



Arizona Rocks 37

Text and photos by Ray Grant

I am off traveling so the next few Arizona Rocks will be modified from the Arizona Mineral Collector column in the Mineralogical Society of Arizona newsletter. This one is about some of the names of minerals first found in Arizona.

All new mineral names must be approved by the Commission on New Minerals and Mineral Names of the International Mineralogical Association. The Commission has a rigorous set of criteria, which must be met before a new mineral is accepted. The locality where a mineral is first found is called the type locality. Arizona has 76 minerals that were first found here. The person who describes the new mineral gets the right to pick the name. For the type minerals of Arizona, 50 are named after people, 18 are named for the locality where they were found, two are named for their chemistry, three are named for a physical property, and three are a combination of two of the above.

Here are some examples of the origins of some of the Arizona type mineral names. The ones named after localities are mostly after cities, counties, or the mines where they were found. Wickenburgite, ajoite, and flagstaffite are examples of minerals named after cities. Maricopaite, yavapaiite, pinalite, gilalite, and coconinoite are named after the counties in which they were found. Grandreefite, antlerite, and coronadite were named after mines. Wupatkiite, one of Arizona's newer minerals was named after the National Monument.

Most of the people who had minerals named after them were geologists, mineralogists, mineral collectors, or miners. Minerals such as andersonite, artroite, bermanite, bidauxite, coesite, graemite, henryite, junitoite, luddenite, ruizite, shannonite, were named after these people. Apachite, papagoite, and navajoite were named after Indian tribes. Kinoite was named for the historical Padre Kino.

Chalcoalumite and cuprotungstite are named for their chemistry and the names hemihedrite, cryptomelane and paramelaconite are related to something about their physical appearance. Calcioaravaipaite is named for chemistry and the locality in the Aravaipa mining district.



Maricopaite named for Maricopa County, it was first found at the Moon Anchor Mine, near Tonopah, Maricopa County (Ron Gibbs photograph).



This specimen contains four type minerals from the Grand Reef Mine, Graham County. Aravaipaite, named after the Aravaipa mining district, laurelite named for Laurel Canyon, grandreefite named for the mine, and pseudograndreefite named because it looked like the grandreefite but was a different mineral (Les Presmyk specimen and photograph).