

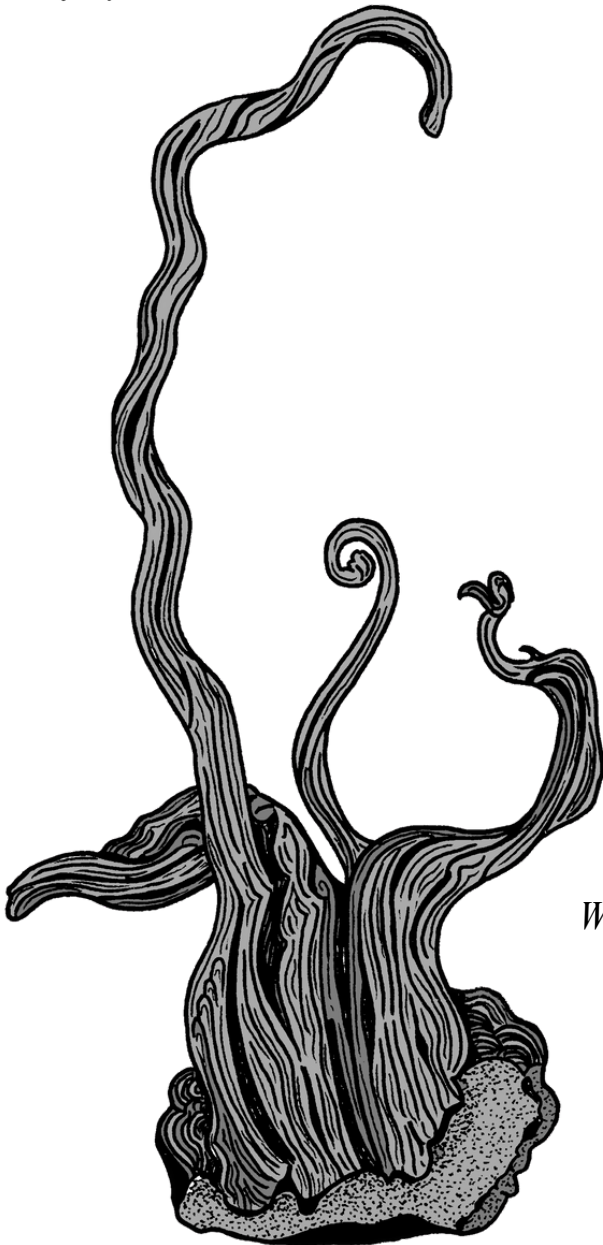
MINI MINERS MONTHLY

VOL 17, NO 8

AUGUST 2025



WHERE AN EDUCATED COLLECTOR IS A SUCCESSFUL COLLECTOR!



SILVER CRYSTALS & WIRES

Silver and the Moon: they have been connected to each other for thousands of years. They both reflect light. The light from the moon - and that reflected from silver - is soft, but still bright. Both show the soft, helpful glowing light seen in the night.

Gold and the Sun: they have been connected to each other for thousands of years as well. Because gold is bright, metallic yellow, people think of it as the blazing color of the bright sun in the middle of the day.

Discover silver and gold in this issue!!

Wire Silver on matrix by Darryl Powell

*“Minerals:
Nature’s way of showing off.”*

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Cool Mineral Museums

By Noah DeSantis

Have you ever been to a mineral museum? If you have not been able to go to one yet, there are so many awesome reasons why you should! I have been to a lot, my favorite so far being the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History in Washington D.C. I could go on and on about all of the really cool things I learned in there, but right now we are going to talk about all of the reasons why you should visit a mineral museum!

One of the most exciting reasons to visit a mineral museum, is that you would most certainly discover new and thrilling interests that you never knew you had; and you wouldn't know about it unless you went there! Finding new interests lights up your imagination, curiosity and inspiration. Who knows, you may even decide that you love it so much, that you want to be a future geologist or scientist. Also, by learning at mineral museums, you increase your knowledge and understanding of earth science history, and get a more meaningful appreciation of the natural wonders of our earth. Mineral museums also help to increase your understanding of how to take care of our earth.

You may remember in recent articles of Mini Miners Monthly that many minerals have everyday uses. At mineral museums, you can explore many unique uses for many different minerals. These museums help you to expand your knowledge on the useful properties of minerals, rocks and crystals, and help you to understand how these properties can be used to help us in our everyday lives. Some of these common uses include construction, energy, agricultural and environmental uses, transportation, jewelry design, and health and wellness. Another useful function of minerals is in manufacturing. For example, copper is used in electronics, plumbing and electrical wiring. Another example of mineral use is in manufacturing glass, plastics and ceramic making.

Another amazing benefit of visiting a mineral museum is that you get to learn all about far-away places on our planet. A few good examples of some of these far-away places are Asia, Australia and many parts of Europe. Really cool minerals have been found in each of these far away continents. As you learn about the minerals from these places, you also get to learn many neat facts about these places too! Enjoying minerals can help you enjoy different countries and cultures and the people that live there.

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Many mineral museums can offer different types of hands-on exhibits. These special exhibits allow you to explore the minerals up close and with your own hands! If you are a “hands on learner,” then these exhibits are for you! These experiences allow you to see in-person, facts about minerals that you already may have. One possibility, for example, is the chance to compare real and fake mineral specimens. By touching and seeing specimens close up, you can learn the ways they are different. Hands-on exhibits also can introduce you to new minerals you may not have known about but could end up loving! If a new mineral at the museum catches your interest, you may then want to look into the amazing places that it is found. You see? It’s like a scavenger hunt!

