

RainShelter Part 1: **The Start of Something Special**

So here I am sitting here in front of my computer waiting for divine inspiration for an article about Rainshelter Cave. It's not coming.....

Well, let me disconnect my brain-stem from my fingers and in the manner of most cave-stories rush on blindly. Wait, now I feel something coming.....

Rainshelter was almost the cave that wasn't. I'll try and speak the truth and then let Jacque correct me.

John Neack and I went caving in the middle of 1986. I had met him for the first time the night before (what a strange person, I thought), when I stood up at a meeting and said that I wanted to cave the next weekend. And so a very lucky friendship started.

We started off by wanting to go straight up Horselick Creek. We started at Horselick Cemetery Cave (cave that shouldn't be but unfortunately was) and were going to walk over the hill to the creek. Well, starting off in grand style - we got lost, we went over the hill and found ourselves in the wrong valley. High up on the side of the wrong hill we found a large deep hole (the right hole on the wrong hill, or is it the other way around?)

After tying a rope to a tree (or a string to a bush, as the case turned out) we climbed down. Not too hard, but not incredibly easy. The pit opened up and we looked around. Damn, no-go, dead-end. Climbing out it started to rain. John and I sat it out about half way up and thus the name Rainshelter was born.

We told each other we would be back to dig out the bottom of the pit, but it was one of those projects that we never quite get around to finishing.

And that would have been the end of Rainshelter cave, if it wasn't for Jacque, King of the Gopher Holes. One weekend the next year he told us of this wonderful pit he had found that needed checking out, up the valley from Horselick. We

dragged ourselves together and shlepped up the hill. Jacque went on and on about his hole (figuratively of course) but the closer we got the more I had the sinking suspicion where we were headed. And sure enough that's where we ended up.

After the first few words about the name:

"Rainshelter"

"Homestead"

"Rainstead"

"Homeshelter"

We sat on the edge and discussed whether we should even try to check this hole out, since we had been before. Mark Suer was already at the bottom working at the breakdown pile. We decided to keep trying (and good thing too).

And sure enough they shouted up "we found something"

John and I went down to check it out. It was a nasty crawl (now known as Kirkwoods Fullmoon Crawl) capped by a large piece of breakdown. Because we didn't know if the breakdown was stable or not I did the smart thing and let John go first. I soon followed and ended up in a large room. On one end of the room was a climbdown, after we negotiated this the halls of Rainshelter were wide open to us and we never looked back.

Howard Kalnitz

NSS 20678

