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Text and photos by Ray Grant

Today, Bisbee, Arizona is a well-known tourist destination, but it is also the Arizona locality with the largest number of different minerals. It has 325 verified mineral species. Dick Graeme has made it his life's work to collect information on Bisbee's minerals and is responsible for the list. There is only one place in the United States with more mineral species. That is the Franklin-Sterling Hill area in New Jersey that has over 360 minerals. In the entire world there are probably only 7 or 8 localities that have produced more than 300 different minerals. Bisbee is also the type locality for seven minerals. (The type locality of a mineral is the locality where the original material came from for the formal definition of the mineral species. Web: *Mindat*). They are chalcocumite, graemite, henryite, kidcreekite, paramelaconite, shattuckite, and spangolite. The most well known minerals from Bisbee are azurite and malachite (copper carbonates) and thousands of specimens have been preserved. Museum all over the world have these minerals from Bisbee on display.

When we talk about Bisbee as a locality what do we mean? This is an area about 2 by 3 miles and with a depth about 4000 feet; or roughly 4.6 cubic miles. In these 4.6 cubic miles, are two open pits and almost 2000 miles of underground workings, quite a distance to walk to look for minerals? Between 1877 and 1975, when mining stopped, 7.7 billion pounds of copper were mined along with 355 million pounds of zinc, 324 million pounds of lead, 100 million ounces of silver, and 2.7 million ounces of gold.

There were more than 30 separate mines in this area. (This information is from the Arizona III issue of the Mineralogical Record on Bisbee, Arizona by Dick Graeme. It is volume 12, no. 5, September-October 1981, and I recommend it as the best reference on the mineralogy of the Bisbee area, there is also a 2015 update on Bisbee by Dick Graeme in the Mineralogical Record, volume 46, No. 4.)

If you visit Bisbee be sure to take the Copper Queen Mine tour, it gives you a real feeling for what it was like in Bisbee during the mining period. The Mining and Historical Museum is also well worth a visit with great exhibits related to the mining and minerals of Bisbee.



Graeme family exhibit of Bisbee minerals at Tucson Show in February 2016, theme was blue minerals.



Part of the Graeme Bisbee exhibit, at Tucson Show in February 2016, theme was blue minerals.