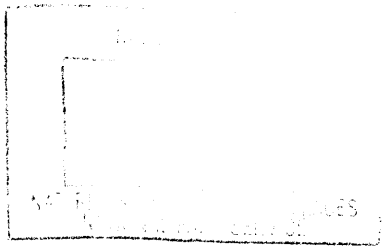
NPS Form 10-900
(Rev. 10-90)

OMB No. 1024-0018

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM

97



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1. Name of Property

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historic name Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office

other names/site number Picher Mining Field Museum

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2. Location

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street & number 508 North Connell Avenue not for publication N/A
city or town Picher vicinity N/A
state Oklahoma code OK county Ottawa code 115
zip code 74360

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, as amended, I hereby certify that this _X_ nomination ____ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property _X_ meets ____ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant ___ nationally ___ statewide _X_ locally. (N/A See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Bob Blackburn 1-21-03

Signature of certifying official Date

Oklahoma Historical Society, SHPO

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property ____ meets ____ does not meet the National Register criteria. (___ See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

Edson H. Beall 3/7/03

_V_ entered in the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined eligible for the National Register
___ See continuation sheet.

____ determined not eligible for the National Register

____ removed from the National Register

____ other (explain): _____

for

Signature of Keeper Date of Action

5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

- _X_ private
- ___ public-local
- ___ public-State
- ___ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

- _X_ building(s)
- ___ district
- ___ site
- ___ structure
- ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing	
1	1	buildings
0	0	sites
0	0	structures
1	3	objects
2	4	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register N/A

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.) N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
COMMERCE/TRADE	organizational

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat:	Sub:
RECREATION AND CULTURE	museum

7. Description

Architectural Classification (Enter categories from instructions)

Bungalow

Materials (Enter categories from instructions)

foundation STUCCO
roof ASPHALT
walls WOOD
other Chimney: BRICK

Narrative Description (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

8. Statement of Significance

Applicable National Register Criteria (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

XX A Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.

____ B Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.

____ C Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.

____ D Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

____ A owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.

____ B removed from its original location.

____ C a birthplace or a grave.

____ D a cemetery.

____ E a reconstructed building, object, or structure.

____ F a commemorative property.

____ G less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)

COMMERCE
HEALTH/MEDICINE

Period of Significance 1925-1953

8. Statement of Significance (Continued)

Significant Dates _____
_____
_____

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)
N/A

Cultural Affiliation N/A
_____
_____

Architect/Builder Stines, C.W., architect
_____

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)
___ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
___ previously listed in the National Register
___ previously determined eligible by the National Register
___ designated a National Historic Landmark
___ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
___ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data
_X_ State Historic Preservation Office
___ Other State agency
___ Federal agency
___ Local government
___ University
_X_ Other
Name of repository: Picher Mining Field Museum, Picher, Oklahoma

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property Less than one acre

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

	Zone	Easting	Northing		Zone	Easting	Northing
1	15	337050	4095250	3			
2				4			

N/A See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title Cynthia Savage, Architectural Historian, for Picher Mining Field Reunion Committee

organization Savage Consulting date November 2002

street & number Rt. 1, Box 116 telephone 405/459-6200

city or town Pocasset state OK zip code 73079

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets

Maps

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Picher Mining Field Reunion Committee

street & number 508 North Connell telephone

city or town Picher state OK zip code 74360

SUMMARY:

The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office is a one-story, wood-sided, Bungalow style building with an asphalt-covered, hipped roof. The building was designed by C.W. Stines of Webb City, Missouri, for the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association and constructed in 1925. Originally, the office building had a solid zinc shingle roof but a tornado in 1986 did sufficient damage that an asphalt roof was put on. A part of the historic zinc roof remains on a small section on the back of the building. The building's foundation is concrete with a rough cast stucco finish. The exterior doors are the historic, wood, glazed, paneled doors. Although the interior doors have been removed and stored in the attic to allow unhampered access throughout the building, they too are wood, glazed, paneled. The windows are the historic, one-over-one, wood, hung with the majority being paired. The windows and exterior doors all have screens with painted black wood frames which contrast with the primary gray of the walls and foundation. Other architectural features include a wrap-around porch, an exterior brick chimney on the west side and hipped-roofed dormers on the other three elevations. Decorative details on the building are minimal and include boxed eaves and double windows. Constructed similar to a house, the building functioned as an office for the Association until 1976. The building was deeded to the Picher Mining Field Reunion Committee in 1983 for use as a museum, which it continues as today. The building was not in use between 1976 and 1983. Other than the change in function and roof material, the only other modification has been the addition of stairs on the southeast corner of the building. The stairs do not appear in a 1937 photograph of the building but were likely constructed prior to 1953. In all, the alterations to the building are minor and do not significantly impact the ability of the property to convey its historic significance.

