

THE LATE GEORGE SMITH.

The late George Smith (1861-1944) was an inveterate collector, and fortunately for the mineralogy of New South Wales his particular forte was the collecting of minerals. In addition, he was a keen observer and most interested in the occurrence, paragenesis, and origin of the minerals he collected.

A native of South Australia, he commenced his career in 1877 with the English and Australian Copper Mining Company, first at Port Adelaide, then as Manager at Waratah, New South Wales, and finally as ore buyer and assayer at Broken Hill in the same State.

In 1890 he resigned his position to become Assistant Manager of the Australian Broken Hill Consols Mine, and four years later he rose to the position of General Manager. In 1898 he left Broken Hill to become Mining Manager for the Chillagoe Mines and Railway Company, Queensland. In 1904 he was appointed as Inspector of Mines, Department of Mines, New South Wales, a position he held until his retirement in 1925.

Throughout his whole life he had always been in a position to indulge to the full his love of mineral collecting. Perhaps his most important additions to our knowledge of Australian mineralogy were made during the years he spent in Broken Hill. First as ore buyer and assayer he had ready access to the mines in the outlying districts, then as Manager of the Broken Hill Consols Mine he had the opportunity of close study of the minerals of that mine as well as inspecting all interesting mineral occurrences in the mines of the Main Broken Hill Lode.

In 1931, Smith prepared a list of minerals found at Broken Hill, giving the place and approximate date of their discovery and the name of the person who first determined them. From that list it would appear that he himself was responsible for making the first determination of the following minerals:

Almandite	Near Pinnacles	1888
Argentite	Consols Mine	1891
Arsenopyrite (cobaltiferous)	Consols Mine	1891
Atacamite	Umberumberka East Mine	1888-9
Aurichalcite	Consols Mine	1890
Barite	Atlas Mine, Purnamoota	1890
Bournonite	Consols Mine	1890-1
Brochantite	British Mine	1888
Chalcotrichite	South Mine	1888-9
Chenevexite	Consols Mine	1890
Chrysocolla	Proprietary Mine	1887
Cobaltite	Consols Mine	1891
Covellite	East Consols Mine	1892
Cuproplumbite	Do.	1892
Dyscrasite	Consols Mine	1890
Erythrite	Do.	1890-1
Harrisite	Proprietary Mine	1897
Iodembolite	Do.	1892
Jamesonite	Lady Carrington Mine, Apollyon Valley	1888
Kermesite	Consols Mine	1895
Melaconite	South Mine	1888-9
Molybdenite	Consols Mine	1890
Phosgenite	Do.	1890
Proustite	(?)	1890
Pyrrargyrite	Consols Mine	1890
Rhodonite	Proprietary Mine	1889
Smaltite	Consols Mine	1890-1
Spessartite	British Mine	1888
Stephanite	Consols Mine	1893
Sternbergite	Do.	1892
Stibnite	Do.	1892
Stilpnomelane	Do.	1895
Sulphur	Do.	1890
Tetrahedrite	War Dance Extended Mine, Purnamoota	1888
Tremolite (in galena)	Near Silverton	1888
Willyamite	Consols Mine	1893
Wollastonite	East Consols Mine	1892-3

This list by no means tells the whole story, because had it not been for the keenness of Smith and his associates many of the rarer minerals of Broken Hill, such as raspite and miersite, would probably never have been known.

There seems to have been a comparative lull in his collecting during his association with the Chillagoe Mines. However, during his twenty-one years as Inspector of Mines, he made very extensive collections, particularly in the New England district of New South Wales. Further, he has added a great deal to our knowledge of the mineralogy of this district, particularly in regard to the tin and wolfram deposits. Many very beautiful and rare specimens would have been lost but for his assiduity. He was really an artist as well as a collector, and seems to have had an uncanny ability of detecting symmetry and composition in a mineral specimen. His best specimens were kept in four upright cases, but they only remained there until he secured a better specimen, when they were relegated to his cabinet of drawers to be exchanged for some specimen that he really wanted.

The late G. W. Card, formerly Curator of the Mining and Geological Museum, Sydney, said that on Mr. Smith's retirement he started to make a rough list of the acquisitions directly due to him but gave up the job as "too laborious".

Dr. W. F. Foshag writing from the Smithsonian Institution, Washington, U.S.A., to Mr. Smith, said: "In arranging the collection [of Colonel Roebing—T.H.-S.] I have often remarked upon the fine specimens he received from you and I believe his Broken Hill material is unsurpassed in this country." Colonel Roebing was America's number one collector and it was but natural that he and Mr. Smith should have enjoyed many years of friendship, though they never actually met.

The collection of the Australian Museum contains all his most precious specimens, those with which he would not part until he could no longer take an active part in mineral collecting. It was then, and only then, that he saw them safely housed in the State collection, where they will always remain a tribute to his artistry, ability, and enthusiasm.

Of the many private collections I have seen, it is surprising how many contain one or more labels with the familiar handwriting of George Smith. In many collections those were the only labels. Incidentally Mr. Smith's thoroughness in numbering each specimen, entering it into a register with full particulars, as well as putting a label with the specimen, might, indeed should, be copied by every mineral collector. His register ran into two volumes which are now housed in the library of the Australian Museum.

In 1942 he was awarded the Insignia of the Legion of Honour of the American Institute of Mining and Metallurgical Engineers after fifty years' continuous membership.

It is most fitting that his technical library, including his own works, has gone back to Broken Hill. Presented to the Zinc Corporation Limited, it occupies a proud place in their library.

While he was not a prolific writer, no student of Australian mineralogy is properly equipped without access to his papers, of which a bibliography is appended.

In his younger days he was a cricket enthusiast, specializing in bowling. Among his papers is a score sheet of a cricket match between Woodville and S.W.C.C. dated 14 November, 1882, in which it is recorded that he took eight wickets for thirteen runs including the coveted "hat trick".

He also collected autographs and postage stamps. During the First World War he was very proud of the fact that he had secured the autographs of all the leading figures on the side of the Allies in that great struggle.

In spite of his many years of constant association with the miner and fossicker, he always maintained a courtly old world manner, and though intolerant of carelessness, particularly in specimen labels, he was always ready to help the beginner both from his store of knowledge and his store of specimens.

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In addition to the above papers he contributed to the discussions on papers appearing in the *Transactions of the Australasian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy* and the *Transactions of the American Institute of Mining Engineers*.

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