

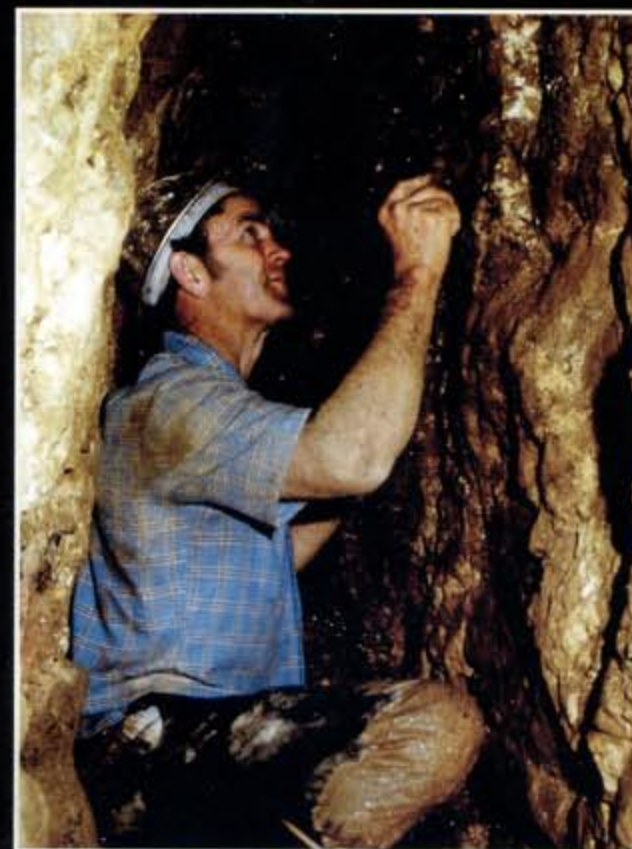
[ 1929-2016 ]

A ROCKHOUND  
REMEMBERED

# Glenn R. Bolick



Glenn took great pride in providing educational talks to schools, youth groups, civic groups, and senior citizens groups.



Glenn's most prolific emerald collecting site was the Adams farm, from which he collected over 3,500 carats of gems.



Glenn was an avid rockhound who enjoyed the challenge of finding perfect specimens.

By Warren L. Hollar

Glenn Bolick passed away on July 27, 2016 in Hickory, North Carolina. Born Feb. 16, 1929, Glenn was considered one of the foremost authorities and ardent aficionados of North Carolina emeralds. Along with his wife, Kathleen, he provided much leadership nationally in the fine art of gem and mineral collecting and in the process for displaying at shows.

He was a self-taught authority in the field of emeralds who was sought out by many others to provide advice on the collecting, cutting, faceting and display of fine gem specimens. Like many other amateur collectors, Glenn continually sought to improve his knowledge in the field. His love of the collecting process and quest for knowledge led him to take an active role in the Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, where he served as president for four years and show chairman for two decades. He continued his involvement in promoting gem and mineral collecting through membership and leader-

ship on numerous regional committees.

His involvement in promoting emerald collecting led to him serving as president of the Eastern Federation of Mineralogical and Lapidary Societies (EFMLS). During the heyday of his collecting and digging, Glenn took a major role in systemizing the gem and mineral display process for shows. According to his wife, Kathleen, he provided excellent workshops in areas from Canada to Florida and from the Carolinas to California on Field Collecting of Emeralds, Emerald and Gem Displaying, Judging, and other related topics.

Glenn and Kathleen began their collecting career in the 1970s with trips to the Rist mine and the Adams farm, near Hiddenite, North Carolina. Glenn grew up on a farm and was known for his tenacious nature, curiosity, and stick-to-it-iveness. The search for emeralds and successes of several searchers resulted in a "Hiddenite Hysteria", similar to the California gold rush. Searchers had to maintain their claims by working in the pits each day ("The Quest for Green Bolts: Part 1", *Lapidary Journal*, May 1982).

For 80 straight days, Glenn, Kathleen, their son Steven, and friends Kenneth and Patricia Arnold, worked through heat, rain, cold, and the aftermath of a hurricane to search for the elusive emeralds. For the next 19 consecutive days, and then intermittently, the Bolicks found emeralds in their claim. Over 3,500 carats of emeralds, all from the Adams farm, collected in one year by one intrepid gem hunter set the tone for his future work with emeralds.

Through the ensuing years, Glenn collected many specimens of amethyst, rutile, tourmaline, quartz, limonite, agates, geodes, and other gems and minerals. Later in life, he developed an interest in fossils and collected noteworthy specimens from the Aurora area of North Carolina.

Along with personally collected emeralds, Glenn was able to acquire additional Hiddenite emeralds. During subsequent years, these emeralds were fashioned into exquisite jewelry and faceted samples that found their way to the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History, the Houston Museum of Natural Sciences, and other locations

throughout the United States. The Bolicks chose Arthur T. Grant, a master faceter who is now deceased, to cut the best emeralds. Paul Desautels, Curator of Gems and Minerals at the Smithsonian, became a good friend and provided Bolick with astute guidance on how to best develop the stones.

At the time, one stone cut by Grant was the largest fine emerald in the nation ("We Mined for Emeralds", *Lapidary Journal*, May 1982). One stone was acclaimed as magnificent and given Kathleen's middle name, Marie. In keeping with the quality of the stone, Desautels encouraged Martha Ann Gilchrist, of Dallas, Texas, to create a unique piece for the Bolicks. The resulting 18k gold necklace, named "Spring Marie" included the 2.685 carat "Marie emerald", set in 24k gold, with 2.5 carats of diamonds set in platinum. This piece of jewelry, and other stones Glenn found, served as one of the feature exhibits at the 1982 Tucson Gem and Mineral Show and appeared on the cover of a major gem-cutting magazine.

According to Shelly Sargent, curator of the "Somewhere in the Rainbow Gem and Min-

eral Collection", based in Scottsdale, Arizona, the piece is now housed in the private educational jewelry collection. Most recently, the piece was displayed at the Tellus Museum in Cartersville, Georgia, a Smithsonian Affiliate Museum, and it will be moved to the University of Arizona in early 2017.

Amber Bolick, Glenn's granddaughter, has said that pieces of the Bolick collection are housed at the Houston Museum, the Smithsonian, several museums in North Carolina, including the Pisgah Astronomical Research Institute and Grandfather Mountain, and other North American museums. Other collections of agates, fossils, etc. have also been donated to schools and museums.

In later life, Glenn spent hundreds of hours creating gem and mineral displays for schools throughout North Carolina. He also took great pride in providing educational talks to schools, youth groups, civic groups, and senior citizens groups. Dr. Baxter Leonard's thoughts reflect the general feeling of the gem and mineral community. He said, "Glenn Bolick represents all that is good in a person. He was kind,

generous, selfless, of highest integrity, fun to be with, and a worker who strived for perfection no matter what the task was. True, he was an avid rockhound who enjoyed the challenge of finding perfect specimens, but much more than that was his love of family and friends, and sharing his experience, knowledge, and skills with those around him."

Many will miss his wry sense of humor and his ability to tell a story about collecting that would have everyone smiling. Glenn is missed by his widow, Kathleen; his son Steven; his daughter Janice; the mother of his grandchildren, Vera Solomon Bolick; and his granddaughters Amber and Crystal; and a number of great and great-great grandchildren. We will greatly miss Glenn, but we know he has joined his deceased emerald-collecting buddies where they are sharing humorous gem-hunting tales.

*Dr. Warren Hollar is a member of the Catawba Valley Gem & Mineral Club, retired school administrator, and retired clinician at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte.*