Finally, one of the best benefits of visiting a mineral museum is the chance you will have to be able to meet some pretty outstanding people! You will definitely be able to learn from experts who have so, so much knowledge to share. You also could have the opportunity to meet new friends who are new learners just like you! Then you can learn side-by-side with your new friends. So many cool things can happen in mineral museums. And who knows... you could just be lucky enough to run into Diamond Dan!



List of Mineral Museums

There are wonderful mineral museums all over the United States (and throughout the world).

MinDat.org is a GREAT resource for all mineral collectors. It has a complete list of mineral museums in the United States.

Go to this link to find one near you (or one you want to take a trip to visit!)

www.mindat.org/museums/



mindat.org

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GO TO A MINERAL SHOW!!

After you make plans to visit a mineral museum,
make plans to visit a **MINERAL SHOW!**

Here is a picture of Noah DeSantis and his Mom at The East Coast Gem, Mineral & Fossil Show. It is held in Springfield, Massachusetts on the second weekend of August. You can also see the many mineral dealers set up at their tables and even Diamond Dan's book table!



If you are a mineral collector who wants to build your collections **attend as many minerals shows as you can.** You can find a list of shows all over the country at this website:



www.rockngem.com/ShowDatesFiles/ShowDatesDisplayAll.php?ShowState=ALL



Silver Fun Facts

Ancient Bling

Silver has been used for jewelry and coins for over 5,000 years—ancient Egyptians even called it “white gold.”

Native element: Silver is one of the few metals found in nature in its pure form, known as native silver.

Best conductor: Of all metals, silver conducts electricity (and heat) better than any other.

Antimicrobial powers: Silver naturally kills bacteria, which is why it’s used in wound dressings and water filters.

Tarnish trouble: Silver tarnishes when exposed to sulfur compounds in the air, forming black silver sulfide.

Treasure troves: The largest silver mine in history was in Potosí, Bolivia—so rich it funded much of the Spanish Empire.

Space traveler: NASA uses silver-coated fabrics in spacesuits to help regulate astronauts’ body temperatures.

World’s largest nugget: The biggest native silver nugget ever found weighed around 4,000 pounds (about 1,800 kg).

Magic mirrors: Ancient people polished silver to create some of the earliest mirrors.

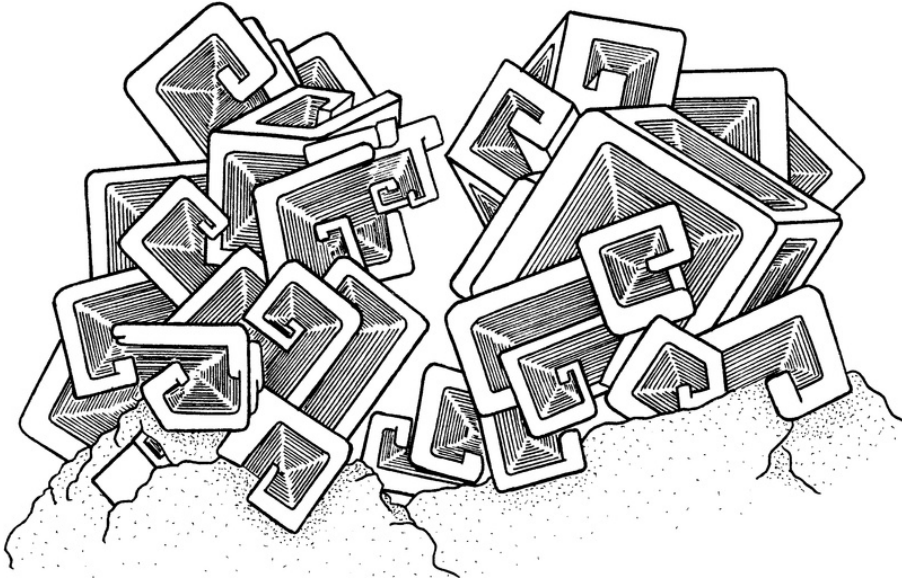
Edible sparkle: Tiny amounts of silver, called vark, are used in decorative food in India and the Middle East.

Super reflector: Silver reflects visible light better than any other metal, making it perfect for telescopes and solar panels.



