

## Philanthropy as Cultural Outreach

### Phoebe Hearst and Music in Lead, South Dakota

In the Black Hills town of Lead, the name Phoebe Apperson Hearst evokes the image of an ideal patron, a woman who unswervingly assisted the community from which she derived a major part of her fortune. Exhibits at the Historic Homestake Opera House and at the Sanford Lab Homestake Visitor Center document Hearst's personal interest in Lead and her largesse in supporting its inhabitants through her sensitive oversight of its gold mine, her contributions to its educational institutions and its hospital, her gifts to religious institutions, and her attention to individuals. Part of that generosity stemmed from Hearst's interest in the arts and, specifically, her support for music, which she considered an essential component of a rich civic environment.

Phoebe Hearst (1842–1919), the mother of newspaper czar William Randolph Hearst, came to a position of power in Lead through the investments of her husband. George Hearst had already made a fortune in gold and silver mining in California and Nevada before he bought the Homestake claim in 1877 with partners Lloyd Tevis and James Ben Ali Haggin for seventy-seven thousand dollars. Fourteen years later, George Hearst died, leaving an estate of about eighteen to twenty million dollars to Phoebe. (Not a penny went to Will, who depended on his mother's largesse for more than a quarter century to build his newspaper empire.) Included in Phoebe's inheritance was a 36 percent share of stock in the Homestake, which turned out to be the largest gold mine in North America. During her lifetime, Phoebe Hearst real-

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ized about fourteen million dollars from her stock. She also enjoyed an annual income of a quarter-million to a million dollars each year from the company's general store, the Hearst Mercantile Company.<sup>1</sup>

The Homestake Mine was only one of many mining and real estate investments Hearst inherited. Doubters at the time questioned the ability of a woman to manage an enterprise of this scale, but Hearst refused to relinquish the decision-making power to male administrators. In fact, when she caught George's business manager, Irwin Stump, handling financial matters without consulting her, she fired him.<sup>2</sup> As Hearst oversaw the continual growth of her inheritance during the following quarter century, she became a one-woman independent philanthropic foundation. Between 1891 and her death in 1919, she gave away in excess of \$21 million, more money than George had left to her.<sup>3</sup> Among the projects Hearst supported in Lead were a free library, begun in 1894, and an opera house and recreation center that opened in 1914. Both of these institutions buttressed Hearst's goal of community cultural enrichment, and both enhanced the town's artistic climate through musical activities.

Although Hearst dispersed her philanthropy widely to individuals and communities, her overarching concern was for education, from kindergarten through university and beyond. Hearst herself attended school in rural Missouri for only nine years,<sup>4</sup> but she continued her self-education throughout her life and pursued a determined course to provide for others the opportunities she had lacked. She funded kin-

1. Susan L. Richards and Rex C. Myers, "An Iron Hand in a Velvet Glove: Thomas J. Grier's Management of the Homestake Mine, 1885-1914," *South Dakota History* 38 (Summer 2008): 102, 102n18, 103.

2. Judith Robinson, *The Hearsts: An American Dynasty* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1991), pp. 246-47.

3. A contemporary report said that Phoebe Hearst left an estate estimated at \$5 million to \$10 million, mainly to her son, William Randolph Hearst. A historian of the Homestake Mine later stated the size of the estate as \$11 million. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 18 Apr. 1919, p. 11; Joseph H. Cash, *Working the Homestake* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1973), pp. 73-74.

4. Hearst attended a one-room schoolhouse in rural Franklin County, Missouri, through the eighth grade and then had one additional year of schooling at the Steeleville Academy, operated by the Cumberland Presbyterian Church in the neighboring county. Robinson, *The Hearsts*, pp. 29-31.

dergartens in San Francisco, California, in the 1880s, in Washington, D.C., in the early 1890s, and in Lead beginning in 1900. Hearst acted with foresight, as kindergarten education was a new experiment in late nineteenth-century America, a forerunner, in some ways, of the much later Head Start program. She was also one of the original founders of the National Congress of Mothers, which became the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA). Furthermore, Hearst was active in the women's club movement, which fostered education outside and beyond the academy. She became the first president of San Francisco's Century Club, founded by female graduates of the University of California.<sup>5</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, Hearst was a major benefactor of the University of California, Berkeley (UC Berkeley), the only campus of the California state university system in existence during her lifetime. She endowed two buildings there, established the anthropology department and museum, funded improvements in the library, and much more. Her support for women students was particularly noteworthy. She constructed a building specifically for female students' use that offered cultural and recreational opportunities, and she established scholarships that continue to the present day. The recipients are fondly called "Phoebes."<sup>6</sup>

Music, in Hearst's view, was an essential component of education at all stages.<sup>7</sup> Although she was not a musician herself, she had developed

5. Several sources deal with Hearst's philanthropy, but none describes her musical projects in any detail. See, for example, *ibid.*, pp. 166–72, 312–23; Mildred Nichols Hamilton, "'Continually Doing Good': The Philanthropy of Phoebe Apperson Hearst, 1862–1919," in *California Women and Politics: From the Gold Rush to the Great Depression*, ed. Robert W. Cherney, Mary Ann Irwin, and Ann Marie Wilson (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2011), pp. 77–96, and Hamilton's master's thesis by the same title (San Francisco State University, 1995); Alexandra M. Nickliss, "Phoebe Apperson Hearst's 'Gospel of Wealth,' 1883–1901," *Pacific Historical Review* 71 (November 2002): 575–605, and Nickliss's Ph.D. dissertation, "Phoebe Apperson Hearst: The Most Powerful Woman in California" (University of California, Davis, 1994). See also Duane A. Smith, *Staking a Claim in History: The Evolution of Homestake Mining Company* (Walnut Creek, Calif.: Homestake Mining Co., 2001), pp. 74–75.

6. Robinson, *The Hearsts*, pp. 267–68, 290–311.

7. For an overview of Hearst's musical philanthropy, see Leta E. Miller, "Practical Idealism: The Musical Philanthropy of Phoebe Apperson Hearst," *Journal of the Society for American Music* 10 (Winter 2016): 383–421.



Phoebe Hearst posed for this portrait in 1914, the year the Homestake Opera House and Recreation Center opened in Lead.

some skills on the piano before she married George and left Missouri for San Francisco in 1862.<sup>8</sup> Indeed, an inventory of a house the Hearsts occupied from 1864 to 1866 lists a Parisian piano and twelve boxes of music.<sup>9</sup> If she did not perform on a professional level, Phoebe Hearst was nevertheless an avid listener. She attended her first opera during her early San Francisco years. In an 1865 letter, she recounts seeing full operatic productions at Maguire's Academy of Music six or eight times within a single month. Hearst patronized opera for the rest of her life, attending performances in the United States and Europe—at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, Covent Garden in London, and Wagner's Festspielhaus in Bayreuth, to name but a few of the renowned venues she visited repeatedly.<sup>10</sup>

Hearst, however, did not need to go to concert halls and opera houses to enjoy musical entertainment. She was wealthy enough to bring singers and instrumentalists to her. During her lifetime, she delighted in staging home musicales, sometimes with hundreds of guests in attendance. At the largest of these productions, she featured well-known performers; at less ostentatious ones, she presented young, aspiring musicians. These events not only helped quench her own thirst for music but also offered high-quality artistic experiences to those attending. Furthermore, the young musicians she hired gained both performance experience and much-needed financial support.<sup>11</sup>

8. Mr. and Mrs. Fremont Older, *The Life of George Hearst: California Pioneer* (San Francisco: John Henry Nash, 1933), p. 113. Despite the joint attribution, Cora Older largely authored this work.

