

United States Department of the Interior National Park Service
NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES REGISTRATION FORM

1. Name of Property

historic name:

ORGAN CAVE

other name/site number:

2. Location

street & number: SR 63, .5 mi. NW of jct. US 219 not for publication: N/A

city/town: Ronceverte vicinity: X

state: West Virginia code: WV county: Greenbrier code: 025 zip code: 24970

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended, I hereby certify that this X nomination _____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets _____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant _____ nationally _____ statewide X locally. (____ See continuation sheet.)

Susan M. Pierce

Susan M. Pierce, Deputy SHPO

Date

12/16/04

West Virginia Division of Culture and History

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property _____ meets _____ does not meet the National Register criteria.
(____ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of Certifying Official/Title

Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

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4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is: Signature of Keeper Date of Action

_____ entered in the National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet. _____

_____ determined eligible for the _____
National Register _____
_____ See continuation sheet.

_____ determined not eligible for the _____
National Register _____

_____ removed from the National Register _____

_____ other (explain): _____

5. Classification

Ownership of Property:
(Check as many boxes as apply)

☒ private
_____ public-local
_____ public-State
_____ public-Federal

Category of Property:
(Check only one box)

_____ building(s)
_____ district
☒ site
_____ structure
_____ object

Number of Resources within Property

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count.)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	3	buildings
1		sites
1		structures
		objects
3	3	TOTAL

Name of related multiple property listing N/A
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register 0

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6. Function or Use

Historic Functions

Landscape: Natural Feature
Recreation And Culture: Outdoor Recreation
Industry/Processing/Extraction: Processing Facility

Current Functions

Landscape: Natural Feature
Recreation And Culture: Outdoor Recreation

7. Description

Architectural Classification

OTHER: Natural Feature

Materials

Foundation: _____
Walls: _____
Roof: _____
Other: Limestone; sandstone

Narrative Description
(See continuation sheets)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "X" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

☒ A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

☐ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

☐ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

☐ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

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Criteria Considerations
(Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

Property is:

☐ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

☐ B removed from its original location.

☐ C a birthplace or grave.

☐ D a cemetery.

☐ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

☐ F a commemorative property.

☐ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance
Entertainment/Recreation
Industry

Period of Significance
1822-1954

Significant Dates
1822
ca. 1850
1861
1914

Significant Person
(Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation
N/A

Architect/Builder
N/A

Narrative Statement of Significance
(See continuation sheets)

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9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS):

_____ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
_____ previously listed in the National Register
_____ previously determined eligible by the National Register
_____ designated a National Historic Landmark
_____ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
_____ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary location of additional data:

☒ State Historic Preservation Office
_____ Other State agency
_____ Federal agency
_____ Local government
_____ University
☒ Other

Name of Repository: Organ Cave Collection, Held By Property Owners.

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property: 26 acres

UTM References

Quad Map Name: Ronceverte

A	<u>17</u>	<u>549812</u>	<u>4174733</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
C	<u>17</u>	<u>549587</u>	<u>4174694</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

B	<u>17</u>	<u>549792</u>	<u>4174589</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing
D	<u>17</u>	<u>549626</u>	<u>4174770</u>
	Zone	Easting	Northing

Verbal Boundary Description
(See continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification
(See continuation sheet.)

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11. Form Prepared By

Name/Title: T. Jane Morgan and Aaron S. Waid

Organization: Organ Cave, Inc. Date: February 26, 2004

Street & Number: Route 2, Box 417 Masters Road Telephone: (304) 645-7600

City or Town: Ronceverte State: West Virginia Zip: 24970

Property Owner

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Narrative Description

Located 6 miles from Ronceverte, West Virginia on State Route 63, Organ Cave is the largest commercial cave in West Virginia. First discovered by Europeans in 1704, Organ Cave measures 45 miles in length, with 200 passages yet to be explored. A National Natural Landmark, regular walking tours of the cave are given year-round and cover a 2-mile total distance.

Description of Grounds

The grounds surrounding the main entrance to Organ Cave are located east of Route 63, which runs directly above the entrance to the cave. Visitors turn onto a paved driveway that lies over a portion of the original Salt Sulphur Turnpike. At the turn, a clapboard sided building that once housed the 1914 Delco generator is visible. The remainder of the turnpike lies on the side of the hill behind the Organ Cave gift shop and is very pronounced and visible today. The section of the road remaining is approximately 100 feet in length, and is on average about 10 feet in width. The original turnpike intersects with the paved driveway leading down the hill and extends from that road way and ends approximately 100 feet from the cave entrance.

The flat area in front of the cave in which the turnpike ends was known beginning in 1822 as Roger's Stagecoach Stop. This flat area, on which now stands the Organ Cave gift shop and cafeteria covers a relatively flat area on which a stream which runs directly into the cave. The cave is north of the stagecoach stop. To the south is the gift shop, a building in which Organ Cave Signs and Designs is housed, a mid-19th century limekiln and a parking lot. West, across the stream is a small playground. Picnic areas are located throughout these immediate grounds. The stream is lined with a wooden fence. A graveled driveway extends throughout this section and eventually intersects with the parking lot and the driveway that leads to Rt. 63.

