

Hat Creek Oil Company Records 5015

Finding aid prepared by Hannah Marshall Bawden

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February 25, 2019

Describing Archives: A Content Standard

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Table of Contents

<u>Summary Information</u>	3
<u>Biographical/Historical Note</u>	4
<u>Scope and Contents Note</u>	4
<u>Arrangement Note</u>	5
<u>Administrative Information</u>	5
<u>Controlled Access Headings</u>	5
<u>Collection Inventory</u>	6

Summary Information

Repository	Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center
Creator	Hat Creek Oil Company
Title	Hat Creek Oil Company Records
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1917-1918
Date [inclusive]	1913-1918
Extent	0.5 Linear feet
Language	English
Abstract	<p>The Hat Creek Oil Company Records consists primarily of correspondence sent to and from the company's owners, B.C. Yates, L.M. McBride, and Ralph Bonney. The collection also includes mineral and mining lease paperwork, agreements, payroll information, and newspaper clippings. The materials are dated between 1913 and 1918 with the bulk of documents dating from the time period that the company was active, between May 1917 and June 1918.</p>

Biographical/Historical Note

The Hat Creek Oil Company was incorporated by the state of South Dakota on May 24th, 1917, and was owned and operated by a group of men from Lead who were also employed by the Homestake Mining Company. The officers and directors of the company included: B.C. Yates, Chambers Kellar, C.A. Seeley, Ralph W. Bonney, and L.M. McBride. The men had purchased the oil and mineral leases for 1,720 acres of land in Fall River County from the Ardmore Oil Company on the Ardmore Anticline. The area was believed to have a wealth of oil and coal and companies such as Norbeck-Nicholson Company had obtained oil at a depth of 2,260 feet.

The owners of Hat Creek Oil Company noted that they would have no need for expensive pipeline construction as the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad ran across the land. This meant transportation of any oil or coal would be less expensive and shipments to the oil field would be more affordable. With these apparent promises of quick profit, 100,000 shares of treasury stock were placed on the market at the price of \$0.25 each. In late October the company urged interested buyers to travel to Ardmore to see the operation. Site Manager L.M. McBride offered private tours to all interested parties as soon as the drilling rig was in place. In November, only 27,000 stocks were left unpurchased.

1918 brought a number of problems for the company. Competitors, like the Shiloh Oil and Rig Company, were drilling faster and more successfully. Equipment broke down often forcing the company to borrow from Ardmore Oil, Shiloh Oil, and Norbeck-Nicholson. Stormy weather halted drilling frequently during the spring and early summer and funds weren't available to pay employees. That same year, B.C. Yates became superintendent of Homestake Mining Company which meant he had less time to deal with Hat Creek Oil's affairs. That year Homestake also announced the company viewed "wildcatting," or drilling just in hopes of finding oil, as diverting too many men from the gold mining industry. On August 6, 1918, the decision was made to discontinue drilling at the Ardmore field, citing that the company's efforts to that date had not proven a success.

Scope and Contents Note

This collection includes Hat Creek Oil Company's business correspondence, payroll information, and lease paperwork. Newspaper clippings pertaining to the company have been photocopied and the originals discarded.

Arrangement Note

Documents are arranged chronologically. An item-level inventory for this collection was created at some time in the past and can be found at the end of the collection

Administrative Information

Publication Information

Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center

Conditions Governing Access

This collection is housed at the Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center with no restrictions to access. The collection may be utilized during normal operating hours or by appointment.

Processing Information

This collection was processed November 2018-December 2018 by Hannah Marshall Bawden.

Controlled Access Headings

Corporate Name(s)

- Homestake Mining Company

Collection Inventory

	Box	Folder
Mining Leases and Agreements with Ardmore Oil Co., Nebraska-Dakota Improvement Co. and Blessing Family 1913-1917	1	1
Correspondence May - July 1917	1	2
Correspondence August 1917	1	3
Correspondence September - October 1917	1	4
Correspondence November 1917 - December 1917	1	5
Correspondence 1918	1	6
Company Papers Undated	1	7
Document List 1913-Undated	1	8