

Kentucky 2013

by: Tina League



May 31- June 4, 2013, 5 members of the SMRMC (Harry, Tina, Mike, Joe and Paula) went to Kentucky to collect Fluorite and Geodes. They drove out to western Kentucky to attend the Eureka Mine Fluorite dig sponsored by the Clement Mineral Museum of Marion, KY. The weekend of June 1 and 2 the Museum puts on a 2 day dig, their annual show, and Museum tours. The Blue Grass Gem and Mineral Club (Tina and Harry are also members of this club) were digging at this site for their June field trip.

Friday night was very stormy and the rain continued into Saturday morning. Undaunted, the rockhounds drove to the Museum in the morning to sign up for the dig and collect their maps. There were four dig sites: Hickory Cane Mine, Eureka Mine (2), and the Lafayette Mine.

Everyone in the group decided to go to the Eureka Mine for the day. They were greeted with steady rain and optimistic collectors. The rain was coming down faster than the pumps could clear the "pit", so everyone spread out and dug through the piles of material that had been dumped on top. Fortunately the purple Fluorite was easy to see once the sticky mud was scraped off the surface.



There were at least 30 people at any given time working in the mud all day. The rain was a constant factor- which didn't help with the footing. By early afternoon they were working in a "boot sucking quagmire"- making it nearly impossible to move around. By mid-afternoon the rain finally let up and several people worked their way down into the pit. They didn't have much luck down there- due to the fact that the veins were under water. The creek banks (which typically have the best material) were non-existent- due to the flooding that day.

By 5:00 it was time to pack up and call it a day. Even with all of the weather related snafoos- everyone managed to collect some nice "gloveable" (Mike's term for good specimens) material. The hardy rockhounds washed off as best as they could in the creek and headed back to town for dinner at the Southwest Grill (the most popular steakhouse in town). The night dig was cancelled due to the dangerous conditions created by the rain.



Sunday morning had the promise of sunshine- hurray!. The first stop after signing in, touring and shopping at the museum was to visit the rock show in the adjacent building. The show was small, but had some very nice specimens. There was an impressive display of beautiful Kentucky agate. Phil (BGGMC) had some spectacular Fluorite that he had collected at another location. Then it was time to head to the mine.

The group decided to visit the Lafayette Mine first to see how the collecting was there. The rocks at the Lafayette were rather weathered, but had the potential for good "garden rocks". The big bonus was that the hill was all rocks- no mud. After collecting some yard rocks and a few fossils, it was time to head back to the Eureka Mine. The Eureka Mine was much quieter than the previous day. Only a handful of rockhounds showed up to play in the sticky, gooey mud pit. Everything was coated with mud that the sun was quickly baking onto the rocks.



Most of the day was spent feeling for crystals and then scrubbing them off in puddles to see if there was any purple. It proved to be an arduous but effective procedure. Many nice specimens were found that day. Joe and Paula headed out a little early to find another location for fossils and arrowhead material.

At 5:00 Tina had to be dragged out of the mine....as usual. It was time to grab a bite to eat and clean up for the Monday's geode hunt in the Danville and Stanford areas.



The plan was to drive to Danville in the morning and collect geodes for the rest of the day and Tuesday morning. Unfortunately Joe's truck had other plans. That evening Harry and Tina got a call from Joe stating that he and Paula were stranded on the westbound side of Highway 24. Harry and Tina drove out to Highway 24 to pick up Joe and Paula. As they were cruising down the highway looking for Joe, they saw a white pick-up that looked just like Joe's truck on the eastbound side of 24. A quick peek to

the other side of the highway- and there was Joe's truck. What a coincidence...and that's why the tow truck driver stopped on the eastbound side and hooked up the wrong truck..oops...an hour later Joe's truck was on the tow truck and the tired rockhounds headed back to town.

Monday morning Joe and Harry headed to the repair shop (just across the road from the hotel) to see if the truck could be fixed that day. Mike had planned on driving home that day after collecting geodes in Stanford. He wished them luck and headed down the road. Harry, Tina, Joe and Paula spent the day driving around western Kentucky touring some of the local towns. By 1:30 that afternoon the repair shop had the truck repaired and road ready. Mike called and said he found the creek in Stanford and successfully collected geodes and was on his way home. The group loaded up their trucks and headed out to Danville. They arrived in Danville one hour before dark and decided to head to the Stanford creek to collect some geodes. They collected until dark and went back to the hotel for some much needed rest.

Tuesday morning they headed out early to collect at the creek in Stanford. They did find some Amethyst geodes and many, many more. The next stop was Halls Gap and then on to the creek in Danville. They ended up collecting rocks until 6:00 pm. With full trucks and a long journey home- they headed out. Harry and Tina decided to drive all night and head straight home. Joe and Paula drove for a few hours, stopped for the night and then headed home on Wednesday.