



Workers' Heritage Centre – Online Newsletter

Fall 2009

Counting down to the opening...

Another summer season is behind us, and we're looking forward to the winter months as preparations continue for the Workers' Heritage Centre's grand opening in May 2010!

“Outwardly Mobile”

Over 2,500 people have seen the Workers' Heritage Centre's 2009 traveling exhibit. Have you?

Featuring six Ottawa-area neighbourhoods, “Outwardly Mobile” explores how the ability of the working class to own their own homes has influenced the character and development of our region. The exhibit is available to display at community centres, conventions, workshops, and other events. If you know of a suitable location, please email curator@whc-cpo.ca for further information.



This isn't child labour! 11 month old Hayley plays with a washboard that's almost as big as she is. Picture taken by grandpa and WHC Board Member Robert Hatfield.



From the Treasure Chest...

This is a member badge that would've been worn by a member of Lodge 412, International Association of Machinists (IAM, now IAMAW), which began in the Hintonburg area in 1899. The front (on the left) would have been worn for conventions; the reverse (image 2) would have been worn for funerals. The badge fell out of favour and was replaced by the more familiar button. Note the union label on the reverse side.

The IAM 412 fond is held at the Ottawa City Archives, as part of a partnership between the Archives and the Workers' Heritage Centre.



Labour Day

Over 300 people visited the WHC's table at the annual Labour Day picnic. In addition to providing information about the museum, children had an opportunity to participate in two activities. Staff introduced them to how typing was done in the pre-computer age with our 1930s era typewriter, and children tried their hand at hand-washing clothes the old-fashioned way with a washboard.

Become a Member!

Help support the preservation of workers' history by purchasing a museum membership. The funds will go toward artifact acquisition and exhibit development. For more information, email director@whc-cpo.ca or call the WHC.

Documenting Our History

There are currently two oral history projects at the Workers' Heritage Centre.

The WHC's Family Leave oral history project has taken off! The project covers the fight to win maternity leave and related benefits. Volunteers had conducted eleven interviews by early October, more are scheduled for October and November. Our Guide for Interviewers has questions to be put to people involved in campaigns to win family leave and questions for people who have taken family leave. A timeline outlining the main events in the history of family leave in Canada is now available. We interviewed women at the Labour day picnic and the CUPE convention, made a presentation to a PSAC Women at Work course and are slated to interview a dozen women at CEP's November Women's Conference.

The second project is documenting the 1991 Public Service Alliance of Canada (PSAC) strike which was the largest national strike ever conducted by a single union in Canada. Several oral histories with strike participants have already occurred, and will be completed by the end of November. This project is in partnership with the PSAC, who are donating the transcription for the project.

PUZZLED

about what to do with your old union records?



“I’ve got a...”

Do you have old minute books or union memorabilia that you don't know what do with? Or do you have items from your own working class background that you'd like to give a good home?

As part of the Workers' Heritage Centre's mandate, we want to help the community find homes for Ottawa's working class history – whether it be union records, items from a particular struggle, or a piece of our vanishing heritage.

Email curator@whc-cpo.ca with any questions you might have.

Autumn Milestones in Ottawa Labour History

Sept 8, 1877

Ottawa gets its first permanent City Hall 22 years after it was incorporated.

Oct. 4, 1918

The Spanish Flu epidemic closed all the schools in Ottawa. In response the Labour Council called for the creation of a municipally run hospital.

Nov. 20, 1920

Ste Anne's Church Hall was destroyed by fire. The hall had been a gathering place for unions since its founding in 1873. Seven unions and the Allied Trades and Labour Council held there meetings there at the time of the fire. The Catholic Church is currently considering the closer of the St Patrick Street church after 136 years.

Dec. 9, 1869

The Noble and Holy Order of the Knights of Labour was founded. It was the first union to organize all workers regardless of skill. It also admitted women into membership. The Knights were a major force in the Canadian Labour movement until 1902 when they were expelled from the Dominion Trades and Labour Congress as rivals to the unions that organized workers by trade.

Want to Know More?

For more information about the WHC, please visit our website: <http://www.whc-cpo.ca>

Museum Hours

By appointment only (until May 2010).

Call 613 742-1872 or email director@whc-cpo.ca

Volunteer Opportunities

Interested in labour history?

We need volunteers with all types of talents. For information, email curator@whc-cpo.ca