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MAMMOTH CAVE.

[FROM THE WORCESTER, (MAS) SPY.]

Description of the Great Cave in Warren County, Kentucky.

Extract of a letter from a gentleman resident in the Western Country, (Dr. NAHUM WARD) to his friend in this County, giving an account of an excursion into Kentucky in the fall of last year—dated Marietta, (Ohio) April 4, 1816.

"The country for a considerable distance round the cave is not mountainous, yet broken and rolling.—It was seven in the evening when I reached the hospitable mansion of Mr. Miller, (the overseer of Messrs. Wilkins and Gratz, in whose land the cave opens,) who met me at the gate, and, as he anticipated my object, bade me welcome to all his house afforded.

During the evening, Mr. Miller made arrangements for my visiting the cave next morning, by procuring me two guides, lamps, &c. I could hardly rest during the night so much had my curiosity been excited by my host's accounts of the 'regular confusion' in this subterraneous world.

At length in the morning, I left the house in company with my guides, taking with us two large lamps, a compass and something for refreshment; and entered the cave about six rods from the house, down through a pit forty feet deep, and 120 in circumference, at the bottom of which is a fine spring of water. When at the bottom of this pit, you are at the entrance of the cave, which opens to the north, and is from forty to fifty feet high and about thirty in width, for upwards of forty rods, when it is not more than ten feet wide and five feet high.—However, this continues but a short distance when it expands to thirty or forty feet in width, and is about twenty in height for about one mile, until you come to the *first hoppers*, where salt petre is manufactured. Thence it is about forty feet in width and sixty in height to the *second hoppers*, two miles from the entrance. The loose limestone has been laid up into handsome walls, on either side almost the whole distance from the entrance to the *second hoppers*. The road is as smooth as a flag pavement. The walls of the cavern are perpendicular in every passage that I traversed; the arches are regular in every part and have hid defiance even to earthquakes. One of my guides informed me, he was at the *second hoppers* in 1812, with several workmen, when those heavy shocks came on which were severely felt in the country. He said that about five minutes before the shock a heavy rumbling noise was heard coming out of the cave like a mighty wind; that when that ceased, the rocks cracked, and all appeared to be going in a moment to final destruction. However, no one was injured, although large rocks fell in some parts of the cave.

As you advance into the cave, the avenue leads from the *second hopper* west one mile; thence S. W. to the *chief city*, which is six miles from the entrance. This avenue is from 60 to 100 feet in height, and about the same in width, the whole distance after you leave the *second hoppers* until you come to the cross roads, or *chief city* and is nearly upon a level; the floor or bottom being covered with loose lime stone and salt petre earth. When I reached this immense area, (*chief city*) which contains upwards of *eight acres*, without a single pillar to support the arch, which is entire over the whole, I was struck dumb with astonishment.

I can give you but a faint idea of this *chief city*. Nothing under heaven can be more sublime and grand than this place, covered with one solid arch, at least one hundred feet high, and to all appearance entire.

After entering the *chief city*, I perceived five large avenues leading out of it, from 60 to 100 feet in width, and from 40 to 80 in height. The walls (all stone) are arched, and are from 40 to 80 feet perpendicular height before the arch commences.

The first which I traversed, after cutting arrows on the stones under

our feet, pointing to the mouth of the cave, (in fact we did this at the entrance of every avenue that we should not be at any loss for the way out on our return.) was one that led us in a southerly direction for more than two miles. We then left it, and took another that led us east, then north, for more than two miles further; and at last in our windings, were brought out by another avenue into the *chief city* again, after traversing different avenues for more than five miles.

We rested ourselves for a few minutes on some stone slabs near the centre of this gloomy area, and after having refreshed us and trimmed our lamps, we took our departure a second time, thro' an avenue almost north, and parallel with the avenue leading from the *chief city* to the mouth of the cave, which we continued for upwards of two miles, when we entered the second city. This is covered with one arch nearly 200 feet high in the centre and very similar to the *chief city* except in the number of avenues leading from it—this having but two.

We passed through it over a considerable rise in the centre, and descended through an avenue which bore to the east about 300 rods, when we came upon a third area 200 feet square and 50 in height, which had a pure and delightful stream of water issuing from the side of the wall about thirty feet high and which fell upon some broken stone, and was afterwards entirely lost to our view. After passing this beautiful sheet of water a few yards, we came to the end of this passage.

