

## WILLIAM EARL HIDDEN

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William Earl Hidden was the son of James Edward, and Abbie Angel Hidden, and was born in Providence, R. I., February 16, 1853. He died, from heart trouble, in Newark, N. J., on June 12, 1918, being thus in his sixty-sixth year at the time of his death. He received his education in the public schools of Providence, New York, and Washington. In 1873-1877 he attended the chemical lectures of Prof. Charles F. Stone; and he joined the New York Academy of Sciences in 1875. For some time he was employed as draughtsman by the American Bank Note Company, and was unusually successful in this art, but his interest in minerals, stamps, coins, etc., weaned him from it, and he finally abandoned it in 1884.

Hidden was married, October 30, 1883, to Miss Josephine Morton of Newark, who died a few years ago. There are three surviving children, Irad Morton Hidden,<sup>1</sup> Morton Earl Hidden, and Miss Abigail Elizabeth Hidden. He was a member of the Rocky Mountain Club, a fellow of the Royal Geological Society of London, and member of the American Numismatic Society and of other organizations.

In 1879, in connection with the recently introduced electric lights, Hidden was sent by Thos. A. Edison on a five-months' search for platinum in the Appalachian belt of North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia and Alabama. He failed to find any deposits of the metal, but was more successful subsequently in the search for other minerals, having developed, in connection with the Welsbach Light Co. in North Carolina and South Carolina, deposits of the rare thorium mineral monazite.

On the first of his many trips to North Carolina, Hidden made the acquaintance of Mr. J. Adlai D. Stephenson, of Statesville, who had devoted himself ardently for several years to the collection of North Carolina minerals, and who had discovered emeralds at Stony Point, Alexander County, North Carolina. Concerning this discovery Mr. Stephenson states that in 1875 he obtained his first emerald. It was small and rather opaque, but of fine color, and the file-like markings on its planes were very

<sup>1</sup> Killed in the recent war.

distinct. In the following year he collected two others at the same locality, neither of which quite equalled the first in color, altho one of them was more transparent. During 1877, two emeralds, of good color and quite transparent, were brought to him from a point about 3 km. distant from the first locality.

Mr. Stephenson also found, in April, 1879, specimens of a chrome-green mineral which he conjectured to be diopside. Of these he gave Hidden several examples, and the latter sent the supposed diopside for analysis to Dr. J. Lawrence Smith, of Louisville, Kentucky, who determined it to be a variety of spodumene.<sup>1</sup> Unaware that another specimen had previously been sent by Stephenson himself to Norman Spang, the great collector of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, Doctor Smith named the new mineral "hiddenite," after William E. Hidden. This led to a heated controversy between Mr. Spang, Mr. Stephenson, and others. As a memorial of the discovery the name of the Post Office Stony Point was changed to Hiddenite.

Later on, the emeralds and the hiddenite were mined, the property having been secured by the newly organized Emerald and Hiddenite Mining Company. Altho the emeralds were not of great gem value, many notable crystals, remarkably interesting as mineralogical specimens, were found, one of them measuring 22 centimeters in length and another weighing as much as 280 grams.<sup>2</sup> The emerald occurrences were described by Hidden before the New York Academy of Sciences in 1882.<sup>3</sup> The two finest crystals are now in the Bement-Morgan Collection in the American Museum of Natural History, New York City. Other examples are in the Garland Collection of Harvard University, the Lea Collection of the United States National Museum, Washington, D. C., the Kunz Collection at Albany, New York, the Field Museum of Natural History, Chicago, etc.

The North Carolina emeralds were remarkable as crystals, and as such are among the finest in the world; but they had the deep emerald hue, the true gem color, on the surface only, and were almost white within. A few very pale gems of 9 carats' weight were cut, but no fine gem of even one carat was ever obtained from the Stony Point material.

(To be continued)

<sup>1</sup> *Am. J. Sci.* [3], 21, 128, 1881.

<sup>2</sup> These are illustrated in the present writer's "Gems and Precious Stones of North America," Pl. 5.

<sup>3</sup> *Trans. N. Y. Acad. Sci.*, 1882, 101-105.