Letters from My Mentor #10, by Anthony J. Albini

April 10, 1985

Dear Tony,

How’s the collecting, this April? You must have come up with some new items of note. I’ve done almost none, as yet, and wonder if I’ll really get started. I did revisit the Case beryl prospect and obtained a few nice specimens of bismuthinite.

John Gillespie finally repaired his spectrograph, and he sent results on samples I’d submitted last autumn. He’s one of the best correspondents I’ve ever had, and it’s coast-to coast.

I’d heard the amblydonite or montebrasite containing Na phosphates, at Strickland, is actually natromontebrasite, a rare species. I chipped off a fragment from a brazilianite specimen. Sure enough, major Na, possibly no Li. So it is natromontebrasite. [in author’s collection, analyzed by Mary Mrose, AJA]

A few years ago, I found big chunks of very dark brown massive tourmaline, on one of the old dumps. John found no Li in the tourmaline, though it might have been present (interference, maybe). The tourmaline is high in Mg, with significant Fe, Ca, and Na. He couldn’t determine the Ca/Na ratio, so I don’t know if it’s dravite or uvite.

The golden mica is very intriguing. I expected phlogopite. But it proved to be, essentially, a Na-Mg-Li mica. It could be the Na analogue of taeniolite, or perhaps the Na-Mg analogue of zinnwaldite (neither yet described). I don’t have an x-ray pattern, unfortunately.

My supposed pyroxmangite from the Jail Hill quarry (deeper pink than the bustamite found there) looks good. Mn is the only cation. And my supposed johannsenite from there had major Mn and Ca, but also a lot of Mg. Probably manganesian johannsenite.

I’ve had no chance to follow up on that UConn opportunity. I may never do it. [he never did, AJA] The people there would all be strangers to me, unlike the gang at Wesleyan. And I can’t afford to be driving all over the landscape in an old car. [I do, AJA!] Russ says he’s got a lady, a professional, interested in photographing Wesleyan’s minerals.

Cordially,

Dick