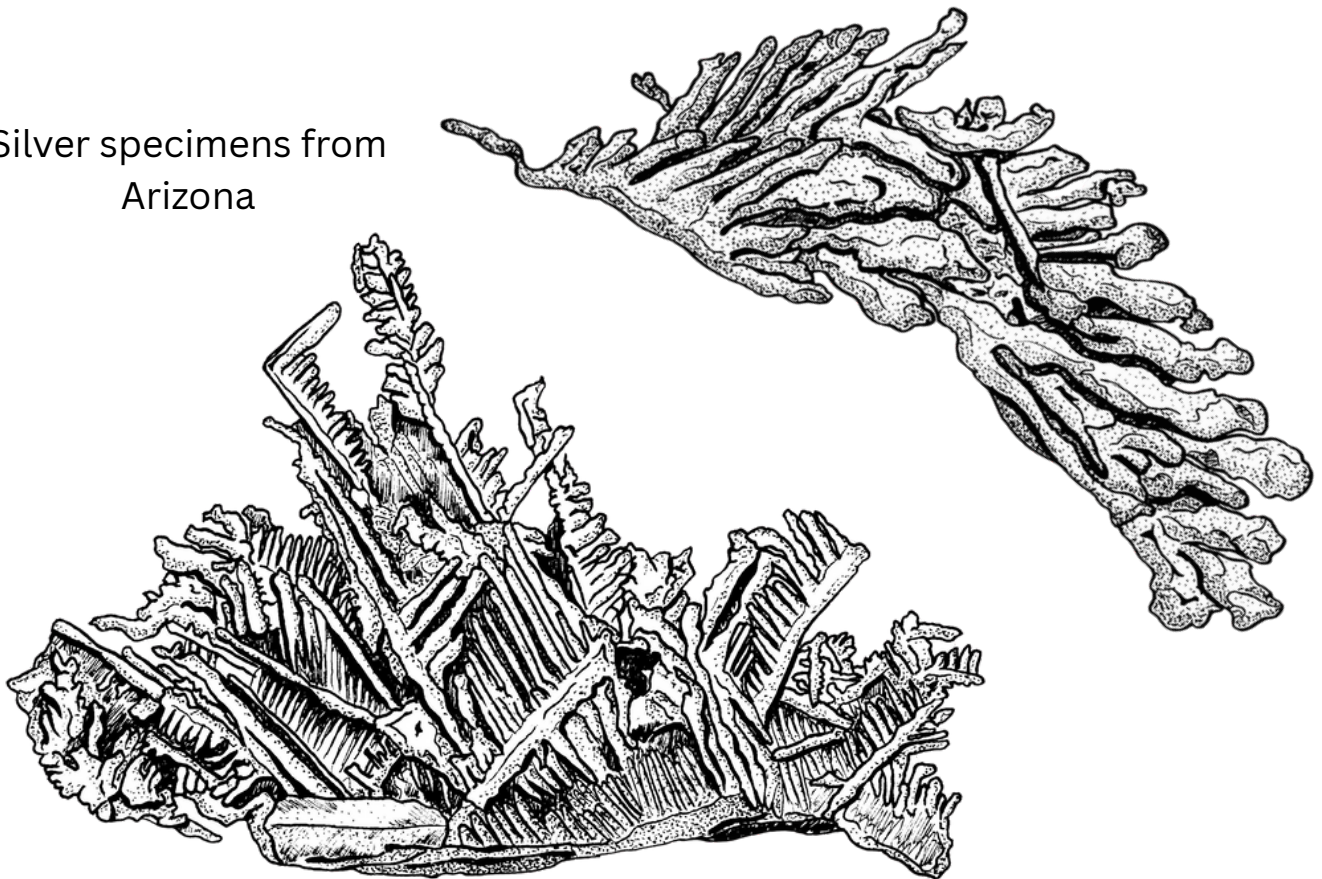
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Silver to Color



Cubic silver crystals from Michigan.

