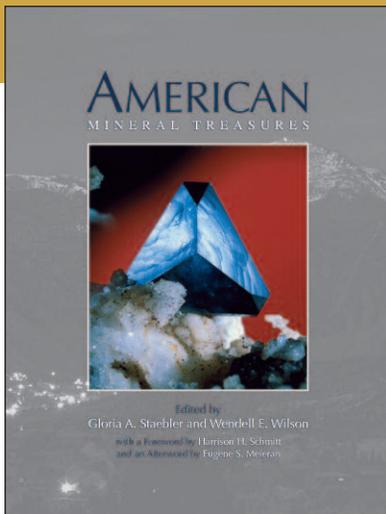


American Mineral Treasures²



At the 2005 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show, mineral collectors Gene Meiran and Shields Flynn were discussing ideas for future shows. Past Tucson show themes usually revolved around a particular country or continent, a particular suite of minerals, or a particular mineral, such as gold. Meiran and Shields wanted to have a show theme involving some of the finest mineral specimens from some of the United States of America's premier specimen-producing localities. Seven other people were brought into the discussion, and the American Mineral

Treasures project developed. Queries were put forth as to which localities should be targeted, and a short list was determined. This book is a part of that project.

The book's principal editors are Gloria Staebler and Wendell Wilson; however, seven other people also became contributing editors. The book starts with an eleven-page chapter summarizing the history of mineral collecting in America. Then the fun begins. What follows are 44 chapters written by experts on each locality. Some of the localities encompass more than one mine or area. The chapter entitled "California Gold," for example, zeroes in on four gold specimen-producing localities, and the chapter "Celestine from the Findlay Arch District" includes localities in Ohio and Michigan.

The book has over 60 authors, some of whom contributed to more than one chapter. What results are wonderful stories of personal discoveries. Some of the stories sound like "whoppers," except that there are many

photographs to back up the tales. The specimen photography, mostly by Jeff Scovil, the recent recipient of the Carnegie Award, is excellent. But being a field collector, two of my favorite images are Jones' Meikle mine pocket of barite crystals (page 206) and Jack's Bunker Hill mine pyromorphite pocket (page 151). Most of the specimens shown in the book were collected in the last 50 years, some as recently as 2007. This is current stuff! I want to go out and find some of these rocks myself! The book is so full of wonderful stories and photographs that people might get the impression that anybody can find such specimens. However, the book is more than personal stories and pretty pictures: many of the chapters include geological and historical information.

Most of the 60+ authors were present at the Tucson show, and many people, including myself, were getting the various chapters autographed by as many of the authors as they could find. By the end of the show I had 39 autographs in my copy.

I have only a few trivial negative comments. I was surprised that the Butte chapter had a one-page historical summary that did not mention the mine fire of 1917, which killed 163 miners. The map of Hiddenite did not include the Rist mine location. I recall seeing one typo where a space did not exist between sentences (okay authors—go nuts looking for the missing space). My only serious complaint is the title of the book. Correctly used, "America" extends from Canada to Argentina. However I must admit that even I get lazy and sometimes refer to my country as "America." Still, in a book that deals with a specific geographic area, one should get that area correctly labeled.

This book had many sponsors, which resulted in a low retail price of US\$85 —far less than expected for a 24.6 × 33.5 cm biggest-book-in-your-library book. Thank you sponsors! The last book the likes of *American Mineral Treasures* I saw was Bancroft's *Gem and Crystal Treasures*, which included worldwide localities and was published in 1984. So many rocks have been found since then. This new book is most welcome.

When I came back from the Tucson show, I attended a social/professional meeting and showed off my new book. After a few minutes someone remarked that it was the best book he had ever seen. From a mineral collector's point of view, he was right! This is not an academic book, but I highly recommend it to all geologists and mineral collectors.

Patrick Haynes
Las Vegas, USA

² Staebler G, Wilson WE (editors) (2008) *American Mineral Treasures*. Lithographie, LLC, East Hampton, Connecticut, USA, 354 pages, US\$85

³ Patrick Haynes has discovered several new mineral species and is busy looking for more. The mineral haynesite is named after him.

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