To the northwest of the office building is a noncontributing, small, metal shed added in about the mid-1950s. According to the president of the Picher Mining Field Museum, Frank Wood, the shed was not present when, as a child, he went to the building to get his chest X-rayed to check for tuberculosis before the start of grade school each year. Although obscured by heavy vegetation, the shed has a flat metal roof and swinging metal doors. Due to its rear location, the surrounding vegetation and its small scale, the shed has no impact on the integrity of the Producers Association Office. A contributing, short, pipe fence, which appears in a 1935 photograph, encircles the immediate front yard of the building. Within the fenced yard are three mining-related objects that have been moved in since 1983. As these objects are not original to the

building, they are classified as noncontributing; however, due to their small scale, they do not substantially impact the integrity of the building. The objects include a black horizontal drill in the southeast corner of the fenced yard; a gray scale model of a derrick to the west; and, a large black ore bucket to the north of the drill. To the south of the building, outside of the boundaries of the nomination, is a green Burlington Northern caboose which was brought in in 1988. The caboose is located in what is now the parking lot for the museum. Due to the location of the caboose outside the immediate perimeter of the building and because it has no tangible connection to the history of the resource, it is not included within the boundaries of this nomination.

The building is located north of the historic downtown along Connell Avenue, also known as United States Highway 69, the main north-south thoroughfare in Picher. Due to the extensive mine tunnels underneath the entire town, many of the town's buildings have been demolished. The high level of lead contamination has also resulted in a significant loss of resources in the community. Historically, the immediate area around the Association office contained several machine shops, other mining-related offices and some houses. The area remains much the same, although the two-story building formerly to the south of the office has been demolished and the space is now used as parking for the museum.

EXTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office is a simple, one-story, gray building. The building was designed by architect C.W. Stines of Webb City, Missouri, for the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association. Constructed in 1925, the building is classified as Bungalow style. More typical of residential architecture, the Bungalow style was probably used as the building is located away from the central business district in a combination residential and light industrial area. Additionally, the style was conducive to highlighting the zinc roof which was not only functional but also promotional for one of the Association's primary products. Across the street to the east is the American Zinc Institute building which became the American Legion in the 1930s. This building is a similar, one-story, Bungalow style building.

The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association building has a cement foundation which was covered with a rough cast stucco. The foundation has been painted a gray similar to the wood walls and has cast iron vents. The hipped

roof is now clad with asphalt shingles but historically was one of a handful of buildings with a full zinc roof. The roof was replaced in 1986 when tornado damage necessitated a new roof. On the rear of the building, covering a small projected closet is a section of the original zinc roof. The roof features fairly wide, boxed eaves with a flared gutter. On the north, east and south elevations of the roof are asphalt-clad, hipped dormers with double, wood, triple-pane windows. The dormers are all hinged to the inside so they can be opened from the center interior hallway.

One of the character defining features of the building is the wrap-around porch. The porch extends the length of the facade and the south elevation. The porch has eight simple, square, wood supports with narrow square tops and no discernible bases. The porch floor remains wood with a wood ceiling above. The porch has four sets of steps, one on the front of the building, two on the south side and one on the north side. The fairly wide, front, stucco stairs feature three wide steps and short, stucco-clad, side walls with a concrete cap. At the top of the stairs, on the north side, is one short wooden pier with a concrete cap. On the south side of the building, the steps located towards the back, west side, of the building match the front stairs, including the short side walls and wooden pier on the east side of the top step. The stairs on the east side of the south elevation are not original to the building but likely were constructed within the period of significance. The southeast stairs consist of three wooden steps with a standard height, wood railing along the west side of the steps. These steps do not have any side walls or a wooden pier at the top. The north set of stucco steps are also identical to the front steps with short stucco side walls and a short wood pier on the west side of the top step.

