

A Dictionary of Mineral Names

By Darryl Powell

Mineral Names

What do they mean? Who

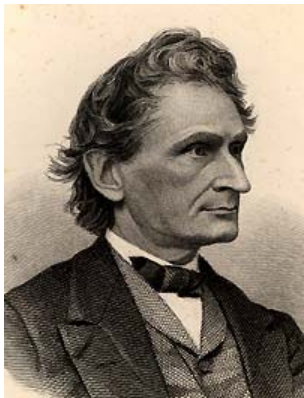


created them? What can I learn from them? This mineral dictionary is unique because it is illustrated, both with mineral drawings as well as pictures of people and places after which some minerals are named. The people pictured on this page have all made a contribution to what is formally called “mineral nomenclature.” Keep reading and you will discover who they are and what they did.

In 1995, Diamond Dan Publications published its first full book, “A Mineral Collector’s Guide to Common Mineral Names: Their Origins & Meanings.” Now it is twenty years later.

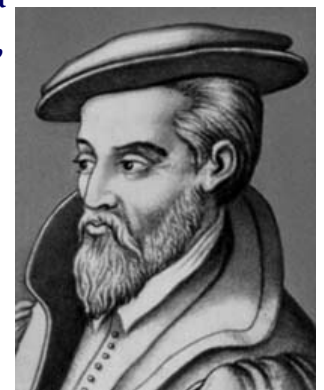
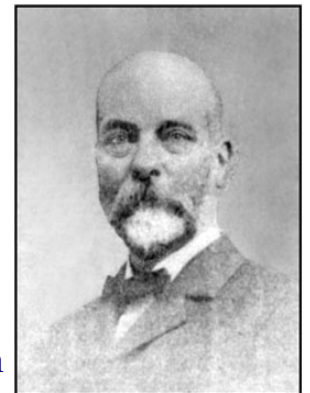
What you will discover in this issue and in the March issue is a revised and improved version of this book.

This Mineral Names Dictionary contains mineral names that the average mineral collector will encounter while collecting minerals, attending shows and visiting museum displays. In addition to the most common mineral names, there are some unofficial names which you will still find on labels.



Each mineral name has a story to tell or a lesson to teach. If you wanted to take the time, each name could become a topic to study. Armalcolite, for example, could quickly become a study of a mineral, first discovered on the moon, and brought back to earth by the

astronauts Armstrong, Aldrin and Collins (do you see parts of their names in this mineral name?) This could lead you to a study of American astronauts landing on the moon, what it took to get there and what we discovered by landing on the moon.



Every mineral name is a source of discovery and learning. Enjoy the journey!

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A Dictionary of Mineral Names

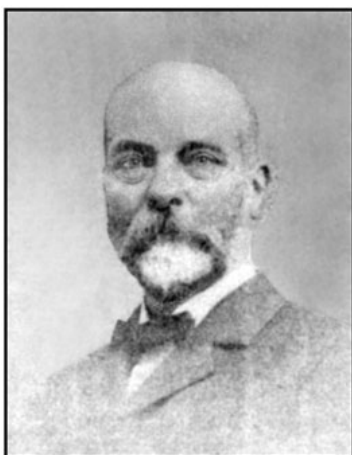
Their Origins and Meanings

Introduction

From the beginning of time, names have been more than simply a way to distinguish one object from another. Names are specifically and carefully chosen (and sometimes designed) to reveal something about the basic character of the object being named. For example, the names given to children tell the world something special about our family and the things or people that inspire us. Children are named after grandparents and siblings, historical people, national heroes and religious heroines. On a less serious side of life, consider our pets who are often named after their looks and personalities (and they never complain!) As a result you will meet any number of Fluffys, Fangs and Thumpers in a trip around the block.

The names given to minerals reveal similar facts about the minerals. For those who care to look closely, nuggets of information from science, history, legend, and geography can be discovered. The names given to minerals relate chemical formulas; they recount ancient legends; they introduce to us famous and not-so-famous collectors; they acquaint us with scientists, poets and the average Joe and Jane; they show us geographical regions found only on ancient maps and cities found only on modern maps. Look closely at the mineral names on the following pages and you will know more about geography, history, culture and language. Locked up in mineral names are many stories waiting to be heard once again.

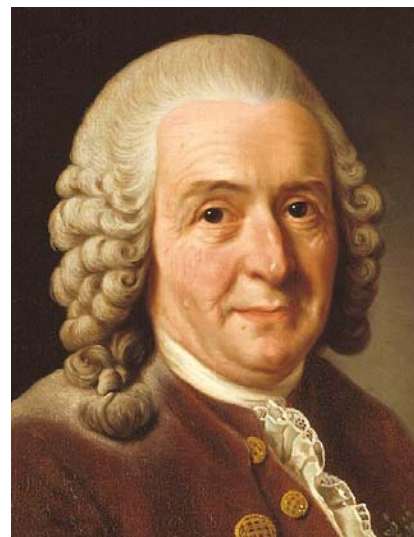
The Scientific Approach



Giving a mineral its name has proven to be as much an art as a science. Mineralogists have been exceedingly creative when it comes to naming mineral species. In 1896, Albert H. Chester (left), Mineralogy Professor at Rutgers College, quiet accurately stated in his book *A Dictionary of the Names of Minerals*, “In short the whole round of human passions has been gone over in the manufacture of these words...” As you will see, scientific methods of systematically naming minerals were attempted, but none really lasted. In the long run, creativity has become the popular “scientific method.”

In the mid-1700’s, mineralogy was a science being born. While other sciences like biology and botany were systematically classifying and naming every species, groups and subgroups within their fields, mineralogy was struggling to follow their footsteps. By the middle of the 18th century, mineralogists were also attempting to create a naming system, that is, a set of rules that everyone would agree to follow as they named and classified newly discovered mineral species.

This desire for a systematic approach was largely due to the influence of the Swedish scientist Carl von Linne (also known by his Latinized name, Carolus Linnaeus, right). Linnaeus determined to create systems by which all minerals, as well as plants

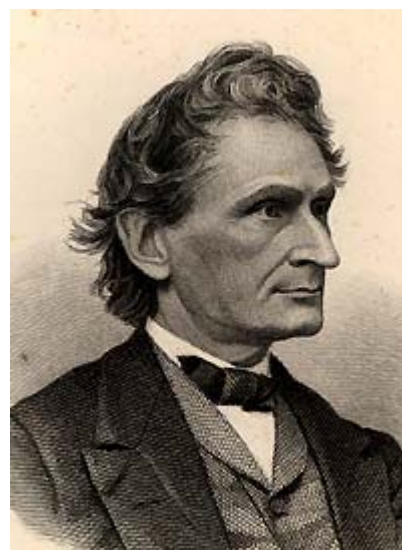


and animals, could be named and classified, using Latinized names. This approach took hold in biology and botany. It was not followed in the field of mineralogy. It did become, though, the foundation upon which other great mineralogists built, or at least tried to build, a mineral-naming plan.



Johan Wallerius, for example, used Linneaus' ideas. Other early efforts included the work of Sir John Hill in 1748 in his book *A History of Fossils*.² Much later, in 1820, the famous Austrian mineralogist, Friedrich Mohs (pictured left), proposed a system which used genus and species names for every mineral. His system resulted in names like *Rhombohedral Emerald-Malachite* for *Diopase*. Such names are difficult for the average mineral collector of today to understand (especially since we have become used to the simpler names) but they were very popular in scientific circles then. Actually, Professor Mohs' system had many followers, some imitators and some who tried to improve upon it.

Even the great mineralogist, James Dwight Dana (right), tried his hand at the subject and suggested his own plan. The names he created were also Latinized and his system resulted in names like *Andalusius prismaticus* for *andalusite*. His plan underwent a number of editions, but eventually Dana himself dropped his entire system.



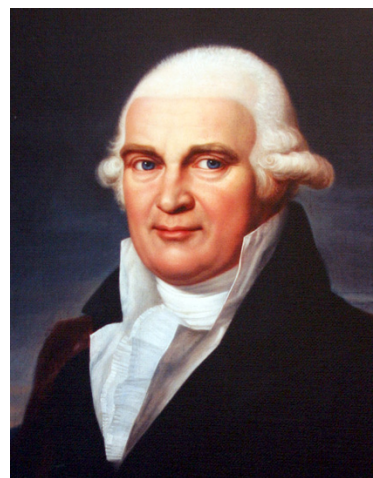
Of course, the field of mineralogy developed and grew. The growing science of chemistry added a new dimension to mineralogy, giving a better understanding of the internal composition of minerals. The chemical composition of minerals thus became a logical source for their names. This led to names like *natrolite* in reference to the sodium in its chemical structure and *uraninite* in reference to the uranium in its chemical structure. The science

continued to advance, and other aspects of minerals were carefully studied and described.

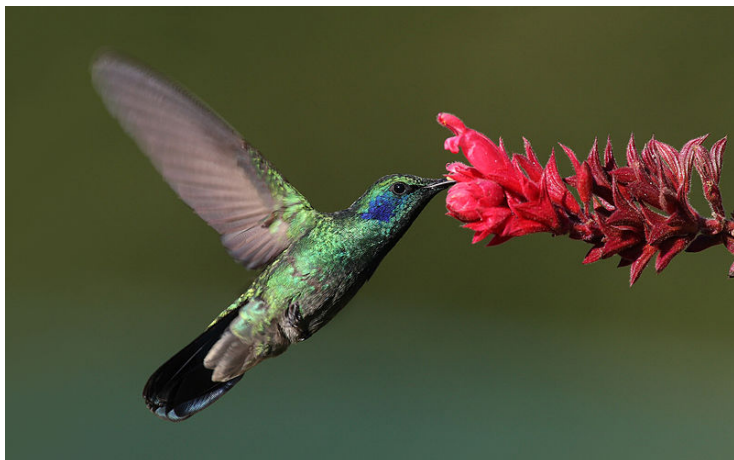


Soon added to this was the field of scientific crystallography, best marked by the work of Jean Baptiste Rome de l'Isle (pictured left), co-founder of modern crystallography. He published his research and observations in 1772. This date is significant to the history of mineral names because from this date forward, minerals could be named after the form of the mineral. A good example of this approach is the name *hemimorphite* which means *half shape*, a reference to the fact that crystals of this mineral have two different terminations on the same crystal.

Discoveries of new mineral species were common in these early days of the science of mineralogy. Scientists, explorers and nature enthusiasts all experienced the thrill of discovery. Soon another new approach to creating mineral names was born: names given in honor of people. Abraham G. Werner (pictured right) pioneered this approach in 1789. In 1783 a South African military man, Colonel



Hendrik von Prehn, brought samples of a “new mineral” to Europe from South Africa. Werner studied the samples, determined them to be a new mineral species, and named the mineral after the Colonel. And the name *prehnite* was born. As thoughtful as this may seem to us, there were those who were not pleased with the idea of naming minerals after people, perhaps because it simply was not “scientific” enough. However, the practice took hold and continues to this day. A more modern example is the mineral *szenicsite* which was named in 1993 after Terry and Marissa Szenics, the people who first discovered this mineral.



So far this discussion has been about the naming of minerals in Europe and America. It is interesting to discover that other cultures have also named minerals after their physical appearance. The Aztec people, for instance, named opal *vitz-itziltecatl* which means *hummingbird stone* in reference to the brilliant, flashing colors of hummingbird feathers. (Picture left used with permission under the GNU Free Documentation License, copyright owner Mdf.)

The Forms of Mineral Names

If you look at mineral names, you will quickly discover some similarities. First, many mineral names end in the suffix *-lite*. This comes from the Greek word *lithos* which means a *stone*. It is so commonly used that this ending has even been suggested as a universal ending to all mineral names. Throughout the history of mineralogy the *-lite* ending has been used frequently, but interestingly it has never been adopted as part of a general naming system.

Second, many mineral names end in the suffix *-ite*. Some have mistakenly proposed that this is a shorter version of the *-lite* ending. Actually this suffix has its roots in the ancient past. The Greek and Roman writers of antiquity used the endings *-ites* and *-it is*. For example, Pliny the Elder called malachite *molochites* and soapstone he called *steatites*. This ending has been carried into modern times.

The Origins of Mineral Names

You discovered earlier that there is no systematic approach to naming mineral species. There are certain customs, however, which have been followed through the years. Some of these customs are quiet scientific and logical; others are more to honor someone special. All are very creative. Here are the most common sources of mineral names.

First, there are some, like *arsenic* which have been **used for centuries**. Their precise origins have been lost. They are simply accepted as relics from the earliest days of mineral identification.

Second, there are mineral names like *adularia* and *muscovite* which were named after a specific **place**. Usually the place was the locality where the mineral was first found or where a significant deposit of the mineral now exists or once existed. Some of these place names refer to



cities or regions which either no longer exist or which are known by a different name today. One such example is *ilvaite*, which was named after “Ilva” which is the old name of the Italian island now called Elba.

A third group of mineral names came from the language of science, that is, **Greek**. There was a day when every scientist knew Greek. Therefore, it became a frequent source for mineral names. This practice may well have been started by Georgius Agricola (the “father of mineralogy,” picture left) who said, “Some of these substances lack names, and because previous writers have not mentioned them, it will be necessary that I assign them new names. As a rule I will give them Greek names because they cannot be named so aptly in Latin.”⁵ *Lepidolite*, for example, was named from the Greek words *lepis* meaning *scale* and *lithos* meaning *stone*, alluding to the scaly

appearance of aggregates of lepidolite flakes in a mass. You will find numerous other examples of this approach throughout the rest of this mineral names dictionary.

Despite Agricola’s statement and practice, **Latin** also became a source for mineral names. As a result, we have names like *albite* which was derived from the Latin word *albus* which means *white* in reference to the most common color of this mineral.

These Greek and Latin words have been used to identify chemical properties and physical characteristics that are distinctive to particular mineral species. For example, *phlogopite* was created from the Greek word *phlogopos* which means *fiery* in allusion to the reddish color displayed on some specimens of this mica. Another example is *serpentine* which came from the Latin word *serpens* which means *snake* in reference to the mottled-green color of the massive variety of this mineral, which can look like the skin and markings of some snakes.

A fourth group represents those few minerals whose names have come from **languages other** than Latin or Greek. *Marcasite*, for example, was created from an Arabic word; *turquoise* was named after a French word for *Turkish*.

A fifth group of mineral names were given **in honor of people**. Sometimes the people are well-known mineralogists or scientists. For example, *kunzite* was named after the famous gemologist George F. Kunz. Minerals have been commonly named after the person who discovered and/or first described the species. For example, *andradite* was named after Jose B. de Andrada e Silva, the mineralogist who first examined this variety of garnet. In addition, mine owners (William Coleman), political figures (Archduke of Austria, Victor Stephan), wealthy benefactors (John P. Morgan), and friends of mineralogists (Henry Ludlam) have all been honored by having a mineral named after them.

A sixth group is named after the **chemical composition** of the mineral. Good examples are *uraninite* which refers to its uranium content, and *manganite* which refers to its manganese content.

Lastly, you will also find that there are some popular mineral names which are popular and which have their origins in either **local legend or local usage**. These “names” are usually not officially recognized mineral names. But they are also usually very well known. *Fairy stone* is a very good example. This is a regional name from Virginia and North Carolina which gained popular, and almost universal usage. *Kidney ore* is another example. It originated as a nick-name for the kidney-like masses of hematite found by miners in the hematite mines of England.

