

## BURIAL MOUND

The burial mound was built during the Woodland Period — 500 B.C. to 1000 A.D. Excavation revealed 12 burials which had been crushed by the weight of stones placed above them. No artifacts were recovered from the mound.

## SINKHOLE

Before the final rockfall the entrance to Russell Cave looked much as the sinkhole does today. The constant erosive action of water on the limestone continually changes the sinkhole and the surrounding area. During periods of heavy rains, runoff from the mountainside, coupled with underground water, occasionally fills the sinkhole to the level of the viewing area where you now stand.

## DRY CREEK

Dry Creek played a major role in the development of Russell Cave. Normally only a dry stream bed, it drains 14,000 acres north of the park. Its periodic flooding exposed the entrance to the cave. The water from the springs beneath the trail provided early man with one of his most important needs and was partially responsible for his return to the cave each fall.

## NATURE TRAIL

Interpretive signs identify some of the plants and trees and explain how early man used them.

## WILDLIFE

Along the nature trail you may see some of the presentday wildlife such as: squirrels, chipmunks, groundhogs, skunks, raccoons, wood rats and assorted snakes and lizards. Early man depended upon the area wildlife for one source of his food.

## BIRDS

Many species of birds visit the park on their annual migration paths.

Native birds include mockingbird, yellowhammer, or flicker, which is the Alabama state bird, bluebirds and jays, robins, cardinals, sparrows, warblers and woodpeckers.

## WILDFLOWERS

The most common wildflowers include May Apple, Trillium, Loose-flowered Phacelia, Hepatica, Spring Beauty, Virginia Creeper, Trumpet Vine and the Jack-in-the-Pulpit.

## HIKING TRAIL

For those interested in longer walks the hiking trail ascends to an elevation of 1000 feet. Along the trail you see interesting and unique rock formations.

From the top of the trail you may wish to walk the fire trail to Montague Mountain's 1700 ft. peak.

During the fall and winter an expansive view of Doran's Cove and the surrounding area can be seen.

The 3-mile round trip will take approximately 2 hours.

Russell Cave is the terminus of the Boy Scout River Mont Cave Trail which begins in Bridgeport and covers a distance of 13 miles.

## SAFETY

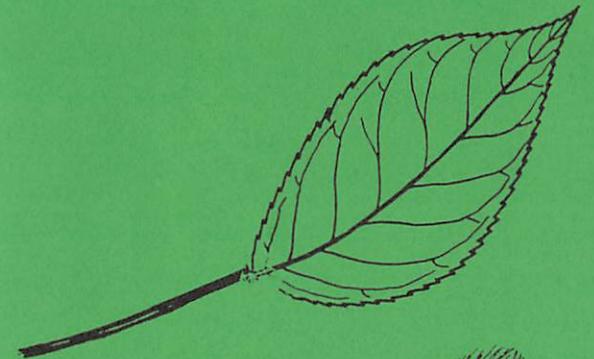
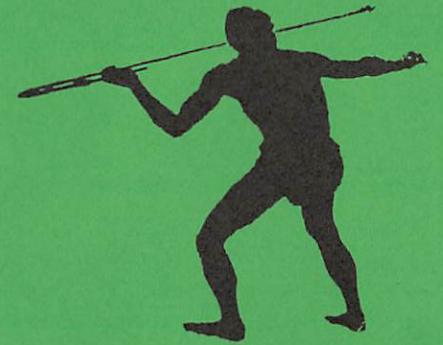
You are cautioned to stay on the trails due to the abundance of poison ivy, the uneven terrain and the possibility of encountering snakes.

