

Information Sheet

R Picher (Okla.).
754 Collection, ca. 1975-1995.
Three folders, photocopies.

This collection is available at The State Historical Society of Missouri. If you would like more information, please contact us at shsresearch@umsystem.edu.

These are pamphlets and scrapbooks of newspaper items concerning the development and decline of the lead and zinc mining industry at Picher, Ottawa County, Oklahoma. There is also information on other mining communities in the Tri-State Mining District of Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

Named after the Picher Lead Company (later the Eagle-Picher Lead Company), the town of Picher, Oklahoma, was founded in 1915. The company had extended its operations in Oklahoma after several decades of lead and zinc mining around Joplin, Missouri, and Galena, Kansas. The opening of the Picher field ushered in the last great mineral development in what became known as the Tri-State District. Only a dozen years after its founding, Picher had become the center of the largest lead and zinc mining district in the world. Mining waned in the 1930s, but Eagle-Picher succeeded in consolidating milling operations at a central mill and was the dominant force in the field by the Second World War. Postwar re-milling of chat piles and “gouging” of marginal ore bodies proceeded off and on through the 1950s and 1960s, after which most mines were abandoned.

Picher boomed through the 1920s, struggled in the 1930s, and experienced a brief heyday in the 1940s. Since mining played out, population has dwindled to a fraction of what it once was. The town itself also began to disappear, quite literally in some cases as portions caved in due to mine subsidence. Governmental aid has enabled the town to survive, but its future remains uncertain as a result of other environmental problems associated with its legacy of mining.

Folder 1 contains two pamphlets concerning the town of Picher. One is a reprint of a “12th Birthday Anniversary” (1927) pamphlet. The other was published in 1975 as an American Bicentennial project. Both include historical information and advertisements of local businesses.

Folder 2 contains a “Tri State Zinc District Scrapbook,” devoted to Picher and neighboring communities, compiled by Garnet L. Hood, the daughter of a miner who grew up in Picher. It consists of newspaper clippings, ca. 1975-1995, with occasional annotations by the compiler. The theme generally is the history of Picher, but other mining towns such as Commerce, Miami, and Quapaw, Oklahoma, and Galena, Kansas, are also included. Other subjects are the history of mining in the Tri-State district and development of the Eagle-Picher Lead Company, tributes to miners and other notable individuals of the region such as Mickey Mantle, who was a native of Commerce, various anecdotes, and reminiscences. A subject guide compiled by the donor is at the end of the folder.

Folder 3 is another scrapbook compiled by Garnet L. Hood. It consists primarily of clippings of newspaper articles by Ben Moody of Miami, Oklahoma, published in the *Tri-State Tribune*. The son of a district miner, Moody became the head of Eagle-Picher’s land, lease, and tax

department, dealing primarily with leases held by members of the Quapaw tribe. His stories include reminiscences of growing up in Picher, the history of the Tri-State district, its mines, and the Eagle-Picher Company, stories of miners, operators, and superintendents, and community life in the small towns of the Picher district. A subject guide prepared by Garnet Hood is at the end of the folder.

<i>r645</i>	<i>1 December 1995</i>	<i>Mark C. Stauter</i>	<i>Gift</i>
<i>r774</i>	<i>20 March 2001</i>	<i>Garnet L. Hood</i>	<i>Gift</i>

Shelf List

These are pamphlets and scrapbooks of newspaper items concerning the development and decline of the lead and zinc mining industry at Picher, Ottawa County, Oklahoma. There is also information on other mining communities in the Tri-State Mining District of Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma.

Folder 1: Historical pamphlets, ca. 1975-1976
(two items)

Folder 2: "Tri State District Scrapbook," by Garnet L. Hood
(437 pp.)

Folder 3: "Yester-year in the Picher mining field," by Ben Moody
(111 pp.)

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