

'Fingerprints' Guard Against Fake Gems

Science has put the bite to a notorious wooden nickel—fake turquoise jewelry. An Arizona analytical chemist has learned how to fingerprint turquoise, determining whether a stone is natural, doctored up, or an outright fake. His technique of reading stones' makeup has proven what police, gem dealers and jewelry makers long have known: An awful lot of those turquoise rings, bracelets, and necklaces being sold during the ongoing boom in American Indian jewelry are not what they seem. They are low-grade stones dyed and treated to look like good turquoise, or tiny chips of turquoise glued together and polished to appear to be a single gem, or made-in-Hong Kong glass.

Half Are Fakes
Mines in five states produce most of the greenish-blue stones in America—Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico, the National Geographic Society says. Almost all is made into Indian jewelry, a growing business of \$750 million a year in New Mexico alone. Dr. Michael Parsons of Arizona State University at Tempe says about half of the hundreds of stones he has analyzed are not turquoise at all, but look-alikes of little value or clever or crude imitations.

Of stones that are genuine, only 3 to 5 percent are "natural gem grade" turquoise, about the same percentage found in mining. Turquoise is a hydrous phosphate of aluminum and copper, formed through the eons by water seeping through rock. It's usually found in arid regions, seldom in mines deeper than 100 feet. We call the semi-precious gem turquoise thanks to the French who, among others, thought it came from Turkey. But the trade routes led farther East, to mines in Persia. In the ancient world, Egyptian pharaohs prized the stones, sometimes sending thousands of miners under guard to the Sinai Peninsula to find them. In the New World, prehistoric Indians used turquoise for pendants, beads, mosaics, and carved figures.

The "Sky Stone"
One Indian legend credits a mythical mountain of turquoise with radiating blue color to the sky. However, natural "sky stones" are dull looking, waxy in luster, and may be soft and breakable. Body oil and excessive soap may add an unwanted

Do Not Refrigerate
Do not refrigerate eggplant, rutabagas, hard-rind squashes and sweet potatoes; they should be stored at 60 degrees. If these vegetables must be kept at room temperature, use them within a week.

green to the blue stone. The amount of greenness a stone takes on, contrary to an old Indian story, does not indicate the degree of a spouse's unfaithfulness.

Nature's shortcomings have not stopped man from "improving" stones—and their value—deepening the color, and adding luster and hardness, with mutton tallow, butter, ear wax, Prussian blue dye, or liquid plastics.

Such stabilized turquoise can make beautiful jewelry. But selling it as natural, untreated turquoise is against federal law and the statutes of at least nine states, with violators subject to \$5,000 fines.

In his pioneering analysis technique, Parsons aims a powerful electron beam at the stone, stirring up radiation which is then read and analyzed with help from a computer. Since every stone's chemical makeup is slightly different, identities are as individual as fingerprints.

Certificates with "fingerprint" description already are helping police, museum directors, gem dealers, and customers to detect fraudulent and stolen turquoise.



Shown above are Congressman L. H. Fountain and the Golden Age Club, which includes members from Vance, Granville, and Warren counties. The picture was taken on the steps of the U. S. Capitol during the club's recent trip to Washington. Accompanying the club was Charles J. Grubbs, Jr., Director of the Henderson-Vance Recreation and Parks Department. Pictured are: Lila S. Jackson, Laura Brown, Pearl Branch, Mrs. Jessie F. Green, W. W. Hedgepeth, May K. Hedgepeth, Iola

Newton, Esther Duke, Pauline Van Dyke, Louise Grissom, Mrs. Estelle M. Faucette, Annie H. Hamm, Lois C. Wilder, Allene Abbott, Winnie Mitchell, Elizabeth Burwell, Beaufort Duke, Laurene Long, Ethel Harrison, Rachel Fuller, Grace Tharrington, Ruth Wiggins, Elizabeth Powell, Jessie Nordan, Mrs. Willie Hicks, Mrs. Jessie A. Johnston, Geraldine Brewer, Annie Blanks, Ida Gafford, Clara Flannigan, Mary Hight and Katherine Loughlin.

Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Williams Egerton, Jr., of Littleton announce the engagement and approaching marriage of their daughter, Barbara Cameron of Littleton and Greenville, to Ernest S. Holzworth, Jr., of Mt. Lebanon Township, Pittsburgh, Pa., and Greenville. The wedding will be solemnized on August 7.



Mrs. Bessie Alston of Warrenton, announces the engagement of her daughter, Ms. Gwendolyn A. Alston of Jamaica, N. Y., to Willie C. Brown, Jr., of Jamaica, N. Y., son of Mr. and Mrs. Willie C. Brown of Bracy, Va. She is also the daughter of the late Henry Alston. Ms. Alston is a 1969 graduate of John R. Hawkins High School. She is presently employed by the New York Telephone Company as a supplies coordinator. The wedding will be June 4 in Springfield Gardens, N. Y.

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