

24" x 18" Official Texas Historical Marker
Comal County

Location: At Caverns off FM 1863 near
New Braunfels, Texas

NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS*

DISCOVERED MARCH 27, 1960, BY FOUR STUDENTS OF
ST. MARY'S UNIVERSITY, SAN ANTONIO. NAMED FOR THE
ROCK BRIDGE THAT MARKS ENTRANCE. DEDICATED ON
AUGUST 5, 1964 BY GOVERNOR JOHN CONNALLY.

OF EARLY CRETACEOUS AGE; STILL FORMING. SITE
OF ARTIFACTS FROM 5,000 B.C., AND HUMAN REMAINS
AT LEAST 8,000 YEARS OLD; ALSO INDIAN CAMPSITES. **

1967***

- * 1 1/4" Lettering
- ** 1/2" Lettering
- *** 1/4" Lettering

FILE COPY DO NOT REMOVE

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JUL 13 1967

SOUTHWELL ORDER
TEXAS HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

APPROVED
7-12-67
T.L.

1504

NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

Natural Bridge Caverns, the largest known cavern in Texas, was discovered on March 27, 1960, by four spelunkers, as cave explorers are called. The four were Orion Knox Jr., Preston Knodell, Al Brandt, and Joe Cantu. They were all attending St. Mary's University in San Antonio at that time.

These students explored over two miles of the magnificent masterpiece of nature and mapped a mile of passages or chambers as huge cave rooms are called. Natural Bridge Caverns is located in the semi-rugged hill country midway between New Braunfels and San Antonio off Highway 1863. The name was derived from the awe-inspiring sixty foot natural limestone slab bridge that spans the amphitheater setting of the cavern.

The caverns are air-conditioned by nature to a cool seventy degrees year-round. Upon entering the cave you will feel a cool breeze and the temperature never varies more than one degree.

Development of the caverns began on March 25, 1963. While excavating; spearpoints dating back to 5,000 B.C. were found at the entrance. The jaw bones of a grizzly bear that became extinct over 8,000 years ago were also found. Below the bones of the bear were an Indian's leg bone and spearpoint.

Natural Bridge Caverns is nearly 100 per cent alive--- that is it is active and still growing. Due to the dripping and mineral content of the water the formations are dazzling and have varied hues of blue, bronze, yellow, red and white coloring. Cave formations such as soda straws, stalactites, helictites, stalagmites, columns and totem poles abound in the caverns, including hundreds of "Fried Egg" formations. This is a rare cave formation.

The first room of this tremendous cavern is Pluto's Anteroom; from there the switch back trail takes you to Sherwood Forest, where the totem pole formations surpass anything in any other cavern in height and slenderness according to the men of the National Park Service who evaluated the caverns.

The most massive formation discovered is the Mount of the Landlords and rises from its base which is eighteen feet in diameter and forty-five feet high. Just imagine how long it took this huge formation to form counting one cubic inch for every hundred years. In this beautiful room which is "The Castle of the White Giants" rises the most decorated massive structure in the cave. It is the forty foot "King's Throne". Suspended from the ceiling in this room is the Chandelier from which there is a steady stream of water falling. The beauty of Natural Bridge Caverns is indescribable and one must see it to believe it.

The caverns were opened on July 3, 1964, and were officially dedicated by Governor John Connally on August 5, 1964. Visitors from every state in the Union, Canada and her Provinces, Mexico and many Foreign Countries have visited the caverns.

1504

Natural Bridge Caverns are open daily 9:00 AM and the last tour leaves at 5:00 PM. Regular tour prices are adults \$2.00; children 6 thru 15 are \$1.50 and children under 6 are free. Organized group rates for churches, schools, etc., given upon request. Night tours are also available by reservation.

Natural Bridge Caverns is a major vertebrate paleontologic cave with 45,000 varieties found. Tentative and partial faunal list was compiled by William Akersten of the University of Texas. The bone material is currently being studied by Dr. Raun and Bill Akersten of University of Texas.

TENTATIVE AND PARTIAL FAUNAL LIST OF NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

Compiled by William Akersten

Primate	
Homo sapiens	American Indian
Insectivora	
Cryptotis parva	Least shrew
Chiroptera	
Myotis velifer	Little brown bat
Tadarida mexicana	Mexican free-tail bat
Lagomorpha	
*Lepus californicus	Jack rabbit
*Sylvilagus	Cotton-tail rabbit
Rodentia	
Peromyscus	White-footed mouse
Perognathus hispidus	Hispid pocket mouse
Perognathus merriami	Merriam's pocket mouse
Neotoma	Wood rat
Sigmodon Hispidus	Hispid cotton rat
*Geomys bursarius	Gopher
*Pitymys pinetorsum	Pine vole
Reithrodontomys	Harvest mouse
Baiomys taylori	Northern pygmy mouse
Carnivora	
Canis latrans	Coyote
Felis rufus	Bobcat
Ursus americanus	Black bear
Procyon lotor	Raccoon
Artiodactyla	
Odocoileus virginianus	White-tailed deer
Bison bison	Bison

Also unidentified birds, snakes, lizards, frogs, toads, salamanders, and turtles.

Natural Bridge Caverns is in the Glen Rose Formation, except for the first forty feet, which includes the entrance sink. The top forty feet could be assigned to either the Bull Creek member of the Walnut Formation or to the Edwards Formation. The geologic age of these rocks is Early Cretaceous. Chronologically they are between 110,000,000 and 140,000,000 years old.

(Bud Frank of University of Texas compiled most information known)

1504

NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

Discovered March 27, 1960 by four college students from St. Mary's University in San Antonio. Opened July 3, 1964 and dedicated by Governor John Connally on August 5, 1964. Prehistoric Indian spearheads dating back to 5000 B.C. were found; denoting seven different Comanche Indian Tribes camped at the site. Jaw bones of a grizzly bear and an Indian's leg bone and spearpoint dating back 8,000 years were also found during development of the caverns. The geologic age of the cavern is Early Cretaceous - chronologically between 110,000,000 and 140,000,000 years old.

(Remarks of House Speaker Ben Barnes at dedication
of an Official Texas Historical for the Natural
Bridge Caverns, 2:00 p.m., December 7, 1967.)

I AM HAPPY TO BE HERE TODAY FOR THE DEDICATION OF
THIS OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER FOR NATURAL BRIDGE
CAVERNS.

