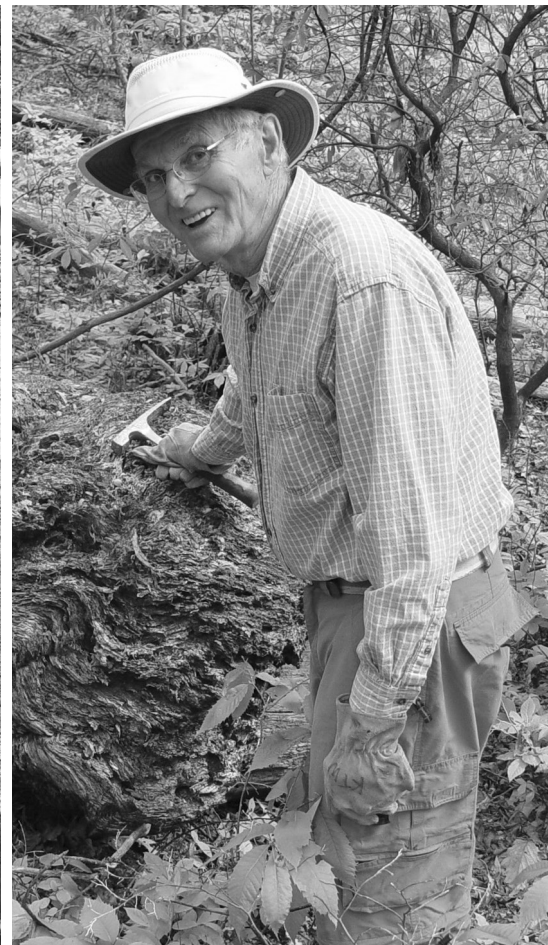
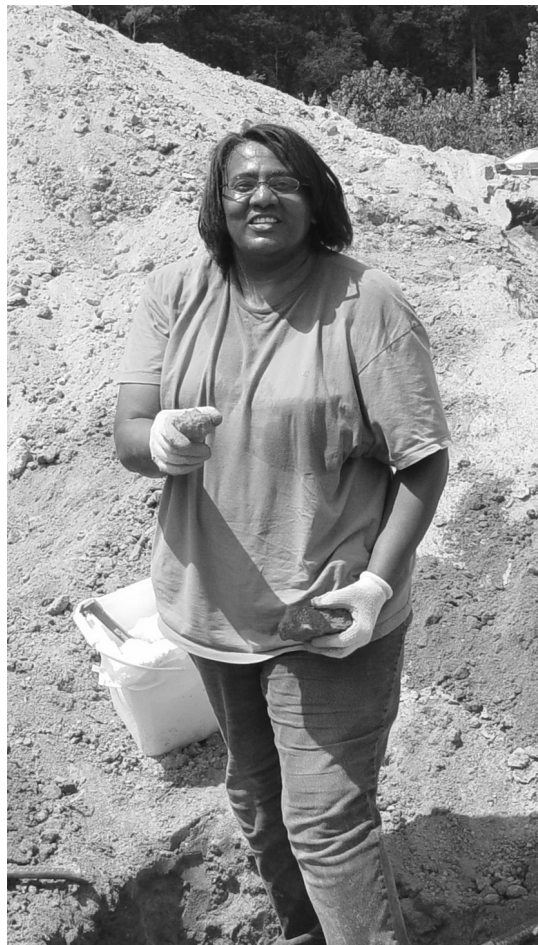


AMERICAN ROCKHOUNDS



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ON THE FRONT COVER: Close up of Widmanstätten crystal pattern, 388 gm meteorite slice from Henbury meteorite, Australia. Richard Jacquot photo, John Sinclair collection.

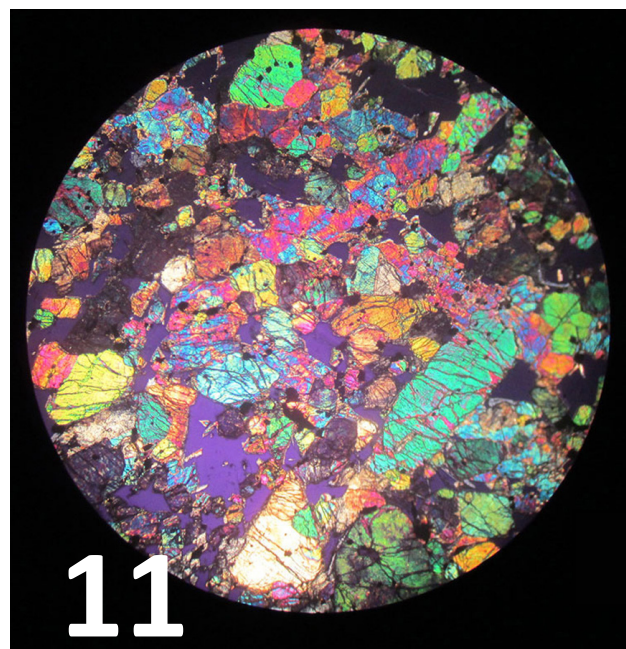
ON THE BACK COVER: December, 2011. Red moon over the Burgin Quartz Mine, Stanly County, NC. Richard Jacquot photo.



