FILE NAME: WR Grace (WRG)

DATE: Unknown

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DOCUMENT DESCRIPTION: 0000 Barry Castleman Notes regarding WR Grace and Zonolite

WR Grace Co. / Zonolite

Libby, Montana has the largest developed vermiculite mining operation in the world. It began in 1919 and the company was called Vermiculite and Asbestos Corp. (or Asbestos and Vermiculite -- "History of Vermiculite" uses both). Large scale production began in the early 1930s. In this decade, various vermiculite expanding plants were built in Chicago, Detroit, and Spokane. Until the mid-40s it was all used as insulating fill, concrete mixes came in the 1950s, with promotion for fireproofing after 1957. WR Grace appears to have bought the business in 1964.

6-14-61 letter from ED Lovick to CA Pratt (VP, Western Mineral Products Co.) acknowledges that asbestosis is a matter of concern based on "many studies". The 1956 report from the Montana State Board of Health is quoted as saying asbestos dust is "of considerable toxicity." A 19-year mill employee was very disabled and sent to a TB sanitarium where he was diagnosed as "questionable asbestosis." Montana's inclusion of occupational disease coverage in the workers' comp law in 1959 was accompanied by the company's decision to institute an employee X-ray program. Doctors' reports are said to have been inconclusive on the question of whether there was a lung disease hazard in the plant. Asbestos in concentrates shipped to expanding plants should give rise to "very small" amounts of it in the dust in expansion plants. State Board of Health engineer comes around annually. "Dust Foe" MSA respirators provided.

8-11-61 letter from Pratt to Lovick states that WMP also has pre-employment X-rays and appreciates any effort to lower the asbestos content of the ore.

9-15-61 letter from Pratt to JA Kelley (Zonolite) mentions that Minneapolis Health Dept. has expressed concern about dust in vermiculite plants.

4-2-64 letter from Pratt to Kelley mentions a claim for total disability compensated in Minneapolis; and another case seen by Dr. Park who was advised to leave the employ of WMP.

10-21-64 letter from Alberta Dept. Pub. Hlth. Dr. Siemens to Williams (Grant Industries) reports that 7/9 workers examined had abnormal forced breathing curves and 2 had fibrosis, recommends respirators. Attached is a note from H. Buchwald (16 Sept. 1964) calling attention to the use of asbestos in "Mono-Kote". Asbestos is described as a "well known cause of lung fibrosis" and HB goes on: "It is most important that dust respirators be worn when any work is done with ground asbestos."

8-25-64 letter from Dr. W. Nelson in Libby to J Kelley (President Zonolite Div. of WRGrace) asks for expenses to go to a medical center and obtain clinical trainong in occupational lung diseases. He notes that his 1959 X-ray study showed "an unusually high incidence of basilar fibrosis," at Zonolite. The survey was repeated in 1964, and "the consensus of local medical opinion was that an important increased incidence of chronic respiratory disease existed in Zonolite employees who had prolonged exposure to dust." Preliminary analysis showed "distinct and important change in respiratory function and pathology." He had not charged for his services but now requested assistance to consult and make time for a competent analysis of his data.

12-3-64 letter from Williams to Siemens assures that no adverse health effects have been seen among US Zonolite plant workers. It does acknowledge a danger from asbestos and the need to use respirators.

12-8-64 letter from Bushell (Grant Industries) to JA Kelley encloses all the above Williams-Siemens correspondence.

12-29-64 letter from Park (MD Casualty) to Rupp (WRG-Zonolite) suggests respirator use and maintenance program to follow

1-2-65 memo from RA Bleich (Libby plant) to JA Kelley (WRG hq) comments on reports from Montana State Board of Health and says "I can only say it presents a very sorry record."

1-2-65 long memo from Lovick (Libby) to JA Kelley "Dust at Libby" reviews events. starting with a Health dept. letter in 1942 describing the dust as a nuisance dust. The doctors' findings in the 1959 health survey was described as equivoval. Dust controls, respirators, and transfer to non-dusty jobs were used by mgmt. A 1964 follow-up exam had PFTs in addition to chest X-rays. 30/143 showed emphysema or fibrosis, and in 14 there was progression in the serial X-rays since 1959. Of 39 hourly workers w/over 10 yrs employment, 18 were classed as abnormal. One 19-yr employee w/severe impairment was ultimately diagnosed as having "questionable asbestosis." In 1962 a Wyoming doc told them his patient had progressive fibrosis resembling asbestosis. In 1961, a Spokane doc told the company that a former employee had extensive bilateral pneumoconiosis w/definite progression. "These cases were referred to Chicago and handled by our insurance carrier." There have been other cases, the memo says. Attachments listed include a survey report by Dr. Nelson and medical reports on 4 employees with 7-19 yrs employment.

