

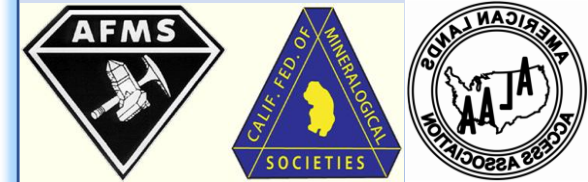


Diablo Diggins

Monthly Newsletter of the Contra Costa Mineral & Gem Society

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General Meeting

Monday, Nov. 20th Endeavor Hall, Clayton Library 6:30 PM Clayton, CA.

Snacks EVERYONE! Bring your favorite snack to share.. if rock related the better...remember..... salt is a rock.

Show Time

This Weekend is our show folks and it is all hands on deck please. Cases need to be set up on Friday afternoon. The success of this show is extremely important and may dictate whether our club will have shows in the future, so please spend as much time at the show and helping anywhere you can. Bring friends and neighbors and tell them to have fun.

“We Dig Rocks”
1. Since 1950

Remember.... Everyone is invited, bring a neighbor, and

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Membership Report by Barbara Roderick

We have two new members to celebrate:

Maureen O'Dwyer & Destiny Dilly.

We have a November birthday:

Betty Pankey 11/30

And 3 December birthdays:

Terry Caskey

Margaret Henrich

Barbara Roderick



Editor's Note

Given the run up to the show and some life challenges this newsletter is shorter than I had hoped. Agate is a very interesting stone and sadly my shortened article probably does not do justice to the topic, so forgive its brevity. We have a new editor next year, so please let us support him. Thank you

Cheryl

A Banded Common Beauty



The first rock most rock hounds polish as a cabochon is commonly an agate. Agate is a microcrystalline variety of chalcedony characterized by banding. The characteristic band patterns—which begin at the center of the rock and move outwards like the rings on a tree—are visually dynamic. Chalcedony, which is a mineral group that includes gemstones like aventurine, bloodstone, carnelian, chrysoprase, jasper, and onyx. Chalcedony is technically a type of quartz.

Agate is formed by volcanic action. The concentric layering forms when there is silica dissolved in liquid lava. When in a geode, a thin layer is deposited slowly all over the inner surface of the bubble. When the silica-content in the fluid is high, larger aggregates of silica-crystals form and following gravity they are deposited on the bottom of the cavity, forming horizontally sedimentary layers. As a result, agate is often found in the shape of round nodules, with concentric bands like the rings of a tree trunk. With the art of lapidaries, sometimes these bands look like eyes, shells or even like sceneries with trees or branches. The reason it is used by most beginners is that the stone is very common, often very striking and of a relatively consistent hardness.

Agate is one of the most popular gemstones that has been used since the prehistoric period. There are evidences to show that this exquisite gemstone was used during Stone Age somewhere between 20000 BC and 16000 BC by the stone age men in Western Europe. Objects in agate from the Neolithic era were found and the Sumerians might have been the first ones to use agate to make seals, necklaces, signet rings and other jewellery sets. The famous collection of four thousand agate bowls, which was accumulated by Mithridates, king of Pontus, shows the enthusiasm with which agate was regarded in the Antiquity. Pliny the Elder, in his Natural History, mentioned the Agate of Pyrrhus, a polished chalcedony in which bands formed a pattern representing Apollo playing the lyre. Cups in agate were also very trendy during the Byzantine era and collecting them became quite common in the European nobleness of the Renaissance. Various museums of Europe kept some amazing artworks of them.

Because Agate is found in so many cultures, it is associated with many myths and legends. The Sumerians used agate by wearing it with other stones around the neck and wrist to

conjure the curses of Goddess Lamashtu threatening the new-born children. In the Epic of Gilgamesh, it has been said that in the garden of the Gods, dewdrops were agates... The Celts associated it to Ceridwen or Kerridwen, Goddess of death and fertility. In ancient China, it was believed that agate came from the brain of a fossilized horse. It was also supposed to come from the recrystallisation of spilled blood during the era of the Yellow Emperor (2500-2600 BC). Agate was highly revered at least since the Han Dynasty of East China (25-220 BC) where its tints of red were extremely appreciated. The moss agate variety was then also very coveted with its dendrites of manganese which reconstituted sceneries, plants or human forms. Everywhere, it has been sold, offered, pledged and even taxed at 5% in the French Kingdom under the reign of King Louis XIV (1638-1715). Agate is one of the first materials known to man. According to legends it makes the wearer agreeable and persuasive, to cure insomnia and give its owner pleasant dreams. Today, it is in the Islamic world that the greatest myths associated to the agate, survive the best. The Persians, Arabians and other nations from the Orient use the agate mainly in signet rings set in silver on which is engraved a Koranic verse, the name of the stone owner, some symbols or magic formula supposed to protect the owner from a great variety of calamities among which scorpion sting, thirst, pneumonia and could even improve his sight.

Agates Today.

