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Until next time…

TD

UPCOMING FIELD TRIPS
April 17th - Farmcote Station, Ironclad Mine / Copper King Mine.
May 15th - MacDougalls Well Station - Amethyst diggings.
June 19th - Balaclava Station - Staurolite Ridge Mine.

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The line of lode is the name given to the massive ore-body of silver, lead and zinc that made Broken Hill famous and has been continuously mined for over 125 years.

The mines along the line of lode have regularly changed hands over this time and many have undergone several name changes. The original blocks pegged by Charles Rasp and the syndicate of seven, have had at least five different names. There are key dates that signify major changes to ownership and mining practice. The name of an individual mine is important information when associating and labelling mineral samples that have been collected from the mines. The provenience of a sample is one aspect that is becoming an important thing to know for collectors and accurate information is essential. Samples with known provenience and old labels still intact, fetch a higher price on the world mineral sample market, than one of a similar quality without.

A plethora of mineral samples have been extracted and preserved and now reside in numerous collections around the world. But how should these samples be named and labelled with the highest accuracy?

Assume a sample is found in an old collection and it has an accompanying label that says “from Broken Hill”. There are two locations called Broken Hill - one in Australia and one in Namibia. Next, the sample is confirmed as Broken Hill, Australia. (A sample from Broken Hill, Australia has particular tell-tale minerals that enable the identifier to confirm its origin) It is easy to test the sample and identify the minerals present, however it next to impossible to identify which mine it came from without any extra information. This extra information is inside the head of the miner who collected the sample. Only they know the exact location on the line of lode, where the sample came out. Some of this knowledge is passed down to the collector, while most is lost with the changing hands of the samples. A collector who meticulously records these details produces a provenience for the sample that adds to its value.

When cataloguing and labelling samples there are a number of considerations to take note and these are:

1. When was the sample collected?
2. Which mine did the samples come from?
3. Was the mine underground or open cut?
4. Who was the company operating the mine?

An example of this situation could be:

A classic Broken Hill sample of smithsonite on coronadite from around the Kintore Shaft on Block 9. These are some possibilities for labelling this sample depending on when it was collected.

1. Pre 1940 - Central Mine
2. 1945 - 1972 - South Mine
4. 2000 - 2006 - Kintore Open Cut, or
5. 2002 - 2008 - Kintore Open Cut via Pinnacles Mine Dumps

**EXAMPLES OF TWO SMITHSONITE SAMPLES ON CORONADITE FROM TWO SEPARATE MINING ERAS:**

Top: A classic "log" of black coronadite from the BHP Central mine. Collected circa 1920’s

Bottom: Globules of teardrop smithsonite on “gun metal” grey coronadite from the Kintore Open Cut. Collected in 2003 during a Club field trip into the pit.
The name of the mine changed as different companies worked the central portion of the lode. The mining method also changed from underground timber stoping to open cut mining. The current company - Consolidated Broken Hill have returned to underground mining.

Labelling the location of origin for samples should be done using the name of the mine at the time of collection. While this is not always possible due to loss of relevant information, the historical records describe what was found at each mine and the types of mining method used.

STARTING WITH THE ORIGINAL LEASES:

The BHP leases were broken up into seven different mines and these were, starting from the southern end of the line of lode:

ML7 and ML8 - South Mine
ML9 - Central Mine
ML10 - Block 10 Mine
ML11, ML12 and ML13 - Proprietary Mine (BHP)
ML14 - Block 14 Mine
ML15 and ML 16 - British Mine
ML39 - Junction Mine

At either end of the BHP leases were new companies that targeted deeper ore. These companies were to become the Zinc / NBHC mines at the southern end and the North Mine taking up the northern end. In 1988 these two mines were united under one company - Pasminco. This company folded and sold off the mines in 2002 to Perilya, who are the current leaseholders.

