

R Elgin, Robert L., 1914-2007.
1261 Research collection, 1960-1993.
Sixty-five folders.

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 the research files of a civil engineer, surveyor, and historian from St. James in Phelps County, Missouri. The collection includes reports, scale sketches, and photographs concerning the restoration of various historic sites in Missouri, charcoal iron furnace sites in Missouri, and prehistoric petroglyph and pictograph sites in the Missouri Ozarks.

Robert Lewis Elgin was a native of Platte County, Missouri. He attended the Missouri School of Mines and Metallurgy at Rolla, where he graduated in 1937 with a degree in civil engineering. During World War Two, Elgin was commissioned Ensign in the U. S. Navy and served in the South Pacific with Seabee battalions building airfields and base facilities. He retired from the Navy as commander, USNR. He returned to Phelps County in 1945, becoming director of operations at Maramec Spring Park for the James Foundation. He made the first architectural and archaeological surveys of this important early industrial site in Missouri, and his research and drawings were used extensively by James Norris in his history of the Maramec Iron Works, *Frontier Iron*. Elgin was Phelps County Surveyor for thirty-six years, and in 1962 formed Elgin Surveying and Engineering, Inc., later owned and operated by his son, Richard L. Elgin. Bob Elgin died in June 2007.

Elgin was personally and professionally interested in prehistory, native crafts, industrial archaeology, Route 66, and historic preservation. By virtue of his work at Maramec Spring, he became an expert on charcoal iron furnace technology. He traveled extensively throughout the northern Ozarks, photographing, measuring, and documenting not only iron furnaces, but also a wide variety of historic and prehistoric sites. Some of Elgin's research materials on travel and tourism have been previously cataloged (see SHSMO-R623), as well a large photograph collection concerning 19th century structures and sites in Missouri (see SHSMO-R1015).

The present collection consists of three parts. The first contains reports on historic sites in Missouri authored by Elgin. Most contain site plans or detail drawings; many have original photographs tipped in. Many of the reports were issued by Coombs & Elgin, a partnership of Elgin with Kansas City architect Kenneth E. Coombs. The firm specialized in feasibility reports, site planning, and rehabilitation plans for historic sites developed as public parks. The firm did considerable work for the Missouri State Park Board on sites within the Missouri system including the First State Capital at St. Charles, the Bingham house at Arrow Rock, Fort Zumwalt State Park at O'Fallon, Lexington State Park, and Watkins Mill near Lawson. There are also reports for the County Court of Jackson County, the Mississippi River Parkway Foundation, and the city of Alton, Illinois. Coombs & Elgin dissolved after 1965, but Elgin stayed involved with historic

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preservation, preparing a condition report and rehabilitation estimate for the Valle-Rozier house in Ste. Genevieve in 1969.

The second section consists of Elgin's survey of iron mines and charcoal iron furnace sites in Missouri. Following his studies of the Maramec Iron Works, Elgin searched out other iron furnace sites on private and public property in Missouri. Most of the preliminary research and nearly all of the site visits were conducted in the 1950s and 1960s, but he continued work on the project over the years and authored a history of the Nova Scotia Iron Company for the Mark Twain National Forest (see SHSMO-R660) in the 1990s. Elgin's work covers the biggest iron-producing sites including Maramec, Iron Mountain, Nova Scotia, and Sligo, but also smaller, shorter-lived sites including the furnaces at Brandsville (Howell County), Ozark (Phelps County), and Stellaville (Franklin County). The files include contain copies of historic photographs, contemporary views of the sites as Elgin found them, sketch maps, research notes, and miscellaneous materials. Also included is a report on the Sligo furnace authored by Richard L. Elgin as a class project in 1965.

The third section reflects Elgin's interest in prehistoric sites and his recording of Native American petroglyphs and pictographs in the Ozarks of Missouri. He was involved with preserving the petroglyphs at Washington State Park, where he designed the shelter and walkways, but also recorded a number of lesser-known sites in Callaway, Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Phelps, Pulaski, and Saline counties. Elgin shared his research on a dozen sites with Carol Diaz-Granados and James R. Duncan, and received a dedicatory acknowledgement in their *The Petroglyphs and Pictographs of Missouri* (University of Alabama Press, 2000). He also received the Carl Chapman award from the Missouri Association of Professional Archaeologists for his work. Elgin's petroglyph and pictograph files consist of photographs, scale drawings, site notes, slides, and maps of the prehistoric features.

Inventory

folders 1-15: Reports on preservation and restoration historic sites, the majority prepared by Coombs & Elgin, Kansas City, Missouri

- F. 1: Alton, Illinois Building Study
- F. 2: *Archaeological Investigations at Watkins Mill State Park Lawson, Missouri*, by Booker H. Rucker, January 1964, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri. Jan 1964
- F. 3: *Condition Report and Restoration Estimate, The Valle-Rozier House Ste. Genevieve, Mo.*, for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Mo., 27 Mar 1969
- F. 4: *Condition Report on Watkins Mill Near Lawson, Missouri*, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, 7 Jun 1962
- F. 5: *Detailed Specifications for Turbine Drive and Spillway Repair Alley Spring State Park*, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, n.d. [2 copies]
- F. 6: *Detailed Specifications for Restoration of the Millrace Montauk State Park*, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, 6 Mar 1965 [2 copies]
- F. 7: *Feasibility Report on Matthew's Tavern Jackson County, Missouri*, for the County Court of Jackson County, Mo., 1 Oct 1963 [2 copies]