The Mineralogists Who Created the Names

The people who gave minerals their names have been very creative. The complete list of mineral names came from a long list of mineralogists and scientists, and even some amateur collectors. If you were to study the list of people who named mineral species, you would discover that some have had a more significant impact than others. Abraham Gottlob Werner named 29 of the minerals with which we are familiar today. Wilhelm von Haidinger named 22. F.S. Beudant named 21. Many other people contributed but a name or two. T. Anderson gave us *gyrolite*. Frederick Pough gave us *brazilianite*. A gentleman named Mauduyt (whose first name is now unknown!) gave us the name *montmorillonite*. Who knows. You may discover a new mineral species and create a mineral name of your very own. Perhaps it will be based on your own name!

Naming Minerals Today



Today there are strict guidelines which must be followed in the naming of a new mineral species. Gone are the days when a mineralogist could publish a paper, propose a name, and expect the rest of the mineralogical world to simply accept and use it. Today the naming of minerals is carefully guided by the International Mineralogical Association's (IMA) Commission on New Minerals Nomenclature and Classification. Here are some of the guidelines followed in the process of naming a new mineral. (If you want more details, refer to their website at http://www.ima-mineralogy.org/CNMNC_Strategy.htm).

First is the *Law of Priority*. This law says that the oldest name given a mineral is the mineral's true name; later names are to be discarded. As you review the names in this issue, you will find that this law was not always followed in the past. It is, however, closely followed today. In the history of mineral nomenclature, a few minerals have been given more than one name. When a mineral name is discarded, it cannot be used later. When a mineral name is set aside it is considered extinct: it can never be used again. This is done to avoid any possible confusion.

Another rule, then, is that any new mineral name must be completely new. In addition, it must be substantially different from all existing mineral names. Again this is done to avoid confusing two distinct mineral species by giving names that are too similar. An example of mineral names that are too similar are *danaite* and *danalite*.

Other guidelines are also followed. For instance, today mineral names should end in *-ite* or *-lite*: these suffixes are to be attached to names of places or persons, or to significant chemical properties, but never to common words. Consequently, we will never find "shinyite" for our collections! When a foreign language is used as the basis for a name, Greek is the preferred language, although other languages, ancient and modern, can be used. Combining words from two different languages, however, is discouraged. Double word names are not used at all (so old names like *sal ammoniac* are no longer created).

Of course there are more regulations and more details, most of which are very technical and scientific. You are encouraged to do your own research on mineral names to learn these technical details.

And now...

A Mineral Collector's Guide to Common Mineral Names, Part I



Actinolite (Amphibole group) was named from the Greek words *aktis* meaning *ray* and *lithos* meaning *stone*, because it commonly has a radiated habit. The name was given by Richard Kirwan in 1794.

Adamite was named in honor of the French mineralogist, Gilbert Joseph Adam (1795-1881) who provided the first specimens of this mineral for study.

Adularia (Feldspar) was first found on Mt. Saint Gotthard, Switzerland. It was the desire of E. Pini (1783) to name this mineral in honor of the mountain range in which it was found. However, it was mistakenly presumed that this mountain belonged to the Adula Mountain range. Consequently, the mineral was named **Adularia**. An original form of this name was **Adulaire**. It was named in 1783.

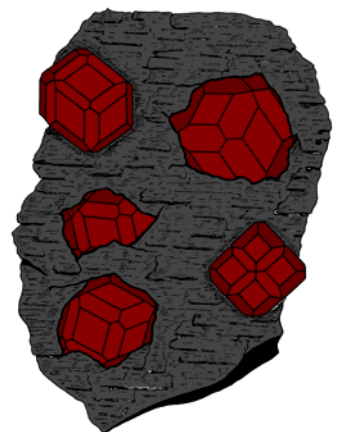
Aegerine (Pyroxene group) was named after Aegir, the Scandinavian sea god (pictured right). The name was given by Jens Esmark, a Norwegian Professor of Mineralogy, in 1835. The name Esmark originally proposed was **Aegerite** and was later altered to **Aegerine**.

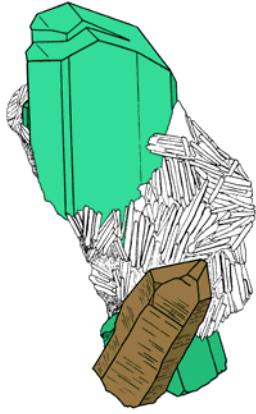


Agate (Quartz) has been known and worked since ancient times. The name is first found in writing by the Greek natural scientist Theophrastus (c 376– c 287 BCE) however, the name may have been in use for years, perhaps decades or even centuries before this. This stone was given the name **agate** because it was found near the river Achatesin in southern Sicily (this river is known today as the Dirillo river).

Albite (Feldspar) was named from the Latin word *albus* meaning *white* in reference to the most common color of this mineral. The name was given by Johan Gottlieb Gahn and Jöns Jakob Berzelius in 1815.

Almandite (Garnet) was named from Alabanda in Asia Minor where garnets were cut and polished. Originally this name was applied to violet-colored spinels and only later given to this variety of precious garnet. It is also called **almandine**.



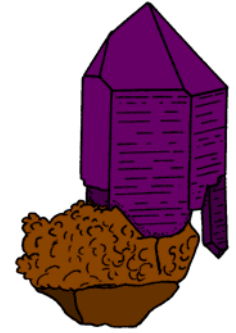


Amazonite (Microcline, Feldspar) was named after the Amazon River, Brazil, where green stones were found by early European explorers. The stones they found, however, were probably not the mineral we know today as amazonite. The name was given to this green variety of feldspar by Friedrich A. Breithaupt in 1847.



The Amazon River, Brazil

Amethyst (Quartz) is one of those minerals believed by the ancients to have special powers. They believed that a person who wore a piece of amethyst or who drank wine from an amethyst goblet would not suffer from a hangover or even intoxication. So it was named from the Greek word *amethystos* meaning *anti-intoxicant* or *not drunken*.



Amphibole was named from the Greek word *amphibolos* which means *ambiguous* in referenced to the fact that this mineral is so easily mistaken for other minerals. The name was given by René Just Haüy in 1797.

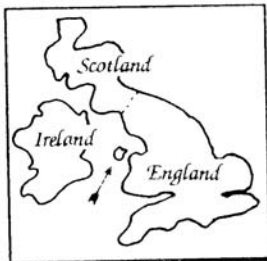


Analcime displays a weak electric property when it is rubbed or heated. Consequently it was named from the Greek word *analkis* meaning *weak*. The name was given by René Just Haüy in 1797.

It is also called **analcite** by some mineralogists. In 1804, Abraham Gottlob Werner named this mineral **Cubizite**, although this name is not used today.

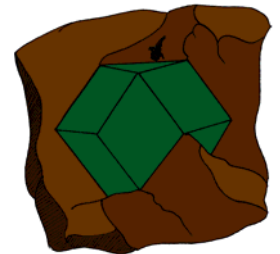
Andalusite was named from Andalusia, a province in southern Spain, where this mineral is found. The name was given by Jean Claude Delamétherie in 1798.

Andradite (Garnet) was named after the mineralogist who first examined it, Jose B. de Andrada e Silva (1763-1838). The name was given by James Dwight Dana in 1868.



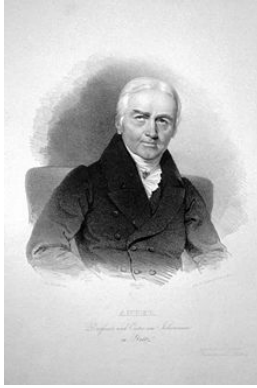
The Island of Anglesey, England

Anglesite was named after the locality where it was first found, the Island of Anglesey, England. The name was given by F.S. Beudant in 1832.



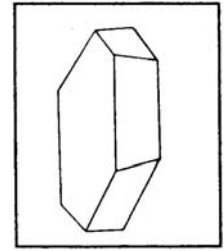
Anhydrite is chemically almost identical to

Gypsum...however it lacks the water found in gypsum (Gypsum— $\text{CaSO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$; anhydrite— CaSO_4). Hence, its name was derived from the Greek word *anhydrous* which means *without water*. The name was given by Abraham Gottlob Werner in 1803.



Ankerite was named in honor of the Austrian mineralogist, Professor Matthias Joseph Anker (1772-1843, pictured left). The name was given by Wilhelm von Haidinger in 1825.

Anorthite (Feldspar) crystals are Triclinic in form. This means the crystal has three axes all of which have different lengths, none of which intersect the others at a right angle. Therefore, its name was derived from the Greek words *an* meaning *not* and *orthos* meaning *upright*; in short, it means *oblique*, in reference to its crystal form. This mineral was named by Gustav Rose in 1823.



An Anorthite Crystal

Anthophyllite (Amphibole group) is commonly clove-brown in color. Hence its name came from the Latin *anthophyllum* which means *clove*. It is sometimes called **Anthophylline**.

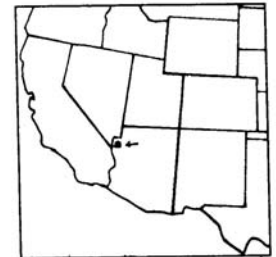
The name was given by Heinrich Christian Frederik Schumacher in 1801.



The Piedmont region, Italy

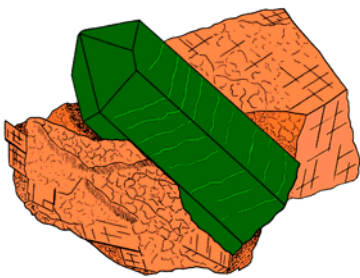
Antigorite was named after the Antigorio Valley, Piedmont, Italy. The name was given by E. Schweizer in 1840.

Antimony was named from the Medieval Latin word, *antimonium* which was originally applied to **Stibnite**, and later to **Native Antimony**.



The Antler Mine, Arizona

Antlerite was named after the Antler Mine, Mohave County, Arizona, the locality from which it was first described. The name was give by W.F. Hillebrand in 1889.

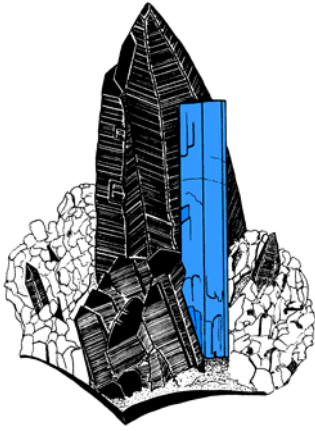


Apatite commonly forms lovely, gemmy crystals. Its name came from the Greek word *apatan* which means *to deceive* because it was commonly mistaken for several other similar-looking gemmy minerals like **Aquamarine**, **Amethyst** and **Tourmaline**. The name was given by Abraham Gottlob Werner in 1786.

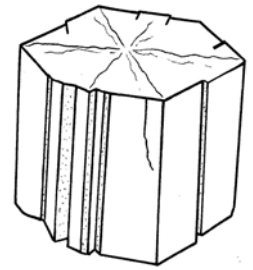
A yellow-green variety of apatite was at one time known as **asparagus stone**.

Apophyllite was named from the Greek words *apo* meaning *from* and the verb *phyllazein* meaning *to get leaves* because it exfoliates when heated. The name was given by René Just Haüy in 1806.

The original name given to this mineral, **Ichthyophthalmite**, did not last. This name was derived from the Greek words *ichthys* meaning *fish* and *ophthalmos* meaning *eye*. Abraham Gottlob Werner simplified this a bit in 1805 by translating this Greek-based name into **Fish-Eye Stone**. Perhaps it was just too complicated to gain wide use.



Aquamarine (Beryl) is a beautiful light blue to bluish-green variety of beryl. Its name was derived from the Latin phrase *aqua marina* meaning *sea water* in reference to its color. (Left)



Aragonite was named after the region of Aragón, Spain, the locality of the famous pseudo-hexagonal twin crystals of this mineral. It was named by Abraham Gottlob Werner in 1796. (Pictured above right. Map of the Aragon region, right.)



The region of Aragón, Spain

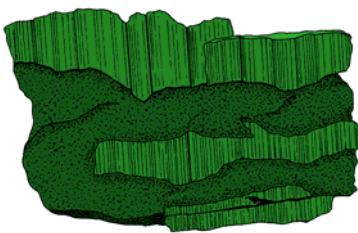
Argentite was named from the Latin word *argentum* which means *silver*, in reference to its silver content (Ag_2S). The name was given by Wilhelm von Haidinger in 1845.

Arsenic was originally the name applied to arsenic sulfide compounds because of their obviously powerful properties, specifically that when ingested they caused severe illness and even death. The ancients called this substance “arsenic” from the Greek word *arsen* which means *male, manly, vigorous, or strong*, because they believed that this substance was male in gender since it was “strong” (that is, deadly). This was based on the sexist assumption that men are stronger than women.

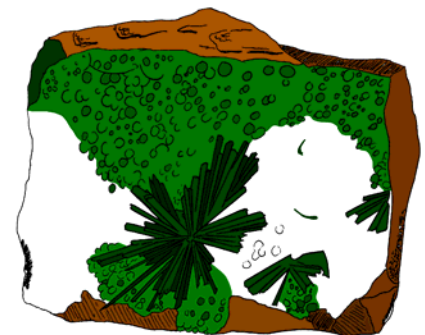
This name was applied to the mineral **Native Arsenic** by Friedrich A. Breithaupt in 1823.

Arsenopyrite is a contraction of the older name **Arsenical Pyrites**, meaning this mineral is similar to pyrite but has arsenic in its chemistry (FeAsS). The name was given by E.F. Glocker in 1847.

Older names for this mineral, which are not usually used anymore, are **Arsenical Pyrites** and **Mispickel**.



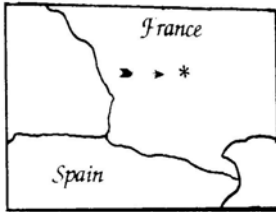
Asbestos had many uses in modern technology because of its resistance to heat and flame. The name was given by the ancient Roman natural historian, Pliny the Elder, in the year 77. It came from the Greek word *asbestos* which means *unquenchable* in reference to its resistance to fire and heat. (Left)



Atacamite was named after the locality of Atacama, Chile, where it was first found. The name was given by D. de Gallitzen in 1801. (Right)

Augite (Pyroxene group) was named from the Greek word *auge* meaning *luster* in reference to its distinctive vitreous to resinous luster. The name was given by Abraham Gottlob Werner in 1792.

Aurichalcite was named from the Latin word *aurichalcum* which means *yellow copper ore*. The name was given by T. Bottger in 1839.



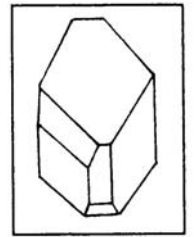
Autun, France

Autunite was named after the important deposits of this mineral in Autun, France. The name was given by Henry James Brooke and W.H. Miller in 1852.

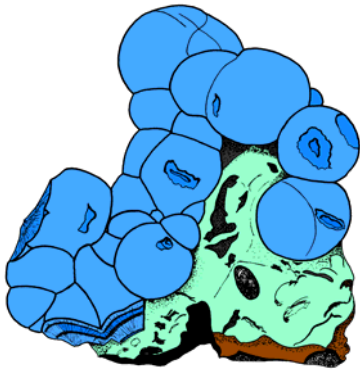
Aventurine (Quartz) is a variety of quartz with minute mica inclusions which give it a spangled appearance. It was supposedly named after an artificial compound called "aventurine" which this mineral resembles.

