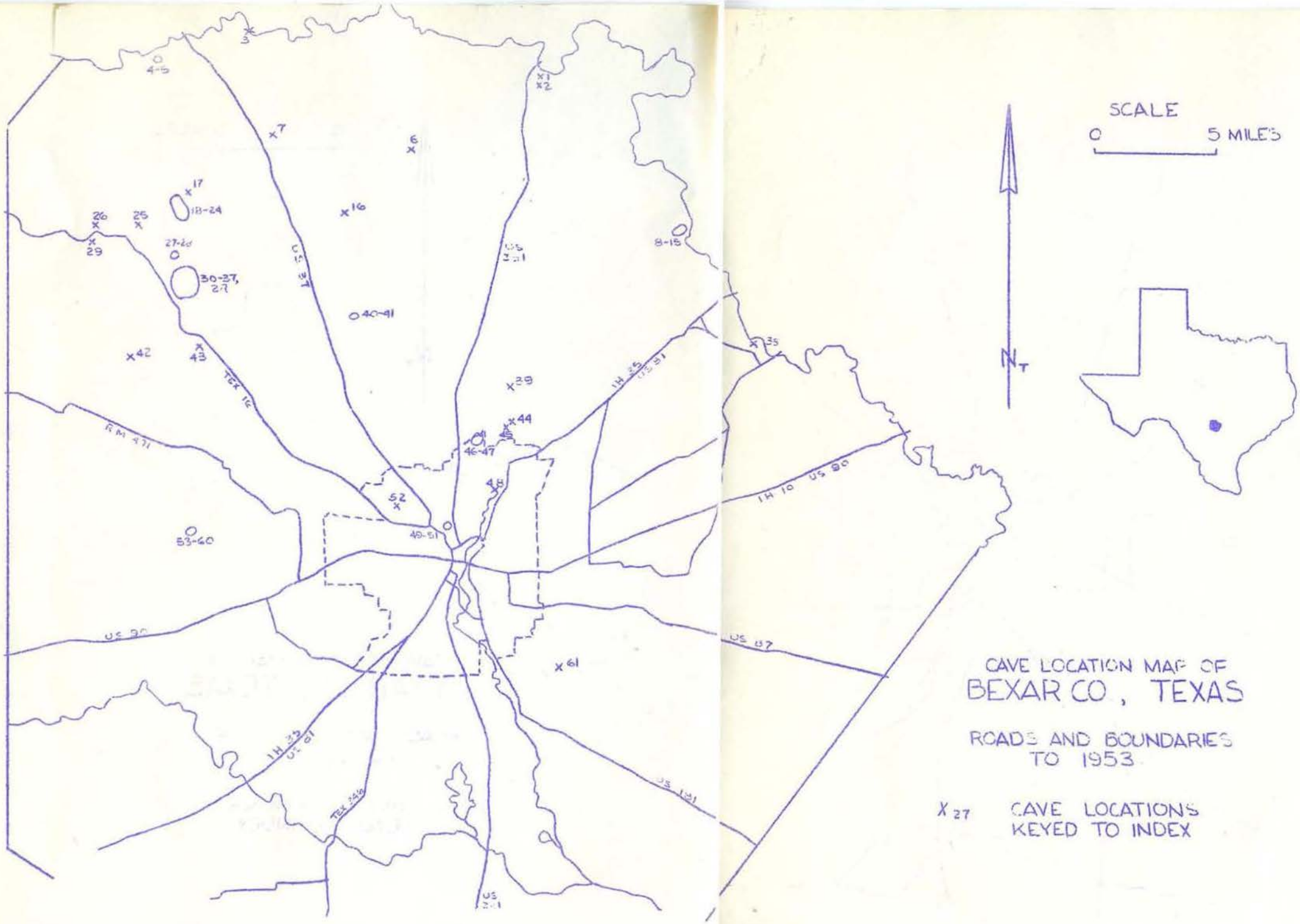
The Edwards is a good cave former for the reasons already cited in the previous issue of the Texas Speleological Survey on Uvalde County. In Bexar County even more than in the Uvalde area the economic importance of the caves in the Edwards is emphasized. All of San Antonio's public and private water supply comes from underground water and by far the majority of this is from caves in the Edwards Limestone.

The Glen Rose Limestone is a minor cave former in Bexar County. It crops out and is restricted to the northern third of the county that is not covered by Edwards. It is stratigraphically below the Edwards and consists of massive chalky limestone alternating with beds of less resistant marly limestone. It ranges up to 1200 feet in thickness. Some of the caves contained within it are Fair Hole, Cibolo Creek Cave, Friesenhahn Cave, and 31' Deep 80' Sink. Livingstone, Sayre and White in their report on the water resources of the San Antonio area say of the Glen Rose, "...it contains solution channels that range from minute openings to large caverns".

The upper Cretaceous Austin Chalk also produces caves in Bexar County. It is present on the surface south of the Edwards outcrop in a disrupted series of patches extending from northeast to southwest and generally paralleling the

Edwards. The largest area of exposure is in the middle western part of the county. Here it contains numerous small caves and sinks. The lowermost beds of the Austin consist of a hard thin-bedded limestone, the middle part contains soft chalky limestone and the upper part is an argillaceous chalky limestone. The maximum recorded thickness is 210 feet and it thins toward the northeast. Some of the caves which occur in the Austin are Schertz, Robber Barons, and Holmgreen's Hole.

Suprisingly even in a well-populated area such as this there are parts that are relatively virgin to spelunkers. The largest outcrop of Edwards, in the northeast part of the county, contains few recorded caves and most of these are concentrated in one spot (see map). In all of the northern area where the Glen Rose is exposed there are good possibilities also. A large portion of this unexplored area is covered by military installations, however, and is, at present, inaccessible.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BEXAR CO., TEXAS
ROADS AND BOUNDARIES
TO 1953
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ALTERNATE CAVE NAMES:

Barham's Cave No. 1 -- Helotes Hilltop Cave
Barham's Cave No. 2 -- Helotes Blow Hole
Bone Cave -- Friesenhahn Cave
Box S Ranch Cave -- Lytle Ranch Cave
Bulverde Cave -- Friesenhahn Cave
Cibolo Cave -- Schertz-Cibolo Cave
Cibolo Creek Cave -- Fair Hole
Classen's Hell Hole -- Classen Loose Rock Cave
Government Canyon Cave -- Lytle Ranch Cave
Huckner Road Cave -- Stapelton Ranch Cave No. 1
Mayer's Cave -- Dead Deer Cave
Marbauch's Sink (?) -- Classen Double Drop Cave
Robber's Cave -- Robber Baron's Cave
Scenic Loop Cave -- Helotes Hilltop Cave
Schertz Cave -- Schertz-Cibolo Cave
Shadowland Cave -- Dead Deer Cave
Trapdoor Cave -- Helmgreen's Hole

ADAM WILSON JR. CAVE — Bexar County (# 30)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The entrance is an impressive sink about 20' across and 10' high. It leads into an amphitheatre-like room with a few old, large formations. At the back on the right there is a 25' long crawlway. There are no formations in the crawl, which pinches out. A salamander was seen in the entrance room.

Ref: TSS files

AIRPORT CAVE — Bexar County (# 30)

Longhorn 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave is located in the bed of a small dry creek, and is entered by a 2' in diameter hole, dropping a total of 45' by a series of vertical or near-vertical chimneys. Fifteen foot long dead-end crawlways extend from both the 30' and 35' points. The cave follows two main joint-sets, one running E-W and the other NE-SW. Throughout its entire depth it never exceeds five feet in diameter, the largest points being at the intersection of the two joint-sets. The cave is of unusual significance because of the high concentration of CO_2 in its atmosphere. The air is noticeably bad at the 30' level, while carbide lamps will not burn at 35'. The last ten feet of the cave have not been entered but a black dirt fill appears to reach to all walls. The cave has been explored to the 35' level at various times by members of the Alamo and University of Texas Grottoes of the NSS.

Ref: TSS files

AUE CAVE NO. 1 — Bexar County (# 4)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Boyce Gaskin

Description: The cave is a 40' sink with a small room at the bottom. It has been explored by the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. Nothing more is known about the cave.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 79.

Ref: TSS files

AUE CAVE NO. 2 — Bexar County (# 5)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Boyce Gaskin

Description: The cave is a large room mostly filled with breakdown at the base of a slope leading from its entrance. It has been explored by the St. Mary's University Speleological Society.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 79.

Ref: TSS files

BABCOCK ROAD CAVE — Bexar County (# 17)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owners:

Description: The entrance to the cave is a drop of about 4' and is about 3' in diameter. At the bottom of the drop there is a small room about 20' in diameter and 4½ to 5 feet high. There are a few formations. Cave crickets and spiders are to be found in the cave.

Ref: TSS files

BANDERA ROAD CAVE — Bexar County (# 26)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave consists of a small crawlway extending for 30 feet to a dead-end. There are no formations and the cave is dry. The only fauna observed was harvestmen spiders.

Ref: TSS files

BERING SINK — Bexar County (# 43)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: O. Bering

Description: The cave consists of a small room at the bottom of a 15' sinkhole. It is necessary to use a rope to enter the cave, which is dead. There are no formations in the cave and a prairie dog was found at the bottom of the hole. It has been explored by the St. Mary's University Speleological Society.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 79.
Ref: TSS files

BLUE HOLE CAVE NO. 1 — Bexar County (# 21)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Brooks; Manager: Arthur Melton

Description: The cave is entered by a six foot in diameter hole in a cliff. It branches after a few feet, the left branch going down for about six feet and ending. The passage straight ahead goes for about 25' before tapering into a funnel at the end.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 79.
Ref: TSS files

BLUE HOLE CAVE NO. 2 Bexar County (# 22)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Brooks; Manager: Arthur Melton

Description: The entrance is about 7' wide and 6' high. After about five feet a 6" thick natural bridge spans the passage. At the back a tight squeeze leads into a small, 2' high room with live formations and cave crickets. Two crawls extend to the left of the main passage. The first is about 20 feet long and comes back to the surface. The second dead-ends after about 15 feet. Total length of the cave is about 60 feet and the depth is 4 feet.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 79.
Ref: TSS files

BLUE HOLE CAVE NO. 3 Bexar County (# 23)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Brooks; Manager: Arthur Melton

Description: The cave is a 35' deep sinkhole filled with old pipe and other trash. It was explored on Dec. 28, 1958 by Orion Knox, Ernest Kalterman, Butch Jubela, and Arturo Solis.

Ref: TSS files

BLUE HOLE CAVE NO. 4 Bexar County (# 24)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Brooks; Manager: Arthur Melton

Description: The cave is a small sinkhole about 15' deep, with a small room at the bottom. It was explored on Dec. 28, 1958, by Orion Knox, Ernest Kalterman, Butch Jubela, and Arturo Solis.

Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 1 Bexar County (# 55)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: The cave is entered by a small sink sloping steeply downward. A crawl to the right connects into the cave after a short distance. A rattlesnake found at the bottom of the slope prevented its being explored any further. It was explored on Feb. 28, 1960, by Orion Knox and others from the St. Mary's Speleological Society.

Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 2 Bexar County (# 56)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: The cave is entered by a 20' deep sink with a room at the bottom. A slope leads down to another room where it ends. It was explored by Orion Knox and other members of St. Mary's University Speleological Society.
Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 3 Bexar County (# 57)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: The cave is entered by a 10' drop into a short passage which ends in a 20' drop into a small room. A small drop to the right side of this room leads into a short dead-end passage. The cave was explored by Orion Knox and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society.
Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 4 Bexar County, (# 58)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: The cave was explored by Al Brandt and other members of St. Mary's University Speleological Society. No description is available at this time.
Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 5 Bexar County (# 59)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: No description is available at this time for this cave, which was explored by Al Brandt and other members of St. Mary's University Speleological Society.
Ref: TSS files

BRIANT STOCK FARM CAVE NO. 6 Bexar County (# 60)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Briant

Description: The cave was explored by Al Brandt and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. No description is available at this time.
Ref: TSS files

BUZZARD'S ROOST CAVE — Bexar County (# 11)

Bulverde 7.5' or Bat Cave 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The cave is entered by a small 10' sink which in turn leads to a four feet drop into a 30' in diameter, 5' high room. No passages extend from this room. It was explored by Bill Gray and other members of the Alamo Grotto.
Ref: W. Gray

CAVASSES CAVE NO. 1 — Bexar County (# 53)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Cavasses

Description: The cave was explored by Al Brandt and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. No description is available at this time.
Ref: TSS files

CAVASSES CAVE NO. 2 — Bexar County (# 54)

Culebra Hill 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Cavasses

Description: The cave was explored by Al Brandt and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. No description is available at this time.
Ref: TSS files

CIBOLO CREEK CAVE — Bexar-Comal County Line

? Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Rempel (?)

