

HOSTE: The three main research questions I had going into my masters project, which was in The Old Lead Belt, was how do people feel today about this legacy of lead mining in their community and what do they think defines their community today—because lead mining stopped in the Old Lead Belt in in 1972—and also what does the future look like for this community.

KBIA: **And what did you find? Were there any commonalities that came out of those questions?**

HOSTE: Themes emerged that were really common across the spectrum of people. Mainly with regards to the first question, what is your relationship to this history of lead mining in the community and how do you feel about it. A really strong dichotomy emerged where people who had a familial connection—who had family members that were lead miners or they themselves were lead miners—had a very different perspective on lead mining and the implications of lead mining versus those people who had moved there since lead mining had stopped. That was really fascinating to see. I guess it kind of makes sense that that kind of dichotomy would exist, but it's also really interesting to see how it plays out and how people talk about this history and how people sort of interpret the consequences.

KBIA: **For the people who's families had been involved in lead mining long term—I know when you go to some of these towns there are people who's great grandparents came there and worked associated with lead mining—what were their feelings, what did you find?**

HOSTE: Yeah, I think that there are a couple things that are really interesting to recognize. Lead contamination is a very serious problem, here as well as other parts of the world, but at the same time mining is incredibly important for our economy, for the things that we want in our lives. It's important to not just sort of think about these things in one-dimensional ways.

KBIA: **How did people feel about the future of their towns? A town that has lost its industry is a town that is struggling. Were people hopeful about anything?**

HOSTE: What was really interesting was to try and ask people, okay, lead mining existed in The Old Lead Belt for over a century, and it really came to define these communities. The lead industry was involved in every aspect of everybody's lives. In terms of housing, in terms of agriculture, in terms of livestock, in terms of running all of the stores in these communities, employing all of these people, giving money to build different things. They were intimately involved in everybody's lives. And then

all of a sudden these mines closed and they're gone. What does that mean for the community? People struggled to articulate to me what defined their community today. You say what defines Bonne Terre or Desloge or Park Hills today, and people don't really have an answer. Which is kind of troubling, right. But then you start to dive a little bit deeper and people have lots of qualities of the community that they really value that point to I think what defines the community, which is the close-knit nature of these communities, the people within them, the quality of the public education that exists specifically in Park Hills. I think there are qualities to these communities that sort of define them, but people don't quite yet recognize them as the core identifying aspects of the communities, rather there is still sort of this void in the wake of the lead mining industry leaving.

KBIA: Where have you taken the project?

HOSTE: It's been a really wonderful experience to share this project with other people. And unfortunately it took something like the Flint water crisis to draw more attention to lead mining or lead contamination and so I've been able to have the work published in a few places as a result of developing news. Presently the work is in display at Columbia College here in Columbia, Missouri in an exhibition. And I'm hoping that over the next year or so that exhibition can travel around the state of Missouri in different gallery spaces.

KBIA: How long will it be at Columbia College?

HOSTE: It will be at Columbia College through the end of September.