THIS OFFICIAL TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER RECOGNIZES
THE SIGNIFICANCE OF NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS TO OUR GREAT
STATE AND IS PART OF A DYNAMIC MARKING PROGRAM TO
COMMEMORATE AND INTERPRET. . .GREAT DEEDS AND EVENTS THAT
HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL, CULTURAL,
ECONOMIC, POLITICAL AND INTELLECTUAL DEVELOPMENT OF TEXAS
. . .THE PUBLIC SERVICES OF GREAT MEN AND WOMEN . . .
AND PROVIDE RECOGNITION FOR WORTHY HISTORIC AND NATURAL
LANDMARKS.

THE COMAL COUNTY HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE,
HEADED BY C. W. HEITKAMP, TOGETHER WITH OTHER GROUPS
REPRESENTED HERE TODAY ARE AN INTEGRAL PART OF THIS VITAL
STATE-WIDE MARKING PROGRAM CARRIED ON BY THE TEXAS STATE
HISTORICAL SURVEY COMMITTEE.

THE DISCOVERY OF NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS IN 1960 AND
THEIR SUBSEQUENT DEVELOPMENT BY THE HEIDEMANN'S, OWNERS
OF THE LAND UNDER WHICH THE CAVERNS LAY, HAS BEEN AN
OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION TO TEXAS.

EVEN WITHOUT THEIR COMMERCIAL ATTRACTIVENESS, THE CAVERNS ARE UNIQUE IN THEIR OWN RIGHT.

NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS ARE IN THE GLEN ROSE GEOLOGICAL FORMATION, EXCEPT FOR THE FIRST FORTY FEET WHICH INCLUDES THE ENTRANCE AND COULD BE ASSIGNED TO EITHER THE WALNUT FORMATION OR TO THE EDWARDS FORMATION.

THESE ROCKS ABOUT US BELONG TO THE EARLY CRETACEOUS AGE ON THE GEOLOGICAL SCALE. . . CHRONOLOGICALLY, THEY ARE BETWEEN ONE-HUNDRED-AND-TEN AND ONE-HUNDRED-AND-FORTY MILLION YEARS OLD.

THE CAVERNS HAVE BEEN AIR-CONDITIONED BY MOTHER NATURE WITH EXACTNESS THAT THE YEAR-ROUND 70-DEGREE TEMPERATURE NEVER VARIES MORE THAN ONE DEGREE . . . A FEAT MANY AN AIR-CONDITIONING FIRM IS HARD PRESSED TO MATCH.

AND NATURE IS NOT YET DONE WITH HER HANDIWORK, FOR THE CAVERNS ARE NEARLY ONE HUNDRED PERCENT ALIVE.

DROP BY DROP . . . SCULPTING IN A MANNER THAT ONLY ONE WITH NO SENSE OF TIME COULD AFFORD . . . NATURE IS USING TINY DROPLETS OF RICH MINERAL-LADEN WATER TO CREATE BREATHTAKING FORMATIONS.

THESE INCLUDE SUCH CREATIONS AS SODA STRAWS, HELICITES, STALACTITES, STALAGMITES, COLUMNS, TOTEM POLES AND THAT RAREST OF CAVE FORMATIONS--"FRIED EGGS".

THESE ARE NOT BLAND CREATIONS FOR THEY GLOW WITH
A SHEEN THAT RANGES FROM AMBER AND GOLD TO ROSE AND COPPER
. . . AND ARE SPLASHED WITH THE MILLION GLINTS OF CALCITE'S
CAVE DIAMONDS.

IN A FEW MINUTES WE WILL BE TOURING THESE CAVES TO
REVIEW THIS MASTERPIECE THAT UNTIL ONLY RECENTLY WAS HIDDEN
BY NATURE FROM THE APPRECIATIVE EYES OF MAN.

AS WE WALK THE PATHWAYS OF THE 28 SEPARATE VAULTS AND
CAVES WHICH MAKE UP NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS, WE WILL BE
PURSUED EVERY STEP OF THE WAY BY THE ECHOING SOUND OF
WATER DRIPPING AS IT GOES ABOUT ITS WAY CONSTANTLY
CREATING NEW FORMATIONS AND SUBTLY ALTERING OLD ONES.

HOW LONG DOES IT TAKE NATURE TO CREATE A CAVE
FORMATION YOU MIGHT WONDER . . . SCIENTISTS FIGURE THAT
IT TAKES OVER 100 YEARS FOR THE BUILD-UP OF A DEPOSIT
ONE CUBIC INCH IN SIZE.

THOUGH ONLY RECENTLY DISCOVERED BY MODERN MAN,
THE CAVES WERE EVIDENTLY KNOWN TO PREHISTORIC ANIMALS
AND MAN.

DURING EXCAVATION, SPEARPOINTS DATING BACK TO
5,000 B.C. WERE FOUND NEAR THE ENTRANCE OF THE CAVERNS.

THE JAW BONES OF A GRIZZLY BEAR THAT BECAME EXTINCT OVER 8,000 YEARS AGO WERE ALSO FOUND. BELOW THE BONES OF THE BEAR, AN INDIAN'S LEG BONE AND SPEARPOINT WERE DISCOVERED. . . MUTE TESTIMONY TO A STORY THAT THE AGES WITNESSED AND ON WHICH, MODERN MAN CAN ONLY SPECULATE.

TODAY NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS ARE CLASSIFIED AS A MAJOR VERTEBRATE PALEONTOLOGICAL SITE WITH SOME 45,000 VARIETIES OF PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE IDENTIFIED AS NATIVE TO THE AREA.

THESE CAVERNS ARE A GOOD EXAMPLE OF THE FINE WORK BEING DONE THROUGHOUT TEXAS TO TASTEFULLY DEVELOP AN AREA INTO A TOURIST ATTRACTION WITHOUT GARISH OVERTONES.

IN GOOD TASTE TOO IS THE PLACEMENT OF THIS TEXAS HISTORICAL MARKER OUTLINING THE KNOWN HISTORY OF THE CAVERNS.

IT IS WITH PLEASURE THAT WE DEDICATE THIS MARKER TODAY TO YET UNBORN GENERATIONS . . . IT IS MY FERVENT HOPE THAT THROUGH USE OF MARKERS SUCH AS THIS, APPETITES WILL BE SHARPEN TO SEEK OUT AND APPRECIATE OUR RICH HERITAGE.

New Extension of Cave Revealed At State Historical Marker Dedication Last Thursday

—Radio Post photo
entrance to the now famous cavern named because of the limestone rock which forms a natural "bridge" over the main entrance. Discovery of a large new extension with beautiful and hitherto unknown formations was disclosed Thursday, the find having been accidental. The ally made only the previous day.

NEW BRAUNFELS — News that a major extension of Natural Bridge Caverns has been discovered overshadowed an appearance by Texas Speaker of the House Ben Barnes to dedicate the caverns as a historic site Thursday.