The facade of the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office faces east onto Connell Avenue. The fenestration pattern of the facade is irregular with unequal spacing between all the openings. The main door is located off-center and consists of a wood, glazed, paneled door with a wooden screen door. To the south of the main door are three wood, hung, one-over-one windows. The first window south of the door is single with the windows farther to the south being paired. North of the main door, there is a set of paired, wood, hung, one-over-one windows immediately to the right with another entrance to the north of this. Like the main door, this secondary entrance consists of a wood, glazed, paneled door with a wooden screen door. On the north edge of the east elevation is a single, wood, hung, one-over-one window which now holds a nonhistoric window air conditioning unit.

The south elevation of the building also contains a secondary entrance. The wood, glazed, paneled door with a wooden screen door is located towards the rear of the building. There is a single, wood, hung, one-over-one window to the west of the door. On the other side of the entry, there is a single, wood, hung, one-over-one window and, farther to the east, a set of paired, wood, hung, one-over-one windows. Hanging from the porch ceiling in the juncture of the porch is a nonoriginal historic sign which reads "Bus Station/NEO/The Way to Go."

The rear of the building is differentiated from the other elevations by the tall, red, brick, external chimney and a small projection with a zinc-clad, hipped roof. Additionally, the two sets of paired windows on the outside of either side of the west elevation have been boarded. To the south of the northernmost pair of boarded windows is the small closet which projects from the main building. This is the only portion of the building to retain its historic zinc roof covering with zinc ridge capping. The projection does not have any openings on the north side. There is a small, off-center, wood window on the west side of the projection and a typical, single, wood, hung, one-over-one window on the south side of the projection. To the south of the projection is another set of paired, wood, hung, one-over-one windows. The north window of this pair of windows has been partially boarded with the remainder being filled with a window air conditioning unit. South of these windows is the brick chimney which is fairly wide along the lower portion before unevenly tapering to the stack. The chimney is topped by a concrete cap and has a metal flue projecting from the top. South of the chimney is the southern pair of boarded windows.

The north elevation of the building contains two sets of paired windows and one single window. This elevation is the most symmetrical of all sides of the building. Evenly spaced from east to west are the two pairs of wood, hung, one-over-one windows with a single, wood, hung, one-over-one window located towards the west side of the elevation. A new heating/cooling unit was located on the ground between the paired windows on the north elevation in 2000.

To the rear of the building, on the northwest side of the property, is a small noncontributing shed. The shed was built in the mid-1950s. Vegetation has almost totally obscured the small metal outbuilding. The shed has a flat metal roof and metal swinging doors. The shed is considered noncontributing as it was built after the period of significance; however, due to its obscured

position in the far northwest corner of the property and its small scale, the shed has no impact on the integrity of the resource.

The immediate front yard of the building has been delineated by a short pipe fence. The pipe was set in a concrete base which, for the most part, has been covered by the grass. The fence appears in several early photographs of the building so it is a historic part of the property. Within the fenced yard, three objects have been moved in since the building was acquired for use as a museum. In the southeast corner of the yard is a black horizontal drill sat on a concrete pad. Directly behind this to the west is a scale model of a derrick which has been painted gray and also sits on a concrete pad. To the north of the horizontal drill is an ore bucket which rests on a small section of track. Except for the historic fence, the objects in the front yard of the Tri-State Lead and Zinc Producers Association Office are noncontributing. Although related to the mining history of the area, the objects do not have a tangible connection with the Producers Association Office. Due to their small scale and placement away from the office building, the noncontributing objects do not significantly impact the historic integrity of the property.

INTERIOR DESCRIPTION

The interior of the Tri-State Lead and Zinc Producers Association Office retains a high degree of integrity. The original configuration of the building remains intact, as do the plaster walls and ceiling. Two of the front rooms have been carpeted but the northeast office and all of the back rooms retain their painted wood floor. The interior, wood, glazed, paneled doors with Florentine glass have been removed to allow flow throughout the building but have been stored in the attic. The building was rewired in 2000 when a new heat and air system was also added to the building. Additionally, flourescent lights have been installed to provide adequate lighting for the museum exhibits. Overall, the alterations to the interior are minor and have been done to facilitate modern use of the building.

