

Did You Know?

If you grew up in Kentucky like we did, you've been on a field trip or two to the majestic Mammoth Cave! You took tours of the Grand Avenue and oohed and awed at the Frozen Niagara, in what is still the longest known cave system in the world. But there are important facts you may not have heard. Yet again, we're learning of major, but little-known, contributions by Black people.

This from *Treehugger*--

--"Enslaved Black people played a role in practically every aspect of the cave system's original rediscovery by modern man, from the mining of saltpeter (the main ingredient in gunpowder) within the depths of Mammoth during the War of 1812, to the establishment of the popular tourist destination before the Civil War.

Many of these men and women worked in the Mammoth Cave Hotel cleaning rooms and preparing meals, while others worked as guides to help develop tour routes within the caves for visitors. Perhaps the most well-known, a self-educated remarkable enslaved man named [Stephen Bishop](#), worked as both a guide and an explorer, contributing to many of the more significant discoveries made in Mammoth Cave until his death in 1857."

This article goes into depth about the African Americans who lived and worked at Mammoth Cave.

<https://www.nps.gov/macal/learn/historyculture/african-american-history.htm>

**Be sure to watch the short (5 min) film: "Telling the Story of One Family's Legacy" narrated by a Mammoth Cave guide descended from enslaved tour guides.

The most famous of the slave explorers was Stephen Bishop. Learn more about him here:

<https://www.nps.gov/people/stephen-bishop.htm>