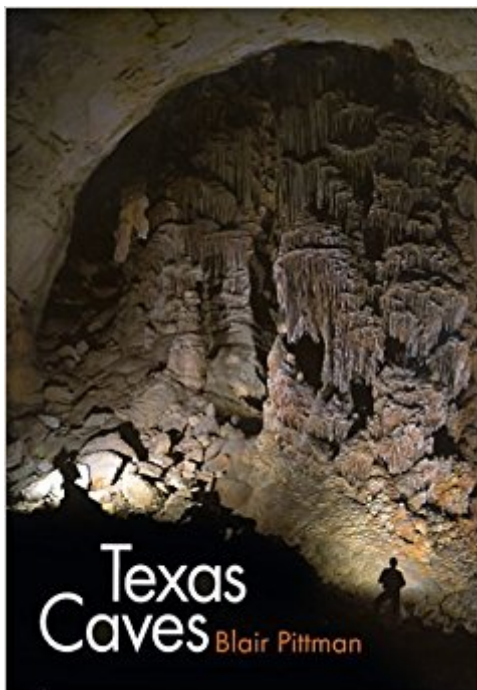


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# Texas Caves (Louise Lindsey Merrick Natural Environment Series)



## Synopsis

Texas has about three thousand known, explored caves, ranging in size from small crawl ways to huge caverns. *Texas Caves* introduces this seldom-seen world, providing basic cave geology and biology, a description of the seven show caves that have been opened and developed for public visiting, and information on state speleological parks. The engaging text as well as one hundred full-color and black-and-white photographs reveal the glories of Texas caves, wild as well as commercial, showing different types of cave formations, the creatures that live in them, and the people who explore them. Caving experiences from cave photographer Blair Pittman, cave discoverer Orion Knox, cave developer Jack Burch, and commercial cave manager Jim Brummett bring to life places that house the hidden beauties that lie beneath the surface of Texas. Texas Speleological Association Chair Gill Ediger adds his thoughts on what it means to be a caver and how cavers, cave owners, and the general public are all involved in the conservation of cave resources. *Texas Caves* offers a deeper understanding of the underground world of caves and an invitation to those who wish to explore a new dimension of Texas' natural history.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Blair Pittman is an award-winning photographer and writer who has worked in photojournalism and nature and fine art photography. Author/photographer of *The Stories of I. C. Eason, King of the Dog People* and photographer of *The Natural World of the Texas Big Thicket*, published by Texas A&M University Press, he lives in Austin, Texas.

Have not read this myself but bought these as birthday presents for my sons who are avid cavers. Got here in record time.

One of my sons became enthusiastic about caves and caverns several years ago after a school field trip to Inner Space Caverns near Georgetown, Texas (in central Texas not far from Austin, the state capital). I was fortunate to tour Carlsbad Caverns in New Mexico when I was a youngster about his age, so I understood his excitement. Needless to say, we were psyched when we recently got the opportunity as a family to tour Natural Bridge Caverns (off I-35 between New Braunfels and San Antonio), a Texas cave which is also a U.S. Natural Landmark. Touring Natural Bridge Caverns was an awesome adventure, but if you can't get to it yourself, check out this book 'Texas Caves' by Blair Pittman. Discovering this beautiful book in the library has added immeasurably to our enjoyment and education about Texas caves. For example, Inner Space Caverns gave my son a bookmark which brags that Texas has the largest collection of caves in the nation, numbering over 300. Wow. But we learned in this book that Texas actually has close to three THOUSAND explored caves (counting everything from small crawlways to huge caverns). Even more amazing! Who knew?! By the way, Texas caves are found in the greater Edwards Plateau of central Texas, an upland surface underlain by a thick sequence of Cretaceous and Paleozoic limestone. With an area of 82,500 km, it is one of the largest unbroken karst (cave) regions in the United States. Caves in the uplands are typically fossil, with just a few interconnected rooms and short passages and pits. In many caves, chambers are profusely decorated with calcite, as in the famous Caverns of Sonora (one of the seven Texas show caves listed below). They are not particularly deep: the deepest cave in the plateau is Sorcerer's Cave (170 meters in depth) and few others exceed 100 meters: Author Blair Pittman is an award-winning photographer, and the magnificent photos in this book attest to that fact. There are amazing photos of sights we remember from Natural Bridge Caverns, as well as photos which entice us to visit Texas' other famous caves. I very much recommend this book. To quote from the jacket: "Texas Caves introduces the seldom seen world (of Texas caves) providing basic cave geology and biology, a description of the seven show caves that have been opened and developed for public visiting, and information on state speleological parks." The seven show caves -- all located in and around Austin -- are: Cascade Caverns (3 miles east of Boerne, which is west of San Antonio) The Cave Without a Name (U.S. Natural Landmark) (6 miles north of Boerne); Caverns of Sonora (U.S. Natural Landmark) (8 miles west of Sonora, which is northwest of San Antonio) Inner Space Cavern (Georgetown, northwest of Austin) Longhorn Cavern (U.S. Natural

Landmark) (Burnet, northwest of Georgetown) Natural Bridge Caverns (a U.S. Natural Landmark) (just north of San Antonio on the way to New Braunfels and Austin) Wonder Cave (San Marcos, north of New Braunfels on the way to Austin) This book says that Wonder Cave is most noteworthy for the visible fault line of the Balcones Fault, created when the earth shifted during the uplifting of the Edwards Plateau some thirty-five million years ago. I'm pretty sure we saw the Balcones Fault line on the ceiling of Natural Bridge Caverns as well -- it's hard to remember exactly, though, because every time we turned a corner there was something new, different and dazzling to behold! Including massive black stone formations which originated as bat guano! And the stains on the cave roof which evidence where the bats once roosted. All very interesting to say the least. A note to teachers of Texas history: THIS is the type of history which should predominate Texas History classes, not minute details of each and every successive bloodbath which has unfortunately taken place on the soil of our great state. Just saying.

The stunning beauty of Texas caves can be seen in the book's many photographs (both color and black & white). The first part of the book gives a brief overview of the geology of Texas caves and cave biology. It provides descriptions of the seven largest "show caves" in the state (including directions, length of tour, camping, facilities, nearby motels, etc). State speleological parks which offer wild cave tours (through undeveloped caves) are also mentioned. The second part of the book includes chapters contributed by well-known Texas cavers. As a Texas caver myself, I was really happy to see a section on "Guide to Caving Etiquette," which can be useful to any reader who wants to know more about cave safety, Texas caving organizations, and establishing landowner relations. Another bonus is a chapter that includes tips for cave photography. This is a good companion book to "The Caves and Karst of Texas" which was put out by the National Speleological Society (1994).

The content of the book was wonderful, as were the pictures. I felt as though I was in the cave. Though I am a little upset, the spine has already come apart after I read it a couple of times.

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