Silver specimens from Arizona

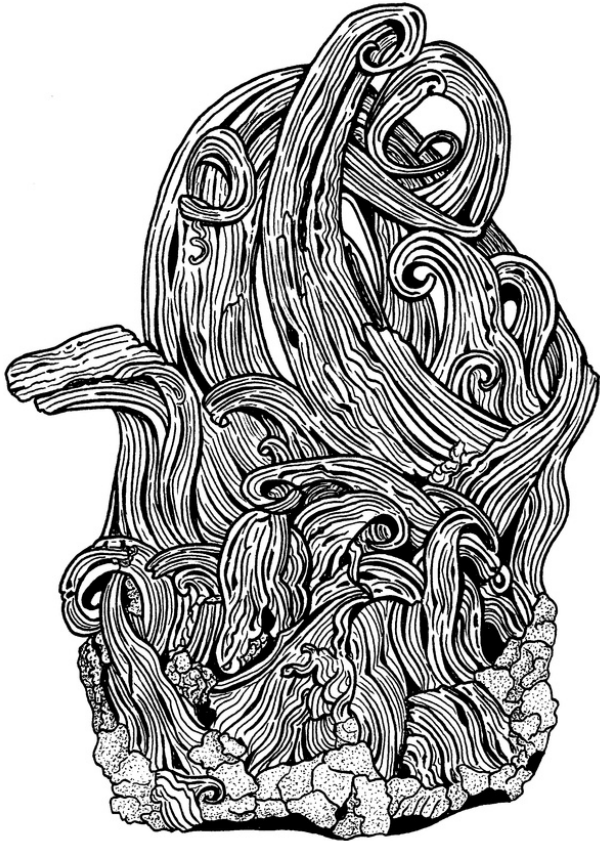


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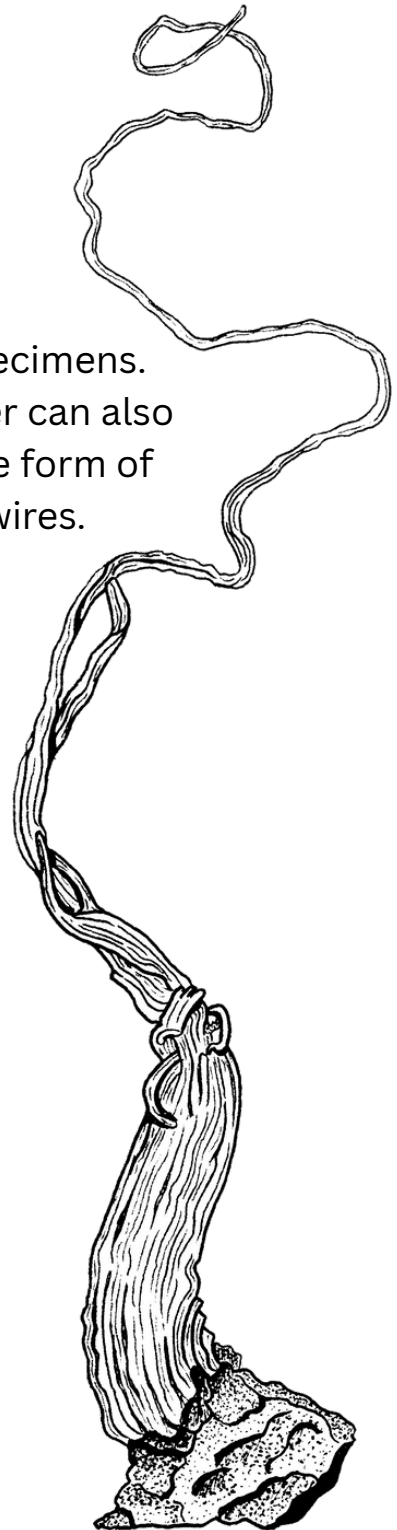
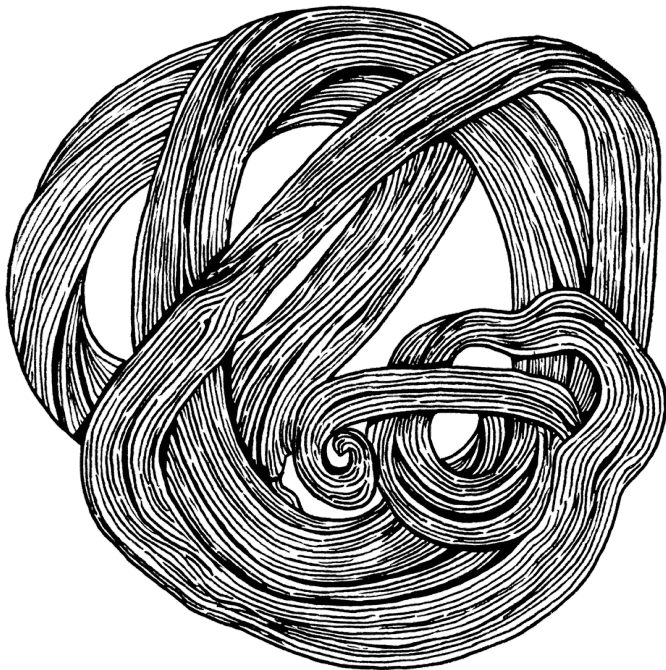


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More Silver to Color



Wire Silver specimens.
Gold and copper can also
be found in the form of
long, thin wires.



GEOLOGY365TM





GOLD

CRYSTALS & WIRES

AMERICA'S FIRST GOLD RUSH

Dahlonega, Georgia

Gold has been known, recovered and used for centuries in the land now known as Georgia. Native Americans living north of present-day Atlanta panned for gold in the Chattahoochee River.

The Spanish explorer, Hernando De Soto, was the first European to explore the southeastern region of the United States. Reports of great quantities of gold drew De Soto and the Spanish to Northern Georgia. Before long, small settlements of miners and fortune-seekers were settling along the Chattahoochee River. Gold miners worked the region and retrieved gold until the early years of the 1700's.

1828 is a very important year in Georgia history. In this year, a man named Frank Logan discovered large quantities of gold in White County. Gold mining in the region began in 1829. By the end of the year, mines were being worked in Lumpkin, Cherokee and Union Counties.

Within one year of Frank Logan's discovery, over 300 ounces of gold were being produced every day in Georgia! So much gold was recovered that the Federal Government established a mint in Dahlonega in 1838. A "mint" is a place where coins are made. In Georgia, they obviously made gold coins.

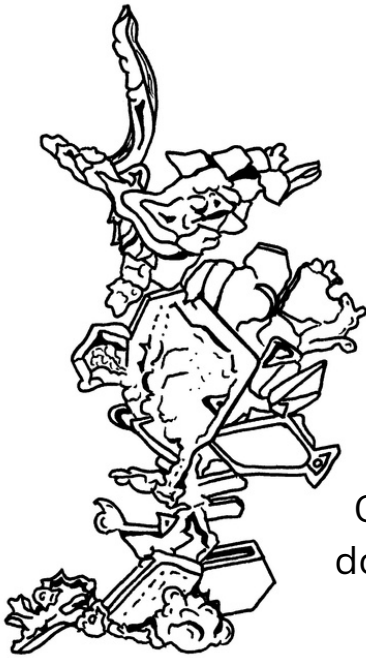
Gold is still recovered in Georgia to this very day. Though the amounts found in the early 1800's are now gone, northern Georgia continues to reward hard-working miners and prospectors with golden treasure from the ground.



Mineral
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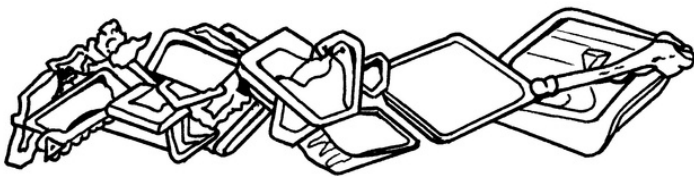
Gold to Color



Gold crystals. Yes, gold does form crystals - in the cubic crystal system.



Right: The Dancing Bear gold specimen from California.



