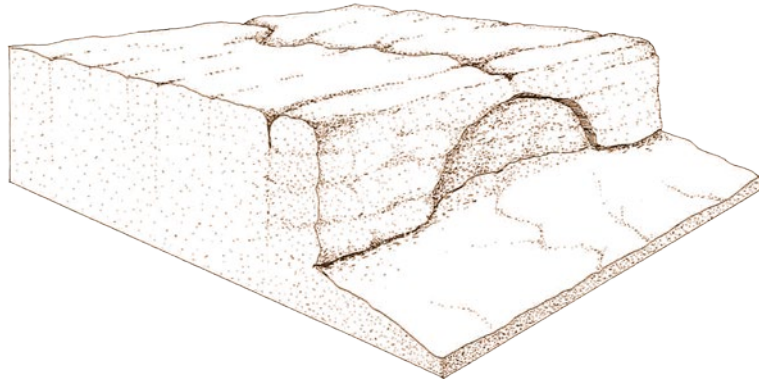


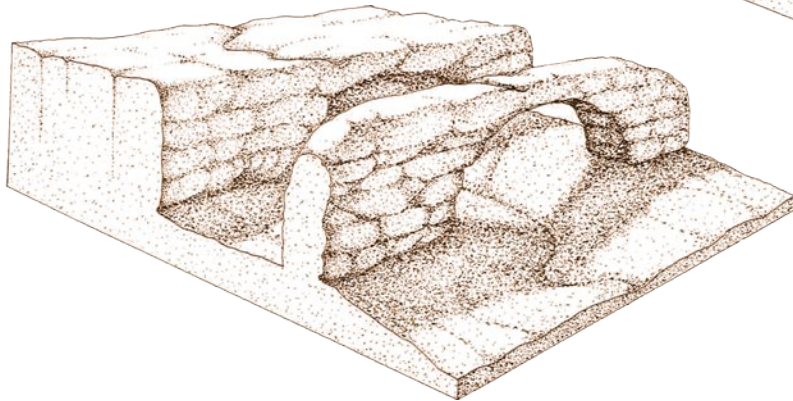
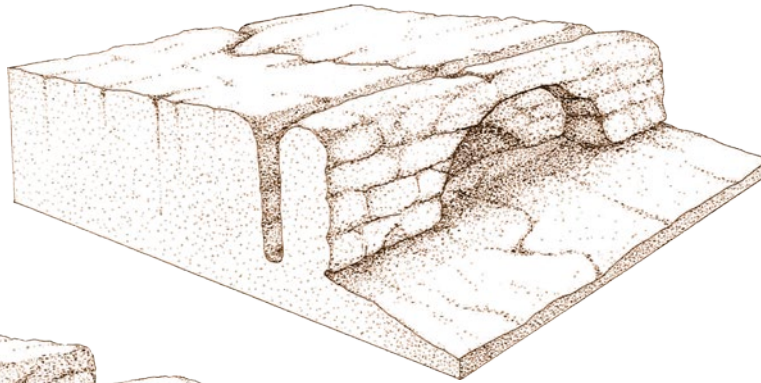
WHAT CAUSES THE FORMATION OF A NATURAL BRIDGE?



1. Before a natural bridge is formed, there was usually a high cliff with a cavity near the base, which developed because of headwind erosion or some similar process.

A crack, or vertical joint, runs parallel to the face of the cliff, and has been exposed to weathering and erosion for many centuries. Widening of this crack is beginning to divert water from the stream channel that flows across the surface.

2. After more centuries of weathering and erosion, the bridge becomes distinctly separated from the face of the cliff.



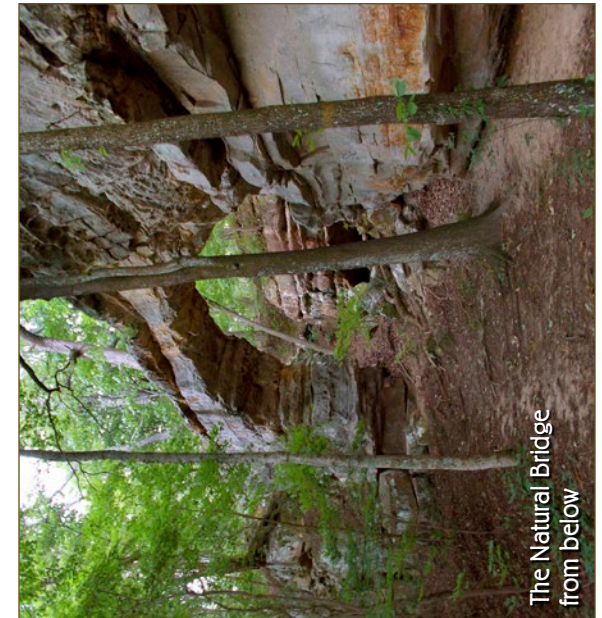
3. Continued erosion parallel to the cliff face eventually leads to the complete isolation of the bridge.

