

Micromounters Hall of Fame

Lazard Cahn

1865-1940

“Old Timer” Inducted in 1982

As a young man living in Colorado Springs, Cahn developed an interest in minerals. Subsequently he studied mineralogy at American universities, and crystallography under Dr. Victor Goldschmidt at Heidelberg. Beginning about 1896, he dealt in minerals, traveling in both North America and Europe.



His interest in crystallized specimens led to their study with the binocular microscope. One result was the discovery of minute colorless crystals from Franklin, New Jersey, which were later named cahnite in his honor.

About 1920, he became closely associated with Clarence Bement of Philadelphia, an active micromount collector. He supplied Bement with many specimens. Also at this time, George Fiss taught him how to mount micro-specimens to show them off to the greatest advantage. From these associations, an interest in micromineralogy arose which continued for the rest of his life.

His study of microminerals led to important contributions to crystallographic knowledge, including the cataloging of over 70 combinations of oriented overgrowths.

About 1933, in semi-weekly sessions he began to instruct science teachers, professional men and students in the study of minerals under the microscope. To each of them, he gave hundreds of micromounts and thereby stimulated an enthusiasm which led to their adding hundreds more to their collections.

As of 1940, nine important micromount collections existed due to his efforts. His own collection numbered over 3,700 specimens representing 685 species. No one better exemplifies the micromounter tradition of sharing than does Lazard Cahn. Upon the death of the current holder, his collection will go to Yale University.