Description: The cave has not been explored by speleologists and no accurate report is available. The only description given of the cave is that it was entered by a 3'-4' long, 2'-3' wide crack in the bed of Cibolo Creek. A constriction in the entrance drop resulted in a boy's being trapped for several hours. The cave is now covered with concrete.

Bibliography: George, William O. "Development of Limestone Reservoirs in Comal County, Texas." Transactions, American Geophysical Union, Vol. 29, No. 4, Part I, page 509. Aug. 1948.

Ref: TSS files

CLASSEN BALING WIRE CAVE — Bexar County (# 13)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The cave is entered by a shallow sink, which was filled with baling wire and other trash to keep goats out. After climbing over the trash a large room about 20' x 25' x 10' high is entered. It contains a number of nice formations. At the back of the room a tunnel 2½' high extends for 15' before opening into a 6' high passage which extends an additional 30' before ending. There is a little guano on the floor of the cave which is generally dry. Total length is about 60'.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

CLASSEN CORK SCREW CAVE — Bexar County (# 15)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The entrance to the cave is a sink, which narrows after about 10' to a tight hole, dropping 40' to the bottom. This is followed by another drop of about 10'. The passage then extends 30', with a flowstone slide of 6' on the left. At the bottom of the slope there is a 15' high room with a pool of water in it. The floor is covered with small travertine dams. On the right there is a 15' drop with a pool of water at the bottom. After about 15' there is another drop, also chimneyable. This is followed by a 35' drop requiring ladders. At the bottom a passage extends to the left above the level of the floor. A 12' crawl leads to the first room which is 20' x 30' x 60' high. A low passage leads from this to a 40' x 30' x 8' high room, containing a hill of mud in the center of the room. A third room is 20' in diameter and 10' high, ending in mud fill. From the bottom of the 35' drop a 10' chimneyable drop leads to a 6' high passage which rapidly lowers to two feet, and is filled with water to about 18" of the ceiling. The passage extends for about 25' with two holes in the floor at the end, but both are filled with water. Although the passage continues any further exploration will necessitate the use of aqualungs. Two crawls extend from the main passage but are small and tortuous, one becoming too small to continue while the other ends in a 15' chimney. The cave was explored to the water crawl on Aug. 16, 1959, by Orion Knox and other members of the Alamo Grotto. The water crawl was explored in Sept. 1959 by Orion Knox and Dennis Doyle.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

CLASSEN DOUBLE DROP CAVE (MARBAUCH'S SINK?) — Bexar County (# 9)

Bat Cave 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Marbauch

Description: The cave is entered by a sink and consists of a series of five drops, dropping a total of better than 100'. It ends in a mud plug. There are no formations and 100' of rope or ladder is required in exploration of the cave. It may well be the same cave as Marbauch's Sink, a cave in the same general area explored in 1958 by Bill Russell and Phil Morey, but positive identification is not possible at this time.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

CLASSEN LOOSE ROCK CAVE (CLASSEN'S HELL HOLE) Bexar County (# 14)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The entrance is an 8' deep, dangerous, sink-type opening in rubble. A passage leads into a 30' x 20' room with two passages extending from it. That to the right is a low, narrow crawl dead-ending after a short distance. That to the left goes for about 15' as a fairly wide, 2' high passage, opening into a 20' long passage ending in a 25' drop. This passage contains some nice formations. At the bottom of the pit, which requires equipment, there is a 12'-15' deep hole, while a passage to the right leads around the hole. A 10' drop is found is found in this passage, which is about 3' wide and 15' high. There is also a hole where water drains. This passage extends as a crawl for about 15' where a drop lets you into a room. A low crawl leads under the right wall of the room and makes a 90° left-turn. After about 20' it drops a few. At the bottom of this drop there is a right turn to a 20' drop into a 10' x 15' x 25' high room. The drainage channel goes to the left and into a small hole, negotiable for only about 10' before it becomes too small. Total depth is about 120'. Mice were found living 90' down in the cave. The cave was explored on Aug. 16, 1959, by Orion Knox and other members of the Alamo Grotto.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

CLASSEN TOBACCO CAN HOLE Bexar County (# 12)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The cave is entered by a two foot in diameter, 15' deep drop, followed by a 3' drop, a 12' drop, a 5' drop, a 20' drop, a 30' drop, and finally a 25' drop. Essentially it is a series of vertical shafts broken by small ledges between drops. It contains no formations and has little horizontal extent. Total depth is about 125' and equipment is required for most of the cave's depth. It was explored in Oct. 1959 by Orion Knox and other members of the Alamo Grotto.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

CRANES CAVE Bexar County (# 18)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Col. Crane

Description: The cave consists of one medium size room with several dead-end passages off of it. It is alive and several formations are to be found in it. The entrance is a small hole about 3 feet deep with a slope leading down into the room. Greg Crane was the first to explore the cave and the St. Mary's University Speleological Society later took the Science Club of Jefferson High School of San Antonio to it.

Ref: TSS files

DEAD DEER CAVE (MAYER'S CAVE) (SHADOWLAND CAVE) Bexar County (# 6)

Otis Ridge 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Col. Mayer

Description: The cave is entered by a 20' deep sink, which can be chimneyed. A crawl to the right leads from a small room at the bottom of the sink. After about 8' there is a 12' drop into another small room. To the right of the room the passage continues to a junction of two passages. That to the right leads to a series of small pits and drops which may be chimneyed to about the 100' level. The passage to the left leads through a series of small, low rooms to a 60' deep pit. This pit drops into a 75' x 50' x 40' high room. The room contains many formations and much breakdown. To the right the passage slopes up to a 50' pit. At the bottom of this drop there is a short passage leading to a stream of water. Downstream it is possible to go a short way before coming to a large pool of water and a siphon. Upstream it is possible to crawl about 20' over travertine dams to a point where the water is coming out of small holes in the ceiling. Total depth is estimated at 125'. Fairly reliable reports state that in time of drouth it is possible to go for "miles" beyond the siphon, which is apparently only a few feet in length. The cave has been explored many years prior to this, but has been recently visited by Barbara Madden and Orion Knox who reached the top of the 50' pit on June 17, 1961. A trip was made on July 15, 1961, by John Talley, Leonard Clark, Al Brandt, Orion Knox, and Barbara Madden to the siphon.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 81.
Ref: TSS files

FAIR HOLE (CIBOLO CREEK CAVE) Bexar-Kendall County Line (# 3)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

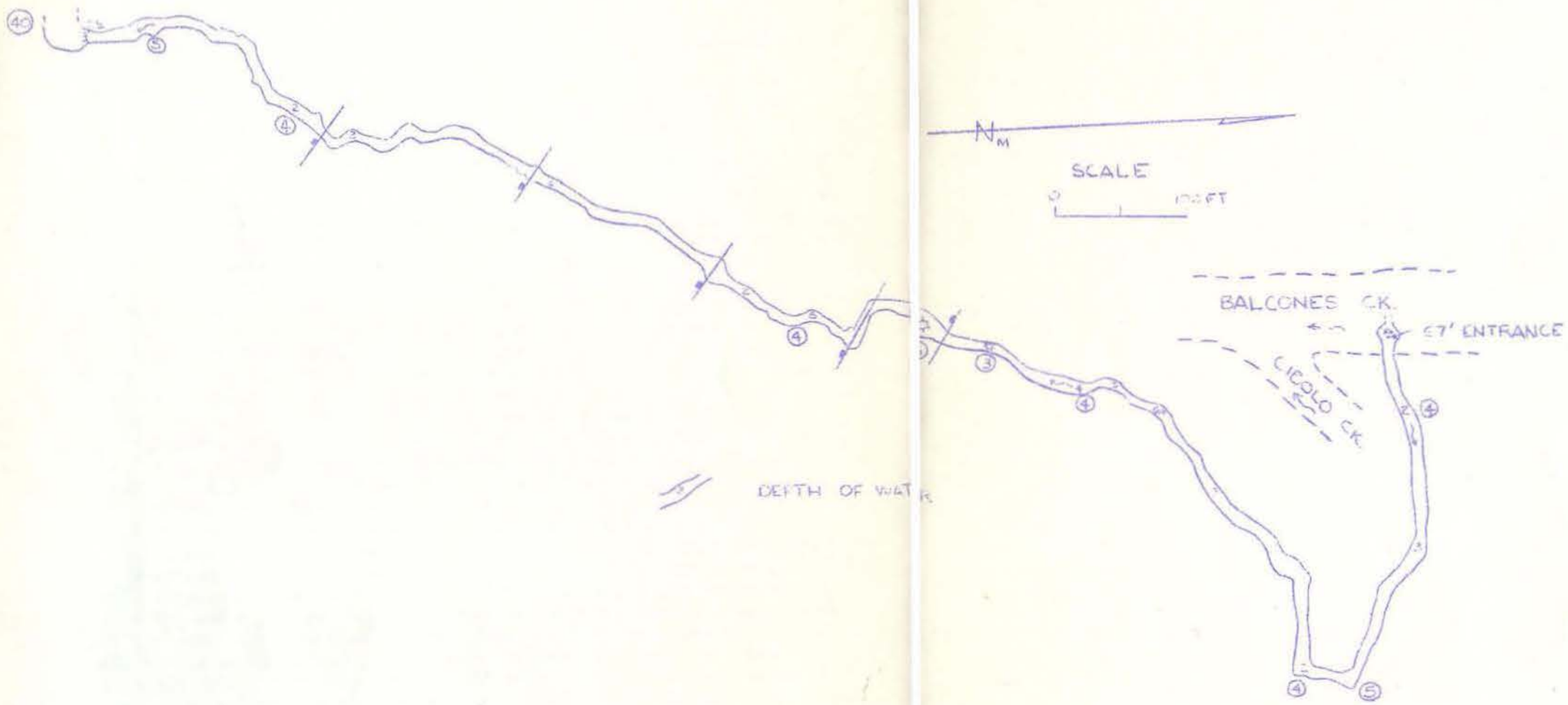
Owner: Mr. Fair

Description: The entrance to the cave lies in the bed of Balcones Creek about half-way from either shore. A 3' high concrete wall has been built around the entrance to prevent water from flowing into the cave. The entrance itself is about 4'-6' wide and almost perfectly circular, dropping 67' to an 8' deep pool of water. Water flows out of a small upper-level passage part of the way down. It becomes too tight to explore after a short distance but probably leads to a second, new-filled entrance in the creek-bed. The cave, located on the Bexar-Kendall County line, runs east for about 300' into Kendall County, before turning sharply to the right for about 50' and then sharply to the right again and running southwest for about 1200' to the waterfall. The cave, therefore, runs through Comal County and swings back into Bexar County, where it generally follows the course of Cibolo Creek. The passage averages 5' wide, with occasionally wider places. Water depth ranges from 2' to over 6', the deepest points being wide places at the base of domes, so that it is impossible to chimney across the deepest parts of the cave. Height above the water is usually four feet, though in places it is lower and in places as much as 6'. The cave is crossed by a number of joints, but in only one instance does it follow these cross-joints. This one time it follows it for no more than 50', although at each cross-joint the passage is somewhat wider than usual. No flow measurements have been made in the cave but the rate of flow varies greatly with the season and the amount of water running in Balcones Creek. Doubtless in times of flood the cave is completely inundated, while in the driest seasons little or no water runs into the cave. The only fauna observed in the cave has been river minnows and a number of common water bugs. Probably the severe flooding that the cave is subject o on this upper

