

NATURE NOTES

The Bulletin of the Webster-Groves Nature-Study Society

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Webster Groves, Mo.

October, 1930

LIFE IN A MAN-MADE CAVE.

At Mincke, St. Louis County, Mo. there is a very large man-made cave from which quantities of limestone have been taken in the past. I have been told that it has not been worked for a number of years. Life of various forms has crept in and established itself on the crevassed rocky walls and ceiling and on the solid rock floor, strewn with small pieces of rock and a thick layer of rock-dust. On a visit to the "cave", in the afternoon of September 21, 1930, many kinds of beetles and flies were seen, some in the air, some on the walls and others crawling through the dust on the floor.

Three bird nests were found not far from the entrance on narrow ledges, about twelve feet or higher above the floor. A small amphibian, supposedly a toad, was found near the edge of a pool of mud which had the consistency of "molasses in January". Nearly every corner and crevice had its quota of spider webs, some consisting of only a few strands of loosely woven silk, while others were woven very thickly and appeared to be nearly opaque.

In one of the more thinly woven webs the remains of several tiny moths were found with parts of a number of small black beetles, and in the rock-dust on the floor below were the hardened skins of at least two (possibly more) lepidopterous larvae, one of them, although part was missing, measuring about three inches in length and between a quarter and three-eighths of an inch thick. This web was in a corner at least sixty feet from the entrance. Its maker was not seen.

Many of the numerous drill-holes in the walls had small web-like structures inside, some of them containing insect debris and others waste material. In one such place I noticed a small spindle-shaped web which had a right forewing of a moth (Geometridae) and one of its pectinate antennae. There was also some rather decayed matter, possibly parts of the moth, within the web. This web was about two inches from the opening of the hole which was about two inches in diameter and seven inches deep. It was fully fifty feet from the entrance to the cave.

On leaving the "cave" several large yellow-legged wasps were nervously flying above and into the entrance along the ceiling, but

FOUND, A NEW MISSOURIAN.

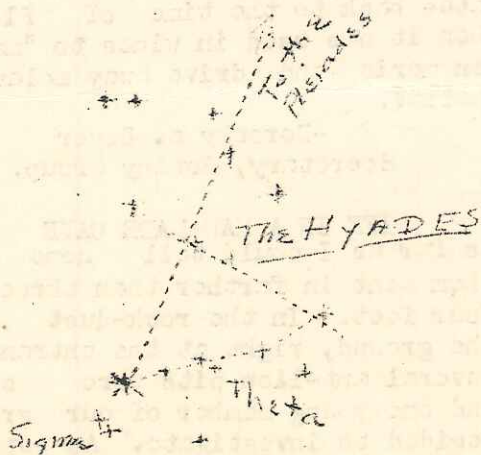
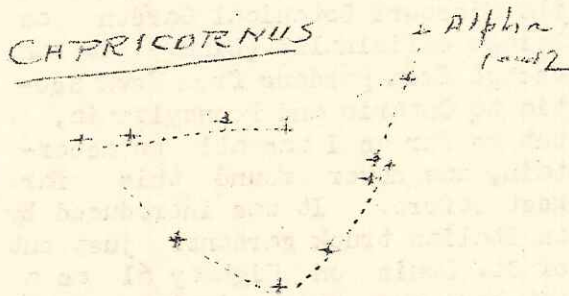
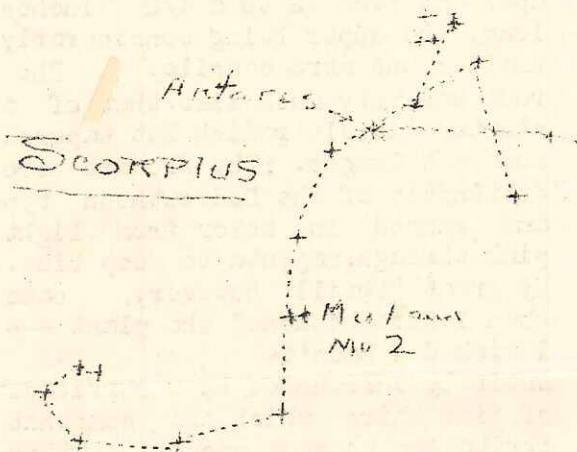
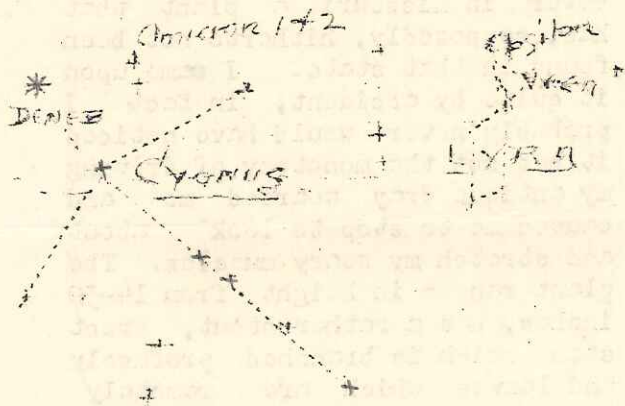
During the summer just passed it was my great pleasure to "discover" in Missouri a plant that had, supposedly, hitherto not been found in that state. I came upon it quite by accident, in fact I probably never would have noticed it had not the monotony of driving my antique dray wearied me and caused me to stop to look about and stretch my weary muscles. The plant ranges in height from 14-30 inches, has a rather stout, erect stem which is branched profusely and leaves which are remotely clasping and oblong at the base but ovate-lanceolate at the top, most of them being obtuse at the apex and from 2 to 5 1/2 inches long, the upper being considerably smaller and more sessile. The root was very much like that of a stunted 'icicle' radish but tapered somewhat longer. The flowers were distinctly of the Dodecatheon type and ranged in color from light pink through magenta to deep blue. My great 'thrill' however, came when I first touched the plant --- I wished I hadn't.