Discovered only Friday evening as a water well dug, holds preliminary view as the present caverns, agreed to the three persons who first viewed it.

Laura Heidemann, president of Natural Bridge Caverns, made an announcement of the big find at the site of the caverns in New Braunfels. There was no attempt to keep it very a secret. She excited, Mrs. Heidemann, her husband, Harry, told the

the 20-inch well shaft. After two hours of exploration, they returned to describe what they saw in superlatives.

"We were extremely excited," Wuest said. "It's beautiful down there — maybe more beautiful than the part we have open — and it's possible this is larger though I can't tell yet for sure."

He mentioned only one formation in particular: rare "soda straws" almost five feet long. "There is nothing like them in the other portion."

Heidemann said the extension is southeast — "downstream" — from the present system. The original discovery ran north.

The fact it does run downstream, Heidemann said, increases the possibility that the extension might be larger than the original.

Only a few of the scores of persons attending the elaborate dedication ceremonies were made aware of the discovery, though the Heidemanns excitedly told those who stopped and chatted with them.

Barnes, introduced by State Rep. John Traeger of Seguin, gave the primary dedication address & unveiled the Texas Historical Marker designating Natural Bridge Cavern as an official Texas historical site and a state landmark. Thousands and thousands of years of history are recorded here, he told this large audience. "We place this marker here because we want the young people to be interested in what happened in Texas in the past."

Barnes added: "We in Texas didn't know what a tourist was a few years ago. But, through the sponsorship of Gov. Connally, we began one of the most ambitious tourist programs in the United States. Tex-

as now ranks second nationally tourism.

"Developments such as Natural Bridge Caverns have made this growth possible."

Mrs. Heidemann and C. W. Heikamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee also made brief remarks during the dedication program. The Canyon High School band, from New Braunfels was on hand to provide music.

Heikamp introduced some of the visiting dignitaries who, in addition to Barnes and Traeger, included officials from area cities and counties and Don Epperson, executive director of the Texas Tourist Council.

Made of cast aluminum, the historical marker reads:

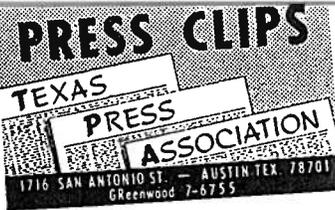
"Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1960, by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance.

Dedicated on Aug. 6, 1964, by Gov. John Connally. One early cretaceous age, still forming. Site of artifacts over 5,000 B. C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also Indian campsites."



Bandera Bulletin
Bandera, Texas

DEC 1-1967



Daily Light
San Antonio, Texas

DEC 4-1967

Comal Co.

Bexar Facts

By MORRIS WILLSON

Which includes Bandera Bulletin

BEN BARNES WILL SPEAK AT PLACING OF MARKER

Speaker of the House Ben Barnes will be the principal speaker at ceremonies on December 7th when an official Texas Historical Marker is placed at the entrance of Natural Bridge Caverns, located off IH 35, between San Antonio and New Braunfels, according to Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of the caverns.

State, county and city officials are expected to be in attendance when the marker, designating the caverns as both an historical site and a landmark, is unveiled. C. W. Heitcamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

The marker, made of cast aluminum, reads as follows: "Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1960, by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance. Dedicated on August 5, 1964, by Gov. John Connally. Of early cretaceous age, still forming. Site of artifacts from 5,000 B.C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also Indian campsites."

Delegations to the unveiling are expected from San Antonio and the surrounding counties, Mrs. Heidemann declared; the public is invited.

Reporter's notebook: G. Howell Hight on Brandon Drive got a chuckle from the sign in an office noting, "This year's party has been canceled due to last year's Christmas party" . . . Clara Heidemann, Route 3, is interested in the Thursday afternoon ceremonies unveiling the official Texas Historical Marker at the entrance to Natural Bridge Caverns (off IH 35, between San Antonio and New Braunfels) . . .



WILLSON

The University Club's Mister Joseph killed his first buck (6 points, dressed to 109 pounds) last week when Lone Star's Floyd Schneider showed him the arduous way to do it . . . Dr. Margaret H. Paton, lecturer from the University of Edinburgh, Scotland, will be a visitor at Incarnate Word College Wednesday . . . The Fred Waring show (to be seen at Municipal Auditorium tomorrow night) has been booked for three weeks next summer at the Nugget in Reno . . . current at Harrah's in Reno is another San Antonio-oriented entertainer — Judy Lynn, sometimes headliner for the San Antonio Rodeo . . . Ray "The Cherokee Cowboy" Price will bring his country and-western show troupe to The Farmer's Daughter Friday night.

Art and culture note: VIP visitors in the Alamo City, after being informed Gov. Connally delivered prints of Vives-Atsara paintings to the chief executives of several South American countries, are sometimes taken to the Alamo Heights studio and gallery of the famed palette-knife artist for a look at his oils of the San Antonio missions.

Outstanding collegiates: Two Texas

A&M junior students have been taken on a closeup inspection of their Air Force future during a tour of the North American Air Defense Command complex in Colorado . . . they are Quinter P. Gerhart, son of Lt. Col. and Mrs. Q. P. Gerhart, 243 Tophill, and John L. Williams, son of Mr. and Mrs. George Williams, 635 Cave Lane . . . Also at Texas A&M, three San Antonio students have been cited for their research in national affairs . . . they are Thomas C. Gruber, 2810 Hitching Post; Robert K. Nordhaus, 1133 Wiltshire, and Robert B. Stiles Jr., 2636 Austin Hwy. . . . Rhodes Scholarship: John Haring, St. Mary's graduate student in government has been invited to Houston for an interview by the Rhodes Scholarship Selection Committee; final selections will be announced later this month.

Hidden talents: They all laughed—the other television cameramen—when KONO-TV's Bob Rogers (after filming the opening of the Salvation Army's Kettles Campaign) slung his camera over his shoulder and picked up a Salvation Army Band baritone horn and started to play . . . but it turned out Rogers is quite a horn player . . . and in addition to shooting some fine TV footage he also blew some beckoning notes that attracted people to the kettle where they threw in their loose change.

Like a movie star: A Doris Day look-alike is attractive Mrs. Don Diers, the Manpower substitute in the San Antonio Symphony offices.

One item omitted: San Pedro printing company boss B. V. Clemens tells the yarn about an employe who came into the executive office, asked to use the phone . . . he explained, "My wife told me to ask you for a raise, but she forgot to tell me how much."

