

DIAMOND

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A few diamonds have been found from time to time in the glacial drift of Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio, transported there by the Pleistocene ice sheets from some unknown source to the north. For detailed accounts of the finds, consult Hobbs (1899) and Gunn (1968). Several diamonds were first found in Wisconsin about 1890 to 1891, though some had probably been picked up much earlier and kept as curiosities. The Dowagiac, Michigan stone was next recognized in 1894. By the early 1900s some 25 to 30 stones had been found in the glacial drift of these states.

The discovery of a kimberlite pipe in Iron County in 1971 prompted the first organized diamond exploration in the state. More than 20 kimberlites have been discovered since 1971, and these post-Ordovician intrusions follow a general northwest trend through Iron, Dickinson, and Menominee Counties from Crystal Falls to Hermansville. Many kimberlites in Northern Michigan contain diamonds, while some appear to be barren. Small diamonds have been recovered also from till and gravel samples collected in both the Northern and Southern Peninsulas (S. M. Carlson, personal communication, 1995).

Cass County: In a gravel pit about 3 km north of Dowagiac, southeast of Lake Michigan on the line of the defunct Michigan Central Railway between Niles and Kalamazoo: The gravels were in glacial drift of a kettle moraine (Hobbs, 1899). The stone, a hexoctahedron, measured 13x 9x 11 mm and weighed 10.875 carats. It was found in 1894 by Issac Wells, Sr., a sand and gravel contractor. According to Sinkankas (1976, page 8), “the owner sent it off to Tiffany & Company in New York City for verification. Returned to Dowagiac after positive identification, the stone was sold to Fred Blackmond, a local jeweler, for \$100.” However, E. A. Middlewood (written communication, 1976) states that it was verified by the Smithsonian Institution in 1894. Sinkankas (1976, page 8) continues, “It is believed that Mr. Blackmond had the crystal cut into four gems, each mounted in a ring, and presented the rings to his son Paul and members of his son’s family. A cut gem of the lot is still in the possession of Steve Blackmond of Dowagiac.”

Dickinson County: 1. Site 70 kimberlite near Norway: Slightly resorbed octahedral crystals and crystal fragments. 2. Site 69 kimberlite near Felch: Macles (i.e., flattened, twinned crystals) (1, 2, S. M. Carlson, personal communication, 1995).

Ingham County: Sometime between 1952 and 1954 the late Professor S. G. Bergquist, then chairman of the Department of Geology of Michigan State University, found a diamond in the gravels of the Mason Esker at Mason. It is an equant yellowish octahedral stone weighing about 0.5 carat with a rough and dull surface (Gunn, 1968). It is now in the possession of his daughter, Donna Bergquist Gray (*Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1982, pages 1B, 2B).

Iron County: 1. Lake Ellen kimberlite, SW ¼ section 27, T44N, R31W: Sharp octahedral crystals. 2. Site 15 kimberlite near Mansfield: Cubic forms (1, 2, S. M. Carlson, personal communication, 1995).

Kent County: There are several reports that “many diamonds” were obtained from gravels south of Grand Rapids (Gunn, 1968; *Detroit Free Press*, November 16, 1982, pages 1B, 2B). Unverified.

Menominee County: 1. Site 73 kimberlite north of Hermansville: Octahedral crystals. 2. Approximately 8 km northwest of Hermansville: In 1993, a 0.5 mm diamond was recovered from a glacial till sample collected as part of a regional diamond exploration program conducted by the Crystal Exploration/Ashton Mining of Canada Inc. Joint Venture (1, 2, S. M. Carlson, personal communication, 1995).

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UPDATE

Wexford County: Near Cadillac: A small (~1 mm) gem-quality octahedral diamond crystal has been recovered from glacial sediments by Torrie Chartier.

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