Entirely surrounded by a barricade of fine hairs which are somewhat irritating to some people, they have a distinctly nettle-like effect. The plant, determined at the Missouri Botanical Garden as *Borago officinalis* (Linn.) is an escape from gardens from Nova Scotia to Ontario and Pennsylvania, but so far as I was able to ascertain, was never found this far west before. It was introduced by an Italian truck gardener just out of St. Louis on Highway 61 as a pot-herb supposedly rivaling our spinach. The history of this little immigrant is too long to relate here but it is very romantic and dates back to the time of Pliny when it was used in wines to "make men meric and drive away melancholia".

-Dorothy A. Boyer
Secretary, Botany Group.

LIFE IN A MAN-MADE CAVE
as far as I could tell none of them went in farther than three or four feet. In the rock-dust on the ground, right at the entrance, several ant-lion pits were seen and one young member of our group decided to investigate. As yet, I have not heard the results of his investigation.

-Stuart L. O'Byrne.



DOUBLE STARS

An alert observer of the sky will often notice that some stars appear in pairs. These pairs when seen without optical aid are known as naked-eye double stars. Some of them are very well known having been noted by the ancient Arab and Greek astronomers. The best known naked-eye double, Mizar and Alcor, is to be found at the bend in the "handle" of the Big Dipper. Mizar (Zeta Ursae Majoris) is a "white" star of magnitude 2.4 and Alcor (g Ursae Majoris) is of magnitude 4.

Epsilon Lyrae, lying just to the East of Vega, is another naked eye pair. Its components are both of fifth magnitude and are quite close together. This star is shown on the accompanying chart.

Mu 1 and Mu 2 in Scorpius form a naked eye double. The former is of magnitude 3.1 and the latter of magnitude 3.6; both are bluish in color. They are shown on the chart.

Alpha 1 and Alpha 2 in Capricornus also form a wide naked-eye pair; the former being of magnitude 3.0 and the latter of orange color and magnitude 3.8. Its position is marked on the chart.

Theta Tauri, lying near Aldebaran in the "V-shaped" Hyades cluster, is a naked-eye double star having components of magnitudes 3.6 and 4.0. This star and the following one are marked on the chart of Hyades.

Sigma Tauri, another naked-eye pair, isto be seen very close to Aldebaran toward the southeast. The magnitudes of its components are 4.8 and 15.2.