2-4-65 Bushell asks Kelley if Zonolite has contacted the Alberta health dept. and notes that 2 employees were being sent to a chest clinic at the dept.'s recommendation.

2-9-65 OF Stewart (WRG hq) replies to Bushell acknowledges that the presence of asbestos in Libby vermiculite, and says there have been reports of "men having pulmonary trouble," at Libby and WMP. Letter details steps being taken to control dust and disease at WRG plants. Attachments speak to growing public concern, and letter says better to anticipate increasing govt regulation in designing dust control into plants.

10-4-65 report by LA Co Div. Occup. Health (Dr. Wiley) says CA Zonolite plant had no apparent hazard -- even though breathing zone of operator "mixing MonoKote, asbestos side" was 7.7 MPPCF.

In 1968, Grace-Zonolite people had extensive discussions with J-M's Ed Fenner and Cliff Schekler. The latter"emphasized that Threshold Limits should be used as guides in the control of health hazards and not regarded as fine lines between safe and dangerous conditions." (1-5-68 memo). Employee education was conceded as necessary, and personal protective equipment was described as "only 50% effective."

1-25-68 memo P. Kostic to RW Sterrett (Zon/Chicago) reviews meeting w/ Dr. Chenowith and L. Park at MD Casualty about ind. hyg. survey being arranged w/J-M assistance. "They advised that we use good discretion in setting up and going through with the survey so as not to create undue alarm." Rather than examine all the workers, Chenowith said to take only 32 so as not to arouse suspicion of them all; and send X-rays to Dr. Spicer at U of MD. He warned that if continued work was a danger to any of the men examined, it would be "our obligation to tell the man."

By 1969, documents show there was no doubt that asbestos would have to be gotten out of MonoKote. Selikoff was telling the unions, and the health battle over sprayed asbestos was in full swing across the US. USPHS reps met w/Grace and offered to do an epidemiological study in Libby.

8-11-70 memo describes San Francisco hearing of 7-21-70 on asbestos hazards from sprayed insulation, and attachment lists all companies represented in attendance.

W R Grace

Predecessor "Multibestos" workers were "sent" to Saranac for diagnosis w/asbestosis

Walter Pemba	p-31-37 p-35-85	}	w/ Dr Whiting
Wm Sole	p-34-101		
Harry Robertson	p-35-129		
Dawson	p-36-124		Dalrymple Newton Hospital

based on card files + case files of AJV

7/3/85

WR Grace

Dan Speights has new material, a letter from the Thirties from the exec (Dewey) of the firm that made chemicals and asbestos brake products that Grace bought in 1954 (Dewey & Olney??). D&O owned a plant called Multibestos in Mass. which may have been the one where Dr. Hawes did his work and came into conflict w/George and Leonard at the comp board there. The latter authors mention Hawes by name and say the plant in question closed in 1936.

Grace itself began as a shipping company and got intc chemies with the acquisition of D & O. Grace denies any early knowledge of an asbestos hazard/

Speights will share his info after his trial in Greenville starting August 5, 1985.

D. Speights
PO Box 685
Hampton, SC 29924

W.R. Grace

They mined vermiculite in Libby, Montana, and the state health dept. has been after them telling them they had an asbestos health problem since the 1940's. The company, Zonolite, still sells expanded vermiculite to the public without warnings on the asbestos content.

Records at Montana state health dept.

Other products: -Monokote fireproofing in buildings
-an acoustical plaster with added chrysotile, made until 1965 (w/Zonolite vermiculite)

Ann Kimmel May 14, 1984

Law prof. Carl Tobias called about asbestos at CPSC, and since he's from Montana I asked about the Grace mine. He passed me on to Don Reed, Env. Info. Ctr., P.O. Box 1184, Helena, Mont. 59624 (406-443-2520).

