Accessing Canada's Labour History Through Museums

Posted on September 27, 2012 by Joan Sangster

By Joan Sangster, Trent University. Canada is host to a rich, vibrant, and inspirational labour history housed in easily accessible archives and popular public museums across the county. There are a range of papers and materials relating to different aspects of Canada's labour history at the National Archives in Ottawa, Ontario (see labour finding guide: http://epe.lac-bac.gc.ca/100/200/301/lac-bac/cdn_labour_history-ef/www.lac-bac.gc.ca/2/26/index-e.html). Additional materials are available at provincial archives and from select unions (see: http://www.workinghistories.ca/index1.php?p=2).

There are also extensive listings of online sources, oral labour histories, and labour songs found on sites such as Working Histories (http://www.workinghistories.ca/index.php), Alberta Labour History Institute (http://www.labourhistory.ca/), and www.protestsongs.ca. The Alberta Labour History Institute has engaged in a major oral history project and many of the transcripts are available on the website.

More scholarly engagement with Canada's labour history can be traced in the journal *Labour/Le Travail* run by the Canadian Committee on Labour History (http://www.cclh.ca/). Subscriptions are extremely reasonable, and there is a student rate.

Most exciting for general audiences are the various labour museums showcasing the different regional aspects of Canada's labour history such as the Workers Arts and Heritage Centre in Hamilton, Ontario (http://www.wahc-museum.ca/), the Ottawa Workers History Museum (http://workershistorymuseum.ca/), the Écomusée Du Fier Monde in Montreal, (http://www.ecomusee.qc.ca/), and in Nova Scotia, the Cumberland Museum and Archives (http://www.cumberlandmuseum.ca/), and the Cape Breton Miners' Museum (http://www.minersmuseum.com/). Such diverse resources eloquently showcase the important contributions of working people in

© LAWCHA. All Rights Reserved.

Canada in ways easily accessible to academics, activists, and the general public.

Author

- 
  Joan Sangster

© LAWCHA. All Rights Reserved.