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USNM

An Unusual Ant Collection Record: Recently I received for determination a dealate female and a worker of the ant, *Smithistruma clypeata* (Rog.) which were collected at Midway Point, Luray Caverns, Virginia, May 27, 1952 by Kathryn Sommerman who stated, "These were taken way down underground in the big room about half way through the cave. The guide called the room "Midway Point" and gave us a rest period, 5 or 10 minutes. The ants were collected from the walls along with some psocids. I had a flashlight and aspirator for collecting. The guide assured me there were no insects within the cave, and although he did not prohibit collecting he wasn't very enthusiastic about the idea. Since we had only one rest period there was no other chance to collect because I did not want to be conspicuous by failing to keep up with the rest of the group. The room was lighted when sightseers were being conducted through there, but otherwise the lights were turned off, and then it was in total darkness. However, the lights were on enough so that the green growths of algae or moss were found near the lights."

Although several other species of ants have been collected from caves in other sections of the world, this is the first species, to my knowledge, that has been reported from a cave in the United States. Another dacetine ant, *Strumigenys* (Pyramica) *gundlachi* (Rog.) was stated by Weber, 1952., Amer. Mus. Novitates No. 1554, p. 5 to have been found in a dark cave in Trinidad, 200 meters from the entrance.

Brown, 1953. Amer. Midl. Nat. 50: 59 says that *clypeata* ranges from southern Pennsylvania to central Illinois south to Florida and Louisiana. According to him abundant records show that the species will nest in the soil cover, beneath stones, or in rotten logs, usually in forested areas, and that although it has not been directly reported feeding on springtails, it almost certainly does. Future collecting in caves may thus yield more species of dacetine ants and springtails than we are now aware live under those conditions.--
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NOTICE

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