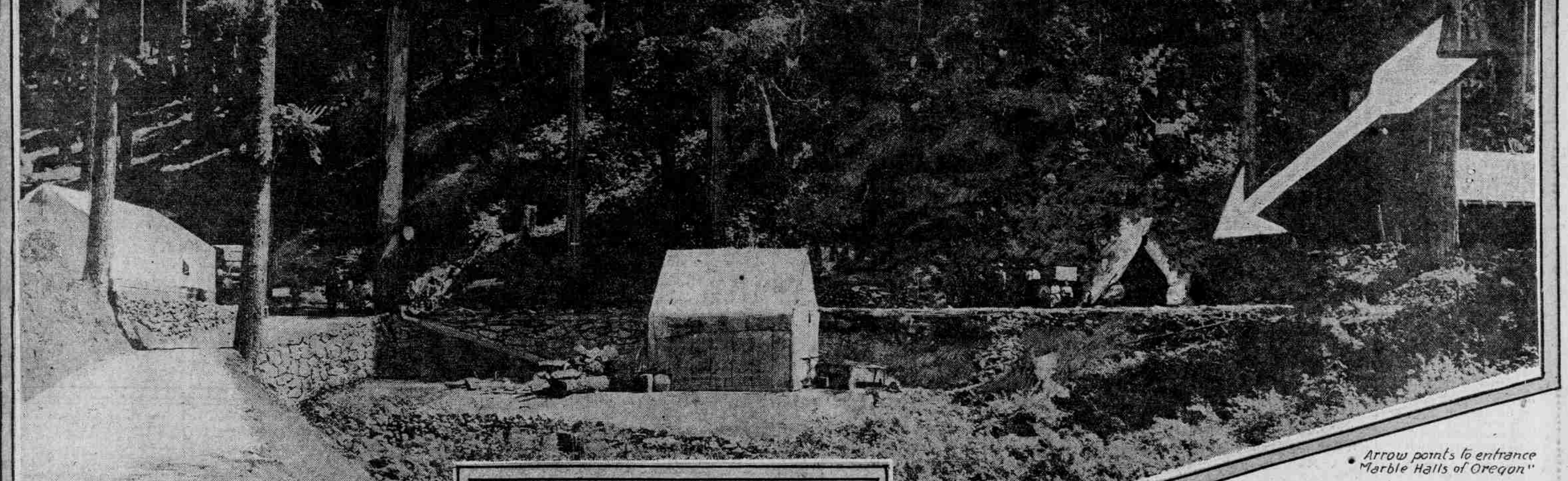




NEW ROAD OPENS OREGON CAVES



Arrow points to entrance
Marble Halls of Oregon

General view of the lower entrance
to the Oregon Caves
Photos A.E. Kellogg
Gold Hill, Ore.

THE OREGON caves in Josephine county now are accessible to motorists by the recent completion of the last eight miles of road from the county road from Holland, southwest of Grants Pass, to the mouth of the caves. This road was built by the government at a cost of more than \$100,000 and is one of the most scenic and beautiful of all of Oregon's scenic highways. It terminates in a camp ground for motorists hewn out of the side of the mountain at an elevation of 4000 feet.

The road has been constructed on a consistent 6 per cent grade and is negotiable in high gear all the way, being smooth and well-graded its entire length. From the foot of the hill to the camp ground at the top the road is dug out of the side of the mountain. The short turns are graded at extra width so that driving is not difficult at any point. The ascent includes many interesting feats of engineering, where at several places there are three parallel roads, one above the other, connected by scenic "horseshoe" loops.

Several springs trickle out of the rocks at intervals up the grade and the towering virgin timber, on either side of the new road, shades the way pleasantly. The caves themselves, of course, are entirely beyond description; just as Crater lake and the Columbia river highway are beyond description.

Caves Trip Takes Two Hours.

The trip through the caves, as it is arranged now, takes more than two hours, and the sightseer walks and crawls more than a mile and a half. Steel ladders have been placed at the ascents and descents, though every precaution has been taken by the "cave men" to keep the caves in their natural state. A child 10 years old may now make the exploration in perfect safety, as well as an elderly man or woman. Coveralls are almost a necessity to women, and the concessioner has them for a nominal rental. Carbide lamps are available and are good, practical lights for the underground journey.

Until the completion of the government road the guiding service and care of the caves was a government gratuity. One man was kept on the ground, who performed the functions of guide and caretaker.

Camp Now in Operation.

Now a concession has been let for this work. R. McIlveen manages a camp, in which tent houses beds are available and good meals are served. Mr. McIlveen is in charge of the guiding service, also, and a fee of 25 cents is charged. It is the intention of the concessioner to build a hotel on the site of the present camp ground. Dick Rowley, who has been at the caves in the employ of the government for 12 years, is one of the guides who waits upon the visiting public. The road from Grants Pass is good macadam to Holland, from which point Josephine county has built the road. Two miles out of Holland there is some deep dust, which makes slow going for a while. Farther on toward the new government road the county is finishing the improvement of the old road to connect the line, and this last link will be finished by the middle of August, according to reports.

