



St. Joseph Lead Company Business Summary Records (R0541)

Collection Number: R0541

Collection Title: St. Joseph Lead Company Business Summary Records

Dates: 1917-1919

Creator: St. Joseph Lead Company

Abstract: The St. Joseph Lead Company Business Summary Records are monthly business summaries for St. Joseph Lead Company & Subsidiaries, from January 1917 through September 1919.

Collection Size: 0.01 cubic foot
(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](https://www.shsmo.org/research-center-rolla). If you would like more information, please contact us at rolla@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

Restrictions on Use: Materials in this collection are in the public domain.

Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *St. Joseph Lead Company Business Summary Records* (R0541); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Rolla [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Rolla].

Donor Information: The records were donated to the University of Missouri by the City of Bonne Terre on March 25, 1993 (Accession No. RA0564).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the St. Joseph Lead Company Business Summary Records can be found in the following collections:

St. Joseph Lead Company Annual Report (R0046)

St. Joseph Lead Company, Southeast Missouri Mining and Milling Division Records (R0542)

St. Joseph Lead Mining Company Papers (C0574)

Processed by: Processed by Mark C. Stauter, July 10, 1995. Revised by Niki Cox, April 7, 2023.

Historical Note:

The St. Joseph Lead Company was organized in New York by Lyman W. Gilbert, John E. Wylie, Edmund I. Wade, Wilmot Williams, James L. Dunham and James L. Hathaway on March 25, 1864. The New York based company issued capital stock in order to purchase a nine-hundred-acre mining tract in Bonne Terre, St. Francois County, Missouri, a part of the Old Lead Belt, where shallow mining had been carried on for years. The company struggled to meet its expenses until 1869, when the introduction of the diamond drill led to the discovery of rich lead deposits deep underground and opened the way to deep mining and the rapid development of the area. Despite falling prices for lead, expansion continued in the 1870s under the supervision of Charles B. Parsons at Bonne Terre. A new mill was constructed in 1883 after the original structure burned to the ground, leaving the company with a new, well-designed plant at the beginning of its most productive period in the Bonne Terre and Flat River areas. By the turn of the twentieth century, it was the largest producer of lead in the district.

During the first two-thirds of 1917 the firm's operations were very successful, reaching a peak profit of over five dollars per ton of ore mined. The company produced an average of about 200,000 tons of ore per month, with a total estimated value of about \$1,500,000. However, there was a precipitous drop in profit per ton beginning in late 1917 and continuing into 1918, although tonnages mined and estimated market values remained fairly steady. Profit per ton mined improved to almost three dollars by mid-1918, but the post-war slump brought that down to only eleven cents per ton in February 1919. However, by July 1919 profit-per-ton had recovered to over one dollar, while production fell to about 150,000 tons per month. The total estimated value of ore mined bottomed out at only \$430,000 in February 1919, rising to \$730,000 by late summer.

The success of the company's lead mining endeavor in St. Louis precipitated expansion during the 1920's. St. Joseph Lead Company purchased the Aguilar mine in Argentina in 1925, a producer of lead, silver, and zinc. In 1926, St. Joseph Lead Company purchased a zinc mine from Northern Ore Company in Edwards, New York and mineral rights in Balmat, New York. Both the Edwards-Balmat mines were in operation by 1930.

The expansion from lead to various other minerals inspired a name change in 1974 to St. Joe Minerals Corporation. However, the name change was short lived, as reduced market prices for zinc and a worker strike in the New York mines in 1979 contributed to the closing of company in 1981, when the Fluor Corporation purchased St. Joe Minerals Corporation.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged in chronological order.

Scope and Content Note:

These are monthly business summaries for "St. Joseph Lead Company & Subsidiaries," from January 1917 through September 1919. Included are production statistics, cost allocations, and statements of average profit per ton of ore mined.

These summary sheets tabulate "Production and Value" figures for the firm, including "Total" figures as well as individual statistics for the company's mining operations at Rivermines,

Leadwood, and Bonne Terre. Separately figured are costs of prospecting, mining, freighting, milling, marketing, taxes, insurance, and smelting, as well as profits (or losses) from subsidiary enterprises such as the Mississippi River & Bonne Terre Railway, the St. Francois County Railway, and the Bonne Terre Farming and Cattle Company.

These statistics will be useful to mining and economic historians. They reflect the wartime and immediate postwar economic environments and show fluctuations in production and profits due to weather, labor unrest, and commodity prices.

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Monthly business summaries, 1917-1919

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