

THE FIRST TEN YEARS OF THE MINERALOGICAL SOCIETY OF AMERICA

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Ten years ago a group of twenty-eight interested in American mineralogy assembled in the Mineralogical Laboratory of Harvard University. This occurred while the Geological Society of America was in session in Boston. The object of the meeting was to discuss the advisability of organizing a society devoted to the advancement of mineralogy, crystallography, and allied sciences. This gathering was the culmination of a movement extending over a period of years to band together those interested in our science into an independent organization. It was thought that a society of this character would stimulate interest and research in mineralogy and crystallography and also tend to give to these sciences the recognition and standing they justly merit.

Accordingly, the formation of the *Mineralogical Society of America* was agreed upon. The constitution and by-laws were adopted, officers were elected for the ensuing year, and responsibility was assumed for publishing the *American Mineralogist* as the Journal of the Society. It was also voted that the lists of charter fellows and members should remain open for one year.

The interest that was at once manifested in the new organization was very gratifying and materially exceeded the hopes and expectations of those most enthusiastic in the movement for an independent society, for at the first annual meeting held in Chicago in 1920 it was reported that the Society had 48 charter fellows and 125 charter members.

During the organization year a very satisfactory plan for affiliation with the Geological Society of America was agreed upon, for it was ever in the minds of the advocates of the new Society to keep in close contact with what for some of us was the parent organization. This hope has been fully realized for the relationship between the two organizations is a very intimate and cordial one, and I believe that it has also been mutually beneficial. The recognition of the president of our Society as a vice-president of the Geological Society of America and the provision for a joint session at the annual meetings at which the retiring president of the Mineralogical Society shall give his presidential address have contributed in no small measure in developing this splendid relationship.

That there has been a continuing and, indeed, a growing interest in the Society is shown by the fact that we have today 114 fellows and 274 members. The mailing list for the *American Mineralogist* now totals 609. This growth in the membership of the Society has been truly remarkable, especially when one considers the large number of organizations in this country devoted to specialized phases of science.

From the very first the annual meetings have been very attractive and have accordingly made a strong appeal. Indeed, for several years the unusual record was maintained of being able to have all papers on the program read. Furthermore, there has been a satisfactory increase in the number of papers presented for reading and in the number of persons attending the various sessions, culminating in a record of 32 papers and a total attendance of 108 for the New York meeting last year.

Reference must be made to the very excellent work of the committees on *Nomenclature and Classification of Minerals* and on the *Preservation of Type Mineralogical Material*. These committees have devoted much time to the problems under consideration, and the carrying out of their recommendations should prove very helpful in the standardizing and unifying of mineralogical practice in America. The reports of these committees have stimulated interest in these phases of our science in other countries and led to the suggestion by Dr. H. S. Washington, in 1925, that efforts be made by the delegates from this Society to the International Geological Congress at Madrid to take steps leading to the formation of a Mineralogical Section of the Congress at which these and other problems might well be discussed. This was done, and it was hoped that some action might be taken at the Congress held during the past summer in South Africa. Unfortunately, however, little progress has been made in this direction. Consequently it has recently been suggested that perhaps through the co-operation of several of the leading mineralogical societies something definite and of real value internationally might be accomplished.

Perhaps the greatest factor in bringing the Society to the attention of the scientists of America and of the world has been the *American Mineralogist*. As is well known, this publication was founded in 1916 through the co-operation of the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society, the New York Mineralogical Society, and the

Mineral Collectors Association and was taken over by our Society when it was organized.

During the ten years under the new auspices the *Mineralogist* has grown greatly in size, from a volume of approximately 200 pages in 1920 and 1921, to one of 500 or more pages in recent years. During this period 485 longer original articles covering 2642 pages have appeared. The number of articles, abstracts, and news items totals 2302, and the ten volumes include 3385 pages. There are also 620 illustrations. When one considers that a great many mineralogical papers have been published in other journals this record of the *Mineralogist* would seem to indicate that there has been a notable increase in research activity during the decade.

From the standpoint of the number and the geographical distribution of the contributors it is of interest to know that in some years there have been over 40 authors who have represented as many as 30 institutions, and five different countries. The editor has succeeded admirably in giving a somewhat international character to the *Mineralogist* and I am sure that he would enthusiastically welcome an increasing number of articles from Canada, England, Germany, and other countries. This wide interest in the *American Mineralogist* as a medium for the publication of the results of mineralogical investigations is very encouraging.

During the first five years of the Society the progress made by our Journal was rather slow. A very real impetus to its development was given, however, in 1925 when the Council approved of the plan of permitting an entire number of the *Mineralogist* to be devoted to the publication of articles from a single institution, provided adequate financial support was guaranteed to pay for the added expense of the increased size of the number. Thus far only four special numbers have been issued. These have been sponsored by two institutions, one number by the University of Michigan and three by Harvard University. It is sincerely hoped that the practice of issuing special numbers will be continued and that more institutions will avail themselves of this plan.

That these enlarged special numbers greatly impressed our constituency in America and abroad there can be no doubt. They contributed materially in establishing the very splendid reputation the Journal now has in scientific circles. These numbers showed very clearly what might be accomplished with adequate financial support. Furthermore, the first two special

numbers which were issued in 1925 undoubtedly did much to convince the late Colonel Washington A. Roebling of the urgent need of an ample endowment for our Journal, for he had keenly sensed the fact that the Society and the Journal were greatly handicapped in their endeavors by a lack of funds.

