

## Chestnut Ridge Pocket Dig

The first time that I collected at Chestnut Ridge I was 17 and found some nice quartz crystals in the dirt. I made a note in my rock collecting journal to return one day and bring a large hammer and chisels. Since that trip I have returned five times and each time I learn more about collecting at this site and where to dig. I have found some nice specimens over the years, especially the quartz clusters on sandstone. However, when I get them home and clean them, many of the crystals have dings on the points or show signs of weathering. When I was there in 2025, I made a promise to myself that if I go again, I'm bringing a 3-pound hammer, chisels and a 3-foot crowbar. My plan is to open a pocket and carefully try to extract a few nice specimens.

On March 28<sup>th</sup> I was on my way back up the mountain with Dave Lines and other members of the club. When we made it to the top, I went right to the spot that caught my interest at the end of the day during our 2025 trip. There were small crystal pockets all over this sandstone ledge. First, I cleared the brush and made a place to work. I exposed the front of the ledge to about 4 feet down. I could now see where the quartz mineralization was in the sandstone and where it wasn't. I went to work with my 3-pound hammer and crowbar removing rock from the ledge. It was slow going but the vugs were getting larger as I went back into the rock ledge. The crystals were very good quality, water clear and no signs of weathering or dings. They were small because the vugs were small. Then I saw an opening on the rock face. I probed it with the 6 inch deer antler that I use to remove the black dirt from the vugs. The antler went in and didn't hit the back wall or bottom. This showed promise of being a larger pocket.



As I carefully opened the pocket and removed the black dirt there were several loose crystals in the dirt. They were good quality and some double terminated. The best part was no chips on the points. I continued to remove rock to expose more of the back wall and bottom of the pocket. On the back wall there was an interesting looking cluster of crystals that I wanted to protect as I began to try and remove specimens from the floor.

**Crystal of interest is circled in red**



After working on the floor with some limited success, I was ready to try and remove the cluster from the back wall. After about an hour of careful chiseling and removing rock with the tip of a flat blade screwdriver, it was loose. I had it in my hand and gave it a light brushing to expose the crystals. It looked good. I immediately wrapped it in layers of newspaper to keep it out of the sun. I then placed it in my pack for safe keeping. At this point I took a much needed break. After my break I did a little more work in this area and found another opening in the rock. I did the deer antler probe, and it didn't hit the back wall or bottom. It was getting late in the day, and it was time to pack up, cover up the dig areas with leaves and get down the mountain. My hope is to return again one day and see what treasures that pocket contains.

These are pictures of the back wall cluster. The crystals are very clear and don't show well in the color photographs, so I added a black and white picture to better show the clarity of the crystals.