The limekiln on the grounds is built directly into the hillside to the east of the cave entrance. The driveway leading into the cave parking lot runs directly over top of the kiln (See Limekiln Description). The limekiln faces outwards towards the graveled driveway and is not visible until one has passed through the parking lot and heading towards the cave entrance.

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<u>Resource #1</u>	<u>Organ Cave</u>	<u>Contributing Site</u>
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Visitors to Organ Cave see the majority of the historical sites on the grounds while participating in our daily commercial walking tours. The first stop on the tour is the remaining Salt Sulphur Turnpike. This road extends down the side of the hill directly behind the gift shop and visitors are given information and shown this road before venturing into the cave. Approximately 120 feet from the stagecoach road lies the main entrance to the cave. A massive aperture into the hillside, the main entrance to Organ Cave is approximately 75' in width. A stairway and shelter are built into the surface and visitors descend 150 feet below the surface at this point to the floor of the Chapel Room.

The largest room on the walking tour, the Chapel room measures 365' by 96' at its largest point. Visitors walk along a path on the side of the Chapel Room that is actually an excavation created by soldiers mining saltpetre. Visitors can see the rough tooling marks on the sides of the walls and witness saltpetre glistening in the embedded rock and soil. The Chapel Room also contains a provision shelter built in 1957 to house supplies in event of a nuclear attack. Though abandoned, the shelter remains intact and contains ruined containers of drinking water, survival crackers, food and medical supplies.

To the right of the Chapel Room lies a small passage known as Tall Man's Misery in which most adults have to stoop in order to pass through. The area in which Jefferson's Sloth was discovered lies to the left of this passage, shortly after exiting the Chapel Room. Beyond Tall Man's Misery lies a passage filled with countless fossils, including nodule chert (fossilized coral, or flint), brachiopods and plesiopods (sea shells) and crinoid stems (plant-like sea animals). The nodule chert lining these passages has been broken off in many sections, removed by Native Americans for use in making knives, arrowheads and fire making tools. Visitors can witness these and other fossils along this passage easily, as the ceiling of the cave is no more than 8 feet in height through most of this portion.

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The midpoint of the tour is a Y section of the cave, with paths branching off in two directions. To the left of this point is a rock covered in various historical carvings. The oldest date in the cave, 1704 is inscribed into the rock, smooth from centuries of tracing fingers but very much apparent. Visitors to the cave walk down a small staircase and continue along the path, passing by a dam built inside the cave in 1910 with the intentions of creating a small lake suitable for trout stocking.

After a few turns and a short walk through a narrow passage known as Hopper Alley, the tour reaches the Hopper Room (see Hopper Room Description). The Hopper Room is the area of the cave in which Confederate soldiers refined saltpetre mined from other areas in the cave. The Hopper Room is a vaguely "S" shaped passage with Civil War Hoppers lining both sides at various points. Visitors are given a verbal demonstration of how the hoppers were built and used and then allowed to view many of the hoppers. Within the Hopper Room there are 37 remaining hoppers of the 52 originals. The majority of the remaining hoppers are in very good shape, some of which could still be used for saltpeter refining. The Hopper Room signifies a turning point in the tour; visitors turn and retrace their steps to the Y section of the trail and then turn left onto the remaining section of the cave.

The final section of the tour is comprised primarily of geological information and sites. Visitors are shown many of the intricacies of cave ecology and geology, including information pertaining to the growth and life cycles of cave formations such as stalactites, stalagmites and flowstones. Visitors see many wonderful sites, including the Rock Organ, the formation for which the cave and the community of Organ Cave are named. The large room containing the Rock Organ is the final stop on the tour. Visitors return to the surface along the path in which they entered.

Hopper Room Narrative Description

Approximately one half mile from the main entrance to Organ Cave lies the Hopper Room, an American Civil War saltpetre processing factory. The Hopper Room contains 37 of the original 52 hoppers built by the Confederate Army between 1861 and 1863.

The Hopper Room begins with a narrow passage known as Hopper Alley. Hopper Alley that ranges between 5' 7" to 3' 6" in width and is 150' 5" in length and constitutes the only entrance into the Hopper Room. The floor of the Hopper Room, like all of Organ

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Cave is a natural pathway that is irregular. At the end of Hopper Alley, the passage widens into an S-shaped section that is the Hopper Room. The mild, dry climate of the Hopper Room has preserved the hoppers and left them in excellent condition, many of which are still usable.

The Hopper Room is dry, smooth-floored passage that houses the entirety of Organ Cave's hopper collection. The initial section of the Hopper Room is 10' 6" wide and 35' 4" in width. This section of the Hopper Room contains 8 original hoppers and one replica hopper built for demonstration purposes.

The Hopper Room curves left of the initial room and continues on a slight slope into the largest section of the Hopper Room. This room is 82' 10" in width between far walls and 17' 3" in the curve of the S-section. The ceiling of this room is covered in black soot, remnants of the smoke from torches used by the soldiers working in the room. There are 20 hoppers remaining in this large section. Numerous mannequins dressed as soldiers are in place and used for display purposes. This room constitutes the end of the commercial walking tour.