### Cover Illustrations:

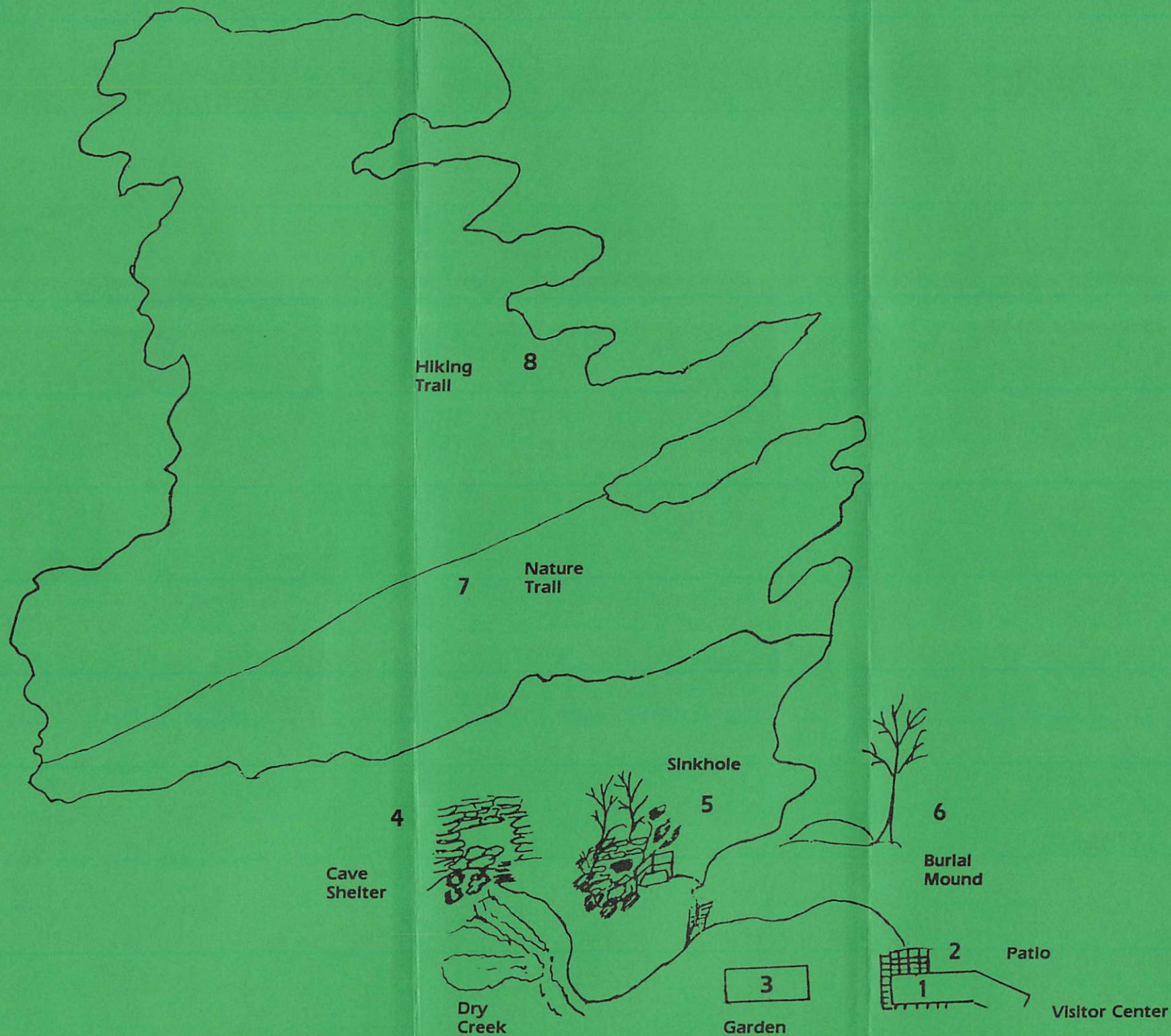
*The abundance of berries, oak, hickory and other nut trees was partially responsible for the hunting and gathering culture's use of Russell Cave.*

## RUSSELL CAVE NATIONAL MONUMENT

# Trail Guide



U.S. Department of the Interior  
National Park Service



## POINTS OF INTEREST

1. Visitor Center —  
Museum has exhibits portraying early man's lifestyle, information, rest rooms and sales area.
2. Patio —  
Living history demonstrations of early man's weapons and tools are presented.
3. Garden —  
In season it contains plants grown by Mississippian Indians.
4. Cave Shelter —  
An audiovisual program highlights the occupation site and excavations.
5. Sinkhole —  
Illustrates early stages of cave development.
6. Burial Mound —  
Built during the Woodland Period.
7. Nature Trail —  
Interpretive signs identify some of the plants and trees and explain how early man used them. .5 mile long, moderate incline.
8. Hiking Trail —  
1.2 miles through woods, steep incline.