

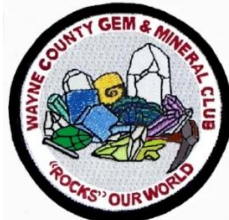
Wayne County Gem and Mineral Club News

December, 2020

Always Looking for Places to Dig!



Hematite in Wayne County (page 6)



<http://www.wcgmclub.org>
FACEBOOK link



*Princess
Mine
Sodalite
(page 3)*



Upcoming WCGMC Workshop

December 5th

Our final workshop for 2020 is scheduled for Saturday December 5th. As with recent workshops we are limiting attendance inside the shop. As of November 30th there are still a couple of spots available. Call Linda Schmidtgall to reserve a spot.

When: 10:00 AM until mid-afternoon

Where: The Weiler's Barn /Club Workshop
6676 E. Port Bay Rd, Wolcott, NY

Rules: Bring your own rocks.

A mask must be worn when inside the shop.

Training on equipment is available.

Eye protection is required.

\$5/adult to offset maintenance costs.

Your Favorite New Acquisition

A Request to Members

It has been a rough year. Yes, that is an understatement. We have had only two field trips, three workshops, and the club has not held a monthly meeting since March. In addition, GemFest was cancelled in June, our August picnic was not possible, and our Christmas/Holiday celebration will not happen. It is clear that we must find other ways to communicate and share our hobby.

Here is one way. I hope most of you have found a way to acquire something new and nice and geologic this year. If not, it is OK to go back to 2019. Take a picture of your new possession: minerals, rocks, fossils, lapidary art, even sands all count. Send the picture to me with a sentence about how you acquired it and why you like it (fredmhaynes55@gmail.com). Add more information if you want, but just those two thoughts are enough. Let's fill next month's newsletter with your contributions. This opportunity is open to both club members and friends who receive this newsletter.

Do it now, while it is on your mind, but anything I receive before Christmas will be in time for the January issue. If I get more than will fit there, part 2 will be in February.

It remains unclear when we can resume our monthly meetings in Newark. Right now it seems unlikely that we will meet in January or February, but we will certainly provide updates with each newsletter. We have accumulated some very nice material this fall and one of our first meetings will involve a club auction. More on that in next month's newsletter.



I hope everyone had a safe Thanksgiving and I wish everyone a Merry Christmas later this month. Yes, finally, it is December and 2020 will come to an end. I sure hope 2021 brings a successful vaccine and an end to the virus and allows us to return to our rockhounding activities.

As if 2020 was not bad enough two of our club officers underwent season ending surgery this fall. In mid-October Past President and workshop coordinator Glenn Weiler had rotator cuff surgery on his right shoulder after a fall. His hunting season was cut short almost before it began. In early November, Bob Linderberg's rockhounding season ended when he underwent knee replacement surgery. I understand both are doing well and expect to be fully recovered for the 2021 mineral collecting season. No snow shoveling boys!

At this time in past years I have been busy planning for our year end party. As you all know WCGMC has a large inventory of rocks and minerals which we like to share with members at our December extravaganza. We cannot do that this year, but how about this deal? Anyone who sends me an e-mail (lees@tds.net) any time before Christmas will receive a WCGMC gift whenever we do meet again. I guess we will also see who reads my column!

Finally, I would like to send a big shout out THANK YOU to Teresa Ferris. Teresa arrived at the October



Free rocks, courtesy of Teresa Ferris.

workshop with three boxes of extra rocks after cleaning out from all the trips of 2019: lots of rocks from Maine, from the Adirondacks and from elsewhere. Folks present at our workshops have been able to benefit from Teresa's generosity. And don't despair if you have not been to Wolcott recently. There are plenty more pieces and others are likely to follow her lead. After all, what else are we all doing except cleaning house these days.

Linda

Editor's note: Linda writes that Teresa arrived with "three boxes of **extra** rocks". I have a question. What is an **extra** rock? Can anyone tell me?



Collected from the Jaycox Shale Member in Kashong Glen 32 years ago, the *Pseudodechenella rowi* on the left had been languishing in Stephen Mayer's collection. Last week, Stephen prepped the uncommon Proetida trilobite. With an air abrasive unit and a little dolomite powder, just look what a bit of patience and talent can produce.



