

My friend Blanton and I were spending the day exploring between Manchester and Chattanooga, and we happened upon what was once a motel near a great spring. A small brook literally just flowed from the side of a rocky hill. It was a beautiful place, and was evidently in a bit of a commercial decline. No one was there, so my friend and I got to spend some time wandering around. Just a little up the hill from the creek, we found an opening in the rock that was just barely large enough for us to crawl through. So, without regard to safety, we entered.

After working our way along just a little bit, we found the tunnel opening up and we were suddenly able to stand at the inside of the rock wall and watch the water as it flowed out. There was enough light coming through the water from the other side to light up a fairly large room. It was great just to stand there and be a part of it.

Pretty soon, though, we decided to go further. I don't even remember if we had a flashlight, but it was not very smart no matter what. We straddled the stream and walked as far as we could, then we had to branch off into another tunnel. This kept getting smaller and smaller until we had to crawl on our bellies like a reptile.

It wasn't long before we had gone as far as we could. As we lay there (I was in front and the farthest in), we suddenly felt the ground begin to shake. My mind froze with the thought that we were in the midst of an earthquake, I was already buried in a cave, and no one had the slightest idea where we were. My thoughts of death, however, almost immediately disappeared as I realized that the vibrations were caused by a car driving on the surface of the ground very close to us. I was so relieved! We still got out of that hole as quickly as we could.

There were probably several lessons to be learned from this adventure. The thing that I remember the most is that though the journey of discovery was great, it still needed to have some planning and some consideration for safety. As my dad always said, "You can run into trouble, but sometimes you have to crawl out!" I was able to crawl out of this particular situation, but I still want to go there whenever I pass by. And I may just do that some time.