

DEC 14 1987
MRA No. 37

INDIVIDUAL DATA SHEET

Property Name Wonderland Cave Property Owner Carole A. Westby, et al
c/o Charity George
Location Dertmoor Road, Bella Vista Address 1319 Fitch Way
Construction Date c 1925 Survey No. 1749 Sacramento, CA 95864

DESCRIPTION

The Wonderland Cave is a natural underground cavern in a hillside at Bella Vista which was developed first as a tourist attraction in the late 1920's and later as an underground night club. A paved path, electrically lighted and with some hand rails, extends from the entrance for a distance of about 200 yards to the night club, a very large naturally-vaulted chamber. The "club room" has been refined with a smooth concrete floor, an alcove for musicians, and wooden and stone booths around the perimeter. Booths and floor were originally decorated with Alice in Wonderland motifs. The cavern extends for an uncertain distance beyond the club chamber but has not been developed beyond that point for public visitation.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

Criterion: AArea of significance: Recreation

The Wonderland Cave at Bella Vista is a natural cavern of modest size, strategically located within the resort area. The cavern floor is generally horizontal and therefore of easy access to the public. To maximize the commercial potential of the cavern, the resort owners developed in the early 1930's a night club in a large vaulted chamber of the cavern. Named the "Wonderland Underground Night Club", it quickly became a popular entertainment spot, attracting leading musicians and entertainers of the region as well as a devoted clientele. After Prohibition was repealed, a local Bella Vista wine was produced and a portion of the cavern became an important wine storage facility. A whimsical fieldstone facade was built across the front of the cavern as a control point for paying visitors. In 1936 the Arkansas Legislature chose to have a special session at Bella Vista and at least one meeting of the legislature was held in the cavern. A caretaker's cottage near the entrance has long been abandoned. Sometime after the

Acreage less than 1 acreVerbal Boundary Description From the convergence of U.S. Highway #71 and Cave Road (cont)Quadrangle Name Bentonville North, Ark.-Mo. Quadrangle Scale 1:24000UTM Reference: Zone 15 Easting 390360 Northing 4032750

INDIVIDUAL DATA SHEET

Property Name Wonderland Cave Property Owner _____
Location _____ Address _____
Construction Date _____ Survey No. 1749 _____

DESCRIPTION

VERBAL BOUNDARY CONTINUED

proceed east on Cave Road .7 miles to the southeast corner of the property and the point of beginning. Proceed north 100 feet, proceed east 70 feet, then proceed south 100 feet, and then proceed west 70 feet to the point of beginning.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE Continued

Criterion: _____ Area of significance: _____

Night Club era, the cavern was made available to a religious organization as a meeting place. The 1930's facade entrance to the cavern was replaced c. 1972 with one of uninspired design. The cavern is not presently open to the public, but it is significant as a reminder of the heyday of Bella Vista as an entertainment center.

Acreage _____

Verbal Boundary Description _____

Quadrangle Name _____ Quadrangle Scale _____

UTM Reference: Zone _____ Easting _____ Northing _____

12/14/87

United States Department of the Interior
National Park ServiceNational Register of Historic Places
Continuation Sheet

Section number _____ Page _____

Multiple Resource Area
Thematic GroupName Benton County MRA
State Benton County, ARKANSAS

Nomination/Type of Review

Date/Signature

91. Stack Barn

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

92. Stockton Building

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

93. Stroud House

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

94. Sutherlin Cabin

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

95. Thurmond House

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

96. Vinson House

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

97. Walnut Street Historic District

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

98. Wasson House

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

99. Wonderland CaveEntered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

100. Young, Col., House

Entered in the
National RegisterKeeper Melona Byers 1/28/88

Attest _____

87002313

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
EVALUATION/RETURN SHEET

Wonderland Cave (Benton County MRA)
Benton County
ARKANSAS

Working No. DEC 14 1987
Fed. Reg. Date: 2/7/89
Date Due: 1/14/88 1/28/88
Action: ☒ ACCEPT 1-28-88
☐ RETURN
☐ REJECT

Federal Agency: _____

- ☐ resubmission
☐ nomination by person or local government
☐ owner objection
☐ appeal

Substantive Review: ☐ sample ☐ request ☐ appeal ☐ NR decision

Reviewer's comments:

Recom./Criteria _____
Reviewer _____
Discipline _____
Date _____
_____ see continuation sheet

Nomination returned for: _____ technical corrections cited below
_____ substantive reasons discussed below

1. Name

2. Location

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use
	Public Acquisition	Accessible	

4. Owner of Property

5. Location of Legal Description

6. Representation in Existing Surveys

Has this property been determined eligible? ☐ yes ☐ no

7. Description

Condition		Check one	Check one
<input type="checkbox"/> excellent	<input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated	<input type="checkbox"/> unaltered	<input type="checkbox"/> original site
<input type="checkbox"/> good	<input type="checkbox"/> ruins	<input type="checkbox"/> altered	<input type="checkbox"/> moved date _____
<input type="checkbox"/> fair	<input type="checkbox"/> unexposed		

Describe the present and original (if known) physical appearance

- ☐ summary paragraph
☐ completeness
☐ clarity
☐ alterations/integrity
☐ dates
☐ boundary selection

8. Significance

Period _____ Areas of Significance—Check and justify below

Specific dates _____

Builder/Architect _____

Statement of Significance (*in one paragraph*)

- ☐ summary paragraph
- ☐ completeness
- ☐ clarity
- ☐ applicable criteria
- ☐ justification of areas checked
- ☐ relating significance to the resource
- ☐ context
- ☐ relationship of integrity to significance
- ☐ justification of exception
- ☐ other

9. Major Bibliographical References

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of nominated property _____

Quadrangle name _____

UTM References _____

Verbal boundary description and justification _____

11. Form Prepared By

12. State Historic Preservation Officer Certification

The evaluated significance of this property within the state is:

_____ national _____ state _____ local

State Historic Preservation Officer signature

title _____ date _____

13. Other

- ☐ Maps
- ☐ Photographs
- ☐ Other

Questions concerning this nomination may be directed to _____

Signed _____ Date _____ Phone: _____



No. 37

WONDERLAND CAVE - 1749 (current entrance)

BELLA VISTA

BENTON CO. MRA

PHOTO'D BY T. JONES, June 1987

NEGATIVES ON FILE AT AHPP



Benton Co.

No. 37

Bella Vista

Wonderland Cave

1958 photo

BENTON CO. MRA

Dance floor area of Wonderland Cave, Bella Vista

Please refer to the map in the
Multiple Property Cover Sheet
for this property

Multiple Property Cover Sheet Reference Number: 64000022