

MICROMOUNTERS OF NEW ENGLAND

NORTHEAST MEETING
Saturday, May 10, 1997

4-H Conference Center
Ashland, Massachusetts

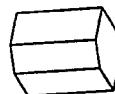
Program:

9:00 Registration and Informal Session
12:00 Lunch
1:00 Presentation:

Mineralogy of the Saint-Amable Sill,
Varenes and Saint-Amable, Québec
by
Laszlo Horvath



2:00 Doorprize drawings
4:00 Departure



President—James Clark Vice-President—Michael Kieron
Secretary—Patricia Barker Treasurer—Janet Cares

Newsletter Editor—Mike Swanson

Additional Information —————

Mrs. Janet Cares, 18 Singletary Lane, Sudbury, Massachusetts, 01776, (508) 443-9180

GUEST SPEAKER:

Laszlo (Les) Horvath
594 Main Street
Hudson, Quebec
Canada J0P 1H0

Les was born in Hungary where he received his early education. In 1957 he emigrated to Canada where he furthered his education and became a Canadian citizen in 1963. He began his career as a metallurgist, but advanced to a management position from which he recently retired.

Les became interested in minerals in 1971, and has since collected extensively in the Montreal area with his Swiss-born wife, Elsa Pfenninger-Horvath. They now have one of the largest systematic collections of Mont St-Hilaire in the area, and were the first to find many of the species new to that locality.

In 1990 the *Mineralogical Record* published an entire issue devoted to Mont St-Hilaire, which has become indispensable to collectors. The feature article, "The Mineralogy of Mont St-Hilaire" by Robert Gault and Laszlo Horvath won the Friends of Mineralogy award for the best paper published in that journal in 1990. This award earned for the authors a certificate of merit and a contribution of \$200 to the *Mineralogical Record* in their name. An update is now in preparation for publication in the near future.

By concentrating on their local area, the Horvaths have accumulated one of the largest collections of Francon minerals, and perhaps the largest collection of the Saint-Amable sill minerals in private hands, most self-collected. A comprehensive locality description, bearing the same title as that of today's presentation will soon appear in the *Mineralogical Record*.

The Horvath collection is not exclusively Canadian, but world-wide, with emphasis on localities having mineralogies similar to Mont St-Hilaire. A large library of mineral-related books, periodicals, and computer databases accompanies the collection. Although Les does not consider himself a micromounter, a large number of specimens, particularly rare species, necessarily fall in that category.

The Horvath home is conveniently located within a short distance from both Montreal and Ottawa, overlooking a large lake formed by a widening of the Ottawa River as it enters Quebec. Here, besides his work with minerals, Les pursues other hobbies such as collecting miniature books, listening to classical music, and enjoying gourmet food and wine. In addition to sharing some of her husband's hobbies, Elsa beautifies the landscape with her flower gardening.

Recently approved by the IMA, but as yet unpublished, is a new mineral from Mont St-Hilaire to be named horvathite for Les and Elsa.

The above biographical sketch is based in large part on information found in the Friends of Mineralogy column by Marcelle Weber in the Mineralogical Record, July/August, 1991, and supplemented by personal conversations with Les, Elsa, and their friends. The name horvathite is used with the permission of Joel Grice, co-author with George Chao of the forthcoming description.

Cover illustration: VARENNESITE

The Saint-Amable sill and the Demix-Varennes quarry.

This information was written by our speaker, Les Horvath, to complement his presentation, which in turn is a condensation of a paper soon to be published, as noted in the reference given under his name with co-authors.

Location

The Saint-Amable sill is located between the towns of Varennes and Saint-Amable, in Verchères County Québec approximately 20 km ENE of Montréal, and 7 km east of the Saint Lawrence River. It forms part of an extensive low plateau, or butte, which rises an average of 20–25 meters above the surrounding countryside. The Demix-Varennes quarry, the main mineral collecting site, and three small, presently inactive quarries, Bau-Val Nos. 1, 2, and 3, are located at the north-western edge of the butte, approximately 4.5 km from the centre of the town of Saint-Amable, and 6 km from Varennes. At its current state of development, approximately 60% of the Demix quarry lies within the municipal limits of Varennes, and 40% within Saint-Amable. Most of the quarrying in recent years has taken place in the Saint-Amable end.

Geology

The Saint-Amable sill is genetically related to the Monteregian alkaline rock province of Lower Cretaceous age, which includes the Monteregian Hills. The Saint-Amable sill is the most extensive and the thickest known Monteregian sill. It is part of a butte, which was probably formed as a result of the resistance of the sill to glacial abrasion and other erosion. The sill lies just below a thin overburden of glacial till and occupies an area of at least 8–9 km², based on known surface outcrops and quarry exposures. It may be larger in total area, but it has not been fully mapped. The sill overlies black shale, interbedded with thin layers of sandstone of the Lorraine Group of the Upper Ordovician period. Its upper surface is an erosional surface, and only its lower contact can be seen. Sill thickness varies from about 3 to 24 meters. The sill rock is a dense, dark gray, fine-grained nepheline syenite and contains many mineralized cavities and seams. These are the source of the well crystallized mainly micro mineral specimens of interest to collectors.

References

- GAULT, R.A., and HORVÁTH, L., (1993) Preliminary report on the mineralogy of the Saint-Amable sill, Varennes, Quebec. *Program with abstracts, 20th Rochester Mineralogical Symposium, April 1993*, 8–9 Abstracted in *Rocks and Minerals*, **69**, 116, (1994)
- GRICE, J.E., and GAULT, R.A. (1995) Varennesite, a new species of hydrated Na-Mn silicate with a unique monophyllosilicate structure. *Canadian Mineralogist*, **33**, 1073–1081, Abstract in *Mineralogical Record*, **27**:306 (1996)
- HORVÁTH, L., PFENNINGER-HORVÁTH, E., GAULT, R.A. and TARASSOFF, P. (1997 in press) Mineralogy of the saint-amable sill, Varennes and Saint-Amable, Québec, Canada. *Mineralogical Record*,

THANKS—are due to many people for their help in making this meeting a success. It would be impossible to list everyone who contributed, so only those responsible for the various aspects are named here. Others will be credited in the Newsletter.

Margaret Stewart—Registrar

Edna Lerer—Sales and door prizes

Steve Cares—Specimen giveaways

Marilyn Dodge—Donor of framed mineral illustrations for drawing

Pat Barker and the Stewarts—Refreshments

Janet Cares—Souvenir Program Editor

Shelley Monaghan—Souvenir Program typing .

All others who contributed time, specimens, food, or talent

We would like to dedicate this program to the memory of Gerarda Johanna Lindeyer who passed away on April 8, 1997. “Gerry” as she was known to her friends, was, as president of the Micromounters of New England, in large part responsible for the arrangements for our first Northeast Meeting in 1982. Her talent for organization was enhanced by her sunny disposition and love of Mont. St-Hilaire minerals. We extend our deep sympathy to her husband, William P. (“Bill”) Lindeyer, who was also a member of MMNE. He resides at 24 Laurel Drive, Granby, CT 06035.