



Frontier Iron Illustrations
R1421

Collection Number: R1421

Collection Title: *Frontier Iron* Illustrations

Dates: 1964

Creator: Norris, James D.

Abstract: The collection includes the illustrations, maps and photographs which appeared in the book *Frontier Iron* written by James D. Norris and published in 1964.

Collection Size: 0.1 cubic feet
(1 folder)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri.

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Frontier Iron Illustrations* (R1421); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The illustrations were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by State Historical Society of Wisconsin on May 26, 2000 (Accession No. RA751)

Processed by: Processed by Erin Smither, January 24, 2018

Historical Note:

The Maramec Iron Works was founded in 1825, by Thomas James and Samuel Massey. They ran an iron works in Ohio, but decided to try their hand at the business in Missouri. There was no iron works West of the Mississippi and iron was expensive to obtain from the East. There was no

railroad to ship the material West and as a result it was necessary to ship the goods by either a boat or a wagon. This meant that there was a great need for an iron works in the West and it would be a promising business opportunity. The two men turned to the Native Americans in the area, who agreed to lead them to a rich deposit of ore located near St. James, Missouri. By 1847 William James had convinced his father Thomas to buy out Samuel Massey's share of the business allowing William to take over management of the furnace.

The Civil War revived the price of iron and the works went into furious production during this time. The iron was used to produce cannon balls, cannons, and gunboats. William James made an arrangement with the government in which his workers would be exempted from the draft so that production of iron products would continue. By the time of the Civil War, the railroad had reached St. James which made it far easier to get the product to market.

In 1872, William James built a new furnace at Newburg at great expense. He believed the ore at the Maramec Works was being depleted and that a new location was warranted. They had also completely deforested the area, nearly 10,000 acres, to harvest the wood needed to make charcoal. Unfortunately, the onset of an economic depression decreased the price of iron. In addition, the new furnace had cost more than anticipated and James went into debt. He began paying workers at Maramec script that could be used to trade for goods at the company store. This was illegal and James was fined \$10,000. Then the destruction of much of the new furnace by fire led him bankruptcy in 1876. He then went to live with his daughter until his death in 1912. The iron works changed hands a few times afterwards, but closed forever in 1891.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in its original order in one folder.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains the illustrations, photographs, maps and other images used in the book *Frontier Iron* which was published by the State Historical Society of Wisconsin in 1964.

Container List:

f. 1 Illustrations, 1912, no date

Index:

Index Term	Folder	Image
Grist mill	1	Yes
James, William (1823-1912)	1	Yes
Maramec Iron Works (Phelps County, Mo.)	1	Yes
Maramec Spring (Mo.)	1	Yes
Massey, Samuel J. (1794-)	1	Yes