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Memorial of Walter Frederick Hunt September 6, 1882–December 19, 1975

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Walter F. Hunt, Roebling medalist, Editor of *The American Mineralogist* for 35 years, its first Emeritus Editor, and Emeritus Professor of Mineralogy of the University of Michigan, died after several years of physical incapacitations at the age of 93 in Ann Ar-

bor, Michigan, on December 19, 1975. Fortunately he had been hospitalized but briefly prior to his death. A hip broken in a fall had been successfully repaired, but he died of subsequent complications.

Born in Hartwell, Ohio, the son of Henry and Ida



Hunt, Professor Hunt came in 1900 to Ann Arbor which was to remain his home for the rest of his life. He enrolled in the University of Michigan and graduated in 1904 with a B.A. in chemistry. Thereupon he was promptly enticed into mineralogy by the late Dean (then Professor) Edward H. Kraus (*Am. Mineral.* **59**, 402–404, 1974) and became the first graduate student of that newly founded department. Receiving his M.A. in 1905 and his Ph.D. in 1915 (both in mineralogy), he joined the faculty in 1906 and rose through the several grades to Professor of Petrology in 1922. With Kraus' elevation to Deanship he succeeded to Chairman of the Department of Mineralogy and Director of the Mineralogical Laboratory in 1933. He retired in 1951 and became professor emeritus in September, 1952, thus spanning over half a century in his student–teacher relationship with the University.

Hunt's editorial stewardship of *The American Mineralogist* was the brightest facet of his scientific career and had enormous influence on the development and direction of our journal for its first half century, for not only did Hunt serve as editor for more than one-

third of a century, but he influenced the choice of his two Michigan successors, Ramsdell and this writer, both of whom he had trained and employed as assistants. It is entirely fitting, therefore, that this memorial records some “behind-the-scenes” details of Hunt's remarkable period of editorial service.

When the editorial seat of *The American Mineralogist* left the University of Michigan in 1967 to immigrate to the foreign climes of California, it had been in existence 51 years, 47 of them as the official publication of the Mineralogical Society of America. And of these 47 years it had been edited from the University of Michigan for 45 years, 35 of which were under a sole editor, Walter F. Hunt. The symbiosis between the journal and the Department of Mineralogy of the University produced some remarkable adaptations for both partners and the individual participants—editors, critics and authors.

George Phair has detailed the history of the first four years of *The American Mineralogist* as part of the 50th anniversary festivities of the Society (*Am. Mineral.* **54**, 1233–1243, 1969). His entertaining and accurate narrative can hardly be improved. Although W. G. Levison, Secretary of the New York Mineralogical Club, was nominal Editor-in-Chief for three years, it was the unflagging efforts of S. (Sam) G. Gordon that got the journal cranked up and those of E. T. Wherry that kept it wheezing along. Sam Gordon, the Assistant Curator at the Academy of Natural Sciences in Philadelphia and active in mineral collecting clubs of both Philadelphia and New York, recruited and organized the staff of *The American Mineralogist* at the age of 19! Gordon, whose vital role in the development of mineralogy in the United States had long been overlooked or forgotten, has at last received his well-deserved accolades in the article by Phair (*Am. Mineral.* **54**, 1233–1243, 1969) and in a series of articles by Arthur Montgomery (*Mineral. Rec.* **4**, 256–261, 1973; **5**, 34–39, 59–66, 115–127, 1974). Wherry, who is one of America's few-remaining naturalists, became editor-in-fact in 1919.

In 1920 the newly organized Mineralogical Society of America acquired *The American Mineralogist* as its official journal, and Wherry continued as editor for two years, being succeeded by Hunt in 1922. The prime advocate of Hunt's candidacy for the editorship was E. H. Kraus. Hunt recalled that Wherry was neutral on his continuing as editor and, with Kraus' forceful backing and the absence of other qualified and willing candidates, Hunt's appointment as editor was assured. Kraus also succeeded in establishing A. B. Peck as treasurer. Peck, another Michigander,

has been the only man who served the Society both as treasurer (1920–23, 1929–30) and as secretary (1933–34). During those years in which he served along with Hunt, one was referred to the operations of the Society as the “Hunt and Peck system.”

