The Jáchymov Ore District, Karlovy Vary Region, Czech Republic: The World's Most Historic Five-Element Vein Deposit

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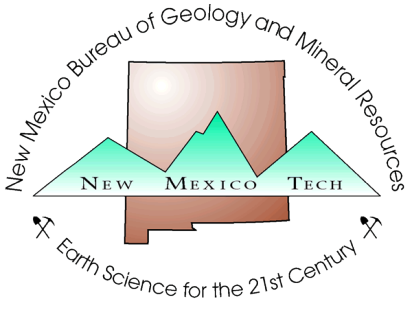
The annual New Mexico Mineral Symposium provides a forum for both professionals and amateurs interested in mineralogy. The meeting allows all to share their cumulative knowledge of mineral occurrences and provides stimulus for mineralogical studies and new mineral discoveries. In addition, the informal 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/nmms/abstracts

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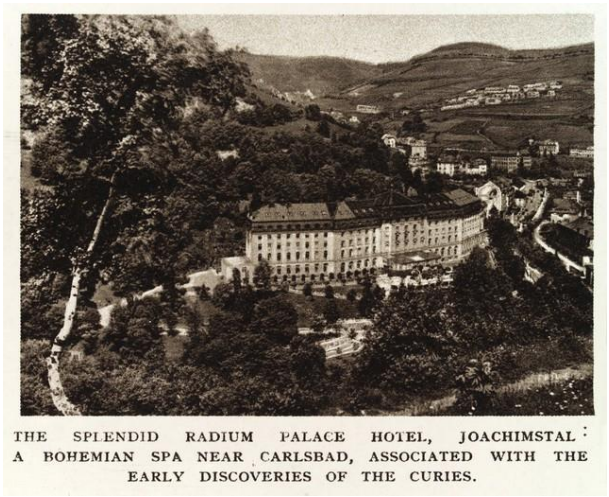
Situated in the scenic Erzgebirge or "ore mountains" near the border with Germany, the ancient mining town of Jáchymov or (Sankt) Joachimsthal has arguably played a more important role in the development of mineralogy and mining engineering than any other locality in Europe and perhaps the world. A classic example of the 5-element (Ag-Co-Ni-Bi-U) vein type deposit, mineralization at Jáchymov is related to hydrothermal fluids and igneous intrusions of the Hercynian orogeny in late Paleozoic time. Silver mining, which began in the 15th century, led to Jáchymov being the second-most populous town in the Kingdom of Bohemia by 1534, with over 613 mines operating in the district. The word "dollar" has its derivation in the silver "Joachimsthaler" coins minted there beginning in the 16th century. Between 1527 and 1531, a famous Renaissance man and perhaps the world's first "mining engineer," Georgius Agricola, worked in Jáchymov as a town physician. During the most productive period of silver mining at Jáchymov (1516-1600) approximately 350 tons of Ag were mined, an incredible feat considering the primitive mining methods employed and the physical labor required to mine even an ounce of this precious metal. In addition to its rich human history, Jáchymov was and still is a "mineralogical rainforest", with 437 minerals known (Mindat.org, accessed 8-27-2024), and an impressive 55 of those being type locality species. Indeed, even extremely common minerals such as fluorite (!) were first formally described at Jáchymov, a testament to its central place in the development of the science of mineralogy in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries. Considered a strategic and highly secretive state resource by the Soviet-aligned Czech government after WWII, due to its large uranium resource, today Jáchymov is a tourist destination and quiet village of under 4000 people, a far cry from the days when kings and queens fought over this jewel of the Erzgebirge, and "Joachimsthalers" fueled the rise of modern European civilization.


THE SPLENDID RADIUM PALACE HOTEL, JOACHIMSTAL : A BOHEMIAN SPA NEAR CARLSBAD, ASSOCIATED WITH THE EARLY DISCOVERIES OF THE CURIES.

Radium Palace Hotel, Joachimsthal (Jáchymov), Bohemia. Process print. Source: Wellcome Collection.)

Svornost mine shaft building in the center of the town of Jáchymov. Vintage real photo postcard, publisher unknown, ca. 1930. G. Grundmann collection. From Mindat.org.

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