

Micromounters Hall of Fame

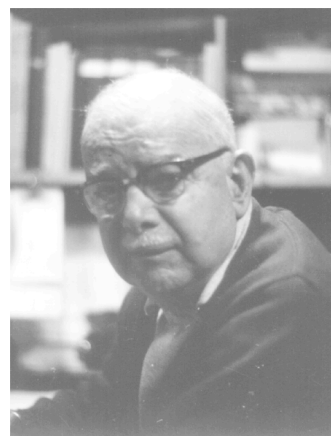
William C. Oke

1883-1964

“Old Timer” Inducted in 1989

William C. (Bill) Oke emigrated to the United States from Australia in 1914. After U. S. Army service and a time in upstate New York he moved to Los Angeles in 1936.

Mineralogy became his hobby and he assisted in the Geology Division of the California Institute of Technology where in 1951 he was named curator of minerals. Shortly thereafter he donated his collection, consisting of 3,000 carefully labeled and cataloged specimens of 1,117 minerals, to the Institute. His work as curator continued until his death.



Microminerals became a major interest and he started a study group of five or six collectors who met at each other's homes. Originally known as the Micromount Society of Los Angeles, the growing micromount group in 1976 became the Southern California Micro-Mineralogists.

Bill discovered a mineral at the Rock Island dam, Washington, and later co-authored a paper published in the American Mineralogist describing the new mineral, paulingite.

He regularly served as a mineral display judge at mineral shows. A judge for years at the California Federation of Mineralogical Society shows, he helped promote an interest in micromounting which became a competitive display category.

He developed special micromounting techniques such as the use of small plastic cells to house unstable minerals. He also built small typesetting printing presses for labels for micromount boxes. One of these presses is with John Ebner's historical micromount display. His micromount collection of over 7,000 mounts, equal in quality and workmanship to that of other noted micromounters, is owned by Dr. George Tunnel.