

Tell Ertl Oil Shale Repository Arthur Lakes Library Colorado School of Mines

John Ward Smith

Background Information

Bio: John Ward Smith

John Ward Smith (1923-1986) was a chemist who spent most of his professional career working for the federal government. Ward was recognized world-wide as an expert in the characterization, nature, and utilization of oil shale and received numerous honors from his peers. Almost his entire career was spent at Laramie, Wyoming, at the research center under the Bureau of Mines. He went on to work with ERDA (Energy Research and Development Administration), then DOE (Department of Energy), and finally, WRI (Western Research Institute), under the University of Wyoming. After 1980, he served as an independent consultant from his office in Laramie.

Although John Ward Smith's primary interest was in oil shale, he also contributed to tar sands and underground coal gasification research. Much of his oil shale work centered on geochemistry and analytical chemistry, defining and describing kerogen, oil shale, and associated mineral species --especially Dawsonite and Nahcolite.

The John Ward Smith Collection

The John Ward Smith Collection mirrors the professional career of Ward Smith. More than 90% is devoted to oil shale. The bulk of the collection is composed of numerous government documents, primarily from the agencies where Ward was employed. The second largest segment of the John Ward Smith Collection consists of copies of Ward's publications and numerous reprints and preprints obtained from other researchers.

The collection is formal --consisting only of books, reports, and other publications; there are no letters and notes (other than a very few handwritten comments in the margins of books and reports).

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