

## SAFETY TIPS — GENERAL INFORMATION

Have a safe vacation. Obey traffic rules, stay on the trails, watch for falling rocks, and do not feed the wildlife. The cave tour is strenuous. It is not recommended for people who have breathing problems, heart trouble, or walking difficulties.

The monument, elevation 4,000 feet, is 20 miles by Ore. 46 from Cave Junction on U.S. 199.

Guide service is furnished by Oregon Caves Co. under contract with the U.S. Department of the Interior. Because of moist conditions within the cave, it may be advisable to use coveralls and rubber foot-gear, which can be rented from the concessioner. Temperature of the electrically lighted cave is about 45° F. Canes, sticks, and tripods must be left outside the cave to avoid accidental damage to formations.

Meals and lodging are available in summer, light refreshments all year. Children under 6 years of age, are not permitted in the cave; they can stay in the concessioner-operated nursery for a fee.

Picnicking and camping are not permitted. Cave Creek Campground, in Siskiyou National Forest, is 4 miles from the monument, on Ore. 46.

Keep pets leashed or in your car. Leave rocks, flowers, wildlife, and other natural features undisturbed.

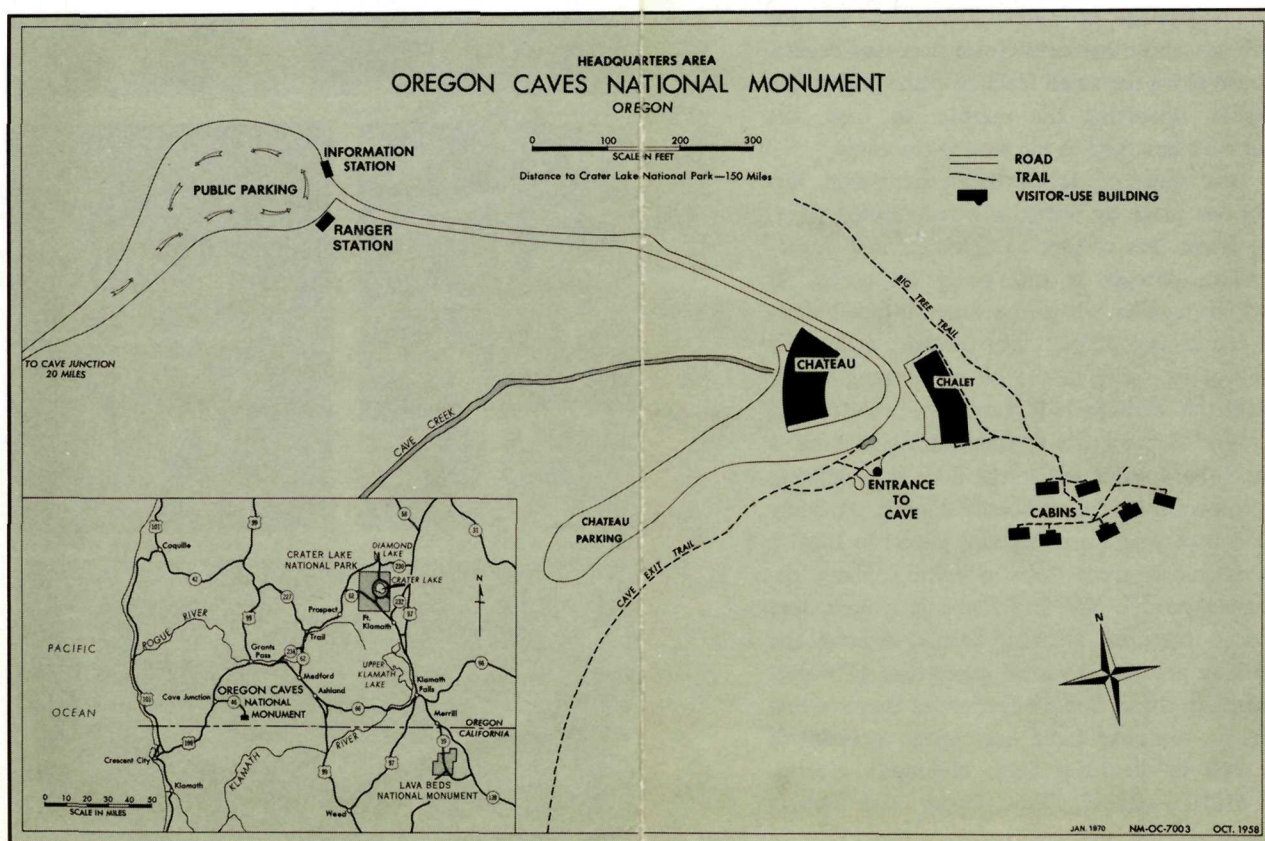
## ADMINISTRATION

Oregon Caves National Monument is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior.