How to expand the journal?—this was the major question confronting the new editor during the early 1920's. A partial and occasional solution appeared in 1925 (Vol. 10) in which appeared two special “University” numbers—No. 9, September, and No. 11, November, the major costs of which were borne by the Departments of Mineralogy at the University of Michigan and Harvard University, respectively. Clearly, however, only relatively affluent departments could furnish such support, inasmuch as it required not only money but a large and active staff of mineralogists all producing publishable pieces of research.

The circumstances surrounding the gift of \$45,000 to the Society by Colonel Washington A. Roebling have been described by Phair (*Am. Mineral.* **54**, 1244–1255, 1969). There is no doubt that most of the credit for initiating the bequest accrues to Charles Palache for putting a blunt bee in the Colonel's Brooklyn Bridge bonnet. In his editorial report for 1926 Hunt states:

“The outstanding event of the year . . . was the generous endowment given the Society last February by the late Colonel Washington A. Roebling . . . the whole or a part of the derived income should be devoted to the improvement of the monthly magazine. . . . It is hoped that the number of leading articles may be somewhat increased next year, but if this hope is to be realized a larger number of manuscripts must become available. You are requested, whenever possible, to select **THE AMERICAN MINERALOGIST** as your medium of publication,”

Oh halycon days, when an editor solicited manuscripts!

Hunt continues “. . . if the manuscripts are forthcoming it should not be long before our annual output will fill a volume of approximately 500 pages.” This prophecy was realized two years later, in 1928, with Vol. 13 of 582 pages. Like heroes, journals are made, not born.

The early years in post-Roebling time reechoed to Hunt's repeated complaints on the dearth of manuscripts:

(1928) “. . . I am still hopeful that . . . sufficient material will become available to insure twelve issues without holding back certain articles six months . . .”

Again part of this deficiency was remedied by a second special Harvard number (No. 7, July, 1929).

The need for additional manuscripts continued, and, in 1931, Hunt suggested that increasing the number of free reprints from 50 to 100 as bait “. . . might even have the effect of attracting additional manuscripts.” This suggestion was approved by the Council.

By 1933 the pendulum had begun to swing, Hunt noting that “In recent months the number of desirable papers that have been accepted has increased steadily. The income, on the other hand, has not kept pace with the demands made upon the Journal. The task therefore has become an extremely trying one . . . No marked expansion, if any, seems likely . . .” In 1934, however, the Council of the Geological Society of America voted to grant some financial assistance to the Mineralogical Society of America in order to subsidize the publication of chiefly petrologic manuscripts which might normally have appeared in the *G.S.A. Bulletin*. These grants, from the Penrose Fund, continued until 1965. With this help the 1935 volume, the 20th, reached 898 pages. It was to fluctuate between 700 and 1200 pages for the next seven years when World War II produced a decline in publishing power. Volume 22 (1937), the first that exceeded 1000 pages, included a magnificent special number, a *Festschrift* in honor of Charles Palache, which alone encompassed 426 pages.

In Volume 23 there appeared the second color plate, paid for, however, by Smith College; this volume also included the third special Harvard number. The first color plate had graced the Tsumeb azurite article (Vol. 12, p. 99, 1927).

By 1940 a money pinch again became evident. Owing to the war, foreign subscriptions could not be maintained, and the Editor had to ask “. . . the author or his college to assume a portion of the cost . . .” of certain articles—the precursors of page charges. Also abstracts were first required for lead articles.

By 1941 declining Society revenues forced a reduction in total pages. In 1942 the Editor was fully caught up in wartime bureaucracy—he had to secure approval of the Board of Economic Warfare for every issue of the journal before final printing and distribution were permitted; *The American Mineralogist* had gone to war. Although the wherewithall was scanty, “. . . the number of manuscripts received has been unusually large.” This copious flow decreased abruptly as the nation became fully involved in the war effort, and to accommodate the decreased

supply, with the July–August number of Volume 28 (1943), the journal became a bimonthly, a format that has been maintained, with minor exceptions, to the present. Also the Board of Economic Warfare, now trusting Hunt not to publish information that would give solace and comfort to the enemy, no longer required their examination of proof material prior to determining whether or not the issue could be exported. The preoccupation of various of the Society's members during wartime was reflected in a special quartz-oscillator plate number in 1945 (Vol. 30, Nos. 5–6) and a third symposium on diamonds (Vol. 31, Nos. 3–4).

The 30th volume of *The American Mineralogist* emerged sluggishly into the post-war sunlight, stumbling over delays in printings, an obstacle that was to reappear at intervals for the next 20 years. Manuscript receipt remained marginal. The Geological Society of America was still helping financially, but printing costs rose 16–18 percent in 1945.

