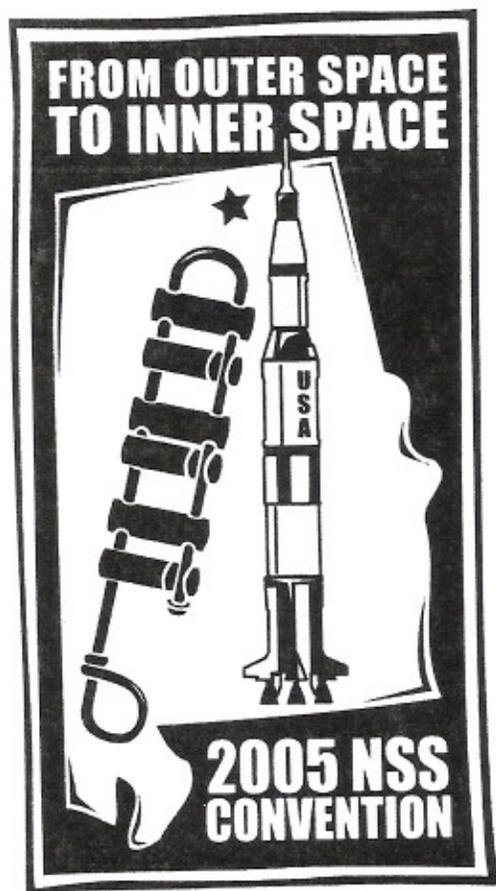


From Outer Space to Inner Space

2005 National Speleological Society Convention
Program Guide



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Tuesday, 9:00 - 12:00. Location: A/V Room

Charles A. Muehlbronner & John Nelson: Heroes of Mammoth Cave's "Echo River Club"

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In January, 1904, the annual convention of the League of Commission Merchants was held in Louisville, Kentucky. As part of their activities, a trip was organized to visit Mammoth Cave. During the Echo River tour inside the cave, seventeen passengers on guide John Nelson's boat were dumped into the icy water due to the horseplay of one of the men. Only the quick thinking and heroic action of Nelson and Charles A. Muehlbronner, former Pennsylvania state senator from Pittsburgh, saved the group from drowning. Back at the Mammoth Cave Hotel, the grateful passengers formed the "Echo River Club" with membership limited to those people on the trip. Muehlbronner was elected as President for life. The group held annual reunions in different cities for several years.

Dunbar Cave - Home of the Willapus Wallapus

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Dunbar Cave was one of the first caves to be developed into a viable commercial underground attraction in Tennessee. J. M. Rice, C. P. Warfield, and J. P. Gracey purchased the Dunbar Cave property in 1882 and developed Dunbar Cave into a tourist attraction. Only four years later, Goodspeed's History Of Tennessee (1886) describes the cave in glowing terms. Many of the chambers and forma-

tions had already been given their current names. Interestingly, one of the formations in Independence Hall was named the "Willapus Wallapus."

Many of the other rooms and formations in the cave have names that are easily recognizable from typical commercial operations. However, extensive research has failed to reveal the origin of the name "Willapus Wallapus." It is believed that this may be some mythical beast described in literature, mythology, or even children's stories. One person located a comic strip from the 1930's that ran under the name of the "Willapus Wallapus." A Google Search turns up a record with that name recorded by a Canadian singing group. Despite these leads, no actual description of what a "Willapus Wallapus" is or was has been located!

Old post cards exist that show some of the named features of Dunbar Cave. Unfortunately, no post-card of the Willapus Wallapus has yet been located. If you go to Dunbar Cave.....keep your eyes open for the "Willapus Wallapus." He is somewhere in Independence Hall.

On White Fish And Black Men: Did Stephen Bishop Really Discover The Blind Cave Fish Of Mammoth Cave?

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Some of the chronology of discoveries at Mammoth Cave, Kentucky., is marred by contradictory reports and legends. The first published reference

2005 NSS Program Guide

to a blind cave fish ("white fish") in Mammoth Cave appears to be by Robert Davidson in 1840; however the chronology given in his book is contradictory. We did archival and field research aimed at identifying the first person to have seen (and probably collected) this blind cave fishes at Mammoth Cave. We also researched all the known specimens of the two species of blind cave fishes ever found at Mammoth Cave to see if that information could provide evidence of which of the two species was seen first. We conclude that: (1) Davidson's chronology in his book is probably wrong and that he did not visit the cave until 1838 or 1839; (2) it is possible that Bishop was the first person sighting the fish, but others cannot be definitely excluded from having been involved in this discovery; and, (3) that although there are two species of blind cave fish that inhabit the waters of Mammoth Cave, the first one sighted was likely *Amblyopsis spelaea*, also the first one to be recognized in the scientific literature. We finally conclude that the facts surrounding Stephen Bishop's fame need to be further investigated under the perspective of the romantic movement of the mid-nineteenth century that gave rise to the "noble savage" mythology as well as on the perspective of race in the United States prior to the Civil War.

The Start Of The Kentucky Cavewars

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Followers of spelean history are acquainted with the Kentucky cavewars, and its many and varied feuds among the show caves of the region competing for the tourist dollars. Previously hidden in obscurity is the start of the cavewars. In 1871, David L. Graves, formerly of near Lebanon Kentucky, leased the Mammoth Cave hotel and grounds from the Croghan heirs. He was also the proprietor of the Cave City Hotel, and ran a stage line in opposition to Andy McCoy, an established stage line operator. Rival drivers were faced with assault and battery, that went to court in 1873. A monetary judgment failed to solve the feuds and a few month later, shots were fired by both parties, mortally wounding David L. Graves himself, or did

it? The stage had been set for factions of the Mammoth Cave area to defend their turf and individual caves for years to come.

Diamond Caverns: Jewel of Kentucky's Underground

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Saltpeper was being mined in Short Cave and Long Cave on the west side of a karst valley near Three Forks, Kentucky during the War of 1812. Beneath this valley was a beautiful cave discovered when landowner Jessie Coats' slave was lowered down a 35 foot pit on July 14, 1859. He saw sparkling calcite that resembled diamonds.

The Kennedy Bridal Party was the first to enter the new show cave a month later. Joseph Rogers Underwood, a renowned Bowling Green lawyer, senator, and managing trustee of the Mammoth Cave Estate bought Diamond Cave and 156 acres from Jesse Coats. A close relationship existed between Mammoth Cave and Diamond Cave with cave literature describing both caves. Mammoth Cave Railroad opened in 1886 with Diamond a stop.

Amos Fudge of Toledo, Ohio, and his son-in-law, Presbyterian minister Elwood A. Rowsey purchased Diamond in 1924. The fledgling National Speleological Society organized an expedition to Diamond in October, 1942. Dr. Rowsey and his son, Elwood, and Rowsey's niece, Jan Alexander McDaniel and her husband, Vernon, ran the cave and campground adjacent to Mammoth Cave National Park until 1982. NSS cavers Gary and Susan Berdeaux, Larry and Mayo McCarty, Roger and Carol McClure, Stanley and Kay Sides, and Gordon and Judy Smith purchased the cave on July 7, 1999 to promote the cave as a historic attraction and develop a national show cave museum. Virgin passages have since been discovered and a new cave found on the property.