



ANNUAL REPORT

BC LABOUR
HERITAGE
CENTRE

EST. 2004

determination were highly effective. Sangha and became vital to the union's strength. Employers were forced to abolish discriminatory race-based pay, to meet and negotiate with the union, and to treat workers with dignity. Sangha also convinced the union to speak out on issues important to the South Asian community, including independence for India and the right to vote in Canada.

BC LABOUR
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2023
Union Made

Hari Sharma
FOUNDATION

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Preserving our Stories

In 2023 our staff and volunteers worked hard to ensure that B.C.'s rich labour history continues to be saved.

- Our ongoing podcast series added six new episodes. We covered a long strike in 1918-1919 by [Vancouver laundry workers](#), B.C. workers' solidarity with the [1919 Winnipeg General Strike](#), construction unions and [Expo 86](#), the remarkable [Darshan Singh Sangha](#) and B.C.'s truck-driving Teamster leader [Diana Kilmury](#).
- Collecting [oral histories](#) from B.C.'s workers and labour activists is an important part of our work. This year we added over 25 new interviews to our online collection where these transcribed videos can easily be viewed, downloaded and shared.
- A new online portal connects our readers with the growing collection of [digitized B.C. labour newspapers](#). These publications offer unique insights into labour battles and personalities not found anywhere else.
- Our [monthly e-newsletter](#) has a readership of over 1,500 subscribers. In 2023 we shared stories that included the [1932 hunger strikes](#), South Asian railway and millworkers in the [West Kootenays](#), the [1947 Chocolate Bar Strike](#) organized by B.C. youth, B.C. workers who went '[Out to Fight Controls](#)' [October 14, 1976](#) and profiled women's suffrage supporter, union label promoter and Vancouver telephone operator union organizer, [Frances Foxcroft](#).



Raising unheard voices

“When union members know their history, the labour movement is stronger.”

- To ensure that BC public school teachers have access to [labour history classroom materials](#) we have created downloadable **labour history lesson plans** and held **workshops** around the province. Thanks to a donation from CUPE BC representing public school support workers, we have been able to translate much of the material into the **French language** making our stories available to more teachers and students.
- Together with the **Hari Sharma Foundation**, the **Kaatza Historical Society** and close to **100 guests**, we shared the history of the **International Woodworkers of America** and their early commitment to racial equality. A permanent bronze plaque dedicated to [South Asian IWA organizer Darshan Singh Sangha](#) was installed outside the Lake Cowichan Museum. Another plaque in Kamloops recognizes the [BCGEU members at the Tranquille Institution](#) who took control of their workplace in 1983 to prevent its closure.
- B.C. [labour history walking tours](#) came back. The first **Prince George Labour History Walking Tour** debuted in June. This tour and a new **Vancouver Women’s Labour History Walking Tour** have been added to our free downloadable **“BC Labour History Walking Tours”** app.

82

Oral Histories

24

Plaques

23

Podcasts

6,145

Downloads

53

Lesson Plans

Remembering our heroes, inspiring today's union members

- The Victoria Historical Association, University of the Fraser Valley, B.C. arbitrators and mediators all welcomed us as guest presenters to **share stories of labour and working-class history**. The first edition of [British Columbia History magazine](#) dedicated entirely to workers and unions included our three-page illustrated article.
- We joined a cross-Canada community of volunteers in remembering the Canadians who fought with the **Mackenzie-Papineau Brigade** during the 1937 Spanish Civil War. White roses were placed on known graves of MacPaps on Remembrance Day November 11.
- We participated in a **national conference of Canadian labour heritage and culture organizations**. The diversity, depth and quality of our work over the past 20 years puts us among the top labour history organizations in Canada.

We acknowledge with thanks the collective support we receive from B.C. unions and workers. We remain committed to our original mandate to preserve, document and present the rich history of working people and their unions in British Columbia.

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Cover photo: Scott Lunny, Hon. Raj Chouhan, Amardeep Mahal, Sadhu Binning at Darshan Singh Sangha plaque unveiling.

Inside: Sussanne Skidmore and Bridget Moran sculpture, Prince George, Three Men in Relief Camp at Penny, c. 1935. Northern BC Archives, UNBC Accession No.2009.5.3.92., The Spirit of Solidarity by Perry Haddock (2017), Blair Redlin and Judy Darcy.

Sponsors: BC Federation of Labour • BC General Employees' Union • BC Teachers' Federation • United Steelworkers
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