

OREGONIAN
Portland
2-14-54

Discovery of Opal Locality Provides New Oregon Lure

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BEND (Special)—A sheepherder whose flock grazed on a high, rock-rimmed mesa, in an isolated land overlooking three states, has been credited with the discovery of one of Oregon's most-noted precious opal localities.

That locality is along the

rocky rims of the Hart mountain ramparts, in the lonely rangelands northeast of Plush, Lake county hamlet.

Hart mountain opals present a challenge to collectors who would seek them in the isolated range country, or to the prospector who would attempt to mine them from the weathered slabs of old lava near the western rim of the towering Warner rim.

That rim, geologists concur, is one of the most spectacular features of the western country.

There are two possible approaches to the opal beds, Dr. H. C. Dake, Portland, notes in the current issue of the *Mineralogist*. One is the torturous Anderson canyon, up the steep western face of the 4000-foot scarp. The other is up the eastern slope of the massive fault-block structure, past a locality well known to members of the Order of Antelope—the far-famed "Blue Sky hotel."

No accommodations will be found there, in the way of a hotel, but the spot will mark the "head of navigation" for motor travel. Ahead will be a steep climb, through thick brush to a mesa where deer and antelope intermingle in the summer months.

\$400 Opal Found

At the western edge of the mesa are the opals. They are not abundant, but, collectors agree, they are intriguing, primarily because of the formation in which they occur. One opal valued at \$400 was found in the area.

Original source of the opals, Dr. Dake found, was in the silica-filled seams in the basalts massed to a depth of thousands of feet in the spectacular Warner rim.

Dr. Dake said he found more than opals in the Hart mountain ramparts, more than 8000 feet above sea level. He found some of the most awesome scenery in the Pacific Northwest.

At the western base of the Warner rim, far below the dissected highlands of Hart mountain, is part of the basin that in the damp days following the ice age cradled one of Oregon's greatest prehistoric lakes. High shore lines of that old lake are distinctly visible from Hart mountain.

To the east are mountains of Idaho, and visible in the southeast on clear days is the Virgin valley of Nevada, noted for its opals.