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Abstract

The purpose of this research was to determine and map the spatial distribution of active and inactive clay mining operations within McDonough County, Illinois; to assess the economic importance of the activity, past and present; to determine the degree of spatial and functional interrelationship between the clay mining operations and the clay-products industry of the county; and to investigate the influence of clay mining upon the cultural landscape.

Clay has been mined and utilized since shortly after white settlers moved into the study area. Common brick and drain tile have been made largely from Pleistocene loess and till. These clay materials are ubiquitous in the study area and have been mined in widely separated parts of the county.

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WALTER HENRY LEHNER, JR.

An Abstract

Mines which developed Pennsylvanian clays and shales used in the production of pottery, sewer pipe and other ware were not similarly distributed but were located near the LaMoine River, and were especially numerous near Colchester.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in the Department of Geography in the School of Graduate Studies of Western Illinois University

August, 1969

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor
David W. Ganyard

The economic impact of clay mining has changed radically over the years. Clay mining was once of greater economic importance than it is today in terms of volume and value of clay produced, mine employment, and employment at clay-products plants.

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Abstract

Much of the clay mined in the study area has been utilized by clay-products plants of the county. However, considerable quantities of The purpose of this research was to determine and map the spatial clay have been shipped out of the study area, especially to Mornmouth, distribution of active and inactive clay mining operations within Galesburg and Peoria, Illinois. McDonough County, Illinois; to assess the economic importance of the Other activities such as agriculture and transportation have left activity, past and present; to determine the degree of spatial and func- a greater impression upon the landscape than has clay mining; nevertha- tional interrelationship between the clay mining operations and the clay- less, over the years, the mining has contributed such features as rail products industry of the county; and to investigate the influence of clay spurs, buildings and pits mining upon the cultural landscape.

Clay has been mined and utilized since shortly after white settlers moved into the study area. Common brick and drain tile have been made largely from Pleistocene loess and till. These clay materials are ubiquitous in the study area and have been mined in widely separated parts of the county. Mines which excavated Pennsylvanian clays and shales used in the production of pottery, sewer pipe and other ware were not similarly distributed but were located near the Lamoine River, and were especially numerous near Colchester.

There are also significant differences in the spatial patterns of clay products manufacturers vis-a-vis clay mines. A strong areal association existed between Pleistocene clay operations and factories which produced common brick and tile. A different pattern was found to exist for the Pennsylvanian clay and shale producers and the potteries and sewer pipe producers.

The economic impact of clay mining has changed radically over the years. Clay mining was once of greater economic importance than it is today in terms of volume and value of clay produced, mine employment, and employment at clay-products plants.

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Much of the clay mined in the study area has been utilized by clay-products plants of the county. However, considerable quantities of clay have been shipped out of the study area, especially to Mommouth, Galesburg and Peoria, Illinois.

Other activities such as agriculture and transportation have left a greater impression upon the landscape than has clay mining; nevertheless, over the years, the mining has contributed such features as rail spurs, buildings and pits.

THIS CLASSIC HAS BEEN READ AND APPROVED.

David W. Sawyer
Chairman

Arthur D. Franston
First Reader

Ronald E. Nelson
Second Reader

June 11, 1969
Date

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