9. "Inventory of the Furniture & Effects now in the Residence S.W. Corner of Chestnut and Leavenworth Sts," Folder 5, Box 77 (Microfilm Reel 121, Frame 61), Phoebe Apperson Hearst Papers (hereafter PAH Papers), Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley. A finding aid for the papers of George and Phoebe Hearst is available at [www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4j49qoz8/](http://www.oac.cdlib.org/findaid/ark:/13030/kt4j49qoz8/), and the Bancroft Library kindly loans microfilms of this material.

10. Hearst to Eliza Pike, 2 July 1865, Folder 4, Box 22, *ibid.* (*see* URL above; also quoted in part in Robinson, *The Hearsts*, pp. 78–79). For more about Phoebe Hearst's love for opera, *see* Miller, "Practical Idealism," pp. 383–421.

11. Hearst was generous in her remuneration to performers. For example, she paid singer Augette Fôret two hundred dollars for a performance at her home on 2 June 1915 honoring two hundred graduates of the Lux School, a girls' vocational school in San Francisco. This sum would equal approximately \$4,900 today. Fôret to Hearst, 8 June 1915, Folder 12, Box 15 (Reel 20, Frame 388), PAH Papers; [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com).



Hearst also promoted cultural enrichment through a musicale series she sponsored at Hearst Hall, the women's building she constructed at UC Berkeley. These concerts ran from 1900 to 1903 and featured appearances by both prominent local professional musicians and internationally recognized artists. Hearst, who greeted the students personally at the performances, invited the entire undergraduate population in groups of about a thousand. The musicians performed on the lower floor of her new building, which could seat nine hundred. Upstairs, Hearst Hall housed a physical education center, as women were not permitted to use the men's gymnasium. This mixture of music and sport was also a guiding concept for the 1914 building Hearst would later fund in Lead. The Homestake Opera House building contained



Hearst Hall at the University of California, Berkeley, featured a social area where Hearst hosted musicales to which she invited the entire student body. Fire destroyed the building in 1922.

both an auditorium and recreational facilities, including a huge swimming pool.<sup>12</sup>

In addition to providing musical events for community enhancement, Hearst underwrote individual European music study for men and women who could potentially make their mark on the musical scene in the United States; she contributed to projects to build performance spaces; and, at the end of her life, she tried to establish an opera school associated with the University of California.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Hearst's patronage of the arts and education in Lead stands as only a small part of a much larger, overriding philanthropic program to enhance the cultural life of communities large and small with which she was associated.

At about same time the musicales were taking place in Berkeley, Hearst began implementing her community cultural enrichment philosophy in South Dakota. She first visited Lead in August 1894, three years after her husband's death. On the previous Christmas Eve, a large three-story building, the Miners' Union Hall and Opera House, had opened. ("Opera house" in this period was the common term for a theater.)<sup>14</sup>

The Miners' Union auditorium was up to date and exceptionally large for the size of the town. According to an 1897 advertisement, the stage measured twenty-five by fifty feet, and the hall seated one thousand, or about one-sixth of the entire population of a community that three years later had 6,210 inhabitants.<sup>15</sup> The space was equipped with two dressing rooms, steam heat, and electricity. In an article printed a few days before Hearst's visit, the local newspaper bragged that Lead had "the finest Opera House building in the state."<sup>16</sup> In the 1890s, this

12. For detailed information on the building, as well as many photographs, see Donald D. Toms and William J. Stone, *The Homestake Opera House and Recreation Building: "The Jewel of the Black Hills,"* 2d ed. (Lead, S.Dak.: Lead City Fine Arts Association, 2002).

13. These activities are all recounted in Miller, "Practical Idealism."

14. *Lead Evening Call*, 17 Aug. 1894; Richards and Myers, "Iron Hand," p. 104; Donald Toms, William J. Stone, and Gretchen Motchenbacher, eds., *The Gold Belt Cities: Lead and Homestake: A Photographic History* (Lead, S.Dak.: G.O.L.D. Unlimited, 1988), pp. 15, 64–65.

15. Toms, Stone, and Motchenbacher, *Gold Belt Cities*, p. 65; Cash, *Working the Homestake*, p. 62.

16. *Lead Evening Call*, 16 Aug. 1894.

impressive hall hosted traveling theater and light operetta troupes, concerts of popular music, local musical and dramatic performances, and numerous balls.<sup>17</sup>

Hearst certainly saw this new building during her August 1894 visit and decided, in consultation with mine superintendent Thomas J. ("T. J.") Grier, to open a free library on its third floor. Plans moved quickly. Town officials dedicated the library on Christmas Day in a grand ceremony in the Miners' Union auditorium that attracted, according to a hyperbolic boast in the local newspaper, "the largest audience which ever gathered under one roof in the northwest." Hearst not only donated books and periodicals, but also furniture, art works for the walls, and a brand new Steinway grand piano, which she arranged to have shipped from the East Coast. The Steinway did not arrive until February, but the building already contained some type of piano, for the dedication ceremony featured a piano duet, vocal works, a violin and piano piece, and a mandolin orchestra performance.<sup>18</sup>

Mayor Llewien P. Jenkins not only extolled the library's educational value but also emphasized its potential for fostering social equality. Rich and poor, he noted, would "meet at the same threshold on the same level."<sup>19</sup> Indeed, "raising up the poor" through education and exposure to "high" culture was the goal of many wealthy patrons of the period. Much of Hearst's educational philanthropy, like that of many of her contemporaries, served such overt goals of social engineering. Although the library also promoted efforts to "Americanize" workers—part of a strategy to turn immigrants into citizens—Hearst

17. The hall's early years as reported in Black Hills newspapers included such offerings as the Franz Adleman Concert Company (violin, soprano, baritone, piano) (*Lead Evening Call*, 18 Aug. 1894); the Dakota Comedy Company presenting the three-act *Caste* (*Lead Evening Call*, 27 Dec. 1894); the Chicago Lady Quartette (*Lead Evening Call*, 22 Apr. 1896); the Seguidilla Mandolin Club (*Black Hills Daily Times*, 8 June 1896); Mahara's Minstrels (*Lead Evening Call*, 18 Sept. 1896); the Payton Comedy Company, a weeklong residency (*Lead Evening Call*, 9 Oct. 1896); the 1897 closing exercises by the pupils of St. Edward's Academy (*Deadwood Weekly Pioneer-Times*, 1 July 1897); and six balls between December 1894 and April 1895 (*Lead Evening Call*, 27 Dec. 1894, 26 Jan., 4, 6 Feb., 16, 24 Apr. 1895). The hall also hosted a local production of Gilbert and Sullivan's *Mikado* in March 1899. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, p. 68.

