

CENTRAL OREGON ROCK COLLECTORS NEWSLETTER



Part 3:

The History of Rockhounding; A Riveting Look at Rock and Mineral Collecting Through the Ages

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Rockhounding in North America

The arrival of European settlers in North America marked a new chapter in rockhounding. From the discovery of bog iron by the Vikings in Newfoundland to the gold rushes in California and British Columbia, North America's vast expanse was a treasure trove of rocks, minerals, and fossils.

Over time, rock and gem clubs emerged, uniting enthusiasts and collectors. Even today, new discoveries, like Enantiornithine bird skeleton in Utah and a sapphire deposit in British Columbia, continue to intrigue and inspire.



Rockhounding's Rise in America: From Passion to Patriotism

The 1930's heralded a new era for rockhounding and geology enthusiasts in the United States. As the nation underwent significant technological advancements, a unique blend of factors converged, ignited a widespread passion for rockhounding.

The Allure of the Open Road

With the advent and spread of electricity and the rise of the automobile, the American dream began to shift. No longer confined to their immediate surrounding, many Americans were drawn to the vast landscapes of the West. The mountains and deserts, previously remote and inaccessible, became treasure troves waiting to be explored. The promise of unearthing precious stones, from agates to petrified wood, beckoned many to embark on adventurous expeditions.

Socio-Economic Catalysts

The Great Depression, one of the most challenging periods in American history, inadvertently played a role in the rise of rockhounding. As many faced unemployment and economic hardships, they sought solace and potential financial opportunities in the canyons, quarries, and fields of the West. The allure of potentially valuable minerals and gemstones offered a glimmer of hope during bleak times.

Furthermore, the surge in road construction projects exposed new rock formations and mineral deposits, making them more accessible to the general public. The concept of the westward family vacation became a cultural phenomenon, with families packing up their cars and heading out on the open road, often with rockhounding as a primary or secondary objective.

The Desert Highway Boom

Recognizing the increasing interest in rockhounding, many early enthusiasts set up shops along popular desert highways. These shops not only sold rocks and minerals but also served as information hubs, guiding hobbyists to the best rockhounding sites in the area. They became essential pit stops for vacationers, offering them a chance to purchase unique souvenirs and learn more about the fascinating world of geology.



*Many rock shops were set up along popular desert highways
(credit: Kai Schreiber)*

The Post-War Era: Knowledge Sharing and Patriotism

The aftermath of World War II saw a surge in national pride and a desire for communal activities. The first generation of rock hounds, equipped with newfound knowledge and experience, began publishing “how-to” gem-cutting guides. These manuals democratized rockhounding, making it accessible to a broader audience.

Moreover, the era was marked by a sense of patriotic duty. The Atomic Energy Commission encouraged amateurs to prospect for radioactive rocks, positioning rockhounding as not just a hobby but a service to the nation.

The Golden Age and Its Decline

By 1963, rockhounding had firmly established itself in American culture. An estimated 3,000 rock shops dotted the landscape, and 900 gem and mineral clubs provided enthusiasts with platforms to share knowledge and experiences. However, this period can be considered the zenith of rockhounding's popularity in the U.S. The subsequent decades witnessed a decline, influenced by socio-economic shifts, technological advancements, and changing leisure preferences.



Look for the last article in this series next month...

**Thank you to Bruce VanderZanden
for sending us this article.**

We are deeply saddened to announce the passing of Lifetime Honorary Member, Roger Whiteman.



Roger, along with his wife Jan, have been mainstays in the club since the early days. While serving as vice president Roger led many field trips. A life-long teacher, Roger was always willing to share his knowledge and expertise, being kind and welcoming to new members. Roger created our club logo. They donated their entire rock collection to the club. Roger will be greatly missed.





Roger Whiteman

By Denver and Laurie Sensibaugh

Last May, while CORC Club members were filling up buckets of rock treasures at Roger and Jan Whiteman's house, Denver Sensibaugh was inside interviewing Roger about his life. Here are some highlights...

Roger Whiteman grew up in Prineville and graduated from Crook County High School. As a kid, he spent his days outside hunting and fishing and sometimes gathering rocks. he studied art in college, attending COCC and OCE (WOU). After that, he spent 30 years teaching art. He started in Oakridge, then at Bend and Mt. View High. Roger married Jan and they have been together for 63 years. They have 2 sons: Jay and Ryan, and a grandson, Trenton.

Roger is a rockhounder and a skilled jewelry maker. He started making jewelry in college and has continued through the years. He cuts thundereggs in unique ways long before it was trendy and the same with doing cabs. The old fashioned ovals were boring to him so he started doing different shapes with the natural imperfections included. He also does lost wax casting and did a wonderful presentation for the club awhile ago.