The general superintendent of the Klamath Falls Group is in charge of Oregon Caves National Monument. Inquiries or comments about this area may be addressed to him at Box 128, Klamath Falls, OR 97601. A resident manager is at the monument all year, and correspondence may also be addressed to him at Box 377, Cave Junction, OR 97523.

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# oregon caves

national  
monument



*Smooth-walled erosion of the River Styx*

In 1874 Elijah Davidson was hunting with his dog in the Siskiyou Mountains of Oregon. In pursuit of a bear, the dog led Davidson to a dark opening in the rocks. Gathering pine splinters to use as a torch, the hunter entered the opening. Thus was discovered the Oregon Cave.

The cave soon became an attraction for adventurers, who explored and opened part of it. In 1877, Frank Nickerson, of Kerby, Oreg., found four different floors, or levels, and opened several galleries that had been blocked by stalactites. Visitors were few, however, for the country was sparsely settled, and the nearest railroad was 200 miles away.

Joaquin Miller, the "Poet of the Sierra," who visited the cave in 1907, made it better known through his writings. He referred to the cave as "The Marble Halls of Oregon."

Oregon Caves National Monument was established on July 12, 1909. Although it has long been known as the "Oregon Caves," the phenomenon consists of a single cave.

## GEOLOGY

The geological story of the cave goes back over a vast period to an age when an ancient ocean covered the area. In this ocean was deposited a thick bed of calcium carbonate, which later hardened into limestone. During periods of mountain building, the heat and pressure generated within the earth transformed the limestone into marble, and it was raised

above the sea as part of a mountain range.

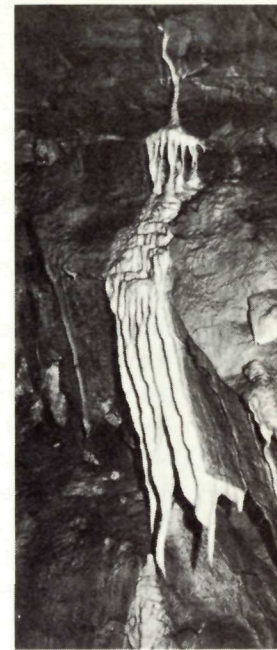
The uplifts that formed the mountains fractured the marble in many places. Although the openings along these fractures may have been small, they allowed the passage of water. Rainwater, charged with carbonic and other acids from decaying vegetation, moved along the small fracture planes below the water table, dissolving the marble. In time, the fractures were enlarged to the size of the cave.

In a later stage of development, carbonate, dissolved in one place by water, was redeposited wherever the water was subject to agitation and evaporation. This process is still going on today. It occurred particularly where the water dripped slowly from the ceiling of the cave, for here each drop lost some of its water to the air as it clung to the rock, and the carbonate it carried was left as a deposit. The deposit grew downward, forming a stalactite. Where water fell to the floor, a stalagmite was built upward by the carbonate deposit. In some places a stalactite and a stalagmite joined to form a column extending from floor to ceiling. Some deposits have assumed odd and fantastic shapes, and others have acquired graceful forms. Among the most striking are the exquisite miniatures of waterfalls created in stone. Some of the main features and chambers in the cave have been given descriptive names, such as Paradise Lost, Neptune's Grotto, Joaquin Miller's Chapel, Ghost Room, and Banana Grove.

Pictures and captions from The Underworld of Oregon Caves by Roger J. Contor



*Detail in Paradise Lost*



*Drapery in Ghost Room*



*Hibernating bat in "dry" room*



*Soda straw stalactite*



*Calcite crystals in layer of flowstone*



*Stalactites formed since exit tunnel was completed in 1933*