FAIR HOLE

BEXAR-KENDALL COS., TEXAS

COMPASS & TAPE SURVEY
BENFER, ET AL., 1960



level prevents any troglodytic form from developing. After 1500' of passage a 35' waterfall is encountered, with a high dome above the waterfall. At this point the cave follows a cross passage. Upstream the cave is nothing more than a small fissure too small to enter, while downstream it extends as a 30' wide, 20' high passage for at least 100' before ending in a large room with high piles of mud and trash, which may well plug holes to a lower level. The stream disappears through breakdown and gravel in the floor of the passage. Equipment is needed for both the entrance drop and the waterfall. The cave was explored in Oct. 1951 by members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society who found bad air in the waterfall passage. A later trip by members of the University of Texas Grotto found no bad air. The cave was mapped to the top of the waterfall in 1960 by Bob Benfer, Mike Pfeiffer, and Murph Carpenter. (See map, p. 15)

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. I, No. 5, p. 41. (Reprinted in SpeleoDigest 1958, pub. by the Pittsburgh Grotto, page 1-305).
Ref: TSS files

FRIESENHAHN CAVE (BONE CAVE) (BULVERDE CAVE) Bexar County (# 2)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Alfred Friesenhahn

Description: The cave is entered by a 6 to 10 feet in diameter, vertical, well-like opening which drops 30'. The cave itself is about 60' long and 30' wide. There are a number of small stalactites and other forms of dripstone which have developed around fractures and minor solution openings. The bedrock floor and lower walls of the chamber are buried beneath alluvial fill of undetermined thickness, and the surface of this fill extends to with 2'-6' of the ceiling. Several large stalagmites, one of which is more than 8' in diameter, are partly or wholly buried in the fill. From the northwest end of the entrance room a constricted opening extends upward at an inclination of 20 to 30 degrees. This grotto is the unfilled part of an ancient opening to the surface, the upper extension of which is completely filled and sealed off by accumulated rock debris and dripstone. The alluvial fill was washed into the cave through this old entrance while it was open to the surface in late Pleistocene time. Coarser rock debris was deposited within and immediately in front of the entrance, while finer-grained silt and clay was deposited in the central and southeast parts of the chamber. There are several features in the floor deposits which clearly indicate that the cave is a part of a connected cavern system. A depression about 15' in diameter has developed in the floor deposits immediately beneath the present vertical entrance. The sunken mass of material must have been displaced into a deeper portion of the cave. Surface water, which occasionally flows through the entrance and falls into the depression, drains freely through the debris. An open fracture 8 to 10 feet deep, as well as minor faults and sag features in the bedded clays, also shows that the fill has subsided since the time of deposition. A filled channel cut into older deposits crosses the cave and passes beneath the exposed part of the cave's southeast wall. (Evans, 1961)

Geology: The cave was formed probably during Tertiary and early Pleistocene times. Stream valley dissection of the plateau in the Pleistocene lowered the water table and brought an end to solution at the level where the cave had developed. After the water had drained out, the cave began to fill with dripstone formations and with blocks of limestone which fell from its roof and walls. The large size of some of the stalagmites indicates that this stage of self-filling lasted for a

relatively long time. The next stage in the history of the cave began when a large opening developed to the surface in late Pleistocene time. The process of filling was, therefore, greatly accelerated as intermittent flooding brought much surface debris and soil into the cave. "The oldest surface materials recognized in the cave deposits occur in Zone 1 where they are intermixed with fallen rocks and dripstone and rest directly on deposits of the older self-filling stage. The fact that only small vertebrates were found in Zone 1 suggests that the surface materials were introduced during the early development of the opening, before it had attained sufficient size to admit larger animals into the cave. The pronounced disconformity at the contact between Zone 1 and its overlying sediments is believed to represent a significant gap in the sequence of deposits. A large part of the original Zone 1 deposit obviously was stripped off by running water and redeposited in a lower, unfilled part of the cavern system. Such erosion could have taken place only at times when deeper, connecting parts of the cavern had been partly emptied of water, caused by a lowering of the water table. The lowered base level led inflowing surface water to wash swiftly through the cave and erode the deposits previously accumulated on its floor. A subsequent rise of the water table prevented further drainage into deeper passages. This ended the erosion of Zone 1 and initiated a new stage of deposition. The fine-grained and thinly bedded sediments which comprise most of Zones 2 and 3 are obviously pond deposits. Throughout the time represented by these two zones the water table stood at a high level, inundating the deeper connecting chambers and, at times, the lower part of the cave floor. Surface water flowing into the cave could not escape through the saturated openings and it accumulated in a pond where the fine-grained sediments were deposited. Numerous partings of limestone grit and very minor disconformities between the thin beds of silt and clay indicate that the pond dried up and reappeared many times during the deposition of the two zones. This intermittent ponding condition was probably caused by minor fluctuations in the water table level and by seasonal variations in the inflow of surface water. The lithologic differences in Zones 2 and 3 apparently reflect somewhat different depositional conditions within the cave. There is no indication, however, that these units were separated by any considerable hiatus. Rather, they appear to represent a continuing process of filling during a single climatic substage. Articulated and well-preserved skeletons found in Zone 2 and in the lower part of Zone 3 suggests a fairly rapid rate of deposition for at least a part of these sediments. Had the skeletons been exposed for a considerable time before burial they almost surely would have been scattered about by scavenger animals. The uppermost part of Zone 3 apparently accumulated at a relatively slow rate. Many of the fossil bones from this zone show advanced decomposition and very slight mineralization, indicating that they were exposed to the atmosphere for a long time before they were ultimately buried in sediments. Indeed, some fossil teeth and the harder, less perishable bones that were never completely buried were found partly exposed at the surface of Zone 3 when excavations were commenced in 1949. The retarded rate of deposition in upper Zone 3 time is believed to have been caused by the gradual filling of the old surface opening which reduced, and eventually completely shut out, inflow of sediment-bearing surface water. For sometime thereafter there appears to have been no deposition within the cave. But eventually surface drainage again found its way into the cave through a new opening near the present surface entrance. The water was not impounded on the cave floor, as had been the case during the preceding stage of depeition. Instead, it flowed through the cave, eroding a channel into the older ponded deposits. The channel crosses the cave on a rapidly steepening gradient and passes beneath the exposed cave wall into a lower part of the cavern system. Evidently subsidence of the water table after deposition of Zone 3, had reopened the lower cavern enough

to receive the inflow from the channel. In time the opening into the deeper cavern was completely filled by Zone 4 channel deposits. At the present time surface water flows into the cave only in occasional periods of unusually heavy rainfall. As no water course leads to the cave's entrance, the inflow is derived exclusively from sheet wash across the gentle surface slope. Modern deposits are accumulating at a very slow rate and are retained within the sinkhole in the cave floor which lies immediately beneath the present entrance. Surface drainage passes freely through the sinkhole debris into deeper openings, so the remaining area of the cave floor is no longer subject to erosion or deposition. This condition has obtained since the sinkhole first developed some time after the Zone 4 channel filling had been completed." (Evans, 1961)

Paleontology: The cave is one of the most important paleontologic sites in the United States. Excavations in the cave's floor deposits have yielded an unusually large and varied collection of fossils, including skeletons, partial skeletons, and more than 3,700 isolated teeth and bones. More than 30 genera of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, and birds are represented in the collection. These fossils represent animals which used the cave as a den or lair and the victims of these animals. "Among the larger herbivorous mammals represented in the fauna which would not have been expected to enter the cave of their own accord are elephant, mastodon, camel, horse, Bison, tapir, and deerp. Quite probably carnivores dragged many of these animals into the cave as prey, and were thus a major factor in the accumulation of the fauna. The carnivores found in association with the herbivorous animals include saber-toothed cats, (Dinobastis and Smilodon sp., only a canine tooth of the latter being recovered), bear, dire wolf, and coyote. Bones of Dinobastis and coyote are especially abundant, indicating that these animals occasionally or regularly used the cave as a den. One of the most interesting features of the fossil accumulation is the very large number of immature elephant bones found (Elephas sp.) as compared to relatively few bones of adult elephants... The condition of the bones, and the fact that they were associated with numerous bones of Dinobastis, points clearly to [the fact that] young elephants were the preferred and principal diet of the great cat, Dinobastis. The American mastodon (Mammut americanum) is also present in the cave deposits but is not nearly so abundant as the elephant. Like the elephant the mastodon is represented almost entirely by young individuals... Although the cave fauna contains most of the familiar late Pleistocene mammals of the general region, the edentates (glyptodents, ground sloths, and armadillos), commonly present in late Pleistocene deposits of the Coastal Plain and in river deposits throughout Central Texas, are virtually absent from the collection. Only the fragmentary remains of a sloth were found. A possible explanation for this absence is that the edentates preferred to remain near the water courses and rarely invaded the rocky, upland environment in which the cave is located. The Friesenhahn fauna contains a large number and variety of fossil rodents. At least nine genera have been identified, and part of these have been studied statistically (Kennerly, 1956). Rodent bones occur in all units of the fill but are especially abundant in Zones 3 and 4. Those found in Zone 4 are in part indigenous to the unit, and in part reworked from the older deposits. Some of the rodents represented probably entered the cave in search of food or shelter. Others were probably carried in as the prey of carnivores... Turtle bones occur in all levels of the cave fill but are by far the most common in Zone 3. The collection made in 1949 and 1951 includes two genera of turtles represented by 354 complete and fragmentary shells... The turtles may have used the cave as a hibernation sit, or possibly they were attracted by the intermittent pond in which the sediments were being deposited... Several objects found in the excavations suggest the possibility that he [i.e. Paleo-American man] either

entered the cave occasionally or lived in the immediate vicinity of its entrance. A few pieces of flaked flint recovered from Zones 2 and 3 closely resemble the flint scrapers which are known to have been fashioned by man... It is not possible to determine with certainty whether the scraper-like objects found in the cave deposits were formed by natural processes or whether they were made by man." (Evans, 1961) Other evidences of the presence of early man include the occurence of a large fresh-water clam which could only have come from a stream many miles from the cave; several pieces of polished bone, which appear to have been cut by a sharp implement, also indicate the presence of man. Until more conclusive evidence is found, however, the presence of Pleistocene man in this cave must remain nothing more than speculation. "There appears to be no sound basis for assigning any part of the fossil-bearing sediments to the middle Pleistocene, as was suggested by Hay (1920). Zones 2 and 3 compose the main body of the cave deposits and are by far the most fossiliferous of any texted in the excavations. The occurrence of such typically late Pleistocene genera as Bison, Mammut, and Elephas clearly indicates that these zones originated in the Wisconsin stage of late Pleistocene time... Zone 1 contains fossils which are less definitive in age. This unit, however, is a part of the related sequence of cave deposits and probably originated in an early moist substage of the Wisconsin... Zone 4 yielded fossils consisting in part of vertebrates reworked from the older cave deposits and in part of smaller forms found in primary position. The indigenous fauna unfortunately does not include species which can be used for conclusive age determinations. The channel and its Zone 4 deposits must have originated during a somewhat dryer interval than the preceding period when the ponded sediments of Zones 2 and 3 were accumulated. On the other hand, the nature of the channel deposits indicates a considerable volume of inflow which suggests somewhat moister climatic conditions than obtain at the present time. There seems to be no reliable means of telling at present whether Zone 4 was deposited during a late substage of the Wisconsin, or whether it is all or in part of post-Pleistocene age." (Evans, 1961)

Faunal List: (Fossil material)

CLASS AMPHIBIA
- Bufo woodhousei bexarensis Mecham
- Bufo cognatus Say
- Scaphiopus sp.
- Eleutherodactylus augusti Duges
- Rana pipiens Schreber
- Rana sp.

