

Meet the Flint Stones

When it comes to collecting minerals, flint never seems to be high on one's list. For the most part, it does not have the beauty of agate. But when the opportunity comes to collect flint, especially in a classic location, it can't be passed up.

The opportunity came for Mary C. and me (Ralph G.) when we headed to Michigan via Columbus, Ohio. We stopped for the night in Zanesville, Ohio. A quick look at the maps showed we were near Flint Ridge, in Glenford, Ohio, famous for flint. Flint is the Ohio state gemstone.



Flint Ridge Ancient Quarries and Nature preserve

Flint is a type of cryptocrystalline quartz. Wikipedia defines cryptocrystalline as “a rock texture made up of such minute crystals that its crystalline nature is only vaguely revealed even microscopically in thin section by transmitted polarized light. “

We discovered the web site for Flint Ridge Ancient Quarries and Nature Preserves and saw that they were open on Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays during the summer. It was Friday so we visited the preserve. The museum opened at 10 AM, but they had trails where we walked until the museum opened. The trails wandered around many pits that were used to quarry the flint. No flint was exposed because of leaves and dirt cover. Admission to the museum was \$3.00, but seniors get a one-dollar discount. We saw beautiful examples of flint and how Native Americans used the flint as tools and weapons. The museum was built around one of the pits that were used for quarrying the flint. Collecting was not permitted at the site.

We talked with museum personnel, and he showed us that the flint was heat treated to bring out its vibrant colors. The museum had nice samples for sale, and we purchased one for each of us. We obtained information about where we could collect flint for ourselves. A local farm allowed collecting for \$7.50 per person and \$0.50 a pound.

While returning to the car, we chatted with a family who was going to the museum. They mentioned that they lived nearby, and the flint was scattered all over the area. We didn't want to spend too much time collecting, so we decided to stop along the road to see what we could find. We found some nice examples of flint. Each of us collected about a dozen samples of various sizes. One of Mary's specimens had quartz points on one side. Two of Ralph's specimens had crystal lined vugs. Figure 1 shows the specimen with a ½ inch vug. Figures 2 and 3 show more specimens of Flint Ridge flint. Figure 4 shows heat treated flint. The heat treatment brought out the colors of the flint. Yes, we did have a "Yabba Dabba Doo" time collecting flint.



Figure 1. Flint specimens. The one on the right shows the crystal lined vug.



Figure 2. Flint Ridge flint.



Figure 3. Flint Ridge flint.



Figure 4. Heat treated flint.