Beginning about 1948 there began an almost annual agitation on the part of a small but vociferous number of members to revert to a monthly journal. "Going to press" only six times a year rather than twelve was much less demanding editorially, and Hunt fought the attempts continually with ingenious arguments.

Beginning in 1947, publication volume began to increase again, reaching 909 pages in 1950, which was to be the minimum for the next two decades. Publication time ranged from four to six months. A noteworthy innovation included a special number, "Contributions to Canadian Mineralogy," which appeared first in May–June 1949 (Vol. 34), marking the flexing of nationalistic mineralogical muscles by our compatriots to the north. This special number continued annually until 1955.

Volume 38 (1953) was notable in that it marked 30 years of the journal under Hunt's stewardship and his retirement to emeritus professorship. Lewis Ramsdell, the newly appointed Assistant Editor, acting on a suggestion by this writer, collaborated in a conspiracy involving the printer, the Council of the Mineralogical Society of America, and the staff and students of the Michigan Department of Mineralogy. A special "University of Michigan" number was prepared by Hunt, but certain dedicatory additions were attached unbeknownst to him. His astonished pleasure at the appearance of this unexpected Festschrift provoked an equal delight in his friends.

Hunt's last several years as editor involved some frustrations. Manuscripts had begun to pile up; in

1953 there was as much as a year's delay in publication. At the end of 1954 there existed a backlog of 66 papers involving 900 manuscript pages. Hunt began to dread the arrival of the mail with more manuscripts and would shake his head in despair at particularly lengthy ones. Members and the Council began to press for stricter control of manuscript quality. In 1953 there was instituted the first systematic replacement scheme for limited terms of office of Associate Editorships. Previously the Associate Editors had served for life, but they did little or no work. In 1954 the Council insisted on the adoption of a scheme of evaluation of all major manuscripts either by an Associate Editor or another critic. This greatly reduced the backlog by forcing reduction or revision of many manuscripts and the rejection of some. Hunt was much too kind-hearted an individual to qualify as an ideal editor, in part, because during his early years, *all* contributed manuscripts were precious and in part because he was basically a very kind-hearted person. For years he had been essentially the sole arbiter of publishability, and the additional editorial burden of "farming out" manuscripts for critiques and returning them to the authors for revision was painful. Hunt hated rejecting *any* manuscript.

I recall on one occasion, after the review system had been instituted, a miserable manuscript arrived that two critics eventually rejected. Hunt returned it and then read in despair the author's lachrymose letter that if he couldn't publish his paper he wouldn't receive a faculty promotion.

Hunt, although weary, would not resign—"The Council will have to fire me." Gentle persuasion by his colleagues eventually overcame his stubborn reluctance and eased a difficult situation, so that Ramsdell, who had been helping Hunt informally for many years even before becoming Assistant Editor, could accede to the editorship.

With Hunt's retirement there ended a remarkable act of selfless devotion. In essence he substituted the editorship, as a young man, for a scientific investigatory career that had a very promising beginning. In the over 25,000 published pages he produced, he enjoyed and promoted the progress of mineralogy vicariously.

Hunt not only did most of the editorial work himself, including proofreading, he also did almost all of the stenographic work alone. His chief piece of equipment was a battered typewriter, if I recall correctly, a 1925 Remington. This venerable clatterbox was the sole instrument that he would and could use. Once in the mid-1950's it nearly expired, and no repairman

could be found capable of restoring it. Work on the Mineralogist ground to a halt, until finally after much delay, an ingenious artisan effected several major mechanical transplants that revitalized it. It was still operable when Hunt retired.

The equally primitive filing equipment consisted of several scuffed wooden mineral cabinets whose recalcitrant drawers housed manuscripts filed under "received," "accepted," "marked for printer," and "published." The last were filed by monthly number and were retained for a year, being then discarded for their replacements. With the change to a bimonthly half the drawers became derelict!

Following Hunt's retirement the editorship remained at the University of Michigan for another decade, half under Lewis S. Ramsdell and the final five years under this writer. The flood of manuscripts became a deluge, but printing volume also increased tremendously, averaging over 1,500 pages per volume and peaking in 1955 with 2,150 pages. To further refine the quality, all manuscripts came under the baleful eyes of two reviewers. Modification of editorial policy to exclude articles dealing with "geographical" mineralogy and strictly "chemical" mineralogy also helped to increase the percentage of manuscript rejection from about 12 to 25 percent, which rise was accompanied by a corresponding decrease in the popularity of the editor.