Source: *Exercises in Physical Geology*
by William Kenneth Hamblin and James D Howard, 1975.

PRODUCED BY
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South Cumberland State Park T R A I L G U I D E LOST COVE NORTH

INCLUDING TRAIL DESCRIPTIONS FOR:
the NATURAL BRIDGE TRAIL



The Natural Bridge
from below



RESEARCHED AND PRESENTED BY THE
TRAIL FRIENDS INFORMATION TEAM
OF THE FRIENDS OF SOUTH CUMBERLAND STATE PARK

TRAIL DESCRIPTION

NATURAL BRIDGE

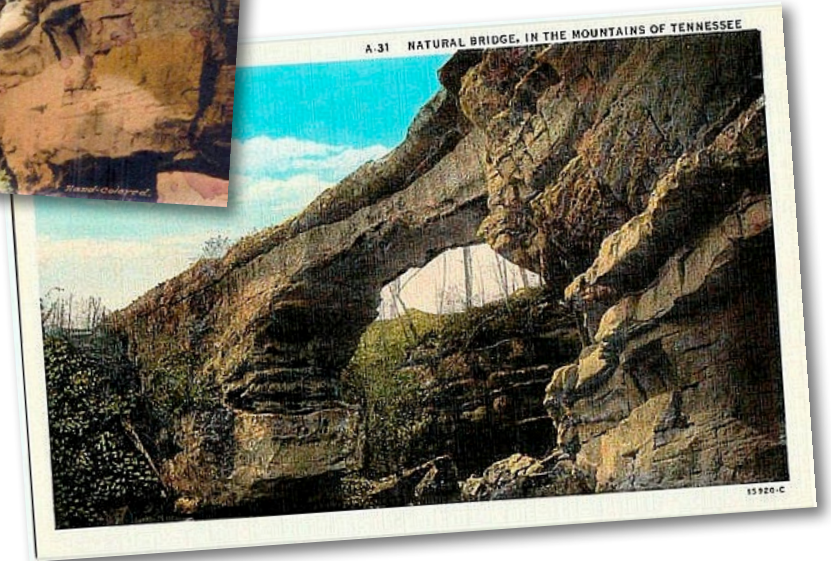
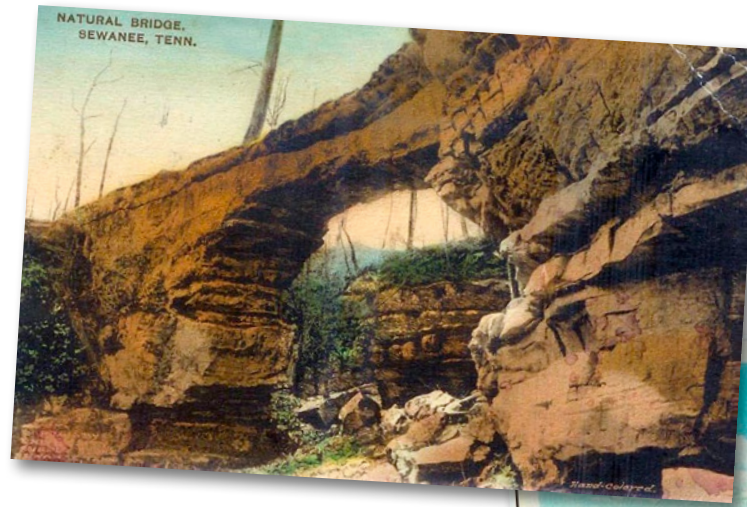
A remarkable natural sandstone arch, the Sewanee Natural Bridge is easily accessible from the trailhead via a 400-foot, stair-stepped path, leaving from the parking lot.

A masterpiece of Mother Nature's handiwork, the 27-foot tall natural bridge has been artfully weathered from solid sandstone by natural forces. Cross the bridge and turn left, making a U-turn to descend below the arch, where you can explore the area immediately below.

Please exercise great care when crossing the bridge, particularly with children.

To learn more about how a natural bridge is formed, please see the illustrations on the reverse.

NOTE: The arch sits on one acre of property; all land surrounding the arch is privately owned. There is no official trail downhill from the arch; therefore, after you have explored above and below the arch, please respect adjoining landowners' rights and return the way you came in.



People have always been fascinated by unusual geological formations. This Natural Bridge has long been an attraction, and can be found on a number of antique postcards, dating from the early 1900s.

Notice that in both of these postcards the forest above the bridge has all but vanished; in the latter half of the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth century, nearly every accessible acre of forest on the Plateau had been cut for timber or firewood. Nearly all of the trees you now see have grown since then.