A detour of one mile is now necessary, paralleling this construction work. The detour is rough, in places steep, though entirely passable for any car. It is possible to make the trip

to the caves and return from Grants Pass in one long day, although two days' time is more practical. The road is clearly directed by adequate signs and no trouble in finding the way will be experienced. Upon leaving Grants Pass at the south, take the right-hand road, leaving the pavement. Two miles west of Kerby the cave road branches to the left, from the main Crescent City-California road.

Regular trips through the caves are scheduled at 8 o'clock and 10 o'clock A. M., and at 1 o'clock and 3 o'clock P. M. Other trips may be scheduled to suit parties, through private arrangement with the concessioner.

In January of the present year the federal government, at a cost of \$120,000, began the construction and recently completed the approximately 10 miles of modern graded highway through the Siskiyou national forest to the entrance of the caves, and at the present time the state of Oregon and Josephine county are co-operating in the construction of the connecting link joining this new road with the Crescent City branch of the Pacific highway. When completed this will give motorists a first-class highway direct from Grants Pass to the caves, a distance of 52 miles.

Lighting System Planned.
At present there is a bill pending in congress for the appropriation of \$20,000 to be expended in making some desirable improvements at the Oregon caves, among improvements considered being the installation of a power plant for electrically lighting the caves throughout, more spacious parking grounds for motor cars, a camp-site water system and a lodge at or near the cave's entrance.

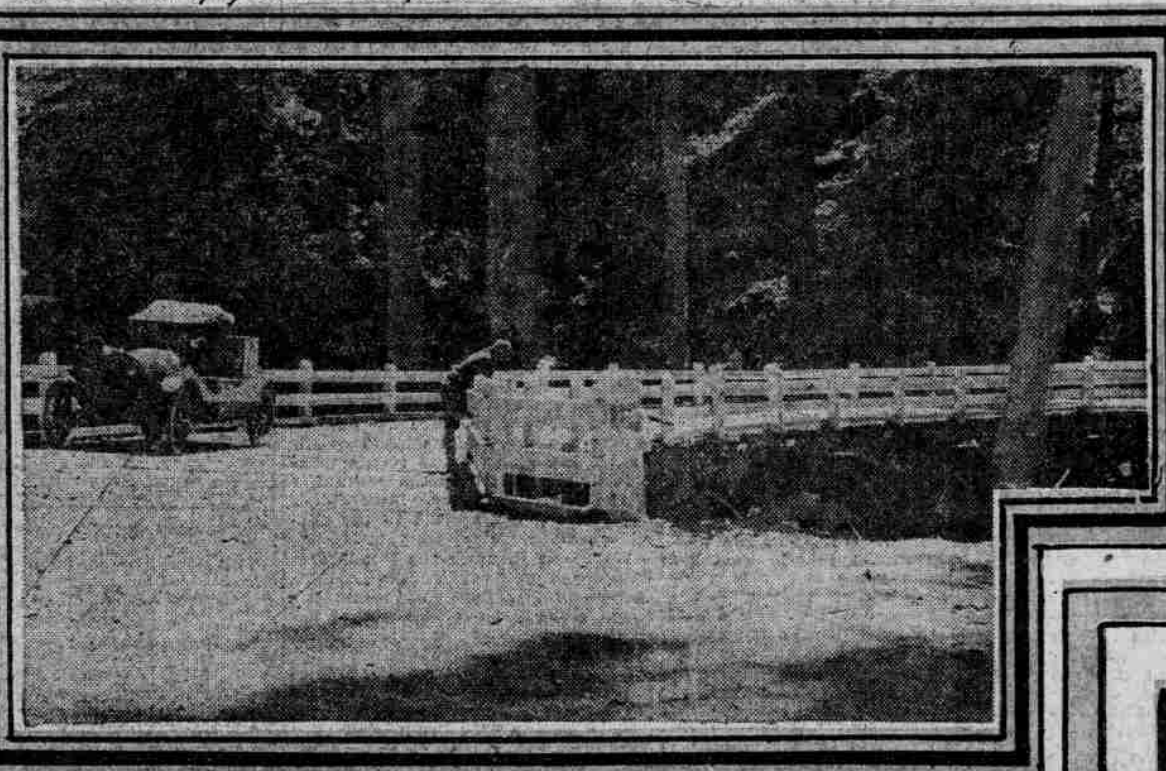
Under the provision of the forest service department and with its financial backing during the past winter, Forest Guard Rowley and his helpers have been busy hewing out stone steps and enlarging passageways in the caves where such improvements could be made without detracting from the beauty of the formations. Because of its location in Josephine county, the Oregon caves were long locally called and in literature "Josephine County caves." The history of their discovery dates back to August 6, 1874, when Elijah Davidson, who still resides near by on Applegate river, was led to the lower entrance by a wounded bear whose trail he had followed from the top of the mountain above. Three years later the bear hunter revisited the place with two companions and they explored the caves only for a short distance from the mouth. On returning to civilization they told of the wonders they had seen, and thus told the story of the caves to the world.