CLASS REPTILIA
- Order Chelonia
  - Terrapene canaliculata Hay
  - Testudo wilsoni Milstead
- Order Squamata
  - Crotaphytus collaris Say
  - Pituophis melanoleucus Daudin
  - Crotalus atrox Baird and Girard

CLASS MAMMALIA
- Order Marsupialia
  - Didelphis virginianus Linnaeus
- Order Insectivora
  - Cryptotis cf. parva (Say)
  - Notiosorex cf. crawfordi (Coues)

Order Carnivora
- Ursus americanus Pallas
- Arctotherium simum (Cope)
- Canis latrans Say
- Aenocyon dirus (Leidy)
- Dinobastis serus Cope
- Smilodon sp.
- Mephitis mephitis (Schreber)

Order Artiodactyla
- Bison sp. (?)
- Odocoileus virginianus (Zimmerman)
- Mylehyus nasutus (Leidy)
- Camelid

Order Perissodactyla
- Equus sp.
- Tapirus veroensis

Order Proboscidia
- Parelephas
- Elephas sp.
- Mammut sp.

Order Lagomorpha
- Lepus californicus Gray
- Sylvilagus audoboni (Baird)
- Sylvilagus floridanus (Allen)

Order Edentata
- Sloth (Lundelius omits this from a later list)

Order Rodentia
- Sigmodon hispidus Say and Ord
- Cynomys ludovicianus (Ord)
- Geomys bursarius (Shaw)
- Perognathus hispidus Baird
- Peromyscus leucopus (Rafinesque)
- Peromyscus cf. nasutus (Allen)
- Neotoma floridana (Ord)
- Pitymys pinetorum (Le Conte)
- Reithrodontomys sp.

Note: Faunal list is from Lundelius (1960). He excludes all avian material until it can be further studied.

Biology: The cave was visited on July 3, 1949 and August 10, 1949, by David Lee Jameson and at that time collected thirteen barking frogs,(Eleutherodactylus latrans) several Syrrhophus marnocki (Marnock's frog), two Rana pipiens (leopard frog), a Bufo punctatus, and a Bufo valliceps (crested toad). Numerous Plethodon glutinosus (sliny salamanders) were seen. Two copperheads (Agkistrodon contortrix) had been previously removed from the cave. (Jameson, 1949)

History: "It is not known who first discovered the Friesenhahn Cave and the fact that it contained vertebrate fossils. The first published reference appeared in The Geology and Mineral Resources of Bexar County, by E. H. Sellards (Sellards 1919, p. 73-74). In this brief account Sellards reported that local residents had entered the cave and collected bones of elephants and other Pleistocene animals. These fossils were submitted to O. P. Hay for identification. Hay (1920) subsequently published a list of 18 species which he had identified from the "Bulverde

Cave" and which he considered to be of middle Pleistocene age... The references published by Sellards and Hay indicated that the cave was probably an important fossil locality, but for many years permission to explore the cave could not be obtained. In the summer of 1949, Mr. Alfred Friesenhahn invited a party from the Texas Memorial Museum to excavate the cave deposits and collect whatever fossils were found. Immediately thereafter a field camp was established at the site in preparation for the long-delayed exploration. Excavations were carried on during the summers of 1949 and 1951. The field party consisted of Glen L. Evans, Grayson E. Meade, Charles E. Mear, John White, Carl Moore, and Kenneth Rechat. Dr. E. H. Sellards, then Director of the Texas Memorial Museum, was in general charge of the project." (Evans, 1961) Since that time a number of additional excavations have been made by members of the University of Texas Geology Department but no significant additions have been made to the faunal list from the cave. (See maps, pages 20 and 21)

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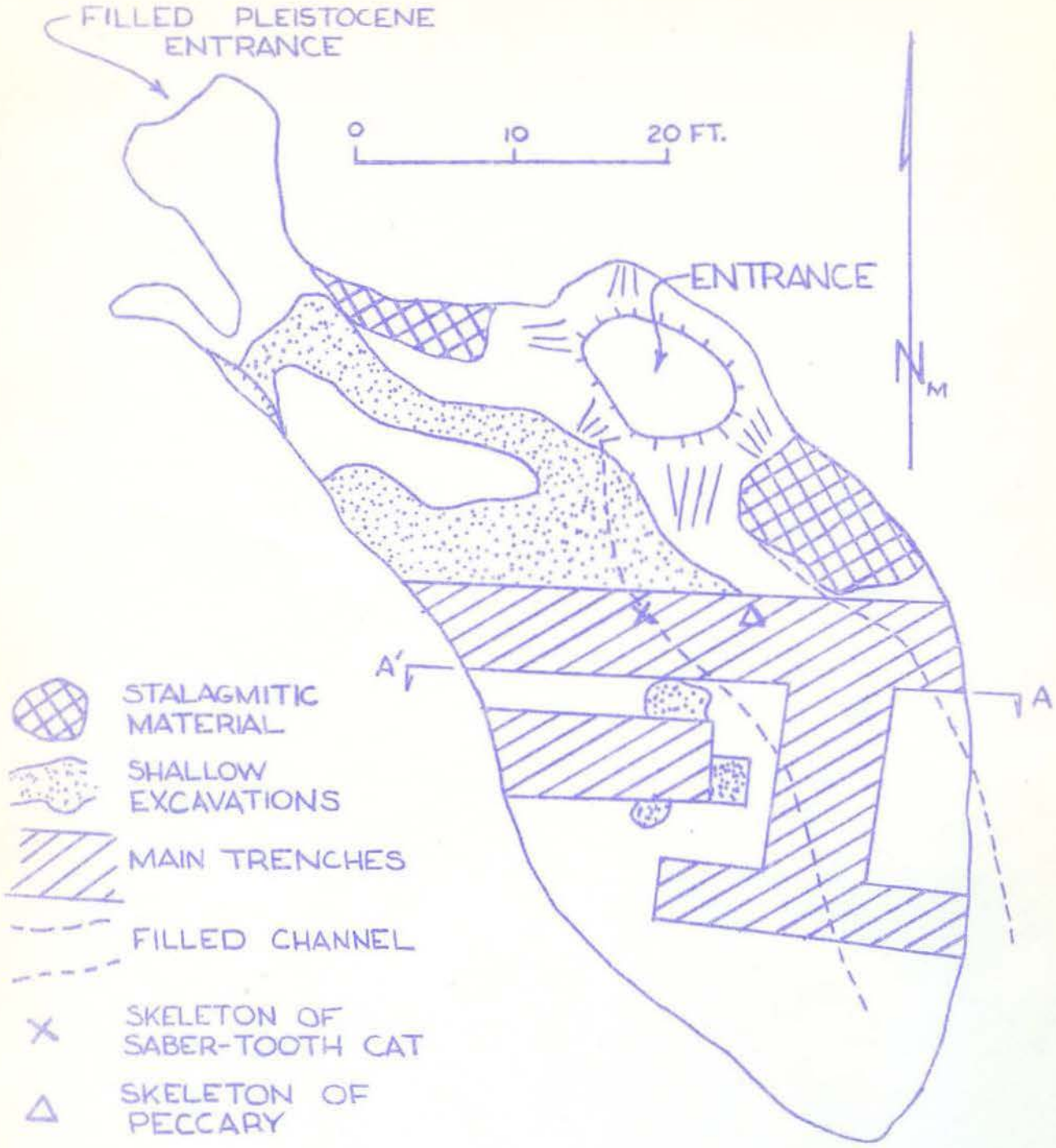
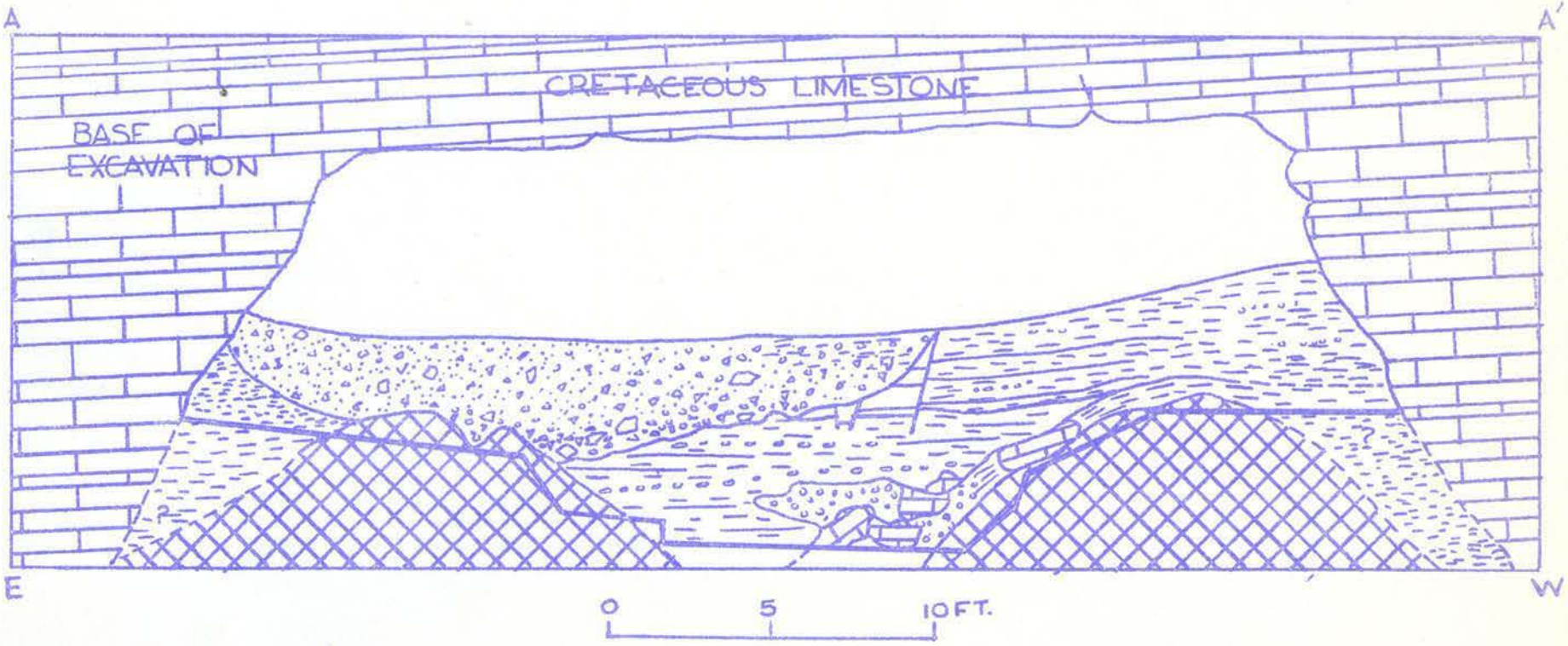
Ref: TSS files



PLAN OF
FRIESENHAHN CAVE
BEXAR CO., TEXAS
(AFTER EVANS)



CROSS SECTION A-A' OF
FRIESENHAHN CAVE
BEXAR CO., TEXAS
(AFTER EVANS)

HAY'S CAVE Bexar County (# 31)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Madla

Description: The cave consists of a pit dropping 38' to the floor of a small room about 12' x 8'. The only formation in it is a coconut-type one. The floor is dir t so that at one time the cave may have been larger. Equipment is necessary to enter it. It was explored on July 27, 1961, by Orion Knox and others.

Ref: TSS files

HEADQUARTERS CAVE Bexar County (# 16)

Otis Ridge 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: U. S. Government

Description: A sloping crawlway about 50 feet long enters a room about 120' long x 100' wide x 15' high. The cave is alive and numerous formations are to be found. There are many initials on the walls. Fauna includes a few bats, a frog and crickets. The room has large slabs of breakdown and there are several holes in the floor which may be entered without equipment but which go nowhere. Fauna was collected for the State Health Department. The cave is now used by the government so that permission may not be obtained for visiting the cave.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 80.

