

P E B B L E C A V E (continued)

Our last major expedition into Pebble Cave included; Hughy Timberlake NSS 12636, David Baxter NSS 12929, Willie Hardin NSS 12516 and myself. Time we had carefully checked and rechecked our plans and equipment. We entered Pebble on a cold, grey winter day, left our sleeping bags in the Bedroom and headed upwards over the breakdown mountain.

M O R E C A V E S B E Y O N D.

Reaching the first pit, Willie and David carefully crossed over the edge and went ahead to check on another pit located in this passage. Hughy and I remained behind to rig the rope ladder into the pit. A cry from Willie informed us he had found another route down the pit without using the ladder. Hughy and I headed towards the new route. We found ourselves standing on a steep fifteen foot drop with no apparent handholds and wondered how in the Blue Blazes had the others descended without a safety rope. We rigged up a safety and climbed to the bottom to join our friends, who were popping in and out of holes everywhere. The lower level contained an ancient column, much breakdown, pits and passages everywhere. Near the column David had discovered a pit in which we would have to use ladders to reach bottom. We gave David the honors of going first since he had found the pit and after tying on a safety he started downwards, only to discover after twenty feet that the walls of the pit closed in to narrow to permit passage. A passage to our left led downwards to the bottom of the first pit we had left earlier.

Returning to the column we entered into a large passage to our right in which much breakdown was found. Here exploration was fast and easy due large, dry passages but soon the cave changed. In front of us the floor had dropped to a lower level and we found ourselves standing on top of a large pit. We were unable to see the true bottom of the pit only large mounds of breakdown, covered with mud was revealed by our carbide lights. The pit, called 'Heel of Achilles', looked invincible, and virgin. David and Willie wanted to go onwards, Hughy and I were unsure because of lack of equipment. Because I was suffering from the flu-bug Hughy and I decided we would not go down the pit but instead return to the Bedroom for a rest. We stood for a moment, watching the two experienced cavers pick their way down over what appeared treacherous breakdown, and after seeing them safely on bottom some fifty feet below, left for the Bedroom. On the way back we sighted several new leads and made plans for another trip.

Warm and comfortable in our sleeping bags we waited the return of our friends. Slowly minutes turned into hours. At last we heard Willie and David returning to camp. Mental and physical exhaustion was beginning to take control of both cavers. They moved slowly to their sleeping bags and fell exhausted to the floor. Their stories of a great cave system, which appeared virgin and continued onwards and onwards staggered our imagination. Before sleep claimed our minds we vowed we would return.

Pebble Cave remains unconquered and guards her secrets selfishly.

Bob Wainscott

 TAKE NOTHING BUT PICTURES
 LEAVE NOTHING BUT FOOTPRINTS
 KILL NOTHING BUT VANDLES.