



DOODLEBUG PIT SYSTEM EXPLORED

With the purpose of exploring the Doodlebug Pit-Blowing cave system, eight members of the Mitteny Grotto started south from Washington D.C. on the day after Christmas. With excellent directions from Gord Link, the first car reached the pit entrance the next evening and left the 540 feet of cable ladder in preparation for the next day's climb. The other car (having been waylaid by a detour) arrived that evening and by the next afternoon we were ready to rappel in.

Rappelling was done on a 480 foot length of 7/16 nylon line. A new method of rappelling was devised and tested to insure a safe, comfortable descent. The method consists of feeding the line through several interconnected cabiners which are attached to a seat sling. The rappel was comfortable and easy to control even on wet, stiff nylon rope. We found this new "double D" link" rappel excellent for long free rappels, but a little hard on the rope.

On the first day Jay Edwards, Bill Glosser, and Tom Turner rappelled in--first to the 165 foot ledge, and then to the ledge which is 60 feet from the floor of the big room. The entrance shaft breaks into another parallel shaft which in turn breaks the flat ceiling of a rather large and complex room. A waterfall cascades 95 feet from the opposite wall and other streams enter from all directions. The floor is made up of a huge pile of breakdown which is broken by deep pits and side passages. All the water funnels into one canyon passage.

The first group in the pit rappelled to the bottom of the big room and explored downstream to a room with a balcony which we called the rotunda room. We also explored a side passage, Thunder Canyon, that contains four waterfalls, two of which are 40 feet high, a complete set of bones of a small mammal, and an extremely high ceiling. The climb out was done on the cable ladder. It was surprisingly easy even though part of it was under a waterfall.

The nextday two parties entered the cave. Roy Willie, Chuck Landis, Carolyn Allison, Peg Fowler, and Ann Weaver explored far back into a virgin part of Blowing. Since they were running out of carbide, they put their names on the wall and Chuck Landis ran up another passage about 50 feet. At the same time that they were

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to explore a stream passage which finally became very low at the point where Cuddington had built his cairn. Beyond this was unex-

DOODLEBUG HOLE--TENNESEE TRIP



1. Chuck Landis about 1/10 of the way down Doodlebug's pit.

Dec. 30, 1957

2. Carolyn Allison about to back off into the hole. Note telephone line and safety line.

Dec. 30, 1957

Photos by Edwards and Turner



3. Broomstick stalagmites in Lost River section of Big Room cave--Tenn. Note Carbide light and helmet.

DOODLEBUG PIT SYSTEM EXPLORED Continued...

returning to the entrance, Tom Turner and Bill Glosser were mapping Doodlebug. They mapped the shaft and Thunder Canyon, and then started down stream. They climbed down into the rotunda room, and began to explore a stream passage which finally became very low at the point where Cuddington had built his cairn. Beyond this was unexplored passage.

After crawling only about 100 feet in the water, they found that the passage opened...and it was dry--with footprints! Running down the passage they soon came to the spot where the others had put their names only a few hours before. There were some arrows pointing towards the lower entrance so they naturally thought they must be almost out--but 2000 feet later they weren't so sure. The footprints had been lost in a maze of interconnecting meanders and parallel passages. They passed a huge dome pit and waded another thousand feet of stream passage before they finally crawled through the entrance of Blowing Cave. The next day the rest of the cave was mapped (available through Nittany Grotto--20' to the inch, cost, 75¢) and that same day the equipment was pulled out.

Several other area caves were explored before we packed up and drove to Cumberland Caverns for a New Years Eve party. Horseshoe was seen twice and Bucky Sink cave was exposed for 200 feet. Unfortunately we were unable to see Higgenbotham, but we saw others--including Sparkman Indian, Lost Creek, Big Room (and Luray on the way home).

Aside from having some clothes and equipment stolen when we left them outside of Big Room, we had a wonderful time in the south. We would like to thank Cord Link and Connie Bush for their hospitality, and the Pittsburgh Grotto for the loan of 165 feet of cable ladder.

We mapped over 4500 feet of Doodlebug-Blowing and left much more to be explored. There are some especially good leads in the big room. The shaft is about 375 feet deep to the bottom of the waterfall, 390 to the bottom of the big room. This, according to our information, (D.C. Speleograph X, 2 and NSS NEWSes) makes Doodlebug the deepest known single drop in the United States.

J.E.