Ref: TSS files

HELOTES BLOW HOLE (BARHAM'S CAVE NO. 2) Bexar County (# 36)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Barham

Description: The cave has an entrance about three feet wide and five feet high. It runs in a SSW direction. The passage is very much the same all the way to the clay choke which stops further progress. It is about 3 to 4 feet wide and 5 to 6 feet high with short crawls every so often. There are a few formations and small rocks on the floor. Cave crickets were seen in the first few rooms. The length of the cave is 350'. It was surveyed on Dec. 25, 1959, by Orion Knox, Preston Knodell, Al Brandt, and Leonard Clark of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. (See map, page 23)

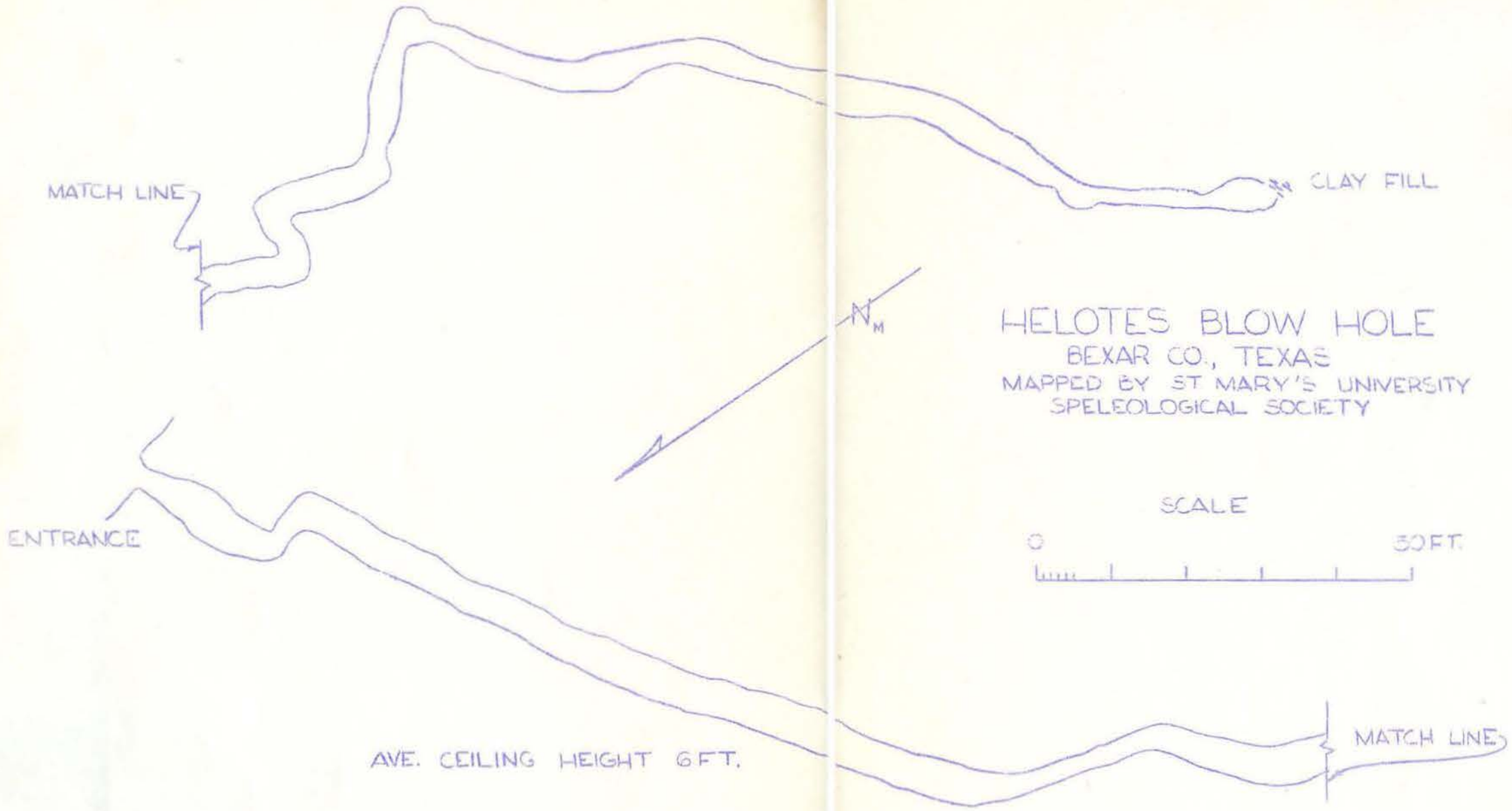
Ref: TSS files

HELOTES CAVE Bexar County (# 35)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave was originally reported in Bulletin 10 of the National Speleological Society as being a single chamber 20' x 30' x 5' high entered at the bottom of a 12' swallow hole. Several sinks in the hole apparently indicates a possible lower level.



HELOTES BLOW HOLE

BEXAR CO., TEXAS

MAPPED BY ST MARY'S UNIVERSITY SPELEOLOGICAL SOCIETY

In the early 1950's St. Mary's Speleological University Society visited the cave, but found it to be a sinkhole, 6' deep and 8' across, having fallen rock and trash at the bottom. Apparently since the report written in Bulletin 10, the cave has been filled. At that time they found it to be dead and containing spiders, scorpions, and cave crickets.

Bibliography: White, Patrick J. "Caves of Central Texas," p. 46. The Caves of Texas, Bulletin Ten of the National Speleological Society. April, 1948.
Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 80

Ref: TSS files

HELOTES HILLTOP CAVE (BARHAM'S CAVE NO. 1) (SCENIC LOOP CAVE) Bexar County (# 37)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Barham

Description: The entrance to the cave is a 1½' in diameter hole in a large flat rock. It can be chimneyed down for about 8' to the floor of a steepway that leads to a 25' pit. At the bottom of the pit there is a room with two passages extending from it. One goes to a room filled with large boulders, about 10' x 15'. The other passage leads to a small room with two chimneys and a crawl leading off. The crawl splits and dead-ends after about 20 feet. The cave walls and floor are covered with popcorn and is relatively dry in all but one room. Numerous harvestmen are found in the entrance.

Ref: TSS files

HOGANS CAVE Bexar County (# 34)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Hogan

Description: The cave consists of a medium size room with several crawlways which are dead-ends. It is alive and formations are plentiful. No ropework is necessary, and the cave has numerous harvestmen. There are dates on the walls dating back to 1918.

Ref: TSS files

HOLMGREEN'S HOLE (TRAPDOOR CAVE) Bexar County (# 45)

Longhorn 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: John C. Helmgreen

Description: The entrance to the cave is in a small storage shed in a vacant lot in a residential district of San Antonio. A trapdoor has been placed over the 25' deep, 3' in diameter well which struck the cave. A steel ladder has been placed in this first drop. A small room is found at the bottom of the drop, with a 15', chimneyable drop leading out of this. At the bottom of this chimney a series of 20' high, 3'-5' wide fissure-like passages extend for a considerable distance. Because of the complexity of the joint-maze along which the cave has formed any adequate description of it is impossible. Much chimneying along the

top or middle of the fissures is required because they are frequently too narrow to negotiate towards the bottom. These parallel fissures are connected to each other by a second set of joints, running parallel to each other and roughly perpendicular to the main set followed by the cave. The cave is formed in the Austin Chalk of Cretaceous age. In much of the cave this is very crumbly and most of the walls are covered with cave coral and popcorn formations, but no other formations of any size or beauty are to be found in the cave. A ventilation shaft has been dug from the cave to a nearby greenhouse to maintain a constant temperature in the greenhouse. Air has always been observed blowing strongly out of the cave. This was particularly noted on January 10, 1961, when it was partially explored by Bud Frank, Bob Benfer, James Reddell, and Graham Bell of the University of Texas Grotto. The cave has also been explored, more thoroughly, by M. D. Doyle, Bill Gray, Orion Knox, and other members of the Alamo Grotto. A possible explanation for the strong current of air issuing from the cave is that it is almost certainly connected with the nearby Robber Baron's Cave. Robber Baron's Cave, located less than 2/3 of a mile away, was observed under similar conditions and on all occasions was found to have a very strong current of air blowing into the cave. The entrance to Robber Baron's is somewhat lower than that of Holmgreen's Hole, which would account for the air currents. Although connection to Robber Baron's has been sought it has never been made and is probably blocked by breakdown which will allow circulation but not admit a human body.

Bibliography: Anonymous. "Photo Page." The Texas Caver, Vol. VI, No. 2, pp. 18-19. Unidentified cave picture taken in Holmgreen's Hole.

Ref: TSS files

HUEBNER ROAD CAVE (STAPELTON RANCH CAVE NO. 1) Bexar County (# 40)

Castle Hills 7.5' Quadrangle

Mr. Stapelton

Description: The cave has an entrance about 2' x 2' in diameter and is located in the bottom of a stream bed. There is a 5' drop to the floor and then a passageway about 20' long, leading to the Big Pit. The top of the pit is about 10' in diameter and the base of the pit is about 30' in diameter. It is a drop of 90'. The room at the base of the pit is about 30' x 40' and funnels into a crawl that leads to another small room and a 20' drop. At the bottom of this final pit there is a room decorated with numerous formations. The passage out of this room is filled with water and soon becomes a siphon. The passage at this point is only about 2½' high. The entire cave is wet and drains considerable water during rains. Cave crickets were seen. It was explored on Jan. 18, 195? by Orion Knox and other members of the Alamo Grotto.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 80.

Ref: TSS files

LAUREL HEIGHTS CAVE Bexar County

? Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave was fairly small and the entrance has been closed since before 1929. Nothing more is known about it.

Bibliography: Ownby, W. A. "Exploring Caves Where Robbers Walked." The Dallas Morning News, June 23, 1929. Vol. XLIV, No. 266, feature section, page 8.

Ref: TSS files

LYTLE RANCH CAVE (BOX S RANCH CAVE) (GOVERNMENT CANYON CAVE) Bexar County (# 43)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: ? ; John Hubble, Foreman

Description: The cave consists of a room about 300 yards long and 100 yards wide at one end. It is narrow near the entrance and contains numerous formations. The fauna consists of Myotis bats, live raccoon, fleas, and cave crickets.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 81.
Ref: TSS files

MADLA'S CAVE Bexar County (# 27)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Madla

Description: The entrance to the cave is a small hole with a 35° slope leading down into a room about 60 yards long and from 4 to 20 feet high. From here a second room extends down a slope. It is about 40 yards long and 35 or 40 feet high. At the base of the room a tunnel extends to the left. It slopes down and is very wet and slippery. Many dead-end crawlways branch off of it and there is much breakdown. It leads back towards the entrance for about 55 or 60 yards. On the right side of the domed room a passage extends for about 30 to 40 yards and is about 5 feet high. It ends in a small circular room. Several sinks in the Dome Room lead to short dead-end crawls but one drops down a very steep slope for about 60 feet. To the left it extends for about 20 yards as a walking passage but all leads from it dead-end. To the right it leads down a slope, becoming a crawl over breakdown and formations for about 20 yards. Total length of the cave is estimated at 800' and total depth at 130 to 150 feet. The cave was visited on November 16, 1958, by Arturo Solis and Orion Knox of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. A second trip was made on Dec. 3, 1958, by Orion Knox, Arturo Solis, Leonard Hill, and Ernest Kalterman.
Ref: TSS files

MADLA'S CAVE NO. 2 Bexar County (# 28)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Madla

Description: This is a shallow sink about 15' deep, with fill at the bottom. It was discovered by Orion Knox and Arturo Solis in November, 1958. A later attempt to excavate it failed to yield a cave of any size.
Ref: TSS files

MADLA'S CAVE NO. 3 Bexar County (# 25)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Madla

Description: The cave is entered by a 45' sink into a 30' long, 20' wide, 15' high room. A second room adjoins this, smaller but with many more nice formations. It was explored by members of the Alamo Grotto and the St. Mary's University Speleological Society.
Ref: TSS files

MOONSHINE CAVE Bexar County (# 19)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Col. Buel

Description: The entrance is a 3½ foot in diameter sink which drops down about 15'. At the bottom there is a circular room about 15' across. There are a few inches of guano on the floor and the remains of an old still probably used during prohibition. The room had no bats at it, but did contain salamanders and crickets. A small low passage led off but soon got too small for further progress. It was explored on Jan. 30, 1960, by Orion Knox and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society.

