

FOSSIL COLLECTING REPORT

June 2010

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June 2, 2010: Cornucopia in the Corsicana

My son was with his mom, my girlfriend was busy with her daughter, I was free of responsibility after work and it had just rained hard the night before.....and off to my honey hole in the Corsicana Formation (68 MYA) I went, threw on some knee pads and gloves, and got down and dirty for a couple hours. Although the rainfall was only 1/2 inch, it fell in sheets and was whipped hard by high winds, eroding new little gullies in the exposure while scouring existing ones. And speaking of scouring, I did my best to lay hands on whatever ancient treasures lay out in the open.

Working a fringe area of the exposure that I often ignore, I was soon rewarded with a spectacular white phosphatic mold of a quarter sized *Eutrephoceras* nautiloid, followed by a medial chunk of reptile limb bone, bone being somewhat rare at this site. A couple hours of crawling around produced one decent crab carapace *Dakoticancer australis* plus 15 or 20 echinoids including a *Linthia variabilis* and a flattened *Proraster dalli*, the remainder being *Hemaster bexari*.



FIGS 1-4: Unidentified Corsicana Formation *Pachydiscid* ammonite this and next 3 pages (Site 349)









FIGS 5-7: Corsicana Formation *Eutrephoceras* c.f. *planoventer* nautiloid this and next 2 pages (Site 349)







FIGS 8-11: Corsicana Formation *Dakoticancer australis* crabs this and next 2 pages (Site 349)







FIG 12: Corsicana Formation echinoids *Linthia variabilis* above and *Proraster dalli* below (Site 349)



FIGS 13-15: Corsicana Formation echinoids *Hemicaster bexari* above, unidentified reptile bone fragment below, branching bryozoan, *Neitheas bexarensis* scallop, and various gastropods including high spired *Turritella vertebroidea* and ornate *Striatocostatum bexarensis* far right next page (Site 349)



I also took a few bivalves and gastropods but the real prize came near the end of my crawl....a marl nodule freshly cracked open by shrink/swell action of the wet matrix, split in a fashion perfectly exposing one side of a spectacular and rare ammonite which I believe to be some variant of *Pachydiscus*. It was thin and fragile so I left it in the nodule which provides a pedestal for display....very nice. Once again, anytime during the week I can kill a couple hours fossil hunting is a rare treat.

June 5, 2010: Bonus Collecting in the Georgetown

I was out doing a little shopping with my girlfriend over the weekend and found her agreeable to sitting in the truck with the AC running for a half hour while I did an impromptu push into a proven honey hole in the Georgetown Formation (102 MYA). I didn't have visions of spectacular finds; instead I was just happy to be out looking. Fortunately I had a few tools in my vehicle to supplement my efforts. I soon found 2 big *Macraster* echinoids and a small *Holaster simplex*, but none were in very good condition and therefore never made it into my collection. However, a little blind mining turned up a *Mortoniceras drakei* ammonite and nice bivalve mold together in the same fist sized chunk of matrix. Satisfied with my take I meandered back to the truck and we went about our day.



FIGS 16-20: Georgetown Formation *Mortoniceras drakei* ammonite and unidentified bivalve this and next 4 pages (Site 173)









June 19, 2010: Glen Rose Echinoid Grab

The alarm went off at 4:30 and I was on my first collecting site in the Glen Rose formation (108 MYA) by 6, on gloves and knee pads, a beam of light issuing from my LED headlamp. Echinoids were my prime quarry, and early on an outsized *Globator hancockensis* found its way into my spotlight, constituting the best find of the day. I stayed until a little after daylight and in the process ended up with perhaps 10 micro *Salenia* echinoids, a couple *Paleopagurus banderensis* crab claws, and a small piece of turtle bone. Off I went to site 2.



FIGS 21-22: Large for species Glen Rose Formation echinoid *Globator hancockensis* this and next page (Site 161)





FIG 23: Same echinoid *G. hancockensis* surrounded by *Salenia* sp. echinoids flanked by crinoid columnals *Isocrinus annulatus*, crab claws *Paleopagurus banderensis* and turtle bone fragment (Site 161)

Also in the Glen Rose, this marine site gave up perhaps the best crop of well preserved *Loriolia rosana* echinoids I've taken there ever before, 21 in total for about 30 minutes effort – well preserved and well worth the stop.



