

CENTRAL TX FOSSIL HUNT 082103

Yesterday was a wild goose chase not worth the gas for the few fossils I collected. Scenery was pretty nice as I probed parts of the state I've never seen, but I don't see myself ever following this route again for the same purpose. Most of the sites were based on the Geologic Atlas of TX map purchased from the University of TX Bureau of Economic Geology. These "excellent sites" proved to be anything but.

Temple: I was at the Grayson exposure on Battle Rd at daylight, and only stuck around a half hour as I found nothing but shell fragments.

Killeen: The area has potential, especially with echinoids (urchins). I searched the fringes of a construction site near a school in Harker Heights, and found mainly large, broken ammonite pieces and thousands of oysters, possibly *Texigryphea*. I only stuck around for an hour, and if I put in a day there I think I could figure the place out and bag some goodies.

Copperas Cove: Further west on 190 I scouted along some large exposures on the west side of town. At the foot of these bluffs I found the same oyster reef as in Harker Heights, and a little higher up I found urchins, both irregular (smooth, heart shaped, like *Heteraster*) and 3 regular (spiny and round, like *Phymosoma* or *Loriolia*). Ammonite pieces were common, and I found one very weathered about 3 inches diameter and glued it back together. I also collected an assortment of large gastropods.

Bend, San Saba, Cherokee, Camp San Saba, Streeter: All strike outs! I don't know if these spots were picked over for years, but I could hardly find even fragments! Exposures were Pennsylvanian, Mississippian, Ordovician, and Cambrian.

Mason: The Barnett Formation west of Honey Creek gave up a couple of goniatites, but they were encased in hard rock. So hard, in fact, that small whizzing missiles shot in all directions with each blow of my sledge. I gave up on one 3 inch specimen with my forehead and nose bleeding from these projectile chips. Good thing I wore safety specs. I ultimately gave up on this piece as it was in the middle of a large monolithic block as hard as granite.

Junction, Kerrville: Back in the chalky Cretaceous limestone I began seeing familiar bivalves and gastropods, just none good enough to take home.

I enjoyed the adventure and scenery, but I must synopsise the collecting potential of southernmost Paleozoic exposures of Central TX as "abysmally poor". No matter. I'll feel like a kid with a bag full of Halloween candy when I leave the Jacksboro spillway next weekend.