18. *Lead Evening Call*, 26 Dec. 1894.

19. *Ibid.*





After its opening on Christmas Eve in 1893, the Miners' Union Hall and Opera House became a center of cultural activity in Lead.

also specifically addressed the needs of miners, two-thirds of whom did not speak English. The Hearst Free Library's eighty-one magazine and newspaper subscriptions in 1897 included publications in Italian, Slavonian, Finnish, German, Swedish, Spanish, Lithuanian, Norwegian, and French. The library holdings also included classics in those languages and translations of American works.<sup>20</sup>

20. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, pp. 33, 71, 105. Cash suggests that Hearst was both showing regard for the foreign-born as well as providing them the means to mingle with the rest of the community through the library. The push for Americanization became more pronounced in 1919 in the aftermath of World War I, when the Homestake encouraged employees to speak and write English.

In Hearst's view, a liberal education embraced not only reading but also listening. Newspapers in San Francisco, Chicago, and elsewhere reported that she had established "one of the finest and best appointed libraries and reading rooms in the whole Northwest"<sup>21</sup> and that "once a fortnight a free musical recital will be given in the main reading-room, Mrs. Hearst having employed a librarian with musical talents and sent with the furniture a magnificent piano."<sup>22</sup> This librarian was Mary Jane Palethorpe Ferrie (1865–1946), who immediately started the musicale series. The first performance took place on 8 January 1895, even before the new piano arrived.<sup>23</sup>

Hearst had likely met Ferrie during her August 1894 trip. Furnishing any library—even one in a large metropolitan area—with a new grand piano built by the preeminent firm in the world is unusual in itself. Hearst must have known that if she did so, there would be a person in place who could use the instrument artistically and prudently. Ferrie was ideal for the task. She had recently come to Lead with her husband, mining engineer James William Ferrie. The couple had emigrated from Scotland, where Mary had received certificates in voice and piano from the Royal Academy of Arts in Edinburgh. It is even possible that Ferrie suggested the musicale series to Hearst. It is worth noting that publicity for the other free library Hearst established—in Anaconda, Montana—makes no mention of a similar musical gift.<sup>24</sup>

The piano that arrived in Lead on 11 February 1895 was a "handsome new Steinway parlor grand."<sup>25</sup> Photographs show that the instrument was a substantial six-foot piano, which would have sold for approximately one thousand to twelve hundred dollars in the late 1800s. This

21. *San Francisco Examiner*, 26 Dec. 1894, p. 3. See also *Chicago Tribune*, 26 Dec. 1894, p. 1.

22. *San Francisco Chronicle*, 26 Dec. 1894, p. 3.

23. *Lead Evening Call*, 5, 7, 9 Jan. 1895. A 1912 article in the Lead High School *Nugget* gives a history of the library and its staff. Folder 8, Box 40 (Reel 63, Frame 195), PAH Papers. See also "The Homestake Library: Company-Sponsored Facility Serves Entire Community," *Sharp Bits* 12 (May 1961): 2–19. For biographical information on Mary Jane (Ferrie) Grier, see William Milton Grier, *The Griers: Pioneers in America and Canada, 1816–1991* (Denver, Colo.: Grier and Co., 1991), p. 62.

24. Grier, *The Griers*, p. 62.

25. *Lead Evening Call*, 11 Feb. 1895.

extraordinary gift encouraged Ferrie to continue the semimonthly library performances, which functioned a bit like Hearst's musicales at UC Berkeley but on a much smaller scale and without major international performing artists.

Ferrie organized musical recitals both at the library and elsewhere. The *Lead Evening Call* listed the programs but did not include names of the composers or details about the pieces. The musicale for 10 April 1895 was typical, featuring a potpourri of piano duets, solo songs, vocal duets, and a guitar piece. Ferrie taught piano and voice lessons in town; it is likely that some of these artists were her students. On other occasions, performers included violinists, the Terraville Glee Club, a band, and even a small orchestra—probably a dance band. In total, the



The Steinway grand piano Hearst donated for the library concerts appears on the stage at rear left in this view of the Hearst Free Library and Reading Room in its second location on the ground floor of the Miners' Union building.

*Evening Call* advertised eight performances between 8 January and 5 June 1895, as well as a musicale in nearby Deadwood on 29 March with participants from Lead.<sup>26</sup> Ferrie would also give impromptu performances for library patrons. The newspaper noted, for instance, that on 26 January, she treated those at the library “to some excellent music, both vocal and instrumental. . . . She has received the latest popular songs and music and gave those present a rare treat.”<sup>27</sup>

Lead’s residents seem to have eagerly embraced these efforts at “raising them up” culturally. The *Evening Call* reported that the performances were packed and that audiences heartily applauded the musicians. Hearst’s gift might even have stimulated the formation of a local boys’ “juvenile band” in January 1895. The so-called Blondin Band made its first public appearance at a library musicale on 13 March and “rendered two selections which would do credit to musicians of much more experience.” The group included boys averaging fourteen years of age and was still going strong in May.<sup>28</sup>

The library musicales were so popular that, for the later ones, Ferrie had to give priority to those who had been turned away previously due to the small size of the room. One hundred people filled the seats at each concert. On 6 June, the *Evening Call* reported that the library and reading rooms “were crowded to the doors last evening long before the time was announced for the musical[e] to commence. . . . Mrs. Ferrie closed the program with the song ‘Au Revoir,’ and was given an ovation. She . . . repeated the last verse.”<sup>29</sup>

With “Au Revoir,” Ferrie also said goodbye to the musicale series. Soon after the June program, she departed for Scotland, where she had left her two children with her parents when she and James Ferrie came to the United States. Ferrie returned to Lead in November 1895 but apparently did not resume the musicales before her term as librarian ended in June 1896.<sup>30</sup>

26. The eight musicales took place on 8, 29 Jan., 12 Feb., 13 Mar., 10, 24 Apr., 8 May, and 5 June 1895.

27. *Lead Evening Call*, 26 Jan. 1895.

28. *Ibid.*, 14 Mar. 1895. *See also* *ibid.*, 28 May 1895.

29. *Ibid.*, 6 June 1895.

30. *Black Hills Daily Times*, 2 Nov. 1895.



Mary Palethorpe Ferrie, a contralto and pianist, was also Lead's first librarian. She later married Homestake Mine superintendent Thomas Grier.

