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DEVOTED TO  
MINERALOGY  
GEMOLOGY AND  
THE COLLECTOR

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**JAMES F. MORTON**

James F. Morton, curator of the Paterson, New Jersey Museum, and one of the leading mineralogists in the country, was born in Littleton, Massachusetts, October 18th, 1870. Mr. Morton, a graduate of Harvard University, has a long and well known record as a writer, lecturer and a leader in the American Association of Museums. He is a member of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, as well as practically all scientific bodies connected with the study of mineralogy, which is his paramount interest.

During the past eight years Mr. Morton

has built up the mineral collections of the Paterson Museum, to a point where national attention is being attracted to same. The Paterson Museum collections can boast the finest and largest collection of New Jersey minerals in existence. Mr. Morton is especially active in obtaining a representative collection of minerals from every state in the Union, so that museum visitors may see what each section of the United States produces. He is a tireless collector when in the field and has personally visited nearly all notable localities from North Carolina to Nova Scotia.

## OREGON AGATE AND MINERAL SOCIETY PUBLIC MEETINGS

1st and 3rd Friday, Portland Chamber of Commerce  
S. W. 5th Ave. and Taylor St., 8:00 P. M.

**March 2nd**

Extemporaneous Mineral  
Talks from the Floor  
By the Members

**March 16th**

Mrs. W. C. Adams will give a Lecture  
on Old Indian Lore and Display  
Indian Relics

## THE MUSEUM AND THE COLLECTOR

JAMES F. MORTON

Curator, Paterson, New Jersey Museum.

It is recognized at the start that mineral collectors are of various types, and that many of them graduate from one class to another, beginning as miscellaneous pickers-up of attractive specimens, and ending as ardent students of Mineralogy. Not all of them, however, fully realize how large a part the local museums are able to play in connection with their common interest.

There are numerous types of museums, a majority falling into one of the four main classes indicated by the words science, art, history and industry. Many museums are of a mixed nature, covering in part two or more of these fields. The main classes are again subdivided into all kinds of specialized types. The mineral collector, as a rule, will find most points of contact with museums which are wholly or principally devoted to the natural sciences. Of these, there ought to be one in every community in the country. I speak advisedly and without exaggeration. In even the tiniest settlement, there should be a place, even if only a small alcove or window in a schoolhouse or store, where there should be at least the germ of an appeal to visual education. The children should be encouraged to bring natural objects from the woods, to be as well classified and marked as local knowledge makes possible; and townfolk should add from time to time objects of curiosity obtained in travels or accumulated from older days in the family. Crude and apparently insignificant as such a beginning might be, it would have incalculable moral and psychological value, as lifting the mind beyond the daily routine to thought of other phases of existence; and here and there in some of the young gazers would be born the spirit of research, with infinite future possibilities.

But we have just now to deal with museums which already exist. There are two pairs of considerations to be borne in mind in these institutions. First, they must co-ordinate appeal to the casual public, who are to be lured to a greater love of nature and a better orientation of attention toward it, with facilities to the serious student and investigator, as well as cooperation with schools and other community educational and civic agencies. Second, they must co-ordinate a general and well-balanced covering of their entire field with at least one specialty in which they can attain particular excellence. In general, the specialty should be of a distinctly local nature, as stimulating civic spirit and encouraging direct observation of accessible aspects of the great world of natural wonders. Thus, a museum located in a coast city may properly specialize in sea shells and marine products in general, try-

ing to excel all others in the types characteristic of the locality. Similarly, a museum in a forest region may be expected to form the great center for the observation and study of the animal and botanical species of the particular habitat. Likewise, location points out the importance of specializing in fossils for certain museums and in Indian and other aboriginal relics for still others. In fact, no two museums in the country should have quite the same relative emphasis on their various groups of exhibits, even when covering substantially the same field.

Following the foregoing principles, the Paterson Museum has made Mineralogy its supreme specialty, though with close attention to as good and well-balanced collections as possible in all the other branches of natural science. This is because Paterson is situated in a district with a hinterland of woods and mountains of nearly homogenous nature and characterized by similar flora and fauna over a habitat region of hundreds of square miles; and larger museums in New York City and elsewhere in the region amply cover this field. Hence it is proper for the Paterson Museum to show these examples in a more generalized way, and to center more closely on the rich deposits of minerals right at home and also those of the ultra-famous locality of Franklin, only thirty miles away, and make itself the great source of knowledge regarding them for the public. To do this adequately, it must specialize in minerals in general, showing the unique characteristics of those of its own region by contrast with the equal but different beauty and interest of those from other districts.

While only a limited number of other museums specialize or ought, under local conditions, to specialize as intensively in minerals as does the Paterson Museum, in all of them Mineralogy should be given a more important place than is sometimes done. Here is where the collector comes in. In no field it is less possible for the isolated person to be sufficient to himself. The collector has a limited range of gathering specimens, unless he is very wealthy, and chooses to build up his collection mainly by purchase. He can collect within his own area, and take occasional trips elsewhere. To do more, outside of direct buying, he must enter into relations with other collectors and institutions, and exchange material. Nor can he learn all he wants to know from books. The forms and colors of minerals present such infinite variety that the identification of specimens is a constant problem. Here the museum must be one of his best

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**THE MUSEUM AND THE COLLECTOR**

(Continued from Page 3)

reliances. With its more complete and balanced collections, he can see where his own types fit in. The services of the museum staff are freely at his disposal for identifying specimens and explaining unusual appearances. He has the opportunity of seeing the minerals from all parts of the world in all their beauty, and of learning where different sorts may be found. Meanwhile, the museum is interesting many other persons in minerals, and building up a new generation of collectors; and in this field it is most decidedly true that "the more, the merrier." Through the research and general services of the museum to mineralogy, every collector is eventually benefited.

On the other hand, the museum is made more efficient and hence more useful to the collector by being strengthened in its equipment for service. The collector who is generous in bringing the largest and best specimens to the museum, and in seeing that it always receives as fine examples as possible of new and unusual types turned up in his collecting, is helping himself as much as others. What comes to the museum, is for everybody and for the whole future. Whatever strengthens Mineralogy, reacts in favor of every collector in the country, as it enlarges the whole group, and thus brings greater material opportunities in his field to every individual. The museums are the great clearing-houses of fundamental service to the common interest. So the collector who co-operates actively and heartily not only with his own local museum, but with museums anywhere in the country that are giving special attention to Mineralogy, is even in a selfish way preparing superior advantages for himself; and from a higher and broader standpoint he is doing his part in creating a more glorious future for this great science, whether in its aspects as a subject for enlargement of human knowledge, for the closer acquaintance with the wonders of nature, for greater familiarity with and appreciation of infinitely varied beauty, or for the delights afforded by the most fascinating of all wholesome and inspiring hobbies.

The secretary is in receipt of an interesting letter from a member "incarcerated" in the interior of Africa. This member in renewing his membership sends in dues for three years, with the notation that he does not wish to miss a single copy of the "Oregon Mineralogist." This is one of the many communications which are being received from foreign countries.