



Smithsonian

National Museum of American History Kenneth E. Behring Center

Will MacPheat Collection of U.S.G.S. Photographs

NMAH.AC.0905

Anne Jones

2012

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Table of Contents

Collection Overview	1
Administrative Information	1
Arrangement.....	2
Scope and Contents.....	2
Historical.....	1
Names and Subjects	2
Container Listing	3
Series 1: Photographs, circa 1921-1969 (bulk 1933-1938, 1960s); undated.....	3

Collection Overview

Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Title:	Will MacPheat Collection of U.S.G.S. Photographs
Date:	1920s-1930s.
Identifier:	NMAH.AC.0905
Creator:	MacPheat, Will (Donor)
Extent:	0.15 Cubic feet (1 Box)
Language:	English .
Summary:	Photographs of oil and gas extraction sites and equipment taken by field personnel of the United States Geological Survey in Montana and North Dakota

Administrative Information

Acquisition Information

Donated to the Archives Center by Will MacPheat in 2005.

Processing Information

Collection Processed by Anne Jones (volunteer); supervised by Vanessa Broussard Simmons, archivist, July 2012.

Preferred Citation

Will MacPheat Collection of U.S.G.S. Photographs, 1920s-1930s, Archives Center, National Museum of American History.

Restrictions on Access

Collection is open for research and access on site by appointment. Unprotected photographs must be handled with gloves.

Terms Governing Use and Reproduction

Collection items available for reproduction, but the Archives Center makes no guarantees concerning copyright restrictions. Other intellectual property rights may apply. Reproduction permission from Archives Center: reproduction fees may apply.

Historical

The collection consists of photographs taken by field personnel of the United States Geological Survey in Montana and North Dakota documenting the construction of equipment for the extraction of oil and gas. Photographs include black and white silver gelatin prints (1920s-1930s), color photographs, Polaroid prints (1960s) and a few negatives. The bulk of these images are believed to have been taken during the 1920s and 1930s, with a smaller group dating from the 1960s.

Will MacPheat's description of the photographs includes the following, referring to an undated photograph: "The handwritten description pretty well tells the story - scene of 180 Quart Nitro explosion." He also refers to "equipment known in the early trade as a 'widow maker' due to the number of people who were killed by them. Loss of fingers was particularly common." He further notes: "In addition to oil field photos are photos showing some of the personnel, the Jordon Hotel in Glendive, MT (1938), a Carbon Black plant and the USGS office in 1935." Most of the early photographs are of sites, excavations, wells, and abandoned claims as well as the labor, mechanisms and structures required to obtain gas and oil from the earth. The later photographs depict the advanced equipment and techniques of the 1960s.

Scope and Contents

The photographs are arranged into two groups. The first group consists of black and white silver gelatin prints dating from 1929-1939 and contain detailed descriptions, including locations. A number of these prints are undated; however, handwritten inscriptions are on the images. Some of the unidentified prints have been grouped with identified prints to which they seem related. The second group of prints consists of photographs dating from the 1960s. Most of these prints are dated; some have been identified, while others have no identification or dates. All of the photographs are arranged in chronological order when possible.

Arrangement

The collection is arranged into one series.

Names and Subject Terms

This collection is indexed in the online catalog of the Smithsonian Institution under the following terms:

Subjects:

- Oil fields
- Oil wells
- Petroleum industry and trade

Names:

- Geological Survey (U.S.)

Container Listing

Series 1: Photographs, circa 1921-1969 (bulk 1933-1938, 1960s); undated

Box 1	Photographs, pages 1-49, 1929-1939
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Box 1	Photographs, pages 50-59, 1962-1969
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[Return to Table of Contents](#)