A History



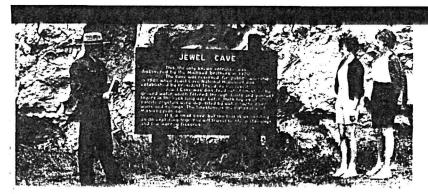
It is not clear when or by whom Jewel Cave was discovered. Some reports indicate that it may have been as early as 1886, though

this has never been verified. As the accepted story goes, two brothers and their friend were attracted to the sound of wind rushing through a small hole in the side of Hell Canyon in 1900. Frank and Albert Michaud and Charles Bush enlarged the opening and inside found a maze of cave passages, many lined with a layer of calcite crystals.

On September 18, 1900, Jewel Cave was recorded as the Jewel Tunnel claim. As a mining claim, the cave had to be "proved," so slabs of calcite crystals were removed and sold to Father Paul Dobberstein to be used as decoration on a religious shrine, the Grotto of Our Redemption. (The shrine still exists and is located in West Bend, Iowa.) At this point, the story again



becomes unclear. It is generally believed that the original entrance was closed off and another opened, though other sources indicate that the present Historic Entrance is actually an enlarged version of the original one. When no commercially valuable minerals were found, the Michauds attempted to develop the cave as a tourist attraction, but they met with little success.



On February 7, 1908, President Theodore Roosevelt created Jewel Cave National Monument, consisting of 1,275 acres north and west of the original cave entrance. The area was administered by the U.S. Forest Service until 1933 when all national monuments were transferred to the National Park Service. The Jewel Cave Corporation, a non-profit organization formed by the Commercial Club of Custer, South Dakota, and the Lions Club of Newcastle, Wyoming, conducted public tours of

Jewel Cave from 1928 until 1939. When the National Park Service took over the tour operations in 1940, much of the early knowledge of the cave had been lost. Jewel Cave was still thought to be quite small and significant only for the extensive coating of calcite crystals on its walls.

Prior to 1958, the total known extent of Jewel Cave was less than two miles. During 1958 and 1959, park rangers and other spelunkers (most notably Herb and Jan Conn) began exploring east of the tour route. Great discoveries ensued!





Since it was impossible to take visitors into the newly

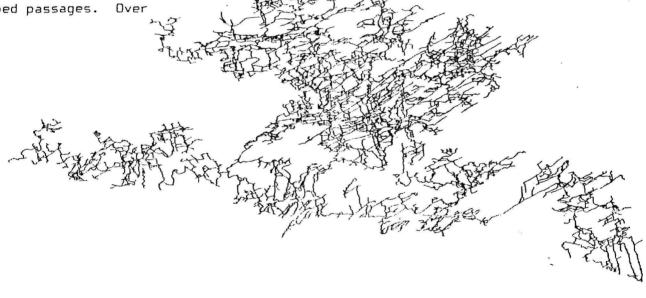
discovered parts of the cave through the original entrance, the National Park Service proposed a new development one mile east of that entrance. The first step was a change in the Monument's boundaries, since most of the newly discovered cave lay outside of the original boundaries. In 1965, Congress enacted a land exchange between the National Park Service and the U.S. Forest Service which re-aligned the boundaries to include the newer portions of the cave and shortly thereafter construction of a new Visitor Center, elevator



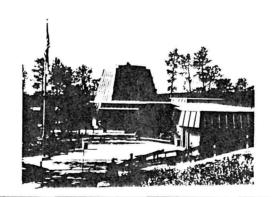
shaft into the cave and tour trail was begun.

Continuing exploration has shown Jewel Cave to be second only (in the United States) to the Flint Ridge-Mammoth Cave System of Kentucky in terms of miles of mapped passages. Over

78.50 miles have been mapped as of March 22, 1989, making Jewel Cave the 2nd longest known cave in the United States and the 4th longest known cave in the world.



Currently, the Jewel Cave facility consists of a visitor center, roads and parking areas, an access tunnel and elevator into the cave, cave trails and lighting, a maintenance shop, and employee housing. The visitor center, dedicated on May 28, 1972, includes an information and



sales desk, exhibit room, public restrooms, and administrative offices. The visitor center is open yearround and guided cave tours! are available May through September.

Jewel Cave National Monument is For More Information located 13 miles west of Custer, South Dakota on U.S. Highway 16.

Please call (605) 673-2288 or write: Unit Manager, Jewel Cave National Monument, RR1, Box 60AA, Custer, South Dakota 57730.