Entering the building through the main front door, one enters the stenographer's office. Off this room to the north and south are additional offices. In the southwest portion of the building is the Directors' Room, a large meeting room which covers a good portion of the back side of the building. The Directors' Room has its own entrance on the south side of the building and a large brick fireplace on the west wall. The fireplace has been closed off but the brick hearth and wooden mantel remain in place. Photograph

panels showing off a portion of the museum's sizeable photograph collection now fill the room. On the northwest side of the Directors' Room is the Mens' room and a closet which projects away from the main building. Off a small hallway to the northeast of the Directors' Room is the elaborate fireproof vault. The vault was used to store the Association's accounting records and features an ornate broken pediment supported by columns with elaborate capitals. The vault is topped by a distinctive gold mascaron. The original blueprints for the building did not include the vault but did have a basement which was not constructed. To the immediate east of the vault, in the small hallway, is the tiny Ladies restroom. To the north of the vault is another office.

ALTERATIONS

The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office retains a high degree of integrity. An additional set of stairs has been constructed on the southeast corner of the building. This minor alteration occurred after 1937 but probably within the period of significance. Modifications to the building which occurred after 1953, the end of the period of significance, consist of replacing the zinc roof with asphalt shingling in 1986, construction of a small metal shed on the northwest corner of the property in the mid-1950s and addition of three objects in the front yard of the building in the 1980s. Although the asphalt shingles replaced a rare zinc roof the change was necessitated by damage caused by a tornado. To replace the zinc roof in 1986 was cost prohibitive so asphalt shingles were used instead. The construction of a small shed in a back corner of the property and the addition of the mining equipment in the front yard have no notable impact on the historic integrity of the building.

The interior of the building also retains a high degree of integrity. Although the building has functioned as a museum since 1983, the impact on the interior has been minor. The majority of changes, carpeting, new lighting and heat and air, does not notably alter the interior. The removal of the interior doors does allow an uninterrupted flow through the building which is not historically accurate but is necessary for the current function of the building.

SUMMARY

The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under Criterion A for its historic commercial and health significance. Formed in 1923, the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association was a trade association similar to those found in other industries of the era. The primary purpose of the Association was "To promote the common interests of its members by ethical and lawful means."[1] In doing this, the Association played an important commercial role in the lead and zinc mining industry of the Tri-State area. The Association Office is also historically significant for its efforts in providing health care to the local miners and their families. Although not truly altruistic, the Association employed a welfare nurse to promote the well-being of area residents in various ways, among several other health-related activities. The period of significance for the building begins in 1925 when the Association moved into their permanent headquarters in Picher, Oklahoma and extends to 1953, the current National Register fifty year mark.

BACKGROUND

In the early 1890s, the commercial extraction of lead and zinc began in the extreme northeast corner of Indian Territory. This new bonanza was adjacent to earlier lead and zinc mines in the two adjoining states, Missouri and Kansas. Beginning in about 1850, lead and zinc were mined in southwest Missouri and ore was discovered in Kansas around 1876. Following the successful mining of significant commercially-viable deposits in Oklahoma in about 1892, the combined mining area became known as the Tri-State Zinc and Lead District. In all, the district covered about 1,188 square miles, including the counties of Jasper and Newton in Missouri, Cherokee County in Kansas and Ottawa County in Oklahoma. Although several towns grew to prominence within the field, Joplin, Missouri, remained the major economic center for the district throughout its history.[2]

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[1]"Constitution and By-Laws, Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association," (n.p., 1925; Available at the Picher Mining Field Museum, Picher, Oklahoma) 2.

[2]Arrell Morgan Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza: The Tri-State District of Missouri, Kansas and Oklahoma (Norman, Oklahoma: The

Lead and zinc mining were synonymous in the Tri-State District because the two minerals naturally occurred together with the ores typically being physically connected. Generally, "Few paying shafts produced amounts of one without likewise producing some quantities of the other." As such, all of the mining and milling operations in the district were adapted to handle both minerals. Several different forms of zinc were present within the district, including sphalerite (zinc sulfide), smithsonite (zinc carbonate), calamine (zinc silicate) and hydro-zincite. The most commercially important of these was zinc sulfide, which was also known as jack, rosin jack, black jack and blende. There were four forms of lead found in the district, galena (lead sulfide), lead carbonate, pyromorphite (lead phosphate) and anglesite (lead sulfite). The primary lead, lead sulfide, mined in the district was "peculiarly pure" as it contained almost no silver or other impurities which made smelting the Tri-State lead much easier.[3]