Axinite typically forms wedge-shaped crystals. Consequently, its name was derived from the Greek word *axine* which means *axe*. The name was given by René Just Haüy in 1797.

The first name given to this mineral was **Yanolite** meaning *violet stone* because it sometimes has a violet color. This name was given by Jean Claude Délamétherie in 1792. It is no longer used.



A typical wedge-shaped Axinite crystal



Azurite was named after the azure (blue) color of this striking mineral. The name was first applied by Robert Jameson in 1805.

One of the earliest names of this mineral was **Blue Malachite**. (Left)

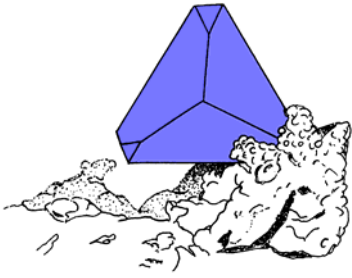
B

Babingtonite was named in honor of the Irish mineralogist and physician, Dr. William Babington (1757-1833, right). The name was given by A. Levy in 1824.



Barite (sometimes spelled **Baryte**) was named from the Greek word *baros* meaning *heavy* or *weight*, a reference to its unusually high specific gravity for a non-metallic mineral. It was given by Dietrich Ludwig Gustav Karsten in 1800.

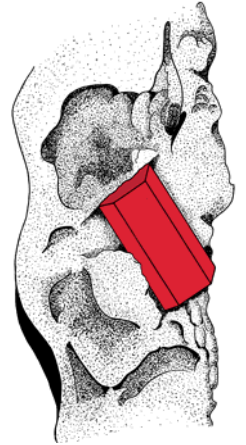
Bauxite was named from its occurrence in Beaux, France. The original spelling, the one given by A. Dufrenoy in 1847, was **Beauxite**.



Benitoite was named from its occurrence in San Benito County, California, the type locality of this mineral. It was given by George Davis Louderback in 1907.

Beryl is a mineral name with ancient origins. It was named from the Greek word *beryllos*, believed to refer to Belur, a town in Southern India near gem deposits.

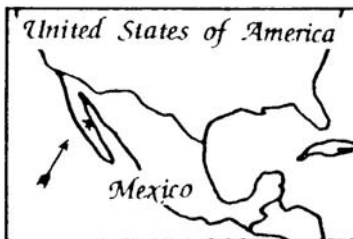
It was first applied to green gemstones in general, but now refers specifically to the silicate of beryllium and aluminum (which includes varieties such as **aquamarine**, **morganite**, **emerald** and **heliodor**). (Right)



Biotite (Mica) was named in honor of the French physicist, Professor Jean Baptiste Biot. He was the first to point out that different micas have different optical properties. The name was given by J.F.L. Hausmann in 1847. (Left)

Bismuth was possibly named from the Greek word meaning *lead white*. A different theory claims it was named from a German word *Wismut*, which is of unknown origins. The precise origin is evidently somewhat disputed. The mineral is more properly known as **Native Bismuth**.

Bloodstone (Chalcedony, Quartz) is the common name for the variety of chalcedony called **heliotrope**. It is dark green with red spots which resemble spots of blood...hence the name.



Boleo, Baja California, Mexico

Boleite was named after its locality, Boleo, Baja California, Mexico. The name was given by E. Mallard and E. Cumenge in 1891.

Boracite was named from *borax*, a reference to its boron content ($Mg_3ClB_7O_{13}$) and its association with the mineral **borax**. The name was given by Abraham Gottlob Werner in 1789.

Borax was derived from the Arabic name for this mineral, *bauraq* meaning *white*. The name was given by Wall in 1848.

Bornite was named after the Austrian mineralogist, Ignaz Edler von Born (1742-1791). It was first used by F.S. Beudant in 1832 in reference to a telluride of bismuth which is found in brilliant, steel-gray laminae. However, it was later applied by Wilhelm von Haidinger (in 1845) to the mineral which now bears this name, a sulphide of copper and iron which is commonly iridescent purple and blue. It is also known by the names **purple copper** and, more commonly, **peacock ore**. (Right)



Boulangerite was named after C.L. Boulanger, who first described this mineral. The name was given by M.C.J. Thaulow in 1837.

This mineral is sometimes referred to as **feather ore**.

Bournonite was named after the French crystallographer and mineralogist, Count Jacques Louis, Comte de Bournon (1751-1825), who first described its chemical composition. The name was given by Robert Jameson in 1805.

This is actually the second name given to this mineral. The first, which is not used today, was **endellionite**.

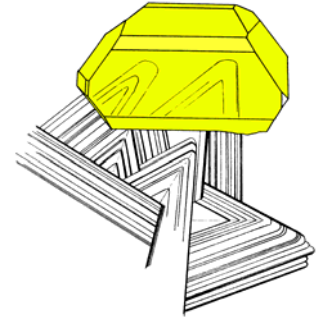


Brazil, South America

Brazilianite is a more recent mineral discovery. It was discovered in 1945, and was identified by F.H. Pough and Henderson later that year. It was named after Brazil, the country in which it was discovered. The name was given by Frederick H. Pough in 1945.

As a point of interest, A.H. Chester reports that in 1818, John Mawe used the name "brazilianite" as a synonym for **wavellite** which he had found in Brazil. By the end of the 19th century the usage was

obsolete.



Bronzite (Pyroxene group) is a name which, simply, refers to the bronze color of this mineral. This silicate mineral is an iron-rich variety of the mineral **enstatite**. The name was given by Dietrich Ludwig Gustav Karsten in 1807.

Brookite was named in honor of the British mineralogist and crystallographer, Henry James Brooke (1771-1857). The name was given by A. Levy in 1825.



Brucite is a mineral name with a long and confusing history. It was named after the American mineralogist who first described this mineral, Archibald Bruce (1777-1818, Left). The name was given by George Gibbs in 1819. However, the mineral given this name by Gibbs is now known as **chondrodite**.

Later, in 1824, this same name was applied by F.S. Beudant to the mineral which today is known as brucite.

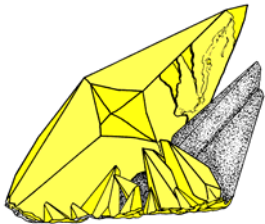
To confuse matters, "brucite" was also used by A. Dufrenoy in 1847 to refer to the mineral now called **zincite**.

Byssolite (Amphibole group) was named from the Greek words *byssos* meaning *flax* and *lithos* meaning *stone* in reference to the fibrous habit of this variety of amphibole. The name was given by Horace Bénédict de Saussure in 1796.

C

Cacoxenite was named after the Greek words *kako zeinos* meaning *a bad (or ill) guest*, an allusion to the harmful effect the phosphorous in this mineral has on the iron in its limonite matrix.

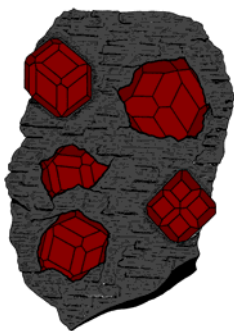
Cairngorm is a gem variety of smoky quartz which is yellow to brown in color. It was named after one of its famous localities, the Cairngorm Mountains of Scotland.



Calcite was named from the Latin word *calx* which means *burnt lime*. It was first applied by Johann Karl Freiesleben in 1836 to an occurrence of calcium carbonate crystals which were pseudomorphs after celestite. Only later was it used to refer to the mineral we know today as calcite. Calcite is sometimes referred to as Calcareous Spar.

Campylite is the name given to a special variety of mimetite which occurs in curved or barrel-shaped crystals. The name came from the Greek word *campylos* meaning *curved*.

Capillary Pyrites is the name used by Johann Gottfried Schmeisser (1795) to refer to the mineral Millerite. He used this name because millerite is commonly found in the form of capillary or hair-like crystals which have the same color and luster as Pyrite.



Carbuncle is an old name which was originally applied to red gemstones in general. Eventually it came to refer only to cabachons of red garnets. The name came from the Latin word *carbunculus* meaning *small, red-hot coal*. This name was used by Pliny the Elder to refer to the garnet variety Almandine.

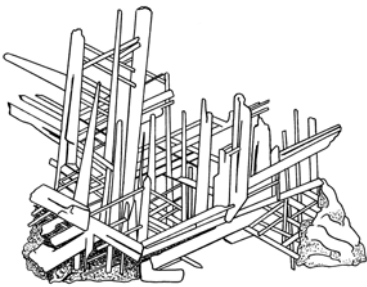
Carnelian is a mineral name of disputed origins. Some claim it originated as a popular name derived from the Latin word *carnis* which means *flesh* in reference to its color. Others say it came from the Latin word *cornum* which means *cornelian cherry*, again a reference to its orange to red color. Despite the disagreement on the precise word in its background, there appears to be agreement that the name is a reference to this mineral's color.

Cassiterite is an ore of tin and consequently its name reflects its composition, SnO_2 . The name is from the Greek word *kassiteros* which means *tin*. *Kassiteros* came from a word in the Elamite language, *Kassiti-re* meaning *from the land of the Kassi*. The Kassi were one of the Elam-

ite tribes. They lived in Elam, a hilly region which bordered the northernmost portion of the Persian Gulf. They controlled the region, to various degrees, for a number of centuries. Records indicate their presence there as early as the 12th century BCE.

Cavansite is a fairly newly discovered mineral. The name was created from its chemical composition: calcium (CA), vanadyl (VAN) silicate (SI) hydrate. It was first described in 1973. Celestite can be colorless, white and faintly blue; the first specimens studied and described were a faint blue. Hence, the mineral was given the name Celestite which came from the Latin word *coelestis* meaning *heaven* or *sky* in reference to its sky-blue color.

Cerargyrite was derived from the Greek words *keras* meaning *horn* and *argyros* meaning *silver* because this silver-bearing mineral can sometimes form in the shape of a horn. It is also sometimes called Horn Silver.



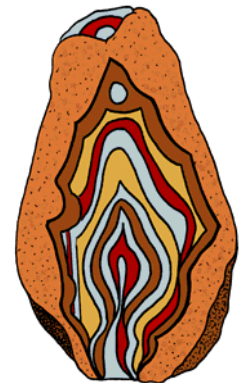
Cerussite is lead carbonate, $PbCO_3$. Its name came from the Latin word *cerussa* which means *white paint* because it was used to make bright white paint. An early name for cerussite was Lead Spar.

Chabazite has a name which is not as descriptive as most other mineral names. It came from the Greek word *chabazios* which simply was an ancient word meaning *a stone*.

Chalcanthite is one of those few mineral names which does not refer to a person, place or chemical formula. It was named from *chalcanthum*, the older name applied to this mineral.

Chalcedony was named after the ancient Greek port of Chalcedon in Asia Minor. In ancient days this word was applied to a stone (now of unknown identity) which was believed to have mystical powers.

Chalcocite was named from the Greek word *chalkos* meaning *copper*, which is a reference to the copper in this mineral (Cu_2S). "Chalcocite" is actually the second name given to this mineral. The first name was Chalcosine. It was later changed by James Dwight Dana in 1868.

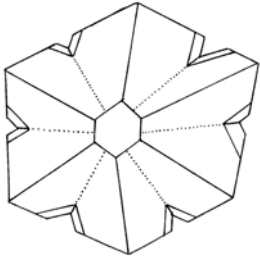


Chalcopyrite was derived from two Greek words, *chalkos* meaning *copper* or *brass* and *pyr* meaning *fire* because it looks much like pyrite, and even gives off a spark when struck with steel, just like pyrite. However, it is different because it contains copper and pyrite does not. Its chemical formula is $CuFeS_2$.

Chiastolite is a name that refers to a variety of Andalusite which, when sliced across the crystal, reveals a cross-like pattern in the crystal. The pattern is created by inclusions in the crystal structure. The name came from the Greek words *chiastos* meaning *arranged crosswise* and *lithos* meaning *stone*.

Chlorite is commonly green. Its name, therefore, came from the Greek word *chloritis* meaning *green*.

Chromite is composed of iron, oxygen and chromium, FeCr_2O_4 . Its name reflects the presence of chromium in its composition.



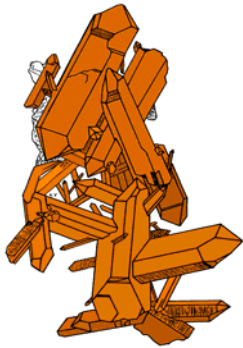
Chrysoberyl was named from the Greek words *chrysos* and *beryllos* literally meaning *golden beryl* because it was originally misidentified as a variety of Beryl.

Chrysocolla was named from the Greek words *chrysos* meaning *gold, golden* and *kola* meaning *glue*. It was originally given to a substance which was used as a gold solder and which looked very much like this mineral.

Chrysoprase was named from the Greek words *chrysos* meaning *gold, golden* and *praon* meaning *a leek*. At one time it referred to a now unknown green gem. Today it refers to the lovely apple-green variety of Chalcedony.

Chrysotile is a fibrous variety of the mineral group Serpentine. The name came from the Greek words *chrysos* meaning *gold, golden* and *tilos* meaning *fibre*, because this fibrous mineral often has a golden metallic luster.

Cinnabar is a mineral name which some claim has its roots in India where it referred to a red resin. However, others claim this name was derived from the Greek word *kinnabaris* which is the ancient name for this mineral. It is possible that the Greek word itself has its roots in the Indian word.



Citrine was named from the Greek word *kitron* meaning *citron*, which is a reference to the yellowish color of this variety of quartz.

Cleavelandite was named in honor of Professor Parker Cleaveland (pictured right, Public Domain).



Clinozoisite was named from the Greek verb *klinein* meaning *to incline* and *zoisite*, a mineral which it resembles.

Cobaltite was named from the chemical composition of this mineral, CoAsS , which includes the element cobalt (which itself is named from the Latin word *cobaltum*).

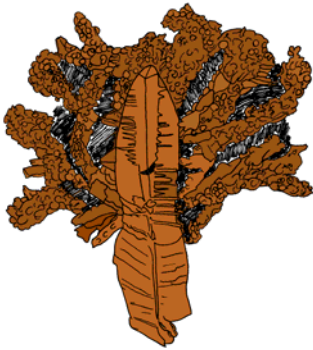


Colemanite was named in honor of William T. Coleman (1824-1893). Coleman was a merchant from San Francisco, California, who owned the borax mines in which this mineral was found (picture left, Public Domain).

Columbite was named after *Columbia*, a name once used in reference to America, where the original specimens of this mineral were obtained. Interestingly this name is so inexact that it gives no indication as to where in "America" it was found.

Conichalcite was named from the Greek words *konia* meaning *lime* and *kalkos* meaning *copper*. This was chosen in reference to the calcium and copper in its chemical formula, $\text{CaCu}(\text{AsO}_4)(\text{OH})$.

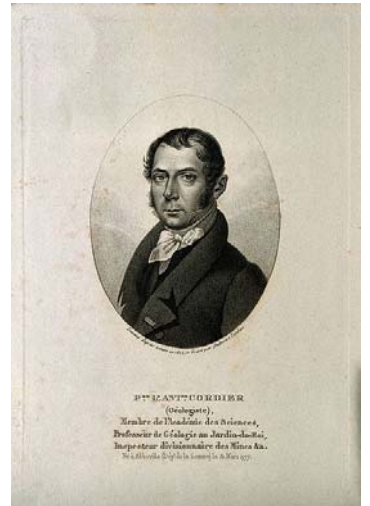
Cookeite was named in honor of Professor Josiah Parsons Cooke (1827-1894), picture right, Public Domain.



