

Reel Amethyst Mine and North American Emerald Mines, North Carolina
by: Tina League



Memorial Day weekend Anna, Joe, Paula, Harry and Tina went to North Carolina for the MAGMA Reel Amethyst Mine dig in Iron Station and the North American Emerald Mines in Hiddenite.

Anna, Joe, Harry and Tina spent Friday at the Reel Mine digging for Amethyst. Everyone spread out in a trench along the vein and began digging in earnest. Some nice clusters were being found down at the bottom of the hill by the water, which inspired everyone to dig harder. T

he July type weather was a bit much to get used to (very hot and humid). Well before noon everyone was raising their canopies and umbrellas to ward off the hot sun. We found some nice clusters and single crystals (some were purple, some clear and smoky).

The best specimens were found in a very dark red sticky clay- the kind that is very hard to clean off of clothes and minerals. I found my best cluster by accidentally smacking it with the digging bar and sending it flying out of the hole. Fortunately it wasn't too damaged. By the end of the day we were all covered in sweat and clay and ready for a long shower. We packed up our gear and specimens and headed back to the hotel.



The next day Anna went back to the Reel Mine to continue her Amethyst hunt. She found a nice size single crystal and some small crystals in matrix.

Joe, Paula, Harry and Tina went to the North American Emerald Mine in search of Emeralds. After a safety briefing we headed down to the mine. There was a lot of ground to cover, so we walked and scoped out the area. The weather continued to be hot and humid, so we took our time moving about. Everything sparkled in the sun due to the large concentration of mica and quartz crystals. There were so many nice specimens that it was hard to decide what to put in the buckets (they got very heavy very quickly).

We all found garnets, calcite, rutile, smoky, clear, and rose quartz, rutilated quartz, pyrite, muskovite mica, black tourmaline and a host of other minerals yet to be identified, but we were still in search of the elusive emerald.

We spent the day digging in clay, pounding on hard rock and ground searching. At the end of the day, the owner was working in a restricted area of the mine on a pocket of crystals. He wanted to show his appreciation to us for coming out to the mine and sticking with it even though the weather was so unbearable, that he brought us a bucket of his "ruble" to play with.

We dumped it on a table at the shade canopy and began to sort through it. We found some nice calcite crystals with mica, rutile and tourmaline, some impressive smoky

quartz crystals, and other minerals. After sifting through the larger pieces, we began to pick at the "dust particles"...and there were tiny emeralds in there....wow! We were very excited- even though they were small-they count! Needless to say, I had to be dragged out of the mine at the 6:00 deadline. We returned to the mine on Sunday morning and continued the hunt.

We hunted for specimens and had planned on leaving a little earlier in order to head home that night- but then the owner sent up 3 more buckets of "goodies" for everyone to sort through. We all spent several hours sifting through the rocks and dust.

Many nice specimens were collected by all- and everyone who sifted found a tiny emerald or two.

We had a great time, and thanked everyone at the mine and headed home. It was a very memorable Memorial Day weekend.