As with most activities in Indian Territory, lead and zinc mining was restricted by the federal government. Originally part of the Cherokee Nation, the far northeast corner of Indian Territory was given to the Quapaws, Senecas and a small band of Shawnees in the early 1830s. After the Civil War, surplus lands of the Quapaw, Seneca and Shawnees were given to several small tribes relocating from Kansas, including the Wyandots, Peorias, Miamis and Ottawas. These tribes then formed the Quapaw Agency.[4]

Although the presence of lead within the area was known "From the earliest historical times,...," large scale mining interest in the area did not appear until the late 1870s. John Patrick McNaughton came to the Peoria reservation in search of mineral wealth in about 1877. Although finding abundant evidence of underground riches and entering into a leasing agreement with the Peoria tribe, McNaughton was restricted by the Secretary of the Interior to strictly prospecting for lead, not being allowed to mine or sell the mineral. Beginning

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University of Oklahoma Press, 1972), 3-4. See also Velma Nieberding, The History of Ottawa County (Marceline, Missouri: Walsworth Publishing Company, 1983), 62.

[3]Ibid., 8-9.

[4]Arrell Morgan Gibson, Oklahoma: A History of Five Centuries, 2nd Ed (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), 149.

in 1889, the federal government undertook allotment of the tribally-held lands of the Quapaw Agency. McNaughton immediately leased several thousand acres from Peoria allottees for mining purposes. However, lands within the former Quapaw Agency remained restricted by the federal government and the validity of McNaughton's leases were questioned but, in a personal appeal to Congress, he was allowed to continue under the Treaty of February 23, 1867 which granted United States citizenship to the Peorias. In 1896, Congress passed a leasing bill which allowed five-year leases for land in what is now Ottawa County with another bill the following year which allowed ten-year leases.[5] Thus, the land of northeast Indian Territory could now be widely leased by lead and zinc mining interests.

Initially, much of the lead mining occurred around Peoria, near the Indian Territory/Missouri border. In 1897, however, an "...accidental discovery..." shifted the mining activities to near Miami, Indian Territory. Twenty-two years after the first commercial lead mine was opened in Indian Territory, the last big strike in the Tri-State District was uncovered. Returning to Joplin following a disappointing drilling near Commerce, Oklahoma, a rig owned by the Picher Lead Company of Joplin get stuck near Tar Creek in August 1914. Sinking a wildcat hole, the driller hit a rich deposit. The Picher Lead Company then leased 2,700 acres in the new field and, overnight, a new mining camp named after the company blossomed.[6]

After 1915, ninety percent of the ore produced in the district came from the Picher Field. In 1918, seventeen million dollars worth of lead and zinc were mined and sold with the majority coming out of mines in a three mile radius of Picher. The price of ore dropped following the end of World War I but production continued relatively unabated. By 1925, mines in Ottawa County produced 103,359 tons of lead and 549,211 tons of zinc. In contrast, mines in southeast Kansas and southwest Missouri produced a combined total of 33,049 tons of lead and 256,839 tons of zinc for the same year. Overall, the district itself was the world's largest producer of lead and zinc concentrates for over a century, from about 1850 to 1950, producing in excess of one billion dollars worth of product. Production within the district peaked in 1926 with 423,800

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[5]Nieberding, History of Ottawa County, 59-64.

[6]Gibson, Oklahoma, 163-164. See also Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 40.

tons of zinc and 912,117 tons of lead being mined. In addition to arms and munitions, lead and zinc concentrates were used in toys, coins, roofing, surgical equipment, linoleum, interior paints, ceramics and pharmaceutical products, among a host of other items.[7]

