

CENTRAL OREGON ROCK COLLECTORS



THE GREAT JEWEL HEIST: THE DARING THEFT OF THE STAR OF INDIA

by Rock Seeker

Nestled in the grand galleries of the American Museum of Natural History sat one of the world's most prized gemological wonders – the Star of India. This behemoth blue star sapphire, weighing a massive 563 carats and roughly the size of a golf ball was a true marvel. Expertly cut and polished to reveal its mesmerizing asterism patterns on both its top and bottom domes, the star sapphire dazzled visitors with its otherworldly beauty.

Originally mined from the gem-rich depths of Sri Lanka, the Star of India embarked on a mysterious journey spanning centuries and continents before finding its home at the New York museum. After financial titan J.P. Morgan donated it in 1900, the legendary gem went on display as the centerpiece of the museum's revised mineral gallery.

For over half a century, the Star of India cast its brilliance upon throngs of amazed visitors who flocked to see its splendor firsthand. But this priceless artifact was about to be caught up in one of the most daring and brazen jewel heists the world had ever seen.



Star of India Sapphire
(American Museum of Natural History)



The Heist

In October 1964, a young group of audacious thieves from Miami began meticulously casing the museum during visitor hours. Their leader, Jack Murphy, known as “Murph the Surf,” had already gained infamy for past high-profile robberies.

Murphy and his two accomplices, Allan Kuhn and Roger Clark, were determined to pull off their biggest score yet – swiping the invaluable Star of India and

other rare gems in a daring overnight raid on the museum. On October 29th, they carefully unlocked a bathroom window on the museum grounds, creating their entry point while avoiding the gem hall’s security systems.

When the museum closed for the night, Murphy’s crew clandestinely scaled the exterior walls and slipped through the unlocked bathroom window into the darkened halls. With expert precision, they tampered with a skylight to gain further access, then smashed open the display cases and snatched 24 priceless gemstones including the Star of India, the DeLong Star Ruby, and the Midnight Star Sapphire – a total haul valued at around \$410,000 in 1964 dollars.

The Pursuit

The morning after the heist, pandemonium erupted at the museum as staff discovered the shattered gemstone cases and their vacant shelves. A massive manhunt was immediately launched as law enforcement realized the perpetrators had to be skilled professionals to have pulled off such an ambitious caper.

Using an inside informant’s tip, the police quickly honed in on Murphy and his crew, who had rented a luxury New York apartment to lay low after their successful museum raid. Authorities swooped in and arrested one of the thieves on site while Murphy and Clark narrowly avoided capture by escaping out another window and fleeing to Florida.

The chase was on as state and federal agents pursued the two remaining jewel thieves from Miami to the Florida Keys. After a tense two days, Murphy and Clark were finally apprehended. However, the mystery over the stolen gemstones’ whereabouts still remained.

A Bizarre Recovery

Despite being in custody, the arrested thieves continually taunted authorities by dropping vague clues and hints about where they had stashed their pilfered treasures. It took months of following bizarre trails and misleading tips before any of the gems began turning up.



The \$25,000 DeLong Star Ruby was finally recovered in September 1965 when philanthropist John D. MacArthur paid the thieves' ransom demand, with the ruby being uncovered at a Florida highway rest stop. It wasn't until January 2, 1965, that the prized Star of India itself was miraculously located – soaking in a damp leather pouch stuffed inside a bus station locker in Miami. More of the stolen gemstones were slowly recovered through the following months.

However, the spectacular 16-carat Eagle Diamond was never recovered, believed by experts to have tragically been re-cut into several smaller, untraceable stones.

Murphy, Kuhn, and Clark were swiftly convicted and served sentences for their roles in the audacious heist. Their sentences varied, with some reports stating they served shorter terms due to plea bargains and good behavior. While their unrepentant attitudes showed no remorse over stealing such priceless antiquities, the incredible saga of the Star of India's harrowing theft and recovery became forever cemented in historic gemological lore.

