

Obituary

Samuel M. Cassidy, Jr. 1902—1992

I met Sam Cassidy more than 20 years ago, shortly after emerging from his cave on a bitterly cold February evening. Steve Jackson and I had earlier received permission from the farm manager to survey Boggs Cave, but had not yet met the owner of the property.

We knocked on his door that evening to briefly pay our respects, our wet clothing beginning to freeze. To our surprise, our courtesy call turned into an extended visit when he invited us into his living room to thaw (gratefully) before a warm and cheery fire. More than an hour later, having been entertained and impressed by the considerable extent of Sam's knowledge of geology and local history, we reluctantly ventured out again into the cold. A long-lasting friendship began on that night.

Sam had been born and raised on Cave Spring Farm in Fayette County, Kentucky,

and had absorbed an abiding affection for the cave that named his home. Throughout his life he developed and retained an interest in caves and geology, although he never became a "caver" with a yen for exploration. Instead, Sam became a mining engineer. His 1924 initiation to the Sigma Rho mining fraternity at the University of Kentucky took place in Lexington's Picadome Cave. During his lengthy professional career, Sam served as president, vice-president, or director for several large coal companies. Among his numerous professional affiliations can be listed the Society of Mining Engineers and the Kentucky Society of Professional Engineers. For a number of years Sam served on the Advisory Council to U.K.'s College of Engineering, and was past president of both the Blue Grass Trust for Historic Preservation and of the University of Kentucky Library Associates.

Shortly after we met in 1970, Sam joined the Blue Grass Grotto of the NSS. He told me that he passed along the issues of the grotto newsletter to a "youngster in Tennessee who was getting the fever." In 1970 he con-



Samuel Cassidy

tributed an article to the newsletter about the history of Boggs Cave that was subsequently reprinted in the *Speleo Digest* for that year. In his later years he remained active in the management of the farm, and always extended a warm welcome to all visitors and especially to cavers. He was one of the finest men I have ever known and I shall greatly miss the stimulating conversations we had on Kentucky history and other subjects.

—Gary A. O'Dell