

Beauty In Stone Proved By Basin's Rockhounds

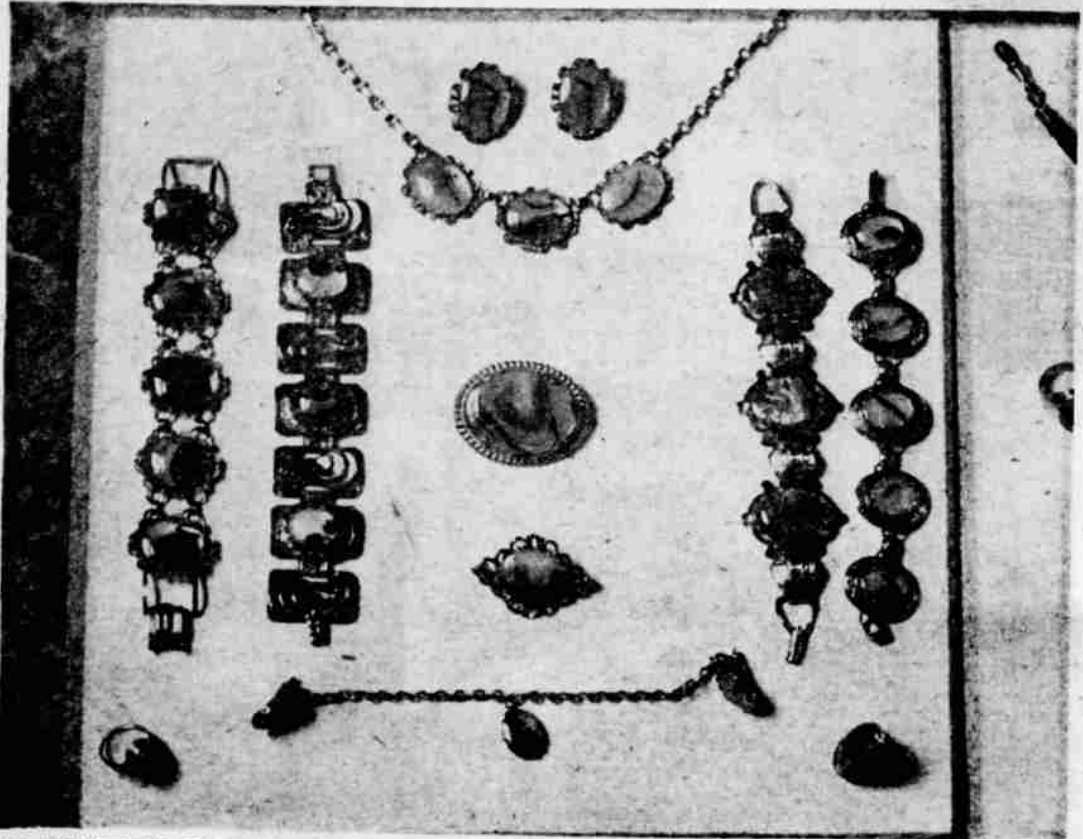
By BILL JENKINS

Almost all of us have heard at one time or another about that dedicated group of hobbyists called rockhounds, but it wasn't until Bill Vernon dropped in at the Herald and News office a few weeks ago that I knew the extent of rock-bound activities here in the Basin.

Bill, a short, stocky, graying man who has been too busy to settle down ever since he "retired" is the field chairman of the Klamath Mineral Club. It is his job to decide when and where the club will go on its three to five trips afield each year. Which means that it is his responsibility to see to it that the members are taken into areas that are productive of the various gem stones they desire. No small task.

Particularly in view of the fact that most rockhounds are out on their own a good deal of the time and every member has a pretty good idea as to which area is going to be best. But Bill, who has even enough patience to try and explain the intricate hobby to a writer like me, seems to manage in fine style.

This hobby, I found, is no casual affair conducted along strictly local lines. The various rockhound groups are welded into a nationwide, and even worldwide, organization. They have their own publication called Gems and Minerals, a monthly magazine published in Mentone, California, under the guiding hand of Editor Don MacLachlan, dealing with all aspects of the hobby. Most of the groups, including the Klamath Mineral Club, are affiliated with the American Federation of Mineralogical Societies. A Northwest Federation



THIS COLLECTION OF AGATES made into various kinds of jewelry is the property of Klamath Mineral Club members Paul and Agnes Kindsvater. The agates were all found by the Kindsvaters on field trips, cut and polished by them

and then mounted in the rings, necklaces and other ornaments. The Kindsvaters have their shop at 79 Lincoln Street.

THE COVER

John Yaden, who bears the distinction of being the pioneer rockhound in the Basin, is pictured here with a highly polished slab of a stone called, in his honor, Yadenite. On the wall behind him are other examples of the rockhound's art. See story and pictures for further details.

Directory is published on page 42 of which is listed the Klamath club and its officers.

Nor are members limited to this magazine. There are such books as The Art of Gem Cutting by Dr. H. C. Drake, now in its sixth printing. Simon and Schuster have published a book in pocket form called Rocks and Minerals by Zim, Shaffer and Perlman, which is a guide to minerals, gems and rocks.

Drake has also published a field guide for rockhounds called Northwest Gem Trails. Agate Areas of Oregon is a slim little volume describing 16 gem locations in detail. As an example, on page three of this little guide we find listed the following under the heading of Greensprings: "About seven and a half miles up grade towards Klamath Falls from the junction south of Ashland on Highway 66 are beautiful banded blue-green agates and goodies. Nodules are in place in a basalt seam, exposed by highway cut on left side of the road. When this cut was made, no doubt, tons of agate and basalt were dumped over the bank. On the summit near Pinehurst there is a variety of agate materials along Jenny Creek near the highway."

Next in line, under the heading of Central Oregon, we find the following: "Within a radius of 50



INSPECTING A CHUNK of opalized wood picked up on the Hunt ranch in the Fish Hole area east of Klamath are Clarence and Frieda Cornett. This substance is used by rockhounds in the manufacture of such things as bookends, paper weights and other bulky and heavy objects as well as in regular gemstone jewelry.



PAUL AND AGNES KINDSVATER are shown here with a portion of their collection of mounted gemstones. The couple started their career as rockhounds some four years ago as a hobby. Since that time they have developed an agate shop on a part-time commercial basis. Their shop is at 79 Lincoln Street.

miles from Prineville is one of the richest agate-bearing areas in the world. From this limited area come superb plume, iris, moss, wood limb casts, obsidian and jasper in many brilliant colors."

Talking to Bill Vernon I find that a great many of the local rockhounds make frequent trips to the Prineville area to share in this mineral wealth.

The subject is too complex to be covered in any one article, particularly by a layman who has never done anything but throw a stone, not polish it. But the rockhounds

are more than willing to offer aid and advice to those interested.

They are an enthusiastic bunch of people. A typical quote is from one of the members: "Although we have just started we find being rockhounds is very interesting and also educational. And not too ex-

pensive. There is always something new and interesting to see or do. We should have started years ago."

Or another statement made by a man and wife team: "Being a

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