

ROCKS AND MINERALS OF LOUISIANA

By Wilford House

Contrary to what most believe, Louisiana has a significant number of beautiful and interesting rocks and mineral specimen. There are both “native”, and “transported” materials to be found in the state. While the items listed are not all-inclusive, they do illustrate the fact of a wide assortment of rocks and minerals.

DIAMONDS

Diamonds are not native to Louisiana, however there have been a number found in the gravel beds located in the Minden area. At one time, there was a corporation formed for the purpose of mining diamonds of that area. The number found was never publically revealed.

PRECIOUS OPAL

In the Toro Creek area of central Louisiana, near the Texas/Louisiana line, there are deposits of precious opal. The matrix is sandstone, and finished stones have a different appearance from Australian opal. Many pieces are very beautiful, and have a lot of “fire”. Colors range from blue to green to red.

CHAMBERSITE

Extremely rare crystals of Chambersite have been found in the salt dome at Venice, Louisiana. These crystals are valued at between \$250 to \$300 per carat.

PEARLS

Pearls may be found in oysters dredged from the Gulf of Mexico. In addition, fresh water pearls have been found in clams in various streams. Mother of pearl from fresh water clams are still collected and used by amateur jewelry makers.

AGATE

In addition to agate found in alluvial gravel, some of which is most beautiful, there is at least one deposit of native agate. The deposit is in the Castor area, and colors of all hues are present.

PETRIFIED PALM

While the most attractive palm is located in the area around Flatwood, Louisiana, and westward to Toledo Bend lake, there have been finds of petrified palm in many other areas of the state.

PETRIFIED WOOD

Finds of petrified wood have been reported in almost every parish in the state. Either in strata, or gravel beds.

CHERT

Significant amounts of chert are found in stream and gravel beds throughout the state

CORNELIAN

Found in stream and gravel beds throughout the state.

QUARTZ CRYSTAL

In addition to being found as alluvial gravel in stream beds and gravel beds throughout the state, defined crystals can be found in cavities in petrified wood, iron ore nodules, and other rock formations.

JASPER

Found in stream and gravel beds throughout the state.

IRON ORE

There are iron ore out-croppings to be found in several locations in north west Louisiana.

IRON ORE GEODES/NODULES

Iron ore geodes and or nodules have been found in dirt pits, along road cuts, stream beds, and washes in northwest Louisiana. In addition, along with the iron ore geodes and nodules, concretions with an iron ore matrix have been found in similar locations.

SANDSTONE

Massive pieces of sandstone have been found adjacent to the current , as well as ancient, stream beds of the Red River.

LIMESTONE

Outcropping of limestone have been found in the northwest portion of the state.

MUDSTONE

Found along the southeast edge of Caddo Lake, in northwest Louisiana.

The area of Louisiana that contains some of the oldest rocks found at or near the surface is in southern Bienville Parish, near the town of Saline.