Upon her return, Ferrie set to work overseeing the library's move to new, more spacious quarters on the ground floor of the Miners' Union Hall and Opera House, where the piano was placed on a small stage. The new library room opened in June 1896, the same month in which Ferrie ended her term. The incoming librarian, Mrs. Percy Ford, staged a few concerts in early 1897, including a piano recital by Landon Charlton, a visitor from Saint Paul, Minnesota, and some "informal" perfor-



mances, such as one that followed a meeting of the Black Hills Union of Women's Clubs.<sup>31</sup>

The Hearst Free Library stayed in its new quarters for only one year. On 30 June 1897, it moved again, this time into spacious rooms on the second floor of the Hearst Mercantile Building.<sup>32</sup> Ford began presenting some musicales in the fall—about one per month through January 1898.<sup>33</sup>

In that same month, a talented and energetic baritone named John M. Tegarty moved into the community. He had spent some time in the Black Hills in 1895 before moving to Cleveland, Ohio, where he was directing a choir and singing at a synagogue.<sup>34</sup> Tegarty returned two years later for a short visit filled with his singing. Between 2 and 12 May 1897, he performed on no fewer than six occasions, ranging from services at the Episcopal church to a private musicale to a concert under the auspices of the Olympic Club to a performance in the huge Miners' Union Opera House.<sup>35</sup> At each event, Tegarty performed a few numbers, sharing the stage with local talent. After this whirlwind ten-day trip, he returned to Cleveland, only to come back to the Black Hills eight months later. "John M. Tegarty surprised his many friends by alighting from the Elkhorn train yesterday forenoon," reported the *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times* on 11 January 1898. "He will remain two weeks . . . [and] wishes to say that so far as he knows there is nothing in the report that he has come here to succeed Mrs. Ford as librarian of the Hearst free library at Lead."<sup>36</sup>

31. *Lead Evening Call*, 18 June 1896; *Black Hills Daily Times*, 20 June 1896; *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, 2 Feb., 11 Apr. 1897.

32. *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, 1, 6 July 1897. See also "The Homestake Library," p. 2. Several sources imply that the library moved directly from the third floor of the Miners' Union building to the Hearst Mercantile location, but numerous newspaper reports describe an intermediary location on the ground floor of the original building.

33. *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, 25 Sept., 9 Oct., 13 Nov. 1897, 8, 22 Jan. 1898.

34. *Ibid.*, 17 Apr. 1897.

35. Numerous articles in the *Black Hills Daily Times* and *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times* document these performances: 2 May at the Episcopal church service; 4 May at a private musicale at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Liebmann; 6 May at a concert sponsored by the Episcopal church; 9 May at a concert of the Olympic Club; 11 May following a meeting of the Homestake Hose fire brigade; 12 May, performance at the opera house.

36. *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, 11 Jan. 1898.

Despite this disavowal, Tegarty became the new librarian on 3 February, and the musicales, though fewer in number, assumed a far more professional cast. Programs published in the newspapers now listed not only performers but also titles and composers, and the choice of repertoire showed a sophistication not evident in earlier years. Tegarty sang in all of the events, performing along with other artists both local and visiting, including former librarian Mary Ferrie, who accompanied him on one concert, and Tegarty's wife, Bernice, who played piano solo works on another.<sup>37</sup> He also began presenting choral works and vocal quartets selected from operas. One musicale included a demonstration of a player piano. Tegarty's performances were memorable enough to merit comment in Annie D. Tallent's 1899 book about the Black Hills. The concerts were "conducted under the direction of the librarian," she wrote, for the "entertainment of the employees, to whom tickets, limited in number to the capacity of the room, are alternately issued."<sup>38</sup> Indeed, judging from notices in the newspapers, Tegarty tried charging admission for the musicales but soon abandoned that idea.

The capacity of the space in the Hearst Mercantile Building was large, and Tegarty climaxed his time as librarian by staging a grandiose performance on 2 October 1900 that featured a hundred choristers. Newspaper reports estimated the audience to be far in excess of the 550 chairs set up for the event.<sup>39</sup> Tegarty had assembled the chorus from local residents and held seven rehearsals during the previous month. The mixed chorus performed selections from Haydn's *Creation* and Rossini's *Stabat Mater* accompanied by a fifteen-piece orchestra. A local band also played; vocal soloists were featured; and a male choir sang. The newspapers reported that "nothing of this kind has ever been heard in the Black Hills."<sup>40</sup> This performance marked not only the high point but also the end of Tegarty's time as librarian. In early December

37. Ibid., 15 Dec. 1898, 10, 11 May 1899.

38. Tallent, *The Black Hills: Or, The Last Hunting Ground of the Dakotabs* (Saint Louis, Mo.: Nixon-Jones Printing Co., 1899), p. 525.

39. Numerous articles in the local newspapers announced this musicale, along with the seven preparatory rehearsals. For reviews, see *Daily Deadwood Pioneer-Times*, 3, 4 Oct. 1900.

40. *Lead Daily Call*, 15 Aug. 1900.

he left for Cleveland and then New York City, and with his departure, the library's musicale series seems to have ended.<sup>41</sup>

During these years, the life of former librarian Mary Ferrie changed dramatically. She and William Ferrie had divorced shortly after they came to Lead—William was reportedly an alcoholic—and on 8 August 1896, two months after her resignation as librarian, she married Homestake Mine superintendent Thomas Grier. Phoebe Hearst was in Lead for the celebration. Over the next seven years, Mary Grier would bear four children.<sup>42</sup> She remained active in Lead's cultural and educational life and, in subsequent years, maintained a fairly regular correspondence with Hearst.<sup>43</sup>

In one letter written in 1911, Mary Grier described the Ladies Auxiliary of the Homestake Aid Association, which boasted a membership of two hundred and met every other Saturday. The group's programs resembled those of many women's clubs throughout the country. After a discussion of business, members would hear "a talk on a subject instructive and entertaining" and then enjoy "one or two musical numbers."<sup>44</sup> The auxiliary met in the rooms of the kindergarten, located in the basement of the Episcopal church. The Woman's Club had established the kindergarten in 1900, but by September of that year, Hearst had assumed full financial responsibility for it. She visited Lead for the formal dedication of the Hearst Free Kindergarten on 27 May 1901.<sup>45</sup>

In the period after Tegarty left, the kindergarten rooms hosted occasional musicales similar to the earlier library performances. Indeed, ac-

41. *Deadwood Weekly Pioneer-Times*, 6 Dec. 1900.

42. Grier, *The Griers*, pp. 50, 62, 66–67; George W. Kingsbury, *History of Dakota Territory*, and George Martin Smith, *South Dakota: Its History and Its People*, 5 vols. (Chicago: S. J. Clarke Publishing Co., 1915), 4:19. The Grier children were born in 1897 (Thomas, Jr.), 1899 (Evangeline), 1901 (Lisgar), and 1903 (Ormonde). Mary also had two children with William Ferrie before they left Scotland. These two children and Mary's parents came to Lead in 1908.