With the high level of production all around, the new community of Picher quickly became an important center in the Tri-State District. Reportedly, over a thousand persons descended on the new camp in 1914. At the peak of production in the Picher Field, 1926, the population of Picher almost reached 15,000. In 1930, the United States Census revealed Picher's population stood at 7,773. Although experiencing a boom during World War II, the population of Picher remained fairly level until the late 1940s. In 1947, the federal government terminated their program for premium payments for production of strategic minerals, including lead and zinc. Within six months, Picher's population declined by more than 3,000. Of the remaining 3,400 residents, at least 800 were unemployed miners. Conditions for the town worsened during the 1950s as the rich ores were exhausted and the remaining low-grade minerals were more expensive to mine. Unable to rebound, by 1962 Picher's population stood at 2,553. About seven years later, the mines providing the economic mainstay of the community had ceased activity.[8]

Although the economic upheavals of Picher were not unusual for a town dependent on one industry, the land on which the town developed was. For the most part, the mining companies leased the land on which the mines and related towns developed on. As such, for numerous years, homeowners in Picher owned the house but not the land on which it sat. Additionally, large piles of "chat," literally mountains of lead-contaminated metal tailings reaching as high as 200 feet, quickly altered the relatively flat landscape of the immediate

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[7]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 40, 170-171 and 266. See also Nieberding, History of Ottawa County, 32-33, 87.

[8]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 40, 267-273. See also Miami (Oklahoma) News-Record, 1 January 1926; Nieberding, History of Ottawa County, 32-33; The Daily Oklahoman (Oklahoma City, Oklahoma) 15 February 1948 and 27 May 1962; "Communities at Risk: Ottowa (sic) County, Oklahoma," Sierra Club, http://www.sierraclub.org/communities/oklahoma/, accessed 26 November 2002.

surrounding area. These "mountains" remain today, adding to the lead contamination of the area. Further complicating the situation in Picher were the "Mine shafts and cavernous chambers (which) honeycomb the earth beneath the town." With crisscrossed tunnels running from two hundred to four hundred feet deep and caverns as large as football fields, the stability of Picher was precarious at best. In 1950, a four-block area at Second and Main was demolished because the buildings were beginning to collapse. Due to the combination of dangerous conditions within the area, Ottawa County, along with the rest of the Tri-State Mining District, was declared a Superfund site in the early 1980s with cleanup a priority. However, the community remains at significant risk from lead contamination and cave-ins.[9]

HISTORIC SIGNIFICANCE

Although types of trade associations have been found in business since Biblical times, the modern concept of trade associations boomed in the United States in the 1920s. In his work for the Harding and Coolidge administrations, Herbert Hoover, Secretary of Commerce, endorsed trade associations in order to "...avoid the waste inherent in competition." Although certain aspects were peculiar to the various industries, overall, these trade associations recorded information on all aspects of their business, including sales, purchases, shipments, production and price. Shared among its members, the information was then used for planning purposes, allowing more predictable costs, prices and markets. In turn, this resulted in more stable employment and wages. Despite the potential for monopolistic practices, including price-fixing, the Supreme Court ruled in 1925 that this type of sharing information was within the law.[10]

Trade associations within the Tri-State District predate the 1920s nationwide boom. In April 1890, the Southwest Missouri and Southeast Kansas Lead and Zinc Miners' Association was organized in Joplin by one hundred mine operators. Basically, this association benefitted the producers by fixing the price of ore

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[9]Daily Oklahoman, 27 May 1962. See also Francis L. and Roberta B. Fugate, Roadside History of Oklahoma (Missoula, Montana: Mountain Press Publishing Company, 1991), 5-7; "Communities at Risk," Sierra Club.

[10]George Brown Tindall, America: A Narrative History Vol. II (New York, New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1988), 1088.

and opening foreign markets. In 1916, a more legal association was formed, the Joplin Ore Producers' Association. With a primary purpose of collecting "...useful data," the Joplin Ore Producers' Association charged its members $750 a month.[11]

In 1923, a lasting trade association for the Tri-State District was formed. The Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association formed in response to several widespread needs to protect the operators within the mining district. Importantly, the Association desired an office located in the heart of the Tri-State mining industry, rather than at the economic center. As such, in late December 1923, the Association opened an office on the fifth floor of the Mining Exchange Building in Miami, Oklahoma. In 1925, the Association moved into its permanent headquarters on North Connell Avenue in Picher, Oklahoma. The Association continued to operate out of its Picher office until it was dissolved in 1976. The building was deeded to the Picher Mining Field Reunion Committee in 1983 for use as a museum, which it remains as today.[12]

