Timpanogos Cave

During the fall of 1887, Martin Hansen first discovered what is known as Hansen's Cave, while cutting timber. In 1921, James W. Gough and Frank Johnson, two youths about 14 years of age, discovered the Timpanogos Cave. The same fall George Heber and his nephew, Wayne E. Hansen, discovered Middle Cave, a scant six weeks after Timpanogos Cave was located. Verl J. Manwill, who rediscovered the covered opening of Timpanogos Cave, briefly records its history and how the Forest Service became involved:

> *In the summer of 1921, we went on the annual Timpanogos Mountain Climb, then in camp that evening we planned our next trip.*
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> *I remembered reading an article in the American Fork Citizen that was entitled "Rumors of Mysterious Cave in American Fork Canyon." We assumed that someone knew where it was, so we decided to go up to the canyon on August 14, 1921, and go through it. We went to see Martin Hansen (discoverer of Hansen's Cave) and he said he had heard rumors, but knew nothing about its where-abouts, but if we were going to look for it, to look for it in the general area and level as Hansen Cave...*
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> *We then proceeded up the canyon and went through Hansen's Cave. We had carbide miner's lamps, candles and also a couple of cameras and a flash gun for taking pictures. At this time we were very disappointed, as the onyx and beauty of the cave had been practically all stripped off. We didn't take any pictures, but proceeded to the entrance where we decided to separate and do exploring. I went alone and went to the west, then climbed up over the ledges to the top and stopped to rest at a point about the same level as Hansen's Cave, but about 3/4 mile east and as my eyes scanned the mountainside, I noticed next to the ledge an artificial appearance like masonry with vegetation partially growing over it about thirty feet west of where I sat. I walked over to it and kicked at it and one of the rocks came loose, rolling down an incline inside of the mountain. I opened it up and the hole was about two feet in diameter. I immediately called the rest of the group and we proceeded to explore it. At the foot of the first incline, about 30 feet down, was a room of rather spacious dimensions and on the floor was part of an old dynamite box (all soggy and moldy). This indicated that someone had been in before and then sealed up the entrance and had either lost the location or was keeping it secret.*
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> *We then proceeded to explore it. It was a thrilling experience as there were no trails or tracks to follow. In places we had to lay on our stomachs and squeeze through. Other places we had to make ourselves into human bridges or ladders to help the ladies along. About half-way through, half of the party became frightened and turned back. However, three of the men and two ladies proceeded all the way and we took pictures of what is now called "Father Time's Jewel Box."*
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> *We then went back out and joined the rest of the party and closed up the entrance, much as the way we found it and went back down to the canyon bottom where we were camped and that night by the light of campfire, discussed our find and talked about ways and means to preserve its beauty for posterity instead of allowing it to be vandalized as Hansen's Cave had been. We decided to start by organizing an outdoor club dedicated to the objective of preserving the cave, which we did.*
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> *We called it the Payson Alpine Club, and I was elected president and my sister Elva Manwill, secretary. We decided to return in about two weeks and measure, map and photograph the cave then turn our information over to the proper authorities for their assistance.*
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> *We returned the following week (ed. two weeks) with a party of twenty-two, but so much time was spent showing it to the other group that we did no measuring, but did take a few pictures.*
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> *When we left the cave, we were met near the mouth by Deputy Supervisor Mann and Ranger West of the Forest Service who demanded to know what we were doing there. When we explained they did not believe us. They seemed to think that we were the persons who were keeping the whereabouts of the cave a secret and were attempting to commercialize on it. So they, at that time, nailed up a sign on a nearby tree declaring the location a public service site, and then told us to vacate at once and they would investigate our story* (U.S. Department of Agriculture 1972).

Timpanogos Cave rapidly became a popular recreational attraction in American Fork Canyon. Initially there was not a trail to the entrance and visitors pulled themselves up the steep slope using fallen trees. Timpanogos Cave was set aside as a National Monument by Presidential Proclamation on October 14, 1922, under the jurisdiction of the Forest Service to be protected for its "unusual scientific interest and importance." In 1933, executive order No. 6166 placed all National Monuments under the jurisdiction of the Department of the Interior and the transfer of Timpanogos Cave National Monument to the Park Service took place on July 1, 1934.