

Louisiana Rockhound Roundup--October 1999

by Pauline Singleton, Fieldtrip Chairman

Eight members of the HGMS Paleo Section (John and Bonnie Linder, Bill and Annette Haughton, Beverly Mace, and Pauline Singleton) attended the Louisiana Rockhound Roundup at Toledo Bend the first weekend in October. This constituted the monthly field trip for the Paleo Section.

The weather and the hospitality were wonderful. It would have been an enjoyable weekend even if we had found no rocks. Friday evening the DeRidder Gem & Mineral Society hosted a hot dog and chili supper for early arrivals.

Over the weekend we saw demonstrations of two distinctly different ways of searching for petrified wood. On Saturday, Gary Moore led a group to an area below the dam at Toledo Bend. There on a sandy beach, he proceeded to show us how to use a probe to search for logs buried under the sand. Sure enough, there were large pieces of petrified wood under two or three feet of sand. Needless to say, one had to move a fair volume of sand to free them! Bill and Annette Haughton uncovered the largest piece. A member of one of the other clubs came up with a nice chunk of petrified palm.

Wanda Thompson graciously opened her little restaurant and served catfish after we finished our hunt. Then we returned to the campground at Pleasure Point for the other activities. There were silent and live auctions, rock swaps, rocks for sale, and show-and-tell, and finally, a potluck supper.

Sunday, we drove to the area just south of Lake Sam Rayburn to hunt more petrified wood. This time, it was Bill Elkhorn who led the way. He showed us a creek where we quickly found about all any of us wanted to carry. Some had to be dug out of the bank, but much was on the surface.

Afterwards, we parted and went in different directions. Some went to Bill Elkhorn's rock shop, which was nearby. Some went back to Louisiana to visit Poor Boy George's. This is a house that incorporates a large quantity of petrified wood, especially petrified palm. It also contains furnishings, which make generous use of petrified wood. Beverly reported to me that it was something to see!

That afternoon, five members of the DeRidder club met with a reporter from the *National Inquirer*, believe it or not. It seems that in July, they had quite an adventure. Warner Abel, Bubba Babineaux, Gary Moore, Hector West and Sherry Gibson were all out hunting arrowheads and petrified wood one day when a thunder storm blew up. They took shelter under a shed with a metal roof, and lightning struck them. All five were knocked unconscious, but all five survived. It will be interesting to see how the *National Inquirer* writes up this story. Thank goodness nothing quite that exciting happened on this rock hunt! Let's hope it never does.

The Louisiana Rockhound Roundup is an annual event, and it affords a wonderful opportunity to meet some other rockhounds and to explore East Texas and Louisiana. Our thanks to the DeRidder group, which hosted it this year.