

The article below (Museum ACQ # 2009-010-029) is from the extensive Helen Carter Schroer Collection in the museum archives. The society, founded in 1967, began active archiving of clippings in 1971. Without these preserved and donated personal collections we would not have informative articles such as the one below.

The 'Funny Looking Rocks' ended up being ancient agatized coral. I-75 was still new and not completed to Atlanta. Carroll Scruggs was wanting to show something "original and native to Georgia" to the many northern tourists stopping at Howard Johnson Motel. This article is the earliest publicly published record of "Georgia Coral" in our museum archives.

The Valdosta Daily Times, Tues., Feb. 8, 1966 (7)



LOWNDES COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY AND MUSEUM  
VALDOSTA, GEORGIA

Scruggs Poses With Piece of Agatized Coral: Fossils Estimated 17 Million Years Old —Times Staff Photo

**'Funny Looking Rocks'**

**Let's Go Hunt Fossils**

By TIMES STAFF WRITER

If you look long enough and in the right places you can find fossils in this area that date back 17 million years.

That's the estimated age of some found in the Withlacoochee River at Rocky Ford by motel operator Carroll Scruggs.

Scruggs said he had known there were some "funny looking rocks" around Rocky Ford for 20 years, but he thought it was petrified wood.

What he thought was petrified wood has been identified

as agatized coral and its age placed at 17 million years by state geologists.

He got interested in the fossils when digging limestone rocks from the river to decorate the grounds of his motel, Howard Johnson's. Scruggs said he used the native limestone to provide the motel grounds with something "original and native to Georgia."

In getting the limestone, Scruggs also noticed the other kinds of rock.

To satisfy his curiosity, he

sent samples of what he thought was petrified wood to the state geology department in Atlanta.

That's when he found out the Withlacoochee River contained agatized coral, a link to this area's prehistoric past when it was part of the sea.

A business has been developed at Tampa making jewelry from fossil coral. Officials of the Tampa firm claim that is the only area where fossil coral can be found.

Scruggs said he has told the company the ancient coral is

company the ancient coral is also found in this area.

He has no intention, however, of getting in the jewelry business, although he says some of the native fossils might be made into cufflinks or a similar favor for the chamber of commerce to give visiting dignitaries.

Scruggs says he has suggested this to the chamber, but "we'll have to find out the cost first."