Reed was very interested but the toxics man was away on indefinite leave. He will bring the question up with labor contacts and ask about it at the health dept. I suggested getting analyses of both the raw mineral and the processed expanded vermiculite, for asbestos content. Explained that epidemiologists are now identifying mesotheliomas among the work force there.

Reed seemed less interested in the consumer side of it, but agreed that it would be important to see where the product is shipped and what hazards that might involve. Reed certainly wants to be sure the workers at Libby and the community are aware of this threat.

Libby is an isolated town in the northwest corner of Montana, Reed compared it to Appalachia. That vermiculite mine is a major employer.

May 24, 1984

(Reed thought the issue might dovetail with their campaign for a right-to-know law in Montana)

WR GRACE, Cont.

OH lawn product mfgr Lloyd Gordon is totally disabled and suing WR Grace, seller of vermiculite containing asbestos. Gordon worked for Scott & Sons in OH from 1967-77, now requires oxygen 20 hrs/day. (ALR 9-21-84)

Gordon's lawyers are Robert Sexton and Thomas Startzman (614-221-4788). I called them and left word of what Ann Kimmel had told me on Grace in Montana. Offered to:

--direct investigation using local envtl group to locate the govt records of interest

--research mineralogy literature on the history of knowledge about asbestos (tremolite) sometimes occuring as a contaminant in vermiculite deposits

It would also be interesting to follow up on discovery on these points. The atty who called said he would at least share with me whatever they come up with.

Ann Kimmel's office has 6 spandex folders on vermiculite, one such folder on the Libby Mont. operation, and untold documents in boxes from WR Grace Co. I have asked for a complete copy of the Libby file, with note to Ann to call me back and verify that it's the thing I was told about by her in May. (803-943-4444)

Oct. 5, 1984

	1960	
California Zonolite Co. Letter	11/04	
Letter	11/13	
	1961	
Western Mineral Products Co. Letter	6/14	
Zonolite Letter	6/27	
Western Mineral Products Co. Letter	8/11	
	1964	
Western Mineral Products Co.	4/2	Vermiculite dust health hazard
Zonolite Letter	4/9	
Memo Deneficating	4/30	Process for Asbestos Ores
Gov't Province of Alberta Letter	10/21	
Letter to Dr. Chenowith	10/30	
Grant Industries Letter	12/8a	
Park Letter to W. R. Grace KY	12/29	Survey- Wilders,
	1965	
Memo	1/2	
Memo	1/2	Dust at Libby
Park Letter to W. R. Grace KY	1/11	Survey- Wilders,
Chenowith Letter Grace	1/18	Zonolite-Div.
Zonolite Letter to Grant Industries Hazards	2/8	Calgary-Health
Zonolite Letter to Grant Industries Hazards	2/9	Calgary-Health

Confidential Memo Pratt	6/4	Dust
Injury Report	6/4	
Los Angeles Health Dept. to Zonolite tests	10/4	Health hazard
	1967	
Texas Vermiculite Company	5/1	
Asbestosis Symposium- Studies Western Health Conference	9/29	Microscopic of Tissue
	1968	
Zonolite Memo	1/9	Dust Control
Memo	1/25	DustControl
Letter Kostic to U. of Cal.	1/25	
	1969	
Memo Cases	6/19	Peumoconiosis
Memo	6/20	Asbestos
Memo	6/25	Asbestosis
Zonolite Memo	10/15	Meeting w/USPHS
Zonolite Memo	11/28	CPLIA Convention
Zonolite Memo	12/1	Mono -Kote
Zonolite Memo Intrepretation	12/2	X-Ray
Grace Memo	12/2	Asbestos
Grace Memo F'proofg	12/10	Sprayed Fiber
	1970	
Zonolite Memo	4/13	Personnel X Rays
Aonolite Memo Pollution	6/1	"Asbestos"

Johns Manville Letter to Grace	6/19	
Grace Memo	8/11	San Fr. Meeting Asbestos Hazards
Memo	8/13	Mono-Kote
	1971	
Baltimore Building Code	3/23	
	1972	
Zonolite Memo	4/6	
Grace	4/6	Survey Zonolite Dust Control
Request for Capital Appropriation Silos	4/13	Vermiculite Ore
Memo	4/18	Travelers Rest Air Sampling Results
	1973	
Zonolite Memo F'prfng	3/28	Vermiculite
Grace Zonolite Bulletin	12/5	Fireproofing