FIG 24: Glen Rose Formation echinoids *Loriolia rosana* (Site 249)

My third site, also in the Texas Hill Country, is one I like to revisit each time it rains. A remote exposure of the *Salenia texana* zone, this site once again gave up a few *S. texana* along with *Heteraster obliquatus* and *Palhemiaster comanchei* echinoids and some bivalves. Always worth a timely look, I was soon on the move again.



FIGS 25-26: Glen Rose Formation echinoids *Palhemiaster comanchei* top left, *Salenia texana* top right, unidentified gastropod in matrix lower left, two *Nerinea* sp. gastropods low center, two unidentified bivalves lower right (Site 445)

The fourth site, also in the *S. texana* zone, is one that used to produce a bumper crop of *Salenia* for me each trip when it was an active construction site. Well past its collecting prime, I was still able to wring 3 pristine *S. texana* from the blue gray marl before I was on my way.....four sites under my belt and still back in time for breakfast tacos and coffee with my loving girlfriend.



FIG 27: Echinoids *Palhemiaster comanchei*, and three nice examples of the regular echinoid *Salenia texana* which marks the contact between the Upper and Lower Glen Rose Formations (Site 133)

But the games weren't over yet....in the evening I drove another direction into the Hill Country to attend my nephew's graduation party. A certain road cut en route called my name. I'm still not sure of the formation but it is something in the Glen Rose/Fort Terrett/Walnut spectrum. Anyway 15 minutes produced 3 *Loriolia* echinoids, thus satiating my thirst for the thrill of discovery for yet one more weekend.....



FIG 28: Echinoids *Loriolia* from Glen Rose or Walnut Formation (Site 170)

June 26, 2010: A Break from the Norm

I hauled young Weston up to Ohio for a long weekend to see his grandparents while I hung out with 55 friends from my high school graduating class for my 40th birthday. Between all the festivities I made a little time for short, impromptu fossil hunts. On Saturday my dad, Weston, and I made our way over to Caesar Creek Spillway in Waynesville for a quick grab of common Ordovician fossils issuing from the Liberty Formation (440 MYA). This was the very same site where I found my first trilobite, a dime sized perfect enrolled *Isotelus gigas*, back in 1980 when I was 10 years old.



FIGS 29-30: Rare Ordovician coiled nautiloid found by young Weston Woehr, Waynesville/Liberty Formation contact this and next page (Site 1)





FIGS 31-33: More finds by Weston Woehr including rugose (horn) corals *Grewingkia canadensis* this and next page, two *Lepidocyclus capax* brachiopods next page, and a nice slab of brachiopod hash on the following page (Site 1)



It was a hot day so we only collected perhaps 30 minutes this time, but in the process we took a number of brachiopods and nice *Grewingkia* horn corals. Weston made the best find of the day, about half of a coiled nautiloid, something I never found in all my collecting time spent in Ohio. It will be displayed proudly in his display case.



FIGS 34-35: The author's take of rugose corals *G. canadensis* above (Site 1)



FIGS 36-37: From the Waynesville/Liberty contact - brachiopods *Hebertella*, *Lepidocyclus*, and *Strophonema* (Site 1)



FIG 38: From the Waynesville/Liberty contact - unidentified gastropods (Site 1)

June 27, 2010: After Church Outing

One of the neighbor kids from 25 years ago is now a pastor in Cincinnati, so I got up early (when you stay out with friends till 2 a.m. anything feels early) and attended his 9 a.m. service. It was good to see Mike Doerr after all these years. On the way back to my parents' place I stopped at a road cut where I've found a little sumpin' each time I've stopped there over the last 4 years...and this trip was no slouch.

Almost immediately I saw a *Flexicalamene* trilobite sitting on a limestone slab. Its head was tucked under and eroded away but it was complete enough that no collector would have knowingly left it...this was a good sign. I continued to bag nice cephalopods and *Cyclonema* gastropods as I peeled off my shirt in the sultering heat. As I was getting ready to head for the car I looked down and saw it....a perfect *Pycnocrinus dyeri* crinoid crown jutting upside down out of a slab of shale. The way the matrix is humped implies that the arms could be splayed out underneath....slow and fastidious prep work will tell the full story.