43. Mary Grier's informative and, at times, lengthy letters to Hearst dating from 1903 to 1919 are in Folders 6–7, Box 37, PAH Papers.

44. Grier to Hearst, 6 Apr. 1911, Folder 6, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 336–39), *ibid.*

45. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, p. 72; Mildred Fielder, *The Treasure of Homestake Gold* (Aberdeen, S.Dak.: North Plains Press, 1970), pp. 164–65. *See also* Richards and Myers, "Iron Hand," p. 110, and Steven T. Mitchell, *Nuggets to Neutrinos: The Homestake Story* (n.p.: By the Author, 2009), p. 316.



Lead was one of the communities in which Phoebe Hearst sponsored a kindergarten, as this postcard attests.

cording to Ed McLaughlin, former superintendent of the city schools, the Steinway piano had been moved there early in the century.<sup>46</sup> Interestingly, a small notice in the Lead newspaper in October 1900, prior to Tegarty's departure, states that Thomas Grier had purchased "a fine Wegman piano" for the kindergarten.<sup>47</sup> These two pieces of information may not be contradictory. It is possible that the Wegman piano was an upright.

The Ladies Auxiliary had another purpose beyond adult education and musical entertainment: to help needy miners. Established in 1909, the group assisted the Homestake Aid Association "in taking care of the families of employees, who by reason of sickness or other misfor-

46. McLaughlin made his comment during a question-and-answer session after the author spoke about Phoebe Hearst at an event in Lead on 4 June 2016. The Homestake Mining Company later had the church dismantled brick by brick and reassembled at another site to make room for the new Hearst Mercantile Building. Steven R. Kinsella, "Company Store: The Hearst Mercantile, 1879–1942," *South Dakota History* 20 (Summer 1990): 107.

47. *Lead Daily Pioneer-Times*, 25 Oct. 1900.

tune are unable to care for themselves.”<sup>48</sup> As one example of their charitable work, Mary Grier described to Hearst a benefit concert that she probably organized through which the group raised \$200.50 for a destitute family (a sum equal to about \$5,000 today). The husband, with a broken back, was near death; the wife was caring for five children.<sup>49</sup>

Hearst’s relationship with Mary and Thomas Grier was not only professional but also personal. She hosted the family on several occasions for extended periods at her fifty-room mansion in Pleasanton, California, about thirty-five miles southeast of Berkeley. In January and February of 1905, the Griers traveled to Washington, D.C., so that Thomas could attend a meeting of the National Forestry Association, after which they went to New York City. Hearst sent them to the Metropolitan Opera, perhaps more than once, in the company of her business manager, Edward Clark, and his wife. “Mr. and Mrs. Clark gave us Grand Opera to our heart’s content,” wrote Thomas Grier, “and made our few days’ visit there one of great happiness.”<sup>50</sup> Mary added, in a letter eleven days later, that Clark “went to a great deal of trouble, and had such difficulty in getting good seats for the opera, that I can scarcely find words to express fully our appreciation of his kindness. It being my first opportunity to witness Grand Operatic performances our appreciation can better be imagined than described.”<sup>51</sup>

During this period, Hearst continued her generosity to the town. For example, each year she gave two hundred dollars to every church in Lead, regardless of denomination.<sup>52</sup> Notably, Hearst continued these donations during the years 1904–1907 when she substantially reduced her contributions to the University of California and other organiza-

48. Bruce C. Yates, “Welfare Work at the Homestake Mine,” *Engineering and Mining Journal* 110 (July 1920): 202. Yates was superintendent and then general manager of the mine from 1918 to 1936.

49. Mary Grier to Hearst, 6 Apr. 1911; [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com).

50. Thomas Grier to Hearst, 5 Feb. 1905, Folder 3, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 224), PAH Papers.

51. Mary Grier to Hearst, 16 Feb. 1905, Folder 6, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 307–11), *ibid*.

52. Many newspaper articles mention these annual gifts. *See*, for example, *Turner County Herald*, 18 Oct. 1900, 2 Nov. 1905, 11 Oct. 1906, and *Hot Springs Weekly Star*, 14 June 1901. For a summary of Hearst’s generous patronage of Lead, *see* Smith, *Staking a Claim in History*, pp. 73–75.



tions in the San Francisco area such as the Berkeley Settlement House she had established in 1900.<sup>53</sup> Nor did individuals in Lead escape her attention. Every year Hearst personally selected Christmas gifts to send to the kindergarten teachers and the librarian.<sup>54</sup>

Relations between the Homestake Mining Company and its workers had generally been excellent since the mine's founding and continued to be cordial through the early years of the twentieth century. Indeed, Superintendent Grier had cultivated a strong, though admittedly paternalistic, bond with his workforce through his progressive labor policies in areas such as worker housing, health care, and investments in the local school district. That relationship, however, turned sour in the fall of 1909.<sup>55</sup>

The Lead City Miners' Union, organized in 1877, had assumed a strong role in the formation of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM) in 1893. The national organization began to lobby for full enrollment of all Homestake workers, in effect seeking a closed shop, and in 1909 sent organizers to the town to realize that goal. Union members passed a resolution stating that they would not work with nonunion labor after 25 November, and they asked Grier for a list of employees. He refused to provide it. Although not opposed to the union per se, Grier felt strongly that individuals should have the right to choose whether or not to join. The company then went on the offensive, filing a suit against the union (later withdrawn) that asserted interference with mine operations. The Homestake announced that after 1 January 1910, it would employ only nonunion labor. On 23 November 1909, union members voted to strike. The following day, before the miners could act, the company stopped operating and locked out the would-be strikers.<sup>56</sup>

The mine closed for the rest of 1909. In January of 1910, however, a large group of workers formed a "Loyal Legion" and requested re-

53. Miller, "Practical Idealism," pp. 408–9.

54. These gifts are mentioned in various letters in the PAH Papers. See, for example, Thomas Grier to Clark, 30 Dec. 1905, and Mary Grier to Hearst, 17 Jan. 1903, Folders 4, 6, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 254, 303–6), PAH Papers.

55. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, pp. 40–41, 68–79.

