

miles from the South Branch near Colonell Hights: it is a perpendicular rock, in the middle of which is a Cavern and which was formd from the stones composing the rock decaying and tumbling down carrying along with them a good quantity of rich mould, which contains the Saltpetre, and as the Cavern is so deep that no rain can come in, the Saltpetre is not washed off. If stones are broke off or lifted up, there is sometimes a good quantity of real Saltpetre in its white colour found, which can be scrap'd off out of the Interstices where it collects. As for its formation there is a similarity with old cellars which are known to contain often according to their age great quantities, with this difference only, that the collection of nitre in these Caverns may be from thousands of years which accounts for their richness.

From the situation and causes I had reason to suppose that the mountains must contain a great many such Caverns and accordingly informed the inhabitants with my notion, who have since searched and discovered about 3 miles further another such Cavern equally rich, and as I have received a sample of Saltpetre from the Ohio which was found and scraped off from interstices of stones in a cavern, which I hereby send for the inspection of Convention, it is evident that our mountains contain every where such caverns full of Saltpetre as to furnish the Colonies with that desirable article to the fullest extent at reasonable rates.

I attempted a Trial to make some Saltpetre out of the mould, and took 2 bushels thereof from which I extracted between 2 and 3 pounds, but am sure that it would have produced considerable more, if I had the necessary utensils on the spot, a sample of the nitre I have brought to the Council of Safety. This Saltpetre was exceeding strong and in very large Cristales.

The people on the spot now make Saltpetre and make use of it partly in gunpowder, and partly for salting meat, that being a scarce article there, and no doubt squander away great quantities, not being sufficiently skilld to make it to advantage.

I have the honor to be Sir

Your most obed^t & Hble Serv^t

Baltimore Town Octob 1st 1776.

C. F. Wiesenthal.

Wednesday Oct^r 2^d 1776.

C. S. J.

Council met. Present as on yesterday.

Ordered That Western shore Treasurer pay W^m Wilkins three hundred Pounds on Acc^t of Fortifications at Annapolis.

Permit granted to William M^cGaray Master of Sloop Nancy,