

Lead Miner's Union Collection 1909 - 1911 5010

Finding aid prepared by Hannah Marshall

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Summary Information

Repository	Homestake Adams Research and Cultural Center
Creator	Lead Miners' Union.
Title	Lead Miners' Union Collection
Date [bulk]	Bulk, 1909-1910
Date [inclusive]	1881-1926
Extent	1.0 Linear feet 2 boxes
Language	English
Abstract	<p>This collection contains administrative records of the Lead Miners' Union and news clippings from the Lead Daily Call and Black Hills Daily Register newspapers. The bulk of the records date from 1909-1910 and were created during the Homestake Lockout. The collection consists of meeting minutes, an account book, newspaper clippings and a small amount of miscellaneous materials found tucked within the minute books.</p>

Biographical/Historical Note

The Lead Miners' Union (also known as the Lead City Miners Union, Lead Miners Union No 2, and Lead Union) was organized in October 1877 by Thomas Tully, Charles Lyford and A.J. White. The Union sought to make changes to the working conditions within the Homestake Mining Company's properties in and around the city of Lead through bargaining as well as to fund charitable causes for the members of the Union and their families. The Territory of Dakota issued a charter to the Lead Miners' Union in 1880 proclaiming the group a benevolent and charitable organization and by the 1890 the Union was able to offer all dues paying members a weekly sickness benefit and \$75 in funeral benefits. Dues were \$1 per month.

The first Union Hall was completed in 1879 on the corner of Main and Bleeker but membership quickly outgrew this location and a four-story building was completed in 1894. The first and second floors were used by local businesses, the third floor was the first Lead Opera House and the fourth floor housed a room used solely for Union business. Bonds were used to fund construction and pay off the the new building, bonds were used. Union members paid an additional \$5 per month until they had contributed \$50 and then were issued a bond. In 1893 the Lead Miners' Union had joined with the Butte Miners' Union of Montana and the Central City Miners' Union of South Dakota to form the Western Federation of Miners. Union was officially known as Lead Miners Union No 2 within the Federation because it was the second Union to join.

In 1906 the Lead Miners' Union began the campaign for an 8 hour workday; at the time workers were required to work 10 hour shifts, seven days a week. Homestake Superintendent Grier eventually agreed to the 8 hour day without a pay cut and this went into effect in January 1907. Most were satisfied with this achievement and over the next two years many members of the Union became inactive within the group or fell behind on their dues. After the 8 hour workday agreement Homestake Mining Company pushed back against the call for a "closed shop" workplace by the Lead Miners' Union (a Union Membership requirement for all employees). In October 1909 a representative for Miner's Magazine, Emma F. Langdon, attended a meeting of the Lead Miners' Union where she passionately called for all former members to be required to pay arrears and become active. It was claimed by the end of the month that 98% of employees were union members and a closed shop without involvement of Homestake management was a real possibility.

On November 10, 1909, Homestake Mining Company filed an official complaint against the Lead Miners' Union claiming damages of \$10,000 resulting from Union actions and a week later on November 17, Superintendent Grier placed notice in the Lead Daily Call that the company would hire only non-union men in 1910. The Union promptly prepared for a strike but Grier moved quickly and on November 22 he published notice in all local newspapers announcing that Homestake Mining Company would cease operating its properties that evening. Homestake began to search for non-union members from outside the community to work in mines and hired Pinkerton Detectives to help Homestake security guards protect the Company's property.

By the first week of 1910, the strife caused by the lockout led forty-nine men to meet in the Lead Society Hall and form the Loyal Legion in support of the non-union effort of Homestake Mining Company.

The men requested permission to go back to work from Superintendent Grier and a small crew did so on January 9, 1910. By Mid-January a large number of newly hired workers, recruited by Homestake Mining Company had moved to Lead and began work alongside the non-union workers. Local workers had to reapply for their jobs and were expected to sign employment cards reading, "I am not a member of any labor union in consideration of my being employed by the Homestake Mining Company agree that I will not become such while in its service". By March 1910 the Homestake properties were back to full production with reportedly almost 1,000 union members disavowing their former membership.

In Deadwood and Lead members of unions such as barbers, bartenders, musicians and carpenters contributed financially to the Miners' Union during the lockout and throughout the winter of 1910. The Western Federation of Miners sent help in the form of money and writers to fill the local newspapers with pro-Union articles and ads until 1912. Local newspapers also took sides during the lockout with The Lead Daily Call supporting the Homestake Mining Company and the Black Hills Daily Register supporting the Union. In January 1913 Charles Moyer, president of the Western Federation of Miners, cancelled the charter for the Lead Miner's Union No 2 for non-payment. The Lead Miners; Union was entirely inactive by 1915.

Scope and Contents Note

This collection primarily contains the meeting minutes and record of dues collected by the Lead City Miners' Union from 1881 through 1913. Clippings from two local newspapers, the Lead Daily Call and the Black Hills Daily Register, from the beginning of the lockout through the end of the lockout in 1910 are also found in the collection. A small number of miscellaneous materials dating from after the closure of the union were found tucked in the minutes books.

Arrangement Note

The collection is arranged by item and thereunder chronologically. Meeting minutes and accounts received are found in bound books. Newspaper clippings are arranged chronologically. The correspondence and other items found tucked in the books date from a later period and have been placed in a folder at the back 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 July 2018 - September 2018 by Hannah Marshall Bawden

Collection Inventory

	Box
Minute Book 1881-1906	1
Minute Book 1907-1909	1
"Minute Book B" 1909-1912	1
Minute Book 1913-1915	1
Ledger 1898-1913	2
Black Hills Daily Register 1909-1910	2
Lead Daily Call Newspaper Clippings 1910	2
Miscellaneous Materials 1915-1926	2