New Braunfels Zeitung-
 Chronicle
 New Braunfels, Texas

DEC 14 1967

Comal



HISTORICAL MARKER was unveiled at Natural Bridge Caverns last Thursday by House Speaker Ben Barnes, left. Others taking part in the unveiling are, left to right. Mrs. Harry

(Clara) Heidemann, president of NBC; Rep. John Traeger of Seguin; Harry Heidemann and C. W. Heitkamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee.

Natural Bridge Caverns Extension Discovered

Discovery of huge new chamber at Natural Bridge Caverns described as being more beautiful than anything yet uncovered at the site was revealed last week.

The disclosure came during dedication ceremonies of a Texas historical marker at which Texas House Speaker Ben Barnes spoke and numerous state, county, and city dignitaries were present.

There was no formal an-

discovery last week Wednesday, the day before the ceremonies. The extension was discovered as a water well was being dug.

Extent of the vast new room described as the largest area yet discovered at Natural Bridge Caverns since discovery of the major portion of the cave in 1960 is still unknown. Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of Natural Bridge Caverns, and her husband said they have no defi-

dime that is seven feet long are highlights of the room, according to Burch, who helped develop the portion of the cave now open to the public.

In dedicating Natural Bridge Caverns as an official Texas historical site, Barnes said, "Thousands and thousands of years of history are recorded here."

"We place this marker here because we want the young people to be interested in what happened in Texas in



New Braunfels Zeitung-
Chronicle
New Braunfels, Texas
NOV 30 1967

Ben Barnes to Speak

Historical Marker to Be Placed Dec. 7 at Natural Bridge Caverns

Speaker of the House Ben Barnes will be the principal speaker at ceremonies on Dec. 7 when an official Texas Historical Marker is placed at the entrance of Natural Bridge Caverns, according to Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of the caverns.

State, county, and city officials are expected to be in attendance when the marker, designating the caverns as both an historical site and a landmark, unveiled. C. W. Heitkamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

The marker, made of cast

aluminum, reads as follows: "Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1960, by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance. Dedicated on Aug. 5, 1964, by Gov. John Connally. Of early cretaceous age, still forming. Site of artifacts from 5,000 B.C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also Indian campsites."

Delegations to the unveiling are expected from San Antonio and the surrounding counties, Mrs. Heidemann said. The public is invited.



Advance Guard
Goliad, Texas

DEC 7 - 1967

Natural Bridge Caverns Due Historical Marker

Speaker of the House Ben Barnes will be the principal speaker at ceremonies on December 7 when an official Texas Historical Marker is placed at the entrance of Natural Bridge Caverns, located off IH 35, between San Antonio and New Braunfels.

State, county and city officials are expected to be in attendance when the marker, designating the caverns as both an historical site and a landmark, is unveiled. C. W. Heitkamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

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Daily News
San Antonio, Texas
NOV 24 1967

Caverns Due State Marker

Natural Bridge Caverns between San Antonio and New Braunfels has been designated a landmark and historical site and will have a state marker placed at the entrance Dec. 7.

House Speaker Ben Barnes will be the main speaker when the Texas Historical Medallion is unveiled.

State, county and city officials of San Antonio and New Braunfels have been invited to participate in the program.

C.W. Heitkamp, chairman of Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will be master of ceremonies. Legend on the aluminum marker reads:

"Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1960, by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance. Dedicated on Aug. 5, 1964, by Gov. John Connally. Of early cretaceous age, still forming. Site of artifacts from 5,000 B.C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also Indian campsites."



Daily Light
San Antonio, Texas
DEC 1 - 1967

Cavern Officials Due At Historical Mark Ceremony

State Rep. John Traeger and former State Sen. Walter Richter, along with other officials and civic leaders from San Antonio and the surrounding area, are expected to be present at the unveiling of a Texas Historical Marker on Dec. 7 at 2 p.m. at the entrance of Natural Bridge Caverns, according to Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of the caverns.

House Speaker Ben Barnes will deliver the principal address. Guests will be conducted on a guided tour of the caverns. The public is invited.

C. W. Heitkamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

Natural Bridge Caverns is located off IH 35, between San Antonio and New Braunfels.



Daily American
Austin, Texas

DEC 8 - 1967

Comal

At New Braunfels

Cave Reveals Huge Room

By NAT HENDERSON
Staff Writer

NEW BRAUNFELS — The discovery of a 12-story room at Natural Bridge Caverns with translucent formations surpassing the beauty and grandeur of the Hall of the Mountain Kings was announced Thursday.

The owners of the cave told of the find shortly after House Speaker Ben Barnes dedicated a Texas State Historical Marker near the entrance to the old portion of Natural Bridge Caverns west of New Braunfels.

The extent of the vast new room is still unknown, because the only three persons who have been lowered into its depths have not explored it fully. However, it is bigger than any known room in the caverns, and speleologists think some passageway may lead to rooms even larger.

Natural Bridge Caverns, the largest cave in Texas, already is one of the state's top tourist attractions. Speaker Barnes noted Thursday that some 60,000 persons went through the developed part of the cave last year. He said an estimated 600,000 are expected to visit the caverns next year among the 10 million tourists who will come to Texas.

Barnes praised Gov. John Connally's tourist programs during the past few years. He said Texas now ranks as the second state in tourism and that next year Texas with the HemisFair will be "the most important place."

The speaker also praised private enterprise for developing major tourist attractions. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Heidemann developed Natural Bridge Caverns without help from the state after it was discovered on their ranch in 1960.

"A few years ago we didn't know what a tourist was,"

Historical Survey Committee; and Truett Lattimer, executive director of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee. The Canyon High School Band played at the ceremonies.

He said tourism now is a major industry.

Gov. Connally, who dedicated Natural Bridge Caverns not long after they were opened to the public in 1964, called the cave "a real jewel in Texas' tourist crown."

More than two miles of the old portion of the caverns have been explored without finding a beginning.

Jack Burch, Reggie Wuest and Myles Kuykendall, employes at the caverns, have done most of the recent exploration. They say the part now open to the public is the upper portion of the cave.

They say the new room will open up the lower portion.

"Caves are like rivers," Burch said. "They get bigger in the lower portions. I feel we will run into larger and better rooms past the new one we have found."

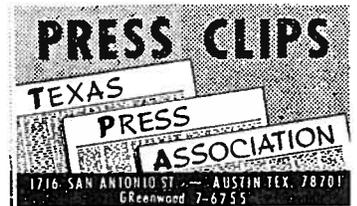
The three men are convinced the new room once was connected — and perhaps still may be — to the old portion. A cave-in occurred hundreds of years ago where the Natural Bridge now marks the entrance to the old part of the cave.

