

# WIND CAVE

NATIONAL PARK



SOUTH DAKOTA

# Wind Cave National Park

A limestone cavern, with beautiful boxwork formations and other interesting features

*Wind Cave* NATIONAL PARK was established by act of Congress, dated January 9, 1903. Its boundaries were subsequently extended and it now includes more than 26,000 acres of federally owned lands. The park consists of a limestone cavern noted for its unusual boxwork rarely found in other sections of the world. Other crystalline formations in various color shadings line a series of subterranean passages, known to be at least 10 miles in extent. The surface area of the park supports a large buffalo herd in its natural habitat and other wildlife, such as elk, antelope, and deer.

Wind Cave National Park is a part of the National Park System owned by the people of the United States and administered for them by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior. In the areas of this system the wildlife, scenery, and objects of historic, prehistoric, and scientific interest are carefully preserved and displayed for public enjoyment.

The Black Hills of South Dakota, on the southeast flank of which Wind Cave National Park is situated, present many features of unusual interest. Rising like an island from the treeless plains, they culminate in Harney Peak, the highest point in the United States east of the Rockies. The variety of their minerals, rocks, and geological formations is exceptional.

Of the many caves found near the margin of the Hills, Wind Cave is most widely known. Its discovery, in 1881, is credited to Tom Bingham, a Black Hills pioneer who,

while deer hunting, was attracted by a strange whistling sound which came from a clump of brush. Search disclosed a small opening in the rock about 10 inches in diameter from which issued a strong draft of air. This is the only natural opening to the cave ever discovered. It is located a few steps back of the present entrance which is artificial.

The strong currents of wind that blow alternately in and out of the mouth of the cave suggested its name. This strange phenomenon is believed to be caused by changes in the atmospheric pressure outside. When the barometer is falling, the wind usually blows outward; when it rises, the wind blows in. Many visitors enjoy stopping at the cave entrance to post themselves on weather indications.

## Colorful History

IN ADDITION to its natural beauty and scientific interest, the southwestern section of South Dakota has a colorful and picturesque history. Possibly a French explorer made his way into it as early as 1683, and the Verendrye brothers are said to have visited it in 1743.

The Sioux Indians, a tribe conspicuous even among Indians for strength and bravery, long occupied the region and only submitted to white settlement after a bitter and tragic struggle. Some of their descendants are today living on the Pine Ridge and Rosebud Indian Reservations, a short drive from Wind Cave.



Wooded and plains country, typical of the southern Black Hills

According to an Indian legend, the four winds were major deities of the Plains tribes; hence the Cave of the Winds was a sacred spot to them. This was one reason why the Sioux fought so hard for the Black Hills when they were invaded by the whites.

The war clouds that ended in the conflict of 1861-65 and Indian uprisings under the leadership of Red Cloud, Sitting Bull, Spotted Tail, and other great warriors hampered the development of this region, but in 1874 an expedition through the Black Hills led by Gen. George A. Custer resulted in the discovery of gold on French Creek and settlement followed rapidly. From 1879 to 1886 were boom days that made legendary figures of such pioneer characters as Wild Bill Hickok, Deadwood Dick, Calamity Jane, and Preacher Smith.

## Geological History of Wind Cave

THE BLACK HILLS are a great dome-shaped uplift of the earth's crust from which the younger strata have been removed by ero-

sion. This has exposed the very ancient sediments and granites of the core and has left the truncated edges of the younger beds encircling the core in concentric ridges and valleys.

The old granites may be 1,000,000,000 years old. The ancient sediments, into which the granites intruded as molten rock, are even older. Thus there are exposed, in and adjacent to the Black Hills, rocks which may represent more than half the entire age of the earth.

Wind Cave is a limestone cavern, dissolved out through long periods of time by ground waters containing carbonic acid. The great limestone bed, in which the cave occurs, encircles the Black Hills. It is known to geologists as the Pahasapa. It is a deposit formed in an ancient ocean which covered this region some 300,000,000 years ago. Sea shells, proof of its origin, are still to be seen embedded in it.

The major passages of Wind Cave were formed by solution along fractures in the limestone. These fractures were probably

formed by the same earth pressures which uplifted the Black Hills region.

The beautiful boxwork, one of the striking features of the cave, is due to the deposit of delicate veins of calcite in intersecting crevices. These veins, as the more soluble limestone between was removed by solution, have been left projecting from the surface. Crossing each other, they form small compartments, or boxwork, and in their fragile beauty resemble the tracery of lace.

Other interesting cave features are frostwork, flowstone, and crystal-lined cavities. Solution work has left many weird shapes, some of which resemble plants and animals.