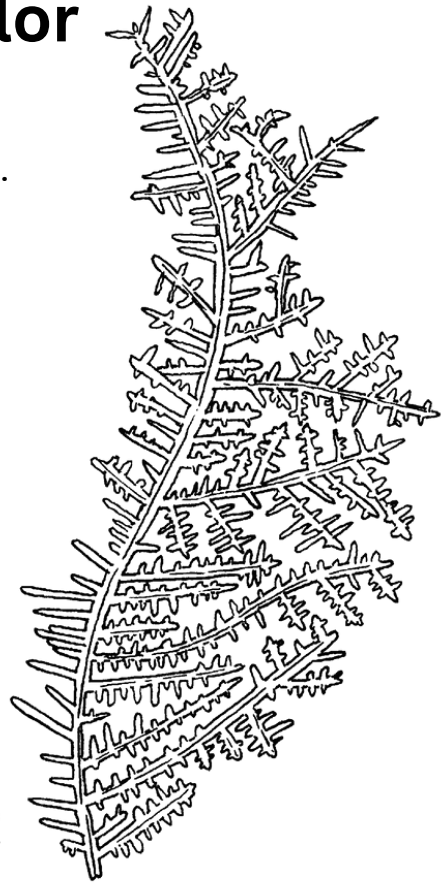
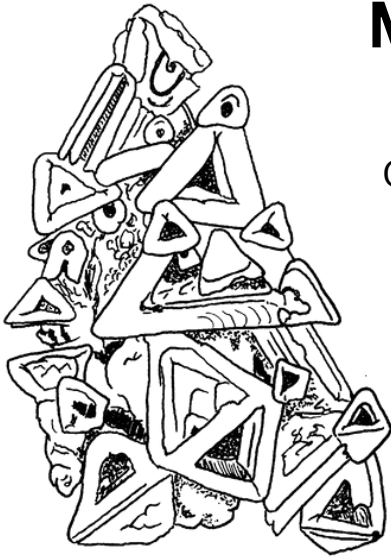
Abandoned gold mine.



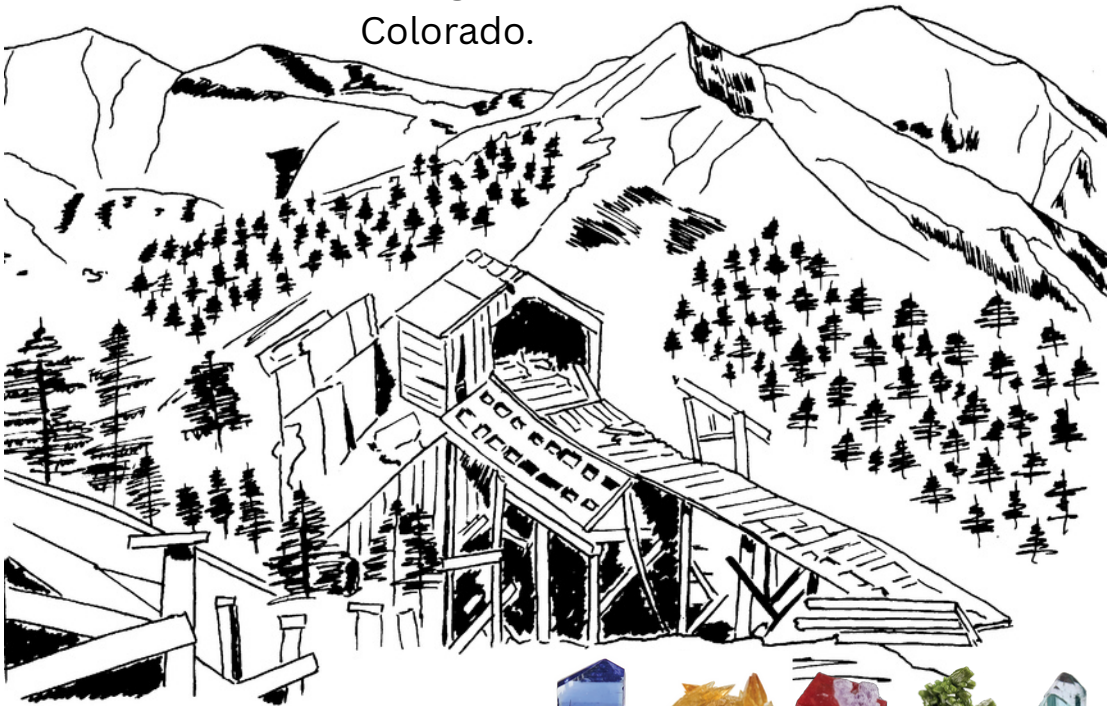
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More Gold to Color

Crystallized gold specimens.



Abandoned gold mine in
Colorado.