THE NORTH MINE:

Many samples were retrieved from the North Mine over the 100+ years of operation. Very few samples remain from the very early days, when the original No1 shaft operated, however most of the quality samples seen in collections came from the four decades 1950’s - 1980’s, when the main mining practice was timber stoping. Over this time, four specific areas were mined. The upper levels (12-23) were accessed by the No2 shaft which was started in 1928 and worked until 1976. The No3 Shaft was commissioned in 1972 and accessed the deeper levels of the main lode (25-36). The deepest areas (36-44) were accessed by and internal shaft on the 32 level and these were separate orebodies sheared of the main lode and called the Fitzpatrick and 2K areas. In the late 1980’s the No1 Shaft and buildings were removed and an Open Cut was put in. The North Mine closed in 1996 following a decline in metal prices.

Some of the best rhodonites and spessartine garnets came from the North Mine around the 25-30 levels. Some very rare and quite unusual mineral assemblages were intersected on the 29 level. This included the hesonite garnets, microcline, hedenbergite and hairy bustamites. The recent decline through the open cut yielded good mimetite and brown pyromorphite. Fine gypsum crystals were also discovered as the decline went through.

Perilya Ltd, bought the North Mine from Pasminco and started a decline from the No1 pit to access the upper levels. Mining during this time reached the 13 level and located a number of zinc deposits ignored by the early miners. Labelling samples from the North Mine, should where possible identify the level on which it was found.

THE ZINC / NBHC MINE:

The Zinc mine was started in 1911 by the purchase of the South Blocks leases. Exploration at depth showed that the orebody continued southerly and a new mine...
was developed with the sinking of the Main Shaft in 1936. This was followed by the New Broken Hill Consolidated (NBHC) shaft following the end of WWII. The Southern Cross shaft was put down in the 1980’s. The two mines effectively worked as one unit up to the formation of Pasminco in 1988. A lot of quality samples came out of the Zinc / NBHC mines during the 1960’s and 1970’s when collecting was promoted and encouraged by the management.

Most of the big plates of manganese-calcite, large bustamite crystals, pyrite over calcite, alabandite, inesite with fluorapatite all come from the Zinc / NBHC mines. The main source of calcite was a fault zone that ran from the 17 to the 21 level at the NBHC and at each level the calcite differed to give a broad array of forms. The alabandite was found associated with these calcite veins. The largest bustamite crystals were found in association with coarse calcite and apatite on the 19 level of the NBHC mine.

In the areas accessed by the Southern Cross shaft good prehnites and frosted hexagonal calcites were found.

THE SOUTH MINE:

Minerals collected from the South Mine can be divided into three time frames. These are:
1. Post WWII and prior to 1972 - South Mine.
3. 1996 - 2008 - Pinnacles Mine Stockpiles. Operated by the Williams Family, where remnant ore from the open cut pits was removed and stockpiled at the Pinnacles Mine.

The South Mine was famous for minerals both from the remaining oxidised zone and the deeper sulphide zone. Quality specimens of wurtzite, secondary galena, large gypsum crystals, rhodonite, spessartite and pyromorphite were all found in the deeper sections.

During the open cut operations by MMM and Normandy, good quality samples of cerussite, smithsonite, anglesite and pyromorphite were obtained. The Blackwood open cut yielded probably the best of the jack-straw cerussite and large plates of yellow pyromorphite. Kintore open cut produced coverings of teardrop smithsonite on coronadite, bladed and reticulated cerussite, pseudomorphs of cerussite after anglesite with coatings of coronadite and plates of brown pyromorphites. Block 14 open cut produced the best azurites and malachites and a zone near the base of the pit produced masses of coarse anglesite.

Selective and less explosive mining methods were used by the Williams family and this allowed for many specimens to be preserved. These were able to be recovered from the stockpiles at the pinnacles.

During the open cut mining operations, a number of new minerals were identified. Luckily, one of the chief geologists was able to stop the mining and document many important finds, then salvage the mineral specimens. There was for many years a shop on site where collectors could purchase mineral samples from the mining company.

The current company mining the South Mine lease is CBH Resources. Any samples obtained during the current mining operation should be labelled as CBH Rasp Mine.
B: Silver in Gypsum. South Mine.
C: Calcite. Southern Cross Shaft, Zinc/NBHC Mine.
D: Green Pyromorphite. South Mine.
E: Cerussite. Block 14 Open Cut.
F: Bustamite in Calcite. 19 Level, Zinc/NBHC Mine.
G: Apatite in Calcite and Fluorite. 19 Level, Zinc/NBHC Mine.
The collection amassed by the late Tess Alfonzi has resided in the Sulphide Street Railway Museum, since its purchase in 1977. Over the last two years, the Broken Hill Mineral Club has taken up patronage on the collection and after a thorough clean, re-sort and re-labelling, the collection now stands displayed back in its full glory.