As if the technical as well as the author-placating responsibilities of the editor were not enough, he was also burdened, until the mid-1960's, with the problems of storage and shipment of back numbers of the journal. Each year the printing order increased, and after each number further space had to be conjured up to store the new surplus. One whole office unit of the total space assigned to the Department of Mineralogy in the Natural Science Building bulged at the seams with a dozen or so highrise cabinets and countless boxes, all gorged with back numbers. From here they overflowed into Ramsdell's office and his laboratory, engulfing all sub-table and supra-cabinet space. Thence they began to trickle into mineralogical and petrological storage facilities. Like the sorcerer's apprentice, removal of one small shipment (to a new member) promptly triggered a torrent of augmented dimensions. By the early 1960's the Departmental facilities were about to be totally engulfed by this torrent ("spurlos versänkt"). The only happy beneficiaries of this bountiful gush were impecunious undergraduates who were hired to piece together complete sets of back numbers from this topographic jungle and wrap them for shipment. Clearly, if the

Department of Mineralogy were to continue as a functioning entity, it had to divest itself of this burgeoning malignancy. We were rescued by the then Treasurer of the Society, Dr. Marjorie Hooker, who courageously volunteered the sacrifice of the basement of her home. The transfer was chaotic and traumatic. Packing became the peculiar preoccupation of staff, students, relatives and girlfriends for several weeks. Normal departmental functions passed into full eclipse. A 2-½ ton truck, rented for the shift to Washington, D. C., broke down under the excess of 10 tons of journals. Eventually this monstrosity had to be transferred thrice, ending up on wooden pallets that were trucked off via motor freight.

Troubles with back numbers did not end with their immigration to Washington. By 1964 the treasurer, Dr. Marjorie Hooker, had negotiated two contracts with Kraus Periodicals, Inc., for reprinting first Vols. 20-32 and subsequently Vols. 1-19 so that all previously exhausted back numbers again could become available. To protect the rights of the Society and of the reprinter, the journal was copyrighted in 1963. Unfortunately a legal hassle developed when it was found that a microfilm company in Ann Arbor had previously microfilmed and offered for sale Vols. 1-46 without the Society's permission. Repeated remonstrances to the company remained unanswered. Finally, only after the Society's legal counsel threatened the offender with a lawsuit, did they agree to cease and desist, and with that the Society finally became sole arbiter of its heritage.

Editors and authors are essentially antipathetic. Critics, a temporary intermediate species, are saved from bilateral dismemberment by a combination of anonymity and editorial dependence. Outstanding mineralogical investigators commonly and patently demonstrated their inability or unwillingness to prepare and organize manuscripts of acceptable quality. For decades Hunt patiently reorganized and refurbished even the many spastic products that were submitted. Some regular contributors became particularly infamous for the physical lack-of-quality of their manuscripts. One famous mineralogist and former M.S.A. president habitually submitted manuscripts festooned with holographic corrections and modifications and patched together with tape, staples and other crutches. Its arrival invariably was closely followed in a week or two by several generations of paragraphs or pages of "corrections" or "new data," and usually the galley proofs were subsequently modified beyond all recognition. Clearly the only solution

was to place his contribution into limbo until the sequence of new versions had run its course before attempting to submit such a work to the mercies of a referee. One foreign manuscript that reached *The American Mineralogist* in the '50's was couched in such atrocious English as to be essentially incomprehensible. Succumbing to heart-rendering pleas from the authors Hunt had it rewritten only to discover later that the identical paper had previously appeared in print in Portuguese.

These details are but small samples of the difficulties Hunt encountered and overcame in his period of pioneer editorship. His service was so extraordinary that in 1957 he was awarded the Roebling Medal, the first awarded primarily for service and most probably the only that will be so based.

In 1909 Hunt married Stella Edwards who died in November, 1944. In 1950 he married Janice A. Wright who survives him. A daughter, Mrs. Marjorie Muehlig, also preceded Hunt in death, in 1972. In addition to his wife, Janice, Hunt is survived by a son, Frederick W. Hunt of Santa Barbara, California, by six grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

Publications of Walter F. Hunt

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- 1944 The Department of Mineralogy. In, *The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey*. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan. 657-663. Memorial of Albert Becker Peck. *Am. Mineral.* **29**, 121-125.
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