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- F. 8: Master Plan Missouri Town—1855 Jackson County, Missouri, PN 6363, 2 Mar 1964 [2 copies]
- F. 9: *Preliminary Report on Carson Hurst, Jefferson County, Mo.*, for the Mississippi River Parkway Foundation, 1 Feb 1963 [2 copies]
- F. 10: *Report on Fort Zumwalt State Park O'Fallon, Missouri*, for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, 8 Feb 1962
- F. 11: Research Report, *Restoration and Development Civil War Battle of Lexington State Park, Lexington, Missouri* prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, Jan 1961
- F. 12: *Restoration Plan Bingham House Arrow Rock State Park*, for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, 6 May 1963
- F. 13: *A Restoration Plan for the First State Capitol of Missouri St. Charles, Missouri*, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, (first edition Nov 1962)
- F. 14: *A Restoration Plan for the First State Capitol of Missouri St. Charles, Missouri*, prepared for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri (first edition Nov 1962; second edition, Jan 1964)
- F. 15: *Specifications for Mill Building Repair, Watkins Mill State Park, Lawson, Missouri*, PN 6391, 4 Dec 1963 [2 copies]

folders 16-51: Survey of Missouri Iron Furnaces, compiled by Robert Elgin

- F. 16: Brandsville Furnace (Howell County, Mo.)
- F. 17: Cannon Creek Furnace (Washington County, Mo.)
- F. 18: Charcoal furnaces, miscellaneous research materials including copies of historic photographs
- F. 19: Decamp Mine (Phelps County, Mo.)
- F. 20: Hamilton Iron Works (Washington County, Mo.)
- F. 21: Harrison—Reeves Bloomery (Crawford County, Mo.)
- F. 22: Iron Mountain Furnace (Iron County, Mo.)
- F. 23: Irondale Furnace (Washington County, Mo.)
- F. 24: Kimmswick Forge (Jefferson County, Mo.)
- F. 25: Lead and copper smelters in Missouri
- F. 26: Maramec Iron Works (Phelps County, Mo.)
- F. 27: Midco Furnace (Carter County, Mo.)
- F. 28: Midland Furnace (Dent County, Mo.)
- F. 29: Moselle Furnace (Franklin County, Mo.)
- F. 30: Nova Scotia (Dent County, Mo.), correspondence
- F. 31: Nova Scotia "*History of the Nova Scotia Iron Company*" for the U.S. Forest Service, Mark Twain National Forest, Rolla, Mo.
- F. 32: Nova Scotia land & maps
- F. 33: Nova Scotia notebook
- F. 34: Nova Scotia photographs
- F. 35: Nova Scotia rough copy & 1st & 2nd drafts
- F. 36: Osage Iron Works (Camden County, Mo.)
- F. 37: Ozark Furnace (Phelps County, Mo.)
- F. 38: Pilot Knob Furnace (Iron County, Mo.)
- F. 39: Scotia Furnace (Crawford County, Mo.)
- F. 40: Scotia newspaper clippings
- F. 41: Scotia Pond and Mining
- F. 42: Sligo Research Report, by Richard L. Elgin, 9 April 1965
- F. 43: Springfield Furnace (Washington County, Mo.)

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- F. 44: Stansbie, J. H., notes from *Iron & Steel* (1908)
- F. 45: Stellaville Furnace (Franklin County, Mo.)
- F. 46: Tong—Ashebran Furnace (Iron County, Mo.)
- F. 47: United States Forest Service
- F. 48: Valle Forge (St. Francois County, Mo.)
- F. 49: Miscellaneous booklets and brochures
 - Maramec Furnace* (brochure)
 - Vogel, Ken, “*Maramec Iron Works 1825-1876*,” (Aug 1984)
 - Program booklets “*Old Iron Works Days*,” Maramec Spring Park, (1979, 1982 [2 copies], 1983, 1986, 1987, 1988, 1989, 1990, 1991, 1992, 1993)
 - Festival Program, *Missouri Heritage Fair*, 1992
 - Festival Program booklets “*Big Spring Arts—Crafts and Bluegrass Festival*,” (1988, 1989, 1990, 1991)
 - 1994 Greentree Folklife Festival*, Kirkwood Park (brochure)
- F. 50: Notes/clippings/snapshots
- F. 51: United States Department of the Interior, Office of the Secretary, Washington, D. C., Appendix to A *Proposal, Ozark Rivers National Monument*, 11 March 1960

folders 52- 65: Survey of Missouri Petroglyph and Pictograph Sites, compiled by Robert Elgin

- F. 52: *Development Plan for Graham Cave State Park Montgomery County, Mo.*, 25 March 1965
- F. 53: Jakes Prairie Petroglyph Site I (Crawford County, Mo.)
- F. 54: Miller Cave Petroglyph & Pictograph Site (Pulaski County, Mo.)
- F. 55: Peenie Petroglyph Site (Gasconade County, Mo.)
- F. 56: Ray Pictograph Site (Franklin County, Mo.)
- F. 57: Reeves Cave Pictograph Site (Crawford County, Mo.)
- F. 58: Reifer Petroglyph Site (Gasconade County, Mo.)
- F. 59: Schneider Petroglyph Site (Gasconade County, Mo.)
- F. 60: Shanghai Spring Pictograph Site (Pulaski County, Mo.)
- F. 61: Washington State Park (Washington County, Mo.)
- F. 62: *Specifications for Petroglyph Shelter and Area, Washington State Park* for the Missouri State Park Board, Jefferson City, Missouri, 13 January 1962
- F. 63: Willenburg Pictograph Site (Franklin County, Mo.)
- F. 64: Winkle Petroglyph Site (Franklin County, Mo.)
- F. 65: Correspondence, miscellaneous papers, photographs, and slides

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18 November 2008

Richard L. Elgin

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