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GOLD

Specific
Gravity
19.3

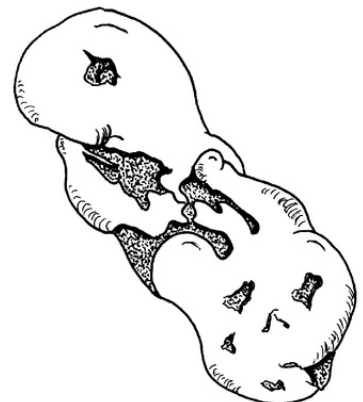
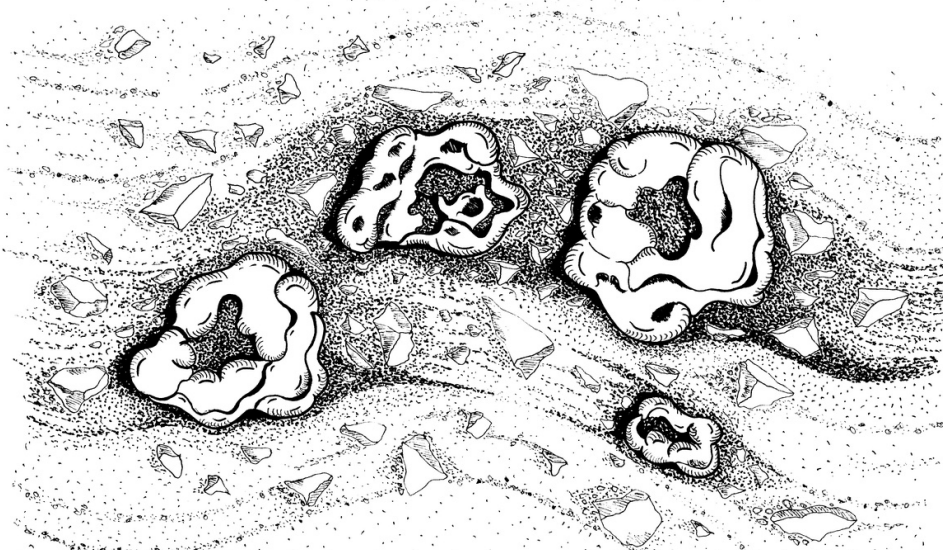
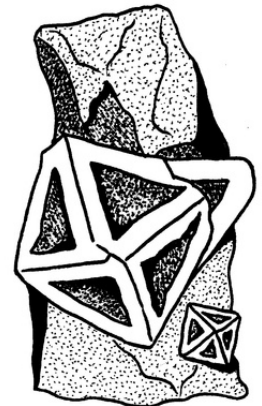
Gold is an element. Its symbol is Au which is from the Latin word, Aurum, which means “shining dawn” or “glow of sunrise.” It is one of the most stable elements in nature. This means that it does not easily attach to other elements. As a result, gold is almost always found as a native metal. (Yes, there are three very rare gold minerals: calaverite, sylvanite, and petzite.



Gold is very dense and, therefore, very heavy. Instead of density, mineralogists refer to the Specific Gravity of a mineral which is its density compared to the density of an equal amount of water. In other words, gold has a very high specific gravity, 19.3. This means a piece of pure gold 1 inch square is 19.3 times heavier than an equal amount of water.

Gold is malleable and ductile. Malleable means it can be hammered into very thin sheets without breaking. Ductile means it can be pulled into long, thin wires, also without breaking.

Gold is most often found in rounded, smooth nuggets that have been transported, smoothed, and deposited by running water.





FOOL'S GOLD

Pyrite

It might look like gold, but don't be fooled! Many prospectors ran off to the bank thinking they had struck it rich in gold only to learn they had struck pyrite. They were fooled by "fool's gold."

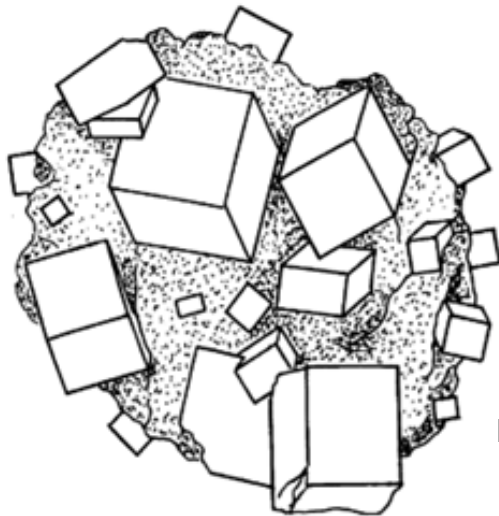


Pyrite from Peru

Pyrite and gold are similar in one way: they crystallize in the same crystal system. This means they both can form cubes and octahedra (that is, diamond-shaped crystals).



Pyrite from Mexico



Pyrite cubes from Peru

You don't have to be fooled, though, because fool's gold and real gold are very different from one another. Fill in the information on the following page and discover how you can tell the difference. The answers can be found in a mineral book.

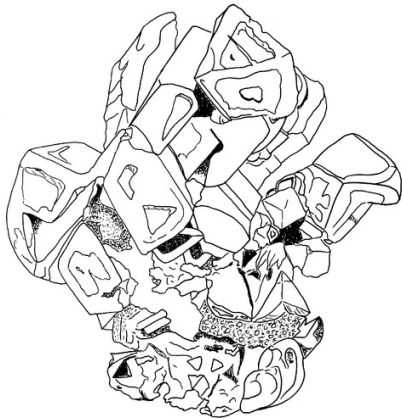
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WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE?

Use a mineral book to find information about gold and pyrite and show how they are really different from each other.



