



A stalactite in the caverns

**ON A BALMY AUGUST DAY IN 1878,** some local men were prospecting for caverns in the Shenandoah Valley in northern Virginia. Andrew Campbell, his thirteen-year-old nephew Quint, William Campbell, and Benton Stebbins were tipped off to the presence of caverns nearby because of the karst topography (limestone and dolomite sedimentary rock deposits). Feeling an odd, cool breeze originating from a depression on the hillside, they began digging at it. Five hours later, Andrew Campbell and Quint entered the caverns by sliding down into it. Their first sight was what would be dubbed the Washington Column, named after the first president of the United States.

The first Grand Illumination of Luray Caverns occurred on November 9, 1878, and the attraction has been open every day since. These days, this popular Virginia attraction, declared a National Natural Landmark in 1973, welcomes 500,000 visitors each year. It's the fourth-largest caverns in the United States that is open to the public and



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# cave *EXPECTATIONS*

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Pathway into the caverns