



Rock, Gem, and Mineral Collecting Sites in Western North Carolina

Rick Jacquot

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Foreword by Ralph Roberts, Publisher There are things you can collect in these old, old mountains that have greater age than antiques. Far greater age. Eons old, and these treasures lie beneath your feet, in the ground, the ancient ground.

Rick Jacquot has knowledge of these vastly old artifacts of the earth's creation and its growing pains through millions of long years, now gone. He has searched over mountain and through bramble-choked glen to find the best places, those hallowed, secretive locations yielding the best in specimens of rock, mineral, and-oh yes!-sparkling gemstones. Some of these specimens can be valuable, others precious in the learning of geological lore they impart. All have a story to tell.

Often hunters of rocks maintain their secrets as closely as any fisherman protecting that piece of stream where the big trout grab for any hook that comes near the water. Rick does not, he shares it here with you, even to giving GPS coordinates!

When Rick brought this book idea to me, I turned out to be an easier sell than he had thought. My father and I spent many happy hours in the pursuit of the not-always-elusive rock. My cousins-Jack Ball and his son Jackie-have ownership of the Little Pine garnet mine in Madison County where my grandfather, George Roberts, was foreman back in its heyday before World War II. I love these mountains-what is on them, in them, and what makes them up. So we, in much pride, add this book to our **Land of the Sky** series.

This book includes:

- 53 of the best sites in the area
- Maps and GPS Coordinates!
- Restrictions, Owners, Fees
- What you need, what you get

Introduction

intro by Rick Jacquot, Author The Western North Carolina area has been mined/prospected off and on for a variety of gems and minerals as far back as the 16th century. I can only imagine what it must have been like to be one of those early prospectors, to be the first one to discover a gem bearing pegmatite or to find gem quality rubies and sapphires in the local creekbeds. Commercial/Systematic mining for various minerals began in the 1700s and in 1871 C.E. Jenks opened the first gem corundum mine.



Over the years, improved mining techniques uncovered many more rich gem and mineral deposits. Unfortunately gem production was too low to justify continued commercial mining, mineral mines began to close as imported minerals began to be shipped into the area, it was cheaper to import the minerals from a foreign country than to mine them locally.

(left: GEM QU)

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