Copper was named from the Greek word *kypros*, that is, the Island of Cyprus, where copper was once found in large quantities. As a mineral it is more commonly called Native Copper.



Cordierite was named in honor of the French geologist Pierre Louis A. Cordier (1777-1861) who first described this mineral (picture right, used with permission by Wellcome Trust, Commons: licensing).



Corundum is a name with an uncertain history. It is widely believed that *corundum* was derived from *Kauruntaka*, the Indian name for this mineral. However, others argue that it came from the Tamil word *kuruntam* (Tamil is a language spoken in India) which itself was derived from the Sanskrit word *kuruvinda* which means *Ruby*, the red gem variety of corundum.

Covellite was named in honor of Nicholas Covelli (1790-1829), an Italian chemist who discovered Covellite at Vesuvius, Italy.

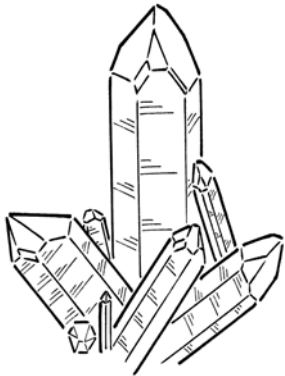
Cristobalite was named after the Cerro San Cristobal near Pachuca, Mexico, a famous locality of this mineral.

Crocidolite was named from the Greek words *krokys* meaning *a woof* (a term used in fabric) in allusion to its fibrous structure and *lithos* meaning *stone*.

Crocoite was named from the Greek word *krokos* meaning *saffron*. Saffron is the stigma of a variety of the flower called *Crocus*. Crocoite is very popular because of its beautiful orange-red color which is the same color as saffron.

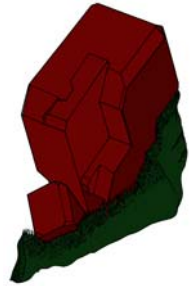


Cryolite has a special optical property that is described as “low refractive index.” When light shines through it, it looks like melting, watery snow. The name, therefore, came from the Greek words *kryos* meaning *frost* or *ice* and *lithos* meaning *stone*.



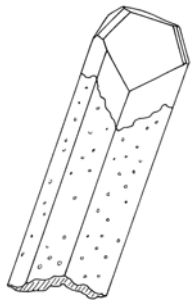
Crystal is a word of Greek origins which means *ice*. Throughout the centuries it has been used to refer to clear Quartz. Today it still refers to Quartz, usually in phrases like Rock Crystal, however, it is used more generically to refer to all mineral specimens which display a geometric form bounded by planes (called “faces”).

Pliny the Elder thought that “crystal” (specifically, clear quartz crystal) was water that had been frozen by such extremely low temperatures that it would never thaw -- in other words, he thought crystal was petrified water!



Cuprite is a copper mineral, specifically, copper oxide, Cu_2O . Therefore, its name came from the Latin word *cuprum* meaning *copper*.

D

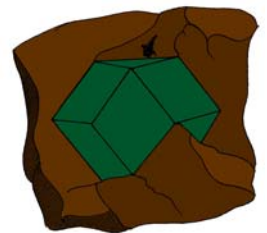


Danburite was named after Danbury, Connecticut, the locality where it was first found and described. (Pictured left.)

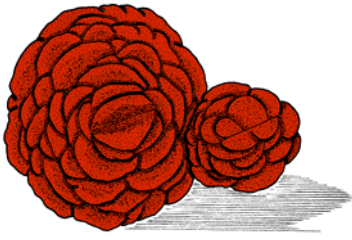
Datolite was named from the Greek words *datysthai* meaning *to divide* and *lithos* meaning *stone*. The massive variety of this mineral is granular and so this name was chosen to suggest its appearance.



Demantoid is a variety of garnet that was named from the word *demant* meaning *diamond*. Added to this is the suffix *-oid* which is used to indicate that something has the appearance of something else: in this case it is used to point out the very brilliant luster of this emerald-green variety of garnet is like that of the diamond.



Descloizite was named in honor of the French mineralogist Alfred Des Cloizeaux (1817-1897), who first described this mineral (pictured left, Public Domain)



Desert Rose is a popular name that was originally given to rosettes of barite crystals which formed in the red sands of Norman, Oklahoma. These attractive “roses” are covered by, and also include, grains of the red sand in which they formed. In addition to the barite “roses,” this title has also been used for similar “roses” composed of gypsum and sand.

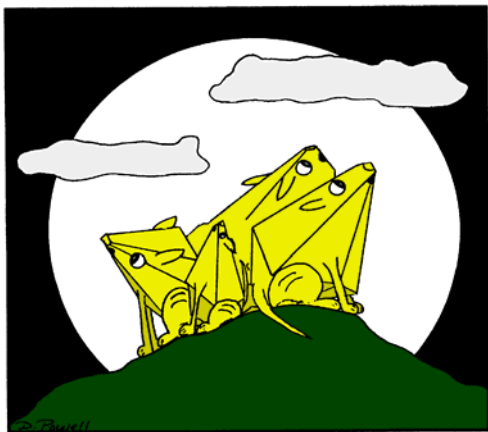
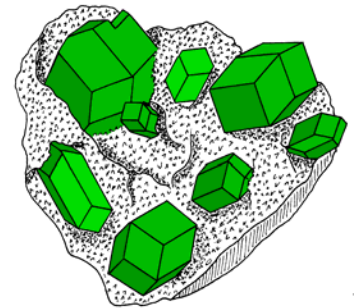
Diamond is the hardest substance on earth. One might consider it practically indestructible. Its name refers to its hardness: “Diamond” is a corruption of the Greek word *adamas* which means *invincible*.

Diaspore makes a cracking sound and then deteriorates when it is heated. Its name, therefore, came from the Greek verb *diaspeirein* which means *to scatter*.

Diopside was named from the Greek words *dis* meaning *two* and *opsis* meaning *view*. When this mineral was first being studied, mineralogists had two different opinions about its prismatic crystal form. The confusion came from the fact that the vertical prism can be oriented in two different ways, giving two different ideas of its crystal form.

Dioptase cleaves fairly easily and these cleavage planes are visible in the crystals. Its name came from the Greek verb *dioptheuein* meaning *to see into*, because its cleavage planes are so easy to see.

Dioptase was called Copper Emerald in 1805 by the mineralogist Robert Jameson. It was also known as Emerald Malachite, but this name is not used anymore.



Late at night, if you listen carefully, you can hear the Dogtooth Calcite howling at the moon.

Dog-Tooth Spar is a popular name for some scalenohedral calcite crystals which resemble, a little bit, the long, pointed canine teeth on a dog. It is a name which has had popular use since the early days of mineral collecting and study.

Dolomite was named in honor of Dieudonne (called Deodat) Guy Sylvain Tancrede Gratet de Dolomieu (1750-1801), a French chemist and geologist. In 1791 he noted that the “limestones” in Southern Tirol,

Switzerland were actually different from other similar carbonate rocks. In 1796 the Swiss mineralogist, Horace Benedict de Saussure studied Dolomieu’s rocks more closely, and named this specific mineral in honor of Dolomieu for his original work and observations.

Because dolomite contains magnesia it has also been called Bitter Spar. This is an old name that you will not find used anymore.



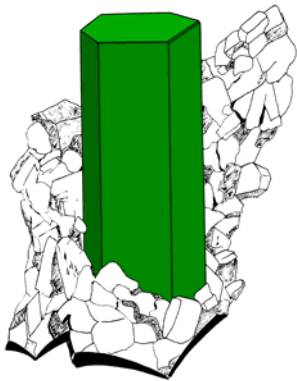
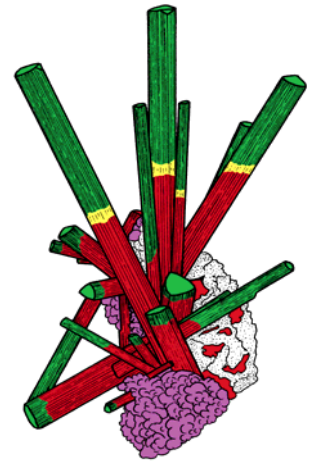
“Dragonite” is an ancient mineral name which reveals a bit of legend and history. In 77 CE Pliny the Elder wrote about a fantastic stone. This frosted, smooth stone was found in gravel. They found it impossible to identify. It was believed by many people back then (and by Pliny the Elder as well) that this wonderful stone came from the head of the flying dragon. Therefore, it was named *Dragonite*. This “wonder stone,” in case you are wondering, was nothing more than quartz crystals that had been polished in a river to the point that the glassy luster was polished away.

Dravite was named after the locality at which it was first found, the Drave district, Carinthia (Carinthia was at one time a region in what is now southern Austria).

E

Elbaite is a variety of tourmaline that was named after its famous locality, the Island of Elba, Italy. Originally this mineral was named Ilvaite after the old name of the island.

Electrum refers to natural alloys (that is, a mixture) of gold and silver which can have an amber color, depending on the amount of gold present in the mixture. The name came from the Greek word *electron* which means *amber*.



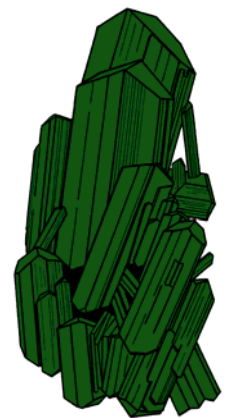
Emerald is the green variety of Beryl. The name was derived from the Greek word *smaragdus* which literally means *a light green precious stone*. This name was originally applied to a number of light green stones. It is possible the name goes back to the old Arabic word *zummurrud*, which was also applied generally to green gemstones. Today it refers to the dark green variety of beryl.

Enargite has perfect cleavage in one direction. Its name was derived from the Greek word *enarge* meaning *distinct* or *apparent*, in reference to this noticeable cleavage.

Endlichite is an arsenic-rich variety of the mineral Vanadinite. It was named in honor of Dr. F.M. Endlich.

Enstatite was named from the Greek word *enstates* which means *opponent* because it is highly resistant to heat.

Epidote forms very beautiful and interesting crystals. The base of the vertical prism has one side which is longer than the other. Because of this feature, the mineral was named “epidote” based on the Greek word *epidosis* meaning *increase*.



Epsomite was named after its occurrence in the borough of Epsom, England, near London.

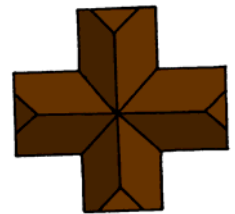
Erythrite was named from the Greek word *erythros* which means *red*, in reference to its crimson (red) to purple crystals.

Essonite is a variety of Garnet. It was named from the Greek word (*h*)*esson* meaning *inferior* because though it resembles Zircon, it is slightly softer and lighter and has a lower refractive index. All these factors mean that essonite is of lesser value as a gemstone than gem zircon.

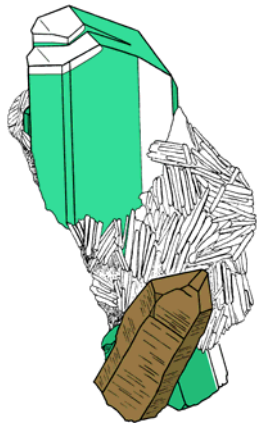
Euclase crystals cleave easily. The name, therefore, comes from the Greek words *eu* and *kla* which together mean *to break well*.

F

Fairy Stone is a popular name for the right angle penetration twins crystals of Staurolite found in North Carolina. The term "Fairy Stone" seems to have originated in this area. Similar crystals are found in Virginia where this popular name is also used. The local legend states that on the day that Jesus was crucified in Jerusalem, the fairies cried and their tears solidified in the shape of crosses.



Falcon's Eye is a popular name that refers to the pseudomorph of quartz after blue Crocidolite fibers (a variety of Asbestos).



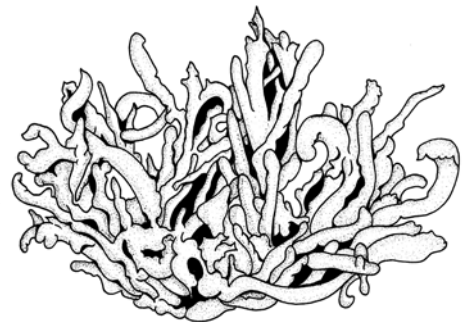
Feldspar is a contraction of the longer (and older) name *Fieldspar*. Some early specimens of this mineral were found in fields, so collectors simply called them "Field Spar." "Spar" is a mineralogical term that is used to refer to any glassy mineral that breaks easily into flat planes (pictured left, Amazonite Feldspar).

Ferberite was named in honor of Rudolph Ferber, a German scientist.

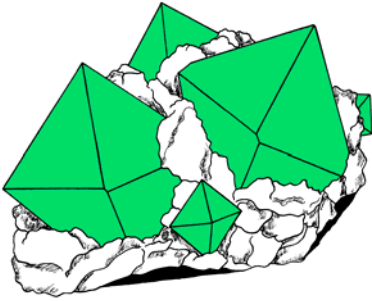
Fire Opal is the descriptive name given to fire-red varieties of Opal.

Flint is another of those few mineral names whose history is not clearly known. It might possibly have come from the Greek word *plinthos* which means *a brick*, but this is not certain. Other writers claim this name came directly from the Anglo-Saxon word *flint*.

Flos Ferri is a variety of Aragonite. This name literally translates as *flower of iron*. These specimens are found in iron ore deposits. This variety was first discovered in the 1400's on Mount Erzberg, Austria. Miners were cutting through a deposit of siderite, an iron carbonate mineral, in hopes of finding silver and gold. In the process they found this aragonite which some thought resembled flowers. It was natural that the miners

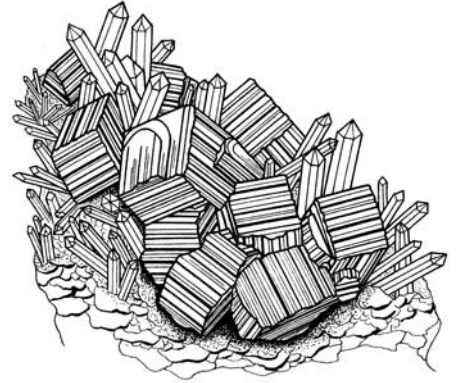


called it “flowers of iron” or “flos ferri.”

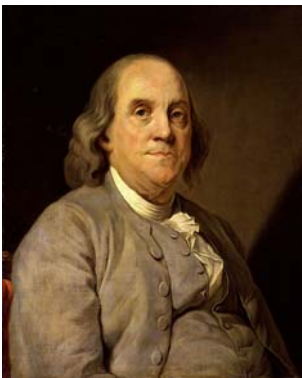


Fluorite is a mineral which contains the element fluorine. However, its name is not created from its chemical composition of CaF_2 . The name came from the Latin verb *fluere* which means *to flow* because it melts easily. This mineral is also popularly known as Fluor Spar.

Fool’s Gold is a popular name for Pyrite. When people were rushing west in search of the great gold deposit that would make them wealthy beyond their wildest dreams, the less experienced prospectors sometimes made fools of themselves. Unearthing large masses of shiny, glittering “gold” they would run to the bank to make a deposit, only to be greatly disappointed (and embarrassed!) to learn that their “gold” was actually pyrite. Many a prospector lost his life (or at least his pride) protecting a claim or depositing a bag of Fools’ Gold!