The collection was put together while Tess worked her mines in the Thackaringa and Olary districts. The main mine was the famous Triple Chance Mine, but she also had many others including the Raven Hill and the Domenic Mines.

The story of Tess is one of a small but very strong willed lady who never gave up and faced hardships head-on. She is a true heroin in our local history and is featured as part of the Heroes, larrikins and visionaries of Broken Hill walk, with her plaque opposite the Duke of Cornwall Park.

Born Teresa Bazzica on the 22nd of June, 1907 in the small village of Oneta, Italy, she migrated to Australia in 1915 to join her father who had migrated three years earlier and worked as a fitter and turner in Western Australia.

From 1921 Tess was living in South Australia, using her knowledge of 23 Italian dialects to work as an interpreter. She moved to Broken Hill and found work at a bar where met German mine-worker Louis Kumm.

The pair were married in 1927 and with Lou, Tess camped out and began mining for mica using a hammer-tap drill. Living off rabbits and kangaroo-tail soup, they slept in a humpy made from potato sacks sewn together. After weeks of toil they had packed five tons of mica into bags ready to sell, but the entire haul was stolen as it awaited collection in a mule cart by the road. Almost defeated, the Kumms began mining again - this time for feldspar and, once they realised its value, for beryl.

They opened the Triple Chance Mine (named for the three products - feldspar, mica and beryl) and were rewarded with success. A stone cottage was built on site.

Often left to guard the mine alone, Tess used her .303 rifle to fend off snakes and claim-jumpers alike, and she survived several explosions and mine accidents.

Lou Kumm was a hard worker but a heavy drinker and in 1954, he and Tess were divorced. Ten years later Tess married her foreman, Dominic Alfonzi. She continued her work, opening a total of 23 mines in New South Wales with several more in South Australia and, at one time, supplying 90% of the nation's feldspar requirements.

Tess was a remarkable woman. At age 70, only 1.5 metres tall and little more than 59 kilos, Tess was still wielding 'a hefty pick and a geologist's hammer' to crush and sort various grades of ore, and driving a front-end loader. She was the only woman in Australia to operate her own mine.
A: The “Beryl” cabinet at the Sulphide Street Railway Museum.
B: Large Quartz pair of crystals from the Domenic Mine. Crystal stands 30 cm tall.
C: Single large beryl crystal from the Triple Chance Mine. Sample is 18 cm tall.
D: Spessartine garnet sample from the Broken Hill mines.
E: Gypsum clusters from various locations around South Australia.
F: The beryl crucifix. From the Triple Chance Mine. Sample is 10 x 6 cm.
G: Quartz crystals on feldspar from the Raven Hill and Domenic Mines.
The Broken Hill Mineral Club Presents...

BROKEN HILL GEM & MINERAL SHOW
“ROCK-ON” 2016

When : 30th Sept, 1st, 2nd Oct 2016
Where : Memorial Oval / Showground
         Broken Hill NSW.

An invitation to all mineral, gemstone, or lapidary enthusiasts to come to Broken Hill in the Australian outback...

♦ To set up a stall, to buy, sell or trade minerals, gemstones and lapidary items.
♦ To see the sights of the historic Silver City and the surrounding district.
♦ To meet up with old mineral and gemstone collector friends or make new ones from clubs Australia and World wide.
♦ To go on organised mineral fossicking trips within the mineralogically diverse Broken Hill district.

Camping facilities are available on site (limited powered sites available).
Caravan Parks, Motel / Hotel accommodation available in Broken Hill.

Contact the Broken Hill Mineral Club or visit our website for a registration form.
Postal Address: PO Box 747. Broken Hill. NSW 2880.
Website: http://brokenhillmineralclub.wikispaces.com

The Broken Hill Mineral Club Inc.