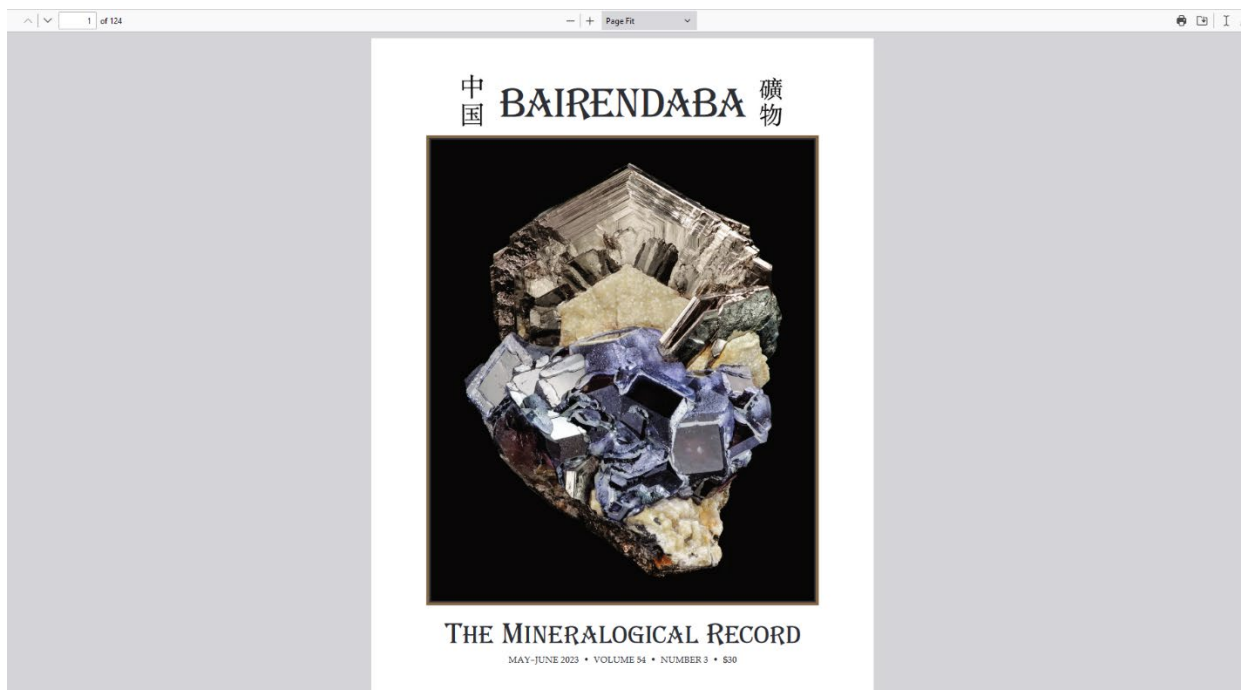
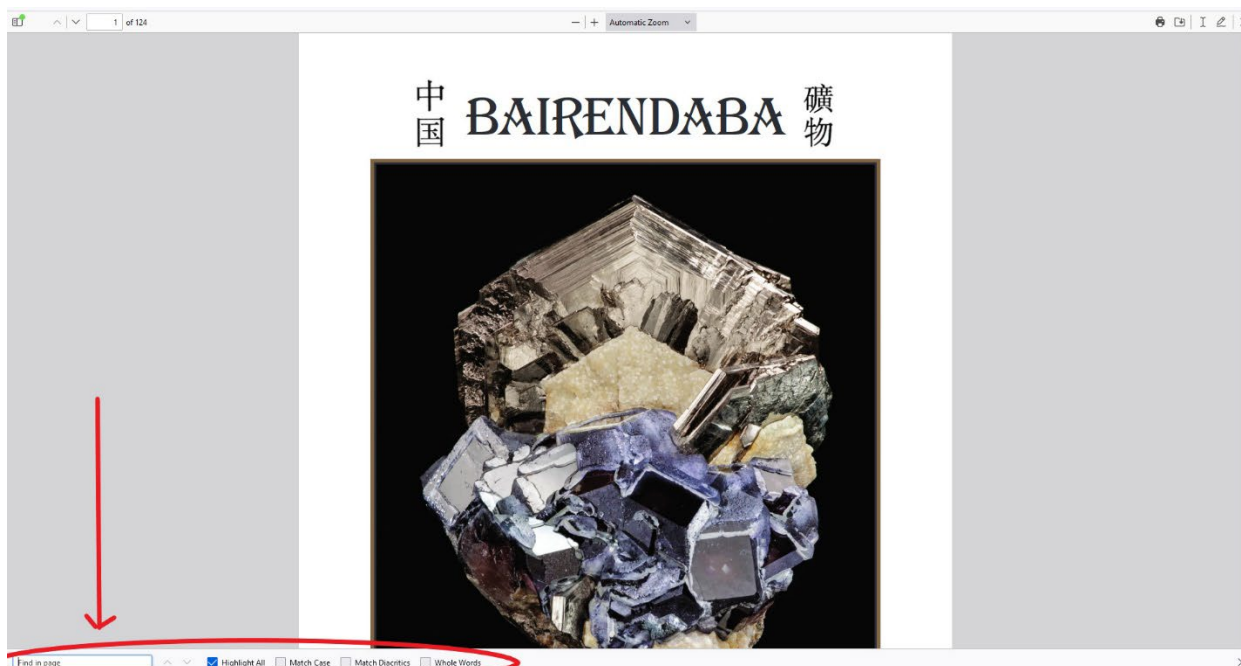


