

Some Days Are Diamond...

By Ralph G. and Mary C.

On our trip home from Florida, we like to visit other areas. This year, we chose Louisiana. After touring Louisiana, we were not too far from the Crater of Diamonds State Park and Mt. Ida, Arkansas, two places we wanted to collect.

Friday, February 28 was a cold day with scattered drizzle when we made our way from Shreveport, Louisiana to Murfreesboro, Arkansas to the Crater of Diamonds. We arrived around noon, ate a quick lunch and paid our fee, \$8.00 per person. We watched a short film on how to mine for diamonds. We decided to do surface mining. We searched for about three hours but neither of us found any diamonds. We did find some nice agate and jasper, along with the lamprolite host rock.



Mary Looking for diamonds.

About a dozen other people also searched; no diamonds found. Alas, disappointed, we will enjoy our jasper and agate.

...Some Days Are Quartz

We left Murfreesboro on Saturday, March 1. After a stop in some town shops where we could see the local diamonds, we headed for Mt. Ida, about 40 miles away. We arrived in Mt. Ida and searched for an open mine to collect quartz. A rock shop gave us some ideas. We chose the Sweet Surrender Mine. We arrived at 2 PM, paid \$20 each and Aaron, one of the owners, showed us where to search. Other collectors were there – a family from Louisiana and one from Canada. Aaron took us to a pile of freshly dug rocks. Aaron quickly found a quartz crystal which he gave to Mary. Ralph turned over a boulder, tapped on it and it sounded hollow, indicating space for quartz crystals to grow. Ralph worked the boulder, extracting quartz crystals. Meanwhile, Mary searched the pile for loose crystals and found quite a few.



Sweet Surrender Mine Pit

Another collector pointed out a large boulder, two feet by four feet, containing crystals. It had a crack on the top. As Ralph hammered, the crack began to widen and finally broke into three large pieces. Ralph recovered two of the pieces to take home and clean. Mary looked over the other piece and gathered nice crystals.



Mary with Aaron and another collector at the Sweet Surrender Mine

It was about 4 PM when we packed up to leave. I asked Aaron "What time do you close." He said 4:30 and took us to another location to look for quartz with chlorite inclusions. We searched and Arron found another specimen for Mary. Mary found two and Ralph found three more. Mary found the shale attractive and took a couple of pieces. By 4:30, it was time to leave. Arron recommended a motel to stay for the night. With only 2 ½ hours of digging, we had a lot of fun and got many nice crystals.

When asked about the annual crystal dig, Arron said that no decision has been made about the 2014 dig. The Sweet Surrender mine was one of the two participating mines last year but they lost money in the dig.