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Under the Big Top
By Eric Brosius



In 1919 P.T. Barnum and James Anthony Baily, whose Barnum & Baily Circus merged with the Ringling Brothers World's Greatest Shows to create the Ringling Brothers and Barnum & Baily Ltd Greatest Show on Earth. The circus traveled from city to city across the United States acting out and displaying shows under a large tent known as The Big Top. Three rings or stages were erected under The Big Top where a variety of unusual acts of human and animal feats were performed within and above each ring. The largest, main ring, in the center of the tent featured the most spectacular of the performances.

March was the Leidy Microscopical Society's Big Top moment. The main event was the Leidy Microscopical Society's Annual Micromount Symposium held on March 8-9 penned as the 48th Annual Micromount Symposium in the advertising flyers. Thanks to the Covid-19 pandemic and a missed year for the symposium in 2021 an advertising error should have made this year's symposium the 47th Annual Micromount Symposium. Have no fear, plans are in the works for the 2025 symposium which will be the actual 48th Annual Micromount Symposium.

Thanks to Don McAlarnen, John Ferrante and Christel Hoffmann, who acted as ringmaster, ringleader and ring mistress under our Big Top, with the organizing, preparing and hosting the symposium for micromounters up and down the east coast. Thankfully, the symposium went mostly as planned for a change.

The main event on Friday March 8 was a talk by Society member Steve Stuart on **“The Hugh McCulloch Collection also known as the Winston Collection”**. Dr. Hugh McCulloch, Jr. was a graduate of Washington and Lee University and Duke University Medical School. He served as Chief of U.S. Air Force Dispensation in Guam and had his residency at John Hopkins becoming Diplomat in Dermatology. He served in World War II and the Korean War becoming Chief of Dermatology at Valley Forge Army Hospital. He also had a private practice in Plainfield and Bay Head, New Jersey following his military service.



Hugh had multiple activities and hobbies in his personal life that he enjoyed including being an avid rockhound and micromounters. His collection numbered in the thousands of documented specimens that were meticulously recorded in a handwritten catalog. His unmounted inventory amounted to thousands of Winston cigarette boxes containing self-collected material from around the world and particularly the Northeastern United States. His collection was donated to several museums including the Los Angeles Museum of Natural History and the Cleveland Museum of Natural History. Most of the unmounted Winston cigarette box inventory went to the Cleveland Museum of Natural History as several “Banker Boxes” filled with the Winston cigarette boxes. Incidentally, each

of the Winston cigarette boxes contained multiple specimens from different localities. The specimens were wrapped in the foil packaging that held the cigarettes. The McCulloch mineral collection catalog was digitized by the Cleveland Museum of Natural History and matches perfectly with all his micromounts and inventory in the Winston cigarette boxes. The Cleveland Museum of Natural History deaccessed his unmounted inventory of Winston Cigarette boxes several years ago. Those Winston cigarette boxes found their way into the hands of several clubs and their members.



Steve Stuart was enamored with the Winston cigarette boxes on the give-away table during the 2023 Leidy Microscopical Society 46th Annual Micromount Symposium. This set him on a journey to research the

story behind those Winston cigarette boxes that contained multiple specimens. Steve included a brief biography of Hugh McCulloch, as I summarized earlier in this article, in his talk along with photos of many specimens that he was able to mount from the Winston cigarette box inventory he obtained during the 2023 Leidy Micromount Symposium.

There are many Winston cigarette boxes of Hugh's collection still circulating throughout the micromount collecting community. The catalog numbers on those boxes can be verified with Hugh's meticulous records at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History.

Hugh McCulloch passed away on February 24, 2015. Many who knew him, remember his car's license plate "Dr Itch" as he drove off into the sunset.

We thank Steve for a very informative program on Hugh McCulloch and his Winston cigarette box collection.

The Leidy Micromount Symposium continued Saturday March 9 with additional attendees including several new to the world of micromounting. The main event on Saturday was a Zoom® talk "**Classic and New Southeastern Microminerals**" by Jose Santamaria. Jose is Director Emeritus of the Tellus Science Museum and vice-president of the Rome Mineral Society and co-chair of the Micromount Section of the Georgia Mineral Society.

After several technical issues with the internet connection, Jose was able to give a wonderful talk on localities in Georgia and Alabama for classic and new microminerals. Some of the locations discussed were Graves Mountain, The Emerson Barite Mine, Cartersville Mining District, Paga Mine, Martin Mariette Quarry, Red Oak Quarry all in Georgia and Indian Mountain, Cherokee County, Alabama. Many fantastic micromount photos of specimens from those locations were included in his talk.

Unfortunately, I was unable to document Jose's full talk in my notes, in which I apologize to him for the lack of detail in this write up. However, we thank Jose for taking the time out of his very busy schedule to provide a very informative and exceptionally well-prepared talk on the microminerals from the Southeast to those who attended the 2024 Leidy Micromount Symposium.



Throughout both days of the symposium, there were many give-aways, dealers and micromounters with spectacular mounts for sale and trade. Many discussions on a variety of subjects occurred among the attendees and of course plenty of viewing micros both mounted and unmounted under the microscope. Again, we thank Don McAlarnen, John Ferrante, and Christel Hoffmann for organizing this year's event. We also thank all those who attended, especially our speakers, Steve Stuart, and Jose Santamaria. We also thank our host venue, the Advent Lutheran Church, for providing an excellent facility to hold our event. Without their generosity we would not be able to hold the symposium.

The events under the Leidy Microscopical Society's March Big Top did not end with the symposium. The regular meeting of the Society took place a few weeks later, on March 21, 2024. The meeting involved mostly the business of the Society with some micromounting. There was a rehash of the March 8-9 Symposium along with proposed upcoming joint meetings with the Philadelphia Society for Microscopy at the Delaware County Institute of Science. The meetings are planned for May 11 and September 7. The May meeting will be a working session introducing youngsters to micromounts through a brief review of micromounts then a series of stations so they can make their own mounts. The September meeting will feature a similar session on making diatom mounts. The meeting's evening concluded with a micromount round table that involved mounts of minerals, fossils, insects, and botanicals.



The last event under the Leidy Microscopical Society's March Big Top was a display and demonstration table at the Philadelphia Mineralogical Society & Delaware Valley Paleontological Society's 2024 Mineral Treasures and Fossil Fair at the Lulu Temple in Plymouth Meeting, PA on March 23rd and 24th. The demonstration table was set up to introduce attendees to the world of micromounting. The display table was set up with two binocular microscopes for viewing a rotating stage of mounts from Don McAlarnen's collection. There was also a digital microscope with a high-definition screen set up for mounts of fossils. We thank Don McAlarnen for organizing and setting up the display. We also thank Dick Braun, Wayne Geller, Matt Okasinski, Bill Prince, and Eric Brosius for help in staffing the demonstration table. We especially thank Judy McAlarnen for her help and also for allowing Don all the time it took away from their schedules to prepare the display and demonstrations.

Don McAlarnen staffing the Leidy display/demonstration table at the Lulu Temple Show.



Bill Prince and Wayne Geller staffing the Leidy display/demonstration table at the Lulu Temple Show.



Finally, the April 18, 2024, meeting of the Leidy Microscopical Society will be an inventory of the contents in the mobile storage cabinet. We will also enjoy micromounts on what the members are currently working on. All are invited even if you do not have a microscope.