56. Ibid., pp. 39–40, 81–84; Fielder, *Treasure of Homestake Gold*, p. 200; Richards and Myers, "Iron Hand," p. 116.



Hearst worked closely with Homestake Mine superintendent Thomas Grier on philanthropic projects for the citizens of Lead.

employment. By March, the Homestake Mine was back in full production using these workers as well as scabs brought in from other mining towns. The new employees signed pledge cards stating that they were not union members and would not join the WFM. Although the union tried to hold on to its former members, it was effectively dead in the Black Hills.<sup>57</sup>

The town and the company ultimately recovered from this tense battle. Rather than becoming more authoritarian, Homestake management “increased its welfare activities and assumed responsibilities toward the worker that it had not previously held.”<sup>58</sup> By 1911, however, the Miners’ Union Hall and Opera House looked “quite desolate.”<sup>59</sup> It was ultimately closed, subjected to litigation, and taken over by a bank.<sup>60</sup>

Meanwhile, a dialogue was under way among Thomas Grier, Hearst, and Clark about erecting a new building to serve as a community center for cultural, educational, and recreational activities. In the summer of 1911, Thomas and Mary Grier visited Hearst at her Pleasanton estate. A few months later, on 13 November, the mining company, with the authority of Hearst, officially announced plans for the Homestake Opera House building, promising it as a gift to the town.<sup>61</sup>

Actually, a request for a community center providing cultural and recreational facilities had been sent to Grier and Hearst six years earlier. In 1905, eight members of Lead’s Board of Education had proposed to Hearst that she erect a new building. Citing exceedingly crowded conditions at the school, they sent her a petition advocating “the erection of a building . . . which would accommodate the library, the kindergarten and the high school, besides providing amply for a capacious

57. The best discussion of the lockout is in Cash, *Working the Homestake*, pp. 80–99. See Richards and Myers, “Iron Hand,” pp. 116–19, for a summary of the Homestake’s actions in bringing the mine back into operation.

58. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, p. 99. Among the new privileges for workers was free medical care. See *ibid.*, pp. 100–102, and Fielder, *Treasure of Homestake Gold*, pp. 206–7.

59. *Lead Daily Call*, 12 Dec. 1911.

60. Cash, *Working the Homestake*, pp. 97, 101.

61. Letters from Mary Grier to Hearst, June–October 1911, Folder 6, Box 37 (Reel 37, Frames 340–48), PAH Papers; Toms, *Gold Belt Cities*, p. 226.

auditorium, gymnasium, recreation and club rooms for the Mothers Union, women's and men's clubs, and first class equipment for manual training and domestic arts." The petitioners' intent was to make the proposed building "the social, moral and intellectual center of the community." It would include an auditorium to seat at least fifteen hundred. In short, the proposal sounded similar to the opera house and recreation center that opened nine years later. The show-stopper for Hearst, however, seems to have been the plan to consolidate the library and kindergarten with the public school.<sup>62</sup>

Grier privately quashed this proposal. In a letter to Clark on 28 February 1905, he wrote that "if a transfer of the Kindergarten and Library were made to the School District, I think one or two ambitious members of the Board of Education would make such transfer the excuse for an attempt to go ahead with very costly improvements. They fail to appreciate that this is a mining camp and should not be a university town which they seem to be aping."<sup>63</sup> In a follow-up on 8 March 1905, Grier estimated that the proposed improvements would cost "three or four hundred thousand dollars . . . [and] in my judgment are not necessary for a mining camp like this."<sup>64</sup>

As it turned out, Hearst was in Egypt at the time, participating in an archaeological dig. Clark told Grier that the final decision would be hers alone, and that she would respond directly upon her return.<sup>65</sup> The proposal apparently went no further.

The tense situation between the mining company and the union following the labor troubles of 1909–1910, however, may have made the concept of a community center more attractive to a management team attempting to restore good relations with the workforce.<sup>66</sup> In October 1911, apparently in a follow-up to the Griers' summer trip to California, Clark and Grier exchanged letters regarding how a new cultural and recreation center might become a reality. Hearst suggested that the

62. Petition, 24 Feb. 1905, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 249–51), PAH Papers.

63. Grier to Clark, 28 Feb. 1905, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 248–49), *ibid.*

64. Grier to Clark, 8 Mar. 1905, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 250), *ibid.*

65. Clark to Grier, 4 Mar. 1905, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 253), *ibid.*

66. Donald Toms believes that the 1914 building was a kind of "peace offering" on the part of the company (e-mail to author, 30 May 2016).

building might be associated with the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA),<sup>67</sup> but Grier rejected the idea. Although he noted that he had no prejudice against the YMCA, Grier believed that "many people who object to identifying themselves clearly with 'Christian workers' . . . and accordingly hold themselves aloof from them, would accept the benefits to be derived from participation in the workings of such an enterprise if it were given another name, for instance: "RECREATION ROOMS FOR OPERATIVES OF HOMESTAKE MINING COMPANY."<sup>68</sup>

Clark and Hearst readily agreed and authorized the hiring of an architect or builder for an estimate. They anticipated a total cost of \$50,000 to \$75,000. Ultimately, the building cost \$250,000 (equivalent to about \$6.1 million today).<sup>69</sup> Mary Grier's role in the plans does not appear in this exchange of letters, but one can imagine that she would have strongly encouraged her husband to provide musical, theatrical, and recreational facilities for the town. Construction began in 1912. Completed after two years of work, the Homestake Opera House and Recreation Center featured an auditorium that could seat an audience of 1,016: 566 on the main floor, 350 in the balcony, and 100 in eight boxes.<sup>70</sup>

An overflow crowd turned out for the gala opening on 31 August 1914 to watch a performance of scenes from Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, Balfe's *Bohemian Girl*, and Flotow's *Martha*, sung in English by the Sheehan English Opera Company, one of many touring troupes in this era. As the flyer for the event shows, Joseph F. Sheehan brazenly advertised his company as "America's Foremost Singing Organization" and himself as "America's Greatest Tenor." He and the company were, in reality, much less than advertised, but Sheehan nevertheless had developed some reputation. Born in Boston, Sheehan became, for nine years, a leading singer with the Henry Savage Grand Opera Company, probably the

67. Clark to Grier, 23 Oct. 1911, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 268), PAH Papers. Clark here acted as Hearst's spokesman, a role he frequently assumed.

68. Grier to Clark, 4 Nov. 1911, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 269), *ibid.*

69. Clark to Grier, 8 Nov. 1911, Folder 4, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frame 270), *ibid.*; [www.measuringworth.com](http://www.measuringworth.com).