GOLD

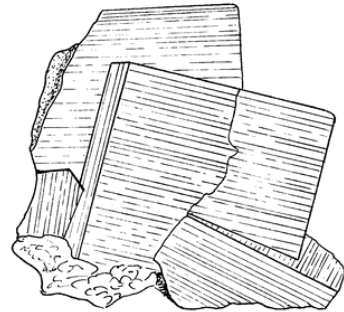
Color: _____

Hardness: _____

Crystal System: _____

Specific Gravity: _____

Streak: _____



PYRITE

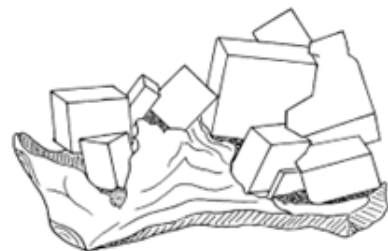
Color: _____

Hardness: _____

Crystal System: _____

Specific Gravity: _____

Streak: _____



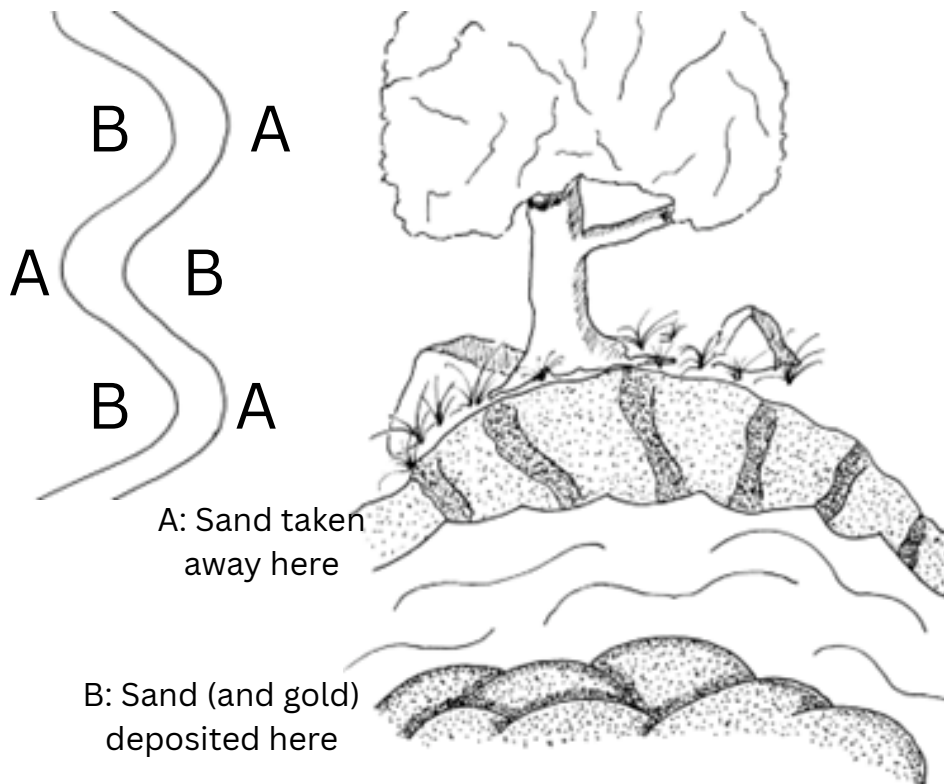
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PLACER GOLD

Have you ever panned for gold?
Prospectors once searched for gold in rivers using pans. It is still possible to find gold nuggets and flakes in rivers — you just have to find the right river. Here is a typical pan used for gold panning. You swish water over the river sand. The light sand is washed away. The heavy gold remains in the pan.



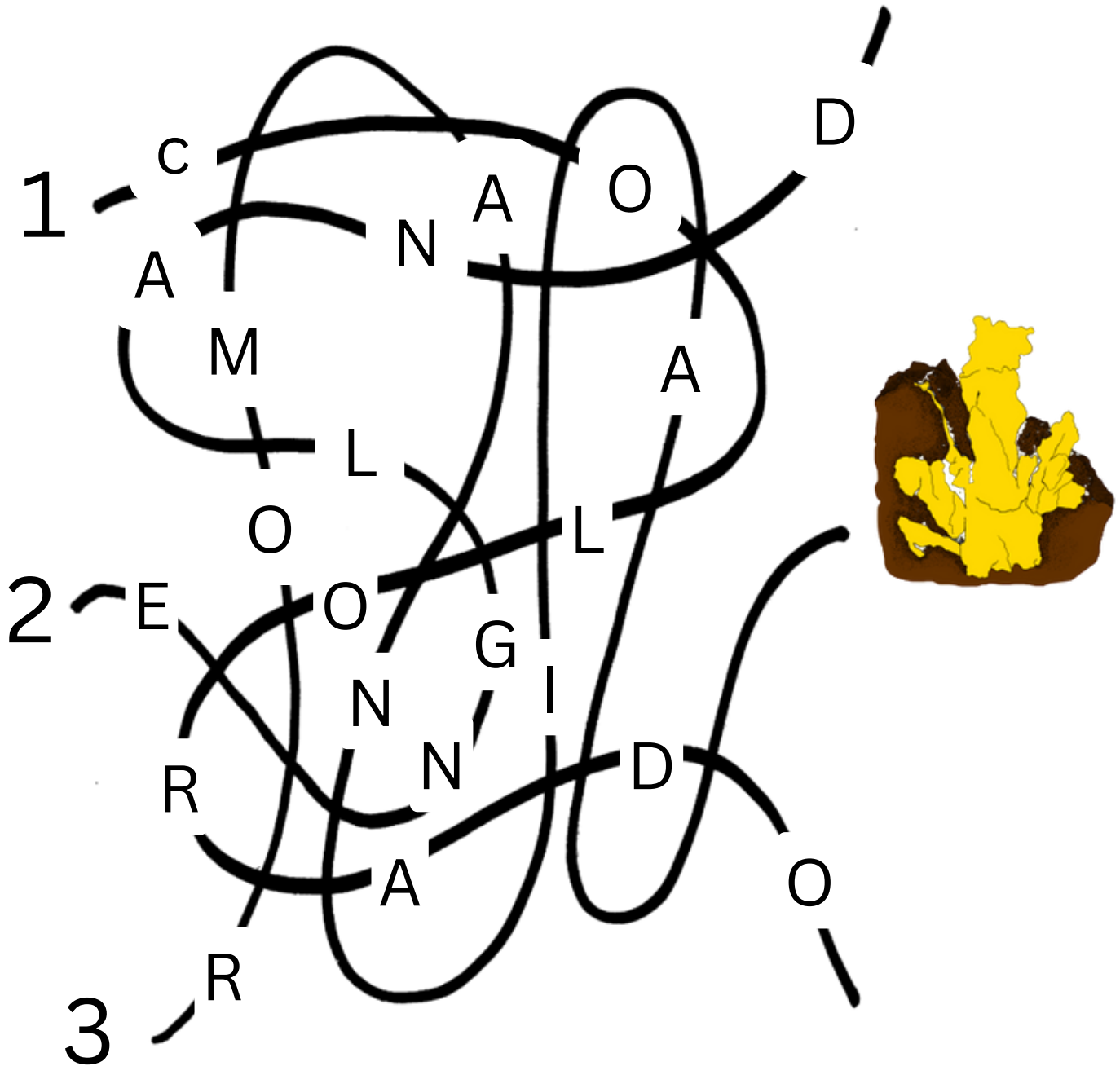
Where would you look for gold in a river?