SODALITE

by Chris Robinson



This is an article about one of my favorite minerals and two of my active hobbies. The mineral is sodalite and the hobbies are mineral collecting and stamp collecting. It was only recently that I met your club's editor and learned that others around the world who enjoy collecting minerals in the field also collect them on postage stamps. With this new-found realization, I wrote much of this article for Philagems, the quarterly newsletter of the Gems, Mineral and Jewelry Study Unit, an international group of topical stamp collectors. It has been redressed a bit for your mineral club audience. I enjoyed meeting many of you in Tory Hill on your 2019 summer trip to Bancroft and I am more than pleased to share my hobby experiences with you.

In 1992 Canada issued a set of five minerals stamps celebrating the 150th anniversary of the Geological Survey of Canada. Each comes from the National Mineral Collection of Canada which began life as a product of the Geological Survey in 1842 under the direction of William E. Logan. Canada's highest peak, as well as the mineral species "weloganite", was named after him.

In true Canadian style, the five minerals featured in this set were chosen in part for their wide spread of localities, representing the North (galena from the Polaris Mine on Little Cornwallis Island in Nunavut), the West (native copper from Kamloops in British Columbia), Yukon (gold crystals from Hunker Creek), Quebec (grossular garnet from the Jeffrey Mine in Asbestos) and Ontario (sodalite from the Princess

Sodalite Mine, Bancroft). Given my home in Ontario, and my knowledge of the Bancroft area, it was the stamp featuring sodalite (second from the left) that most caught my attention and interest. This sent me on a mission to learn more about the brilliant blue mineral on the Canadian stamp.

Sodalite - the Mineral

Sodalite is a relatively rare sodium aluminum tectosilicate found in alkaline and plutonic rocks which are low in silica. It is almost always massive, with just a few occurrences of small dodecahedral crystals. In its massive form sodalite is found as vein fillings in igneous rocks such as nepheline syenites. It is associated with other minerals typical of silica under-saturated environments, such as leucite, cancrinite and natrolite. The most distinctive quality of sodalite is its rich royal blue color, but like so many species, this can be deceptive, as it can also be found as colorless, white, yellow, green, grey and pink masses.

Most sodalite will fluoresce orange under ultraviolet light (see photo on next page). The variety hackmanite, which can be collected on the dumps in downtown Bancroft, exhibits tenebrescence or reversible photochromism, which is the ability to change color when exposed to light.

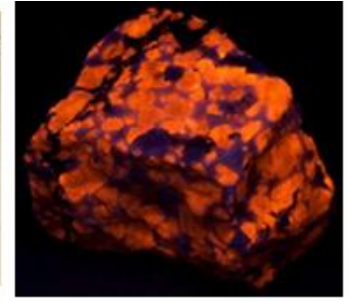
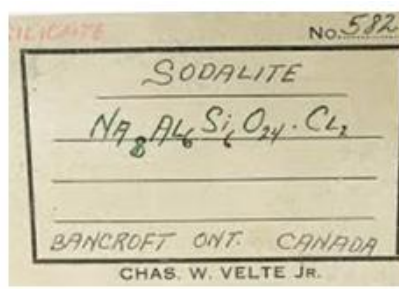
Sodalite from Bancroft

Sodalite was first described in 1811 from its type locality in the Ilimaussaq complex of Narsaq in West Greenland and named for its sodium content. But sodalite only gained fame when it was found in sufficient quantity near Bancroft, Ontario to be used as a decorative material - with royal connections.

And thereby hangs a tale...Today, Bancroft is a small town (population: 3,900) located on the York River in Hastings County in the Canadian province of



Canadian mineral stamps of 1992 (copper, sodalite, gold, galena and grossular garnet).



On the left is a sample of sodalite from my collection followed by a larger boulder from the mine location, an old sample label with the chemical formula and on the far right sodalite's short wave orange fluorescence.

Ontario, about three hours drive northeast of Toronto. It was first settled in the 1850's by United Empire Loyalists and Irish immigrants. For 30 years starting in the mid-1950's, mining was the main occupation. It was at this time the town proclaimed itself "The Mineral Capital of Canada" on the basis of the wide variety of minerals that can be found in this part of the Grenville geological province, the southern edge of the Canadian Shield. 'The [Bancroft Gemboree](#) evolved into Canada's largest gem and mineral show, running continuously for 57 years, until its cancellation this year due to COVID.



Bancroft Millennium coin

The rocks in the region locally date to around 1.1 billion years BP when sedimentary rocks were buried under conditions of high temperature and pressure by the Grenville Orogeny, a mountain building event comparable in scale to the continental collision that created the Himalayas. With additional igneous intrusions, these conditions have produced an amazing range of almost 300 different mineral species in a relatively small area around Bancroft.