The Hopper Room extends into a narrow section with a low ceiling. This third section of the Hopper Room measures 12' 6" at the widest point. There are 8 hoppers in the next room in the passage. The low ceiling in this section is covered with exceptional amounts of soot from torches. This section marks the end of the areas of the Hopper Room that contain hoppers. The cave extends into a narrow sloping passage beyond this before coming to a dead end, which constitutes the physical boundary end of the Hopper Room.

The hoppers are composed of various hardwoods, including oak, locust and cucumber (no longer found in the surrounding area). Each fully intact hopper contains the following components: removable wooden slats, frame held together with pegs, drainage trough, collection trough. The following are hopper dimensions that are representative of the intact hoppers. The height from ground to the top of the tallest board is 2' 11". The diameter of the hoppers at the top is 5' 7" by 5' 1". The inner dimensions measure 1' 2" in width and 4' 9" in length. The trough along the bottom of the hopper measures 6' 10" in length and 6" in width and 5.5" deep. The collection trough measures 1' 9" in length by 1' 1" in width and 7" in depth.

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Resource #2 Limekiln ca. 1850 Contributing Structure

The limekiln located on the Organ Cave grounds is built into a hillside on which the present day driveway to the parking lot is positioned. The limekiln is only viewable from the immediate grounds outside the entrance.

The kiln is comprised solely of sandstone blocks with a general cut but no uniformity in dimensions and is entirely constructed with a dry stack method (no mortar). The structure as a whole is in remarkably good condition; all stone structures are primarily intact with no missing or crumbled sections. The only structural degradation is a few missing blocks, though the presence of blocks of similar appearance on the ground beside the kiln indicates that these are most likely stones that were originally part of the limekiln structure. The limekiln is built into a man-made recessed area in the hill side, with arched flying buttresses on both sides of the entrance which sit flush with the surrounding hillside and extend into the hill. The distances between buttresses measures 6' 8" and comprises the stokehole section leading up to the opening into the kiln. The exposed length of the buttresses measure 15' 9 " long. The arch of the buttresses spans from 7' 4" at the lowest point and 13' 6" at its highest point with the middle of the buttress is 8' 6" in height. This type of kiln structure is known as a "Groundhog".

The entrance to the kiln is arched, with square blocks of relatively equal size forming the top of the entrance. The blocks forming the archway entrance are the most uniform blocks visible in the limekiln. The height of the arch from ground to the bottom of the keystone is 6' 7". The inner width of the arch measures 5' 8".

Recessed inside this archway are two stokehole openings that were used to feed stone and wood into the kiln. Originally metal doors were in place over these openings, but these no longer remain. These openings measure 2' 10" in height and 1' 6" in width. These openings are separated by a stone column and there is visible iron bracing remaining around the outer sides and the top of the openings.

The fire pit, which comprises the inner section of the kiln, is a large circular structure that measures 13' 1" in diameter across at the floor and is 18' 6" in height from floor to top. The floor of the fire pit is an irregular surface because it is comprised of mixture of uneven earth, stone and calcium curds, which is a result of chemical reactions from use and exposure.

From above (beside the driveway) the top opening to the kiln is apparent and has the appearance of a large chimney recessed into the hillside. The top opening to the kiln

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is covered with a few boards and wire fencing to prevent visitors and animals from potentially falling through the hole in surface to the inner floor of the limekiln.

Resource #3 Limehouse ca. 1850; ca. 1900 Non-Contributing Building

The limehouse originally stood directly in front of the limekiln, and was used as the storage area for the burned lime. Historically, an iron-track and cart system connected the kiln to the limehouse, but no physical remains are visible today. Around the turn of the 20th century, an addition was made to the limehouse to serve as a ticket counter and souvenir shop. The limehouse was shifted several feet from its original position within the last five years. The limehouse is wood-frame with walls insulated with sawdust. The building presents a gable-front plan with an ell addition. Vinyl replacement windows, rounded false-log siding, and a pressure-treated wood deck have all reduced the historic integrity of the building.

Resource #4 Visitor's Center/Gift Shop/Museum 1998 Non-Contributing Building

Located mid-way between the limehouse and the snack-bar building is the modern visitor's center. It is a side-gable log construction building with an asphalt shingle roof. A porch spans the main façade.

Resource #5 Snack Bar Building 1998 Non-Contributing Building

Positioned at the base of the historic turnpike trace, and near the opening of the cave stands the modern snack bar building. It is a gable-end, single story log construction building with vinyl double-hung sash windows. An incised porch dominates the main façade.

Resource #6 Delco Powerhouse Building ca. 1900 Contributing Building

Located in the corner where the access road to Organ Cave leaves State Route 63, the powerhouse building originally held the Delco electric power generating system that provided the first electric light for the cave tours. The side-gable building rises two stories, has wooden clapboard siding, and a standing-seam metal roof. Square vents are present in the gables, and swinging "barn type" doors provide access to the main story from State Route 63. The building rests upon wooden posts, with the exception of a sturdy concrete pillar in the southeast corner. Porcelain insulators nailed to a small board on the northeast corner mark where the power supply left the building for the cave complex below.