70. Toms and Stone, *Homestake Opera House and Recreation Building*, pp. 2, 14.



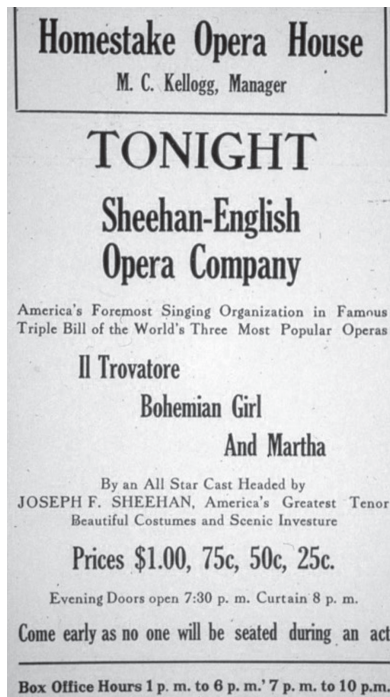


The Homestake Opera House, photographed here from the balcony, had seating for an audience of 1,016.

best-known English-language touring troupe in the United States. In 1906, he appeared with this company in the American premiere of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* in Washington, D.C., singing the crucial role of Lieutenant Pinkerton. Sheehan founded his own company the following year. Although rather short-lived, the troupe did perform in other small towns across the country in addition to Lead.<sup>71</sup>

Lead's new building also housed the Hearst Library, now in its fourth location. The library occupied rooms on the second floor, where it remained until a fire in 1984 gutted the auditorium, though it spared the library's valuable collection of leather-bound books. After a brief

71. Ibid., pp. 9–16; *Who's Who on the Stage; The Dramatic Reference Book and Biographic Dictionary of the Theatre*, ed. Walter Browne and E. De Roy Koch (New York: B. W. Dodge & Co., 1908), p. 396; *Ithaca Daily News*, 11 Feb. 1913.



This poster advertised the 31 August 1914 opening-night performance at the Homestake Opera House featuring the Sheehan English Opera Company.

move to temporary quarters, the library opened in its present location next door to the opera house. Among the holdings—described in a 1961 pamphlet and still in the library collection today—are opera and oratorio scores, books about music, and anthologies of songs and instrumental pieces, reflecting Hearst’s musical interests. The Hearst Free Library had grown prodigiously, increasing its book collection from an original two thousand volumes to twenty-eight thousand by 1960.<sup>72</sup>

A month after the opening of the Homestake Opera House, Thomas Grier died. He had lived to see the building completed and dedicated with great success. He had, however, suffered from heart trouble for several years.<sup>73</sup> Immediately after the opening, the family left for Los Angeles, where Grier had started building a second home in 1913. He

72. “The Homestake Library,” *Sharp Bits*, p. 4.

73. Grier had a heart attack in 1912 while in Chicago. Grier, *The Griers*, p. 53. His subsequent ill health is documented in many of Mary Grier’s letters to Hearst from 1912 through 1914.

died on 22 September 1914 after suffering his second heart attack. Lead honored him two years later with a statue that stood for many years at the entrance to the opera house. It was later moved farther up Main Street, where it stands today.<sup>74</sup>

After Thomas Grier's death, Mary Grier moved to California. She continued to correspond with Hearst, and the Homestake Opera House continued to attract traveling companies. Among those that appeared during Hearst's lifetime was the Chicago English Opera Company, which staged full productions of five operas in four separate performances on 20–21 November 1916. The troupe was a new one; it had just incorporated in July and had begun its first season the month before it traveled to Lead.<sup>75</sup> After presenting a matinee and an evening performance of two operas at the Deadwood theater on 18 November,

74. Throngs of townspeople turned out in 1916 to see the statue of Grier dedicated. Toms and Stone, *Homestake Opera House and Recreation Building*, pp. 18–19; Richards and Myers, "Iron Hand," pp. 121–24.

75. "A New Opera in English Company to Tour Country," *Musical America* 24 (22 July 1916): 1.



This view of the Homestake Opera House, complete with the statue of Thomas Grier, was recorded in the 1920s.

the company opened its two-day stint at the Homestake Opera House. The troupe began with a matinee featuring Verdi's *Il Trovatore*, followed on the same evening by Wagner's *Lobengrin*. On the following day, a matinee contained two short operas, Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the one-act *Cleopatra*, by the company's director and conductor, Basil Horsfall. That evening the company ended its short residency with an all-time favorite of the era, and still a sure-fire hit today, Bizet's *Carmen*.<sup>76</sup>

It may be difficult for today's readers to imagine that a traveling troupe could present five operas in two days, much less make a financial success of them in a small mining town. In fact, opera in English was the rage at the time. Musicologist Katherine Preston reports that close to one hundred English-language touring opera troupes were active during the last forty years of the nineteenth century.<sup>77</sup> Easily understood in translation, these operas functioned as musical theater, constituting a vital part of the popular stage. The repertory was often a hodgepodge of what would now be considered different styles and genres: burlesque, minstrelsy, drama, and grand opera. The troupes generally performed in regular theaters that attracted working-class audiences, in contrast to foreign-language productions, which catered to the upper economic class at specialized venues. What made these tours financially viable was the railroad. The troupes took advantage of low-cost transportation to cart everything with them. Indeed, the Chicago troupe came to Lead in three railway cars carrying sixty people, including a complete orchestra and a full chorus, along with sets and costumes. Tickets to the performances ranged from \$.50 to \$1.50.<sup>78</sup> The *Lead Daily Call* emphasized that this visit offered the town its first exposure to full-length operas accompanied by orchestra, complete with staging and costumes. Of course, operas were not the only fare

76. Articles in the *Lead Daily Call* every day from 15 to 22 November describe the productions. The troupe also held auditions for singers seeking vocal scholarships. *Lead Daily Call*, 21 Nov. 1916. The audience's favorite singer, according the newspaper, was Florentine St. Clair. *Ibid.*, 22 Nov. 1916.

77. On traveling English-language opera troupes in the United States in the Gilded Age, see Preston, "Between the Cracks: The Performance of English-Language Opera in Late Nineteenth-Century America," *American Music* 21 (Fall 2003): 349-74.

78. Toms and Stone, *Homestake Opera House*, p. 22; *Lead Daily Call*, 21 Nov. 1916.



presented in the Homestake building's auditorium; the hall was used for everything from theater productions to boxing matches.

The Homestake Mine closed in 2002 and now houses the Sanford Underground Research Facility, a laboratory in which physicists study solar neutrinos. The Homestake Opera House and Recreation Center still stands today on its original site at 313 West Main Street and continues to enrich Lead's cultural climate. The venue currently offers more than seventy performances per year despite the devastating fire in 1984 that wrecked the interior.<sup>79</sup> A project to restore the stage area is currently under way, and Rapid City architectural firm TSP Inc. in 2013 estimated the cost of the restoration at \$8 million.<sup>80</sup>

The ongoing commitment to restore and operate the Homestake Opera House is a reminder of how much Lead's greatest benefactor contributed culturally to the mining town that generated so much of

79. For an account of the fire, see Toms and Stone, *Homestake Opera House*, p. 44; see also the detailed exhibit in the building, assembled by director Sarah Carlson.

80. *Rapid City Journal*, 10 Apr. 2017.



As the standing-room-only crowd in this undated photograph shows, the Homestake Opera House proved a popular venue for musical concerts and other events.



her wealth. Phoebe Apperson Hearst has been called a woman of contradictions, and indeed, an examination of her relationship with music might tend to support such a conclusion. She loved to be seen with other members of high society at glittering opera houses throughout the United States and Europe and to spend thousands of dollars on lavish house concerts. However, she also brought little-known musicians to her home to perform for audiences of fewer than two dozen guests,<sup>81</sup> took delight in presenting chamber music performances for university undergraduates, and gave a Steinway piano and an opera house to a small town in South Dakota.

