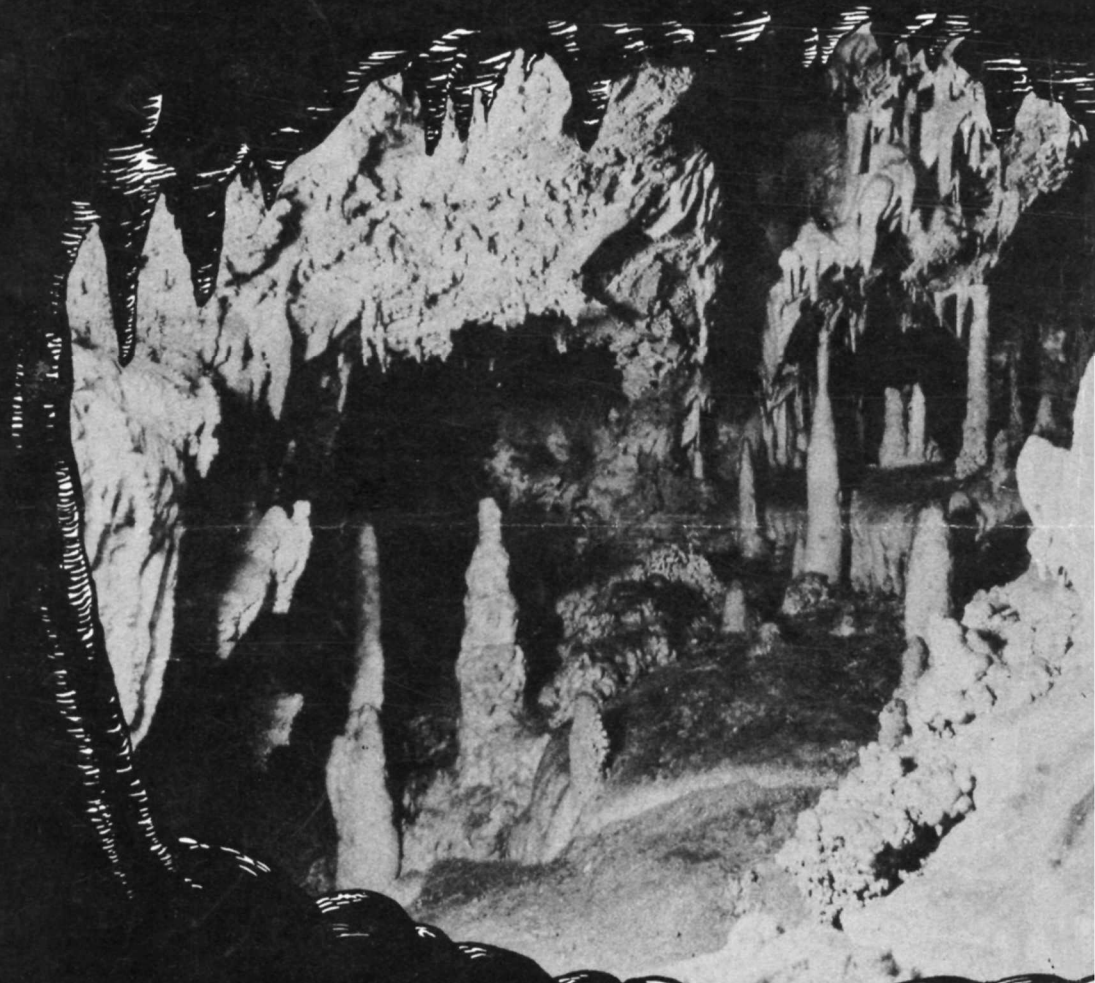
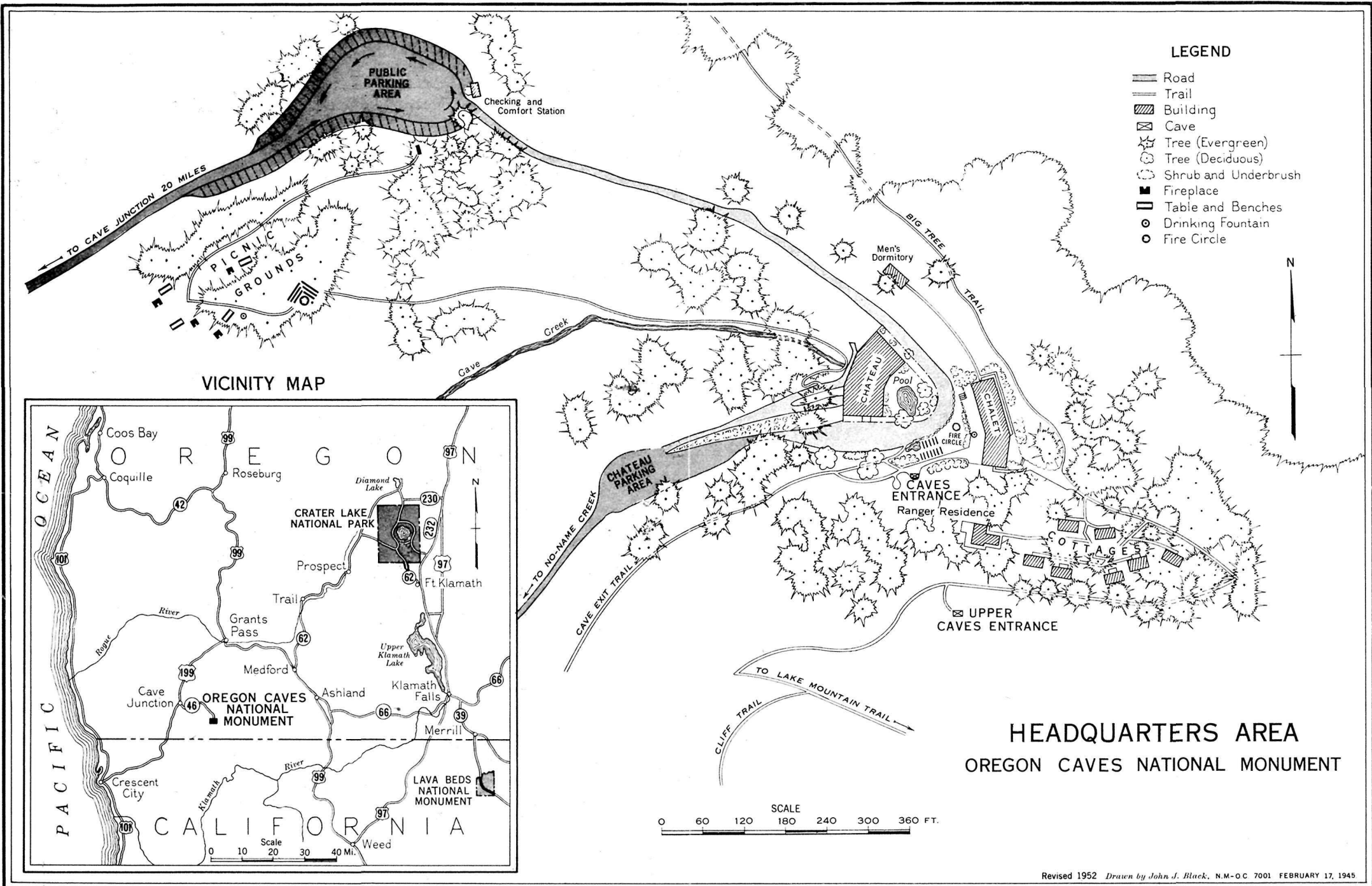


