



Photo courtesy Earl Wolverton Jr.

Pupils of the Harmony School in 1908 were (from left, front row) Frank Bowman, Fred Bowman, Edgar George, Harry Mumaw, Maggie Miller, Pauline Sheetz, Mary George, Annie Mumaw, Mary Mumaw, Lona Ryan, Lula Myers, Lizzie Barrick, (second row) Hugh Sheetz, Joseph George, Omer Haun, John Welch, George Holler, Virgie George, Carrie Welch, Virgie Stoneburner, Dave Mumaw, Hobert Holler, Lee Holier, Price Myers, Jerry Holler, Lester Holler, (third row) Dallas Sheetz, Grace Sheetz, Maggie Barrick, Thelma Bowman, Clara Holler, Zella Coffman, Miss Virgie Funkhouser (teacher) Margaret Coffman, Elizabeth Myers, Sada Stoneburner, Melvin Stoneburner, (fourth row) Miss Stella Bowman (teacher), Maynard Sheetz, Willie Coffman, Lillie George, Lester Barrick, Lena Holler, Alice Ryan, Grace Barrick and Jocie Sheetz, (back row) Lester Wolverton, Albert Stoneburner, Loy Miller, Earl Wolverton, Homer George, Grover Holler, James George, Luther Sheetz and Edgar Sheetz.

4/25/02

Pages from newspapers past

Oct. 22, 1879

Died. Clara Alice, infant daughter of Sylvanes and Virginia F. Good, near Hamburg Sept. 26, aged three months.

At his residence near Mt. Jackson on the 7th of Sept. Mr. John Filtzmoyer, aged 77 years, 1 month and 27 days.

News items. Levi Keller, an escaped convict from the Virginia Penitentiary was captured in Woodstock by Sheriff Hoshour and is now in jail.

Wild Cat Killed. On last Wednesday Mr. W. H. Racey killed a wild cat or catamount on the mountain near Mt. Olive. It was about 4 1/2 ft. long.

Jno. L. Helsley was committed to jail upon the charge of breaking into the granary of Moses Bowman and stealing one bushel of wheat.

William Hall, a highly respected colored man of Edinburg died last Friday. He formerly belonged to Dr. Belew and when he became free, he was notified of the fact by his master. He asked whether he would be permitted to remain with his old master and being informed that he could do so, he was perfectly satisfied and continued to live with him until his death. He was a worthy and consistent member of the Methodist church and enjoyed the full confidence of the community.

Oct. 29, 1879

Married. On the 24th of Sept. by Rev. E. B. Jones, Mr. Trenton Bredon and Miss Marianna Orndorff, all of this county.

On the 12th inst. at the residence of Mr. Jos. F. Whittington on Cedar Creek by the same, Mr. George W. Conner and Miss Susan M. Whittington.

On the 19th inst. by Elder E. B. Shaver, Mr. J. W. Shipe and Miss Mary Rebecca Bauserman.

On the 28th of Sept. near Maurertown by Elder John Pirkey, Mr. B. Frank Saum and Miss Martha Jane Miley.

On the 24th inst. by Rev. J. E. Seneker at the residence of John Miller Jr. near Little Stony Creek, Mr. Andrew J. Miller and Miss Sarah C. Barb.

On the 22nd inst. at the residence of the bride's father, D. J. Miller, by Rev. C. W. Hollis, William H. Smith of Shenandoah County and Miss Nannie S. Miller of Frederick County.

On the 19th at the residence of the officiating minister, Rev. Jas. S. Petty, Mr. John H. Jones of Front Royal and Miss M. Jennie Griffin of Woodstock.

Died. On October 17, Carrie L., daughter of Dr. F. E. and Lou Rice.

New Market Endless Caverns. *The Discovery.* On Sunday afternoon October 19, 1879, the New Market Endless Caverns were discovered, on the land of Mr. Reuben Zirkle, known as the old Lewis Zirkle place, Smith Creek, about four miles Southeast of New Market, and half a mile South of his residence, and near the base of the Massanutten Mountain. It seems Mr. Reuben Zirkle, his sons, J. O. and A. E., and son-in-law J. M. Koontz, were walking over the farm, when they came to a "hole in the ground," in a clump of cedars, at the place mentioned, and in a playful manner they began prospecting for caves. They were of the opinion, if rabbits and foxes could go into this hole, which they were known to do, why not man, and besides, the hill is known to be very caveous.

A few stones were removed, an opening effected, and Mr. "Olay" Zirkle entered, when to his utter surprise, he found himself in a considerable open space. He removed a few more stones and went on a little further, finding what is now known as the great "Ante Room." He returned to the

opening, candles and string were procured, and Mr. Koontz joined him in the search. They soon found enough to show, that is was far more than a "hole in the ground," and there was more of interest in it to man, than to rabbits and foxes.

Explorers-Endless-No Proper Conceptions - Since then many persons have visited and actively engaged in exploring these caverns; but they seem to be endless and wind around in such a manner as to make it almost impossible to give locations and to form any correction conception of their extent and magnitude.

Compared with the Luray Caverns. As far as the two have been explored, the New Market-Endless Caverns are more extensive and a person can go farther in any direction. There is a marked difference between these two caverns-those of Luray naturally being more easy of access, greater spaces or rooms free from obstructions, more and larger formations, (stalactites, stalagmites, drapery, columns, &c.) and surface of lofty ceiling. In these caverns one can go further up or down, than in those of Luray, there often being as many as three rooms, one above the other-but the width of rooms is not so great.

