Register of the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee Collection, 1917-1942

Collection number: MSS 055

Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Los Angeles, California

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee Collection,
Date (inclusive): 1917-1942
Collection number: MSS 055
Creator: Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee,
Eliazer, Ralph H.
Extent: 1 half-box and 1 oversize box
1 linear foot
Repository: Southern California Library for Social Studies and Research
Los Angeles, CA 90044

Abstract: This collection consists primarily of pamphlets, posters and other printed materials created or collected by the Tom Mooney Molders Defense Committee, in their work to free Tom Mooney, a labor activist wrongfully convicted of bombing the 1916 Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco. There are also a small number of documents pertaining to Tom Mooney and his estate.

Language: English.

Provenance
Donated to the Library on March 30, 1999, by Ralph Eliazer. His mother, Sara Eliazer, ran the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee office in San Francisco.

Access
The collection is available for research only at the Library's facility in Los Angeles. The Library is open from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Tuesday through Saturday. Researchers are encouraged to call or email the Library indicating the nature of their research query prior to making a visit.

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Organizational History
The Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee was founded to raise money and work for the release and pardon of Thomas J. Mooney, a member of the International Molders' Union, charged and convicted of bombing the 1916 Preparedness Day Parade in San Francisco, July 22, 1916. The Parade had been organized by a right-wing, pro-war group, and was also being used to champion the anti-union, "open shop" system. Pro-union, pro-German and pro-Mexican groups and individuals protested the holding of the parade. Mooney had been spearheading an attempt to unionize the San Francisco street car lines, which were controlled by the Pacific Gas & Electric Company and other utility interests. Mooney and fellow defendant Warren Billings, both labor union activists, were tried for murder and convicted on the basis of the testimony of several contradictory witnesses. Mooney's wife, Rena Mooney, who was described by the same witnesses, was found innocent.
Billings was sentenced to life in prison and Mooney was sentenced to death in 1917; the sentence was commuted to life after the intercession of President Woodrow Wilson in 1918. Wilson had tried to get Mooney and Billings new trials after it became clear that Frank C. Oxman's testimony was perjured. Oxman was not even in San Francisco at the time of the bombing. Eventually all the witnesses' testimony was disproved.
The Scripps-Howard newspaper chain championed Mooney's innocence in the twenties, and several defense committees sprang up around the country including the National Mooney-Billings Committee out of New York, and the Mooney Defense Committee of Southern California (Los Angeles). The Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, headquartered in San Francisco, appears to have been the most active and radical of the committees. Besides calling for a pardon, the Defense Committee championed Mooney as a "Labor Martyr" and published exposés charging that California politicians had been buying union endorsements. The Defense Committee charged labor leaders with blocking the pardons of Mooney and Billings. In 1931 Billings asked that his name be removed from Mooney Defense Committee literature, especially those attacking labor leaders. He suggested letting the American Federation of Labor (AFoFL) run the Defense Committee. The defense committees separated.
The Defense Committee applied for pardons from each, successive governor of California. In the early 1930s the California Supreme Court reviewed the conviction and word was leaked that they had found in favor of Mooney and would recommend a pardon. The ruling was not released for over a year and ended up negative. In 1937, the United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee held hearings into the Mooney case, and passed a resolution (S.J.Res. 127) asking Governor Frank F. Merriam of California to grant Mooney a pardon. The House Judiciary Committee passed a similar resolution in 1938. Mooney was finally given a "full and unconditional pardon" by Governor Culbert L. Olson in 1939. Mooney died in a San Francisco hospital on March 6, 1942, just 3 years after his release, of gastric problems that were blamed on the poor food and medical treatment received in prison.
Following Mooney's death, the Defense Committee (Sara Eliazer) oversaw the donation of Mooney's papers to the University of California and the distribution of duplicate pamphlets and books to Columbia, the Library of Congress and other institutions around the country. Roger Baldwin of the American Civil Liberties Union was part of this process.
Scope and Content
This collection consists mainly of pamphlets, posters and other printed materials pertaining to the Preparedness Day Parade bombing, Tom Mooney and the Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee. The non-published documents consist of some correspondence, a few photographs (of Mooney and of Sara Eliazer), a copy of the Governor's pardon, and the deed for Mooney's burial plot. Some of the materials were signed by Tom Mooney, during his imprisonment, with both his name and his prisoner identification number. Of special interest are the posters. One includes a poem dedicated to Mooney and the other several photographs. Both are signed by Mooney.
Title: Tom Mooney, by Theodore Drieser,
Date (inclusive): n.d.,
Location: Pamphlet Collection
Title: Capital in Lithographs, Lithographs by Karl Marx, illustrated by Hugo Gellert, New York: Ray Long and Richard R. Smith,
Date (inclusive): 1934.
Note
Inscribed by Tom Mooney, with an extensive note to Alice Barnsdall, March 12, 1936, also later autographed by illustrator to Alice McGrath (donor).