A hole was drilled last week past the cave-in, and the new room was found. The shaft, about two and a half feet in diameter, drops 65 feet before hitting the roof of the new room. Then it is 12 more feet to the floor.

The room is pear-shaped, at least 200 feet long and about 120 high beneath its dome.

It contains many of the delicate "soda straw" formations, some of them almost five feet long and about the size of cigarettes. A rare column no bigger than a dime is seven feet long.

"Hundreds of pink, flesh-colored formations are the



Radio-Post
Fredericksburg, Texas

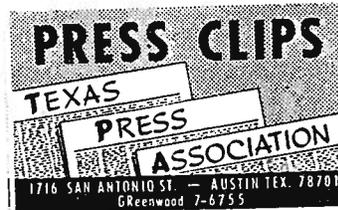
DEC 7 - 1967

Barnes Speaks At Historical Dedication

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State, county and city officials are expected to be in attendance when the marker, designating the caverns as both an historical site and a landmark is unveiled. C. W. Heitcamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

The marker, made of cast aluminum, reads as follows: "Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1960, by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance. Dedicated on August 5, 1964 by Gov. John Connally. Of early cretaceous age still forming. Site of artifacts from 5,000 B.C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also India



Daily Express
San Antonio, Texas

NOV 24 1967

Barnes Sets Talk at Cave Ceremony

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PRESS CLIPS

TEXAS

PRESS

ASSOCIATION

1716 SAN ANTONIO ST. AUSTIN TEX. 78701 477-6755

Daily Express
San Antonio, Texas

DEC 8 - 1967

Comal



CAVERN MARKER—Mr. and Mrs. Harry Heidemann stand with Speaker Ben Barnes near a newly dedicated marker proclaiming Natural Bridge Caverns as a Texas historic site. State Rep. John Traeger of Seguin is barely visible in the rear.—Staff Photo.

New I At Sta

SPECIAL TO THE EXPRESS

NEW BRAUNFELS — News that a major extension of Natural Bridge Caverns has been discovered overshadowed an appearance by Texas Speaker of the House Ben Barnes to dedicate the caverns as a Texas historic site Thursday afternoon.

The extension, discovered only Wednesday evening as a water well was being dug, held a preliminary promise of being as large and as beautiful as the present caverns, according to the three persons who have the far viewed it.

Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of Natural Bridge Caverns, made no formal announcement of the big find during the elaborate dedication ceremonies at the site of the caverns west of New Braunfels.

But there was no attempt to keep the discovery a secret.

Visibly excited, Mrs. Heidemann and her husband, Harry, told the Express that no concrete plans would be made regarding the extension until it could be more thoroughly explored.

It is probable, though, that the new cavern will in time be connected with the present caverns, which were discovered in 1960 and described by veteran spelunkers as among the largest and most beautiful in the county.

The bit of a water well struck into a large room of the extension. A measurement of the hold showed the ceiling of the room to be 67 feet beneath the surface, the floor 87 feet beneath the surface.

Reggie Wuest, a son of Mrs. Heidemann; Myles Kuykendall, a guide; and Jack Burch, one of the four original developers of the caverns, became the first three persons to explore the new portion of the caverns a short while later.

They were lowered by rope down the 20-inch well shaft. After two hours of exploration they returned to describe what they saw in superlatives.

"We were extremely excited," Wuest said. "It's beautiful d



Radio-Post
Fredericksburg, Texas
NOV 30 1967

Ben Barnes to Keynote Natural Bridge Caverns Marker Ceremony

Speaker of the House, Ben Barnes will be the principal speaker at ceremonies on Thursday, Dec. 7 when an official Texas Historical Marker is placed at the entrance of Natural Bridge Caverns, located off IH 35, between San Antonio and New Braunfels, according to Mrs. Clara Heidemann, president of the caverns.

State, county and city officials are expected to be in attendance when the marker, designating the caverns as both an historical site and a landmark, is unveiled. C.W. Heitcamp, chairman of the Comal County Historical Survey Committee, will officiate at the ceremonies.

The marker, made of cast aluminum, reads as follows: "Natural Bridge Caverns, discovered March 27, 1962 by four students of St. Mary's University, San Antonio. Named for the rock bridge that marks the entrance. Dedicated on Aug. 5, 1964 by Gov. John Connally. Of early cretaceous age, still forming. Site of artifacts from 5,000 B.C. and human remains at least 8,000 years old; also Indian campsites."

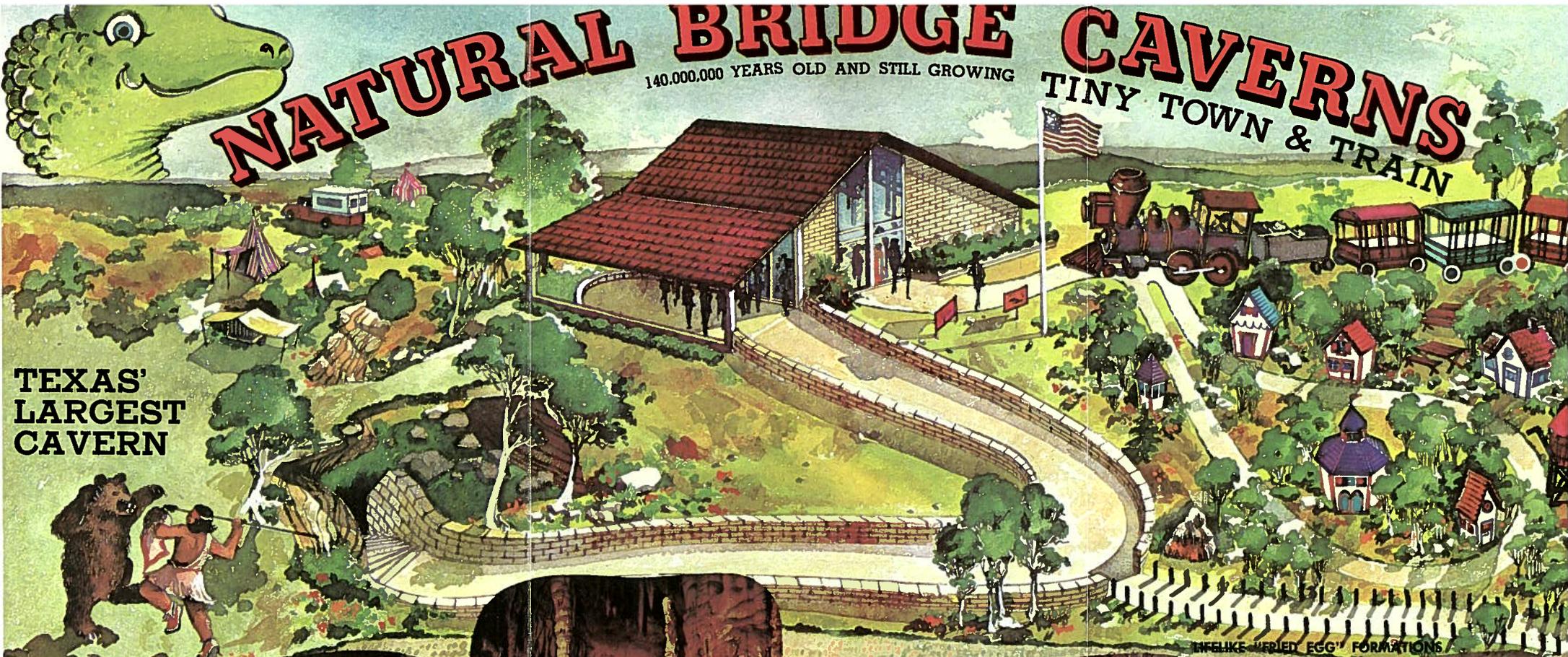
NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

