

The Eklunds acquired the land from the heirs, established a road to the gold mine, and began mining the new wealth of the Black Hills, the tourist dollar. By 1950, the underground waterfall was open to the public.

The Falls are presently owned and operated by the Harold Johnson family. "It is our intent to keep the area as natural as possible." The area has no gift shop or outside distraction — just the natural beauty of the canyon in which it nestles.

Gold-bearing quartz veins and living stalactites are clearly visible throughout the tunnel. The drill marks that carved out the tunnel over 125 years ago can still be seen by visitors.

While hundreds of gold mines and caves penetrate the Black Hills, Thunderhead Falls is unique among them — for no other is known to have a waterfall inside.



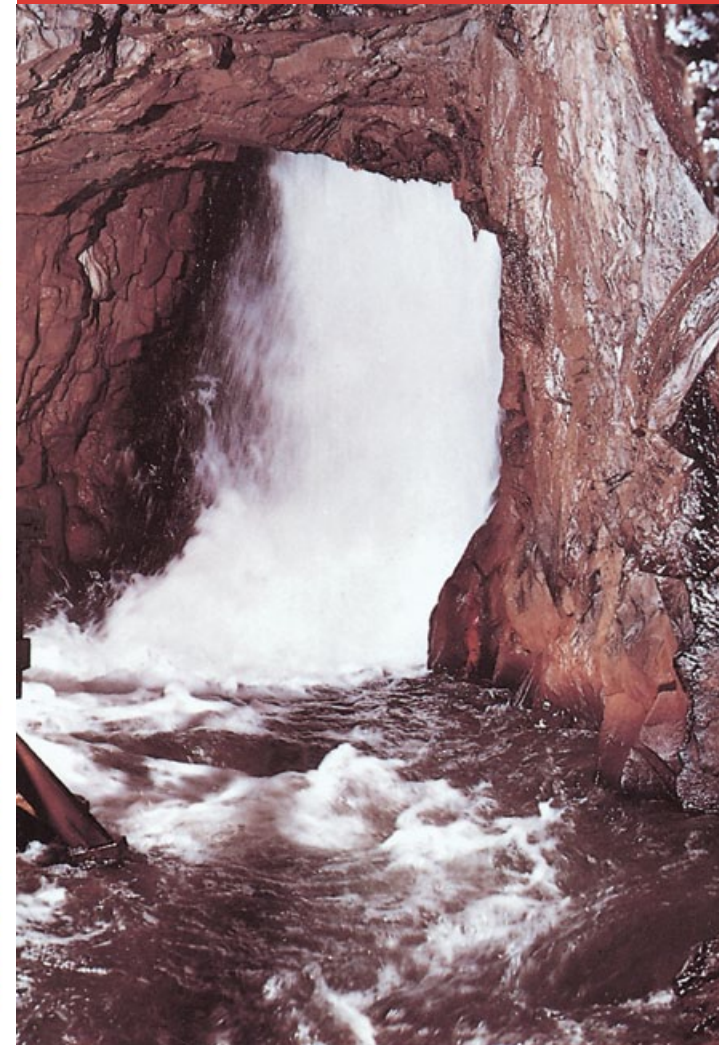
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# THUNDER HEAD

## UNDERGROUND FALLS

600 FEET INSIDE A MOUNTAIN



10 MILES FROM  
**RAPID CITY, S. DAK.**  
WEST ON HWY. 44  
SCENIC ROUTE TO MT. RUSHMORE  
MAY 1 - NOVEMBER 1

# THUNDER HEAD *UNDERGROUND Falls*

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## THUNDERHEAD FALLS,

— *frustration of the early day miner  
in his quest for gold!*

*Situated in a canyon of  
scenic GRANDEUR!*

**Gushing 8 cubic-feet of  
water per second!**

The easy walk along the rushing  
underground stream is  
a delightful experience.

Electric lighting accentuates  
the natural colors of  
the mineralized formations.

Experience the **SPRAY** and **ROAR**  
of the underground falls,  
highlighted in color!

The **THUNDERING BEAUTY** of the Falls  
— the exciting climax of your visit!

# THUNDER HEAD *UNDERGROUND Falls*

Living Stalactites, which began growing  
over a century ago, stud the ceiling of  
the ancient tunnel in a sparkling and  
colorful array.

A spectacular vertical waterfall,  
Thunderhead Falls is located *two  
blocks* inside a mountain! Located in  
the oldest gold mine in the Black Hills  
open to the public, dating back to 1878  
— a fascinating historical site!

Gold-bearing quartz veins — the min-  
ers' delight — and other mineralized  
formations add colorful and intriguing  
visual interest to the 600-foot walkway  
leading into the heart of this Black Hills  
mountain.

On Display — Don't miss viewing the  
historic ore train that was used to track  
the iron ore slack out of the mines in  
the early days.

## HISTORY

Buried deep within 600 feet of mountain, a gush-  
ing 8 cubic feet of water falls vertically for more  
than thirty feet. This unique attraction is  
**Thunderhead Underground Falls**, located 10  
miles outside of Rapid City off Highway 44 West  
in the central Black Hills.

This hydro-spectacle dates back to just after  
the Custer Expedition of 1874, which means  
Thunderhead is one of the earliest operating gold  
mines in the Hills, and the oldest gold mine in the  
Black Hills open to the public.

Thunderhead's owners filed their claim in 1881  
under the name of the Ft. Meade Hydraulic Gold  
Mining Company. The land patent read, "Land of-  
fice at Deadwood, Territory of Dakota — on the  
twenty-fourth day of June, 1881. Mineral entry No.  
88 — Lot No. 244, embracing a portion of the  
unsurveyed public domain . . ."

At the time of the claim, the mine was already  
developed to such an extent that a rough map of  
the area showed the course of Rapid Creek in  
relationship to the existing mine shaft. The mine  
had probably been in operation about three or  
four years before the claim was filed.

The Ft. Meade Hydraulic Mining Company  
worked the claim until about 1900. Over the course  
of the mine's twenty-year history, the entire 600  
feet of tunnel was hand-drilled and blasted out  
with the aid of black gunpowder. Because of the  
unique water flow in the area, it may have been  
one of the first placer mining operations in the  
Hills, but the "Mother Lode" that was every miner's  
dream was never found.

Part of Thunderhead Fall's attraction might be  
the mystery of how it was ever formed. The ghost  
of an old miner might know — but he's not telling.  
Locals speculate that early miners blasted a hole  
into Rapid Creek's bed, creating the unique water-  
fall.

After the mine's closing, the existence of the  
falls went unnoticed until 1949. Then an inquisitive  
passenger on the old Crouch Line, a sightseeing  
rail venture running from Rapid City to Mystic,  
noticed the curious stream of water pouring from  
the side of a mountain. Vera Eklund, the passer-by,  
managed to convince her husband, Albert, to take  
a bit of time out of their schedule to find the source  
of the water flow. Much to their delight, the horizon-  
tal tunnel ended in a most impressive waterfall,  
deep within the mountain itself.

# THUNDER HEAD *UNDERGROUND Falls*