**Location:** Rare Books Collection

*Longshoremen and Mooney,*

**Title:**

**Date:** 1938,

**Physical Description:** silent, b&w, 8 minutes,

**Location:** Film Collection [SCL Videotape 1]

*Tom Mooney in San Francisco,*

**Title:**

**Date:** 1938,

**Physical Description:** silent, b&w, 15 minutes,

**Location:** Film Collection [SCL Videotape 2]

*Tom Mooney in Los Angeles,*

**Title:**

**Date:** 1938,

**Physical Description:** silent, b&w,

**Location:** Film Collection [SCL Videotape 2]

*Tom Mooney Rallies from 1930s,*

**Title:**

**Date:** 1938,

**Physical Description:** silent, b&w, 10 minutes,

**Location:** Film Collection [SCL Videotape 2]

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<td>Roger Baldwin, ACLU, 1942</td>
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<td>Note, n.d.</td>
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<td>Full and Unconditional Pardon for Thomas J. Mooney (reproduction of formal pardon, Autographed by Tom Mooney), 1939</td>
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<td>Burial Plot Certificate, 1943</td>
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<td>Congressional Record - reprints</td>
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<td>United States Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing on Thomas J. Mooney (S.J Resolution 127), December 15, 1937</td>
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<td>United States House Judiciary Subcommittee Hearing on Tom Mooney (H.J. Resolution 297), May 11 and 17, 1938</td>
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<td>'Tom Mooney and American Justice,' a Radio Address by Hon. James. E. Murray of Montana, May 17, 1938</td>
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<td>'Tom Mooney Should be Pardoned Immediately,' Radio Address and Remarks of Hon. Emanuel Celler of New York, June 1, 1938</td>
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<td>Photographs, 1939, n.d.</td>
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<td>Pamphlets</td>
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<td>1/12</td>
<td>Reply of Thomas J. Mooney to Brief Filed by District Attorney of City and County of San Francisco Against Petition for Pardon by Maxwell McNutt (Attorney for T.J. Mooney), c. 1918</td>
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<td>1/13</td>
<td>The Story of Mooney and Billings, National Mooney-Billings Committee (New York), June 1929</td>
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<td>1/14</td>
<td>Justice is Waiting, Mooney Defense Committee of Southern California, August 1930</td>
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<tr>
<td>1/15</td>
<td>Tom Mooney (A Member of the International Molders Union for 29 Years) Betrayed by Labor Leaders, Tom Mooney Molders' Defense Committee, 2nd Edition, May 1931</td>
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Collection Contents

Box-folder 1/16  The Amazing Frameup of Mooney and Billings: How California Has Stolen 13 Years from these Labor Leaders, by Marcet Haldeman-Julius, Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, Kansas [Signed by Mooney 1936], 1931

Box-folder 1/17  A Review of the Facts in the Case of Thomas J. Mooney: for Consideration by His Excellency, Honorable James Rolph, Jr., Governor of California, by James J. Walker, Aaron Sapiro, Cyrus B. King, & Frank P. Walsh, December 1, 1931

Box-folder 1/18  Our American Dreyfus Case: A Challenge to California Justice, by Lillian Symes, Harper & Brothers, Published for Special Circulation by the Inter-Religious Committee for Justice for Thomas J. Mooney (Los Angeles) [Signed by Mooney 1936], 1935

Box-folder 1/19  We Accuse! by Vito Marcantonio, International Labor Defense Pamphlet No. 1, 1938

Box-folder 1/20  Tom Mooney’s Message to Organized Labor, His Friends and Supporters, and all Liberal and Progressive Voters of California on the 1938 California Elections, Tom Mooney Molders’ Defense Committee, August 1938


Box-folder 2/3-2/5  Posters - Printed and Distributed by the Defense Committee

Box-folder 2/3  Labor's Champion, - Text and photograph - 28x34 inches [Signed by Mooney 1936], c. 1935

Box-folder 2/4  Labor Martyr Immortalized in Poem - includes Stone Face by Lola Ridge published in The Nation, September 14, 1932 and 1928 photograph of Mooney - 28x34 inches, [Signed by Mooney 1936], c. 1932

Box-folder 2/5  Tom Mooney Should be Pardoned, Say 64% of Voters in National Poll, Reprint from the January 20, 1938, Washington Post - 20x13 inches, c. 1938

Box-folder 2/6-2/7  Newspapers and Reprints

Box-folder 2/6  The Bulletin (Clipping sheet) and San Francisco News (Reprint), 1917, 1938

Box-folder 2/7  Labor Herald - Issue on Mooney’s Funeral, March 13, 1942