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Organ Cave represents one of the best-preserved sites in the country exhibiting original industrial facilities from the early to mid 19th century. The Hopper Room and the limekiln located on grounds serve as reminders of the ingenuity and dedicated labor of Americans working with the intensity of the Industrial Revolution even in the very rural areas of the nation. The cave and aboveground complex are nominated under Criterion A for Entertainment/Recreation and Industry. The cave has functioned as a tourist attraction since 1822, and has also been the site of saltpetre extraction and lime-burning. The period of significance begins in 1822—the earliest recorded date for cave tours—and ends in 1954, or fifty years before the present. This ending date was selected to reflect the cave's continued use as a tourist attraction into the modern era. Significant dates selected reflect the beginning date of the cave tours (1822), the construction of the limekiln (ca. 1850), the beginning of Civil War-era saltpetre extraction (1861), and the installation of electric lights in the commercial tour section of the cave (1914).

Significance in the Area of Industry

The Hopper Room represents one of the best opportunities in the country to witness an 1800's saltpetre facility in the country. Built by Confederate soldiers working in the cave between 1861 and 1863, the Hopper Room processed one of the most important resources to 19th century America, saltpetre. Found glittering on the sides of the cave to this day, the vast amounts of saltpetre at Organ Cave made the location a perfect spot for Confederates to harvest this mineral. The dry, stable climate of the Hopper Room made it an ideal place for the Confederacy to construct the original 52 hoppers that were used to mass produce the necessary saltpetre for black powder manufacture. The soldiers carried heavy gunny sacks full of the saltpetre rich cave soil and rock weighing up to 150 lbs to the Hopper Room, filled the massive wooden vats (hoppers) and poured water through these vats to leach the minerals out. The labor was intense, as 4500 lbs of cave soil (30 trips) was necessary to fill up one hopper. Today, one can only imagine the countless painful hours of labor that took place within the passages of the cave.

The soldiers would continue working until 200 lbs of saltpetre was produced. This was then packed out of the cave and shipped to various black powder production facilities, including those in Augusta, Georgia. As the soldiers left with their refined saltpetre, they kept track of their production with tally marks, which can be seen in hundreds of locations throughout the cave. Each mark represents 200 lbs of saltpetre, and one only need take a glance at the sheer volume of these scratches to understand the monumental production taking place within the cave.

Today, 37 of the original hoppers remain in their original location, most in very good condition. Not only is the condition of the hoppers superb, the original setting adds infinite

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amounts of authenticity to the entire site. Visitors to the Hopper Room learn the processes of mining and refining saltpetre from start to finish and along the way come to appreciate the tremendous sacrifices made by Americans in the throes of wartime mass production.

Organ Cave Limekiln

The limekiln located on grounds at Organ Cave represents one of the best-preserved limekilns in the nation. This kiln, known as a 'groundhog' because it was set inside the ground, was built in the mid 19th century and was used to produce lime and potash, important agricultural resources. The style itself is known as a shaft or bottle-kiln, and many of this type were used for continuous burning. The limekiln functioned as a massive firing pit that heated limestone to the tremendous temperatures necessary to separate the lime from the rock. The desired temperature was 1900-degrees Fahrenheit; at this point the carbonic gases (CO₂) would escape the stone and leave behind pure calcium (CaO). Inside, the pink sandstone blocks have been glazed with a thin layer of green glass formed from the intense heat. The potash was derived from the layers of fuel wood between the layers of limestone (This practice of layering has been described as 'mixed feed'). This potash was a desirable addition to the farmer because it inhibited the clotting properties of the pure lime. This lime was raked out and collected in a metal mining cart, that was pushed on a small rail system to the kiln's storage shed. This shed was lined with sawdust to prevent the lime from absorbing outside moisture, and pencil marks were discovered from when the unknown owner was recording the barter of his lime with local farmers. Lime used for building was stored for several months to mature before being used.

Today, a limekiln of this preserved quality is a rarity. An example of the scarcity of these kilns was demonstrated in 2001, when Colorado listed their most intact kilns (Calcium Limestone Company) as one of Colorado's Most Endangered Places.

These small but productive kilns were once a common landmark across the country. Along with salt, lime provided the earliest examples of mineral extraction in America, while providing the most common non-food item manufactured in the mid-eighteenth century, starting at about the late 1840's and ending with the creation of industrial factories during WWII. Without this, the farmer lacked a vital soil amendment that not only killed shallow-soil insects, but also provided calcium in poor soils, added to its friability, and formed the base of home-mixed cement. Lime treated animal hides and leather for clothing and market. The local blacksmith understood that lime created a flux in his furnace, permitting him to forge at lower temperatures, and the brick-and-ceramic

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makers used lime as an additive to their product.

The stonework is a prime example of dry stack construction. The sandstone was squared in a general but not uniform manner from local quarries and assembled without mortar—the use of any such would have soon been destroyed in the intense heat of the kiln. Shallow lines exist on the face of one block demonstrating the stone dressing of the unknown mason. The segmented arch that tops the openings of the feedhole is still completely solid. Inside, along with the glazing of glass, small clumps of calcium ‘curds’ have clotted inside the deeper spaces between the stones; the powdered remnants of the burnt lime exposed to weather and becoming a natural cement.