140,000,000 YEARS OLD AND STILL GROWING

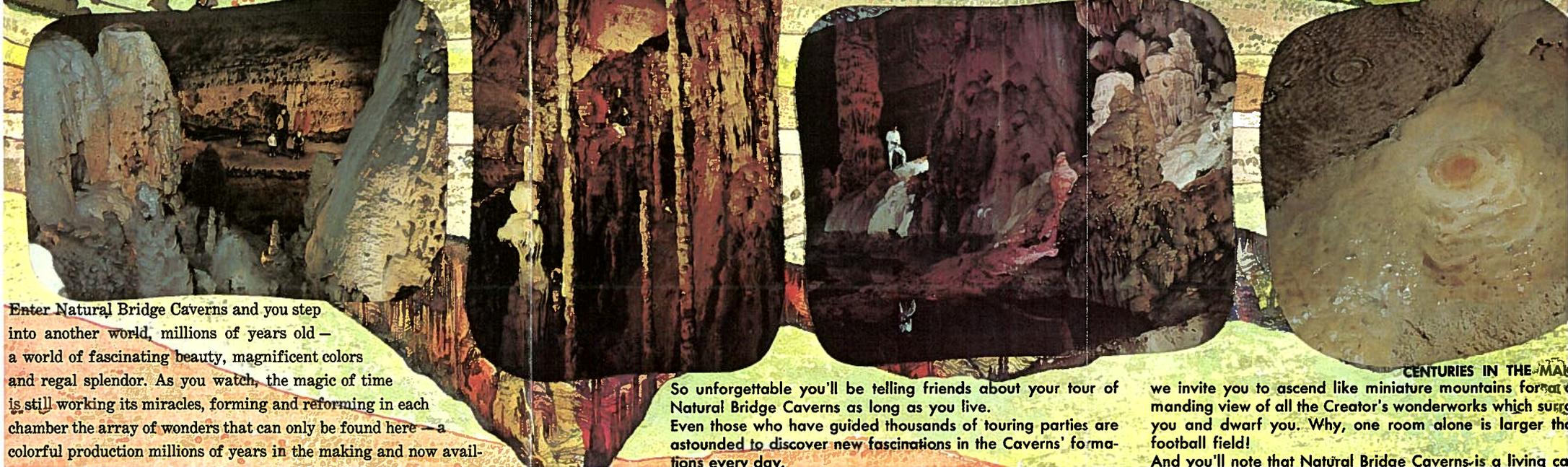
TINY TOWN & TRAIN



TEXAS' LARGEST CAVERN



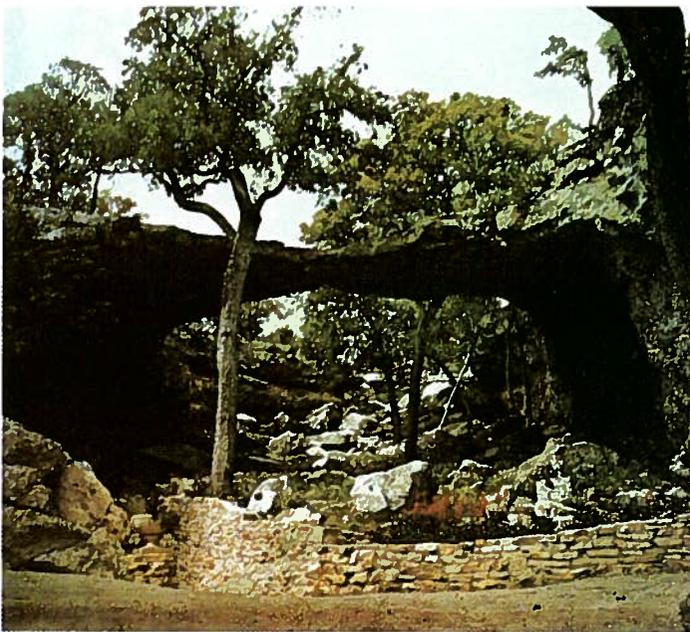
LIFELIKE "FRIED EGG" FORMATIONS



Enter Natural Bridge Caverns and you step into another world, millions of years old — a world of fascinating beauty, magnificent colors and regal splendor. As you watch, the magic of time is still working its miracles, forming and reforming in each chamber the array of wonders that can only be found here — a colorful production millions of years in the making and now avail-

So unforgettable you'll be telling friends about your tour of Natural Bridge Caverns as long as you live. Even those who have guided thousands of touring parties are astounded to discover new fascinations in the Caverns' formations every day.

CENTURIES IN THE MAKING we invite you to ascend like miniature mountains for a commanding view of all the Creator's wonderworks which surround you and dwarf you. Why, one room alone is larger than a football field! And you'll note that Natural Bridge Caverns is a living ca-



60 FOOT NATURAL BRIDGE. CAVERN ENTRANCE BELOW. This is where you will enter Texas largest and most spectacular underground wonderland.

For many years, a formidable cattle ranch was run here under the name Natural Bridge Ranch. Then, in 1960, four college students set out to explore the small cave below the bridge. Discovery of a secret passageway led to the most fantastic underground phenomenon below.