When a river “snakes” over the land, it is described as meandering. There are two sides to a meander. At the outside bank (A) of the meander, the water runs faster and sand is washed away. At the inside bank (B) of the meander, the water flows slower, and sand and gold are deposited. Therefore, always pan for gold in the inside bank.

FOLLOW THE TRAIL

There are three trails below, all mixed into each other. Start at each number and carefully follow the trail. As you go along the trail, write down the letters you find in the order you find them. A different gold locality will be named as you follow each trail. Only one trail, though, will lead you to the gold specimen found at that gold mine. If you have to, go back in this book and look at the gold specimens and where they were found.



This gold specimen is from _____

GOLDEN WORD SEARCH

People have searched the world to find gold. In rivers and mountains, with pans and picks, men and women have tried to find a treasure of gold. Golden treasures are hiding in this word search puzzle. Can you find them? The words can run diagonally, left to right, right to left, top to bottom or bottom to top. Some are easy. Some are really hard to find! The list of words related to gold and gold mining are listed below.

M	I	S	O	M	E	T	R	I	C	W	E	S	Y	G
O	A	B	G	M	I	N	E	R	A	L	P	P	O	W
C	D	L	O	G	S	L	O	O	F	T	L	W	Q	R
T	G	O	L	D	A	L	L	U	V	I	A	L	U	L
A	B	Y	D	E	N	D	R	I	T	I	C	V	A	S
H	D	A	R	K	A	R	A	T	B	X	E	M	R	S
E	S	H	O	T	A	B	T	O	P	Y	R	I	T	E
D	M	K	J	I	C	Z	L	A	A	R	S	N	Z	E
R	A	H	I	N	U	G	G	E	T	P	U	E	C	D
A	G	J	O	C	B	W	A	L	A	Q	T	R	Y	E
L	M	N	O	A	I	E	W	S	O	F	T	B	Y	E
X	A	E	D	U	C	T	I	L	E	T	E	M	O	M
P	A	N	N	I	N	G	R	D	A	D	R	L	I	F
M	I	L	L	D	E	M	E	T	A	L	L	I	C	U
G	A	N	G	U	E	H	E	R	E	D	N	A	E	M

Alluvial; Cubic; Dendritic; Ductile; Fool's Gold; Gangue; Gold (x2); Inca;
Isometric; Karat; Leaf; Magma; Malleable; Meander; Metallic; Mill; Miner;
Mineral; Nugget; Octahedral; Panning; Placer; Pyrite; Quartz; Seed; Shot;
Sutter; Wire

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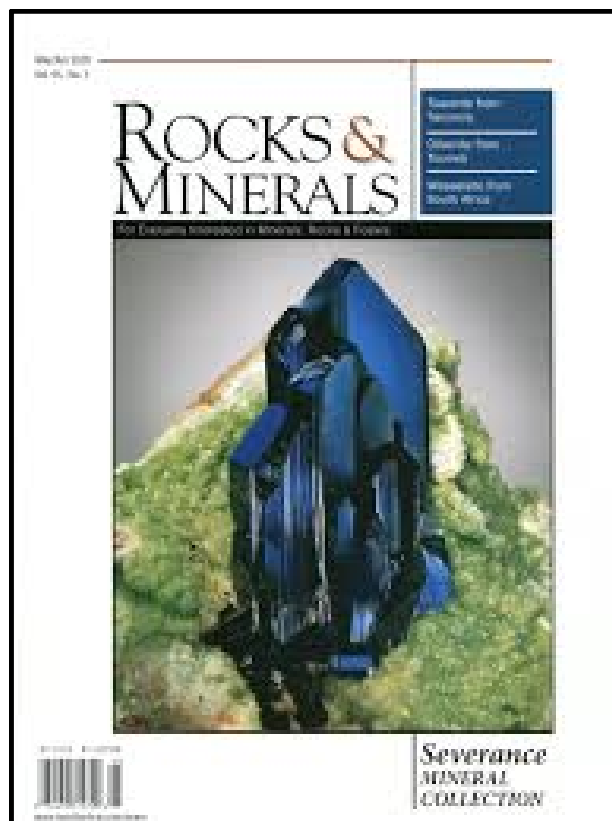


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