Accordingly, in February 1926 Colonel Roebling notified our treasurer, Professor A. H. Phillips, that he desired to assist the Society in its endeavors by a gift of \$45,000. While in the past there have been notable gifts of extensive mineral collections to various institutions in the country, never before has so splendid an endowment been established for the encouragement and development of the science of mineralogy through the medium of a society and its journal. When the announcement was made of Colonel Roebling's action, mineralogists in America and abroad freely and gladly expressed their sincere appreciation of his generosity. In making this liberal gift Colonel Roebling contributed in a very large way to the advancement of American mineralogy, for the status of any branch of knowledge is largely determined by the character of its active organizations and current publications.

Since the hope was expressed by Colonel Roebling that all or part of the funds should be devoted to the development and expansion of the American Mineralogist the Society, in formally accepting the gift, pledged itself to carry out the wishes of the donor. Hence, when the income from the Roebling fund became available, the Council authorized the editor of the *Mineralogist* to pursue a more liberal policy in the conduct of the Journal. This had a most gratifying result, for the four volumes published since the Roebling gift have averaged over 450 pages. This average shows an increase of about 200 pages over that of the preceding six volumes. Moreover, the recent volumes contain a much larger number of illustrations.

That the Journal is a distinct credit to our Society is evidenced by the fact that the demand for complete sets became so great that three years ago the Council authorized the reprinting of the first five volumes. These volumes had been out of print for some time. The income from the sales of the reprinted volumes and of complete sets has more than counter-balanced the expenditures involved. While this outcome is financially very gratifying, it is of greater importance to know that complete sets of the Miner-

alogist are now widely distributed and much more accessible to scientists the world over than formerly. In addition, the usability of the Journal has been greatly facilitated by the publication of an author-subject decennial index for the period 1916-1925. The practice of issuing such an index for every ten volumes should be continued. Furthermore, the well established regularity with which the Journal now appears each month is without doubt greatly appreciated by the membership of the Society.

During the period under consideration the Society has been fortunate in the choice of its officers. The fact that there have been but few changes in the offices of the secretary, treasurer, and editor has permitted the development of a continuity of policy which has proven very beneficial. The affairs of the Society have been handled with great care and foresight. Although there has been material expansion in some of the activities of the organization, which added to our expense, the funds have been so efficiently husbanded that they have been substantially increased with the result that our assets now exceed \$50,000. We are greatly indebted to those officers who have guided the Society's affairs so wisely and who have ever sought to give it the standing among the scientific organizations of the country that it so justly deserves. Thus, it is a source of great satisfaction to know that we have been accorded representation on the National Research Council.

The election by the Council, in 1925, of Professor Edward Salisbury Dana, of Yale University, as honorary president for life met with the hearty and enthusiastic approval of the Society. By this very fitting recognition of the achievements of a leader in our science not only was a most distinguished name in American mineralogy more closely linked with the organization but the Society also honored itself. Likewise, the policy adopted by the Council in 1926 of electing from time to time as honorary fellows for life men in other countries who have been conspicuous in the advancement of mineralogy is strongly to be commended. Thus far, nine eminent mineralogists representing five countries have been honored, of whom one, Professor Paul H. von Groth, has since died.

In ten years the Society has achieved much, in fact, much more than the most enthusiastic advocate of its organization had dreamed or hoped for. Through the annual meetings opportunities have been given for the presentation of papers and the ex-

change of ideas and opinions, not previously possible. Then, too, these meetings have permitted workers in our field in the United States and Canada to come into personal contact with the result that a splendid *esprit de corps* has been developed. Furthermore, thanks to the Roebling endowment, the Society is now assured in the American Mineralogist of an adequate outlet for the rather prompt publication of papers. This is of great value since a decade or two ago it was often necessary to send them abroad in order to secure their early publication.

Although the success of the Society has been noteworthy, there is still much that may be accomplished. Among other things, it is sincerely hoped that during the next decade some of our members or friends will emulate Colonel Roebling by contributing funds to assist the Society in some of its other objectives, for example, in the more direct encouragement of research. It would be very helpful if the Society had the means to establish awards, either medals or money prizes, to be given to outstanding investigators in America or abroad, or to the authors of contributions adjudged as noteworthy. To be the recipient of a medal or prize of the Mineralogical Society of America would soon be recognized as a signal honor, one that would be greatly coveted. It would also be well if it were possible for the Society to make grants from time to time of varying amounts of money to assist in the prosecution of problems in our field, deemed of large importance. Furthermore, to stimulate interest in mineralogy on the part of young investigators the establishment of competitive fellowships would be of great service. These are a few suggestions as to the need for additional funds and how they might be used to advantage in furthering our science. Other needs undoubtedly will occur to many of you.

While today we rejoice that the achievements of the Society have been so significant during the first ten years, we are at the same time confident that the next decade will show equal or even greater accomplishments. This will be readily possible if we maintain the same enthusiastic interest in the science and the splendid loyalty and spirit of co-operation that have been so marked since our organization.