

RUSSIA AND OTHER COUNTRIES OF THE FORMER USSR IN THE *MINERALOGICAL RECORD*

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1. The January–February 1980 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a blue **topaz** crystal (4.3 cm) on matrix, from Murzinka in the Ural Mountains, Russia. Smithsonian Institution collection; Wendell Wilson photo.

The *Mineralogical Record* magazine was founded 51 years ago, following discussions at the Tucson Gem and Mineral Show. John S. White, a Museum Specialist in the Mineral Sciences Department of the U.S. National Museum of Natural History (part of the Smithsonian Institution) approached Dr. Arthur Montgomery (Fig. 12) who had his own Russian connection to mineralogy – for financial support to start a new magazine for mineral collectors and specimen-oriented mineralogists.

Montgomery had trained in mineralogy under Charles Palache at Harvard University, and received his Ph.D. in Geology in 1951, later becoming a professor at Lafayette College in Pennsylvania. He was first introduced to minerals by his mother in 1928; she had traveled as a writer to Russia, and (perhaps on a whim) brought back for him a box containing a selection of Russian minerals. He was fascinated with them, and thus the direction of Montgomery's life in mineralogy was decided. With Montgomery's backing, White put out the first issue of the *Mineralogical Record* in 1970 (I joined the editorial board in 1973, and took over as editor in 1976).

It is interesting to ponder the question: What if Montgomery's mother had not brought back that box of Russian minerals for him? Perhaps he would have found another passion in life and would not have become a mineralogist, would not have been inclined to fund the start-up of a new mineral magazine, and thus there may have been no *Mineralogical Record*. History often turns on what seems like trivia

The early years

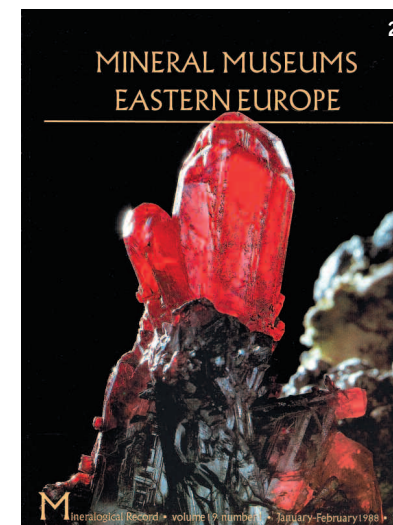
Although Western mineral collectors were extremely curious about mineral collecting and mineral localities in Russia, getting authoritative articles to publish on Soviet mineral localities prior to the fall of the "Iron Curtain" was just about impossible. Every minable commodity was considered by the Soviet government to have "strategic significance" in some way, and consequently the publishing blackout covered nearly all of the information we wanted. During the first 25 years of the *Mineralogical Record*, 1970–1994, we published not a single significant locality article on any occurrence in the lands of the former Soviet Union. Getting specimens out wasn't easy either (Fig. 1), as the brave mineral dealers operating in that theater in those days will attest. Happily, those problems began to crumble away in 1988.

1988–1989

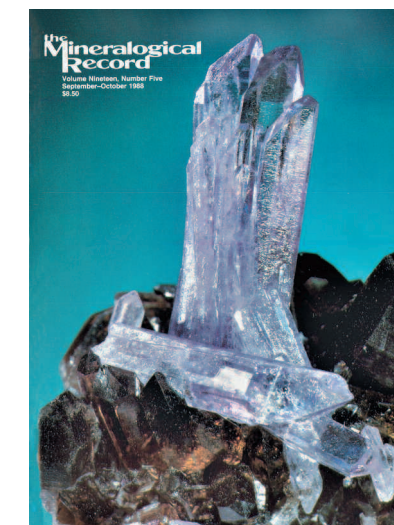
In 1988, Peter Bancroft wrote a major article in the January–February issue of the *Mineralogical Record* on "Mineral Museums of Eastern Europe" (Figs. 2, 13). He included chapters on the Leningrad Mining Institute (with its vast inventory of historic specimens, many of large museum size) and the Fersman Minera-

2. The January–February 1988 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, devoted to the "Mineral Museums of Eastern Europe", by Peter Bancroft. The Fersman Mineralogical Museum and the Mining Museum of Leningrad Mining Institute were featured.