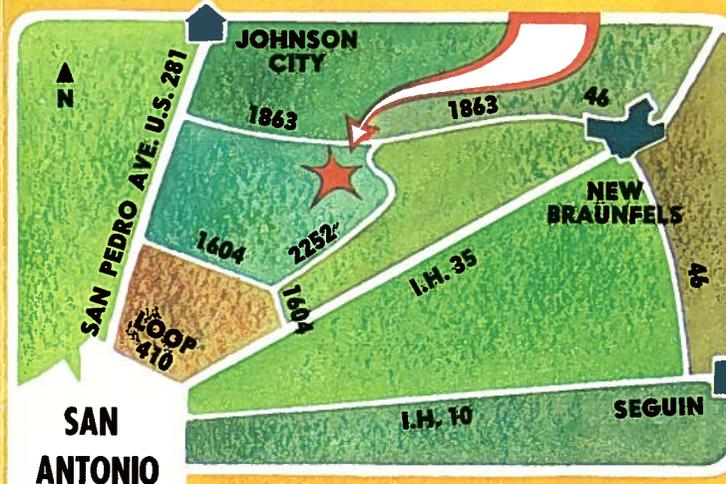
Since 1960, over a quarter of a million dollars has been spent in developing Natural Bridge Caverns. The hour and 15 minute tour will be something to be remembered a lifetime.

BRING YOUR CAMERA



Member National Caves Association,

NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS



JUST MINUTES NORTH OF SAN ANTONIO, SOUTH-WEST OF NEW BRAUNFELS. A PAVED, SCENIC HIGHWAY WILL BRING YOU TO OUR DOOR!

UNIQUE GIFT SHOP AND SNACK BAR, air conditioned and open year 'round. Have a fresh, home made sandwich, fresh goat's milk, soft drinks or shop from a big selection of gifts from around the world. See our cavern formation and arrowhead museum. We are also a U. S. Post Office.

PICNIC GROUNDS and facilities are available free to cavern patrons. They are located at Park Headquarters. Rest in the shade, dine and enjoy the view of hundreds of scenic acres.

RIDE THE TINY TOWN TRAIN thru Storyland and the animal park. Children may walk about, pet the animals and examine the fairytale buildings.

NEW CAMPER FACILITIES are available for tents and camping rigs in a secluded 360 acre area of the park. Complete new central facilities provide hot water, showers and garbage pickup. Standard rates.

OPEN everyday 9 AM to 5 PM (6 PM June, July and August). Tours begin every thirty minutes. The Caverns are a comfortable 70° year 'round. No sweaters needed. Comfortable rubber-soled walking shoes should be worn. Walkways are smoothly paved, well lighted and safe. **CHILDREN UNDER 6 FREE WHEN ACCOMPANIED BY THEIR PARENTS.**

GROUP RATES AVAILABLE to parties of 20 or more. And courtesies of the trade extended to all travel agents and carriers. **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

FOLLOW ME TO...

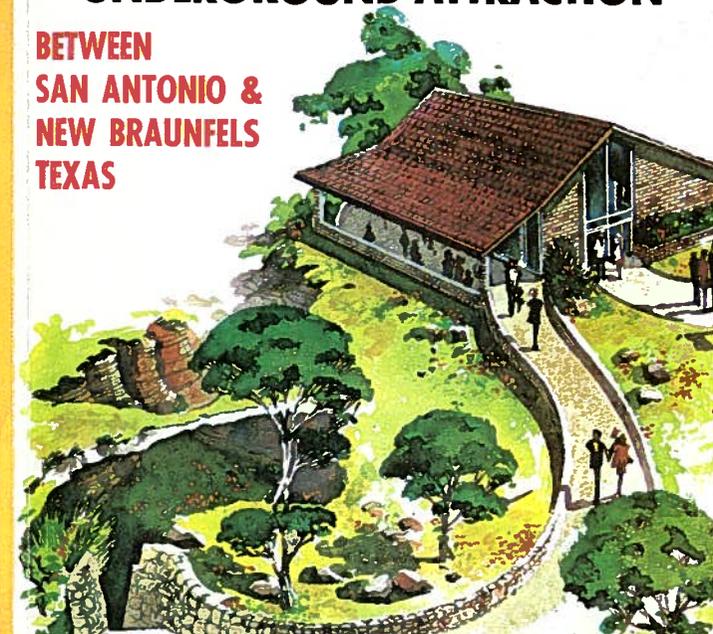
NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS



NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

TEXAS LARGEST AND MOST SPECTACULAR UNDERGROUND ATTRACTION

BETWEEN SAN ANTONIO & NEW BRAUNFELS TEXAS





An Experience to Treasure a Lifetime

SO unforgettable you'll be telling friends about your tour of Natural Bridge Caverns as long as you live.

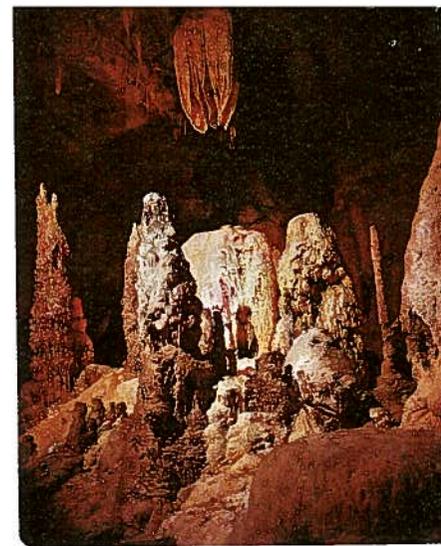
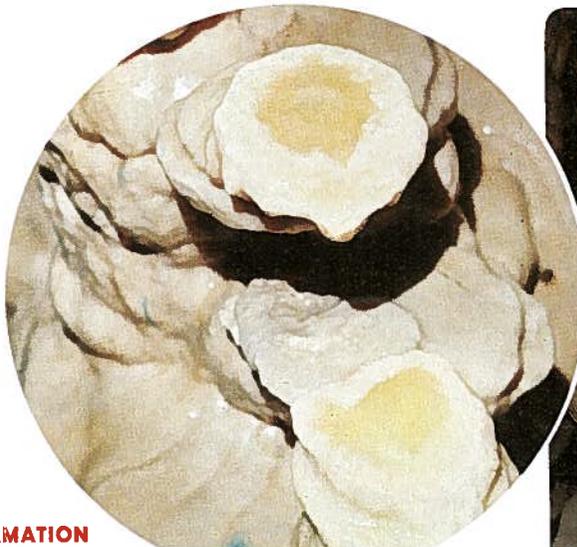
Even we who have guided hundreds of touring parties are astounded to discover new fascinations in the Caverns' formations every day.

YOU'LL see configurations of tiny, china-doll delicacy . . . others as majestic as an emperor's throne . . . still other formations we invite you to ascend like miniature mountains for a commanding view of all the Creator's wonderworks which surround you and dwarf you. Why, one room alone is longer than a football field!