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and museum called Leighton's of West Paris.] Frank Perham is a man well-met. A geologist with more practical field knowledge of pegmatites than most, he is also a dedicated pegmatite miner, a crack diesel engine mechanic, and is possessed of a wry, laconic humor that bubbles frequently in his conversations. Following in the footsteps of his father, Frank obtained a geology degree from Bates College in Maine, and proceeded to learn Maine's pegmatites by mining them. He has, over the years, mined commercial-grade feldspar, muscovite and beryl at the Waisanen, Nubble, and Bumpus mines, and the Newry Hill area, as well as maintaining a small drilling and blasting operation for ledge rock and cement removal. These operations provided the experience and equipment for his main love, the mining of gem-bearing pegmatites.

Considering that the mining of gems is primarily a labor of love on Frank's part, his successes have yielded truly significant rewards. Some of the areas in Maine where Frank has worked for mineral specimens and gem materials include the Harvard mine for purple albite, Plumbago mountain for rose quartz crystals, Mount Mica for tourmaline, the Keith and Pulsifer quarries on Mt. Apatite for tourmaline and purple spatie, the Consolidated Mining quarry in Georgetown for gem spodumene and tourmaline, the Whispering Pines mine for facet-grade rose quartz, and the Waisanen mine for smoky quartz crystals, herderite crystals, and tourmaline.

Undoubtedly, one of Frank's greatest thrills was the mining of record amounts of top-quality elbaite tourmaline at the Dunton gem mine in 1972, 1973 and 1974. Frank's description of the recovery of this gem material is one of the most fascinating and captivating experiences I have ever heard. The human side of Frank is ever-present, and he affectionately recalls the day in September of 1972 when his father was brought to the top of Newry Hill to see the gem elbaite being brought out of the pockets. Tourmaline had always been a part of the then-aged Stan Perham's life, and Frank wanted him to share in the thrills of this notable discovery. Frank's mining efforts have now come full-swing, and he is back at Mount Mica and Newry, mining for the Plumbago Mining Corporation, the discoverers of the 1972 tourmaline strike.

To watch Frank work a pegmatite with suspected pockets, and find the pockets and remove the contents with a minimum of damage, is akin to observing an expert surgeon in a complex operation. With a fine touch for drilling and blasting, perfected by years of experience, Frank is eminently well-suited to the challenges any pegmatite can offer. He has a remarkable three-dimensional memory which enables him to remember the size, contents, and position-in-space of pockets found in

Perhamite, 2.5 cm, from the Emmons quarry, Uncle Tom Mountain, Greenwood, Oxford County, Maine. Raymond Sprague photo. "Named in honor of Frank Croydon Perham, geologist and pegmatite miner of West Paris, Maine, in honor of his dedicated labors in the recovery of mineral specimens."

the past, and he utilizes this knowledge in the search for more pockets and seams of pegmatite minerals. One is most impressed by Frank Perham in the "breaks" between drilling efforts, when the noise has ceased and the dust settled, and Frank begins to explain, over a cup of hot soup, what he is doing that day. It is at this time that the listener comes to realize that this humble and self-effacing man is indeed the complete geologist, who is daily blending theoretical and practical knowledge in the search for pegmatite minerals. On a recent visit to the site of Frank's efforts, I had the good fortune to arrive just before lunchtime, known to Frank as the "edible hour." We were invited to join him while he ate in a converted bus-cum-camper which he hauls to the site of his mining for creature comforts (hard seats and one table). We were informed, ever so seriously, that we were dining in what Frank calls the "Mount Mica Hilton!" Frank's narratives include colorful (and off-color) descriptions of some of his finds. Most of his analogies are quite unique, such as "lepidolite crystals stacked up like a pile of Necco wafers," and other even more eloquent efforts.

