

# 2001 NSS Convention

## A Cave Odyssey

July 23-27, 2001  
Mount Vernon, Kentucky

### Program Guide



Editor  
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# Spelean History Session

Thursday 9:00 - 12:00 noon

## Scientists prefer them blind: a historiography of hypogean fish research

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The history of hypogean fish research has been strongly influenced by neo-Lamarckism (including orthogenesis) and typological thinking. Only in the last few decades neo-Darwinism has made any inroads in the research approach to this subject. The majority of the most distinguished and productive hypogean fish researchers have used their research subjects to confirm their own views on evolution rather than to use those subjects as a spring of knowledge to enrich mainstream biological thought. Of these views, I found that the most pervasive of all is the notion of evolutionary 'progress' that has led many researchers to envision hypogean fishes as prime examples of 'regressive' evolution. I propose that the utilization of hypogean fish for the study of convergent evolution should catapult these subjects of research into prime objects of evolutionary studies.

## Nuclear Fallout Shelters in Mammoth Cave National Park

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Between 1963 and 1978 Mammoth Cave National Park had four Civil Defense nuclear fallout shelters in the Mammoth Cave System and Great Onyx Cave. Supplies included food, water, a medical kit, sanitary supplies and devices to check radiation.

Though Mammoth and Great Onyx Caves probably would have been as accessible and safe as other fallout shelters, usually basements in homes or public buildings, caves in general would not be as suitable for fallout shelters. Most caves are not in highly populated areas, do not have roads leading to them and lack easy access entrances. A well-ventilated cave could let fallout in, while a cave with little ventilation could

be unsafe for large groups over long periods of time, and the cool temperature of most American caves would be uncomfortable for inactive people.

After 15 years in the cave, the shelter supplies were removed, not always with care. The water was poured out of the barrels before removing them from the caves, washing away sediment and leaving gullies in the floor in Mammoth Cave's Audubon Avenue. Workers destroyed gypsum flowers in Crystal Cave. Most of the supplies were disposed of, but the carbohydrate supplement candy, 15 years old and "hard as rocks", was given to National Park Service employees to eat. The Office of Civil Defense no longer exists and fallout shelters are no longer common. The Mammoth Cave fallout shelters are no longer a survival strategy, but an interesting chapter in Mammoth Cave history.

## Caves as Curiosities: The Location of Cultural Values within American Caves in the Nineteenth-Century

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During the nineteenth century, one way Americans conceived of caves was as natural curiosities, interesting spaces that were expressions of the sublime. Americans located spiritual, religious, romantic, and patriotic cultural values within caves, giving them an importance beyond their utilitarian and commercial worth. By attaching these values to caves, Americans created ambiguous and contradictory interactions with the cave environment, reflecting differing impulses towards the natural world. The tension between commercial and utilitarian exploitation of caves and the cultural values of caves was an important factor in the nascent efforts to conserve the cave environment in the period.