Moving On- Wonders. We walk, and crawl, and stoop for about a quarter of a mile, seeing many bold, rugged formations; here and there are pure white and pretty-some small drapery, all fluted, and brown and white. We also pass under a small natural bridge and by a bright angel's wing. We come to a considerable room. It looks as if the people who lived in it some 3000 years ago moved out, and it has not since been occupied, and is woefully out of repair. It may have been visited by some mighty convulsion and things here are in a wild, messy, chaotic state, stalactites and stalagmites, broken and strewn over the ground; drapery old, colored a muddy brown, and crumbling away-here and there heaps of sharp mountain sand and a few mountain rock, supposed to have been washed there.

Exploring-Anteroom-Formations. We entered these caverns, one cold, chilly night, not long since, at the summit of a hill, down a flight of steps-about 25 feet-hastily erected. We found ourselves in the ante room, together with some fifteen, all ready for the exploration.

The ceiling here is tolerably high, filled with innumerable stalactites, imbedded as it were in snow blown in from above, and revealing at once the most pleasing beauty. In this room, scattered all through, are very pretty stalagmites, a few massive columns, and many peculiar wonderful formations. We could trace out a white mouse running up a stalagmite, a statue of William Cullen Bryant, an eagle, a coffin-like object, resting high up on an immense formation; a ball hanging from the ceiling, and numerous indescribable objects.

Walnuts, Hickory Nuts and Cave Rats. Walnuts and hickory nuts were scattered over the floor in the greatest abundance, and animals, between a rat and squirrel were scampering around. These what-you-may-call-ems, are a little larger than the common rat; have longer and less tapering tails; with fur or hair on them, lighter in color; have longer faces; longer ears; Roman noses; five fleshy projections, over each of their claws, which are not as long and sharp as those of the common rat. They are rather tame; have long, sharp teeth, ready for business and which they used to a bad advantage on our overcoat, which we left in this room. They build round nests on the ground and live off of nuts. We will call them cave-rats, for the want of a better name, and take up our line of march.

Tolling out string. We begin to toll out string, and wander around for half a mile, coming back by a most circuitous route to

our starting point. At one place, the massive wall, under which we pass, reaching as far as the eye could see with our lights, shows a quite fresh crack and we pull a piece from its side. We were down upon our knees, but felt that this would avail us little, and full of fear we hasten on, lest we become unapproachable skeletons.

Yosemite Valley. We take a new route, and here are gigantic formations, grotesque and prodigious-mostly massive lime-stone; frightful canons; yawning chasm; wild abysses; deep pits; over-hanging rocks; rugged ravines; a deep river-bed, now a little damp-a perfect Yosemite Valley-a wild rugged fearful, dangerous place. We shudder as we leap, and clamber, and slip and slide from rock to rock, down, down, all the time, avoiding the dangers as best we can. One could not well make this exploration in the full light of day. He would see the dangers, and his fear be greater than his curiosity and courage.

The Brink-The Stream-Help Wanted. We come to a place where we look down over rough, rugged rocks, away down, and some of the venturesome rush on, and come to a strong stream of water, coming from under a massive rock. All stop here, save one who goes on far from the others. He fails; his light goes out; his matches get wet in the stream; he calls for help and is brought back.

Returning-The Lost. We begin our return, and find two of our companions gone. We shout unitedly and pistol shots are fire, but no response-they hear us not; a council is held; the lights, save for a few, are given to two who begin the search, the others return for more lights. We pass between two indescribably large lime-stone walls, as near to each other-arched over, many feet above-that in many places we can barely squeeze through-a fat man's misery-a test of one's courage. We arrive at the entrance; a few procure lights and start in search of the missing ones, who are at length found on their return, with but one candle.

The Lost Found-A Diamond Room-Waterfalls-Melting Column-&c. these have wonders to relate. They find the Diamond Room, so brilliant, so sparkling, so resplendent, as to daze the mind, dazzle the eye and tantalize imagination. Here are the most perfect clusters of diamond-appearing stones, banks of glittering stones; pure white, bright, coral like formations; heaps like driven snow; rocks forming a dancing, sparkling waterfall; a Melting Column; a beautiful monument, lofty ceilings-attractions innumerable, peculiar-not known to other caverns. The room is over 500 feet in length; varying from 10 to 40 feet in breadth-the ceiling from 15 to 60 - the floor is covered with the most beautiful and varied formations.

Near by it is another room, which contains beautiful drapery, a number of stalactites, and other objects peculiar to caverns.

Bear Tracks - Bats - &c. Bear tracks, hard from age are seen, and one place where one tried to scramble up a wall; and a few bats hang to the walls. There are a few springs and places where draughts of air blow out candles. These would indicate other entrances.

These and many more attractions can be found in these truly wonderful caverns, and new discoveries are being made-the farther away from the present entrance, as a rule, the prettier. They are endless, and there is no telling what may be revealed.

Opening the Caverns. Efforts are being daily made to open them, and much can be seen without great fatigue, mud or inconvenience. It will take a vast amount of time, money and labor to make all parts of these caverns accessible, but when this is once done, they can be visited and enjoyed by thousands. A new entrance may be found or a shaft sunk, so all parts may be easily seen and efforts are being made to accomplish it.