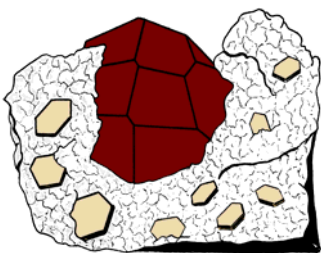
Forsterite is the magnesium-rich end member of the olivine solid-solution series. It was named in honor of the German Professor Johann Reinhold Forster (1729-1798), who taught mineralogy and natural history at the University of Halle.



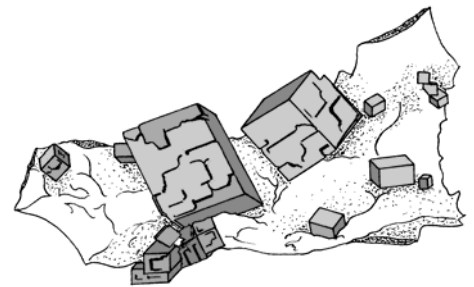
Franklinite is found (with very few, insignificant exceptions) only in the world-famous zinc deposits at Franklin, New Jersey. Consequently, this mineral was named after this great locality. The town of Franklin was named after its Colonial-era Governor, William Franklin. William Franklin was a son of Benjamin Franklin. Therefore, the case could be made that this mineral was indirectly named after the famous politician, publisher, statesman, and founding father of our nation. As interesting as this is, it is a bit of a stretch!

G

Galena is the name taken from the Latin word *galena* which means *lead ore*. In ancient times Pliny the Elder used the name Galenite to refer to lead ore.



Garnet is a very early name, used since ancient times. It came from the Latin word *granatum* which means *a pomegranate* because groups of small, red garnet crystals were thought to resemble pomegranate seeds.



Geyserite is a variety of Opal which is deposited by hot springs and geysers. The name was taken from Geysir, Iceland, a locality of this mineral.



Glauberite contains the sodium sulfate which is called *Glauber Salt*. Glauber Salt is named in honor of the German chemist, Johann Rudolf Glauber (1604-1668) who made Glauber Salt artificially (pictured left, used with permission of Wellcome Trust).

Goethite was named in honor of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832), the German poet, naturalist and amateur mineralogist (pictured right,

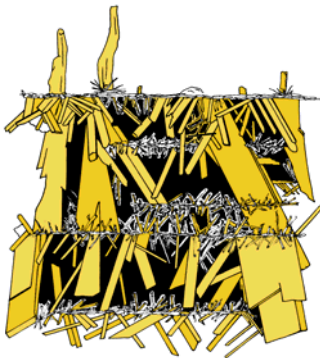


Public Domain).

Gold is an Anglo-Saxon word of uncertain origins. As a mineral it is referred to as Native Gold.

Graphite was named from the Greek verb *graphein* meaning *to write* because it was once used in the manufacture of pencils.

Grossularite is a variety of Garnet that was named from the Latin word *grossularium* meaning *the gooseberry* in reference to the light green color of the first specimens of this mineral to be studied.



Gummite was named from the Latin word *gummi* meaning *gum*, in reference to the gum-like appearance of some specimens of this mineral.

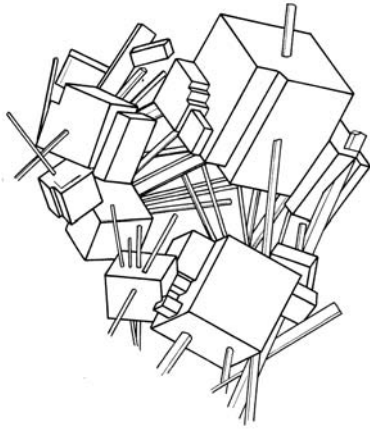
Gypsum was named from the Greek word *gypsos* which means *plaster*. Originally it referred to gypsum that was heated and crushed to powder so that the water in the crystal was driven off. This is what we today call Plaster of Paris.

Gyrolite is commonly found in round balls. Consequently, the name was created from the Greek word *gyros* meaning *round*, in reference to

this common habit.

H

Hair-Stone was an early name for quartz which had inclusions of hair-like crystals of Rutile, Actinolite or other minerals with acicular habit.



Halite was named from the Greek word *hals* which means *salt* (in its masculine form) or *saltwater, sea* (in its feminine form), because of the salt content of ocean water.

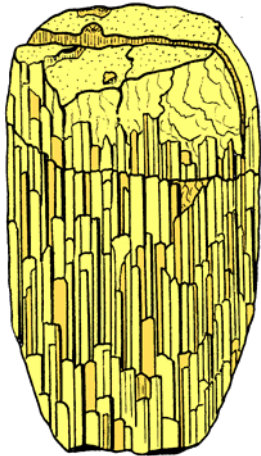
Harmotome was given a name which describes a special crystallographic feature. You might have to be a crystallographer to understand, but here goes . . . The name “Harmotome” came from the Greek words *harmos* meaning *a joint* and *temnein* meaning *to cut*. “...the meaning is ‘that which divides itself at the joints,’ referring to the fact that the pyramid made by its prismatic planes in turning divides parallel to a plane

passed through its terminal edges.” (from A Dictionary of Mineral Names by A.H. Chester).

Heavy Spar is a synonym for Barite because Barite has the highest specific gravity of the non-metallic minerals (pictured right).



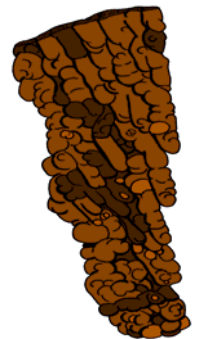
Hedenbergite was named in honor of M.A. Ludwig Hedenberg, the Swedish chemist and mineralogist who discovered and first described this mineral.



Heliodor is the yellow variety of Beryl. It was named from the Greek words *helios* meaning *sun* and *doron* meaning *gift* in reference to its color (pictured left).

Heliotrope is a green variety of chalcedony with red spots scattered throughout. It was named from the Greek words *helios* meaning *sun* and *tepein* meaning *to turn*. According to Pliny the Elder (77 CE) this variety of chalcedony “gives a red reflection when put in water in the face of the sun.” The popular name of this mineral is Bloodstone.

Hematite was named from the Greek word *haimatites* meaning *bloodstone* (*haima* means *blood*) in reference to the fact that all hematite specimens, when powdered, are blood-red in color -- regardless of their color before being crushed.



Hemimorphite forms very interesting crystals. A “hemimorphic” crystal is one which has different terminations on opposite ends of the same crystal.

Hemimorphite typically shows this interesting feature. Its name came from the Greek words *hemi* meaning *half* and *morphe* meaning *form, shape*.

Heulandite was named in honor of John Henry Heuland (1778-1856), a well-known English mineral collector and dealer.



Hexagonite was named after the hexagonal (six-sided) shape of its crystals.

Hiddenite is a green, transparent variety of spodumene. It was named in honor of the American mineralogist, William Earl Hidden (1853-1918).

Hornblende is an old German name originally used to refer to any of a number of dark, prismatic minerals found with metallic ores, but which themselves had no valuable metal content. *Blende* is a German word which means *deceiver*. "Horn" possibly refers to the shape of some specimens which may have resembled an animal's horns. This name now refers to the dark green to black varieties of the mineral group called the Amphiboles.

Horn Silver is a synonym for the silver chloride mineral, Cerargyrite, and was actually the first name given to this mineral.

Howlite was named in honor of Henry How (d. 1879) and the Greek word *lithos* meaning *stone*. How was a chemist, geologist, and mineralogist from Nova Scotia who first described this mineral (image right, Public Domain).



Huebnerite is the manganese end-member of the wolframite solid-solution series. It was named in honor of Adolph Huebner, a mining engineer from Freiberg, Saxony.



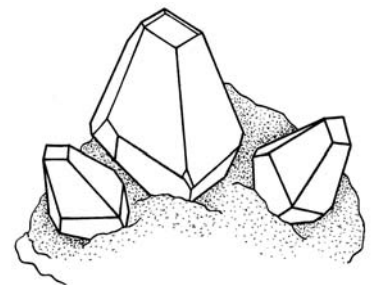
Hyacinth is a popular name for red, gemmy specimens of Zircon.

Hyalite is a colorless, glassy variety of opal. The name came from the Greek word *hyalos* which means *glass*, in reference to its appearance.

Hydrozincite was named after its composition which includes water (*hydro* comes from the Greek word *hydros* meaning *water*) and zinc, $Zn_5(CO_3)_2(OH)_6$.

I

Iceland Spar is a varietal name for transparent, colorless calcite rhombs. The name is a reference to Iceland where, in the late 1600's, a wonderful discovery was made. Stone workers were removing basalt near Eskifjordur on the eastern shore of Iceland, when they hit a fairly large (6 x 3 meter) pocket lined with clear and partially clear calcite crystals. The crystals were removed and sent to Europe where they were inspected by a Danish surgeon named Erasmus Bartholin who noted the property of double refraction in the clear specimens. Since then, clear calcite has been found in various locations worldwide, but the name honoring its place of first discovery remains.



Idocrase was named from the Greek words *eidos* meaning *form* and *krasis* meaning *a mixture*, because crystals of this mineral seem to have crystal forms found on different minerals combined to form this species. Another name for this mineral is Vesuvianite.

Ilmenite was named after Ilmen, a range in the Ural Mountains, where it was first found.

Ilvaite was named after the old name for what is now called the Island of Elba, Italy. It was originally called the Island of Ilva. Ilvaite is the pink variety of Tourmaline.

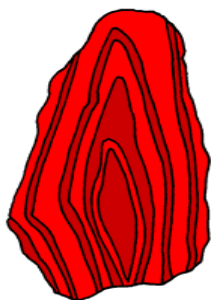
Inesite was named from the Greek word *ines* which means *flesh-fiber* because it can be found in fibrous, flesh-red masses.

Iron is the elemental name of what is more commonly called Native Iron. The name itself came from the Old English word *iren*.

J

Jade is a group name which refers to the Pyroxene mineral, Jadeite, and to the Amphibole mineral, Nephrite. The name “jade” is thought to be from the phrase *piedra de yjada* meaning *stone of the side*, because it was believed to be a remedy for kidney problems.

Jadeite was named from the older term Jade.



Jamesonite was named in honor of the mineralogist Robert Jameson (1774-1854) from Edinburgh, Scotland (pictured right, Public Domain).

Jasper was named from the Greek word *hiaspis*, which was used in ancient times to refer to some precious stone, the exact identity of which is now unknown.

K

Kaolin is an old name for the clay used to make porcelain. “Kaolin” is a corruption of the Chinese name of the original locality of this mineral, Kauling (meaning *high ridge*) which is a hill near Jauchu Fa, China. It refers to a collection of clay minerals of similar composition.

Kaolinite is one of the kaolin minerals, and is named after the group of which it is a part.

Kernite was named after Kern County, California, where the mineral is found in great quantities.

Kidney Ore is a popular name for reniform masses of Hematite that resemble a kidney. This name was apparently given by the miners who first found this type of hematite in the famous mineral deposits of Cumberland, England.



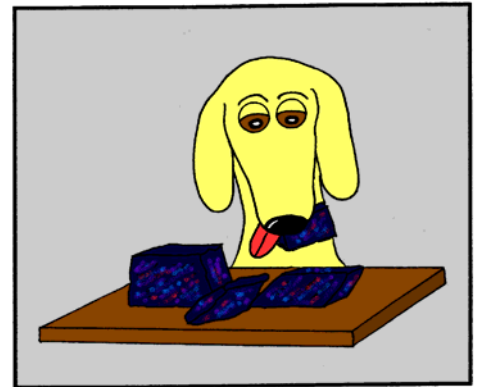
Kunzite was named in honor of the noted mineralogist, gemologist and one-time Vice President of Tiffany's of New York City, George Friedrich Kunz (1856-1932). Pictured left, Public Domain.

Kyanite is a variation of the spelling of the original name of this mineral, Cyanite. The name came from the Greek word *kyanos* meaning *blue* in reference to this mineral's most common color.

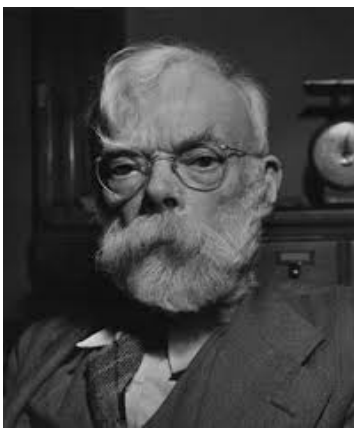
L

Labradorite is found in large, cleavable masses on the coast of Labrador, Canada and is named after this important locality.

Lapis Lazuli is not a mineral, but a collection of minerals. It is primarily composed of Lazurite, but also includes white calcite and some pyrite. The name "Lapis Lazuli" was first used in writing by Anselmus Boetius de Boodt in 1647, although the name is known to have been used in the Middle Ages. He claims the name came from *azul* meaning *blue* which was altered to *lazuli*. Others suggest its origins are properly found in the ancient Persian word *lazhuward* meaning *blue*. *Lapis* is the Latin word for *stone*.



A mineral collector's best friend:
a Labradorite Retriever



Laumontite was named in honor of Francois Pierre Nicolas Gillet de Laumont (1747-1834), the mineral collector who discovered this mineral.

Lawsonite was named in honor of Professor Andrew Cowper Lawson (1861-1952) of the University of California (pictured left).

Lazulite is a mineral name whose origins are not certain. One theory states it was named after its older name of Lazurstein. Another claims it came from an Arabic word *azul* meaning *heaven* and the Greek word *lithos* meaning *stone* in reference to its blue color. Yet another theory says the name came from the medieval Latin word *lazulum* which was originally given to Lapis Lazuli and later to Lazulite.

Lazurite was named from the mineral name *azurite* because of their similar azure-blue color.

Lead is the elemental name of this metal which rarely occurs in nature. Such specimens are usually called Native Lead.



Lepidolite is a variety of Mica. It was named from the Greek words *lepis* meaning *scale* and *lithos* meaning *stone*, in reference to the scaly appearance of groups of lepidolite flakes in a mass.

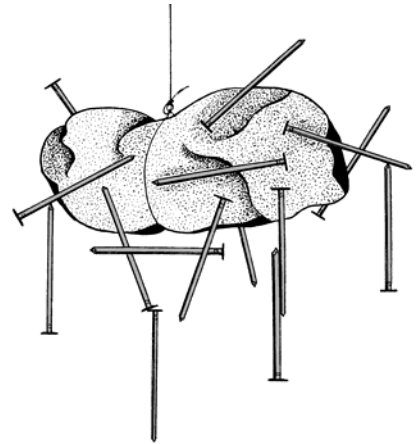
Leucite was named from the Greek word *leukos* meaning *white*, a reference to its color.

Limonite was at one time called Wiesenerz which means *meadow ore* (since it was found in the meadows). Therefore, it is concluded that the name “limonite” came from the Greek word *leimon* meaning *meadow*.

Linarite was named after Linares, Spain, a locality of this brilliant blue mineral.

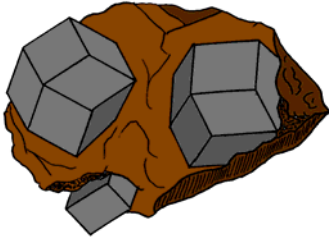
Lodestone is a magnetic and polarized mineral. Because a magnetic needle is used in a compass to guide a person along the way of a journey, this mineral was given the name “lodestone” since the word *lode* means *way*.