Significance in the Area of Recreation

In addition to importance in regards to these sites, Organ Cave represents an important element of the growing nature of curiosity that began in the 19th century: the fulfillment of leisure time through tourism. As one of the oldest commercial caves in the United States, Organ Cave served not only as a valuable mineral resource, but also as a landmark that attracted wonder and inquisitive exploration.

Commercial tours of the cave began in 1822, when the cave was known as Roger’s Stagecoach Stop. The Salt Sulphur Turnpike, which passed directly in front of the cave entrance, created the opportunity for such tours. Fed by a growing number of travelers between the towns of White Sulphur Springs and Salt Sulphur Springs, the cave began its reputation as a destination for the more daring tourists of the time, as one early visitor wrote: “The preparation for exploring one of these cyclopean caves, consists of a supply pitch-pine sticks, faith in your tour guides and folly in yourself.” (Prolix, P. 1837)

One of the primary attractions of Organ Cave is the massive formation from which the cave and the community receive its name, the Rock Organ. A massive stalactite and stalagmite column, the Rock Organ remains an undeniably impressive feature in the subterranean landscape today. In addition to its impressive size, the Rock Organ thrilled early visitors with the deep baritone notes produced when its stalactites were struck, as one early visitor wrote “an exact reproduction of a large pipe organ—at least by striking on the different pipes notes of remarkable purity and strength are reproduced.” (Cole, 1917)

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Following the Confederate occupation, Organ Cave once again assumed its role as a recreation destination. The early 20th century marked a very active public role for the cave. The Chapel Room (named for its use by the Confederates as a religious facility) saw use as a public meeting hall, ballroom and slide show theater. The remarkable acoustic quality of the room combined with a smooth flat open floor made the Chapel Room an appealing recreation destination.

In 1910, the owner of the cave installed a dam at a midway point through the cave with the intentions of creating a small lake suitable for stocking with trout, yet another community and tourist destination. The lake was an unsuccessful venture, but it illustrates the ambition of the owners and the community during the early 20th century about making the most of the area's most remarkable landscape feature. Instead of pine stick torches, the visitors were allotted candles. These candles were placed in boxes at intervals throughout the 'public' section of the cave.

James Boone, owner of the cave at this point, had ambitions to move from candles to electricity. In 1914 the built-up trail was supplemented with Edison style light bulbs powered by a Delco generator and 72 storage batteries—this was the first use of electric power in the community. In 1917 an appreciative visitor wrote: "Hundreds of electric lights illuminate the darkened passageways and some thousands of dollars have been expended to make visits here of worth and long to be remembered. As a natural wonder it has to be seen to be appreciated." (Cole)

Candles were still available. A photograph of around 1927 shows a building by the entrance that stored the guests' umbrellas and stocked these candles and candleholders.

Timeline of Organ Cave

8,000 B.C.E. – Native Americans begin using the cave as a resource for flint and other purposes.

1704 C.E. – Colonial explorers discover what is the present day Organ Cave.

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1796 C.E. – Men mining saltpetre under the direction of Thomas Jefferson discover the remains of a giant 3-toed sloth (*megalonyx jeffersoni*). Jefferson studies the sloth and presents it to the Institute of Science in Philadelphia. The sloth represents one of the most important early finds in the field of paleontology.

1812 C.E. – Saltpetre miners begin extracting and refining saltpetre inside the cave using hoppers. The remnants of 5 hoppers can be seen in this area today (outside of Organ Cave property).

1822 C.E. Stagecoaches run from White Sulphur Springs to Salt Sulphur Springs on the Salt Sulphur Turnpike. The turnpike passes by the entrance to the cave and the first commercial tours of the cave begin. The cave is at this time known as "John Roger's Stagecoach Stop", and the cave was one of the first commercial tourism caves in the country.

Mid – 1800's C.E. – A limekiln is built into the hillside outside of Organ Cave. The limekiln is used to extract lime from limestone suitable for agriculture and industrial use. Today the kiln remains in excellent condition.

1861 C.E. – The Confederate Army under the orders of Robert E. Lee occupy Organ Cave for the purpose of saltpetre mining and refining. The soldiers build 52 hoppers within what is known today as "The Hopper Room" and use this facility to separate the saltpetre from the rock and soil in which it is found. Today, 37 original hoppers remain, the largest collection of Civil War hoppers in the United States.

1914 C.E. – Electrical lighting systems are installed at Organ Cave. The cave was the first place in the area to have electrical lighting. This time period marks the use of the cave as a community meeting area. Dances, slide shows and church ceremonies are held within "The Chapel Room".

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www.coloradopreservation.org

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Verbal Boundary Description

The Organ Cave property boundary extends above ground and into subterranean levels. A fence surrounding the entire property defines the above ground boundary. It begins on the hillside directly above the main entrance to the cave. This line then continues southeast down the side of the hill and continues through a wooded area, which is directly south of the Organ Cave gift shop. This boundary ends prior to reaching the Organ Cave parking lot, where it turns east, reaching the road that comprises the long hillside driveway that leads to the parking lot. The boundary then turns north and follows this driveway, eventually intersecting with Route 63. The border then turns westward and runs parallel to Route 63, which passes directly over the entrance to Organ Cave.