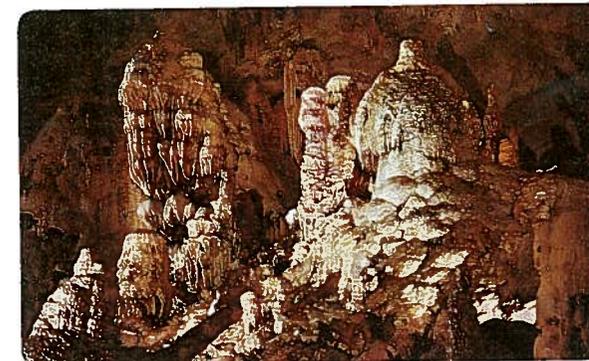
And you'll note that Natural Bridge Caverns is a *living* cave - countless thousands of centuries old and still forming as you are passing through.

THIS we promise you: an hour and a half to remember a lifetime.

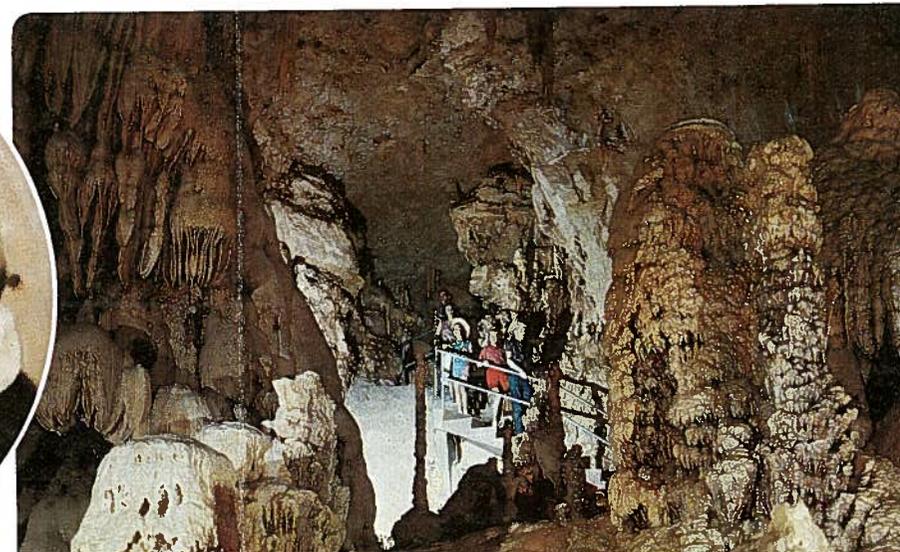
FRIED EGG FORMATION



8 FOOT CHANDELIER

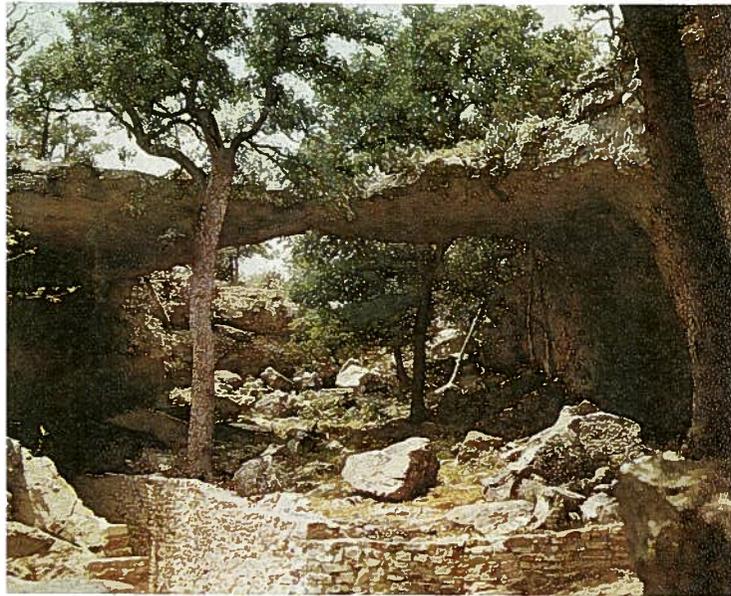


40 FOOT KINGS THRONE





is where your tour of Texas' great underground phenomenon begins . . .



NOW you see where Natural Bridge Ranch got its name.

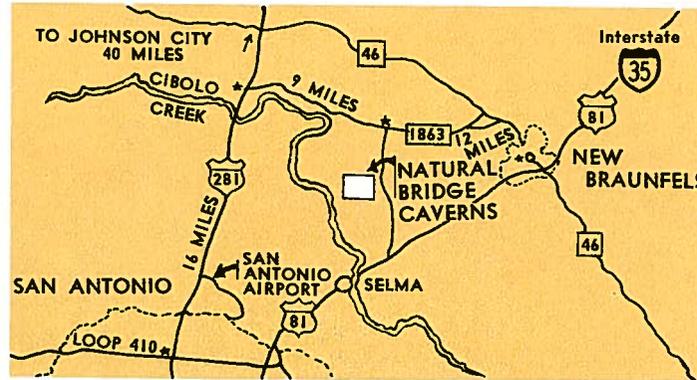
For many romantic years of Texas history, the ranch remained just one of thousands of formidable cattle-raising spreads, *until* — only a half-dozen years ago — four daring young college men set out to explore and map the undreamed of magnificence of nature which lay beneath.

YOU ARE INVITED TO BRING YOUR CAMERA!

YOU'LL make your entrance to the huge Caverns, all of whose walkways are now smoothly paved and effectively lighted, at the base of this dramatic rock sculpture. Texas' celebrated Natural Bridge.

... wherever you are
at this moment...

Whether you're now in Saskatoon, Seattle, Syracuse, Sarasota or nearby San Antonio, you'll want to keep this map for your use just as soon as your travels bring you in the vicinity of Natural Bridge Caverns . . .



OPEN the year around (except Christmas Day) 9:00 A. M. to 5:00 P. M. June, July, and August open until 6:00 P. M. Natural Bridge Caverns' tours depart so frequently they never cause unforeseen delay in your traveling schedule.

Youngsters under six accompanying their families are always free guests of the Caverns.

GROUP rates available, of course, to parties of 20 or more persons. And courtesies of the trade extended to all travel agents and carriers.

ANSWERS to any specific questions you may have are immediately obtainable by writing Natural Bridge Caverns, Rt. 3, Box 515, San Antonio, or P. O. Box 418, New Braunfels, Texas; or telephone area code 512, GENEVA 8-2181.

FREE picnic areas in Natural Bridge Caverns Park.



NATURAL BRIDGE CAVERNS