We then returned about 100 yards, and entered a small avenue (over a considerable mass of stone) to our right, which carried us south, through an uncommonly black avenue, something more than a mile, when we ascended a very steep hill about sixty yards, which carried us within the walls of the *fourth city*, which is not inferior to the second, having an arch that covers at least six acres. In this last avenue, the further end of which must be four miles from the *chief city*, and ten from the mouth of the cave, are upwards of twenty large piles of salt petre earth on one side of the avenue, and broken lime-stone heaped upon the other, evidently the work of human hands.

I had expected from the course of my needle that this avenue would have carried us round to the *chief city*; but was sadly disappointed when I found the end a few hundred yards from the fourth city which caused us to retrace our steps; and not having been so particular in marking the entrances of the different avenues as I ought, we were very much bewildered, and once completely lost for 15 or 20 minutes.

At length we found our way, and, weary and faint, entered the *chief city* at 10 at night. However, as much fatigued as I was, I determined to explore the cave as long as my lights held out.

We now entered the fifth and last avenue from the *chief city*, which carried us southeast about 900 yards when we entered the fifth city, whose arch covers above four acres of level ground strewn with broken limestone. Five beds of uncommon size, with brands of cane lying around them, are interspersed throughout this city.

We crossed over the opposite side, and entered an avenue that carried us east about 250 rods, when finding nothing interesting in this passage, we returned back, and crossed a massy pile of stone in the mouth of a large avenue, which I noticed, but a few yards from this last mentioned city, as we came out of it. After some difficulty in passing over this mass of lime-stone, we entered a large avenue, whose walls were the most perfect of any that we saw, running almost due south for 500 rods, and very level and straight, with an elegant arch. When at the end of this avenue, and while I was sketching a plan of the cave, one of my guides who had been some time groping about among the broken stones, called out, requesting me to follow him.

I gathered up my papers and compass, and after giving my guide, who sat with me, orders to remain where he was until we returned, and moreover to keep his lamp in good order, I followed after the first who had entered a *vertical* passage, just large enough to admit his body. We continued to step from one stone to another, until at last, after much difficulty, from the smallness of the passage, which is about forty feet in height, we entered upon the side of a chamber; at least eighteen hundred feet in circumference, and whose arch is about one hundred and fifty feet high in the centre. After having marked arrows (pointing downwards) upon the slab stones around the little passage through which we had

ascend, we walked forward nearly to the centre of this area.

It was past midnight when I entered this chamber of eternal darkness, "where all things are hushed, and nature's self lies dead." I must acknowledge I felt a shivering horror at my situation, when I looked back upon the different avenues through which I passed since I entered the cave at eight in the morning; and at that "time o'night when church-yards groan," to be buried several miles in the dark recesses of this awful cavern—the grave, perhaps, of thousands of human beings—gave me no very pleasant sensations. With the guide who was now with me, I took the only avenue leading from this chamber, and continued it for the distance of a mile in a southerly direction, when my lamps forbidding my going further, as they were nearly exhausted. The avenue, or passage, was as large as any that we had entered, and how far we might have travelled had our lights held out, is unknown. It is supposed by all who have any knowledge of this cave, that Green river, a stream navigable for several hundred miles, passes over three branches of this cave.

It was nearly one o'clock at night when we descended "the passage of the chimney," as it is called, to the guide whom I left seated on the rocks. He was quite alarmed at our long absence, and was heard by us a long time before we reached the passage to descend to him, hallooing with all his might, fearing we had lost our track in the ruins above.

Very near the vertical passage, and not far from where I had left my guide sitting, I found some very beautiful specimens of soda, which I brought out with me.

We returned over piles of salt petre earth and fire beds, out of one avenue into another; until at last with great fatigue and a dim light, we entered the walls of the *chief city*; when, for the last time, we trimmed our lamps, and entered a spacious avenue that carried us to the *second hoppers*.

I found, when in the last mentioned large avenue or upper chamber, many curiosities, such as Glauber salts, Epsom salts, flint, yellow ochre, spar of different kinds, and some petrifications, which I brought out, together with the mummy which was found at the *second hoppers*. We happily arrived at the mouth of the cave about three in the morning, nearly exhausted and worn down with nineteen hours continual fatigue.

I was near fainting on leaving the cave and inhaling the vapour air of the atmosphere, after having so long breathed the pure air which is occasioned by the nitre of the cave. The pulse beat stronger when in the cave, but no so fast as when upon the surface.