Ref: TSS files

NATURAL BRIDGE JR. CAVE Bexar County (# 20)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Sams

Description: There are two entrances to the cave, one being a small opening which can be chimneyed into the first room. The second is a larger opening about 3' x 4' which slides into the first room. The room is about 15' x 10' and 10' high. At the back there is an opening that leads to the second room which is about 10' x 12' and 12' high. The floor is covered with loose rocks and the cave is damp but not wet. No insects were seen. It was explored by Orion Knox and other members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society on Jan. 30, 1960.

Ref: TSS files

RATTLESNAKE CAVE Bexar County (# 48)

San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: No accurate description of the cave is available but it is reported to be small and infested with rattlesnakes. It was supposedly a habitation site of the Comanche and Apache Indians on their raids to the vicinity.

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, p. 101. Guessax & Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

ROBBER BARON'S CAVE (ROBBER'S CAVE) Bexar County (# 44)

Lenghorn 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Busby

Description: The entrance to the cave is in a relatively flat vacant lot in a residential area in San Antonio. It is a slightly elongated sink about 40' in diameter and dropping along a steep slope of trash and fill for about 20'.

At the bottom of the slope a hole barely large enough to enter extends for about 15' before opening into a 6' wide, 5' high passage. This passage is floored with silt and trash washed in from the entrance. From here a passage about 150'-200' long extends as a 5' high, 5' wide tunnel. A number of passages extend to the right of the main passage but all soon end in fill or breakdown. A number of these return to the entrance sink where they end in fill and trash. At the end of the main entrance passage a duck-under to the left leads to a parallel passage which extends back towards the entrance. This leads in turn to the main part of the cave. Any attempt to describe Robber Baron's Cave will only result in hopeless confusion, because of the complexity of the joint maze it follows. Better than 1800' of passage has been mapped and better than an additional 1,000' explored with no point in the cave being more than 300' from the entrance. The pattern followed by the cave is that of a strong set of WNW-ENE joints, intersected by a weaker set of perpendicular joints. The passages formed along the stronger set of joints are 2'-5' wide fissure-type passages, with the ceiling ranging from 4' near the entrance to 15' in other parts of the cave. The weaker joints usually consist of low crawls formed along the floor level of the fissure-type passages. An interesting note may be made about the southernmost extension of the cave. It is noticed that the cave suddenly comes to an end, with all of the N-S trending passages being terminated by breakdown. It is not known if this is caused by artifical means or by natural collapse along a strong fracture zone. The fact that the cave is frequently within 16' of the surface is doubtless a cause for the sudden termination of most of the major passages of the cave. Such things as blasting for gas, sewage, and water lines has doubtless taken their toll of Robber Baron's Cave. The only formations to be found in the cave are a few masses of flowstone along the major passages, and in the lowest parts of the cave popcorn and coral cover the walls, floor and ceiling. The most significant discovery in the cave is that of "velvet flowstone" in the most southern passage of the cave. This is of a deep purple color and velvety to the touch. It is one of the few instances in Texas of the occurrence of this rare form of calcite deposit.

Geology: As stated above the cave follows two major sets of joints, the strongest bearing WSW-ENE, with the other running perpendicular to this. The cave itself is formed in the Austin Chalk of Cretaceous age, but the entrance sink is in the Anacacho limestone and this hard, fairly resistent limestone forms the upper termination of the cave. This is in the form of a distinct bedding-plane forming the ceiling of many of the passages in the cave. It contains much of the red clay fill described by Bretz, as well as considerable amounts of silt and trash washed in from the many attempts to fill the entrance sink. The entrance is at an elevation of 770'.

Meteorology: A series of air temperature readings were taken in the cave on the night of January 12-13, 1962, between the hours of 10:30 p.m. and 2:30 a.m. At the time there was a very strong current of air blowing into the cave. No air circulation was noticed at point # 3 nor any points thereafter. The chart below is keyed by number to the map on page 30.

Location	Temperature (°F)	Location	Temperature (°F)
1	23°	7	62.5°
2	38°	8	64°
3	55°	9	68°
4	63°	10	72°
5	66°	11	72°
6	68°	12	72°

History: The cave is one of the best known in Texas, both for its actual history and for the numerous legends which surround it. The cave was commercialized in 1926, but the venture failed and was abandoned in 1933. Its failure was almost certainly because of the lack of attraction which its bare walls offered, and even the array of legends which either naturally surrounded it or which were fabricated by the owners was insufficient to attract people to the cave. For a number of years the cave remained open to anyone interested in going through it, but concern over legal difficulties which might arise should someone be hurt, caused the owner to fill the entrance with trash and gravel. Successive rains over the years, as well as adamant efforts by local children, were sufficient to open the entrance enough to allow entrance through a tiny hole. In the early 1950's Bob Hudson, Gordon Dane and members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society explored the cave. Since that time the entrance has been periodically opened and closed by rainwater flooding the entrance and by futile efforts of the owner to seal it. In 1961 seven San Antonio youths were trapped in the cave by mud and water clogging the tiny entrance crawl. After considerable effort all but one of the boys managed to escape. The remaining boy became stuck and it took the San Antonio fire department to haul him out of the hole. Since that time it has been open. Although William Gray of the Alamo Grotto had partially mapped the cave in 1935, the cave had so changed since that time that a new and more detailed map was felt to be in order. Two mapping trips have been made and a total of 1800' surveyed. It is hoped that the remainder can be mapped soon. The first of two surveying trips was made on January 12 and 13, 1962, by Dick Smith, James Reddell, Eugene Blum, and Peggy Walkington; the second trip followed about a week later and was made by Dick Smith, James Reddell, and Orion Knox.

Legends: It is impossible to distinguish between what is true and what is not; and, in fact, it is equally impossible to distinguish between authentic legends and those fabricated by the commercial operator of the cave. It is rumored to have been the hide-out of a band of robbers, ruled by a "robber baron", and as Ownby (1929) says: "If the walls of this cave could talk they probably could reveal tales of crime which cause the blood and thunder stories of the wild and woolly West to pale into insignificance." A number of interesting and enjoyable tales have built up about a cave known as "Robber's Cave" and although the location given by Ownby is wrong, there is little doubt but that they are at least the same cave of the legends, if not in reality, so for lack of a better place these tales are recounted here: "It [i.e. the cave] takes its name from a gang of outlaws whose leader was known as Jim Pitts. This gang operated extensively for about 100 miles around San Antonio and this cave was their rendezvous. They robbed country post offices, stores, stages, and even churches. The musical instrument, or organ, belonging to a church not very far from this cave was stolen by this gang. The mouth of the cave was large enough to enable the robbers, who emulated the example of the famous thirty-nine followers of Ali Baba, mentioned in the Arabian Nights, to remove and hide this church organ within its recesses. This cave has never been fully explored and it is not unlikely it is many miles long and in some places very broad. A dog that chased a rabbit into it was gone for three days and emerged nine miles from the point he entered. When found the animal was nearly famished and exhausted." (Barnes, p. 102)

Bibliography: Anonymous. "Principal Caverns in Texas." The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide: The Encyclopedia of Texas, p. 483. A. H. Belo Corp. 1936.

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House, Boyce. City of Flaming Adventure: The Chronicle of San Antonio, pp. 179-180. The Naylor Co. San Antonio: 1949.
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National Speleological Society. Palaces Under the Earth. "Caves Formerly Operated Commercially But Believed to Be Closed." Page 18, Washington: 1951.
Nicholson, Frank E. "Caves of Texas." The Texas Almanac and State Industrial Guide: The Encyclopedia of Texas, page 192. A. H. Belo Corp. 1933.
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Stickle, Arthur Waldo, ed. "Caves and Caverns." The State of Texas Book: One Hundred Years of Progress, page 122. Bureau of Research and Publicity, 1937.
Walker, Jimmy. "Forgotten Caves." Houston Chronicle Rotogravure Magazine, August 21, 1955.

Ref: TSS files

SAN ANTONIO QUARRY CAVE — Bexar County (# 46)

San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: San Antonio Portland Cement Company

Description: Little is known of this cave which was hit during limestone quarrying operations. Probably formed in the Anacacho limestone of Cretaceous age its extent is not known, but has been rumored to have been extensive. It has been filled or else destroyed by the quarrying operations.

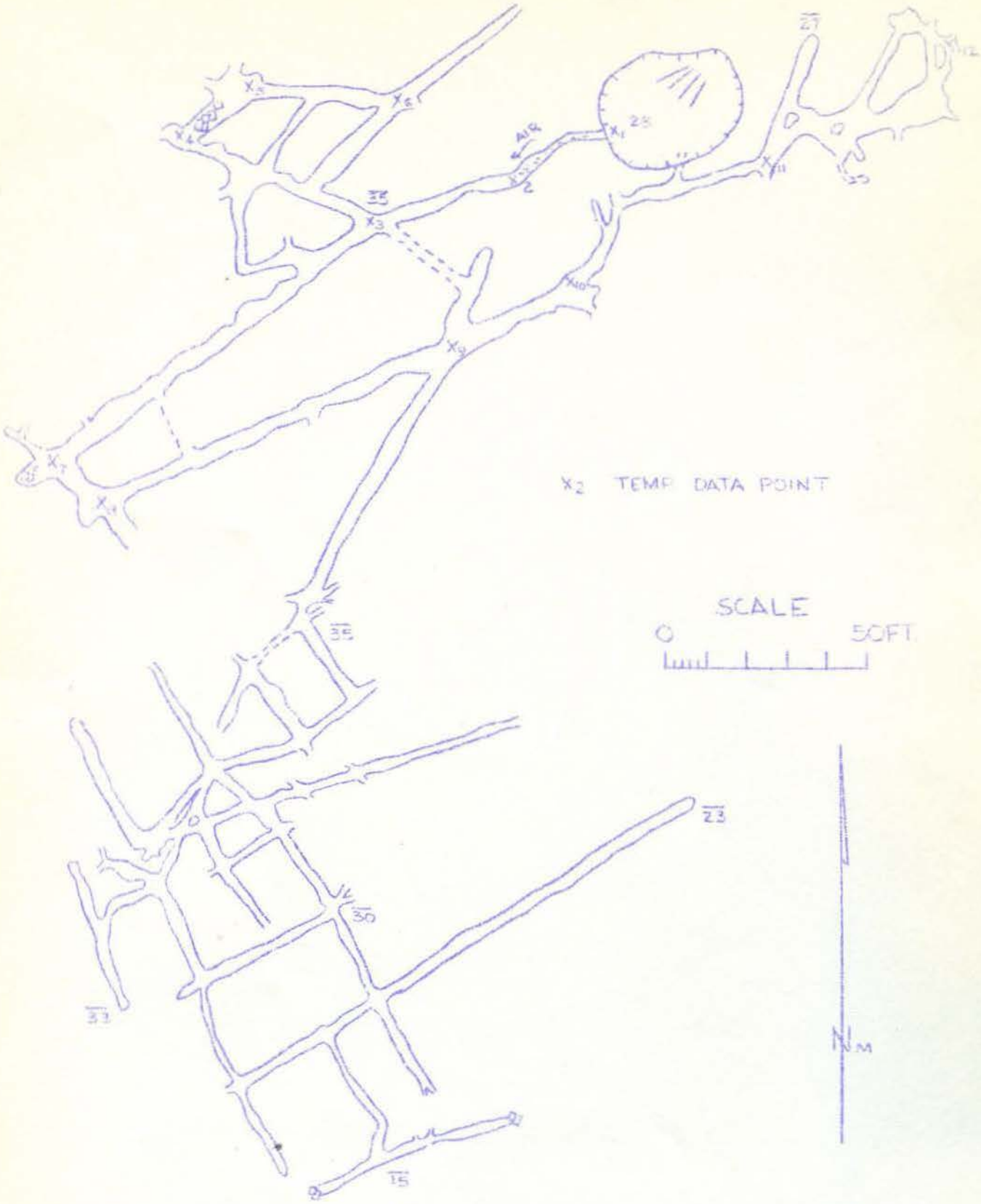
Ref: TSS files

SAN PEDRO PARK CAVE — Bexar County (# 49)

