**Photographic Analysis Lesson Plan**

**1946 Iron Miners’ Strike on the Marquette Iron Range**

1. Introduction

Students will conduct an analysis of photographs documenting the 1946 Iron Miners Strike on the Marquette Iron Range. The photographs are part of the United Steelworkers of America Local 4950 records at the Central Upper Peninsula and NMU Archives.

1. Primary Source Learning Objectives (SAA [*Guidelines for Primary Source Literacy*](https://www2.archivists.org/sites/all/files/Guidelines%20for%20Primary%20Souce%20Literacy%20-%20FinalVersion%20-%20Summer2017_0.pdf)):
   1. Assess the appropriateness of a primary source for meeting the goals of a specific research or creative project.
   2. Critically evaluate the perspective of the creator(s) of a primary source, including tone, subjectivity, and biases, and consider how these relate to the original purpose(s) and audience(s) of the source.
   3. Situate a primary source in context by applying knowledge about the time and culture in which it was created; the author or creator; its format, genre, publication history; or related materials in a collection.
   4. As part of the analysis of available resources, identify, interrogate, and consider the reasons for silences, gaps, contradictions, or evidence of power relationships in the documentary record and how they impact the research process.
2. Historical Background

At 12:01 a.m. on February 8, 1946, nearly 3,000 iron miners on the Marquette Iron Range in Michigan’s central Upper Peninsula walked off their jobs. It was the first major labor action in the region since 1895. Three thousand inexperienced union miners on the Marquette Iron Range joined 750,000 steelworkers nation-wide in a strike of the steel industry led by the recently formed United Steel Workers of America (USWA). The strike against the steel industry lasted just nine days, but the strike on the Marquette Range against the iron mining companies lasted 104 long and frustrating days and finally ended on May 22 when the companies capitulated to the union’s demands for recognition, dues write-off, and 18.5 cents per hour more in wages.

Prior to the Great Depression, the labor movement had little success in organizing workers in the iron mines of the central Upper Peninsula. The trauma of the Great Depression, however, ended labor’s lethargy on the Marquette Iron Range. In 1937, Henry A. Burkhammer became director of District 33 (Duluth) of the Steel Workers Organizing Committee (SWOC), CIO. Burkhammer immediately sent organizers into the field that assisted in the formation of Local 2099 in Ishpeming and Negaunee. In response to the SWOC’s efforts, Cleveland Cliffs Iron Mining Company, the largest on the Range, formed the "Marquette Range Industrial Union." This company union continued to be active until 1941, when SWOC organizer, Joe Pascoe, filed a successful complaint against it with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The NLRB’s ruling against the company union spurred SWOC organizing, and by the end of 1941 they had managed to sign all the mines on the range. In May 1942, SWOC became the United Steelworkers of America. In April 1943, the USWA had completed formal agreements with all the companies. Jack Powell, a local miner from Chicago with no union experience, became the sub-district director in 1944.

1. Activities
2. Invite the university archivist to give a short presentation on the history of the 1946 strike.
3. Have the students review the United Steelworkers of America Local 4950 records (MSS-037) [collection finding aid](https://nmu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/3/resources/51).
4. Using the Photographic Analysis Worksheet, have students examine and evaluate the following photographs:

* Mather Mine Picket Line
* Crowd Converging on House
* Group of Women
* Strike Parade

1. Have the students write a 2-3 report summarizing the information and conclusions of their photographic analysis.
2. Assessment

Assessment Rubric of Primary Source Analysis

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| 1. **Learning Objective** | **Minimal** | **Fair** | **Good** | **Exemplary** |
|  | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| **Assess the appropriateness of a primary source** | Makes a very brief or erroneous attempt at identifying the basic characteristics of the sources. | Offers only a basic description of the sources and may include errors. | Describes most of the elements of the sources correctly. | Thoroughly and accurately describes elements of document, photograph, and finding aid |
| **Critically evaluate the perspective of the creator(s) of a primary source** | Does not acknowledge or identify any bias, prejudice or factual errors | Does acknowledge and identify some bias, prejudice, or factual errors | Acknowledges and identifies appropriate bias, prejudices, and factual errors | Acknowledges and identifies appropriate bias, prejudices, and factual errors AND explains how these problems raise questions about the credibility of the evidence. |
| **Situate a primary source in historical context** | Is not able to place any of the sources in a broader historical context. | Offers one example in which a source is placed in a broader historical context. | Explains and gives examples of the meaning and usefulness of more than one but not all of the sources, placing them in a broader historical context. | Explains and gives examples of the meaning and usefulness of all of the sources and places them within a broad historical context. |
| **Identify, interrogate, and consider the reasons for silences, gaps, contradictions, or evidence of power relationships in the documentary record and how they impact the research process** | Does not offer any additional information about the source besides what is already provided. | Asks questions about one source regarding its validity, limitations, and strengths. | Able to ask questions about more than one but not all of the sources regarding their validity, limitations, and strengths. | Able to ask questions about all of the sources regarding their validity, limitations, and strengths. |