Omicron 1 and Omicron 2 in Cygnus, a naked-eye double, appears as a triple star if observed through a field glass. The magnitudes of the naked-eye components are 5.0 and 4.0, the latter, being a double, has a 7.0 magnitude companion star. Omicron 2 is an orange colored star. The chart of Cygnus shows the position of this object.

NOTE:-

The editor would like comments or criticisms of the article "Double Stars" so as to know if lists written up in that form and with accompanying charts have any real value to those of our membership who are interested in astronomy. If favorable comment is made it is entirely possible that more complete and detailed accounts of these and other astronomical objects will be published in the future.

Webster Groves Nature-Study Society
A BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN NATURE-STUDY SOCIETY

(Organized in 1920)

Webster Groves, Mo.

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STUART L. O'BYRNE
Editor
NATURE NOTES

GENERAL MEETING

And Awarding of Prizes.

On Saturday evening October 4th the insect collections and other exhibits of the contestants in the 1930 contest just closed, will be displayed at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory, 527 Ivanhoe Place, Webster Groves, after 8 PM when the prizes will be awarded.

This will be an interesting meeting. Be sure to come - and invite some of your friends.

GARDEN TRIP

On Saturday afternoon October 11th, a Garden Trip is announced by Mrs. Satterthwait. Meet at the Greenhouse in Tower Grove Park near the Magnolia Avenue entrance, at 2 o'clock.

FIELD TRIP

On Sunday morning October 12th, assembling before 8 o'clock at 9th St. and Chouteau Ave., starting across the Municipal Bridge to Pittsburg Lake, near East St. Louis, on the hour of 8. Bring lunch and field glasses.

GROUP MEETINGS

Photography, Monday evening October 6, 8 PM, at the Mueller residence, 12 Armin Ave., Gondale Heights. "Printing of Pictures from Negatives" will be the work of the evening, so bring along some of your negatives. Mr. Arthur Mueller is now chairman.

Geology, Thursday evening October 9, 8 PM, at the Jones residence, 690 Bonita Ave., Webster Groves. The Chairman has delegated "Mr. ???" to give a non-serious explanation of "The Lighter Side of Rocks".

Microscopy, Friday evening October 10th, at the U.S. Entomological Laboratory. "Single Celled Animals. - The Protozoa." Any one having slides showing protozoa please bring them along, and bring microscopes. Dr. Meiners, Chairman.

Ichthyology Monday evening October 13, 8 PM, at the Entomological Laboratory. Subject to be announced. Mr. Hubricht, Chairman.

Astronomy, Saturday afternoon and evening October 18 at the Schmedelbach cottage near Allenton, Mo. "Viewing the Westward Parade of the Stars". Mr. Townsend will select objects for small telescopes; Mr. Jones, objects for the field glass; Mr. O'Byrne, objects for the naked-eye; Mr. Mueller, objects suitable for night photography.

The place is so ideal for outdoor star study that it is well worth the trip to Allenton. Route, Manchester Road West to the Allenton Road, south seven miles to Allenton, where Miss Schmedelbach will meet arrivals between 4.30 and 5 o'clock at Gross' Grocery and conduct them to the cottage at the "Tom Evans" camp. Bring cots, blankets, flash lights, star maps and cameras if you can, and plenty of lunch, as you are expected as overnight guests at the cottage. (Coffee furnished).

Botany, Monday evening October 20, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. Topic, "Do Plants Have Sex?", Miss Dorothy Boyer; followed by another display of Mr. Bradley's mounted specimens shown at the last meeting to be used as a "memory test" of the correct names of the trees they represent.

Ornithology, Friday evening October 24, 8 PM, at the Laboratory, subject to be announced. Mr. Palmer, Chairman?

Entomology, Monday evening October 27, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. "Relations Between Insects and Plants", led by the Chairman, with emphasis on the topics "Insects and Flowers" and "Insectivorous Plants". Mr. A. F. Satterthwait will give a talk on "Sunflower Insects".

Nature-Melody, Friday evening October 31, 8 PM, at the Laboratory. "Migratory Birds and Orthoptera", Mrs. Satterthwait, Chairman.

Juniors will meet on Wednesday afternoon October 29th with Mrs. Pickens, at the usual hour.

Anne A. Jones, Secretary