Formations Are Described.

According to the Oregon bureau of mines and geology, the Oregon caves are representative of a type of underground cavern by which limestone formations are characterized the world over. The geologist would explain that marble is only a limestone that has become hardened and crystallized by the action of those agents in the shell of the earth—heat, pressure and circulating water—that modify the physical condition of rocks everywhere. Caves are formed in rocks whose substance is relatively easily dissolved away. Limestone is the most common one of these, and marble, which is but a crystalline limestone, shares this same susceptibility to the solvent action of earth waters.

A recent visitor to the caves has interestingly described the motor trip to this new wonder of Oregon

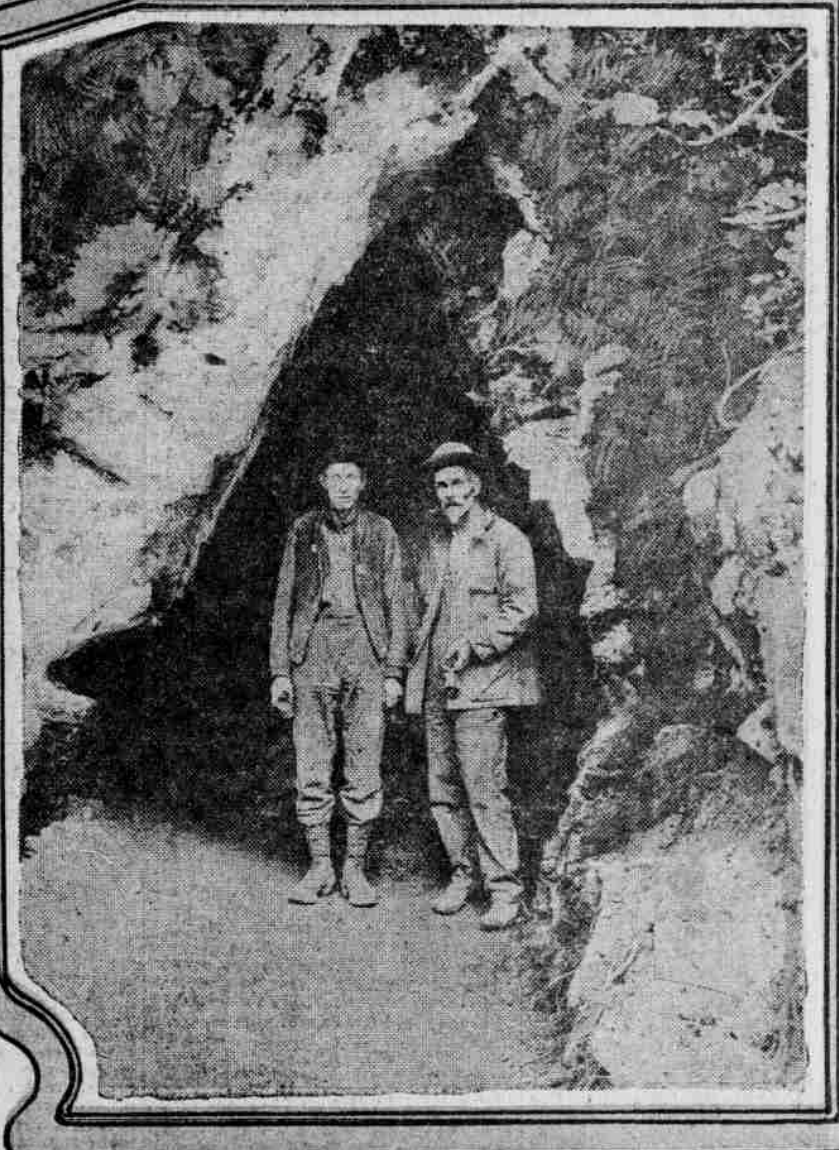
Auto Parking grounds 800 feet from the entrance of caves



Bridge across Panther creek on the mountain side Highway.



Loop on the grade up the mountainside



Lower entrance to Oregon Caves. Richard W. Rowley, on the left, who has been in charge of caves for 12 years



A cut on the mountainside highway



from Grants Pass, which serves as a gateway to that region from the level country for some eight miles, crossing the Applegate river. Then "Leaving Grants Pass on the Pacific highway, we proceed in a general southwesterly direction over a town, a distance of three miles, is Grants Pass. Waters Creek is the nearest shipping point for the vast region of the Illinois valley, which brings up to Wilderville. The next Coast-railroad, 15 miles out from and for all the country for 60 miles beyond a chain of high hills, Illinois River Valley on Route. "After leaving Waters Creek we (Continued on Page 2)