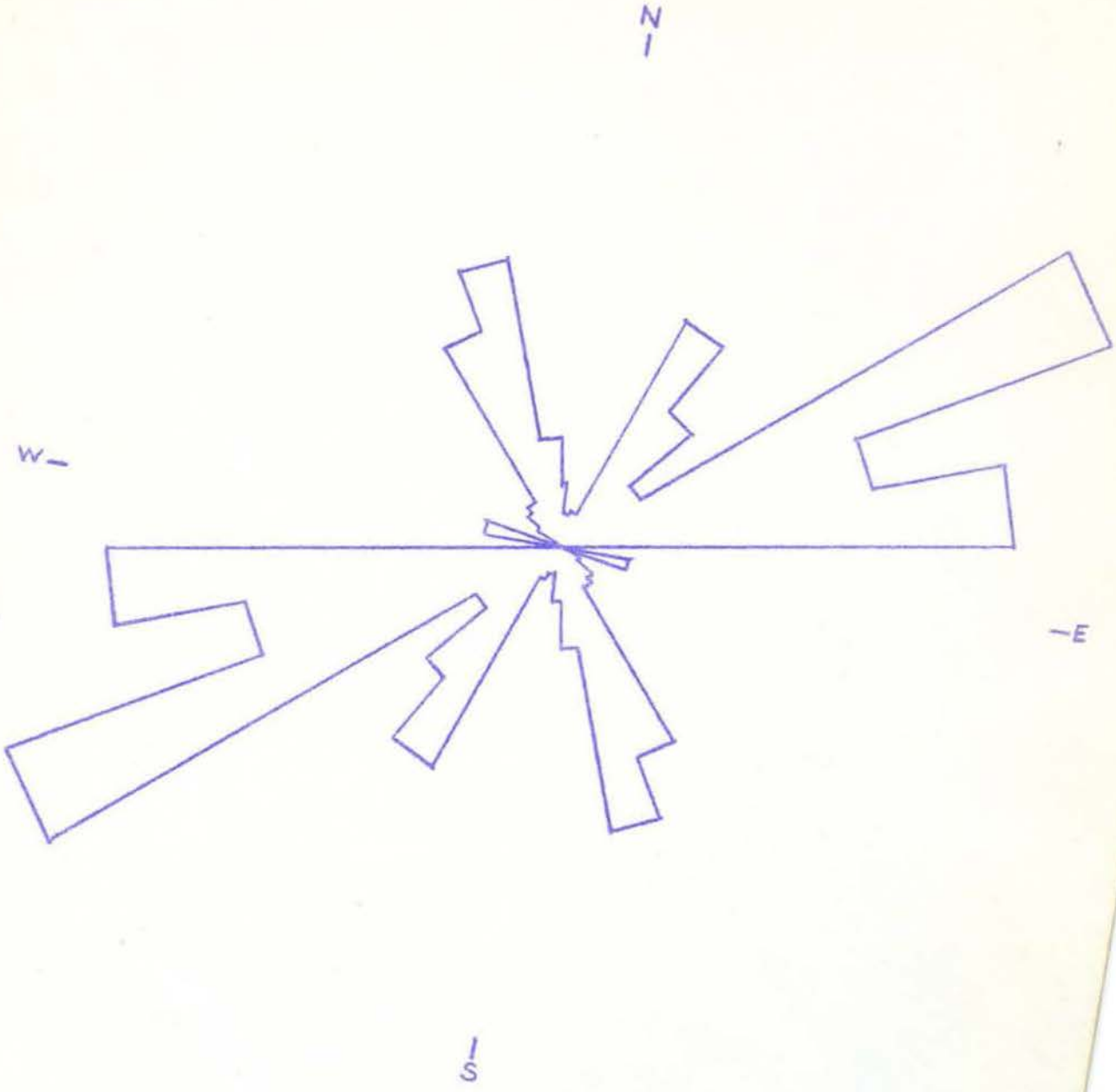
San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: City of San Antonio (?)

Description: No accurate or reliable description of this cave is available. It was first reported in 1910 by Charles Merritt Barnes. His description of the cave is as follows, "At San Pedro Park the water flowing from the orifice at the eastern end of the lakelet comes from a cave whose dimensions have never been defined... Through the center of the cave at the northeast corner of San Pedro Park there runs a boldly flowing stream of water about 20 feet in width and directly towards the point from whence the springs forming the San Pedro river emerge. This is another indication that the water supplying those springs and forming that stream comes through this cave and probably companions of it at greater or less distances north of the San Pedro springs. The mouth of the cave has been hermetically sealed by a stone of very large size and great weight being placed in it which those who know its location have been unable to remove. Captain Fred Bader, recently deceased, who had partially explored it with Andrew Bonnet and several others in quest of supposed buried treasure there, went back some time later to



ROBBER BARON'S CAVE
BEXAR CO., TEXAS
BRUNTON AND TAPE SURVEY
BY UTSS
1966



PASSAGE ROSE
ROBBER BARON'S CAVE
1706 FT. OF PASSAGE
SCALE: 1" = 50 FT.

complete the exploration with another party. This they were unable to accomplish on account of the immense boulder lodging there that clogged its mouth." Another, unverified report, of a cave in the park states that its entrance is in a house on the park grounds and is supposed to have been explored for at least 1500' by local geologists. It is not known if they are the same cave or not.

Legends: One of the most fascinating legends of Texas caving lore surrounds this cave. Barnes in his book gives the legend in full. The story is full of buried treasure, love, and tragic death. "There is a cavern deep and dark and near San Pedro park. There this treasure is said to be, but all knowledge of this cavern's trace is gone. Into its mouth a huge stone was rolled that stopped and hid its orifice from view. More than a generation ago a last effort was made to find this spot. They are said to have found and rolled away the stone and gone down into the cave taking with them lights and food. Within they found a swollen stream. When they essayed to cross its current was all too swift. There they found a bottle and some wine. As they drank from it their lights burned blue and low and dim and out of the crannies of the cave came the spectres and then the woman and her male escorts fled fast and back to the cavern's mouth. And others went to this selfsame cave and down within and found the wine and flask. There were snakes and wolves and bats all there. One fired to kill a wolf. As he fired part of the cavern's roof fell down. Those then there escaped unscathed but in haste, nor went again, although no spectres came. I was with them once, but cared no more to search. Untasted was the wine; uncorked its flask was left. Another band of bolder ones again went there. Again their lights burned blue and to them the spectres all four came. Even to the cavern's mouth they pursued. There they held the searchers in thrall until they had rolled back the stone into the cavern's mouth. Since then no others there have gone. And now this cave is lost. This treasure still evades all quest." (Barnes, 1910.) Because of the resemblance of tales it is almost certain that the legend recited applies to the cave at the head of the San Pedro Park springs.

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, pages 89-90; pages 100-104. Guessax and Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

SCHERTZ-CIBOLO CAVE (SCHERTZ CAVE) (CIBOLO CAVE) Bexar County (# 38)

Schertz 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The cave is described in Bulletin 10 of the NSS as consisting of 1.5 miles of passageways. A thorough examination of the cave by members of the University of Texas Grotto found that this estimate was tremendously exaggerated and that probably no more than 1500' of passage exists in the cave. A depression from which a box was reportedly removed was cited as being ¼ mile from the entrance, but upon examination this was found to be less than 500' from the entrance. Apparently, therefore, all of the open cave has been found. The entrance is at the bottom of a 10' wide, 6' long, 8' deep sink in a clump of bushes in a large brushy pasture. A slope covered with breakdown and trash extends for about 10' before it ends in a crawlway. After about 50' there is a junction. The right-hand passage is a 5' wide, 4' high crawl extending for about 100' to another junction. The main passage continues over a breakdown slope for about 100' to another junction. This passage is about 3' high. It continues for a short distance past the junction before ending in clay fill. The side passage goes about 100' before ending. At the second junction the passage to the side drops through a very tight hole for 20' to a lower level passage. Here two levels have definitely developed with the two frequently

connected. Indeed the passage is a continuous up-and-down over the remnants of the upper level. After about 50' a passage to the left is encountered. It is a very difficult, tight 7' high passage, no more than 10" wide, with a crawl at the bottom. This crawl in turn leads to a series of 4' wide, 3' high passages intersected occasionally by smaller, narrower passages, still formed on two levels. The main passage then continues for 50', down a steep slide into the lower level and back up into the main level where after about 100' it ends in what is apparently breakdown from the surface. Returning to the first major junction, the same type of passageway is found to the left, continuing for about 200' before it too ends. Much of the cave is now blocked by breakdown and fill, and doubtless considerable passage could be found by excavating some of the filled passages. The floor of the cave is covered with dust and is quite dry. The only formations found are masses of cave coral covering walls, floor, and ceiling. Fauna includes cave crickets and rattlesnakes. The total depth of the cave is between 40' and 50'.

Geology: The cave is formed in Cretaceous limestone and runs along two sets of parallel joints. The strongest set of joints runs approximately E-W, while the other and weaker set runs perpendicular to this. The E-W passages are fairly wide and low passages, while the N-S passages tend to be high, fissures, much narrower than the others. The cave has developed along two distinct beds of limestone, separated by only a few feet of rock, which has frequently collapsed. The walls and ceiling of much of the cave is of a very loosely cemented conglomerate or clay, which is doubtless the cause of most of the passage terminations in the cave. Definitely related to the cave, though not connected, are a large number of solution holes on a nearby cliff. These are formed on two levels and are all partially filled with silt and clay from the flooding of Cibolo Creek. They are doubtless the remnants of a cave or cave-system which may have at one time included Scherts-Cibolo Cave. Also related to the geology of the cave are numerous joints in the bed of Cibolo Creek, all of which may be correlated with the passages of the cave itself.

History: The cave is one of the best known in Bexar County, despite the fact that it has been little visited by cavers. Hundreds of local boys have visited the cave and left their names in it. Not long after Bulletin 10 was published it was explored by members of the St. Mary's University Speleological Society. In 1960 Bill Russell, James Reddell, Bob Benfer, Alice Hirsch, and John Zuck mapped the cave. Unfortunately the notes made on the trip were lost, and the cave has not been re-surveyed. At that time about 800' were mapped, but much was left unsurvyed.

Bibliography: White, Patrick J. "Caves of Central Texas." The Caves of Texas, page 47. Bulletin Ten of the National Speleological Society. April, 1948.
Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 82.
Ref: TSS files

SKELETON CAVE Bexar County (# 50)

San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: City of San Antonio (?)

Description: A cave was discovered in the early 1900's by city workmen while blasting stone. "In it were found the skeletons of Indians of huge stature, some exceeding seven feet in height. Besides these skeletons were found some

stone pottery and a number of arrow heads as well as stone spear heads and other relics of a portion of a tribe of an aboriginal race. This race evidently had its burial ground in this portion of the cave, which may also be one of the numerous chambers of the treasure cave mentioned in another chapter of this book. About ten years previous to this time another cluster of corpses or the bones of human beings of similar size and with the same character of relics were unearthed in the same immediate vicinity by another gang of the City's workmen while blasting the rock in this park." (Barnes, 1910) This is the only source of information on this cave, which has almost certainly been filled since the original report was written. The reliability of description of artifacts and skeletons may well be doubted.

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, page 100. Guessaz & Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

SOUTH SIDE SINK — Bexar County (# 61)

Southton 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner:

Description: The entrance is a two foot wide sink, dropping about 15' to a dirt floor in a section that is about six feet in diameter. The walls are pocketed by solution. An additional three feet were excavated by Orion Knox but no passage was found.

Ref: TSS files

SPENCER'S CAVE — Bexar County (# 29)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Spencer

Description: The cave is entered by a small sinkhole, 8' deep, having a single passage leading off. Mr. Barham was in the cave for 300' some years ago, but trash has filled it to within a few feet of the sink.

