

Braving Lee to Collect Almandine Garnets in Connecticut
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Edited by Mary Cramer

When traveling to other areas of the country, we try to find time to do rock some collecting. So when visiting Western Massachusetts, we decided to collect almandine garnets at the Green Farm in Connecticut. Almandine is the Connecticut State Mineral, with the Green Farm considered a classic locality for the garnet¹. On September 7, Ralph and Mary braved the remnants of Hurricane Lee, drove from Lenox, MA and headed to Connecticut. Not only did we have to pass through Hurricane Lee, we had to pass through Lee (Massachusetts), Figure 1. Although some areas began to flood, such as this park in Sheffield, MA, Figure 2, we decided brave the weather. At worst, it would be a nice drive.



Figure 1. Entering Lee in Hurricane Lee Remnants



Figure 2. Flooding in Sheffield, MA

A search of the web led us to the John Betts web site, which provided directions to the Green Farm Garnet Mine. Unfortunately, the directions were from New York City, not Massachusetts. Based on the directions the web site presented, we chose the intersection of Garnet Road and Perkins Road in Roxbury, CT for our GPS. The web site warned us that Garnet Road had no garnets. The GPS would not recognize the area, but would recognize the two roads in Southbury, CT. After driving along the Housatonic River and over some dirt roads, we arrived at the Green Farm, where we paid our fee (\$5.00 per car) and walked the short path to the garnets.

The garnets were plentiful, Figures 3 and 4. Like most almandines, they occurred in schist. Most are small, with the largest being about 1 inch across. Collecting was easy, Figure 5, with the garnets occurring both in matrix and loose in the surrounding soil. While collecting the almandines, we also found some staurolite. Figures 6 and 7 show some of our finds. Note that the right side sample in Figure 7 shows the staurolite under an almandine. Another sample appeared to have pyrite.



Figure 3. Almandine garnets in schist.



Figure 4. Green Farm Garnet Mine



Figure 5. Mary chiseling for almandine garnets.



Figure 6. Almandine garnets from Green Farm



Figure 7. Staurolites from Green Farm

After about three hours of collecting, including a short break for lunch, we headed back to Massachusetts. The rain held off, enabling us to have a successful collecting trip.

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1. John Betts web site: www.johnbetts-fineminerals.com/jhbnyc/trips/roxbury.htm

A couple of notes:

1. Gasoline was expensive in Connecticut, with prices reaching \$3.99 for regular gasoline.
2. We also recommend stopping in a nearby town for a rest room. No facilities are available at the Green Farm.