

# Convention Souvenirs of The United Mine Workers of America

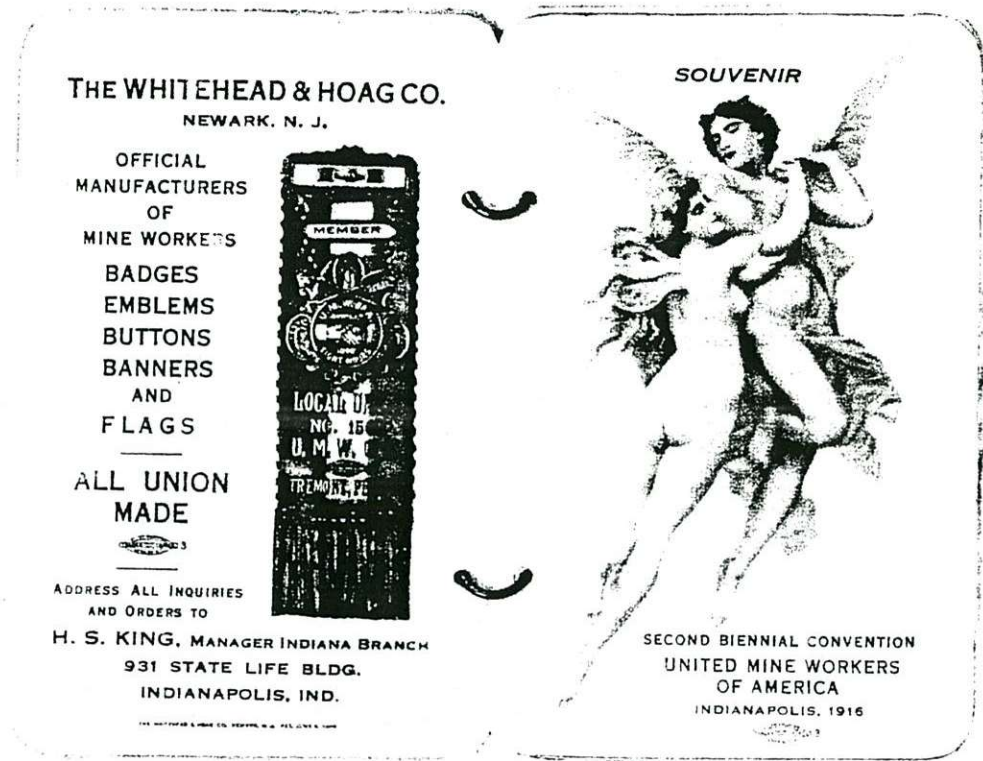
by Jim Steinberg

The UMW of A's first biennial convention commenced January 20, 1914 in Indianapolis, Indiana. From this date on, collectors will find related memorabilia that recalls those mass events that shaped the future of organized labor in America.

Much of the first convention was devoted to attacks on the American Federation of Labor. The miners were particularly unhappy with the A.F. of L. over its failure to support the strike of the Western Federation of Miners in the metal mines of Calumet, Michigan. After the convention, the labor movement would hear of miners shot and killed, their tents burned and bullet riddled.

On October 25, 1917, John P. White resigned as president of the UMW of A and was replaced by Frank J. Hayes. The UMW of A convention, now an annual event, opened on January 15, 1918 and was the union's 26th. While noting the shortage of labor in the United States, the miners union made a clear statement of being absolutely against the importation of Chinese workers. The convention also removed the prohibition against members being affiliated with the Boy Scouts!

*Various souvenirs were distributed at UMW of A. conventions. This small notebook from the 1916 convention in Indianapolis features a full color cover and the advertisement from Whitehead & Hoag on the back. Collectors will find the Whitehead & Hoag label on the inside of many of their ribbons. The front and back covers of this pad are made of celluloid. (From Jim Steinberg collection)*



The UMW of A convened a special International Convention of September 9, 1919 at Gray's Armory in Cleveland, Ohio. Sadly, on the opening day of this convention, attendees were to hear, that their beloved previous president John Mitchell had died that same afternoon of complication following an operation. Union president Frank Hayes was unable to preside over that convention due to a protracted illness. In his place, John L. Lewis became the acting president of the UMW of A.

**Reference:** Coal and Unionism, David J. McDonald and Edward A. Lynch, 1939, Lynald Books.