Letters from My Mentor, Richard Schooner, #9 by Anthony J. Albini

February 12, 1985

Dear Tony,

How did we overlook cassiterite, at the Hollister pegmatites, for so long? How did everyone overlook microlite, at the Simpson quarry, ditto? It reinforces what I’ve said about revisiting localities when we’re more observant or knowledgeable collectors

There’s no doubt about the Husband quarry bismuthinite: typical gray crystals, mostly pseudomorphed to bright green bismutite. I can assume that you stopped short of the bismuth zone, with so much good material in the molybdenum zone. After all, Bi and Mo are often associated. My specimens show little (very very little) molybdenite.

In the latest Rocks & Minerals, pages 32 and 33, David Shannon tells how to mix heavy liquids, 2.0 to 3.33, using tetrabromoethane and methylene iodide. [Do not attempt this, very poisonous, AJA]. Sounds feasible, if one could easily obtain these reagents [Not today, AJA]. I wouldn’t know where to look for chemicals, in small quantities. No doubt, heavy liquids and a blowpipe set [do not attempt this, AJA, poisonous fumes possible] would identify most [some, AJA] minerals.

In that same issue, I dispute Bob Jones’ contention that dioptase forms only under arid conditions. The Congo basin shouldn’t be particularly arid; neither is Germany (which he lists); nor in the powerline leading up to the Case quarries. I’ve rechecked the x-ray chart of the latter, and the three principal peaks are there, plain as anything, right on the button. In the thin crusts, dioptase could easily be mistaken for malachite.

The latest Mineralogical Record is devoted almost exclusively to Nevada.

I sent some of those Strickland Quarry phosphates to Paul Moore. Maybe he’ll just send them back, who knows? The triplite I have is in small pieces, very garnet-like, with a conchoidal fracture, and only traces of cleavage: typical triplite [now in my collection, AJA]. I don’t know if it’s the same as the reddish mineral intergrown with lithiophilite. Remember that hureaulite from there was early analyzed by J. F. Schairer. [was heaureaulite, AJA]

The ludlamite(?) I once noted at the Swanson mine was an isolated apple-green cleavage in feldspar, not associated with anything else.

Among minerals I’ve recently spotted, very sparingly, on State mine “oldies”, are (I believe) wolfeite, graftonite and childrenite. [Dick called this spot “little Palermo”, like the Palermo #1 mine in NH, it is emplaced at the end of the Littleton Formation, AJA] I once had a specimen showing a greenish globular mineral (crandallite, perhaps?) in siderite. By globular, I mean globular OOO…rounder than I’ve drawn them!

Cordially, Dick