

# Rock Collecting

The summer I turned 12 I was really into rock collecting and I recognized that my Aunt Gertrude lived on a big granite dome in East Raleigh. Just exploring around their yard and garden, I learned about mica, feldspar, quartzite and granite. My uncle had built a 'wrap around' gravel driveway, which encircled the entire cottage-style homestead. There I also found a fair number of slate arrowheads and quartz crystals as well, so I spent a lot sunny summer days looking for little gems in the dirt.



One Saturday I was on that circular driveway when I found a number of radiant, colorful stones with a bright blue hue. The pebbles were really unusual - none of the stones were very big, about the size of peas - but they were numerous. I got super excited and grabbed a handful to show Gertrude. She must have heard me running up to the patio hollering like a maniac because she whipped open the door and let

me run in – looking a little frightened at first.

Once I explained the situation she was immediately relieved and she got excited about the stones. Together we searched the guidebook of rock and minerals for the bright blue specimens. We figured it might be Azurite, a rare mineral found in the Southwest, but it was not found in our area. It seemed an unlikely suspect, but nothing else fit. I went back out to find more evidence.

Less than a hour later I discovered another hoard of unusual stones, but these were dayglow pink - think black light poster color intensity. Wow! Another trove right in Gertrude's driveway! Unbelievable!

I took another handful of stones inside and again we started leafing through the books to identify the sample, but nothing added up. As I was pacing around the living room thinking, I started watching her angelfish floating around in her aquarium. Suddenly, I noticed at the bottom of the tank were the EXACT SAME ROCKS that were in the driveway! Bright blue! Neon Pink! I turned to face Aunt Trudy, who was hyperventilating with laughter! She forgot that she had dumped the old aquarium stones out there years ago and immediately the mystery was explained. Bummer.

She was fooled too it seemed, so she said...



But in reality, I suspect Aunt Trudy just couldn't bring herself to dampen my child wonder and excitement and 'went along with it'. It was the right move - we had a great, adventurous weekend together and it made the great memory that I share with you now.