In summary, Frank Perham combines the talents of a geologist and pegmatite miner with the warmth and good rich humor of an honest Maine man. Many of Maine's treasures have been borne into our consciousness through his hands, and more will certainly come in the years ahead. He represents the best in the mineral men of Maine.

For more on the life of Frank Perham see Frank C. Perham: Adventures in Maine Pegmatite Mining (2014) by Karen Webber and Raymond Sprague. A new edition with Skip Simmons as a coauthor will come out shortly.

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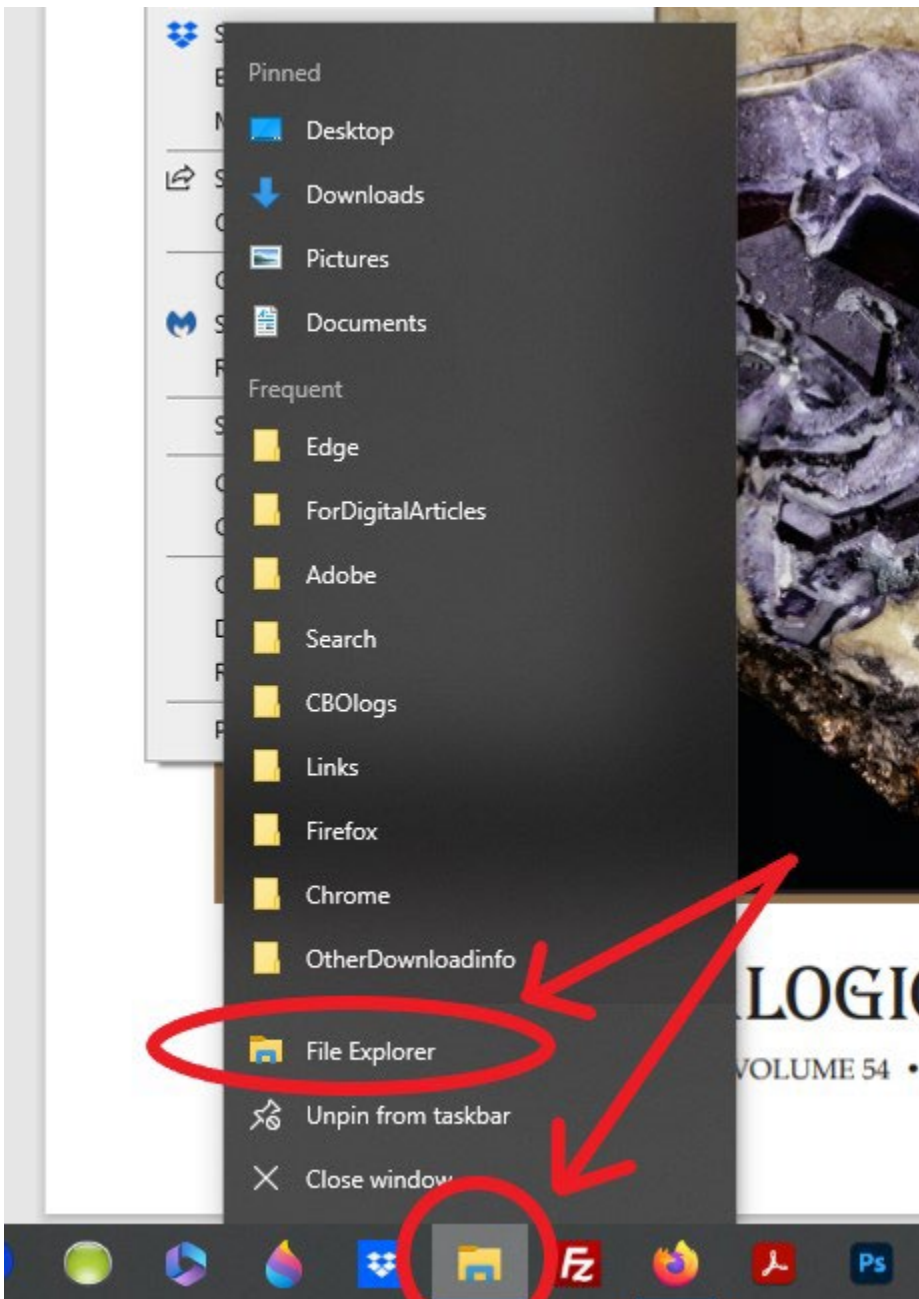
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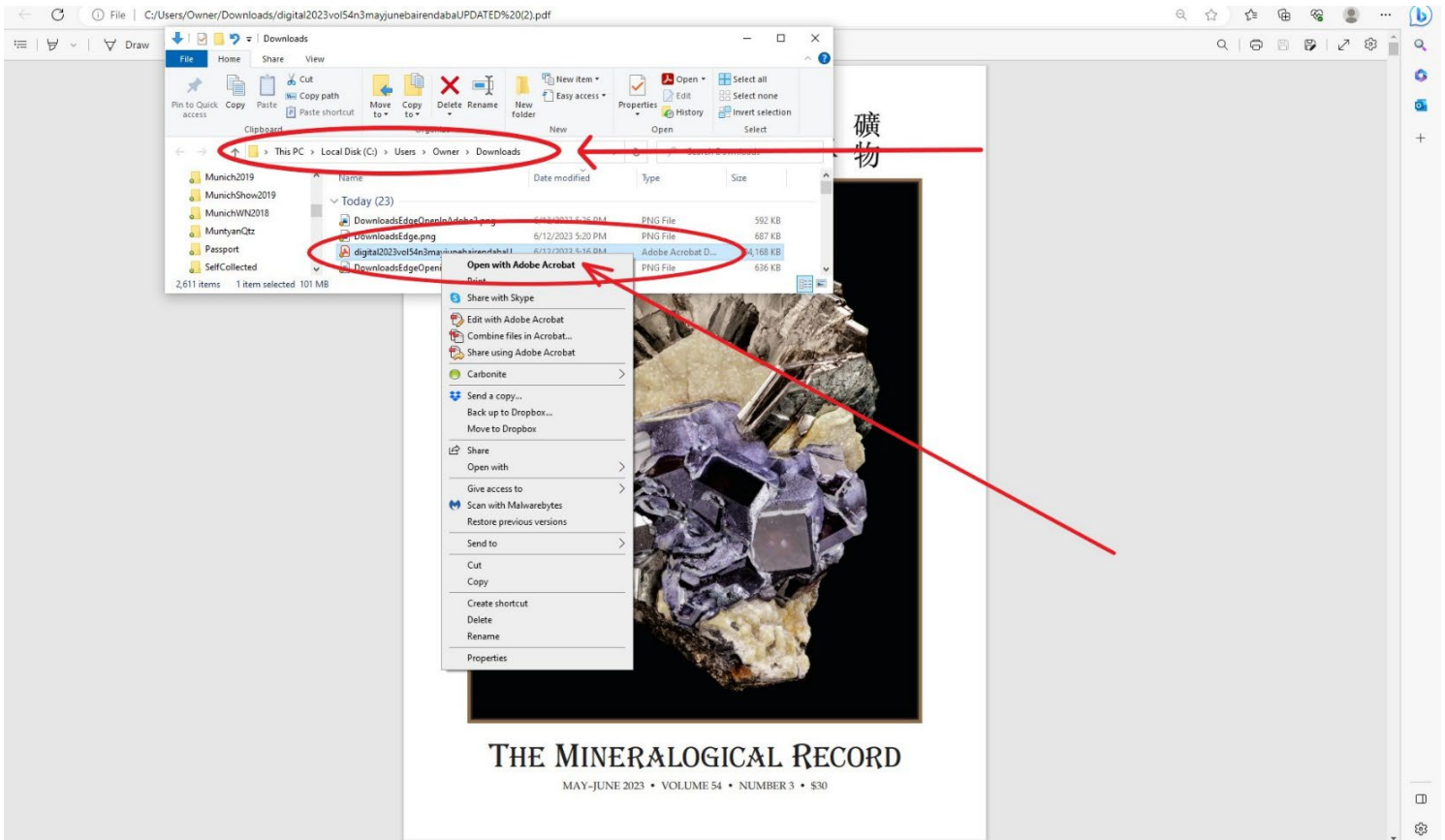
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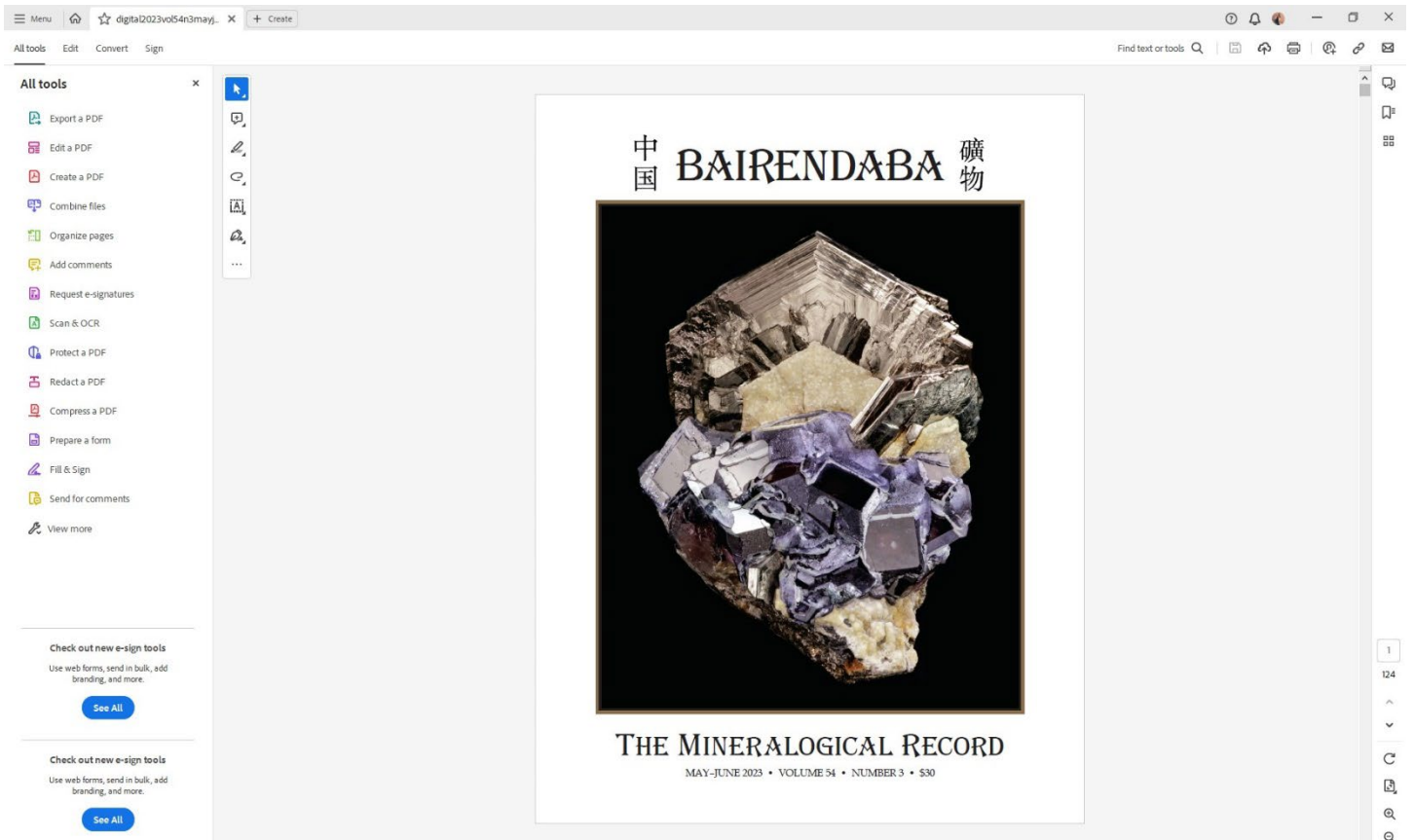
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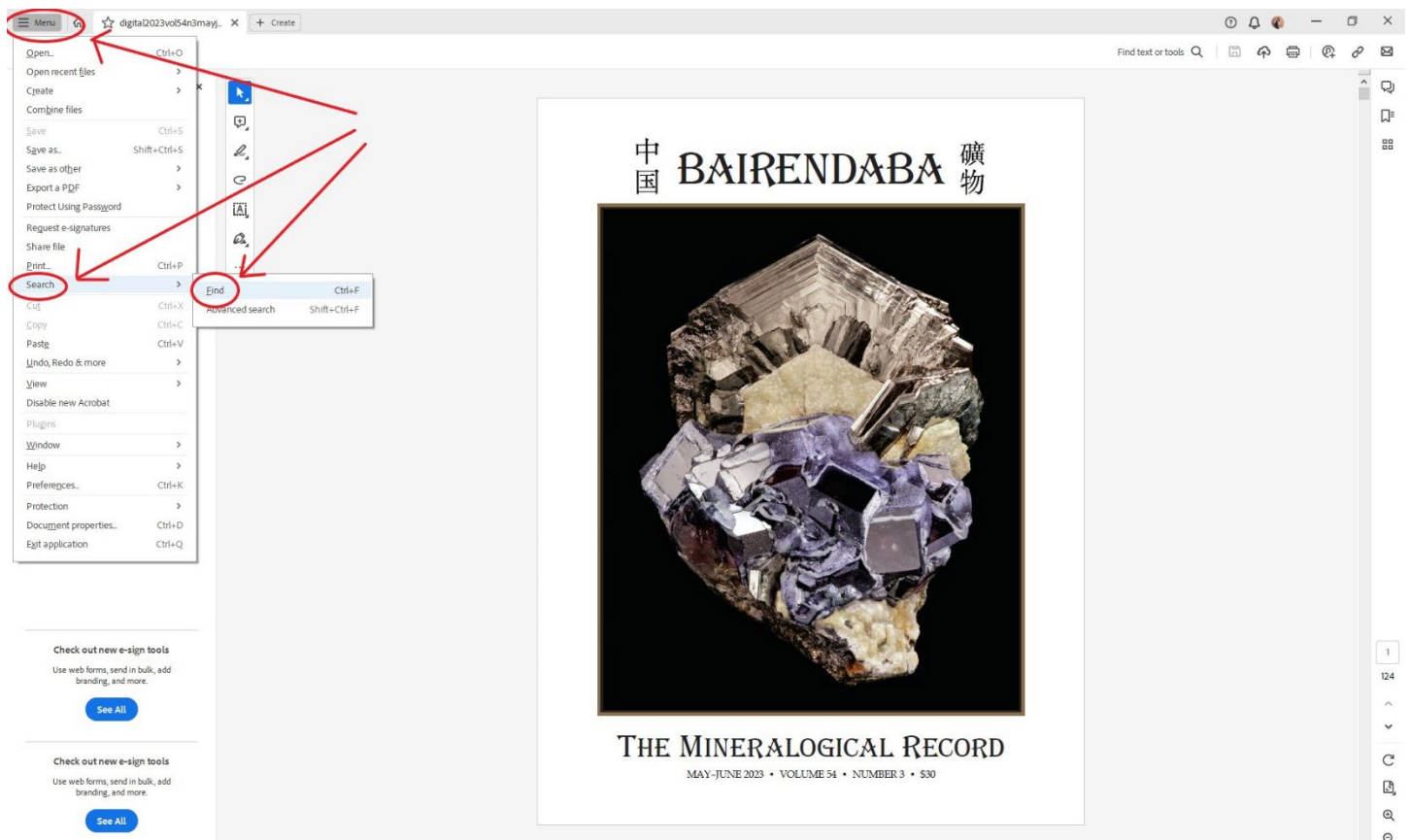