Ludlamite was named in honor of Henry Ludlam, an English mineralogist.



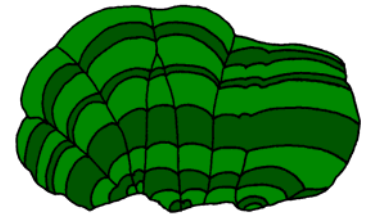
M

Magnesite was named from its composition, $MgCO_3$ which includes the element magnesium.



Magnetite was named after a district in Thessaly, Greece, bordering on Macedonia, called Magnesia.

Malachite was named from the Greek word *moloche* meaning *mallow*. Mallow is a plant, so the name is a reference to its green color. The name *Molochitis* was used as early as 77 AD by Pliny the Elder.



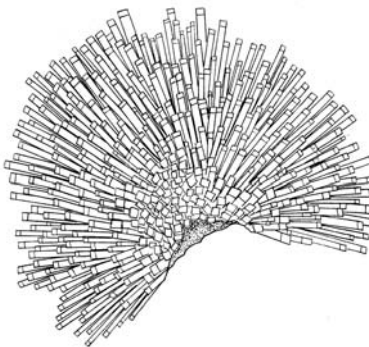
Manganite contains the element manganese and is therefore named after its composition, $MnO(OH)$.

Marcasite was named from an Arabic word which was at one time applied to pyrites in general. It may come from the word *marchesita* or *marchasite* meaning *pebble*.

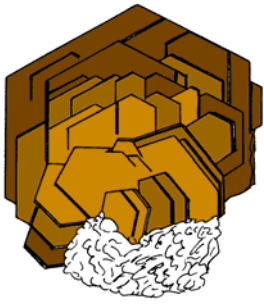
Margarite, it is told, was created by mineral dealers from Tyrol, Austria. The name was derived from the Greek word *margarites* meaning *a pearl* in reference to its pearly luster.

Meerschaum is a common, popular name for the mineral Sepiolite. It was derived from the German words *meer* meaning *the sea* and *schaum* meaning *foam*. This is a reference to its very light, somewhat frothy appearance.

Mercury is the elemental name for this mineral. As a mineral it is more commonly known as Native Mercury. The name was derived from the Greek words *hydros* meaning *water* and *argyros* meaning *silver*. This “watery silver” is the only metal that is a liquid! It is also known by the popular name of Quicksilver.



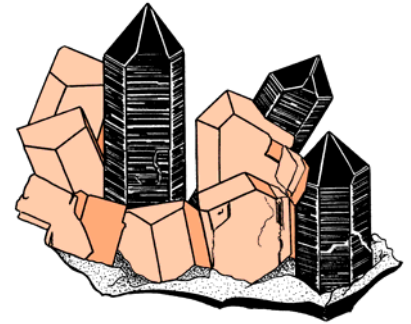
Mesolite was named from the Greek words *mesos* meaning *middle* and *lithos* meaning *stone* because it is chemically between Natrolite ($Na_2Al_2Si_3O_{10} \cdot 2H_2O$) and Scolecite ($CaAl_2Si_3O_{10} \cdot 3H_2O$).



Mica refers to a group of minerals which includes Muscovite, Biotite, Lepidolite and Phlogopite. The name was probably derived from the Latin word *micare* meaning *to shine* in allusion to the vitreous luster of the micas.

meet at an angle of 89 degrees and 30 minutes - just the tiniest bit off from 90 degrees. The name, therefore, was derived from the Greek words *micros* meaning *small* and *klinein* meaning *to incline*

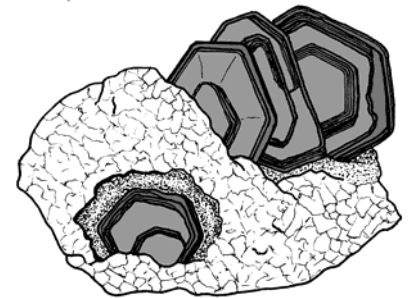
Microcline is a variety of the Feldspar group of minerals. It has two cleavage planes, one perfect and one good. The planes as an indication of how very close the cleavage planes are to being a perfect right angle.



Millerite was named in honor of William Hallows Miller (1801-1880), the English mineralogist who first studied this mineral.

Mimetite is very much like the mineral Pyromorphite: they have the same crystal structure, are similar in appearance and occurrence and share other physical and chemical properties. Consequently, it was observed that Mimetite mimics or imitates pyromorphite. Therefore, it was named after the Greek word *mimetes* meaning *an imitator*.

Molybdenite was at first thought to be a compound of lead. In 1782, P.J. Hielm gave the name "Molybdenite" to lead-bearing minerals in general. It was created from the Greek word for lead, *molybdos*. By 1796 Richard Kirwan was referring to the mineral as Molybdena and the metal extracted from it as "Molybdenite." In 1807, Alexandre Brongniart called the mineral "Molybdenite." This designation has continued to this day.

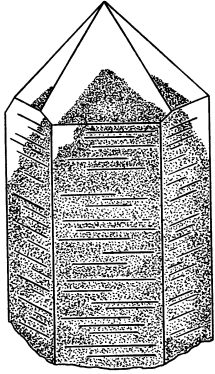


Monazite is a relatively rare mineral. Consequently it was named after the Greek verb *monazein* which means *to be solitary*.



Moonstone is a popular name for polished specimens of Adularia and Albite. The name is a reference to the glimmering silver-white to blue luster of polished specimens. In ancient times, moonstone probably referred to the glassy clear crystals of gypsum that we now call Selenite.

Morganite was named after the famous American financier - and mineral collector - John Pierpont Morgan (1837-1913). In fact, significant gifts of valuable mineral specimens were made by J.P. Morgan to the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. It is also known as Rose Beryl. (Picture left: J.P. Morgan, public domain).



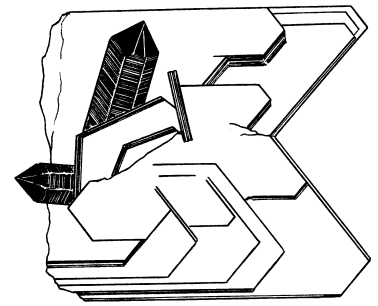
Morion refers to very dark to black smoky quartz. Originally the name was applied by lapidaries (that is, those who polish gemstones into gems) and has since crossed over into use in the mineral specimen field. The name was derived from Pliny's word for this mineral, *mormorion*.

Moss Agate is a popular name for a variety of agate which has moss-like inclusions of manganese oxide.

Mottramite was named after its locality of Mottram, St. Andres, Cheshire, England.

Mountain Leather is a popular name for the occurrence of matted tremolite fibers which feel like soft leather. The "mountain" reference indicates that it is found in mountainous environments.

Muscovite is highly resistant to heat and electricity. Consequently, it found common use as oven glass in Old Russia which was at one time known by the name of "Muscovy." This mineral acquired the common name "Muscovy Glass" after the Latin term *vitrum Muscoviticum*. In 1850, James Dwight Dana formally named this mineral muscovite based on the Latin term. Those who remember the old wood stoves wood recall that the window panes were actually sheets of translucent mica referred to as "Isinglass," an old popular name for mica.



N

Nail Head Spar is a popular name for calcite crystals which resemble the heads of old-fashioned wrought iron nails.

Natrolite was named after its chemical composition, $\text{Na}_2\text{Al}_2\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{10} \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$. The Latin word *natrium* means *sodium* (the chemical symbol for sodium is Na from "natrium") and the Greek word *lithos* meaning *stone*.

Nepheline was named from the Greek word *nephele* meaning *cloud* because this mineral becomes cloudy when immersed in strong acid.

Nephrite was originally called "Lapis Nephriticus" meaning *kidney-stone* because it was believed to be a remedy for kidney disease. The name Nephrite was given by Abraham Werner in 1780 based on the longer, older name.



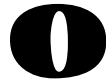
Neptunite frequently occurs with the mineral Aegirine. Aegirine was named after the Scandinavian sea god, Aegir. Neptunite, in turn, was named after the Roman sea god, Neptune. (Left: King Neptune, god of the Sea.)

Niccolite was named from the Latin word *niccolum* meaning *nickel*, a reference to the nickel content of this mineral, NiAs.

The well-known mineralogist and author, Frederick Pough, gives a different and more interesting interpretation of this mineral name's origins. He maintains that it was originally called Kupfernickel (literally, *copper nickel*) by German miners. Legend says that these miners believed human-like creatures

called "imps" or "gremlins" lied underground and passed their time by teasing the miners. In retaliation the miners put them down by called them "nickels." This name was therefore applied to the mineral.

Niter (sometimes also spelled Nitre) is from the Greek word *nitron*. Nitron is the word used to refer to the saline material found in trona deposits. The Greek word has its roots in the ancient word *neter* (as well as the Hebraic word *nether*) which referred to the substance extracted by water from burned vegetable matter.



Okenite was named in honor of the German naturalist, Lorenz Oken (1779-1851) of Munich. The original spelling was Ockenite. In 1830 it was changed to Okenite. (Picture Left: Public Domain.)

Oligoclase is a variety of Feldspar. It was named from the Greek words *oligos* meaning *little* and *klan* meaning *to break* because it was thought to have less perfect cleavage than the similar mineral Albite.

Olivinite was named after its olive-green color.

Olivine was named after its typical olive-green color.

Onyx was named from the Greek word *onyx* meaning *a finger nail* or *claw*. This name was originally given by Theophrastus and, later, by Pliny the Elder to a variety of two- and three-colored layered stones.

Opal was named from the ancient Latin name for this favorite gemstone, *Opalus*, which literally means *precious stone*. It was used by Pliny the Elder to refer to the mineral we today call Precious Opal. He wrote, "The flat precious stone called opalus is the most valuable of all the stones, but it is difficult to define it and describe it. It has the gentler fire of the ruby, the brilliant purple

of the amethyst and the sea-green of the emerald, all shining together in an indescribable union.”

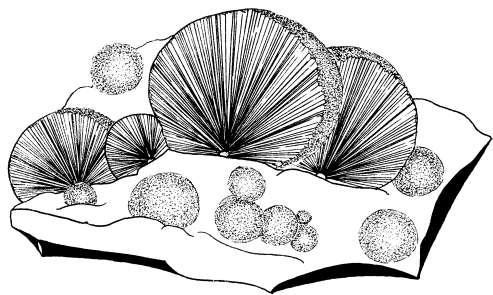
The Latin word *opalus* was derived from the Greek word *opallios* which itself was derived from the Sanskrit word *upalah*.

Orpiment was named from the Latin word *auripigmentum* meaning *gold paint*, a reference to its common use in ancient days. It was also believed that it did not just have the color of gold, but actually contained gold.

Orthoclase is another variety of Feldspar. It has two cleavage planes which intersect at a right angle (90 degrees). The name, therefore, is from the Greek words *orthos* meaning *right* and *klan* meaning *to break*.

P

Peacock Ore is a popular name for copper ores which display an iridescent tarnish, colors like those of the male peacock's tail feathers. The name originated with copper miners. To be most accurate, "Peacock Ore" refers to colorful Bornite. Collectors must be careful: it is common to find a lot of material at mineral shows bearing the label "Peacock Ore." This so-called "Peacock Ore" is chalcocopyrite that has been heat-treated to cause the iridescent colors.



Pectolite was named from the Greek words *pectos* meaning *compact* and *lithos* meaning *stone*. The name is an allusion to the tightly grouped, radiating crystals of this mineral (a mineral habit termed "radial").

Periclase was named from the Greek words *peri* meaning *around* and *klasis* meaning *breaking*, an allusion to its perfect cleavage.

Peridot is a variety of Olivine. The name is an old French word of unknown origin. The French at one time used it to refer to the mineral Chrysolite (another variety of Olivine).

Perthite actually refers not to a mineral, but to the specific combination of the minerals Orthoclase and Albite. The name was derived from an important locality of this mineral mixture, Perth, Ontario, Canada.

Phenacite (also **Phenakite**) was named from the Greek word *phenax* meaning *a cheat* or *a deceiver* because it looks so much like quartz (and was frequently mistaken for quartz).

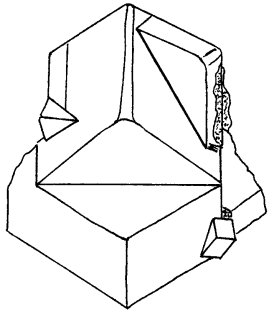
Phillipsite was named in honor of the British mineralogist, William Phillips (1775-1829).

Phlogopite was named from the Greek word *phlogopos* meaning *fiery*. This is a reference to the reddish color displayed on some specimens of this variety of mica.

Phosgenite was named from the word *phosgene* an old name for a compound containing carbon, oxygen and chlorine. This mineral contains all three of these elements: $Pb_2(CO_3)Cl_2$.

Pitchblende is the massive variety of Uraninite. It was named from the words *pitch*, because it looks like pitch or coal tar, and *blende* which means *deceive*.

Plagioclase is yet another variety of the mineral Feldspar. It was named from the Greek words *plagios* meaning *oblique* and *klaos* meaning *to cleave*. This is a reference to the oblique angle formed by its two cleavage planes.



Platinum was discovered in Colombia, South America. In 1735 it was taken to Europe where it was called *Platina* after the Spanish word *plata* which means *silver*, because it was at first thought to be silver.

Prase is a green Jasper-like mineral. It was named from the Greek word *prason* which means *a leak*, in reference to its green color. (If you don't already know, a leak is a plant.)

Precious Opal is the name which refers to the varieties of Opal that display the wonderful play of colors for which opal is famous and loved as a gemstone. "Precious" is simply a reference to its far greater value in comparison to Common Opal.

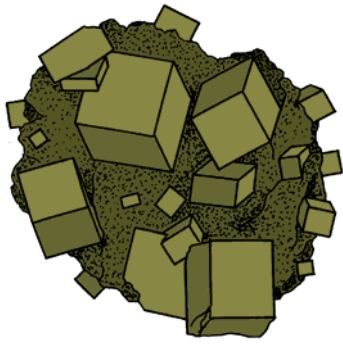
Prehnite was named in honor of the Dutch soldier, Colonel Hendrik von Prehn (1733-1785) who returned to Europe with samples of this new-found mineral from the Cape of Good Hope, South Africa in 1783.

Proustite was named in honor of the French chemist, Joseph Louis Proust (1755-1826). (Picture Right: Public Domain.)

Psilomelane was named from the Greek words *psilos* meaning *smooth* and *melas, melanos* meaning *black*, in allusion to the smooth, black appearance of many specimens.



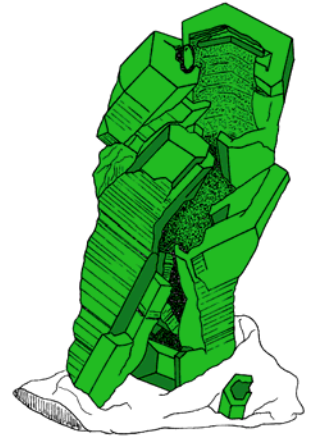
Pyrargyrite was named from the Greek words *pyr* meaning *fire* and *argyros* meaning *silver*. This name was created to highlight its striking color on fresh surfaces and its silver content (Ag_3SbS_3).