I have described to you hardly one half of the cave; as the avenues between the mouth of the cave and the *second hoppers* have not been named. There is a passage in the main avenue, about sixty rods from the entrance, like that of a trap door. By sliding aside a large flat stone, you can descend sixteen or eighteen feet in a very narrow defile; where the passage comes upon a level; and winds about in such a manner as to pass under the main passage without having any communication with it; and at last opens into the main cave by two large passages just beyond the *second hoppers*. It is called the "Glauber salt room," from salts of that kind being found there. There is also the *sick room*, the *bat room*, and the *flint room*—all of which are large and some of them quite long. The last that I shall mention, is a very winding avenue which branches off at the *second hoppers*, and runs west and southwest for more than two miles.—

This is called the "haunted chamber," from the echo of the sound made in it. The arch of this avenue is very beautifully incrustated with limestone spar; and in many places the columns of spar are truly elegant, extending from the ceiling to the floor. I discovered in this avenue a very high dome in or near the centre of the arch, apparently fifty feet high, hung in rich drapery, festooned in the most fanciful manner for six or eight feet from the hangings, and in colors, the most rich and brilliant. The columns of spar & the stalactites in this chamber are extremely romantic in their appearance, with the reflection of one or two lights. There is a chair formed of this spar, called "Wilkins' armed chair," which is very large, and stands in the centre of the avenue, and is encircled with many smaller ones. Columns of spar fluted and studded with knobs of spar and stalactites; drapery of various colors, superbly festooned; and hung in the most graceful manner, shewn with the greatest brilliancy from the reflection of lamps.

A part of the "haunted chamber," is directly over the *bat room*, which pass-

es under the "haunted chamber," without having any connexion with it. My guide led me into a very narrow defile on the left side of this chamber, and about one hundred yards from "Wilkins' armed chair," over the side of a smooth limestone rock ten or twelve feet high, we passed with much precaution; and had we slipped from our hold, we had gone to "that bourne from whence no traveller returns," if I may judge from a cataract of water, whose dismal sound we heard at a very considerable distance in this pit, and nearly under us. However, we crossed in safety, climbing fast to the wall and winding down under the "haunted chamber," through a very narrow passage.

Within a few yards of this reservoir of water, on the right hand of the cave, there is an avenue which leads to the north-west. We had entered it but about forty feet, when we came to several columns of the most brilliant spar, sixty or seventy feet in height, and almost perpendicular, which stands in basins of water that comes trickling down their sides; then passes off silently from the basins, and enters the cavities of stone without being seen again. These columns of spar and the basins they rest in, for splendor and beauty, surpass every similar work of art I ever saw. We passed by these columns and entered a small, but beautiful chamber, whose walls were about twenty feet apart, and the arch not more than seven high, white as white wash could have made it; the floor was level as far as I explored it, which was not a great distance, as I found many pit holes in my path that appeared to have been lately sunk, and which induced me to return.

We returned by the beautiful pool of water, which is called the *pool of Clitorius*, after the *Pons Clitorius*, one of the classics, which was so pure and delightful to the taste, that after drinking of it a person had no longer a taste for wine. On our return back to the narrow defile, I had some difficulty in keeping my lights; for the bats were so numerous and continually in our faces, that it was next to impossible to get along in safety. I brought this trouble on myself by my own want of forethought; for as we were moving on, I noticed a large number of these bats hanging by their hind legs to the arch, which was not above twelve inches higher than my head. I took my cane and gave a sweep the whole length of it, when down they fell; but soon like so many imps, they tormented us till we reached the narrow defile, when they left us. We returned by Wilkins' arm-chair, and back to the *second hoppers*. It was at this place I found the *Mummy* which I before alluded to, where it had been placed by Mr. Wilkins, from another part of the cave, for preservation. It is a female about six feet in height, and so perfectly dried as to weigh but 20 pounds when I found it—the hair in the back part of the head is rather short, and of a sandy hue—the top of the head is bald—the eyes sunk in the head; the nose, or that part which is cartilaginous, is dried down to the bones of the face—the lips are dried away, and discovered a fine set of teeth white as ivory. The hands and feet are perfect even to the nails, and very delicate, like those of a young person; but the teeth are worn as much as a person's at the age of fifty.

