

## COUNT GEORG CANCRIN AND THE HISTORY OF CANCRINITE DISCOVERY

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Photo 1. Picture of Count Georg Cancrin after an oil painting by Johannes NIEDERHAUS, Historischer Forschungsverein der Deutschen aus Russland e. V

The mineral cancrinite (photo 2–5) was named after Count Georg CANCRIN<sup>2</sup>, a native German and later Russian minister of finance. The type locality is Miass, Ilmeny Mountains, Southern Urals, Russia. Cancrinite was discovered during an expedition by the German scientists Alexander von HUMBOLDT, Christian G. EHRENBERG and Gustav ROSE to Russia in 1829, and described and named by G. ROSE in 1839. Here we summarize the life-history of CANCRIN, and the cancrinite discovery and naming.

### Georg CANCRIN

Georg Ludwig Daniel CANCRIN (photo 1) was born in 1774 in Hanau, Germany. He was the son of Franz Ludwig CANCRIN and Maria Louisa Phillipa CANCRIN (née KROEBERIN) (WELLENKAMP 1971, BECK 1959:71ff). Franz Ludwig CANCRIN was successful in construction and mining activity, particularly in salt mining. 1782 he fell in disgrace with landgraf Wilhelm III, was fired and prisoned for several months. In 1783 he was invited by Russian Empress Ekaterina II, and Franz moved to Russia with wife and daughters where he headed salt mining in Staraya Russa near Novgorod. Later the Empress awarded him by Noble Title and later he became a member of State Council in a government of Tsar Pavel the First. Franz Ludwig CANCRIN past away in 1816 in St. Petersburg.

Georg stayed in Germany (Hanau) with an aunt and studied political science and law, philosophy and architecture in Gießen and Marburg, Germany. 23-years old Georg published anonymously in 1797 a novella “Dagobert, eine Geschichte aus den jetzigen Freiheitskriegen” (Dagobert, a story from the recently concluded wars of liberation). This novella was an epic on the heroic feats of republican officers in France.

Since he could not find employment in Germany, G. CANCRIN went to Russia and arrived on 26 May, 1797, in St. Petersburg. The first years in St. Petersburg were the hardest of his life. Despite the influence of his father he had no job, partly because he spoke no Russian (and also later hadn’t a good grasp of it). So he made his way as an accountant, copyist and teacher. In 1800, G. CANCRIN became an assistant to his father Franz in the saline of Staraya-Russa. In 1803 he was transferred to the interior ministry in St. Petersburg and there occupied himself with the salt production for all of Russia. Already in 1811 CANCRIN had been appointed to the assistant of the general provisions master in the ministry of war. In 1815 he was appointed to the rank of a general in Paris. Then he negotiated in Vienna the subsistence

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<sup>2</sup> – It is also used the notation CANKRIN.



↑ Photo 2. Yellow **cancrinite** with aegirine-augite from an alkali pegmatite, width 11 cm. Tvedalen, Norway. Mineralogisches Museum of the University of Würzburg.  
Photo: Joachim A. Lorenz

↑ Photo 3. Yellow-orange **cancrinite** as granular rock component, width 4 cm. Litchfield, Kennbec Co., Maine, USA.  
Photo: Joachim A. Lorenz

↑ Photo 4. Blue **cancrinite** with large, dark microcline crystals and analcime in an alkaline pegmatite, width 8 cm. Loch Borrolan, Assynth District, Sutherland, Scotland. Mineralogisches Museum of the University of Würzburg. Photo: Joachim A. Lorenz

↗ Photo 5. Fine-grained **cancrinite** (in bright interference colours) with microcline (above) in a pegmatite, width 3 mm, thin-section, crossed nicols. Loch Borrolan, Assynth District, Sutherland, Scotland.  
Photo: Joachim A. Lorenz

expenses of the Russian army in the war years 1813 to 1815, which he decreased from 250 to 60 million roubles. In 1816 G. CANCRIN married Ekanterina Zacharowna MURAVEVA, a relative of General Barclay DE TROLLEY and the niece of Tsar ALEXANDER I. His sons were educated as Evangelical Reformed and his daughters baptized Orthodox.

In 1818 he compiled a document to Tsar ALEXANDER I on the economic situation of the farming community in Russia, which consisted in large part of serfs. In 1821, a new book was added: "Weltreichtum, Nationalreichtum und Staatswirtschaft" (Prosperity of world, prosperity of state and economy of state). In it he described the mercantile situation in Europe with respect to Russia, proposing a new government program. Then Tsar ALEXANDER I appointed CANCRIN as the finance minister of Russia at Easter in 1823. CANCRIN reduced public spending and replaced the worthless paper roubles with silver roubles with appropriate coverage. As a loyal public servant, he took no part in intrigues and attempted coups, such as the one in 1825. One goal of CANCRIN was the development of the economy from manufacturing to industry, which was designed to bring the economy of Russia closer to the foreign standard. As finance minister he gave the economy order and protection, encouraged the mining industry, established factories, and established a school for the education of engineers in St. Petersburg. Subsequently, he wrote a three-volume book on the military economy ("Über die Militär-Ökonomie im Frieden und Krieg", 1820–1823; (The military-economy during peace and war), and later "Die Ökonomie der menschlichen Gesellschaft und das Finanzwesen", 1845; (The economics of human society and the system of public finances). As the only contribution to the knowledge of the rich mineral deposits of the country, he wrote an important treatise on the deposit of diamonds in the Ural Mountains (Bullet. de la soc. geolog. de France 1833, IV.; SCHENKENBERG