



TIMPANOGOS CAVE SYSTEM HISTORY

Hansen Cave

In the fall of 1887, Martin Hansen was cutting wood and saw mountain lion tracks in the freshly fallen snow. He followed these tracks up the side of the canyon until they led him to an opening in the mountain in which he discovered a cave.

When Hansen discovered this beautiful cave, he decided to show it off and lead people through it for 25 cents a person. He constructed a **primitive** trail, often using trees as ladders to go up the sides of the cliffs. Many of these earlier visitors broke off formations as **souvenirs** and would sign their names on the walls of the cave.

The Duke Onyx Mining Company came from Chicago, Illinois looking for onyx. **Onyx** was used as a decorative stone in furniture, counter tops, and mantle pieces. Onyx was often found in caves so miners brought in their chisels and wedges and took out approximately 2 train-car loads of cave rock. Later, it was discovered that the cave formations were not onyx after all, but a much softer mineral called **calcite**.

Timpanogos Cave

Two teenage boys, James Gough and Frank Johnson, came up with their families to explore Hansen Cave and decided to do some more exploring on their own. They slid down a slope on the other side of Hansen Cave and discovered the entrance of Timpanogos Cave. These boys wanted to keep it a secret and make it their own. They actually filed a mining claim on the land even though they never really mined anything, and then they moved away. Only a few friends even knew the cave had been discovered.

After hearing rumors of a mystery cave, Vearl Manwill and a few friends in the Payson Alpine Club **combed** the area around the caves looking for an entrance. Manwill made the "rediscovery," and made contact with the Forest Service about its whereabouts.



Middle Cave

In October of 1921, two deer hunters on the opposite side of the canyon were looking across at the entrance of Hansen Cave and **spotted** another opening between the other two entrances. These two men, Heber and Wayne Hansen, were the son and grandson of Martin Hansen. They decided to check it out, but didn't have enough light and were unsure of the depth of the cave so they went home to get a rope and supplies. When they came back to explore, they brought a 60 foot rope but upon entering the cave discovered that it was too short. The entrance to Middle Cave is approximately 110 feet above the floor, so entering the cave required ropes and climbing.

Timpanogos Cave System Becomes a National Monument

Because the caves were on Forest Service Land, the Forest Service was in charge of the cave's protection and **administration**. However, because they didn't have the funds, a Timpanogos Cave Committee was formed. They raised money, put in a lighting system, built a trail, and lead cave tours. The first cave tours were in 1922. Thousands of people came through the caves and saw how beautiful and spectacular they were. The relatively untouched formations of Timpanogos seemed a sharp contrast to the mining and other damages found in Hansen Cave. As the community came to see the caves, they began to care more about them.

On September 15, 1922, Regional Forester R. H. Ruthledge wrote to Washington, D.C. requesting that the caves become protected as a National Monument. On October 14, 1922, President Warren G. Harding used the Antiquities Act of 1906 to set the caves aside because it "...is of unusual scientific interest and importance." The Timpanogos Cave Committee continued to maintain and give tours of the cave until 1944 when the National Park Service eventually took over responsibility and care for the cave.



Lessons for Today

As the community of the early 1920s learned about the caves, they wanted to protect them. Their speedy action **preserved** the caves so that now, nearly 90 years later, we can still enjoy the beautiful formations and interesting **geology**.

Mining has been a very important part of Utah history, and it has contributed greatly to our economy and culture. However, the

formations in Timpanogos Cave are not judged today by how much money they are worth. The formations in the caves are valued today for their beauty, scientific interest, and their use as a resource to teach others.

Name _____

Date _____

Questions

1. How much was a Hansen Cave tour in 1887?

2. Why did the Duke Onyx Mining Company want to mine in Hansen Cave?

3. What is the difference between calcite and onyx?

4. After Frank and James discovered Timpanogos Cave, what did they do?

5. What would you do if you found a cave and why?

6. How was Timpanogos Cave rediscovered?

7. How are the people who discovered Middle Cave related to Martin Hansen?

8. Did Heber and Wayne enter the cave immediately after finding it? Why or why not?

9. Why didn't the Forest Service maintain and operate the caves?

10. Explain what the main difference is between Hansen Cave and Timpanogos Cave.

11. President Harding set Timpanogos Cave aside in 1922 as a National Monument, what year did the National Park Service take over responsibility for the cave?

12. How have people changed their views about the protection of the caves since the discovery of the first cave?

Vocabulary

Define each of the following words.

1. **Primitive** _____

2. **Souvenirs** _____

3. **Onyx** _____

4. **Calcite** _____

5. **Combed** _____

6. **Spotted** _____

7. **Administration** _____

8. **Preserved** _____

9. **Geology** _____

Name ANSWER KEY

Date _____

Questions

13. How much was a Hansen Cave tour in 1887?

25 Cents

14. Why did the Duke Onyx Mining Company want to mine in Hansen Cave?

They thought the cave formations were onyx and they could use it to make furniture and directions.

15. What is the difference between calcite and onyx?

Calcite is a softer mineral and onyx is a harder material

16. After Frank and James discovered Timpanogos Cave, what did they do?

They kept it a secret and tried to make it their own

17. What would you do if you found a cave and why?

Answers will vary

18. How was Timpanogos Cave rediscovered?

Vearl Manwill and some of his friends searched to find the cave

19. How are the people who discovered Middle Cave related to Martin Hansen?

They were his son and Grandson

20. Did Heber and Wayne enter the cave immediately after finding it? Why or why not?

They did not enter the cave but came back later when they had supplies

21. Why didn't the Forest Service maintain and operate the caves?

They were on federal land and they didn't have the funding for it

22. Explain what the main difference is between Hansen Cave and Timpanogos Cave.

Timpanogos cave was better protected so there are more formations and Hansen cave wasn't really protected and they tried mining it causing a lot of damage

23. President Harding set Timpanogos Cave aside in 1922 as a National Monument, what year did the National Park Service take over responsibility for the cave?

In 1944, the National Park Service took responsibility

24. How have people changed their views about the protection of the caves since the discovery of the first cave?

People care more and the caves are valued more and are better protected