Pyrite was named from the Greek word *pyr* meaning *fire*, because it sparks when it is struck with steel.

Pyrolusite was named from the Greek words *pyr* meaning *fire* and *luein* meaning *to wash, to do away with [color]*, because when it is melted with glass, the glass becomes colorless.

Pyromorphite was named from the Greek words *pyr* meaning *fire* and *morphe* meaning *form*, because this mineral melts into a globule, but re-crystallizes upon cooling. Because of this property it was thought (wrongly) that pyromorphite was deposited by volcanic action.



Pyrope was named from the Greek word *pyropos* meaning *fiery*, a reference to its red color.

Pyrophyllite was named from the Greek words *pyr* meaning *fire* and *phyllon* meaning *leaf*. This name was created to describe that this mineral breaks into flakes (exfoliates) when it is heated.

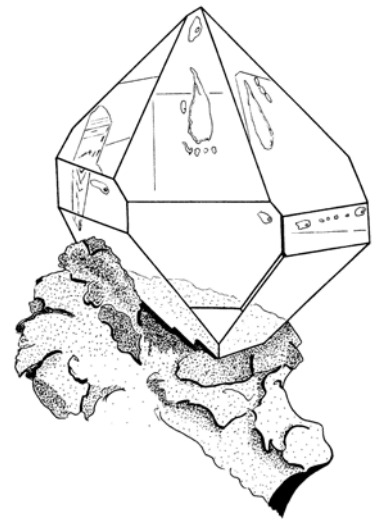
Pyroxene was named from the Greek words *pyr* meaning *fire* and *zenos* meaning *a stranger*: even though it was found among igneous rocks it was commonly believed that it did not form there through fire, but occurred entirely by accident.

Pyrrhotite was named from the Greek word *pyrrotos* meaning *redness*, which is a reference to its reddish color.

Q

Quartz is a mineral name with a long, and a little confusing, history. It is thought to come from the German word *quarz*, a word of ancient and uncertain origins. The names “quarz” and “querz” are first found in German writings in the 1500’s. Their origins are a mystery. Much to the dismay of mineralogists and etymologists (etymologists are those who study the origins, history and uses of words) alike, no one has been able to determine the precise origins of the name Quartz.

There are theories, however. One is that it was derived from a Slavic word *tvruda* meaning *hard*, a word which passed through the Czech and Polish languages on its way to German where it became *quarz*. Others think it is an abbreviation of an Old Saxon phrase *querk-lufterz* meaning *cross-vein ore*. Perhaps we will never know its exact origin!



R

Realgar was named from the Arabic phrase *rajh al ghar* which means *powder of the miner*, based on its occurrence and a peculiar physical property. First, an early deposit of realgar was a silver mine; secondly, it turns to a powder when exposed to light.



Rhodochrosite was named from the Greek phrase *rhodochros* meaning *rose-colored*, a reference to its striking rose-pink to red color. (Picture Left.)

Rhodonite was named from the Greek word *rhodon* meaning *a rose*, in allusion to its rose-pink color when pure.

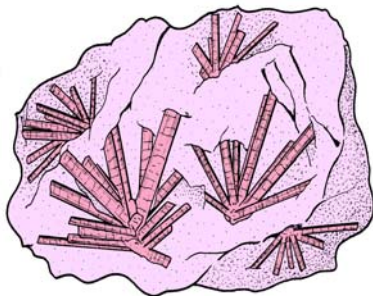


Rock Crystal is the popular name used to refer to colorless, crystallized quartz.

Rock Salt is the common name for the mineral Halite, and is used to refer to mineral salt as found in the ground, as opposed to the salt obtained by the evaporation of sea water.

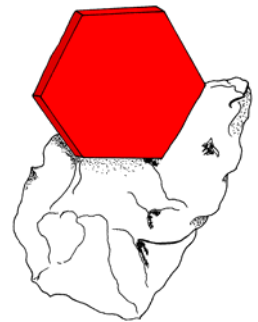
Rosasite was named after the Rosas Mine, Sardinia, Italy.

Rose Quartz is the name given to the rose-pink variety of quartz.



Rubellite is a variety of Tourmaline. The name probably came from the Latin word *rubellus* meaning *reddish*, a reference to its red-pink color. (Left)

Ruby was named from the Latin word *rubeus* meaning *red*, in reference to its color. (Right)

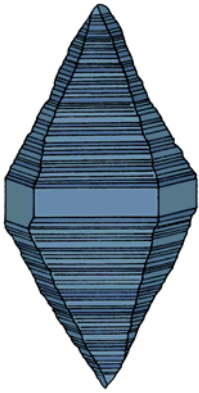


Ruby Silver is a very old name which has been used to refer to both Proustite and Pyrargyrite. The name refers to the color of these silver-bearing minerals before they oxidize and turn dark. Proustite is sometimes called Light Ruby Silver and Pyrargyrite Dark Ruby Silver.

Rutile was named from the Latin word *rutilus* meaning red in allusion to its color.

S

Sanidine was named from the Greek words *sanis* meaning *tablet* or *board* and *idos* meaning *appearance*, in reference to the tablet-like shape of its crystals.



Sapphire was named from the Greek word *sappheiros* meaning *a blue stone*. In ancient times this word probably referred to Lapis Lazuli. Today it refers to the colored varieties of corundum, excluding red Ruby. (Left)

Sard was named from the Greek word *sardius* which itself most likely came from the place name of Sardis, which was probably a once-famous locality of this mineral.

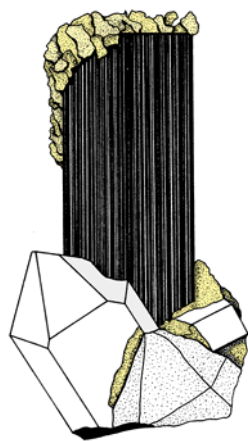
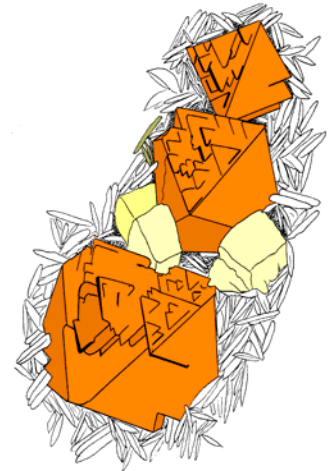
Sardonyx is simply the combination of the mineral names Sard and Onyx.

Since sard is a red or brown chalcedony, sardonyx refers to onyx of alternating red or brown material and white material.

Satin Spar as a general term refers to fibrous varieties of some minerals with a silky luster. Originally it was applied to Calcite; it was also used to refer to this variety of Aragonite. Today, Satin Spar refers to this silky, fibrous variety of Gypsum.

Scapolite was named from the Greek words *skapos* which means *a shaft* and *lithos* which means *stone*, in reference to its prismatic crystal habit.

Scheelite was named in honor of the Swedish chemist, Karl Wilhelm Scheele (1742-1786). (Right)



Schorl is another mineral name with a long and somewhat mysterious history. James Dwight Dana reported that a slight variation of this name, Schrul, was used as far back as 1565. It was used to name black, little stones which were by-products of the washing of gold and tin ores.

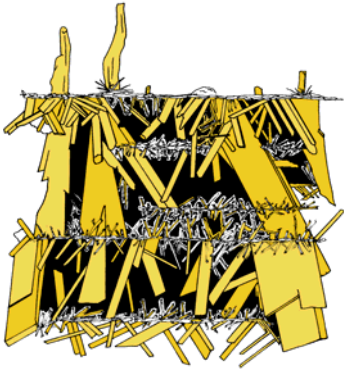
Johann Gottschalk Wallerius was the first to use the name “schorl” as we now spell it (in 1797). The problem remains that no one knows the origin of the word. Wallerius, like those before him, applied the name to a variety of dark-colored, prismatic minerals.

In 1772 a publication by Rome de L'Isle refers to “schorl” as a variety of tourmaline. This is the use of the name Schorl today. (Left)

Scolecite was named from the Greek word *skolex* meaning *a worm*, because this mineral curls up when it is heated.

Scorodite was named from the Greek word *scorodion* meaning *garlic-like*, because it smells like garlic when heated.

Sea Foam (Meerschaum, Sepiolite) is an early synonym of Meerschaum, a variety of the mineral Sepiolite. This popular name is a reference to the light weight and frothy appearance of this mineral.



Selenite (Gypsum) was named from the Greek word *selene* which means *the moon*, an allusion to the pale, bluish reflections of some varieties of gypsum. Today, “Selenite” refers to all transparent to translucent gypsum in general, regardless of color. Purists would say this title should refer only to the clear, colorless, transparent varieties of gypsum. However, one is likely to find the term “selenite” applied to nearly all specimens of gypsum at mineral shows and in collections today. (Left)

Sepiolite was named from the Greek words *sepion* meaning *cuttle fish bone* and *lithos* meaning *stone*, in allusion to this mineral’s lightness (which is due to its relatively high porosity).

Serandite was named in honor of J. M. Serand, a mineral collector from West Africa. The story is told that he was known for having a “rosy-pink complexion” similar to the color of Serandite.

Serpentine was named from the Latin word *serpens* which means *a snake*. Most authors report that this name is a reference to the snake-like mottling of massive serpentine. A different theory claims the name was chosen to refer to an ancient Roman belief that this mineral was effective as a remedy for snake bites. The name is found in literature as old as writings by P. Dioscorides around 50 CE.

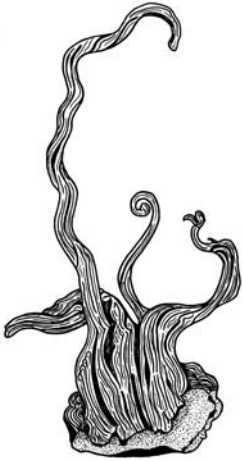
Siderite is another mineral name which has been used in a variety of ways by a variety of mineralogists through the centuries.

It was first used by Torbern Bergmann in 1790 to refer to the mineral now called Pharmacosiderite. In 1797, C.E.F. von Moll applied the name to a deep blue variety of Quartz.

Today this name refers to the iron carbonate mineral. The name was derived from the Greek word *sideros* meaning *iron* in reference to its iron content, FeCO_3 .



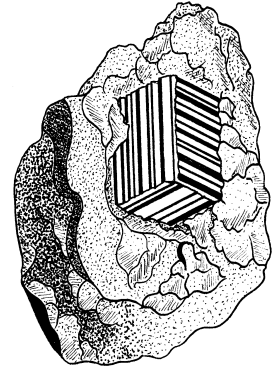
Sillimanite was named in honor of Professor Benjamin Silliman (1779-1864) who was the first professor of mineralogy at Yale University (as well as professor of chemistry).



Silver was named from the Old English word *seolfer*. This name is related to the German word *silber* and the Dutch word *zilver*. An early Latin name for this mineral was *Luna* which means *moon*, a reference to its striking, bright luster.

Silver Glance is a synonym for argentite. “Silver glance” was derived from the earlier German word for this mineral, *silberglanzerz*. This name is first mentioned in writing by Anton Estner in 1804 and Robert Jameson in 1805, although it was probably in use long before these references were written.

Skutterudite was named after the locality of Skutterud, Norway.



Smithsonite was named in honor of James Smithson (1765-1829), British chemist and mineralogist, and founder of the Smithsonian Institution, our national museum in Washington, D.C.

At one time the two minerals, Smithsonite and Hemimorphite, were thought to be one in the same, and were together known by the name *Calamine* (a name applied to zinc ores in general). Smithson is the mineralogist who distinguished the chemical difference between these two minerals.

Smoky Quartz is the popular name for the smoky brown to black, transparent varieties of quartz.

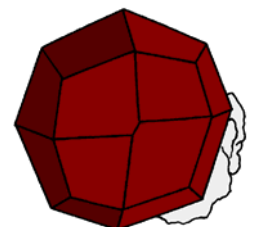
Soapstone is a popular name for massive Talc. It feels cool and slippery to the touch and is therefore described as feeling “soapy.”

Sodalite was named from *sodium*, which is one of the elements in its chemical composition, $\text{Na}_4\text{Al}_3\text{Si}_3\text{O}_{12}\text{Cl}$, and from the Greek word *lithos* meaning *stone*.

“**Spar**” is a generic term which refers to any non-metallic, cleavable mineral with a vitreous (glassy) luster.

Specular Iron (Hematite) was named from the Latin word *speculum* meaning *a mirror*, because this variety of hematite has a shiny, metallic luster, and *iron* is a reference to its content. Specularite is an uncommon synonym for Specular Iron.

Spessartite (also found as Spessartine) was named after Spessart, Bavaria (Germany), a famous old locality of this variety of Garnet. (Right)



Sphalerite was named from the Greek word *sphaleros* meaning *delusive, treacherous*. The choice of this word was inspired by the other name for this mineral, Blende, which itself came from the German word meaning *blind* or *deceiving*. This mineral was considered “deceiving” because although some specimens looked like Galena, they did not produce any lead.

Black Jack is the name miners once used for black specimens of Sphalerite.

Ruby Jack is a popular name for the very attractive, and rather rare, ruby-red crystals of Sphalerite.

Sphene (Titanite) was named from the Greek word *sphen* meaning *a wedge* in reference to the wedge-like shape of the crystals. This is a very common synonym for Titanite and one is likely to find either name in today’s mineral literature.

Spinel is yet another mineral name with a mysterious history. There are quite a number of different theories explaining its origin.

One says it was derived from the Greek word *spinther* meaning *a spark*, in reference to the sparkling colors of gem-quality Spinel. A different theory claims it was derived from the Latin word *spina* meaning *a thorn* in allusion to its pointed crystal shape. Others point to the same Latin word but translate it as *a spine* (which is a perfectly accurate translation) because it is thought that it was first applied to crystals which had a “spine shape.”

Spodumene was named from the Greek word *spodoumenos* which means *something reduced to ashes*, in reference to the ashy color of common Spodumene.

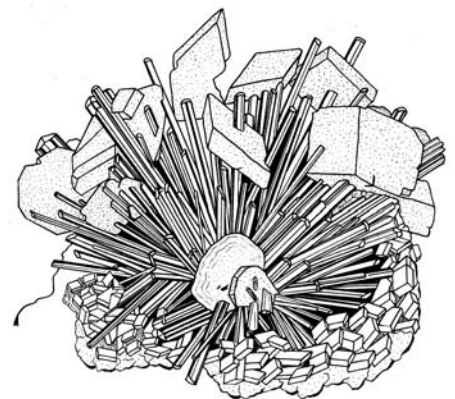
Staurolite was named from the Greek words *stauros* meaning *cross* and *lithos* meaning *stone*, because twin crystals often form the shape of a cross. In North Carolina and Virginia these cross-shaped specimens are known by the popular name of Fairy Stones.

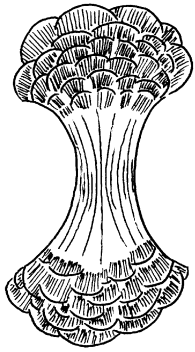


Stephanite was named in honor of Archduke of Austria, Victor Stephan (1817-1867), who also served as mining director. It has also been called Brittle Silver Ore.

Stibiconite was named from the Latin word *stibium* which means *antimony* and *konis* meaning *powder*, because this antimony oxide is often found in a powdered form.

