

Simpson Farm Dig Yields Amethyst, Smoky, Milky and Clear Quartz Crystals ---Plus --- Skeletals, Scepters and Phantoms by Dave Lines



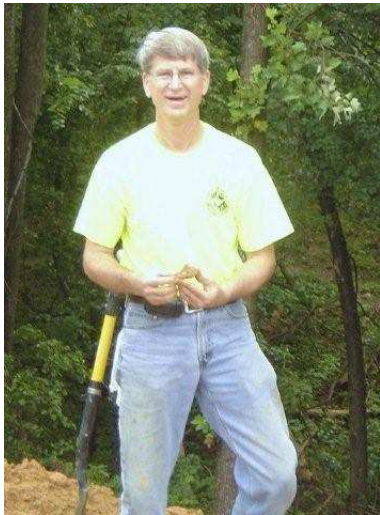
As promised, a backhoe had removed more overburden of clay from the vein area. And it had *rained almost 2 inches during the previous night*. So when we arrived, small, shiny purple crystals were visible everywhere. All our attendees (* SMRMC Members Dave, Harry and Tina, Joe and Paula, Rich, Mike and Pat, Polly, Ralph B., and RGMS members Lynn, Tom and Bob S.) immediately began a surface search picking up loose crystals and small clusters. What fun!



In fact, this trip promised everything --- mud, hard digging and hot 90 degree weather --- that separates the serious rockhounds from the pack. My hat is off to these folks --- not a single person quit or left before 3 p.m --- that was 8 hours of straight digging. Why did everyone stick with it? Because we kept finding crystals and the potential to find even better stuff was right there in front of us.



The owner showed us a gorgeous deep purple amethyst cluster of 1 to 1-½ inch crystals --- the cluster was as big as a person's hand with the fingers spread out. She said it was appraised at \$500. That really got our attention.



But the biggest factor for the non-stop enthusiasm was simply that we continually kept finding veins. And the deeper we dug, the better the finds were. That really kept us motivated.



The digging area was about 100 feet wide and about 200 feet long. It had originally been the edge of a pasture along the woods which sloped down to a wooded stream. Nearly all the trees had been bulldozed from the site and a trench had been gradually dug about 10 feet wide and 6 to 8 feet below the original grade. The owner said he had been finding amethyst there for most of his 71 years.

The State geologist had looked over the site and determined that the amethyst extends for over $\frac{1}{2}$ mile and goes very deep. The potential is very real.



For most of the morning, the digging area was shaded by the woods, but by noon some of us set-up some portable market umbrellas. My EZ-Up tent was a lifesaver. Great shade under it and the slight breeze made it quite tolerable to dig.



The techniques varied ---- Ralph spent most of his time surface searching --- and did well. Most of us dug in a general line about 10 feet wide that more-or-less followed the veins. Once a small vein was located, we simply followed it. Sometimes it was thin and sometimes it widened with small pockets of crystals. Most of the pockets we uncovered contained broken crystals that had been broken long before we arrived --- probably broken by earthquakes. The clusters we found seldom held together. The surrounding matrix was red clay and rotten mica and rotten granite. In general, deeper digging yielded better and larger crystals. To a person, we all want to go back --- soon.