One of the most noted of these mineral localities is the Princess Sodalite Mine that lies four kilometers

east of Bancroft, close to Highway 28. It is a small, but long productive quarry that has consistently produced high quality, deep blue specimens of sodalite from a metamorphosed nepheline syenite/calcite vein-dike. To chase down more details on the sodalite from here, I met up with Andy Christie who has owned and operated the mine/quarry since 1996. Andy has the look of an eager rock hound. As he showed me around his property, which includes a rock shop, a 'rock farm' and several small old and active quarries, his eyes lit up every time we encountered boulders or exposures of blue sodalite – which was often. Visitors can browse the large selection of mineral specimens, jewelry and metaphysical items in the store and can also collect specimens from the Rock Farm for \$1.50 per pound. The Rock Farm material is a mix of material from the on-site quarry and other locations in the Bancroft area.



The sodalite quarries in the woods behind the shop are now off-limits to collectors for liability reasons. And Andy chuckled as he recounted the dynamiting activities of his predecessor at the quarry, who inadvertently sent sodalite boulders through the roof of the shop and his neighbor's window!

Andy took me on a tour of the sodalite quarries to see the small-scale extraction areas of the current

quarry. He showed me large seams of startlingly blue sodalite in the quarry face and substantial boulders of massive sodalite from the royal blue (as shown on the stamp) to light blue and even white. It occurs here with pink/orange natrolite and a host of interesting micro species including dawsonite, nordstrandite, boehmite, zircon, cancrinite and apatite. Notably, pyrite also occurs with the sodalite, contrary to what most mineral textbooks state, which is that the absence of pyrite distinguishes sodalite from its look-alike species lazurite.



Just another sodalite boulder at the Princess Mine.

As we dodged a passing rain shower which made the blues of the sodalite around us even more vivid, Andy discussed the history of the Princess Sodalite Mine with me. The site was discovered in 1891 and in 1893 polished specimens of sodalite - similar to that shown on the 1992 stamp - were exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago by the Canadian Geological Survey (another link back to the work of William Logan!). In 1906 Thomas Morrison opened the quarry for sodalite extraction as a decorative stone and 118 tons were shipped to England. This much is documented - but the royal connection is much less clear.

The version found in most recent accounts is that on their royal tour of Canada in 1901, the Prince and Princess of Wales (the future King George V and Queen Mary) were presented with some sodalite from Bancroft. The Princess so admired the deep blue hue that arrangements were made five years later to ship 130 tons to beautify the interior of Marlborough House in London. As a result, the quarry became known as the Princess Sodalite Quarry.

However, my research uncovered a different princess and a different London house! It seems the royal connection was with Princess Patricia of Connaught, Queen Victoria's granddaughter and Queen Mary's niece. Princess Patricia spent six

years in Canada with her father, Prince Arthur, Duke of Connaught, Canada's Governor General at the time. The Bancroft sodalite was named 'Princess Blue' after this very popular princess and the name passed on to the source of the material. Although Princess Patricia did indeed have links with Marlborough House, the output of sodalite in 1906 was shipped not to there, but to Brook House on Park Lane in London. This mansion was the home of Sir Ernest Cassell, one of the wealthiest businessmen in Britain and private banker to King Edward VII - who was Princess Patricia's uncle. In 1905-1907 he spent a small fortune extensively renovating Brook House, using Charles Allom for the interiors. Allom was the decorator to the Royal Family at the time - another royal connection. A total of 118 tons of Bancroft sodalite, valued at \$6,000, was used to adorn the interiors at Brook House.

As I emerge from my 'rabbit hole' research of my local mineral stamp, one thing is clear: the color of sodalite from Bancroft, and as shown on the Canadian stamp is truly 'royal' blue!

To explore this story further

The Princess Sodalite Mine is open May through October; it is a 5 minute drive east of Bancroft, Ontario or about 4 hours from Buffalo, New York, if and when WCGMC members are allowed to enter Canada. You can view fine specimens of sodalite from Bancroft in the Canadian Museum of Nature in Ottawa and the Royal Ontario Museum in Toronto. There is also a fine boulder of Bancroft sodalite on Huron Street in Toronto, outside the Geology Department of the University of Toronto.

Check out these other references:

www.PrincessSodaliteMine.ca.

Sabina, A.P. (1986) *Rocks and Minerals for the Collector*. Bancroft-Parry Sound Area and Southern Ontario. Geol. Surv. of Canada, Misc. Rept. 39.

