

Field Trip Report: Bluegrass Quarry, Churchville, Maryland

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On cool Saturday morning October 24, 2015 15 rockhounds, including 4 from the SMRMC arrived at the Bluegrass (formerly Vulcan) Materials Quarry in Churchville, Maryland for a half-day of collecting. I was looking forward to this club trip for several reasons: this was only my second field trip this year; this particular quarry was a first for me; and it is rare event to collect in any Maryland quarry. After everyone arrived, we listened to the safety briefing and proceeded down into the pit. The first thing I noticed about this site is that the host rock consist of a gneiss and I thought that the rock's metamorphic origin will make it difficult to find any cavities—at least large ones anyway—that might produce crystals. After about an hour exploring the area, I heard relatively little pounding on boulders. During the time I spent in the quarry, I was not able to use my phone at all, not even to take photos. I should have taken the camera. This was a sobering lesson in redundancy in documentation not to be forgotten.



Unidentified crystal near cavity in gneiss



Short epidote crystals on calcite

Near the end of the first hour I did managed to find a 30 lb chunk of gneiss containing a small cavity about an inch in diameter with crystals near the opening. During the next couple of hours the sound of hammers pounding on rocks increased, always a good sign. Several collectors found long crystals of epidote earlier, and I eventually found a few and lots of short crystals near the end of our stay in the pit. Jim White found mostly calcite, including a dogtooth crystal. Pyrite in massive form was also collected by several members.

It was time to leave the quarry. As I was heading back to the car I found a piece of schist containing a garnet crystal. It was a really enjoyable time there and we thank the quarry representative as we headed out. It wasn't until I was about five or six miles from the quarry that my phone "unfroze" and became functional again.