

CAVES HONEYCOMB ENTIRE-MOUNTAIN

Great Cavern Discovered by Capt. Thomas in Adirondacks Seems Main Subterranean Gallery.

TRACKS OF MANY ANIMALS

Huge Bear Among Them—Temperature Mild, with Thin Mist and Odor as of Warm Sulphur Springs.

Special to The New York Times.

SARANAC LAKE, March 10.—According to Capt. Elmer E. Thomas, who has reported the discovery of caves rivaling the Kentucky Mammoth on W Mountain, near Standish, it seems probable that the entire mountain is honeycombed. Caves have been reported from time to time in the past, but Capt. Thomas has located the main subterranean artery from which dozens of other tunnels branch, each running into great underground chambers from which still other passages lead off.

Besides being a geological freak, W Mountain seems to be the retreat of many rare wild animals. In one of the smaller caves elk signs were found and one explorer brought back some elk horns. Capt. Thomas, who is a hunter of considerable reputation, found frequent bear tracks in his recent exploration of the caves. One of the tracks, he says, was that of the largest bear he has ever run across, the paw print measuring ten inches long by seven across the toes. Black cat and sable were common, while deer tracks were remarkable.

W Mountain is right in the wilderness, the nearest settlements are at Standish, a village about two and a half miles to the northeast, and Twin Pond the same distance to the southwest. The W range is so called on account of its ragged saw-like formation.

When seen at his home here to-day Capt. Thomas said that he was lumber cruising when he stumbled upon the caves. There was nothing imposing or suggestive in the outward appearance of them. The mouth of the great cave was merely a yawning slit in the snowclad mountain. But for the contrasting darkness he would probably not have noticed it. He entered by lowering himself about fifty feet. Then he found himself in a tunnel, which he followed for about 100 feet, when he suddenly emerged into an immense hall thirty feet high and about fifty wide.

Capt. Thomas was accompanied on this occasion by former Superintendent of Woodlands A. W. Cooper. Their entrance to this hall carrying lanterns disturbed thousands of bats, which shrieked and whirled about them. The two men followed a further tunnel on a decline of forty degrees and presently found themselves in a greater subterranean hall from which shot a labyrinth of tunnels, their entrances naturally arched and pillared. Capt. Thomas and Mr. Cooper ate lunch on the second chamber, which they christened the "Dining Hall," the first chamber being the "Hall of the Bats."

The two men penetrated about 1,000 feet more or less when they halted, fearing to lose themselves and awed by the strangeness of their surroundings.

The temperature in the cave was mild, although it was bitterly cold outside, and Capt. Thomas reports that a thin, warm mist hung in the air and there was a distinct odor as of sulphur springs. It was with a remark about being too near Hades that the explorers returned to the open air.

Later Capt. Thomas discovered three other cave mouths about a quarter of a mile apart. One of them he recognized as having been reported some time before. Capt. Thomas and Mr. Cooper thoroughly explored the mountain and later made snapshots which show a vista of a hundred miles of wood and water from the dim Vermont shore on the other side of Champlain to beyond Tupper Lake. The mouth of the great cave looks down the Saranac Valley for an immense distance.

The New York Times

Published: March 11, 1909

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