

Agates of Lake Superior

By Kristie Degner-Hansen

As a young child growing up in rural Northwestern Wisconsin, I recall many a summer day spend look for Lake Superior Agates with my siblings. A rock with stripes was our mission. Although at that time we didn't fully understand exactly what we were looking for, we searched the pasture land and fields of our parents farm. Each rock with any bit of a stripe I would ask my brother "is this an Agate?" "No" he would say and explain it has to have banding all around.

How had we heard of a Lake Superior Agate? My Grandfather, (my Mother's Father) had moved his family to the shores of Lake Superior in the 1950's. There he walked the beaches and collected Agates. He shared this passion with his children, my mother and her sisters and brother. When he left for the wilderness of Alaska, his collection had long been forgotten in his old tackle box. I rediscovered the tackle box of treasures after he passed away. His collection was beautiful, no large rocks, but very detailed specimens. I had found a few Agates here and there, but never had much luck. After finding the toolbox, it reignited my excitement to look for the banded rock.

As an adult I walk many different shores of Lake Superior, in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin, I think of my beloved Grandfather and how he used to find joy and peace in walking some of these same shores and finding the occasional gem of an Agate. I know my Grandfather is never far away when I look down and find an Agate lying there in all of its glory. He seems to be with me a lot, as my luck has changed and I can't recall the last time I visited the shores of Lake Superior and didn't find at least a tiny Agate.