

The STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of* MISSOURI

**R1309 Wood, James A., 1938-
Motion picture, 1963
One film, transferred to DVD**

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PROVENANCE

James A. Wood, Sr. made this film of the barite mining operation at Dog Patch Mine in Washington County, Missouri in 1963. It was transferred to DVD and donated to SHSMO-Rolla on 1 October 2013, accession number SHSMO-RA1597.

HISTORY

This 3:33 minute motion picture of the barite mining operation at Dog Patch mine in Washington County, Missouri was made by mine owner and operator James A. Wood Sr. in 1963. Barite ore, more commonly called “tiff,” was historically used as a white pigment for textiles, paper, and paint. Barite later became important in drilling mud for the petroleum industry. By the 1930s, Washington County was dotted with hundreds of shallow tiff mines mostly operated by single miners and their families.

Wood made his home movie at Dog Patch Mine, a barite mine and mill northeast of Potosi near Cadet, Missouri. Extant imagery representing Washington County barite mining generally depicts social conditions in the tiff mines in the 1930s, so this short film is noteworthy as an example of the mechanized period and a rare glimpse of barite mining in its last phase.

The film was shot on one of the best days of production at the Dog Patch Mine in 1963 and shows plant operations including barite being removed from the ground with a Caterpillar high lift, at that time the first of such equipment to operate in Washington County tiff mines. At its peak, the Dog Patch Mine covered ninety acres, and employed eight workers and four truck drivers. It closed in 1964 after the barite was depleted.

James Wood’s family has a long history of mining, beginning with the L. A. Wood Company. Its founder, Leonidas A. Wood, gained considerable experience in barite mining in Virginia and in 1923 became foreman of a barite mining operation for the Barium Reduction Corporation at Sweetwater, Tennessee. In the late 1920s, he embarked on his own mining venture—one so successful that he ultimately became known as the “Barytes King” of the country. Wood expanded his operations to Cartersville, Georgia and then to Potosi, Missouri, where he sent his son, Albert W. Wood, to supervise. In 1945, Albert, or A.W., established the Barytes Mining

Company in Missouri. It operated until 1957 when the Wood family sold all of its mining holdings to the National Lead Company.

James Wood grew up in Missouri immersed in the mining business, and returned to it after graduation from Central Methodist College with a degree in economics in 1961. He opened the Dog Patch Mine the same year, constructing the mine and mill structures from materials salvaged from former National Lead Company buildings with the help of his father A.W. The mine provided chemical grade ore mostly for the Pfizer Chemical Corporation. Besides Dog Patch, Wood was involved with other mines in this barite-rich area, including Rabbit Patch Mine, which closed in 1967, and an extensive tract near Richwoods, known locally as having the best ore. He quit working the mines in 1967 and purchased the Potosi Express, a trucking company. He remained connected to the mining industry by hauling lead ore for the Doe Run and St. Joe lead companies during the heyday of the “new” lead belt in southeastern Missouri in the 1970s. He retired in 2001.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This is 3:33 minute film of the barite mining operation at Dog Patch Mine in Washington County, Missouri. It shows the mechanized period of barite mining and was shot on one of the best days of production at the mine in 1963.

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PREFERRED CITATION

James A. Wood barite mining film, 1963. State Historical Society of Missouri

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James A. Woods barite mining film, 1963

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Washington County (Mo.)

Wood, Albert W.

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Wood, Leonidas A.