Looking to provide a "...more intelligent and efficient operation throughout the field," the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association outlined four objectives in their constitution. The foremost objective was, naturally, to promote the interests held in common by the Association members. To do this, the Association declared its intention "To collect, compile and record all available data and statistics touching or concerning the production or consumption of zinc and lead ores." Additionally, the Association sought to cooperate with government authorities concerning the administration of laws which directly or indirectly affected the zinc and lead mining industry and to distribute through "...publication and other means information of general interest concerning or affecting the economic conditions of zinc and lead mining" in the Tri-State District.[13]

As indicated in their constitution, the Association was interested in the activities of government authorities as it affected zinc and lead producers.

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[11]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 175-177.

[12]Miami News-Record, 27 December 1923 and 13 September 1925.

[13]Ibid., 27 December 1923. See also "Constitution and By-Laws, Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association," 2.

Representing the industry, committee members and staff of the Association contacted legislative bodies, as well as tariff and trade agreement agencies, taxation agencies and scientific agencies. In 1938, interaction with government agencies was considered as the largest budget activity undertaken by the Association. The Association was interested in state, as well as federal government activities, particularly taxation within Oklahoma which was higher than in the other two states of the district. The Association was also foremost in the late 1940s unsuccessful fight to maintain premium payments to ore producers by the federal government and the also unsuccessful 1950s battle to reduce the importation of zinc and lead from Peru, Mexico and other foreign markets.[14]

Meeting its second objective, the Association started a weekly statistical report in 1924 showing the district's production, stocks, shipments and prices which became the "...principal source of this sort of information." The Association was also "...instrumental in furnishing information about other phases of the zinc industry..." to interested persons. Additionally, in cooperation with the American Zinc Institute, which was the "...research, public relations, marketing, statistical, and legislative oversight agency for lead and zinc in the United States," the Association sought to further the use of zinc. As such, in 1925 the Association placed a sign on their new building declaring "Roof With Zinc - We Did."[15]

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[14]"United States Department of Commerce Trade Association Survey," Completed by Evan Just, Secretary, Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association, 15 November 1938 (Available at the Picher Mining Field Museum, Picher, Oklahoma) 5-8. See also Memorandum on Taxation in Ottawa County, prepared by Evan Just, Secretary, Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association, 1937, (Available at the Picher Mining Field Museum, Picher, Oklahoma), 8; "Why Conservation of Marginal Zinc and Lead Ores Mean So Much to Our National Economy and Security - A Message from Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association", 1947 (Available at the Picher Mining Field Museum); and, Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 267-272.

[15]Miami News-Record, 5 September 1937 and 13 September 1925. See also Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 178.

The Association also had a role in labor relations of the Tri-State District. The most noteworthy example occurred in 1935 when the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers, an affiliate of the American Federation of Labor (AFL), tried to get recognition from district operators. Using the Association, the operators continued to deny recognition of the union. On 8 May 1935, the union voted to strike which was followed on the 21st of May by a back-to-work movement engineered by the mine owners, rather than laborers. The company-dominated Tri-State Mine Metal Workers Union, also known as the Blue Card Union, ran labor relations in the district for about four years. In 1939, the National Labor Relations Board in Washington, D.C., found that the "...operators had denied collective bargaining rights, discriminated against workers for membership in the International Union, and were largely responsible for the recent labor violence." Although the Blue Card Union continued in nominal existence, the International Union of Mine, Mill, and Smelter Workers, which had become affiliated with the Committee for Industrial Organizations (CIO) after its formation in 1935, dominated labor relations in the Tri-State District until the late 1940s. Although the operators did not actively interfere in union business after 1935 through the Association, they "...regularly voiced resentment against the CIO and denied that it represented the views of district workmen." For example, in 1939, Evan Just, Association secretary, testified to Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins that the CIO and its representative did not represent the "real workmen" of the district.[16]

The Association was also interested in private businesses which affected the mine operators. Foremost among these was the insurance industry. Due to the high number of accidents, insurance for the mines was costly. Following its formation, the Association engaged a "safety engineer", who was "...responsible for promoting and coordinating safety programs in the mines." The Association has been noted as "...the first private agency to promote improved conditions in the mines through its mine safety department." In addition to inspecting the roof to prevent cave-ins, safety engineers also "...saw to it that men using sledges or grinding drill points wore goggles," and suggested better lighting in the mines. Through these efforts, the number and magnitude of mines accidents in Tri-State District were reduced. Additionally, "...by