The varied types of agate often receive names reflecting their appearance:

1. **Moss or Plume Agate:** This variety isn't banded and is named for its moss-like inclusions.
2. **Lace Agate:** Known for its intricate, lace-like patterns. Blue lace agate is a sub set prized for it's light blue color.
3. **Fire Agate:** Features a mesmerizing play of colors and, as the name suggests, often has a fiery appearance.
4. **Dendritic Agate:** This has tree or fern-like inclusions known as dendrites.
5. **IRIS AGATE:** Iris agate has the banded look you expect with agate, but it also has a unique feature. Some segments – or the entire specimen – have an optical quality that creates an iridescent effect, leading to a rainbow of colors when viewed from different angles
6. **PICTURE AGATE OR SCENIC AGATE:** PICTURE agate has inclusions that create images that resemble nature scenes. Also referred to as scenic agate, this version of the gem is often one of the most popular due to its unique look.
7. **TURRITELLA AGATE:** Turritella agate contains silicified shells, leading to unique patterns within the stone. Typically, these stones are found in Wyoming and feature earthy hues with translucent to semi-transparent sections

Carnelian and Onyx

[Carnelian](#) in and of itself isn't agate, but it is chalcedony; a red, orange, or amber-colored chalcedony mineral. However, some agates feature carnelian. As a result, a carnelian with banding is technically a version of agate. But if the banding isn't present, carnelian isn't classified as an agate. As with carnelian, [onyx](#) isn't necessarily a type of agate on its own. However, if it features banding, it's potentially considered an onyx agate, effectively a hybrid. In that case, the bands – which may feature different hues of onyx or other kinds of chalcedony – are what make it an agate. If the colored bands themselves aren't present, the piece is only classified as onyx.

So the philosophical question arises, is a small chip of agate without banding an agate? I will let every reader decide this one for themselves.

Pictures of Agates



Carnelian Agate



Fire Agate



Banded Agate



Carnelian Agate



Lake Superior Agate

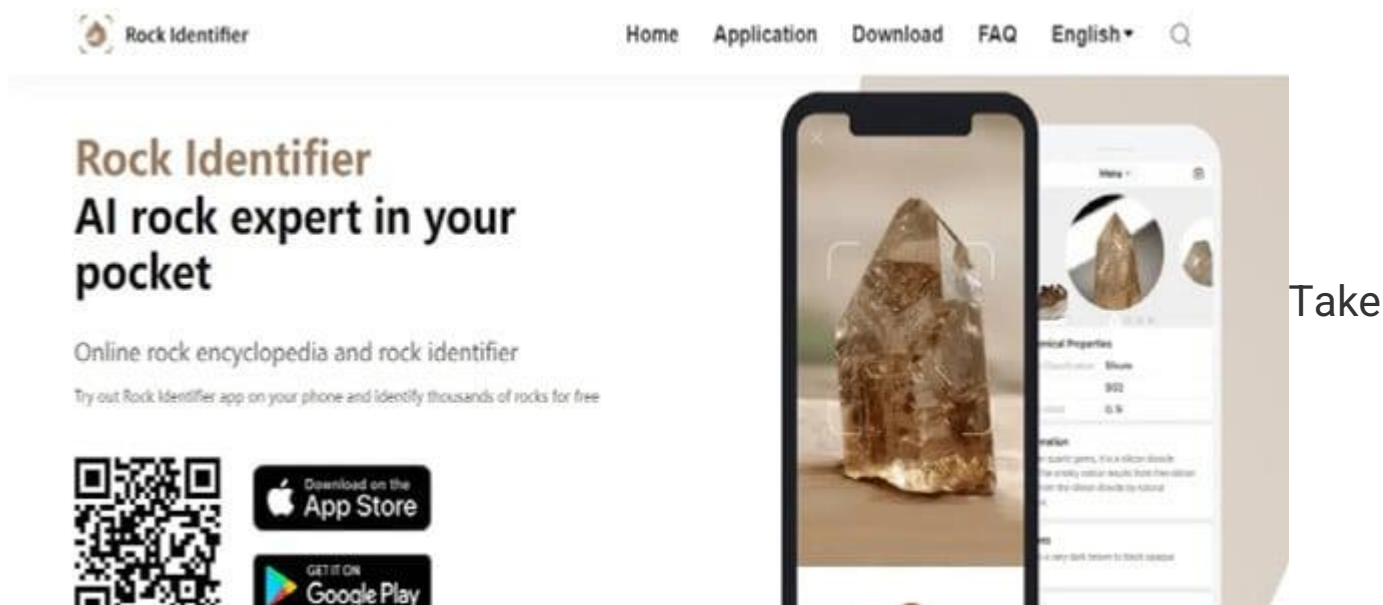


Unpolished raw banded agate



Some Useful Internet Treasures

<https://rockidentifier.com/>



a photo of your rock and the app will identify it. (Foto: LornaP)

This app allows you to take a photo of a rock and it will identify it for you and give you some information about it. It also provides a map, showing the localities of the rock in your country. You can save your collection and also make a wishlist, it even discusses real versus fake gemstones, however, some customers have reported the ID as not always being 100% correct.

<https://www.vagabondgeology.com/rocks--rock-identification.html>

A quick online site on how to identify a rock with good, beginner decision trees for rock identification

<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/rock-identifier-stone-id/id1546796934>

For Apple Rock Identifier is an all-in-one stone, crystal, mineral, and gemstone identifier. Simply take or upload a photo of a rock or crystal, and the app will tell you all about it in seconds.

Take a photo of any crystals or gemstones and get an instant accurate identification. This rock scanner app can recognize over 6,000 types of rocks and minerals and helps anyone who wants to identify, examine and explore the characteristics of stones.

One additional feature is it turns your phone into a metal detector. Not as powerful as the bigger version, your phone can identify metal objects with this app.

Please Note: I researched this sites on line and these has the best reviews, but I have never used the sites. These sites claim to be free, but that often is claimed when there are additional in site costs, especially for phone apps. I also strongly recommend never to us a personal, permanent credit card on any online sight. I use a temporary cash card or gift card to limit exposure of personal data. Have fun, but be safe.