The subterranean dimensions of the cave property extend from the mouth of the cave entrance inside to the inner floor and follow the trail used during the commercial walking sections of the tour. This boundary extends to the Hopper Room and the Rock Organ, two opposite sides of the Organ Cave passages. An accompanying map will provide further detail.

Boundary Justification

The selected boundaries are the traditional boundaries that have been associated and owned in conjunction with Organ Cave. The selected boundaries encompass only a portion of the Organ Cave Inc. property today, but contain upon them all significance contributing and non-contributing sites.

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Name of Property: Organ Cave
Address: SR 63, .5mi. NW of jct. US 219
City: Ronceverte Vicinity
County: Greenbrier

Photographer: Alan Rowe/Janie Morgan

Date: September, 2004

Negatives: Held by State Historic Preservation Office

Photo 1 of 32: Entrance to cave property on SR 63, camera facing south.

Photo 2 of 32: Delco powerhouse, camera facing south.

Photo 3 of 32: Delco powerhouse, camera facing north.

Photo 4 of 32: Historic approach to cave, camera facing west.

Photo 5 of 32: Mid-point of historic approach to cave, camera facing west.

Photo 6 of 32: View up historic approach to cave, camera facing east.

Photo 7 of 32: Top opening of limekiln, camera facing south.

Photo 8 of 32: Overview of cave property, camera facing west.

Photo 9 of 32: Limekiln, camera facing north.

Photo 10 of 32: Limehouse, camera facing north.

Photo 11 of 32: Overview of cave property, camera facing east.

Photo 12 of 32: Visitor's center building, camera facing north.

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- Photo 13 of 32: Snack bar building, camera facing west.
- Photo 14 of 32: Cave opening, camera facing west.
- Photo 15 of 32: View from cave opening toward surface, camera facing east.
- Photo 16 of 32: View from Chapel Room in cave toward opening, camera facing east.
- Photo 17 of 32: Area where sloth fossils were discovered.
- Photo 18 of 32: View of narrow passageway.
- Photo 19 of 32: Area where flint nodules are present on ceiling.
- Photo 20 of 32: Area where flint nodules are present on ceiling.
- Photo 21 of 32: Stone steps to area where cave branches.
- Photo 22 of 32: View of passage that leads out of commercial area of the cave.
- Photo 23 of 32: Passageway that leads to saltpetre extraction area.
- Photo 24 of 32: Passageway that leads to saltpetre extraction area.
- Photo 25 of 32: Example of a wooden hopper used to leach saltpetre from soil.
- Photo 26 of 32: View of the main hopper room.
- Photo 27 of 32: Passageway to cave formations area.
- Photo 28 of 32: Examples of historic graffiti.
- Photo 29 of 32: View of cave formations.
- Photo 30 of 32: Examples of historic graffiti, including the name "LEE".

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Photo 31 of 32: View of cave formations.

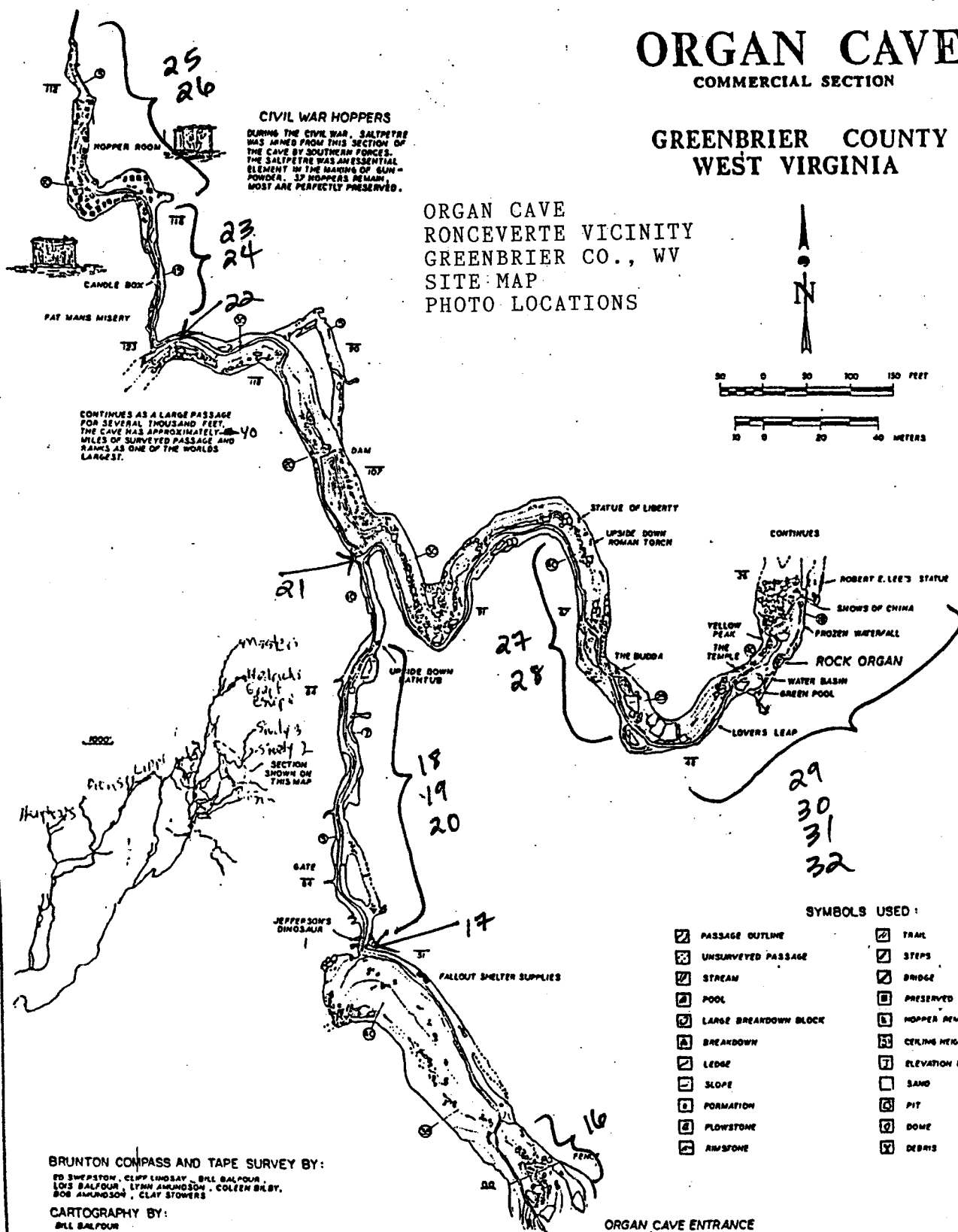
Photo 32 of 32: View of the "rock organ" that gives the cave (and the nearby community)
its name.