[16]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 232-248.

gathering facts and figures on accident experience," the Association was able "...to prevent the imposition of exorbitant insurance rates."[17]

Although economically benefitting the operators, the Association also undertook several activities which directly promoted the health of the miners and their families. In 1923, the Bureau of Mines investigated the Tri-State District to determine what efforts were being made to prevent silicosis in the district. Silicosis was a non-contagious lung deterioration contracted from exposure to mine dust which eventually resulted in the contagious lung disease tuberculosis. Although only miners exposed to the dust in the mines developed silicosis, their families were at risk once the disease developed into tuberculosis, especially when living in substandard housing like the majority of miners did. As a result of the 1923 investigation, the Association, along with the Bureau of Mines and the Picher Post of the American Legion organized a clinic at Picher to offer yearly physical exams to the miners. Due to increasing demand, the clinic was expanded in 1927. Sponsored by the Association, Bureau of Mines and the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company, the enlarged clinic included a "...large X-ray room, dispensary, and venereal disease clinic" and employed a staff of eleven. The Association provided sixteen thousand dollars a year to the clinic, while the other two sponsors contributed eight thousand dollars each. By 1929, eighty percent of the district miners were examined at the Picher Clinic. After this, all job applicants in Tri-State mines "...were required to undergo a physical examination including X-ray at the Picher Clinic." Although nominally to protect the miner, the efforts of the clinic also benefitted the mine operators by identifying those workers disabled by disease. Despite the efforts of the clinic, "For years, Ottawa County, Oklahoma, had the unenviable recognition of having the highest tuberculosis mortality rate in the nation."[18]

Related to halting silicosis and mine safety, the Association was also active in dust counting and air composition surveys of the members' mines. Although the benefit of wetting the mines to control dust was known in the teens, the practice did not become common until the 1920s. By 1929, "...all operating companies were using some form of dust control, including wet drilling and

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[17]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 177. See also Miami News-Record, 5 September 1937.

[18]Gibson, Wilderness Bonanza, 186-195.

ventilation of underground workings plus sprinkling of ore piles before shoveling." In the late 1930s, a devise measuring the amount of rock dust in the mine was developed with a norm of five million particles per cubic foot being instituted. At the same time, the dust and air surveys conducted by the Association staff were considered the third of the Association's top three activities.[19]

In their health care efforts, the Association also employed one-to-two welfare nurses. In addition to vaccinating the area children for smallpox, diphtheria and typhoid, the nurses provided clothes, shoes, food, books and glasses for those in need. Between October 1930 and October 1931, the nurses made 1,295 separate visits to area homes with over four thousand follow-up visits. Almost six hundred families were investigated "...for relief work." Groceries, including flour and meat, were provided to 431 families and 96 children received shoes. The Association's welfare nurse "...did most of the work on community health and sanitation" until the county health department took over in 1949. In all, it was estimated that the welfare nurses made more than 75,000 visits to needy recipients between 1926 and 1949.[20]

Between 1925 and 1953, the Association undertook a myriad of activities to promote mining operations in the Tri-State District. Generally, all of these activities bolstered in one way or another the commercial well-being of the mine operators. Related to this, the Association was also responsible for critical health care activities in Ottawa County. Although indirectly profiting the Association and its members, the Association's role in promoting the well-being of the numerous miners and their families living in the area provided an essential service to the community. Conclusively, the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association was an eminently successful trade association which played an important commercial and health role in Ottawa County in the 1920s through the early 1950s.

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[19]Ibid., 189. See also Miami News-Record, 5 September 1937 and "United States Department of Commerce Trade Association Survey," 5.

[20]Ibid., 193-195. See also Memorandum on Welfare Department Work, December 1931, (Available at the Picher Mining Field Museum, Picher, Oklahoma).

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VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION:

Lots 9-10, Block 8, Blue Mound Addition One, Picher, Oklahoma.

BOUNDARY JUSTIFICATION:

The boundary includes the property directly historically associated with the Tri-State Zinc and Lead Ore Producers Association Office.