Oregon Caves

NATIONAL MONUMENT — OREGON





HISTORY

The caves are said to have been discovered by Elijah Davidson, in August 1874, while hunting. A bear, wounded by one of his shots, sought refuge in an opening in the rocks. Davidson hastily gathered a few splinters of pitch for a torch, and, with an old muzzle-loading rifle, followed the bear. It was then that he made his remarkable discovery. Soon after this the caves became an attraction for the adventurous, and portions of them were explored and opened; but to date they have not been completely penetrated. In 1877, Frank M. Nickerson, of nearby Kerby, Oreg., found four different floors or levels. He opened a number of the galleries which had been blocked by stalactites.

In 1907 the caves were visited by Joaquin Miller (the Poet of the Sierra), C. B. Watson, and Jefferson Meyers. These visitors were deeply impressed with the beauties of the region, and Joaquin Miller did much to attract public attention to the area by his many references to the caves as "The Marble Halls of Oregon."

GEOLOGY

The geological story of the Oregon Caves goes back over a vast period of time to an age when an ancient ocean covered this area. In this ocean a thick deposit of lime was formed which later hardened into limestone. This limestone, during a period of mountain building, was transformed under the terrific pressure and heat generated within the earth into marble and was raised above the sea as part of a mountain range.

During the mountain uplift the marble was broken and fractured in many places. The actual openings along these fractures may have been very small, but they were sufficient to allow the passage of water through them. Rain water falling upon the surface of the ground and charged by carbonic and other acids from decaying vegetation found its way along the small fracture planes. This dissolved out the marble which in composition is almost pure calcium carbonate. As the fractures were enlarged, they admitted more water which increased the rate of solution.

The lime dissolved in one place by the water was redeposited wherever the water was subjected to evaporation. This occurred particularly where the water dripped slowly from the ceiling of the cavern, for here each drop as it clung to the rock lost some of its water to the air, and

the lime which it carried was left as a deposit on the rock. This deposit grew downward as would an icicle, forming what is known as a stalactite. Where the drops of water fell to the floor and there evaporated, a pillar known as a stalagmite was built upward by the deposit of lime. In some places the stalactite and stalagmite joined, forming a column which extends from floor to ceiling. These deposits assume in some cases odd, fantastic, or grotesque shapes and in others beautiful, inspirational forms. Here and there are exquisite miniatures of waterfalls created in stone. Descriptive names are given to some of the main features and chambers in the caverns, such as the Garden of the Gods, Paradise Lost, Neptune's Grotto, Joaquin Miller's Chapel, Ghost Chamber, and Satan's Cradle.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Oregon Caves National Monument, located in the heart of the Siskiyou Mountains, 4,000 feet above sea level, covers an area of 480 acres. It was established as a national monument in 1909, under the Department of Agriculture, and by Executive order was transferred to the jurisdiction of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior, in 1934. The Superintendent of Crater Lake National Park is in charge of the monument and correspondence should be addressed to him at Crater Lake, Oreg., in summer, and Box 672, Medford, Oreg., in winter.

From Cave Junction on the famous Redwood Highway No. 199, it is only 20 miles to the caves over scenic State Highway No. 46. To go through the caves, a guide is required. Guide service throughout the year is furnished by the Oregon Caves Resort, Inc., under contract with the Department of the Interior. During the summer season, this company also provides meals, lodgings, candies, ice cream, soft drinks, souvenirs, etc., as well as nursery service for small children, whose parents make the caves trip. Lodgings are provided in the modern, unique, and comfortably appointed mountain chateau, as well as in modern, comfortable sleeping cabins.

The Government maintains a picnic area nearby. No camping is permitted in the monument, but adequate campground facilities are found at the Grayback Campground along the approach highway, 8 miles from the monument.

The caves are electrically lighted and the temperature in them is about 48°.