

120 years of the A.E. Seaman Mineral Museum of Michigan Tech

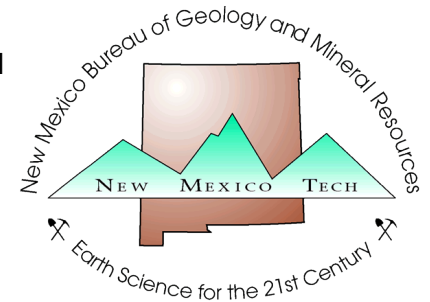
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The annual [New Mexico Mineral Symposium](#) provides a forum for both professionals and amateurs interested in mineralogy. The meeting allows all to share their cumulative knowledge of mineral occurrences and provides stimulus for mineralogical studies and new mineral discoveries. In addition, the informal atmosphere encourages intimate discussions among all interested in mineralogy and associated fields.

The symposium is organized each year by the [Mineral Museum](#) at the [New Mexico Bureau of Geology & Mineral Resources](#).



Abstracts from all prior symposiums are also available: <https://geoinfo.nmt.edu/museum/minsymp/abstracts>

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120 YEARS OF THE A. E. SEAMAN MINERAL MUSEUM OF MICHIGAN TECH

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The first mining boom in the United States took place for native copper in the early to mid 1800s in the rugged Keweenaw Peninsula of Michigan, where indigenous peoples had extracted and worked copper for thousands of years. The need for training mining engineers and geologists was clear by the early 1860s, and in 1885, the State of Michigan established the Michigan Mining School (now Michigan Technological University) in 1885. Included in the State's charge to the school's trustees was to "provide for obtaining and establishing a complete collection of minerals of the Upper Peninsula, and properly classifying the same." From the beginning, mineral specimens were purchased for educational purposes, and in 1902, Arthur Edmund Seaman, the school's first geology professor, selected a portion of the mineral collection for display, thus effectively founding the museum. It was named in A. E. Seaman's honor in 1932, became the official Mineralogical Museum of the State of Michigan in 1990, and is also a Heritage Site of the Keweenaw National Historical Park.

Thanks to the visionary collection building and care of A. E. Seaman and the museum's subsequent curators and managers, the museum today occupies a 9,000-square-foot purpose-built facility on Michigan Tech's campus. Approximately 4,000 specimens are on display out of over 37,000 specimens that it curates, including nearly 15,000 specimens from the University of Michigan Collection through the Michigan Mineral Alliance. Historic collections include those of A. E. Seaman, John T. Reeder, Lucius

L. Hubbard, Thomas Whittle, Alan W. Pinger, George B. Robbe, and others. More recent collections include those of Donald C. Gabriel, E. Wm. Heinrich, Lance T. Hampel, Patrick W. Collins, Paul and Janet Clifford, and Donald Peacor, to name just a few. The museum's exhibit hall includes themed galleries such as Mineral Treasures, Beauty of Minerals, and a renowned exhibit of Fluorescent Minerals. Three regional galleries focus on the minerals of the Great Lakes Region. World-wide minerals are featured in exhibits of gemstones, systematic mineralogy, and minerals in the context of the processes that formed them. While highlights of the collection include the world's best collection of Michigan minerals (including copper crystals, copper-included calcite crystals, silver crystals, Lake Superior agates, and more) and the Great Lakes region, collectors and tourists alike find surprises in almost all of the museum's nearly 150 display cases. Adjacent to the museum building is the Phyllis & Jack Seaman Rock Garden, and a pavilion featuring a magnificent 34,000-pound "Lake Copper" that was hoisted from the bottom of Lake Superior at Great Sand Bay.

This talk will review some the museum's proud history, impactful people, and of course, some outstanding specimens. We'll also touch on some of the ways we look to impact the future. Founded in a geologically unique place, and built by dedicated, and creative people, the A. E. Seaman Mineral Museum continues its mission to display, preserve, study, educate and grow the appreciation of some of the most wonderful natural treasures on earth.



An exhibit highlighting some of the museum's best specimens from "Copper Country" Michigan.