## Specimen Displays

SPECIMENS of formations from the cave are displayed in the headquarters building for study purposes and general inspection by the public. The handling of formations in the cave and the unauthorized collection of souvenirs are strictly prohibited.

During the summer a wildflower display is also maintained. It includes the common species of Black Hills flora for the locality. Flowers must not be picked in the park without permission of the superintendent.

## Wildlife

IN ADDITION to the cave, there are almost 27,000 acres of range and forest lands within the boundaries of the park. The surface area of the park approaches, in importance, the cave itself as an attraction to visitors. Many cars stop along the highway to view the wildlife, which is representative of the species that roamed the Black Hills in the early days.

Visitors usually can get close, unobstructed views of the buffalo herd from the main highway which winds through the rolling hills of the park. It should be remembered

that the bison are wild and cannot be treated like domestic animals. It is not wise, therefore, to get out of your car or to go near any of them.

Small groups of antelope may often be seen by the careful watcher. The elk frequent the open parts of the park during the night, late afternoon, and early morning. During the day they return to the forested sections. The deer usually remain in the woods, but may sometimes be seen crossing the grasslands.

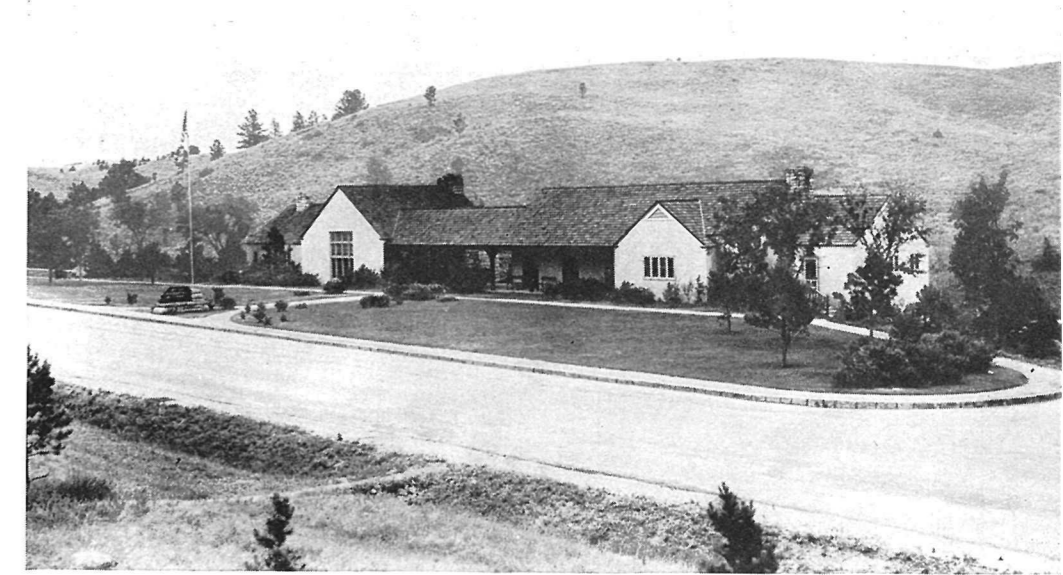
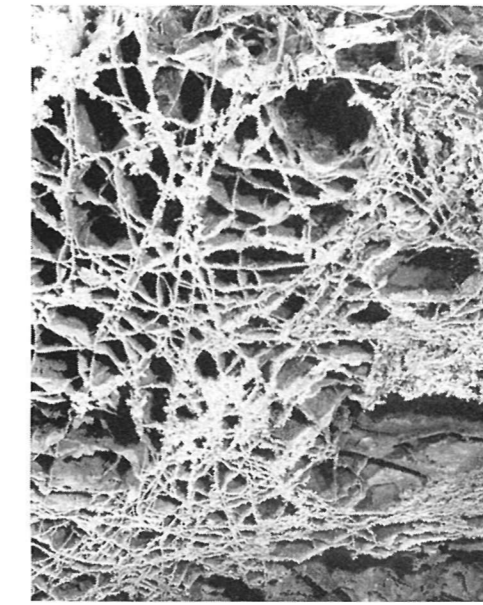
## Cave Trips

ALL TRIPS through the cave are under the guidance of park rangers. The entrance fees, including Federal tax, are as follows:

Adults.....	Cents 60
Children, 12 to 16 years.....	35
Children under 12 admitted free.	

This fee schedule includes the use of the elevator on the outgoing trip. Children must be accompanied by adults assuming responsibility for their safety and orderly conduct while in the cave.

