Notable New Mexico Microminerals

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New Mexico has an abundance of localities that produce a wide variety of mineral species best viewed as microminerals. This is a result of the diverse geological environments occurring in the state. Igneous intrusives and volcanics that generated hydrothermal fluids are widespread. Contact metamorphic rocks (e.g. tactites) and regional metamorphic rocks (quartzites, shists, etc.) are also numerous. The Rio Grande rift has mineralization similar to the Mississippi Valley type deposits. Sedimentary environments have also produced superb microminerals. The uranium/vanadium minerals in the Grants uranium district in western New Mexico are particularly noteworthy. Oxidation of hydrothermally deposited primary minerals (sulphides) produced a plethora of colorful secondary minerals which delight the micromineral collector.

The extensive geologic activity created ample ore bodies which have been mined in New Mexico for over two hundred years. Numerous mining districts cover the state. Commercial mining activity has ceased with the exception of large open-pit copper mines in the southwest (Silver City area). This long history of mining has resulted in numerous abandoned mines, prospects, and mine dumps. This program will document some of the notable microminerals recovered and the locations that produced them.

References
Figure 3. Libethenite, Chino Mine, 8mm Fov. Michael Michayluk photo.

Figure 4 Raydemarkite, Cookes Peak, Summit Group, 2mm Fov. Michael Michayluk photo.