Side Note Per Google:

The historical Star of India gem is widely considered priceless, though modern valuation estimates place its market worth between \$10 million and \$50 million+ if it were ever sold on the open market.

Why the Star of India is So Valuable

The gem's astronomical worth is driven by an incredibly rare combination of geological and historical features:

- **Massive Carat Weight:** It weighs an immense 563.35 carats (over 112 grams), making it one of the largest gem-quality blue star sapphires on Earth.
- **Double-Sided Asterism:** Unlike most star sapphires, which only showcase a star on the top face, the Star of India uniquely displays a sharp, perfectly centered six-rayed star on both sides of the cabochon cut.
- **Exceptional Clarity:** Star sapphires are usually highly opaque due to the rutile "silk" needles that form the star. The Star of India balances this phenomenon with an unusually vibrant grey-blue color and high translucent clarity.



ANNUAL CORC

PICNIC

Sunday, July 19th

11:00 - 2:00

**American Legion Park 850 SW Rimrock Way,
Redmond, OR 97756**

4 Raffles!!!!

Silent Auction!!!!

**Support the club and bring rock related items
for the auction.**

***Silent Auction and how it works: Pick up a silent auction
form at the picnic, or send us an email and we will email a
form to you.***

Bring your filled out form and your item to the picnic.

All Proceeds Go to Support the Club.



BE A VENDOR



**Club members, if you want to sell your items, bring a table
and canopy, we will have space around the perimeter of the
picnic area for you to sell your rocks and
rock related items.**

**A canopy, if you use one, must be held down with sand or
water, no stakes in the grass “per the city”.**

Please be respectful and leave your dogs at home.

Come join the fun!!!!

Lots of food!

Main dish provided by Baldy's!!

Bring a side dish or dessert to share.

Happy 250th. 4th of July



Club Meeting Dates

Make Sure to Mark Your Calendar

**July 19th Annual Picnic
American Legion Park**

**August 19th
September 16th
October 21st
Holiday Party TBD**

CORC Field Trips 2026

Note: Field trip dates and locations are subject to change due to weather and fire conditions. Watch your email and the Club Newsletters for updates.



July

No scheduled field trip.
Annual Picnic July 19th at
American Legion Park



August

Richardson's Rock Ranch
Saturday, August 15
(Due to heat and fire danger
we do not go out and dig in
July and August)



September

Field Trip to Ginger Sander's
Mine for Precious Opal
Saturday, September 5
Sunday, September 6

October

Ochocco Jasper
(Walton Lake area).
Saturday, October 17
Sunday, October 18
**Subject to change due to weather
and available material*



*Looking forward
to some great
rockhounding!!!*



ANNOUNCEMENTS

EST. 1935
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ROCK GARDEN



**Come Visit The Garden
& Gift Shop**

**Open: Friday, Saturday,
Sunday and Monday
10-4**

Always looking for Volunteers

Contact:

petersengardenmuseum@gmail.com



CigarBoxRock Lapidary



Open Tuesday- Saturday

9:00am - 3:00 PM

CBR@Bendnet.com

541-389-9663 Or 541-280-5574

Follow us Facebook and Instagram

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Cigarboxrock.com



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MEMBERSHIP

Renew NOW!

**ONLINE at the
CORC website**

(corockcollectors.com)

Renew by MAIL or IN PERSON.

Print the membership form from the CORC
website and mail it to:

Central Oregon Rock Collectors (CORC)

4817 SW Volcano Ave

Redmond, OR 97756

or bring it to the next meeting or field trip.

Annual membership dues are:

\$20 for individuals,

\$25 for household

and \$5 for juniors.

(Note: Junior memberships are for minors
who are accompanied by a club member
from a different household.

e.g. Grandparents, aunts, uncles)



Contact Us

Email: corc.rocks@gmail.com

Mailing Address:

4817 SW Volcano Ave

Redmond, OR 97756

Meeting Address: 3800 SE
Airport Way, Bldg 3, "The Annex",
Redmond, OR 97756