Boxwork formation, tipped with white aragonite crystals, on ceiling in Elks Room



Administration Building

The trip through the cave is not unlike the average hike over a mountain trail. Comfortable walking shoes should be worn. The temperature is 47° and does not vary winter or summer. It is advisable to take a light sweater or jacket. The cave is electrically lighted.

Schedules of cave trips are dependent on the availability of guides. Trips require from 1 to 1½ hours.

From June 1 to September 1—Trips every hour of the day, starting at 8 a. m. and ending at 6 p. m.

September, October, April, and May—8:30 a. m.; 10 a. m.; 1:30 p. m.; 3 p. m.

November, December, January, February, and March—Any time between 8 to 11 a. m. and 1 to 3:30 p. m. During these months visitors should notify the superintendent a few days in advance to assure availability of guide service.

## How To Reach the Park

HOT SPRINGS, S. Dak., is the southern entrance to the Black Hills. It is 10 miles south

of Wind Cave National Park on United States Highways Nos. 18 and 85A and State Highway No. 79.

**By Automobile.**—Wind Cave National Park is on United States Highway No. 85A. It can also be reached by side trips from United States Highway No. 16 at Custer, and over State Highway No. 87 through Custer State Park.

**By Railroad.**—The park is accessible from Hot Springs on the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy and the Chicago & Northwestern Railroads.

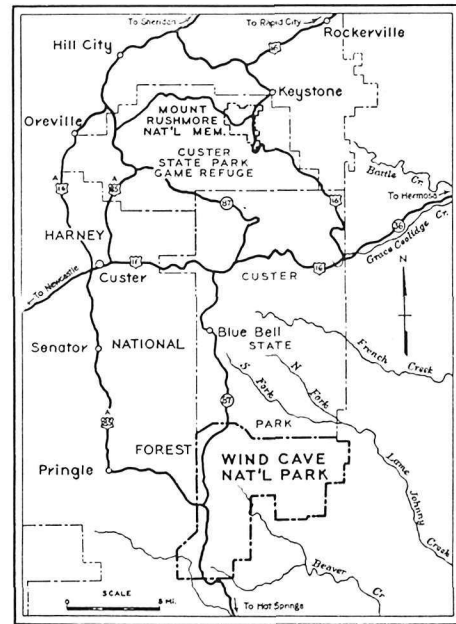
**By Bus.**—Wind Cave may be reached by bus from Hot Springs, Custer, or Rapid City.

**By Air.**—The nearest transcontinental air terminal is Rapid City, S. Dak.

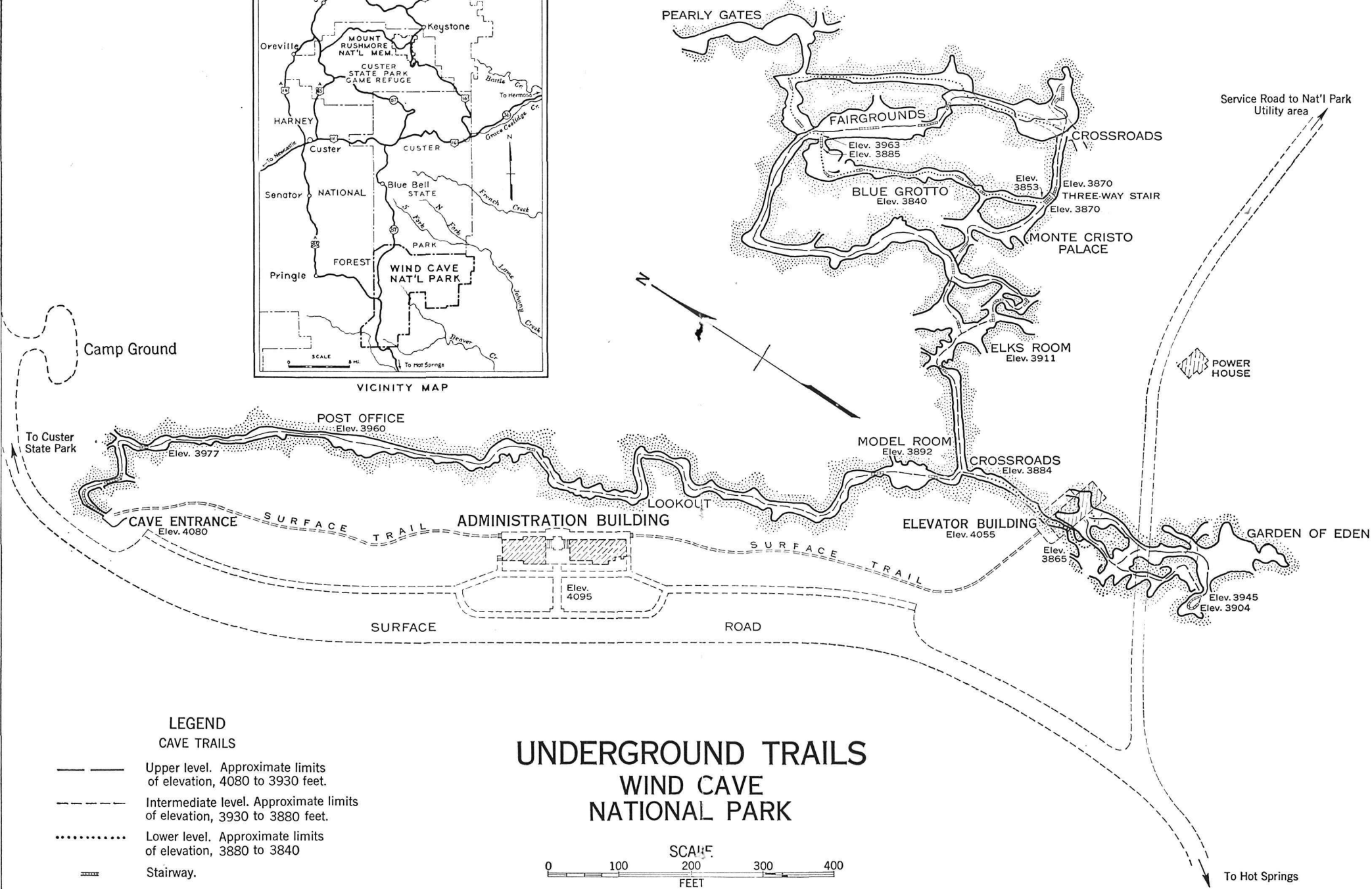
For further information regarding transportation to Wind Cave National Park, consult your local travel agencies.

