

Agate Windows at Presbyterian Church

In 1968, the Presbyterians had out grown the Little Log Church on Third Street and had called the Reverend William Gamble as minister and to supervise the building of a new church. He and his wife, Charlotte, were fascinated by the abundance of agates on the Yachats beaches and asked the architect, Frank Steele, to design six agate windows for the sanctuary. Steele was advised that it was not possible to manufacture windows of agate stones.



Dr. Gamble was not to be deterred and experimented with a local rock shop owner, Eban Page, to develop an epoxy that would hold agates. After much experimenting and with lots of help from local people, they found that with about three layers of epoxy and fifteen gallons of agates plus shredded fiber glass for strength, they were able to make windows that did not crack.

A Town Effort

Agates were donated by nearly everyone in Yachats. The agates had to be unpolished since the epoxy would not stick to polished ones. Each agate had to be cleaned and dried. People would gather on the back porch of Blanche and Charlie Childs, clean and sort the agates and try to keep up with the demand of the window makers.

The entire procedure on each window had to be done very quickly. First a layer of epoxy was poured in a frame, let cool, turned over, agates poured in, brushed with epoxy and covered with another layer of resin. There were usually four people on each side of the frame working together.

They Snuck One in

The window makers all agreed there would be no pattern to the agates, but the Reverend William Gamble could not resist putting a cluster of red agates to resemble the sun in the second window from the East. When the window was installed in 1970, it was inadvertently put in upside down so that now we have a rising sun instead of one already in the heavens. Charlotte Gamble also succumbing to temptation, with coconspirators shielding her from prying eyes, formed some small agates into the shape of a cross. It can be seen at the top of the third window from the East.

Before the Colors Fade

Records of the window makers are incomplete but we know the following participated:

- Henry and Essa Boyd
- Martin and Lela Bridges
- Charlie Childs, Sr.
- Viola and Major Dixon
- William and Charlotte Gamble
- Adolph and Margurite Habluetzel
- John and Olga Hundtoft
- Mary and Emil Kippenhan
- Grace and Walter Lewallen
- Ruby and Eban Page
- Charles and Marie Rozema
- Madeline and George Stankey