

National Limestone Quarry

Timothy Foard



On June 1, 2013 several members of the Philadelphia and Central PA mineral clubs, Northern VA mineral club, and the SMRMC met at the National Limestone Quarry, Mt. Pleasant Mills, PA around 9:00 AM for a safety meeting and a brief lesson on the Bible by Eric Stahl, the quarry's owner.

It was going to be an incredibly hot day. We proceeded down into the lower portion of the quarry where the calcite and strontionite crystals occur. Not much active work in the quarry, and it was evident that previous club members had very recently picked over the area. A little discouraged, but determined to find decent specimens, and I was especially interested in finding some strontionite, which eluded me on a previous trip.

Calcite were everywhere, small crystal vugs were common. Several had an iridescent coating, probably iron oxides. Occasional fluorite was seen as purple stains on the white massive calcite. During the first couple of hours I found little that I want to take home. Since I collected a lot of material here a year earlier, this time around I was more selective in what to collect. I found a hand-sized chunk of limestone containing small pyrite cubes and a couple of small calcite vugs.

By the third hour, all of the other members decided to head up to the wavellite site, but I remained at the lower end of the quarry because I have yet to find any strontionite (and that I have enough wavellite from the earlier trip). After a brief rest (remember, it was a hot day!), I renew my efforts and more systematically searched all of the area I was only allowed to collect. This paid off, as I obtained several specimens of strontionite, some larger calcite crystals (Ted from the Northern VA also gave me a couple of specimens of calcite as well), and some fossiliferous limestone containing mostly brachiopod shells.

A second trip to a fossil site was initially scheduled after the National Limestone quarry trip, but the members changed their mind (might had something to do with the heat). We thanked Eric, ate lunch at nearby Mt. Pleasant Mills, and headed home, hoping for another trip in the future.



Micro calcite crystals with iridescent coating



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Strontionite in calcite matrix.