## Accommodations

NO HOTELS or tourist cabins are located in the park, but a few public campsites, with free wood and water, are maintained near headquarters. Lunchroom facilities and soda-fountain service are provided during



VICINITY MAP



## UNDERGROUND TRAILS WIND CAVE NATIONAL PARK

**LEGEND**

**CAVE TRAILS**

- Upper level. Approximate limits of elevation, 4080 to 3930 feet.
- - - Intermediate level. Approximate limits of elevation, 3930 to 3880 feet.
- ..... Lower level. Approximate limits of elevation, 3880 to 3840
- Stairway.



the summer months. Curios and miscellaneous articles are obtainable. Good hotels, auto camps, restaurants, and garages are located in Hot Springs and other nearby cities and villages.

**not guess your fire is out—know it.**  
**Camps.**—Use designated camp grounds. Keep camp grounds clean. Combustible rubbish must be burned on campfires, and all other garbage and refuse should be placed in garbage cans or pits provided for the purpose.

*Administration*

WIND CAVE National Park is administered by the National Park Service of the United States Department of the Interior, and the representative of this bureau in charge of the park is the superintendent. His address is Hot Springs, S. Dak.

**Trash.**—Do not throw paper, lunch refuse, film cartons, chewing gum paper, or other trash on walks, trails, roads, or elsewhere. Carry until you can burn in camp or place in receptacle. Help keep the park clean.

Park regulations are designed for the protection of the natural beauties and scenery as well as for the comfort and convenience of visitors. The following synopsis and suggestions are for the general guidance of visitors, who are requested to assist the administration by observing the rules. Full regulations may be seen at the office of the superintendent and at the ranger station.

**Automobiles.**—Careful driving is required at all times for protection of yourself, other visitors, and the wildlife. Obey traffic rules. **Do not drive car off the highway.** Tractors with lugs or vehicles without tires are strictly prohibited.

**Preservation of Natural Features.**—In order that future generations may enjoy the park in its natural state, visitors are asked to refrain from collecting rocks, minerals, or plants without prior permission from the superintendent.

**Wildlife.**—Visitors should remain on the highway and in, or very near, their cars in the park because the buffalo are not confined by fences. These animals are **dangerous to persons on foot.**

**Guide Service.**—No person is permitted to enter the cave unless accompanied by a park ranger.

**Firearms.**—Unless adequately sealed, cased, broken down, or otherwise packed to prevent their use while in the park, firearms are prohibited, except upon written permission from the superintendent.

**Fires.**—Light carefully, and in designated places. Extinguish completely before leaving camp, even for temporary absence. **Do**

**Park Rangers.**—The rangers are here to help and advise you. When in doubt, ask a ranger. Rangers at park headquarters will be glad to help you plan your activity while in Wind Cave and to explain the regulations.

Wind Cave is open to the public every day throughout the year

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

J. A. Krug, *Secretary*

National Park Service, Newton B. Drury, *Director*