Rockhounding is enjoyable to Roger because it gets him outside which he loves. He also loves being around the people. When he goes rockhounding he high grades it out, only taking a small amount of the best rock to work with. His favorite thunderegg mine is the Valley View, which is now closed. It is above the Lucky Strike Mine. He has some beautiful examples that he has cut.



*Roger and Jan
with volunteers
working to
prepare their
rock collection
for donation.
April 2022*



*Roger doing a
presentation at a
club meeting.*



STATE BY STATE ROCKS, GEMS, MINERALS

For this year, and probably the next, we decided to do "State Rocks, Gems, and Minerals". We will go state by state to see what rocks, gems, minerals and even fossils each state has to offer to the rockhounds of the world.

Alabama



State Rock:



Marble A metamorphic rock formed by alteration of limestone or dolomite, often irregularly colored by impurities, and used especially in architecture and sculpture.

Most of the white and gray marbles of Alabama, Georgia, and western New England, and that from Yule, Colorado, are recrystallized rocks, which are still quarried.



State Mineral:



Blue Quartz (blue quartz is due to inclusions of its color, typically fibrous magnesioriebeckite or crocidolite, or tourmaline. The color can be caused by the color of the minerals used).

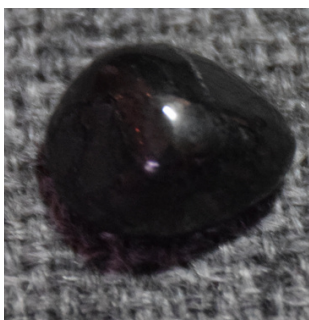
The first thing you should know about quartz is that it has a higher hardness than glass so you can do a simple test to verify whether you have an authentic piece. A

piece of quartz would be able to crack glass. You can try a glass bottle and if the stone scratches it, it is quartz. On the other hand, if it takes an enormous effort to create a crack in the bottle it's probably a plain piece of glass.



State Gem:

Hematite Hematite is one of the most abundant minerals on Earth's surface and in the shallow crust. It is an iron oxide with a chemical composition of Fe_2O_3 . It is a common rock-forming mineral found in sedimentary, metamorphic, and igneous rocks at locations throughout the world.



NASA has discovered that hematite is one of the most abundant minerals in the rocks and soils on the surface of Mars. An abundance of hematite in Martian rocks and surface materials gives the landscape a reddish brown color and is why the planet appears red in the night sky. It is the origin of Mars' "Red Planet" nickname.



STATE BY STATE

ROCKS, GEMS,

MINERALS

Alaska



State Rock:

There is no state rock for Alaska

State Mineral:

Gold: Pure gold is relatively soft--it has about the hardness of a penny. It is the most malleable and ductile of metals.



The largest gold mine in the United States is the Homestake mine at Lead, South Dakota. This mine, which is 8,000 feet deep, has accounted for almost 10 percent of total United States gold production since it opened in 1876. It has combined production and reserves of about 40 million troy ounces.

Gold is relatively scarce in the earth, but it occurs in many different kinds of rocks and in many different geological environments.



State Gem:

Jade:

Color: Green, white, orange, yellow, lavender, black

Mohs Hardness: 6.5 to 7 and 6.0 to 6.5

The finest jadeite—almost transparent with a vibrant emerald-green color—is known as “imperial jade.”

semi-transparent-Jadeite has a lovely, smooth, and even texture that makes people want to touch and hold the gem.

While jade is rarely faceted like other gems, plain as well as intricate jade carvings are judged by their artistry.

Jadeite is generally sold by the piece rather than by weight. For top-quality imperial jadeite, slight size differences can make large value differences.



References:

www.geologypage.com
www.ereferencedesk.com
www.gia.edu

statesymbolsusa.org
geology.com/minerals
geology.com



Happy
New Year!

2024 CORC Board Members

April Anable
President

.....
Patricia Moreland
Vice President

.....
Tonia Smith
Secretary

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Nancy Johnston
Treasurer

.....
Ken Lawson
Co-Field Trip Committee
Chair

.....
Eric Smith
Co-Field Trip Committee
Chair

.....
Barb Thompson
Claims Committee Chair
.....
Program Committee chair

We are now accepting membership renewals for 2024. 2024 Membership Renewals

You may now go to our website
corockcollectors.com to pay your
membership dues online. Click on the
Membership page. It will take you to Cheddarup.
Follow the instructions to fill out the
membership form and make
your payment.

Or you may print off the membership form
instead and mail it with a check.

Central Oregon Rock Collectors (CORC)
P.O. Box 6265
Bend, OR 97708

Annual membership dues are
\$20 for individuals,
\$25 for household
and \$5 for juniors.

Non Board Members

Tonia Smith
Nancy Johnston
Newsletter Editors

.....
April Anable
Social Media
Webmaster

We are still looking for a
volunteer to
be our Program Chair. This
entails planning
our programs for our meetings
and is a
board position. If interested
please email us
at corc.rocks@gmail.com