Stibnite was actually the second name suggested for this mineral. It is a modification of the name Stibine which was proposed by F.S. Beudant in 1832. James Dwight Dana gave this new name, Stibnite, in 1854. “Stibine” came from the Latin word *stibium* meaning *antimony* (*stibium* itself was derived from the Greek word *stibi*, which is of Egyptian origins) because this mineral contains antimony (Sb_2S_3). A synonym for stibnite, which



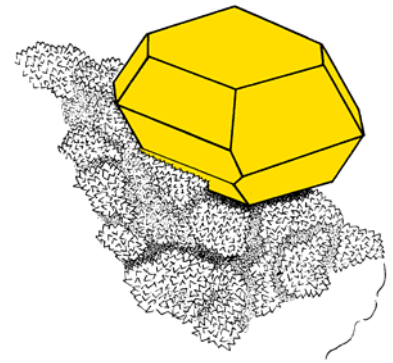


is found occasionally in non-American publications, is Antimonite which is clearly a reference to the antimony content of this mineral.

Stilbite was named from the Greek verb *stilbein* which means *to shine* or from the Greek noun *stilbe* which means *a mirror*, both of which are a reference to this zeolite mineral's shining, glassy luster.

Strontianite was named after Strontian, Argyllshire, Scotland, the locality where it was first discovered.

Sulfur (also spelled Sulphur) is the Latin name for this element (although the fact that this is an element was not determined until 1809). The exact origin of this name is unknown.



Sunstone is a reference to specific types of Feldspar (most particularly Orthoclase and Oligoclase) which display sunshine-like, orange-yellow reflections, most notably on polished surfaces.

Sylvanite received its name from an early name for the element tellurium, In 1796 Richard Kirwan referred to the element tellurium as "sylvanite," after the locality in Transylvania, Romania, where its ores were first found.

Sylvite (also found as Sylvine) came from its New Latin chemical name of *sal digestivus Sylvii* which translates as *digestive salt of Sylvius*. "New Latin" refers to the Latin used since about 1500, as defined by The American Heritage Dictionary, Second College Edition, 1982.

T

Talc is thought to be derived from the Arabic word *talg* or *talk* meaning *mica* since talc forms mica like flakes (that is, it has micaceous cleavage).



Tantalite was named after the Greek mythological king, Tantalus, who was infamous for his criminal activity. As punishment for his crimes, Tantalus was condemned to Hades. There he was doomed to stand in water which would recede when he would try to take a drink; above him hung fruit which would move out of his reach whenever he tried to take some. His drink and food would forever be untouchable leaving him eternally thirsty and hungry. Because this mineral is difficult to dissolve in acid, mineralogists considered it "untouchable" in its own way. (Left: Tantalus, 1733, Public Domain.)

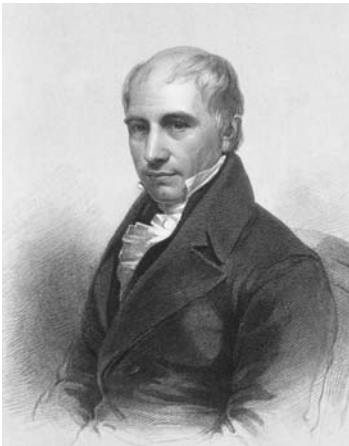
Tanzanite was discovered in July of 1967 in the African nation of Tanzania by a tailor named Manuel d'Souza. The mineral was studied by Henry B. Platt who was at the time the primary gem buyer and Vice President of Tiffany and Company jewelers. He chose to name the new find Tanzanite after the nation in which it was discovered. He preferred this over Zoisite (Tanzanite is a variety of Zoisite) because he felt "Zoisite" sounded too much like the word "suicide."



Tennantite was named in honor of the English chemist, Smithson Tennant (1761-1815). (Left: Public Domain)

Tetrahedrite was named after the tetrahedral form of its crystals. The name came from the Greek words *tetra* meaning *four* and *hedra* meaning *face*. A tetrahedral crystal, like tetrahedrite, is one which has four sides or faces.

Thenardite was named in honor of Louis Jacques Thenard (1777-1857), a noted French chemist. (Right: Public Domain.)

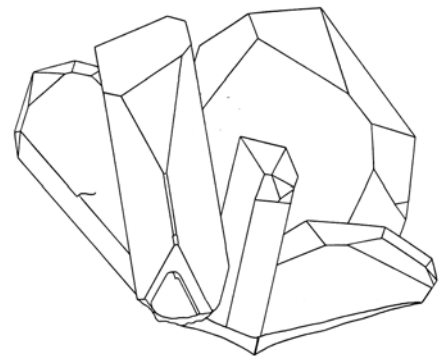


Thomsonite was named in honor of Dr. Thomas Thomson (1773-1852), a prominent Scottish chemist and mineralogist. (Left: Public Domain.)

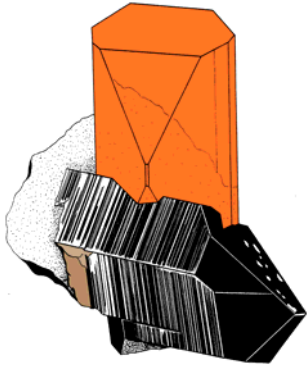


Tiger Eye (sometimes found as Tiger's Eye) is a popular name referring to the lovely pseudomorph of quartz after golden brown Crocidolite fibers. The name is a reference to the yellow-brown color and chatoyant character of this lapidary favorite, particularly of polished specimens, which resemble the color and appearance of a tiger's eye.

Tincalconite was named from two languages: from a Sanskrit word *tincal* for Borax, and from the Greek word *konia* meaning *powder*, because this mineral is formed when borax loses its water and turns to powder. (Anyone who has ever owned a specimen of borax has been disappointed to watch its striking crystals literally crumble to Tincalconite dust.)



Titanite is a synonym for Sphene. The name came from its composition, CaTiSiO_5 , which includes the element titanium.

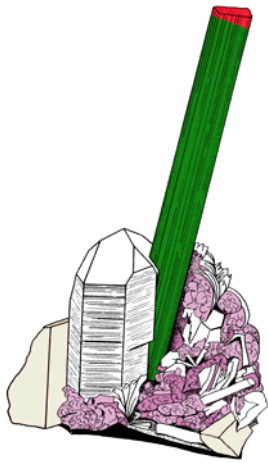


Topaz was named from Topazos (which literally means *to seek*) an island in the Red Sea. Today this island is called Zabargad. Zabargad (which is the Arabic word for Olivine) is a small, stony, almost inaccessible island approximately 30 miles off the coast of Egypt. Found within the fractures and fissures of this island are gem-quality Peridot crystals. Ancient peoples applied this word to a mineral other than the one we call “topaz” today, most probably to Peridot.

Some mineralogists claim that the name came from the Sanskrit word *tapas* meaning *fire*, in reference to the color and luster of some specimens

of topaz.

Torbernite was named in honor of the Swedish mineralogist and chemist, Torbern Olaf Bergman (1735-1784), who first examined this mineral. It is sometimes also called Uranium Mica. (Right: Public Domain.)



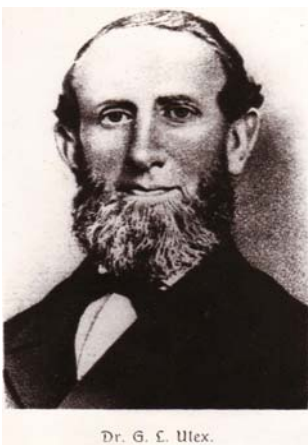
Tourmaline was named from the Sinhalese word *toramallie* (spelled in some sources *turamali*) a name which referred generally to gems found in Sri Lanka.

Travertine is a form of Calcite. The name is thought to come from the phrase *Lapis Tiburtinus* meaning *stone of Tibur*, although this theory is somewhat in question.

Tremolite was named after its locality, the Tremola Valley near St. Gotthard, Switzerland.

Turkey Fat Ore is a popular name for the bright yellow variety of Smithsonite which, you might guess, looks like turkey fat.

Turquoise was named from an Old French word *turquoise* meaning *Turkish*, because turquoise was transported from Persia (modern Iran) through Turkey to Europe.



Dr. G. L. Ulex.

U

Ulexite was named in honor of the German chemist, Georg Ludwig Ulex (1811-1883), the one who discovered this mineral. (Left: Public Domain.)

Uraninite is an oxide of uranium and was named in reference to its chemical composition, UO_2 .



Uvarovite is a variety of Garnet. It was named in honor of Count Sergey Semionovich Uvarov (1786-1855), a Russian nobleman and President of the Academy of St. Petersburg. (Left: Public Domain.)

Uvite, a variety of Tourmaline, was named after the province of Uva, Sri Lanka, where it was found.

V

Vanadinite was named after its chemical composition which includes the element vanadium, $Pb_5(VO_4)_3Cl$. Vanadium is named after Vanada, the Scandinavian goddess of fertility, who is now

known by the name Freya.

Variscite was named after Variscia, the ancient name of the Voigtland region of Germany.

Vesuvianite was named after the locality from which it was described, Mount Vesuvius, Italy. This is a synonym for Idocrase. (Right: Mt. Vesuvius, Brooklyn Museum Archives, Public Domain.)



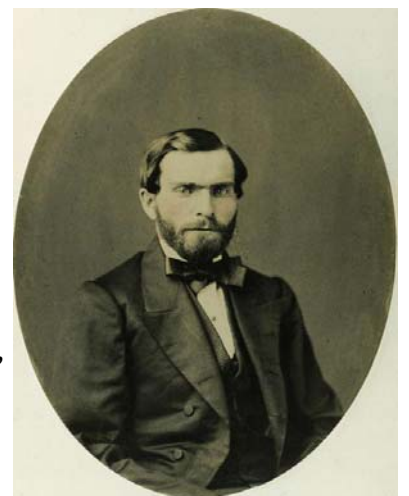
Vivianite was named in honor of the Welsh-Cornish mine owner and mineralogist, John Henry Vivian (1785-1855), who discovered this mineral. (Left: Public Domain.)

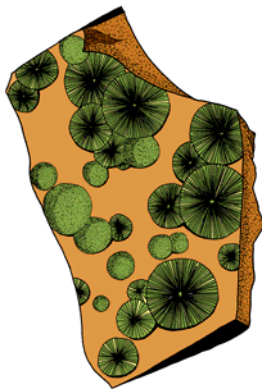


W

Wad is a name applied today to impure manganese ore which contains a variety of manganese oxides. It is an old name which originally referred to these manganese oxides as well as to Graphite. The origin of this name is unknown.

Wardite was named in honor of Henry Augustus Ward (1834-1906), founder of Ward's Scientific Establishment in Rochester, New York. Ward was a well-known mineral dealer and supplier of scientific specimens and equipment. (Right: Public Domain.)

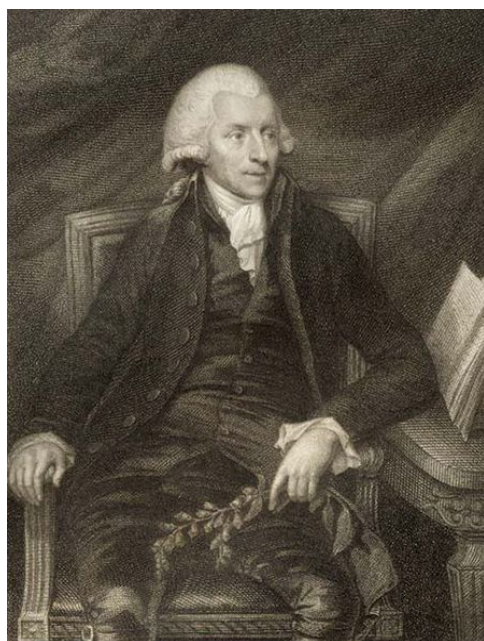




Wavellite was named in honor of the English physician, William Wavell (1750-1829), who discovered this mineral in 1800 near Barnstaple, Devon, England.

Wheel Ore is the name given by German miners to Bournonite when it is crystallized in wheel-shaped twins.

Willemite was named in honor of King William I (Willem Frederick) of the Netherlands (1772-1843). It is an odd twist that this mineral was named in honor of Willem by a French man considering the fact the French stole Willem's mineral collection during the Napoleonic Wars.



Witherite was named in honor of the English physician and naturalist, William Withering (1741-1799) who discovered and first analyzed this mineral.

Wolframite was named from the old German words *wolf* meaning *wolf* and *rahm* meaning *froth*. There seems to be agreement concerning the origins of this name. However, there is some disagreement concerning the specific image intended by the name. One story reports that the name was given by German miners who noticed that it “gnawed” through Cassiterite, that is, it interfered with tin production by making the smelting of Cassiterite difficult, resulting in a reduced yield of tin. A slightly different story is told by the 16th century mineralogist, Georgius Agricola. He claims that the name reflects the observation that a froth developed during the smelting process, a froth that looked like that made by a wolf devouring its prey.

Wollastonite was named in honor of the English chemist and mineralogist, William Hyde Wollaston (1766-1828). Wollaston is also famous for his invention of the reflecting goniometer, the first instrument designed to accurately measure the positions of crystal faces relative to one another. (Left: Public Domain.)

Wood Opal is the name given to wood that has been petrified by opal rather than the more common Chalcedony.

Wood Tin is a variety of Cassiterite. It looks like dried wood, complete with layers which resemble annual growth rings in trees. This popular name reflects this resemblance.



Wulfenite was named in honor of Franz Xavier Freiherr von Wulfen, an Austrian mineralogist (and Jesuit cleric) who first described this mineral in 1785. (Left: Public Domain.)

X

Xenotime was named from the Greek words *xenos* meaning *a stranger* and *time* meaning *honor*, because the element yttrium in this mineral's chemical formula was originally -- and incorrectly -- believed to be a new element.

Y

Yellow Ochre is a common name for the yellow, earthy variety of Limonite. The term *ochre* refers to any mixture of clay and/or sand with iron oxides.

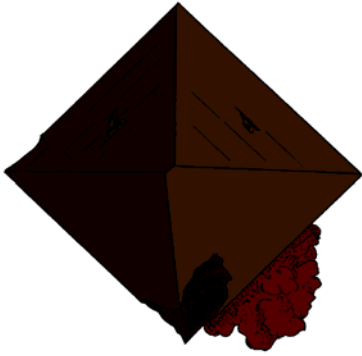
Z

Zeolite is a name that refers to a group of silicate minerals that contain water molecules. The name came from the Greek verb *zein* meaning *to boil* and the Greek word *lithos* meaning *stone*, because this group of minerals dramatically swells up when heated in front of the blowpipe.

Zinc Blende is a synonym for Sphalerite. *Zinc* is a reference to one of the metals in its chemical formula ((Zn,Fe)S) and *blende* which means *deceiving*. It was considered "deceiving" because some specimens looked like Galena but did not produce any lead.

Zincite was named after its composition which includes the element, zinc, (Zn,Mn)O.

Zinnwaldite was named after the locality of its first discovery, Zinnwald, Bohemia (now roughly West Czechoslovakia).



Zircon is another mineral name with disputed origins. Some claim it was named from the Arabic word *zarqun*: *zar* meaning *gold* and *gun* meaning *color* in reference to the golden color of some specimens. Others believe this name came from the name *cerkonier*, a name used by German jewelers which was later altered to “cirkon” and “zyrkon.”

Zoisite was named in honor of the Austrian scholar, Baron Sigmund Zois Freiherr von Edelstein (1747-1819), who discovered this mineral. (Right: Public Domain.)

