

LUCILE MINE DAILY REPORTS, 1908-1909

Finding aid

Collection number: GR-DIR-10

Extent: 0.4 cubic ft. (5 oversize folders)

**Alabama Department of Archives and History,
624 Washington Ave., Montgomery, AL 36130
www.archives.alabama.gov**

LUCILE MINE, 1908-1909 ADMINISTRATIVE HISTORY

Lucile Mine was a Red Feather Coal Company mine located in Bibb County near Blocton, Alabama. It was worked to a large extent by convicts leased to the company by the state of Alabama who were housed onsite at Lucile Prison. With the industrialization of the American South, big corporations in industries such as mining and lumber, along with large plantations, heavily relied on the cheap source of labor from the prison system. Prisoners were placed into three categories based on physical abilities and skills and were priced accordingly. A fourth class, often known as “DH” or “dead hand,” consisted of prisoners priced at a negligible amount or nothing due to a perceived lack of value as a laborer.

In the early morning hours of May 16, 1910, a fire occurred at Lucile Mine that destroyed the prison and took the lives of twenty-seven Black convicts. Of the twenty-seven killed, twenty-six people burned to death while one person was shot trying to escape. The fire was blamed on three convicts attempting to escape Lucile Prison. On October 8, 1913, another fire occurred at Lucile Prison. This fire destroyed all except the prison hospital, but there were no casualties.

The fires at Lucile Mine exemplify the dangerous and poor conditions convicts endured under the convict-lease system. Many of these prisoners were arrested for trivial reasons if for any real reason at all, and many had their sentences extended due to falsified bad conduct reports intended to maintain the companies’ cheap source of labor for longer. The largely Black population of the prison system began referring to convict leasing as a “new form of slavery.” The convict-lease system continued until Alabama became the last state in the nation to officially end the practice in 1928.

LUCILE MINE DAILY REPORTS, 1908-1909 SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of daily reports from Lucile Mine located near Blocton in Bibb County, Alabama. They were created from December 1908 to December 1909 and sent to the State of Alabama Mining Department. Lucile Mine was attached to Lucile Prison and owned by the Red Feather Coal Company. The reports indicate the number of convicts working each day, their classification, and the specific job assigned to them. The reports also include tabs for Task, Output, Shorts, Made Up, Extras, and Gain. The format and title of the forms change slightly over time, with some forms including additional fields such as “No. Cars Dumped,” “Output in Tons,” “Remarks,” “Men on Dead and Day Work for the Company,” and “Men Discharged and Men Received.” One iteration of the form has “Flat Top Mine” printed on it but appears to have actually been used for Lucile Mine. Despite some minor differences, all iterations of the form include the same overall information, and they all close with a mine foreman and warden’s signature. Remarks are handwritten throughout the forms in various locations. Most of these pertain to schedule changes or accidents. There is a small amount of correspondence filed with the reports regarding business relating to Lucile Mine or the Red Feather Coal Company.

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FOLDER LISTING

<u>Box</u>	<u>Folder</u>	<u>Description</u>
SG038214	4	Daily reports, December 1908-January 1909
SG038214	5	Daily reports, January 1909-March 1909
SG038214	6	Daily reports, April 1909-June 1909
SG038214	7	Daily reports, July 1909-September 1909
SG038214	8	Daily reports, October 1909-December 1909