Ref: TSS files

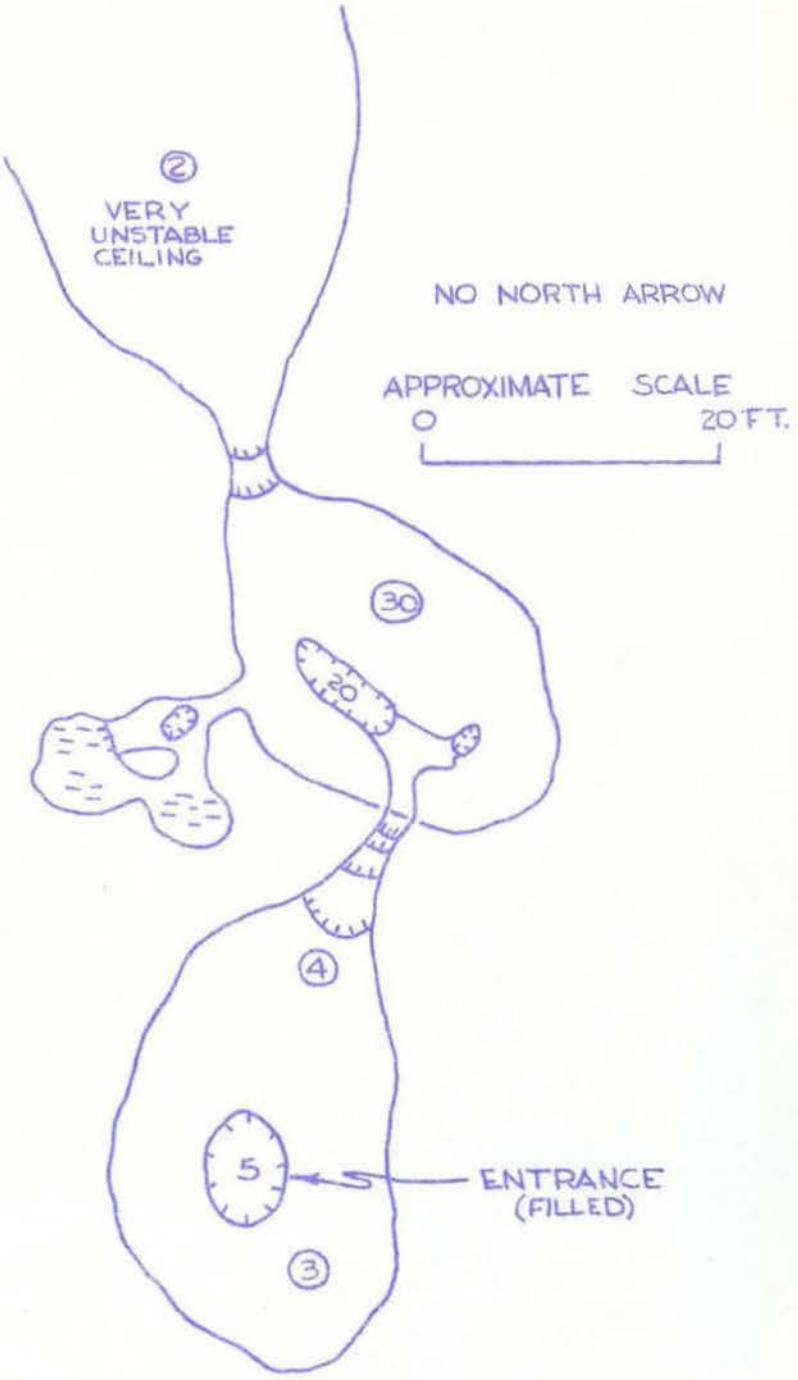
STAPELTON RANCH CAVE (STAPELTON RANCH CAVE NO. 2) — Bexar County (# 41)

Castle Hills 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Mr. Stapelton

Description: The entrance is located in an area of fallen-in rocks. It has a four foot drop into a large low-ceilinged room about 20' in diameter with a dirt floor. At one end there is a crawl leading down and to the right. After about 20' there are two pits leading to the same room, both about 15' deep. The room is about 15' x 20' with a 15' wide, 2' high passage leading off. The ceiling is very weak and with large slabs of limestone hanging from it. After a caver was almost trapped by falling rocks the exploration was abandoned and the entrance has since been blasted shut. Exploration was made by Orion Knox and other members of the Alamo Grotto on Jan. 18, 1959. (See sketch, page 34)

Ref: TSS files



STAPLETON RANCH CAVE NO. 2
BEXAR CO., TEXAS
SKETCHED BY ALAMO GROTTO
1959

31' DEEP 80' SINK — Bexar County (# 1)

Bulverde 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Texas Highway Department

Description: The cave is entered by a small sink which drops vertically for 31', no equipment being required. The cave is fairly small for ten feet when it opens into a 17' long, 10' wide room, the entrance being along one side. One end of the room narrows to 5'-7', the ceiling being about 20' high. Back under the entrance a passage extends several feet to a 20' high dome, followed by a 10' long crawl. The drainage in the room runs back down the crawl and into a small sink in the cave floor. The cave was entered on October 7, 1961, by Bud Frank, E. L. Lundelius, and others from the University of Texas. A coon skull was found and collected, but no other bones were found. The cave is dry and is formed along a joint striking northeast and dipping southeast. It is formed in Cretaceous limestone.

Ref: TSS files

THURMAN CAVE NO. 1 — Bexar County (# 32)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Jack Thurman

Description: The cave is an 80' sinkhole into a 40' in diameter, 10' high room. There are several formations as large as 10' in length and most of them alive. Any possible entrances from the room have been filled with silt. There are several chimneys and there is a rock slide on one side of the room. Equipment is necessary to enter the cave.

Ref: TSS files

THURMAN CAVE NO. 2 — Bexar County (# 33)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Jack Thurman

Description: The cave is entered by a 6' deep, small vertical hole. A small passage leads into a very low room with much breakdown. A 50' long crawlway leads to a dead-end. There are a few formations but they are all dead. It is inhabited by numerous cave crickets.

Ref: TSS files

T.M.I. CAVE — Bexar County (# 47)

San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: City of San Antonio

Description: The cave consists of a joint maze in a cliff face. It is made up of about 40' of horizontal passage connected to the cliff by five entrances. It contains no formations or rooms. It follows a joint parallel to the cliff and two joints perpendicular to the cliff. A number of smaller solution holes are found nearby but none are of any extent. It is frequently visited.

Ref: TSS files

TURNER'S CAVE Bexar County (# 8)

Bat Cave 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: Mr. Turner or Mr. Eichman

Description: The cave is entered by a 40' drop to a small ledge. A second drop of 90' leads to a room about 50' x 30'. This room adjoins a large room containing bats. The dimensions of this room are not known. It contains many formations, most of which are alive. At the lowest level the cave has been vandalized with initials. About 130' of ropework is necessary to enter the cave. Fauna is plentiful, frogs and turtles being found, as well as bats.

Ref: TSS files

WHISTLE DROP CAVE Bexar County (# 10)

Bat Cave 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: John P. Classen

Description: The cave is entered by a small rubble-filled sink, which had to be excavated. After 15' of squirming through breakdown a 10' pit is reached. From here a hole opens into the top of a 65' pit. Forty feet to the right, at the bottom of the pit there is a 30' pit, also requiring equipment. Although the first pit is clear of loose slabs and boulders, this one has been leached clean, leaving the walls of the pit very sharp and with many sharp blades of flint exposed. Between the projections the remains of sterile red clay fill are found. Two passages extend from the bottom of this pit. One is an impossible jagged watercourse headed straight down, while the other is a tight, muddy crawl. After about 20' a 12' chimneyable pit is found, with a tight crawl leading out from the bottom. After 20' progress is blocked by an impossible to negotiate right angle turn, with the floor sloping steeply down. Total depth of the cave is about 125'. It was explored in March, 1961, by William Gray, Merrill Doyle, David Gray, Porter Montgomery, Murph Carpenter, Monte Killian, and Dennis Doyle, all of the Alamo Grotto.

Bibliography: Gray, William R. "Whistle Drop." The Texas Caver, Vol. VI, No. 5, pp. 57 & 62. May 1961.

Ref: TSS files, W. Gray

WOODLAWN HILLS CAVE Bexar County (# 52)

San Antonio West 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner: City of San Antonio

Description: The cave is at the bottom of a 40' brick lined well belonging to the city water works in San Antonio. The well was hand dug about 1900, and the city had a pump room dug at the bottom of the well for pumping water to the surface. However, the dug well has now been abandoned in favor of a drilled well about 20' away, and is still pumping water from the same pool underground at the 40' level. Much of the visible portion of the cave is full of water, and it is expected that there is too much water to enable any exploration without aqualungs. The cave was visited in the early 1950's by Carl Clayton and Patrick White. It remains unexplored.

Ref: TSS files

UNNAMED CAVE Bexar County

? Quadrangle

Owner: Dr. F. Herff, Sr. (owner in 1910)

Description: The cave is entered by two entrances, the largest being only 18" at its widest point. This entrance drops perpendicular and so difficult to climb. The other drops at a 45° angle and is very narrow. The depth of the cave is about 50' and consists of three chambers. One is 40' long x 30' wide x 15' high. The other two are both small, one about 10' and the other about 12' broad and of irregular shape. The two smaller rooms are about half-filled with guano, myriads of bats having made it their roosting place for many years. The large chamber was the lair of coyotes and lobo wolves, one of which was killed in this chamber, but when the shot was fired that killed it, the explosion dislodged a large stone in the roof that fell in dangerously close proximity to the party then exploring the cave, all of whose members were nearly deafened by the concussion produced by the discharge of the weapon. All about this cave were scattered the bones of fowl and animals brought to the cave and devoured by the wolves. The cave has almost certainly been filled and its location is unobtainable. It is interesting to note that the story of the wolves and the explorers is the same applied, with a touch of horror, to that of the legendary stories surrounding San Pedro Park Cave.

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, page 101. Guessaz & Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

UNNAMED CAVE Bexar County (# 51)

San Antonio East 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: City of San Antonio (?)

Description: The cave consists of one small room about ten feet in diameter and eight or nine feet high. It is not known if passages extend from this one room. The cave has probably been filled by the city.

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, page 101. Guessaz & Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

UNNAMED CAVE Bexar County (# 7)

Van Raub 7.5' Quadrangle (?)

Owner:

Description: Little is known of the cave, but the following legend is cited by Barnes: "In it was accidentally found the skeleton of a man who had been murdered and his body thrown into this cave. The person making the discovery came very near losing his own life. Just as he saw the skeleton and was going closer to it, a large rattlesnake struck at him burying its fangs in the thick leather chaps, or leggings, he wore. This saved him. He shot the snake with a pistol he had and then proceeded to take a close view of the skeleton after which he went at once to a coroner and reported the finding of the skeleton. It proved to be that of a man named Harris who was an important witness in a criminal

case. Harris disappeared shortly before it was time for his testimony to be heard. The body was identified from gold filling in the teeth of the skull. Harris died literally with his boots on and the bones of his feet and lower portion of his legs were found in the boots and removed from them." (Barnes, 1910)

Bibliography: Barnes, Charles Merritt. Combats and Conquests of Immortal Heroes, pages 102-103. Guessaz & Ferlet Co. San Antonio: 1910.

Ref: TSS files

DOUBTFUL CAVES

EVERS ROAD SINK — Bexar County (# 1a)

? Quadrangle

Owner: State Highway Department

Description: The cave was opened by heavy rains in Sept of 1957. It consists of a small vertical sink about 4' in diameter and 8' deep. The sink is plugged with mud. Investigated by St. Mary's University Speleological Society.

Bibliography: Widener, Donald L., ed. Texas Cave Survey, Vol. II, No. 3, p. 80.

Ref: TSS files

THURMAN CAVE NO. 3 — Bexar County (# 2a)

Helotes 7.5' Quadrangle

Owner: Jack Thurman

Description: The cave is a small, tight sinkhole, which was opened with a sledge hammer. It is about 10' deep and with no outlets.

Ref: TSS files

NOTE: HABA CAVE, reported in The Texas Caver, Vol. II, No. 1, by Ken Baker in an article entitled "Biological Notes," on page 3, is neither described nor located. This is almost certainly the same as Haby Cave in Medina County, which is known to have bats of the same species as cited by Baker for "Haba Cave." Until further notice is made of Haba Cave it is assumed to be synonymous with Haby Cave, Medina County.