

Field Trip Report
National Limestone Quarry
Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA
This Could Be the Last Time
By Ralph Gamba and Tina League

On Saturday, July 14, eleven members of the Southern Maryland Rock and Mineral Club traveled to the National Limestone Quarry in Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA. The eleven who made the 4 hour trip were Tina, Harry, Joe, Paula, Joyce, James, Tim, Ralph B., Penny E., Mary and Ralph G. Members from the Northern Virginia and Montgomery County clubs joined in collecting on this trip arranged by Ted from the Northern Virginia Mineral Club.

The mine owner, Eric Stahl met us at 8:30. Many presented Eric with mineral samples to add to his collection. At around 9:00, Eric briefed us on collecting and gave a short witness on salvation of Jesus. Eric also said that he is negotiating the sale of the quarry and this was the last trip he scheduled. The new owners may not allow collecting, so this could be our last trip to the quarry - as the Rolling Stones sang "This could be the last time." Eric did say that if the negotiations fail, he would invite us back in the fall.

We then headed to the quarry, some going to the lower portion –the Tonoloway formation - for calcite, strontianite, and fluorite. Some headed to the upper quarry for wavellite and fossils.

At the lower quarry, Figure 1, Ralph G. opened a rock containing strontianite. He also found a plate containing nearly a dozen "dogtooth" calcite crystals up to 1 inch long. Others found calcite, along with strontianite and fluorite.



Figure 1. National Limestone Quarry, Lower Quarry

After collecting at the lower quarry, we went to the upper quarry, Figure 2. We obtained wavellite and fossils, including fossil snails.



Figure 2. Searching for wavellite and fossils at the upper quarry.

Around 3:00 pm Tina, Harry, Joe and Paula packed up to leave when Ted offered to show the way to the second quarry, several miles down the road. Petra from the Montgomery County club joined them. The five followed Ted north until they had to stop at a red light. Ted and company disappeared into the "wild blue yonder". Fortunately, Joe knew the way from a previous trip. They arrived at the quarry in search of flowstone and fluorite.

The quarry was huge and full of fascinating flowstone boulders, Figure 3. They collected some massive calcite "chunks", flowstone, and best of all, some beautiful purple fluorite, Figure 4, encased in calcite. They spent several hours breaking rock and packing up our finds. We headed out that evening sweaty and tired and very happy with our "buckets of goodies".



Figure 3. Flowstone



Figure 4. Fluorite

We all hope that we can visit this quarry again before it is sold.