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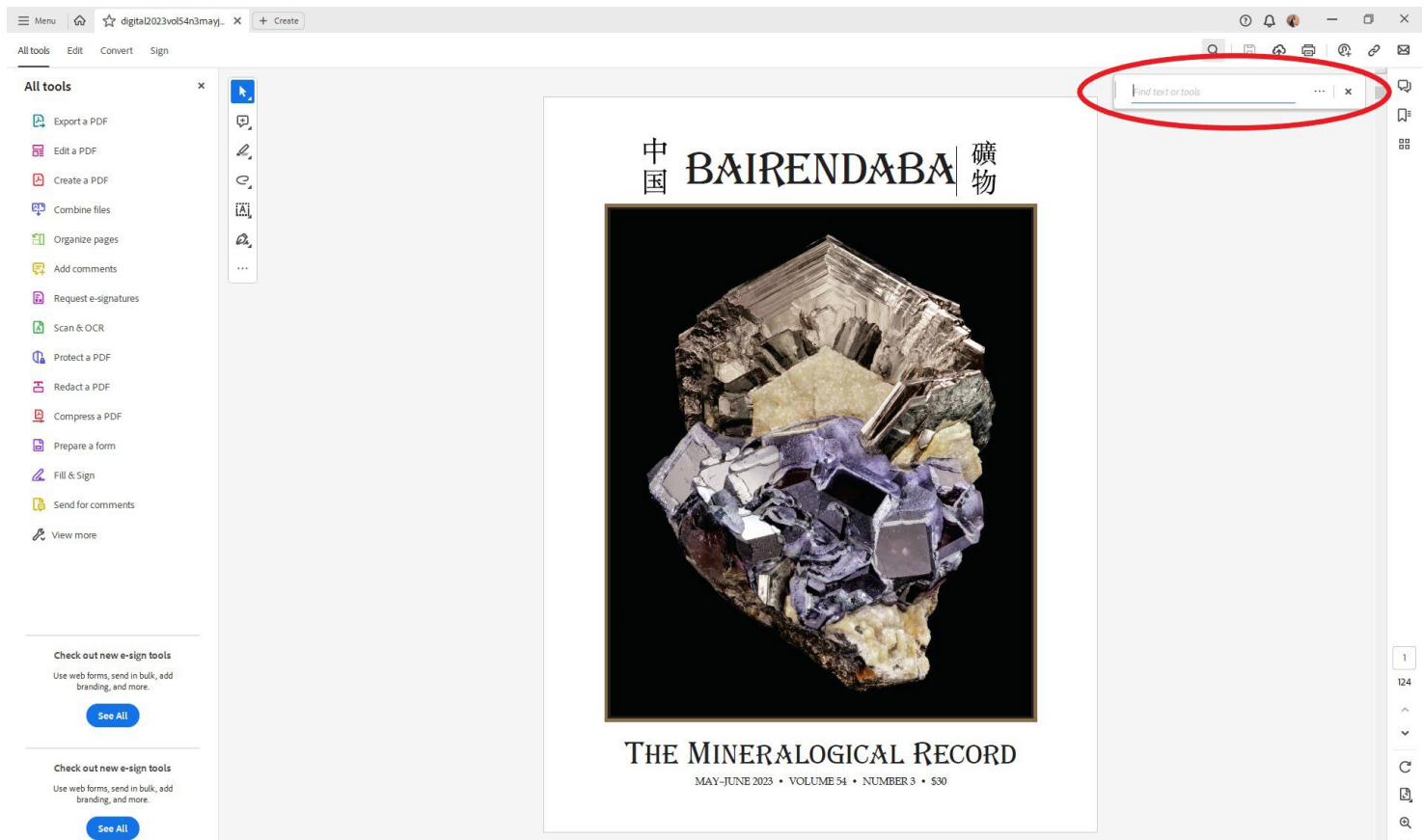
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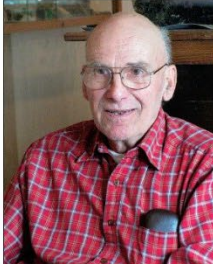
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short of his 92nd birthday. His collection ultimately numbered about 176 carefully chosen, consecutive-level specimens, including many of historical interest. He famously owned the "Kegele Amulet," a magnificent Tourmaline specimen originally collected by Tourmaline mine director Frederick William Kegele (1874-1946). Many of his specimens were illustrated in the July-August 2016 *Mineralogical Record* supplement on *Mineral Collectors of the American Northeast*, and also in John Whitt's article on "William Severance and his mineral collections" in the May-June 2020 issue of *Rock & Mineral*.