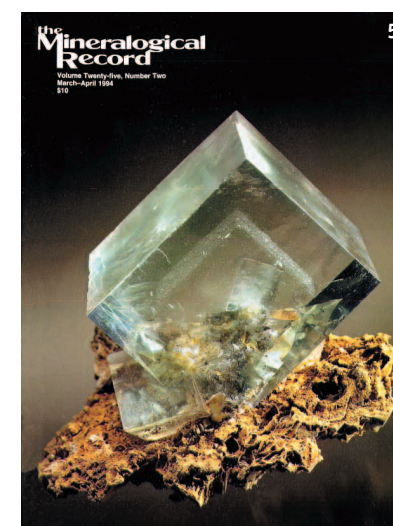
Cover photo: **proustite** crystal (4 cm) from Schneeberg, Saxony, Germany. Collection of the Freiberg Mining Academy; Jürgen Karpinski photo.



3. The September–October 1988 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a **creedite** crystals (up to 3.7 cm) on quartz from the Akchatau tungsten mine in Kazakhstan, Soviet Union. William Larson collection; Harold and Erica Van Pelt photo.



6. The March–April 1998 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing **sperrylite** crystals (up to 1.5 cm) on chalcopyrite from the Talnakh orefield, Norilsk district, Russia. Rice Northwest Museum of Rocks and Minerals collection; Jeff Scovil photo.



4. The November–December 1993 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a **ferroaxinite** (4.8 cm) from the Puiva mine, Subpolar Urals, Russia. This issue contained Rock Currier's article, "A gourmet's guide to Russia". Wayne and Dona Leicht collection. Harold and Erica Van Pelt photo.

5. The March–April 1994 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a **fluorite** crystal (7 cm) on matrix from Dalnegorsk, Russia. Rock Currier collection; Harold and Erica Van Pelt photo.



7. The January–February 2001 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a cluster or hematite-stained **quartz** crystals (8.2 cm) from the Second Sovetskiy mine, Dalnegorsk, Russia. This issue contained a major article on Dalnegorsk and the abstracts from the 2001 Russia-themed Tucson Mineralogical Symposium. Jeff [Fast] and Gloria's Minerals specimen; Jeff Scovil photo.



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29. **Gold**. 3.8 cm.
Lena River, Sakha Republic (Yakutia), Russia.
John Barlow collection. Wendell E. Wilson photo.

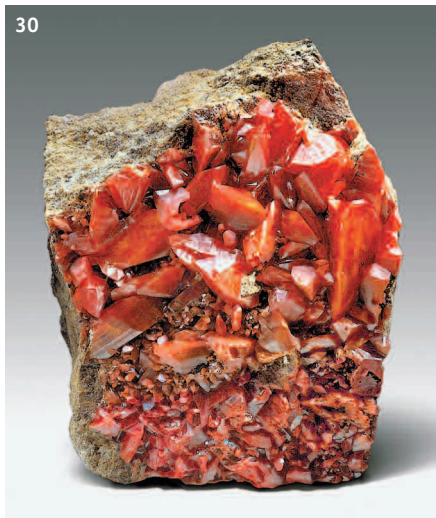
30. **Crocoite** crystals on beresite, a dolomite-sericite-quartz rock. 6 cm. Berezovskoe deposit, Central Urals, Russia.
Private collection; Max Glas photo, courtesy of Lapis magazine, Munich.

31. **Gold**, about 2 cm (weigh 16.75 gramm),
from Berezovskoe deposit, Central Urals, Russia.
Fersman Mineralogical Museum RAS, #30035.
Photo: Michael B. Leybov. Published with permission of
Fersman Mineralogical Museum RAS (Moscow).

32. Crystal drawings of **crocoite** (color added) from
Berezovskoe deposit, Central Urals, Russia (from Koksharov,
1875).

