

Memorial of Hugh Swaine Spence 1885–1978

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Hugh S. Spence (Hugh de Schmid), a longtime Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America, died at his home in Ottawa on March 13, 1978, at the age of ninety-three.

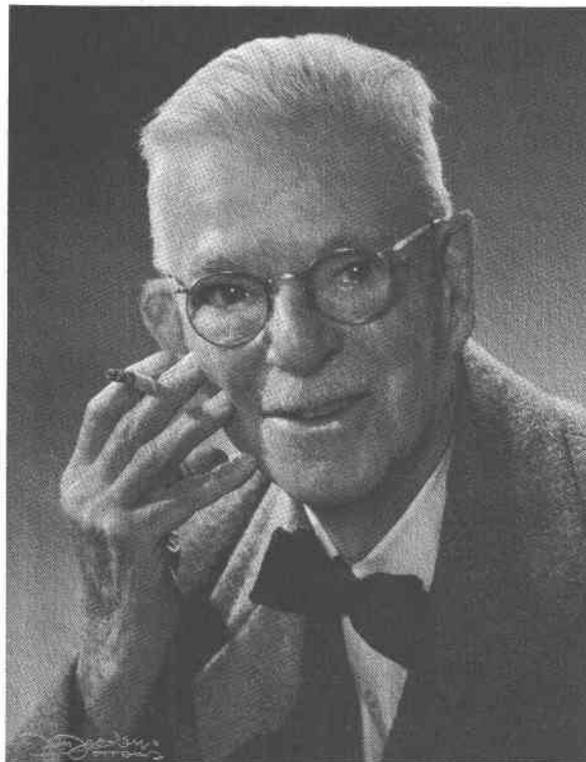
He was born in Devon, England, in 1885. He received an M.E. degree in 1908 in mining from the Royal Saxon School of Mines (Koenigliche Sächsische Bergakademie) in Freiburg, Saxony. He joined the Mines Branch of the Government of Canada (now CANMET) in Ottawa as a Mines Engineer in 1910 and remained with the government until his retirement on September 15, 1949, after thirty-nine years of service. On retirement, he engaged in private practice in Ottawa as consulting mineral technologist.

His work with the Mines Branch was principally with industrial and rare-earth minerals, including uranium and thorium. In the course of his work with the federal government, he travelled extensively across Canada and examined nearly all the known occurrences, both major and minor, of these minerals. The results of his findings are in the many Mines Branch publications. They include reports on barium, strontium, bentonite, graphite, feldspar, mica, phosphate, and talc.

In the course of his extensive studies of quartz veins and pegmatites, Spence published several articles on Canadian pegmatite minerals in *The American Mineralogist*. He also built up one of the best mineral collections in Canada.

He early examined and, in 1931, published the first official report on the Great Bear Lake, Northwest Territories, pitchblende–silver deposit, discovered by Gilbert Labine in the spring of 1930. In a paper in the November 1932 issue of the *Canadian Mining Journal* on this deposit, Spence showed the first, and still some of the best, radiographs on Great Bear pitchblende ore. He was the author of "Prospector's Guide to Uranium and Thorium Minerals," published in 1948; this proved to be a very useful handbook, and by 1949 had gone into its third printing.

For his contributions to mineralogy, he was honored by having a rare pegmatite mineral, spencite (-tritomite-(Y)), named for him. Spencite, the yttrium analogue of tritomite, is a metamict boro-silicate of yttrium, thorium, and calcium. Spence had found this mineral in 1934 in a prospect pit in Cardiff township, Haliburton county, Ontario, and it was identified, described and named by C. Frondel in Volume 6 of the *Canadian Mineralogist*,



1961. In the pit it occurred as masses of a brown splintery mineral in a pegmatite stringer in pyroxenite.

Hugh Spence belonged to many professional and scientific societies, including the American Institute of Mining Engineers, the American Ceramic Society, and the Canadian Institute of Mining and Metallurgy. He first joined the Canadian Institute in 1912 and was an active member of its Industrial Minerals Division for many years. He was elected Life Member in 1951 and a member of the Fifty-Year Club in 1961. He was elected Fellow of the Mineralogical Society of America in 1934 and took an active interest in the Society's activities.

He married Kathleen Kelley, who pre-deceased him, in Ottawa in 1913. He was survived by a son, Neville S., five grandchildren and four great-grandchildren.

On a personal note, I recall with pleasure his frequent trips to British Columbia and the visits I had with him at

the Mines Department in Victoria. These visits were always stimulating, and he frequently had searching questions on mineral occurrences throughout the Province. Hugh Spence has made a lasting contribution to mineralogy, and we appreciate the excellent work of his long and productive career.

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