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ASTERIODS, METEORS AND METEORITES

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IMPACTITE

Sandhills Region, North Carolina

Tony Jones

My dad was doing some work under his porch one day and placed his hand down on a rock. Immediately he recognized it as something unusual because, well, we live in the Sandhills and rocks aren't common. He has always had an interest in finding meteorites since watching one of those reality shows a few years ago. He hands it off to my mom to give to me at work (since we work together) to figure out what it is.

On first inspection, it appeared to be a tektite, but I could find nothing really resembling the "skin" like that found on tektites. Also, there is a preponderance of bubbles, which is contradictory to most tektite information available. This glass is a shade of green somewhere between tektites and moldavite, with little patches of rust and a few balls of rusty metal stuck in it. I knew it had to be from an impact, when it dawned on me the information I had read about trinitite (atomic impact glass from New Mexico). That gave me the idea to show it to an old paratrooper I work with.

Fort Bragg, North Carolina was originally created to be an artillery training ground during WW I. Today it is widely known as home of the Airborne and Special Operations Forces. The two groups were literally created here in North Carolina at Fort Bragg. Rather fitting for the state who was "first in flight" to also be the first to throw people out of planes eh? Back to the rock... The porch it was found under, is just a few miles from the current artillery impact zone. Fort Bragg is literally in my back yard. I regularly watch from my front door as paratroopers are jumping from planes. I'm less than two miles

from Sicily Drop Zone.

Anyway, it's conceivable that the area my house is in could have been getting shot at by heavy artillery at some point in the past 96 years. So I asked the grizzled old paratrooper if he had ever been to the impact zone and if he ever saw any glass out there. He told me that in his early days of being Airborne he was assigned to pick up a bunch of glass out at one of the drop zones. He could vividly recall the extra thick trash bags they were given for the job. Even after picking up all that glass, when it came time for his jump he managed to get stabbed in the arm with some. That is when I finally pulled the rock out and showed it to him. "Did it look anything like this?" He confirmed it was exactly the same as what he had picked up years before. He also told me how he was finding lots of it in his yard before they set up his house. He lives about 5 miles west of me. When tilling his yard for the first time, he even found metal shrapnel from shells along with some glass.

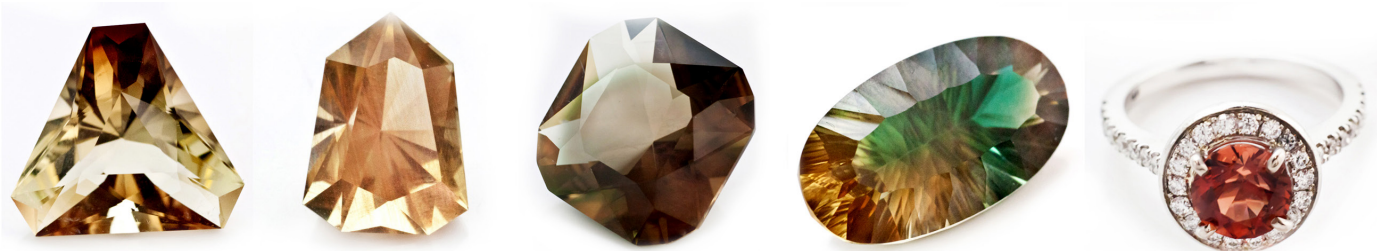
A peculiar feature of this piece are the little iron balls. There are also two spots of something white. While he didn't really pay much attention to this stuff back then, he most closely associates it with the white phosphorous munitions. White phosphorous doesn't get much publicity due to how nasty the stuff is, and the conventions currently restricting it's use, but it is still available in the military's arsenal.

Above: Green Impactite, Sandhills Region, NC, near Fort Bragg. This shot uses some backlighting to show the green translucent color of the piece. 2" x 1¼" x 1¼" (5.08 cm x 3.18 cm x 3.18 cm). Tony Jones photo.



Oregon Sunstone

A Gemstone in the Rough



Jim Landon

Mixed colors and sunstones set in jewelry. Oregon sunstones set in jewelry are quite striking and unique and they facet into beautiful gems. Jenni White photo.

The high desert of south central Oregon has been known for many years as a source of gem grade plagioclase feldspar called sunstone. The sunstone deposits are found in the aptly named Rabbit Basin where sagebrush dominates the land and extreme weather conditions limit mining to a few short months in summer. The lack of rainfall, intense summer heat and geographic isolation

make this destination one that requires significant pre-planning with a bent toward self sufficiency. Dry lightning storms with fierce winds are not uncommon, creating choking dust and sand storms that can flatten tents and rock recreational vehicles.

In many ways the sunstone area and its rough and tumble assembly of miners resembles the



Palagonite "pillows" formed when molten basalt carrying the sunstones flowed into standing water. Miners prefer to dig in these areas because of the softer nature of the rock. Jim Landon photo.



Fee diggers at one of the active sunstone mines may use power tools to break up the hard basalt matrix. Jim Landon photo.