ORGAN CAVE

COMMERCIAL SECTION

GREENBRIER COUNTY WEST VIRGINIA

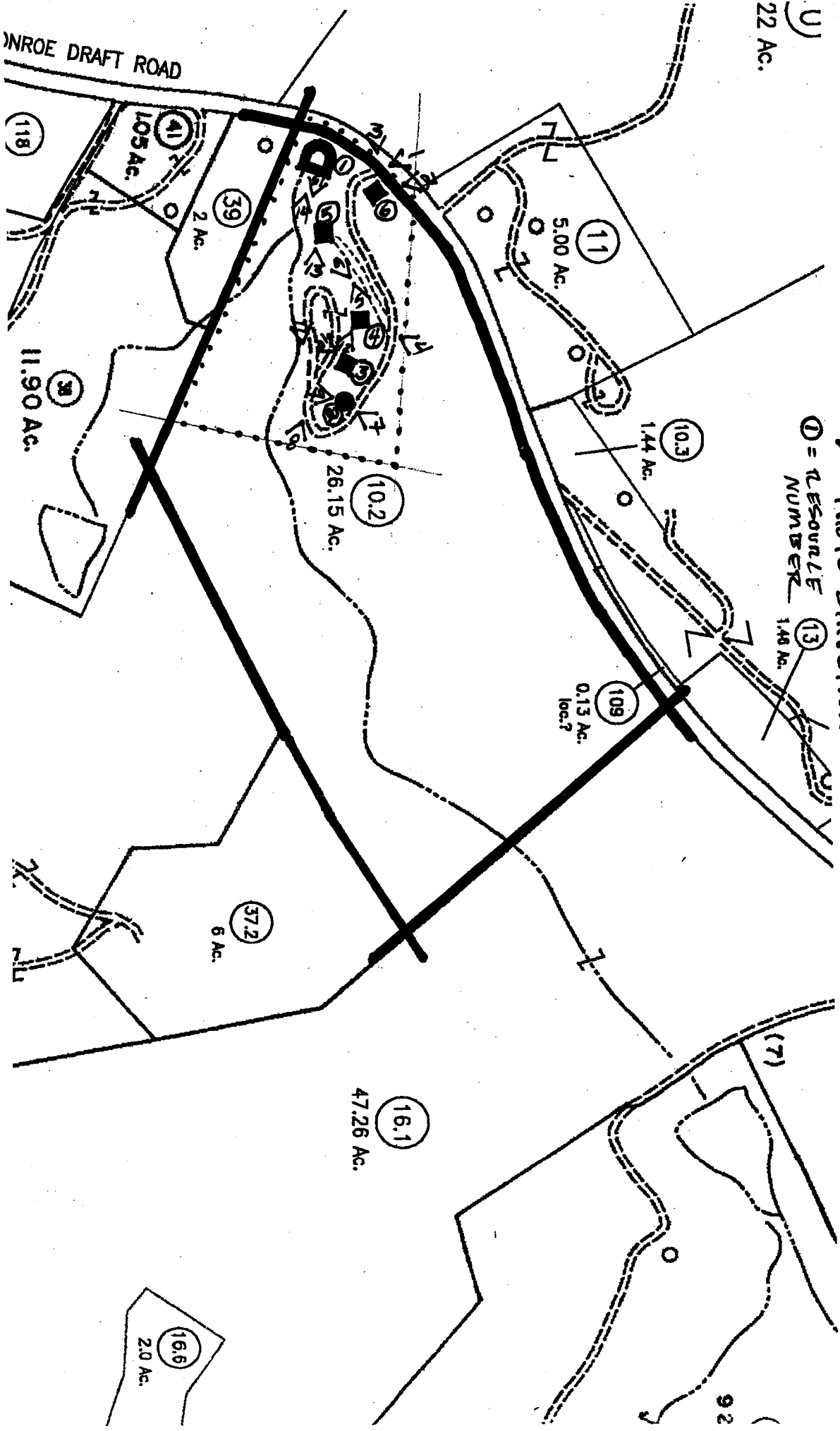
ORGAN CAVE
RONCEVERTE VICINITY
GREENBRIER CO., WV
SITE MAP
PHOTO LOCATIONS



ORGAN CAVE
 RONCEVERTE VICINITY
 GREENBRIER CO., WV
 SITE MAP
 PHOTO LOCATIONS

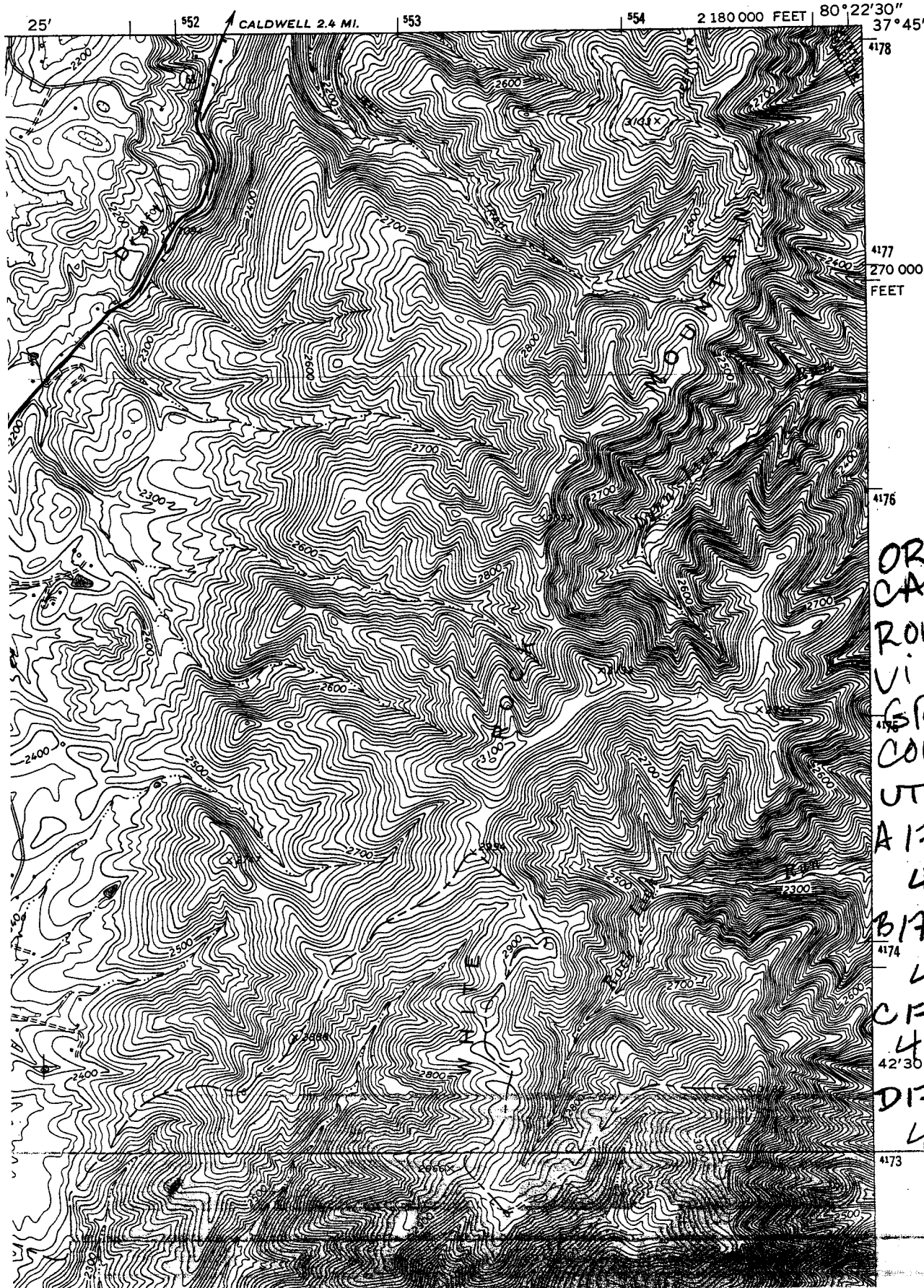
D = CAVE OPENING
■ = BUILDING
● = LIMESTONE
> = PHOTO DIRECTION
--- = DOTTED LINE
--- = IR BOUNDARY

U
 22 Ac.



RONCEVERTE QUADRANGLE
WEST VIRGINIA
7.5 MINUTE SERIES (TOPOGRAPHIC)
NW/4 RONCEVERTE 15' QUADRANGLE

4959 IV SE
(WHITE SULPHUR SPRINGS)



ORGAN
CAVE
RONCEVERTE
VIC.
GREENBRIER
COUNTY, WV
UTM:

A 17/549812/
4174733
B 17/549792/
4174589
C 17/549587/
4174694
D 17/549026/
4174770

