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## MEMORIAL OF LOREN B. MERRILL

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Loren B. Merrill of Paris, Maine, died at his home on March 30, 1930 at the age of 77 years. The death of Mr. Merrill will bring a sense of great personal loss to a wide circle of friends who came to know him through his love of minerals. The writer of this appreciation first met Mr. Merrill in 1896. Then a stranger to eastern mineral localities, I went to Paris Hill one late September day and made my way to Mr. Merrill's house. I had seen in the Harvard Mineralogical Museum the tourmalines and associated minerals taken from Mt. Mica and presented as the Hamlin Collection. I wanted to see the deposit from which they had come and as Mr. Merrill then owned the mine on Mt. Mica, he was naturally the first person to seek. He was cordial in his greeting and next morning took me with him to the mine where he was working and turned me loose on the dump. I had a wonderful day for there was a wealth of minerals unfamiliar to me to be had for the taking, and the dump was at that faraway time not so well picked over by collectors as in later days. That was the first of many visits to Paris Hill and to Loren Merrill, sometimes with my class on a spring collecting trip; again for more serious collecting or purchase of specimens. I never failed to find him with something new or interesting in the way of minerals found in his ever active search. I like to remember him in his little shop behind his house where he learned to cut in the greatest perfection the beautiful tourmalines, quartzes and beryls he had dug from the Maine ledges. He was active at Mt. Mica from the very earliest period of its working as a tourmaline mine and after the dissolution of the first company organized by Mr. Hamlin of which he had been an employee, he became the owner. Single handed or with one or two helpers only he carried on the work for many years, his enthusiasm overcoming the ever increasing difficulties of operation as the zone of gem-pockets went deeper into the ledge. The cut on

the top of Mt. Mica and the great pile of waste taken from it will remain for many years the best monument to his tireless energy.

Another picture of Merrill vivid in my memory is of his coming once into the laboratory in Cambridge seeking information from us there as to the polishing of his gems. He had learned how to shape them to gem form but the final art of polishing the facets eluded him, and he thought to learn from our work in cutting and polishing prisms for optical study what he needed. We could tell him nothing of value. Nor do I know how or when he did learn to do the exquisite work which he later produced. But machines of his own design were perfected and he taught many of his friends and neighbors the beautiful art of gem cutting.

He lived among minerals in a very literal sense. His garden paths were bordered by quartz and brightly colored minerals from Mt. Mica. The stone wall bounding his drive was an outdoor museum of all the local minerals. His stable was littered with mica and feldspar and quartz and a hundred boxes had to be gone over to find the full count of his stock. In his cabinet were his choicest specimens, some of which he would never part with. And in his safe were his gems and gem stock—largely of his own finding. He never seemed so happy as when he had his finest pieces on the table and could tell the story to appreciative listeners of where and how each had been found. He kept in his possession for many years and to the end of his days a tourmaline crystal which he considered the finest he had ever found among the hundreds he took from the gem pockets of Mt. Mica. This crystal he had agreed to cut for the Harvard Collection and a large price was agreed upon for the gem and the work. But he could not bring himself to cut it and I have before me his last letter to me in which he asks to be freed from his engagement as he feared the crystal might be shattered if cut in so large a form as we had planned.

A more intimate relation with Mr. Merrill began in 1923. Harvard University had acquired some years before the lease of a tourmaline ledge on Noyes Mt. in Greenwood, Maine. I hoped to develop this ledge in such a way as to add to our scientific knowledge of these pegmatite deposits. Mr. Merrill, then more than 70 years of age, was engaged to do the actual work of opening the deposit. My student, K. K. Landes, was my representative on the ground, but I spent many days of that summer on the ledge. The mine was high up the mountain, 350 feet above the road up a steep

trail. I can never forget the sight of Merrill's gaunt, bent form toiling up the trail laden with drills, water, powder, or any of the necessary supplies for the work; sliding down at night burdened with specimens developed during the day; striking the drill hour after hour in the heat of the morning sun which beat into the shallow opening. Never did he seem to tire or lose his intense interest. After each blast he was the first to be down to see what might have been revealed. And when the work ended with very disappointing results as regards gems or specimens found, he still persisted in the belief that we had not reached the heart of the matter and later took over the lease in the hope of working it again for himself. This however he never did for he became actively interested in the development of quartz and pollucite properties for the General Electric Company and so continued till his death.

Self-taught in his mineral lore, he could teach us all much about minerals. He was a natural mechanic and made seemingly of iron and whipcord. The gems mined with his own hands and cut with the eye of an artist were far more to him than money. I count it a fortunate chance that made it possible for me to call this kindly, simple, sincere enthusiast, my friend.