

## January 29 - February 1, 2003

During the last weekend of January, Val and Glade (and Roxy the Boxer) went to southern Nevada to work the Middle Cambrian rocks in hopes of finding some of the much-coveted *Albertella* trilobites. January is the perfect time of year for weather conditions. Temperatures can reach into the 100's from March to October. We encountered beautiful clear skies and temperatures in the 60's and 70's. The downside of working in January is the short daylight hours and long winter nights. During the summer we usually camp out but under these circumstances we stayed in town in a nice air-conditioned room and lots of good food. Our first day was spent at a location with no roads near the exposure. It was on the backside of a mountain. We had to climb up one side and down the other. That meant climbing back up with a pack full of rock at the end of the day. We were able to locate the formation and a site that had never been looked at before. On the surface of the exposure were a number of complete *Albertella* as evidence that no one had ever collected here. This is one of those dream locations with good numbers of complete specimens. But with a hike this difficult, you had to ask yourself, "Was it worth it". The answer was, yes!

View looking at the Nevada desert northeast of the quarry



This is what the exposure looked like when we first got there. Several of the layers had both complete and partial specimens showing on the surfaces.



Val at work with the “Wizard Bar” opening up a fresh exposure



Glade at work



Glade finds a nice Albertella



A large, nearly complete specimen



**Val at work on the steep hillside**



**Roxy is checking out the wild Burros in the valley below**



**A couple of wild Burros, leftovers from the old mining days of the 1800's**



A very tired Glade at the end of the day with a pack full of trilobites and a very difficult mountainside in the background



One of the better specimens found that day. Although it was cheekless, it had nice color and measured about 2 ½ " in length.



The largest *Albertella* found on the trip. This one measures over 3 ½ " to the tip of the spines. These almost look like *Bristolia* with their long genal, maxiplueral, and pygidial spines.



The second day was spent working a site we had found on our previous trip in September of 2002. The location is near a ghost town in southern Nevada. The only sign of life is the one remaining house near the highway. This location had another species of *Albertella*. The hike was not as difficult as the day before, but the quarrying was not as easy either. It was not unusual to find more than one specimen on a surface, though we were not able to find the high mortality zone that we had hoped for.

Glade at work on the mountainside



Glade using the wizard bar to loosen a rock



Glade moving heavy over-burden



Val using the wizard bar to loosen a rock



Val trying to work while Roxy is letting him know that she has sore feet



One of the very nice *Albertella* found at this site. Note that the spines on this species are much shorter than the ones found the day before.



Another fine specimen found that day.



This specimen looks to be the appendage of an Anomalocaris. They were the giant predators of the Cambrian.



The third day was used for prospecting. We encountered a few wild horses. The day was spent reading and studying maps, driving around on poor roads, and hiking rugged hills. Finally late in the day our efforts paid off and we found evidence of the much hoped for mortality zone. We found ourselves unprepared for working in the hard limestones though. We wished we had brought our heavy hammers and our "Persuader". The rock split poorly but we got an occasional glimpse of layers that we nearly covered with articulated specimens. Most were small, less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of an inch in length. Still it was exciting to find those layers when we did.

We looked at this mountain and could see the formation but it was about a three-mile walk and several thousand foot climb. We passed on this one.



The scenery was incredible. Not a tree to mar the view. Just a few yucca.



The barrel cacti were very colorful, though not yet in bloom.



We did check out this mountain but had no success here.



Wild horses in the distance





Glade standing by one of the giant yuccas.  
These look more like  
small palm trees than yuccas plants.



Here is a sample of the mortality layer. The  
specimen needs some more  
preparation but shows eight complete/or  
nearly complete trilobites on this surface.



More evidence of the mortality layer



One of the *Albertellas* that we found. This one needed a little preparation.



Another view. Unfortunately the axis and head were weathered already.

