

## Mine Maps as Grey Literature

By Linda R. Musser,

Head of the Earth and Mineral Sciences Library,  
The Pennsylvania State University, 105 Deike Building,  
University Park PA 16802; 814-863-7073; Lrm4@psu.edu.

Maps are a tough format - frequently big in size, awkward to store, and of little or no interest to many librarians. Even among the map library community, mine maps are the ugly duckling of the map library world. A narrowly focused, unglamorous, rarely collected stepchild of the cartographic community. Yet mine maps are repositories of unique, difficult to replicate information illustrating location and extent of historic and current mining activities.

The majority of maps are governmentally produced, a trait that qualifies most maps for grey literature status. Fortunately, such are usually published in significant enough quantities that they can be collected and held in multiple repositories. Their content is frequently of broad enough interest that many map libraries collect, catalog, preserve and provide access to these materials. The same cannot be said for mine maps.

Firstly, these maps are not produced by the government in most cases. They are produced by the mine operator for internal use, although many governments require their creation and deposit with the state. Secondly, they are produced in single or very limited quantities, making them hard to collect. The subject matter is such that, to many librarians, it seems of limited interest or utility. This is far from the truth, of course.

Mine maps are of great utility to a variety of users. Homeowners (and realtors trying to sell homes) want to know if there is a mine underlying the property. Mining companies desire knowledge of the extent of previous mining operations in the event they choose to commence re-mining operations. Geologists utilize these maps to assist

in mineral reserve estimation, sample collection, exploration and mapping. Planners and engineers are interested from the point of view of project and community planning. Government inspectors require them for reasons relating to health and safety as well as environmental protection and redemption.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF MINE MAPS

Mine maps, like all maps, come in a wide variety of sizes, colors and materials. Maps were frequently drawn on the most convenient and inexpensive material at hand. Thus mine maps are found drawn on newsprint, velum, linen, drafting paper, canvas, and mylar. Color may or may not be used depending on the mineral or mineral seams being represented in the map. For example, maps of anthracite mining operations commonly utilize color to indicate the extent of mining in a particular coal seam. Size is also tied to the type of material being mined. Again, using historic Pennsylvania coal mines as an example, anthracite mines tended to be limited in width but could be quite lengthy thus generating maps of reasonable width (137 cm.) but extreme length (366 cm.). Bituminous coal mines, on the other hand, were extensive in all dimensions requiring maps of equivalent proportions (e.g., 600 cm. x 900 cm.).

### MINE MAP COLLECTIONS

As previously stated, mine maps are little collected by most libraries. Many of these maps are acquired by donation directly from the mining company as part of their archives. On occasion, mining engineers will also donate mine maps. It is quite rare, however, to find a mine map in a library outside a government agency. Given that many governments require that mine maps be deposited with the state, it is not surprising that the government is the most common collector of mine maps. Unfortunately, not all governments take good care of these unique records of industry. Nor are they uniformly concerned with providing access to these records. Conditions and access vary widely.

In the state of Pennsylvania, for example, mine maps are collected by no less than seven different agencies. Each agency has unique materials and separate inventory schemes. Additionally, the cooperation and communication among the agencies frequently leaves something to be desired. Also located in Pennsylvania is a national repository for abandoned mine maps. Operated by the U.S. Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, the National Mine Map Repository (NMMR) collects and creates microfilm copies of abandoned mine maps loaned to the NMMR. Its holdings, while extensive, represent less than fifty percent of the mine maps in existence in the United States.

#### CONCLUSION

Similar repositories exist in other countries as well and they face similar challenges of collecting, cataloging, preserving and hopefully providing access to these unique materials. It is hoped that librarians will become more aware of the value of these not-so-pretty stepchildren of the map library world and endeavor to do their part in preserving these unique records of industry.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Musser, Linda R. and Lisa A. Wishard (1999), "Mine Map Repositories in Pennsylvania and the United States", *Proceedings of the Geoscience Information Society*, v.29, (in press).

Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement, U.S. Department of the Interior (1997), *Mine Map Repositories: A Source of Mine Data*, U.S.G.P.O., Washington, DC.