

## A New Agate Occurrence

Petrified wood, together with some fine agate has been found over the years at random places in the country surrounding Brogan, Ironside and Unity. This region has never been noted, however, for any special source areas such as command the attention of the rock-hound fraternity at large elsewhere in eastern Oregon. For this reason the recent discovery of in-place Jasper occurrences from which some very excellent banded agate and jasper has been recovered may be of more than passing interest.

The occurrences are situated about midway between Unity and Ironside. They consists of jasper bodies in an acid volcanic rock that can be roughly classified as rhyolitic. The jasper is typically light brown in color, but gradations to a whitish semi-agate phase are common. Seams and nodule-like bunches of agate are interspersed throughout the mass. To date an insufficient amount of cutting has been done to properly evaluate the potentialities of all the agate variations present, but some very attractive settings have been made from banded agate and jasper. The jasper in this variety comes in both red and brown hues, and the banding pattern is close and intricate. The bulk of the pure agate is dense and light blue to colorless. A small percentage of this is obviously of cutting grade, but whether some of the less obvious phases will prove attractive for jewelry purposes is something that hasn't been established as yet. There is also a considerable abundance of mixed agate and jasper in which the components grade into each other and occur in rather large irregular shaped forms without banding or individual internal pattern. Some exceptionally attractive sets have been made from select pieces of this material.

An interesting element is added to the picture in the form of evidence that the Indians found and mined these occurrences years ago. Very briefly, all of

these occurrences are in caves. These are without doubt in part natural as small caves and ragged crevices are common in rhyolitic rocks, but that they have been enlarged by mining is indicated by the presence of crude "drifts," "raises" and "stopes" all of which have followed seams of agate and jasper. Otherwise the most conclusive evidence is the dumps of agate and jasper fragments which occur outside near the portals. These are quite clean cut in their bounds, meaning that like material is not present everywhere in the area outside of the portals, and it seems quite obvious that they represent sites where larger chunks were cobbled down. A few jasper arrow points have been found, but in general the dumps are comprised of rather large (2 to 3 inch) fragments which suggests that the actual task of arrow making was conducted elsewhere. Why much of the material in the dumps was not considered as suitable and packed off accordingly, is not clear, and the absence of larger stone implements, or tools, is also a **mystery** unless they have already been picked up by collectors. What may be found by future exploration is of course problematical, but it can be depended on that the discover, Mr. W. R. Parker, of Unity, will be on the lookout for Indian artifacts as well as agate, and if finds of unusual merit are made the information will be passed along to the readers of this pamphlet.

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