Letters from my Mentor #7 by Anthony J. Albini

January 1, 1985

Dear Tony,

How’s this for a good start on New Year’s Day! From Wendell E. Wilson, Editor and Publisher of the Mineralogical Record: “I would like to obtain an article on the Strickland quarry. After asking around a bit I have learned that you would be the ideal person to write such an article. Do you think you might be interested? Bill Henderson and Marcelle Weber and I would be happy to provide whatever photographic assistance you may require. Length would be up to you, but a thorough treatment would be preferred. Let me know what you think.”

Note that he wants a “thorough treatment”. That sounds very good.

Now, if we could clean up some of the more important unknowns, especially phosphates, the situation would be terrific. I think the geological part of the article would make passing reference to other similar deposits of the Middletown District…to whet the general appetite for another article, or series, on the whole area. This would be a fine start. I’m not going to delay very long.

Incidentally, I didn’t know what to make of those tiny black crystals in buff [feld, AJA] spar that you let me borrow. Microlite, possibly…though I’ve never seen aggregates of cavity microlites in that replacement unit. I doubt cassiterite because they look like regular isometric octahedrons, not tetragonal ones. I personally, as you know, split a lot of that cavity-lining rock, since it furnishes galena, sphalerite, rhodochrosite, etc. I didn’t see any way to remove enough for an x-ray test without defacing the specimen. I guess I neglected to enclose my comments on the samples, when I hastily thought of putting the box in the car.

Any more phosphates? It’s sort of odd that the phosphates we used to find on the front of the Schoonmaker dump, long ago, contained dickinsonite, vivianite, rhodochrosite, etc. This material is different: no vivianite, no strengite, etc. I wonder if the imminence of a Strickland quarry article might not get results with identifying such things, since there’s always been a strong relationship between the Mineralogical Record and the Smithsonian? Pete J. Dunn is on the Editorial Board. Maybe Mr. F [Jim Ferriaolo, AJA] would be willing. We need good accurate x-ray tests by someone with access to an up-to-date card file (which Wesleyan, alas, doesn’t have…too expensive).

I’m just about ready to send a few more samples to John Gillespie.

Is there supposed to be a winter around here somewhere? On Saturday, some friends and I had a picnic on the beach, Camp-style, while their little girl and boy “skated” on the watery ice, in just their shoes. The little girl, going on 9, I should add, is a very avid mineralogist; even has a copy of the Audubon Society guide and her own tumbler! A lovely child, and very intelligent…as so many young children are before the school system and their peers ruin them.

Cordially, Dick

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