**WFW**



Frank Perham (1914-2023).  
Raymond Sprague photo.

**Died, Frank Perham, 88**

Frank Croydon Perham was born in South Paris, Oxford County, Maine, on March 5, 1914, the son of Greenwood Louise Wood (she died when Frank was only 19 months old) and the famous Maine miner and mineral dealer Stanley Irvine Perham (1807-1973). Stanley had begun taking natural history items from his bedrock in 1915, and by 1929 had founded Perham's Maine Mineral Store. The Perhams were a mining family; Stanley Perham being the son of Alfred Chase Perham, also a mine of Maine pegmatite. Stanley married Hazel Louise Scribner in 1935, and she helped out with the mineral store.

Frank first began to develop his interest in minerals in 1949: "When I was 15 years old," he said, "I met with my father to the B.B. mine, up in North Newry [Maine], and that's when it really began for me."

Frank graduated from West Paris High School in 1932 and attended Bates College in Lewiston for two and a half years before enlisting in the Army. He married Mary Esther Timmonson in 1955, following which he was stationed in Korea where he attended and

graduated from the I-Corps Non-commissioned Officer Academy there. After returning to Bates College he was a member of the Jordan-Randall Scientific Society and graduated with a B.S. degree in Geology in 1959, the same year his daughter was born. He was employed in his family's business for a couple of years, then for the next two decades he mined commercially for pegmatite minerals in the Oxford Hills area while also working as a drilling and blasting contractor for the State of Maine.

Frank loved minerals, and he also enjoyed competing in stock car races in the late 1960s and early 1970s, and served on the Board of Trustees of the Stephen Memorial Hospital.

In 1972, Frank took part in mining one of the greatest tourmaline discoveries in the history of Maine pegmatite mining. The exciting story of the discovery at the Dutton mine in Newry was written up in the *Mineralogical Record* (vol. 6, no. 1, 1972).

In 1973, Frank opened his own mine repair shop, the Route 219 Garage in West Paris, and ran an adjacent junk yard. He was always happy to give lectures over the years, describing his mining adventures, and he covered various mining properties which he freely opened to the public for collecting. The mineral *perhamite* was named in his honor by Peter Dunn and Donald Appleman in 1977. Frank continued mining and making discoveries well into his 80s. In 2015 he sold his extensive collection of 1,280 specimens of Maine pegmatite minerals to the Maine Mineral and Gem Museum in Bethel (located further up Route 16 from the former Perham store at West Paris). Soon afterward he refilled his display cases with specimens from a storage unit and from new finds.