Indeed, in the very year that Mary Ferrie was putting on musicales with local talent for audiences of a hundred, Hearst staged perhaps her most extravagant home events. In February 1895, just as the piano arrived in Lead, Hearst arranged for two productions at her Washington, D.C., mansion honoring Florence Bayard, daughter of the United States ambassador to Great Britain. George Hearst had been elected senator from California in 1887, and the couple had moved to the capital, where they bought, and thoroughly remodeled, a magnificent home. On 19 February 1895, about two hundred guests came to Hearst's home and heard two renowned singers who were on tour with the Metropolitan Opera company, Lillian Nordica and Pol Plançon.<sup>82</sup>

Hearst followed with an even more extraordinary musicale a week later, also honoring Bayard. On 26 February, she presented what she called a "rococo concert" evoking the 1770s. Guests and musicians appeared in eighteenth-century costumes. She hired Anton Seidl (conductor with the Metropolitan Opera and the New York Philharmonic), a twenty-piece orchestra, soprano Lillian Blauvelt, pianist and composer Henry Holden Huss, and others. According to the *Washington Post*, the piano had been built in Salzburg in 1760, and Franz Joseph Haydn was among those who had played it.<sup>83</sup>

Although these ostentatious events seem quite at odds with the

81. For an eyewitness report of one such event during the First World War, see Margaret Calder Hayes, "Weekend in the Country," *California Monthly* 91 (Oct. 1980): 24.

82. *Washington Post*, 20 Feb. 1895.

83. *Ibid.*, 27 Feb. 1895. The program for the rococo musicale is in Folder 22, Box 71 (Reel 114, Frames 133–34), PAH Papers.

unpretentious library concerts in Lead, it is likely that Hearst herself would have seen them as two sides of the same coin. As humanities scholar Kathleen McCarthy observed, wealthy women in the Gilded Age frequently saw the typical European grand tour as “a necessary badge of social acceptability.” Such travel was closely linked to their philanthropic work, as these women “did their best to reproduce the cultural bastions of the Old World on American soil.”<sup>84</sup> Hearst could share the art forms she loved with those less fortunate than herself, bringing both physical and nonphysical artifacts to audiences in the communities with which she was associated. She simply presented them to Washington society in one form and to the miners and their families in Lead in another.

It is also important to recognize that in the process, Hearst addressed her own needs, enjoying her grand affairs and the expressions of appreciation she received from those who benefited. She took special delight in guiding her cultural activities personally, whereas others might have formed a foundation and delegated responsibility to a board of directors or external consultants. Hearst, in contrast, maintained tight control of her philanthropy throughout her life. Although Edward Clark may have acted for her on many occasions, the final decisions were hers. From a business point of view, her arrangement with him was a brilliant move in a time of changing roles for women in the United States. Hiring Clark to manage her businesses and function at times as her mouthpiece kept her in charge but provided a shield for, and a rebuttal to, those who doubted a woman’s ability to handle “men’s” affairs.

Although Clark certainly advised Hearst on matters relating to the Homestake Mine, he always deferred to her on questions of where to dispense her philanthropy, as in the discussion of the derailed 1905 building proposal. Notably, Hearst made such decisions not only for large expenditures, such as funding the Homestake Opera House, but also for small requests from thousands of individuals. Near the end of her life, she told a reporter, “As long as I can see, I shall read my own

84. McCarthy, *Noblesse Oblige: Charity and Cultural Philanthropy in Chicago, 1849–1929* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), p. 32.

letters.”<sup>85</sup> Her claim seems to be borne out in the correspondence preserved after her death. Secretaries communicated her responses to the writers, but Hearst often noted on the letters the substance of what they should say, and even the smallest request merited a response. Many artists, for instance, invited Hearst to local concerts or asked for her patronage of performances or organizations. Typically, she would jot a note telling her secretary to “buy 5 tickets” or “send \$5.” Her personal attention to these small requests is extraordinary considering the huge outlays she made to major causes.

Similarly, Hearst took pleasure in personalizing gifts to individuals and to her libraries. She herself chose the books for the free libraries she established in Lead and Anaconda, Montana. Every year she sent Christmas presents to numerous individuals in the companies she owned throughout the country. One folder of letters in the Hearst archive at UC Berkeley, labeled simply “Lead, South Dakota, Philanthropy 1900–17,” contains dozens of thank-you letters from gift recipients ranging from children to the Episcopal minister and his wife.<sup>86</sup>

Considering Hearst’s enormous wealth, the absence of any supercilious, or even patronizing, attitude in her interactions with the citizens of Lead is notable. One reason, perhaps, is that, unlike many other female patrons of this period, Hearst was not born to riches. In her generosity to small-town America, she often recalled her own childhood in the rural Midwest—walking three and a half miles to a one-room schoolhouse, helping her mother with traditional female chores, and having to further her own education through self-improvement rather than by attending an elite private school. Although some might judge Hearst’s attempts to “Americanize” the workers of Lead<sup>87</sup> as patronizing, she herself was motivated more by an excitement over learning and culture than by any attempt to force her tastes on the town’s inhabitants.

This delight in education and in arts had been part of Phoebe Ap-

85. “A Business Woman: Lessons for Young Women from the Life of Mrs. Hearst,” undated article from the *New York Herald*, Folder 5, Box 83 (Reel 131, Frames 45–46), PAH Papers.

86. See Folder 10, Box 37 (Reel 57, Frames 428ff), PAH Papers.

87. Cash, *Working the Homestead*, pp. 73, 78, 105.

person Hearst's formation from her early years. When George Hearst, whose family's Missouri farm bordered on that of Phoebe's, returned home in 1860 from his first, phenomenally successful mining trip to California, he found a young woman who was "eager to learn. She used to hold a book in her left hand and churn with her right."<sup>88</sup> George's priorities were quite different. With even less formal education than Phoebe, he seemed not particularly interested in intellectual pursuits, focusing instead on his mining activities. Indeed, his letters to Phoebe border on illiterate. George never accompanied Phoebe on her European jaunts—despite her repeated requests for him to do so—but he generously funded her trips and unstintingly indulged her artistic interests.

Phoebe Hearst's humble background must have made her rise to riches seem like a fairy tale. For that reason, perhaps, she felt an obligation to share her unexpected affluence with others. A year before her death, she wrote to Mary Grier a simple statement of her philosophy: "Homestake's gold should give benefit to those who mined it, as well as those who owned it."<sup>89</sup> Hearst, it seems, felt comfortable in places like Lead. Its citizens were, in a real sense, her own people. She by no means denied herself life's luxuries but also gave back to rural America just a bit of her good fortune.

88. Older, *Life of George Hearst*, p. 113.

89. Quoted in Grier, *The Griers*, p. 67.