Robinson, G.W., Chiarenzelli, J., Bainbridge, M. and Scott Ercit, T. (2019) *Minerals of the Grenville Province* Schiffer Publishing

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5luVQmto0hs>

A bit about the author: *Chris spent the first forty years of his life in England, discovering the joys of stamps at age eight and the old lead, fluorite and barite mines of the Pennines when he was twelve. For the past 25 years he has lived in Toronto from where he has hosted a weekly show on travel on Canadian radio. He is a long-time member of the Walker Mineralogical Club in Toronto and has a family cottage on a lake near Bancroft in prime Grenville Province collecting country".*



By Fred Haynes

I had driven by the sign in the title box dozens of times and often wondered what might be behind the cattails and railroad tracks in Ontario Center. Motivated by the visit to the old Wolcott furnace last month and by the possibility of obtaining a hematite “sand” sample I decided to stop on my next excursion that took me through western Wayne County on Route 104.

There is actually not much left to see. Fighting through some briars the chimney stack from the factory can be reached and a few small piles of unprocessed hematite iron ore lay around the solitary chimney. On the west side of the red brick structure a protective window hides some ground hematite that apparently escaped being processed into paint.



Paint mill in Wayne County: Across the railroad tracks north of Route 104 between Slocum Road and Ontario Center Road this chimney stack is all remains from a paint mill that operated for over three decades in the early part of the 20th century.

The C.K. Williams Company opened the mill in 1913. Hematite ore was brought here from nearby locations such as the water-filled quarries that are now part of Casey Park. Once at the plant, it was crushed, bagged and sold as pigment by the sackful. The ground hematite could be mixed with linseed oil to produce a very durable paint. A bit of skim milk was often added as casein, an insoluble colloidal protein in milk, was discovered to be a quality bonding agent for the paint mixture (Shilling, 2002).

Barrels of the paint were sold to farmers who found the paint affordable and easy to use. Apparently, the paint resisted weathering better than other products available at the time and only one coat was required. It is not known how many Wayne County and surrounding area barns were painted with hematite red barn paint from this mill before it closed in 1948.

Collecting a small bit certainly permits one to understand why it works well in the production of red barn paint. It is really really red and a small amount sure goes a long way to “painting” every thing it touches. When I got home it took more than the 20 recommended seconds to remove the red pigment from my hands. The wash water from my clothes turned brick red almost instantly.



My sandwich bag sample of ground hematite. I used my silver scoop to collect it and painted it red while doing so. Technically this is not “sand”. It is clay or perhaps more accurately rock flour. But it is a very colorful addition to my collection and it comes from right here in Wayne County and with a unique and interesting history.

Reference:

Schilling, D.A., 2002, The [Great Iron Ore Odyssey](#), in The Crooked Lake Review, Summer, 2002

Masked WCGMC Artisans at the Club Workshop in November



Linda



Mark



Nancy



Heidi

Photos by
Teresa Ferris
&
Heidi
Morgenstern



Teresa



Heidi



James



George

Wayne County Gem & Mineral Contacts

ELECTED OFFICERS

President - Linda Schmidtgal
[lees\(at\)tds.net](mailto:lees(at)tds.net) 315-365-2448
Vice-President - Fred Haynes
[fredmhaynes55\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com) 585-203-1733
Secretary - Debbie Breeze
Treasurer - Bill Lesniak

Board of Directors

Gary Thomas
Bob Linderbery
Heidi Morgenstern
James Keeler

Past President - Glenn Weiler

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<https://www.facebook.com/groups/1675855046010058/>

APPOINTED POSITIONS

Bill Chapman – Field Trip Chair

Fred Haynes – Newsletter Editor
[fredmhaynes55\(at\)gmail.com](mailto:fredmhaynes55(at)gmail.com)

Bill Lesniak – Website Coordinator
Glenn Weiler – Workshop Coordinator

Linda Schmidtgal – Collection Curator
Eric Elias: GEMFEST Show Chair

Fred Haynes – Facebook Administrator
Jim Rienhardt – Sand Chapter

Club meets 2nd Friday of each month starting in Sept.
Social meeting at 6:30 PM Regular meeting at 7:00 PM
Park Presbyterian Church, Maple Court, Newark, NY

Website – <http://www.wcgmc.org/>

Dues are only \$15 individual or \$20 family for a full season of fun. Renewal is in October. Send to:

WCGMC, P.O. Box 4, Newark, NY 14513