Frank Perham died on January 31, 2023, at the age of 88. His close friend, Woodrow Thompson, adds the following notes about Frank:

**Memories of Frank Perham**

Frank was a favorite speaker at the Maine Mineral Symposium and the New England Mineral Conference. The talk given as people came to have his vivid memories of adventures as pegmatite mining. No matter what the place, topic was, Frank eventually came around to the thrill of collecting the famous pen tourmaline pocket at the Dutton mine in Newry. He told this story many times, but always with colorful enthusiasm and new details that had not been before.

I recall one of Frank's stories that exemplifies his subtle Oxford Hills humor. He told about looking high on the crest of Flumbago Mountain in Newry, where rose quartz crystals were found. Mineral collectors typically searched this locality by grasping up the steep rocky south face of Flumbago. Instead, Frank managed to drive up there from the east side, with his legs and equipment on a rough forest road, set up a campsite. One day he was fixing a meal when he heard the commotion of Frank collectors approaching the summit top. They finally dragged out one of the woods only to come upon Frank, who cheerfully asked "Would you like a cup of coffee?" Frank was nicknamed "The Pocket Fairy" for always showing up at a mine when a pocket had either just been found or was about to be discovered. The miners took it as a good omen when Frank came to visit.

He could remember details of virtually every crystal pocket he had seen. Louise Thompson showed him a ring with a faceted tourmaline that had recently been mined by Gary Treeman at Mount Mica. The stone had an unusual blue color, and she was hoping to learn more about it. Frank initially recognized the color and remarked on which of Gary's numbered pockets it had come from.

Woodrow Thompson, 6 February 2023

The *Mineralogical Record*, volume 54, May-June, 2023

Another personal description of Frank was provided back in 1973 by Southmain mineralogist Peter J. Dunn in the *Mineralogical Record* (vol. 6, no. 3), repeated below in full.

**Frank Perham: Pegmatite miner, geologist and humorist**


Few names are as intimately associated with the pegmatite belt of Maine than that of the Perhams: Frank's grandfathers, Alfred, was a former-tin-miner, and Frank's father was the well-known Stan Perham. Stan made his mark in a tourmaline find at the B.B. mine in north Newry, Maine, and came to fame as the "mineral man at Trip Course" in West Paris, Maine, where he operated a mineral shop until his passing on December 1, 1973. The shop is now operated by his daughter, Jane Perham Stevens, and his widow, Hazel Perham. Hazel died in 1991; the shop was finally closed by Stan in 2009, and was replaced by Brett Leighton in 2022 as a mineral store and museum called Leighton's of West Paris.

Frank Perham is a name well used by geologists with some practical field knowledge of pegmatite than most, he is also a dedicated pegmatite miner, a crack trial engine mechanic, and is proud of a way, known better than he babbles frequently in his conversations. Following the footsteps of his father, Frank obtained a geology degree from Bates College in Maine, and proceeded to learn Maine geology by mining them. He has, over the years, mined commercial-grade feldspar, muscovite and beryl at the Whipple, Noble, and Dupont mines, and the Newry Hill mine as well as maintaining a small drilling and blasting operation for ledge rock and cement removal. These operations provided the experience and equipment for his main love, mining of pen-bearing pegmatite.

Consider that the mining of pens is primarily a labor of love on the night, his successes have yielded truly significant quantities of the mines in Maine where Frank has worked. Mineral specimens and gem materials include the Harvard and Whipple spines, Flumbago mountain for rose quartz crystals, Mount Mica for tourmaline, the Keith and Purdy quarries on Mount Mica for tourmaline and purple apatite, the Consolidated Mount Mica quarry in Coopersville for pen specimens and tourmaline, the Whispering Pine mine for fine-grade rose quartz, and the Whipple mine for smoky quartz crystals, banded crystals, and tourmaline.

Undoubtedly, one of Frank's greatest finds was the mining of recent amounts of pen-crystals within tourmaline at the Dutton pen mine in 1972, 1973 and 1974. Frank's description of the recovery of this gem material is one of the most fascinating and captivating passages I have ever read. The human side of the discovery is so personal, and he affectionately recalls the day in September of 1972 when his father was brought to the top of Newry Hill to see the pen which was brought out of the pocket. Tourmaline had always been a part of the deceased Stan Perham's life, and Frank wanted him to share in the thrill of this notable discovery. Frank's mining efforts have now come full-swing, and he is back at Mount Mica and Newry, mining for the Flumbago Mining Corporation, the discoverers of the 1972 tourmaline strike.

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