FIG 39: Fairview Formation *Flexicalamene* sp. trilobite (Site 292)



FIGS 40-45: Two Fairview Formation crinoid crowns *Pycnocrinus dyeri* – first specimen as found this page and as prepped next 2 pages followed by second specimen found free of matrix next 3 pages (Site 292)













FIGS 46-47: Fairview Formation *Endoceras* sp. orthocone cephalopods above, *Ambonychia robusta* pelecypods below (Site 292)



FIGS 48-50: Fairview Formation brachiopods *Rafinesquina ponderosa* top left and *Platystrophia clarksvillensis* top center and top right, gastropods *Cyclonema bilix* below and next page (Site 292)



After grabbing a couple nice cephalopods my eyes were drawn into the shadows between rocks....there I worked my fingers into a crevice and came out with a spectacular *P. dyeri* crown with arms intact, completely weathered free of matrix! Both crinoid crowns should prep very nicely and make wonderful additions to my collection, and if I'm not mistaken they nail the exposure down to the Upper Ordovician Fairview Formation. Naturally I celebrated my victory with ice cream.

June 28, 2010: Trilobite Washout

It rained hard Sunday night, so I set my alarm early and placed myself in a well known road cut at daylight while other collectors headed for the office. Leaden skies gradually revealed light gray "butter shales" still dripping from the night's downpour.

In short I put 3 hours into the site and was well rewarded for my efforts. In addition to a double handful of nice brachiopods, I walked out with 17 nearly complete to perfect *Flexicalamene* trilobites, my personal record for the area! They ranged in size from nickel sized down to smaller than a BB. My favorite is a 3/4 to 1 inch long specimen stretched out and eroding out of a shale nodule....very nice. But soon I was on a plane back to Texas, where the fossils are no less abundant or interesting, just quite a bit younger....



FIGS 51-55: Found near the Waynesville/Liberty contact *Flexicalamene* c.f. *meeki* trilobites this and next 3 pages (Site 291)









FIG 56: Found near the Waynesville/Liberty contact *Endoceras* sp. orthocone cephalopods (Site 291)



FIGS 57-58: Waynesville/Liberty Formation gastropods *Loxoplocus bowdeni*, *Sinuites cancellatus*, *Cryptolites ornatus* (Site 291)



FIGS 59-60: Waynesville/Liberty Formation rugose corals *G. canadensis* above, pelecypods *Caritodus demissa* and unidentified smaller specimen below (Site 291)



FIG 61: Waynesville/Liberty Formation brachiopods *Zygospira modesta* from the butter shales of the trilobite zone (Site 291)



FIG 62: Waynesville/Liberty Formation brachiopods *Rafinesquina ponderosa* flanked by two specimens of *Hebertella occidentalis* (Site 291)



FIG 63: Waynesville/Liberty Formation brachiopod *Strophonema* sp. (Site 291)



FIG 64: More Waynesville/Liberty Formation brachiopods including *Strophonema* sp., *Lepidocyclus capax*, and *Hebertella occidentalis* (Site 291)

June 29, 2010: Corsicana with the Chilluns

When my plane landed and I made it back to the office around lunchtime I found a message on my machine from local collecting buddy Brian Evans. Rain had fallen across the San Antonio area overnight in my absence and he was up for a crawl at the Corsicana site to see what reliquiae had surfaced as a result.

We piled his daughter Allison and a friend into the van along with Weston and his scooter. There is nothing louder than a contest of tall tales between 3 kids under 10 fueled by Twinkies. Brian and I could barely hold a conversation over the cacophonous chatter from behind us.

Upon reaching the site it was clear that overnight rains had only landed a glancing blow. Still, we crawled for an hour or so and grabbed a few goodies. While I saw 8 or 10 exploded crabs *Dakoticancer australis*, it took me a while to land 3 worth keeping. One was broken into 8 pieces and I thought it might go back together fairly well. The second while large has a big crack running through it. Unfortunately both spontaneously exploded. The third and smallest has a few cracks but is otherwise a nice carapace.



FIGS 65-66: Corsicana Formation *Dakoticancer australis* crab carapace above, *D. australis* claw lower right, unidentified crab claw fragment lower left (Site 349)



FIGS 67-70: Corsicana Formation echinoids including spectacular and large example of *Plesiaster americanus* this page, two more distorted examples of same species next page followed by three examples of *Hemaster bexari* (Site 349)





FIG 71: Corsicana Formation gastropods left and center followed on the right by two scallops *Neithea bexarensis* (Site 349)

After grabbing a few gastropods, *H. bexari* echinoids, and one *P. americanus* echinoid I shuffled over to see what Brian was finding. His paycheck was roughly the same as mine (minimum wage) so we packed up the kids and headed out. Hurricane Alex is currently brewing in the Gulf and its outer bands of rain just might stir up a few crabs at the site later in the week....