

double negative, and of the decimal system of notation, is of some importance in any effort to face connection with other tongues. They average below the medium stature, are of scant angular frames, of larger bones, but less symmetrically built than the Navajoes, and have much less intelligent faces, are more squalid in appearance, and more generally worthless than the latter tribe. The women occasionally make baskets, and some few of the men can be induced to work in the fields near the agency. At present there is plenty of game on the reservation, and it is a well-watered country—one of the prettiest in New Mexico.

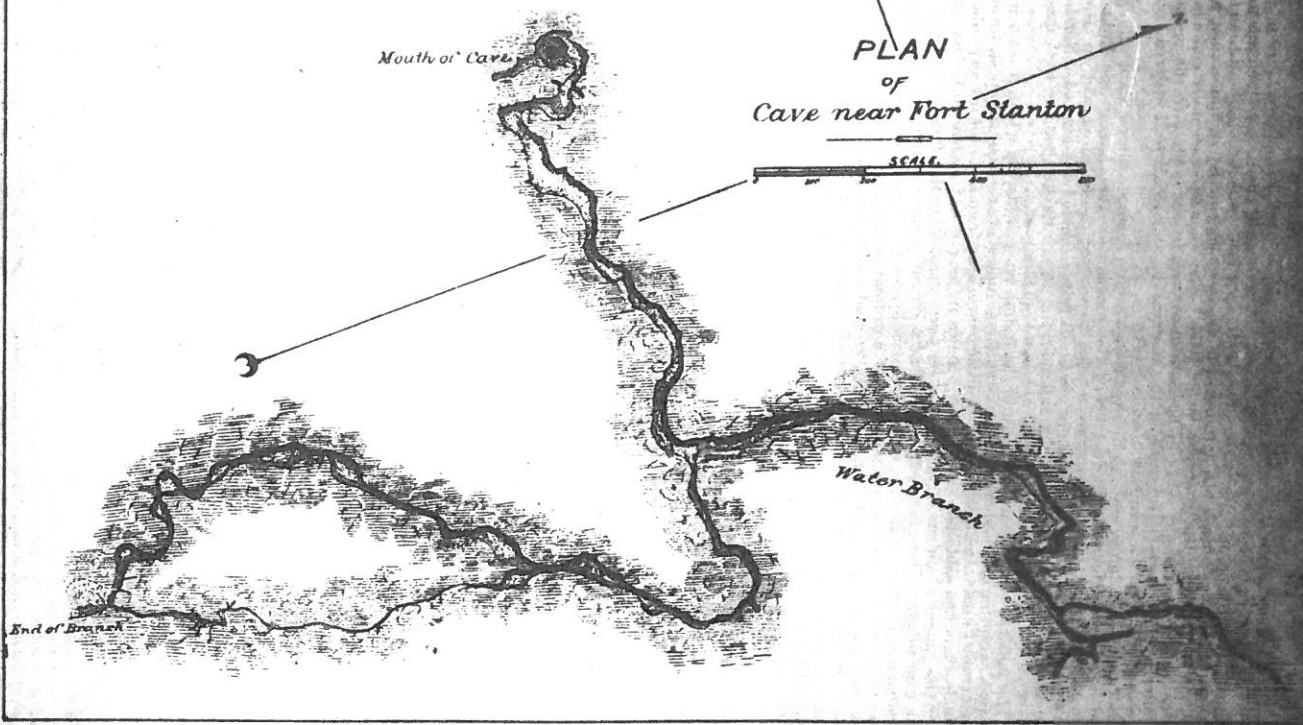
Between the Tularosa and the Ruidoso rises a saddle from the Sierra Blanca Ranges and Sacramento Mountains. Just below the junction of the Carrizo and Ruidoso Creeks flow swift mountain streams; at the crossing of the Stanton road are Downlin's flour and saw mills. This country is beautifully timbered and grassed. North of the Ruidoso and Eagle Creeks, branches of the former, is the Bonito—a well-named Pretty Creek—on the right bank of which is Fort Stanton.

The military reservation tongues into the Indian reservation, by which it is encompassed, excepting on one short side. At Stanton, as indeed at every military post, we met the greatest kindness and courtesy. A little over a mile from this post is a cave about which rumor had said that it was over 5 miles in length and abounded in beautiful grottoes, snowy chambers, crystal stalactites, and great lakes in whose waters eyeless fish were found. This cave we thoroughly explored and surveyed, and were not a little disappointed to find its growing mysteries dwindled into a very commonplace cave. The formation is limestone capped with sand. A ground-plan is given herewith. Entering the cave by the funnel-shaped mouth, we find a short branch running to the left about 200 feet, then running to an impassable outlet. We followed the right-hand branch, running nearly south a short distance, then generally east, to the point at which the upper branch runs off to the south, the main cave changing to the north-east. A short distance beyond this point we came to the spring, beyond which there are again two forks; the left-hand branch, carrying the water, is narrow, just wide enough for the water channel, which is about waist-deep. This branch we followed to the point where the roof closed down in contact with the water, which we followed slowly of proceeding; and a cold tramp it was. Retracing our steps, we followed the limestone stream, which again divided into short forks. At the forks is a dome, where the hole that an outlet had been found, and a current of air setting in from above led to closed by wedged rocks. Upon tracing the line upon the surface, a small crevice discovered that our surmise was correct. Leaving the main cave by a passage which runs out from near the roof, about 40 feet above the bottom, we enter a low passage into domes and larger passages, in some of which there are fine stalactites and stalagmites, though nothing to compare with Mammoth Cave, as claimed. Farther on there is a dome from which open two passages, one running down to the right, the other running on nearly a level to the left. We tried first this left-hand branch, and for nearly a quarter of a mile were on our hands and heels; occasionally we had a breathing spell propelling ourselves by our elbows and heels; finally we reached a dome, pendant from the roof of which were many amber-like stalactites reaching out slowly but surely toward the upturned stalagmites year by year lifting their heads in their slow approach to union, the one gathering the daily increments of each and dividing it in generous proportions with the other till, united as one, they make a great pillar of support to the dome from which both drew their strength. At the end of the narrow passage through which we had fairly wormed our way we reached a dome, the largest in the cave, the roof of which had fallen in and choked up what may have been the farther outlet, but no passage was open from it excepting one leading off at an acute angle with our previous course. This dome open way led back till it also became choked with debris from the falling in of the roof, making it impossible to proceed farther. Retracing our steps, we entered the right-hand branch, which descended into a dome-like chamber with two narrow outlets leading to a more open passage, which we followed till it, too, came to an end, which we little suspected, till the work was plotted, was within about 50 feet of where we had been but one communication, being cut off by the caving in of the dome. About 800 feet from the point reached on the water-course in the first branch examined, and in the direction of its axis prolonged, there bubbles up near the bank of the Bonito a large spring, which is doubtless the outlet of this underground drainage. No sign of life was found anywhere in the cave, excepting a few bats which, disturbed in their quiet haunts, fitted back and forth, roused from their sleep in the deep gloom by the fitful flicker of our few candles. The air was perfectly pure and the water very pleasant to the taste. We were five days surveying the various branches, and fortunately suffered no inconvenience other than the fatigue from our underground work.

Northeast from Stanton lies the Capitan Range. The southern point was occupied for triangulation. About the base of this mountain, in the limestone formation, there are

PLAN
of
Cave near Fort Stanton

SCALE



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