American Rockhound Billy Wayne Mintz

Richard Jacquot

If you have ever spent any time hunting the Western North Carolina mountains for ruby and sapphire, you have likely crossed paths with rockhound Bill Mintz. Born in Haywood County, North Carolina on April 12th, 1943, Bill has hunted minerals for decades. Bill was the first rockhound friend I made after moving to North Carolina in 1987. For several years, I hunted alone or with my son R.J. In 1995, I married Sandy and we started hounding together. I took her to my usual hunting sites, Wood Creek and Chunky Gal. My Aunt Anne told me about the campsite her and my Uncle Floyd had at Lake Chatuge, near Hayesville, NC, and of all the rubies people found walking the lakebed. One day, Sandy and I made a trip to the lake and that's when I first met Bill. Bill had a great influence on my rockhounding and even on the MAGMA club, but more on that later.

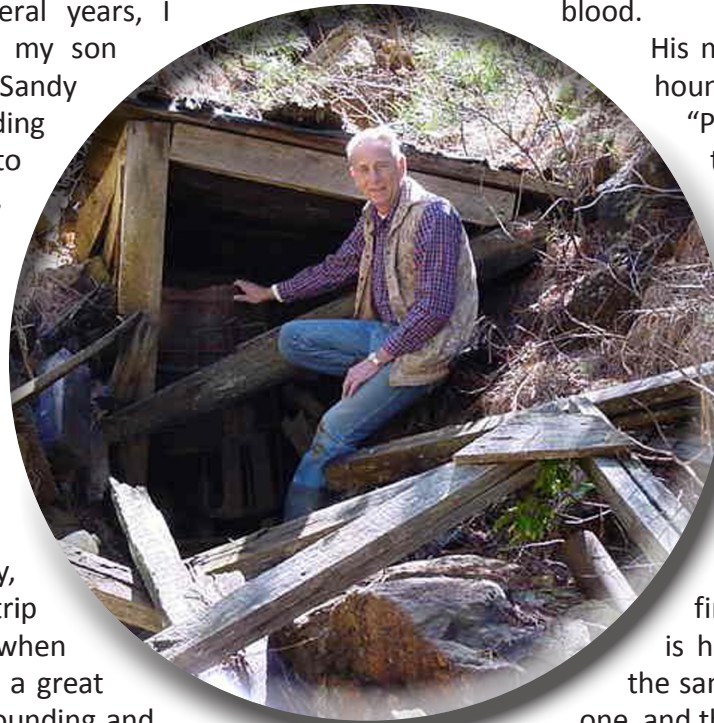
Bill began rockhounding at an early age, his family were mountain people and had a long history of prospecting for gold and gems. Bill's mother used to tell him stories of his grandfather, Nathan Reinhardt, going out for days to hunt gold. The family used to live near what today is the Waynesville water shed. Nathan would go off alone for three or four days, then return with enough gold to buy groceries and other things the family needed. Nathan never told anyone where the gold came from. Bill thinks he may have been hunting near Little Hogback Creek in

Jackson County or maybe Rutherford County. Nathan did take his son Dewey (Bill's uncle) with him on occasion when he was little, but when Dewey got older, he couldn't remember where they had gone, so the site was lost, at least for now. Nathan died in 1922. Bill never got to know his grandfather, but prospecting was in his blood.

His main inspiration for rockhounding came from his uncle "Penny Tom". Tom got this nickname because he was always giving the kids coins to buy candy. Bill said Tom drug him all over the mountains hunting rocks from the time he was 7 or 8 years old. Tom told him "When you're walking, never look up, always look down and you'll find something. If a rock is heavy, compare it to one the same size, keep the heavier one, and the ones with good color."

Thanks to the good advice from "Penny Tom," Bill has found a lot over the years! Tom took Bill to the first place he can remember digging. Located about a mile and a half from where Bill lives today in Haywood County, the site was called Eagles Nest Mountain. At Eagles Nest, they would dig for garnets that ranged from quarter to half dollar in size. Bill said they were pretty garnets and they would sell them at rock shops. He said it wasn't like it is now, back then if you sold a garnet for a dime, that was good money. This was around 1950.

Bill got his rockhounding from his mother's side of the family, grandfather Nathan, uncles



FAVORITE FINDS



Top left: Quartz crystal, construction site, Wake County, NC. 2" x 1" x 0.6" (5 cm x 2.5 cm x 1.5 cm).

Middle left: Quartz crystal with phantoms, Coopers Ridge, Chatham County, NC. 0.79" x 0.39" x 0.28" (2 cm x 1 cm x 0.7 cm).

Top right: Close up of healed quartz crystal, Burgin Quartz Mine, Stanly County, NC.

Middle right: Quartz crystal, Burgin Quartz Mine, Stanly County, NC. 1.18" x 0.47" x 0.39" (3 cm x 1.2 cm x 1 cm).

Bottom right: Quartz crystal, Burgin Quartz Mine, Stanly County, NC. 1.38" x 0.98" x 0.79" (3.5 cm x 2.5 cm x 2 cm).

Scott LaBorde specimens and photos.