She must have been some personage of high distinction, if we may judge from the order in which she was buried. Mr. Wilkins informed me, she was first found by some labourers, while digging salt-petre earth, in a part of the cave about 3 miles from the entrance, buried eight feet deep between four limestone slabs, and in the posture in which she is exhibited in the drawing I sent you. [Seated, the knees brought close to the body, which is erect, the hand clasped and laid upon the stomach, the head upright.]

She was muffled up; and covered with a number of garments made of a species of wild hemp and the bark of willow; which formerly grew in Kentucky. The cloth is of a curious texture and fabric, made up in the form of blankets or winding sheets, with very handsome borders. Bags of different sizes were found by her side, made of the same cloth, in which were deposited her *jewels*; head trinkets, and implements of industry; all which are very great curiosities, being different from any thing of Indian kind ever found in the country. Among the articles was a musical instrument, made in two pieces of cane, put to-

gether something like the double flageolet, and variously interwoven with elegant feathers—she had likewise by her a bowl of uncommon workmanship & a vandyke made of feathers, very beautiful.

My friend Mr. Wilkins, gave me the *Mummy*, which I brought away, together with her apparel, jewels, music, &c.

FROM THE PORT FOLIO.

OF THE ABORIGINES OF THE WESTERN COUNTRY.

In removing an artificial mound in Chillicothe in 1813, there was found a piece of copper, encrusted with a substance which consisted of thin plates of copper rolled up, enclosing each other. It was about three inches in length, and one fourth of an inch in thickness; the copper remarkably pure and fine; the *lamina*, or plates about twenty in number. They had been smelted and prepared in a workmanlike manner, and ingeniously folded up in a single piece. As this specimen of copper is justly ascribed to the aborigines, it enters into the controversy in regard to the Asiatic and European origin of the aborigines. It is a manifestly trifling thing to ascribe this copper to a Welsh colony of the eleventh century; but the difficulty is entirely removed by supposing it to have an Asiatic origin.—Brass and copper were in use at a very early period in Asia, and may be traced as far back as *Tubal Cain*. Brass not being found in nature, but made of copper, affords a presumption that there were workmen in copper at that period. The copper *lamina*, found at Chillicothe, considered as a precious memorial, might have descended thro' several centuries, and might have once been in the hands of a people more refined, than those aboriginal Asiatics to whom it is referred. It was a custom in heathen nations to bury with their chiefs, not only pieces of armour, but memorials which were preserved or worn by way of ornament.

In removing the same mound in Chillicothe, a beautiful piece of marble was taken up in 1814, and is now in possession of a gentleman at Chillicothe. This marble piece was undoubtedly made and used for ornament, being perforated ingeniously with loop holes for fastening. It is apparent that these loop holes must have been executed by some instrument for boring, as the exactness appears to be inexplicable under any other supposition. This marble piece is about 5 inches in length, flat on one side, and oval on the other, having an increasing width at the middle. The ends are apparently cut and squared with some implement used for that purpose. The marble has a dark red color, but the veins of the stone are very distinct. We do not deny but that the present race of Indians have exercised a degree of skill equal to that which is exhibited by this piece of marble, but not in the use of those instruments which we have supposed to have been necessary in this case.—It is likewise to be remarked, that these Indians are not in the practice of using this kind of ornament. Had marble of this description been more common in the western country, occupying a position nearer the surface of the earth, and not buried in mounds, we might have ascribed them to the present race of Indians, or their immediate predecessors. Humboldt says of the aboriginal Mexicans, that they were in the practice of accomplishing the most curious carvings with a *poor knife, and upon a hard substance*; and between the *aboriginal Mexicans* and the *aborigines of the western country*, it may be remembered that we have not admitted any great distinction.

On the bank of Scioto river, just above Chillicothe, a very large limestone rock was broken down for lime. In the body of this rock, twelve or fifteen inches below the surface, three brass screws were found, a half inch in length. One was in a state of preservation; the other two were marred by the injuries of time and accident. This it seems was a solid limestone rock, and not perforated to any depth. There are portions of limestone in the western country which are unquestionably of a secondary nature, and have formed or increased since the original creation.—These screws, however, laid upon a bare rock, would hardly obtain by any process of nature, such a durable covering. We are under the pleasing necessity of alleging; that these pieces of brass were by some means secured in the limestone rock, or that one rock had been placed upon another, enclosing the screws, and that the rocks had formed a natural union. Such an inseparable union of two rocks would require a length of time perhaps equal to that of the secondary formation of twelve or fifteen inches of limestone.—We may therefore allow to these