



History of the Natural Bridge

-A very long time ago:

Natural Bridge was formed when a cavern collapsed and left the span that stands today.

-A long time ago:

Monacan Indian legend has it that Natural Bridge appeared just as they needed to escape from an advancing enemy.

-In 1750:

Legend holds that young George Washington surveyed the Natural Bridge site for Lord Fairfax. Landmarks remain of the work and on the wall of the bridge where he carved his initials.

-In 1774:

Just before the American Revolution and writing of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas Jefferson purchased 157 acres of land including the Natural Bridge from King George III of England for 20 shillings. It has remained privately owned.

-Late 1700s:

Its development as a retreat began when Jefferson built a two room log cabin - one room was reserved for guests.

-Early 1800s:

In 1833, Jefferson's heirs sold the site and the new owner erected the Forest Inn to accommodate the increasing number of people.

-Late 1800s:

During the 1880s Natural Bridge attained resort status under the ownership of Colonel Henry Parsons.

-Early 1900s to now:

Natural Bridge continues to welcome visitors from all over the world.

-In 1998:

Designated a National Historic Landmark by the US Department of the Interior.