33. Crystal drawings of **crocoite** (color added) from
Berezovskoe deposit, Central Urals, Russia (from Haiüy *et al*).

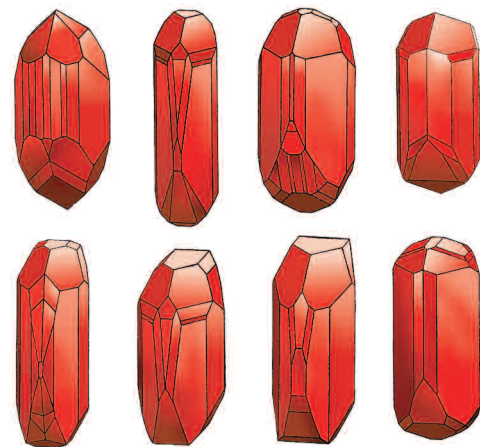
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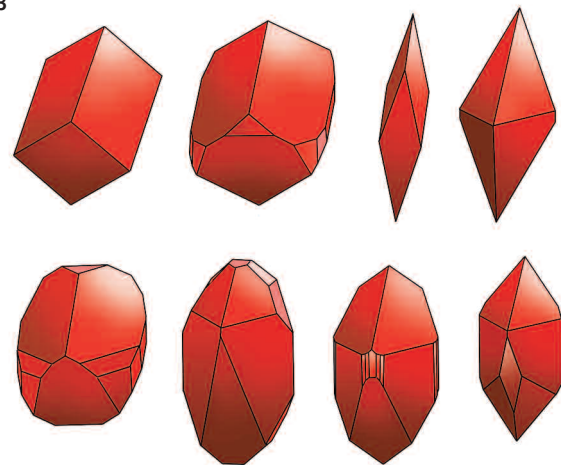
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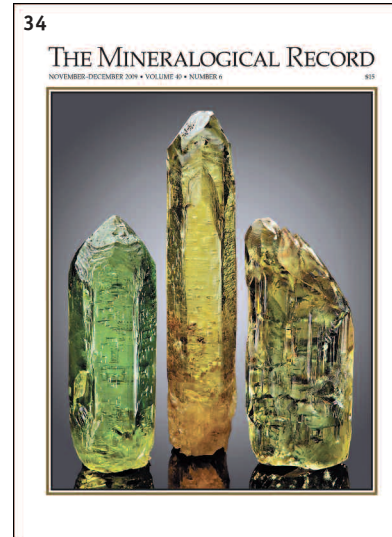
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34. The November–December 2009 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing three crystals (to 20 cm) of yellow-green **beryl** (var. **helyodor**) from the “Dnieper Pocket”, Volodarsk-Volynsky pegmatite field, Ukraine. Marco Amabili and Daniel Trinchillo collections; James Elliott photo.

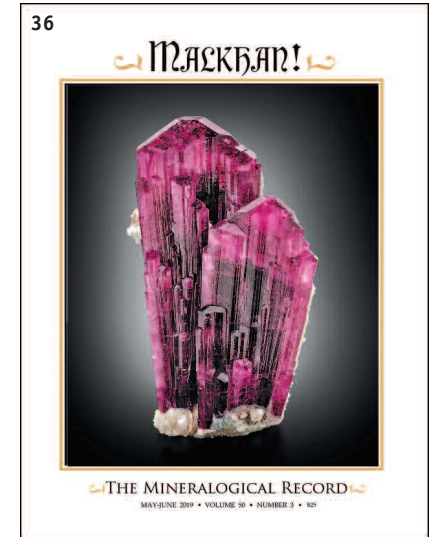
35. The July–August 2016 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a **crocoite** specimen (12 cm) from Berezovskoe deposit, Russia. Collection of the MIM Mineralogical Museum, Beirut; Augustine de Valence photo.

36. The May–June 2019 issue of the *Mineralogical Record*, showing a **elbaite** cluster, 21 cm, from the Zabytyi (Forgotten) Pocket, Sosedka pegmatite, Malkhan Range, Transbaikalia, Eastern Siberian Region, Russia. Daniel Trinchillo specimen; James Elliott photo.

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famous among collectors for a sudden bonanza of world-class specimens of cuprite, native copper and copper pseudomorphs after cuprite. The same oxidized zone has also produced superb specimens of iodide minerals – iodargyrite, marshite and miersite.

In 2016 we published another major article on a famous, classic Russian locality: Berezovskoe deposit (Fig. 35). For 250 years the Berezovskiy mining district near Ekaterinburg in the Ural Mountains has been famous among mineral collectors and mineralogists as the type locality for crocoite and, by extension, for the element chromium. Berezovsk is also the type locality for aikinite, bushmakinite, cassedanneite, embreyite, phoenicochroite, pyrophyllite and vauquelinite, and has yielded fine specimens of pyrite, scheelite and other species.

2019

Bringing this review up to date in 2019, we published a major article by Jindřich Kynický and others on the minerals of the Malkhan pegmatite field in Siberia – the largest source of gem-grade and specimen-quality tourmaline in Russia. Since their discovery in the 1980s, the Malkhan pegmatites have yielded uniquely beautiful, wonderfully large crystals of wine-red tourmaline with smoky quartz and cleavelandite that rival the great historical tourmaline discoveries in Brazil, California and the Himalayas. The district has produced over 50 different mineral species and is the type locality for bismutocolumbite and borocookeite.

Conclusion

Surely the future will bring more *Mineralogical Record* articles and reporting on the mines, minerals, museums and collectors of Russia. The distance separating collectors and mineralogists in the West from their colleagues and counterparts in the Russian part of the world shrinks to nothing when we share our passion for minerals – a passion that transcends all geopolitical affairs and problems. We are grateful to the staff of *Mineralogical Almanac* for bridging the gap as well, and giving us even more fascinating reading to enjoy. We gratefully acknowledge their valuable help over the years, the excellence of publications, and kind willingness to produce English-language versions of *Mineralogical Almanac*.