Labour History Project Working People: A History of Labour in BC



**Connie Jervis**

Film Summary: In 1939, Connie Jervis, 24 year old president of the Langley Teachers' Association, led a successful fight for improved system of wages and compulsory arbitration.

**Curriculum Application:**

Social Studies 11 and Social Justice 12

**The Essential Question:**

To understand the challenges and strategies of collective bargaining as a means of improving working conditions for labour groups.

What historical factors

**Summary of the Lesson Activities**

1. Focus questions for the vignette provides a short lesson option. ( 15 Minutes )
2. Small group activity to develop an understanding of the key vocabulary and terms.
3. Small group activity that leads into a class discussion on the vignette.
4. Individuals or small groups of students work on creating newspaper style articles on the issues presented in the vignette and supporting print materials.

Learning Objectives

1. To understand part of the story of the long road that BC teachers took to achieve full rights as both unionists and professionals.
2. To appreciate that, in the words of English historian Sheila Rowbotham, women’s accomplishments, contributions and leadership at all levels of society have been “hidden from history.” In each successive generation, what has been buried must be exposed.
3. To understand that discrimination against women, even in matters of wage equality, took determined, sustained effort to overcome.
4. To be aware of arbitration as a dispute mechanism and the great effort expended, largely by women, to have it recognized for Langley teachers.

**Materials and Resources Provided**

* [“Connie Jervis” Episode 2-](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_9btseqlq/embed/dynamic)

[Working People – A History of](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_9btseqlq/embed/dynamic)

[Labour in British Columbia](https://cdnapisec.kaltura.com/index.php/extwidget/preview/partner_id/1454421/uiconf_id/26824312/entry_id/0_9btseqlq/embed/dynamic)

Lesson Activity 1: Vocabulary Activity

Lesson Activity 2: Teaching suggestions and guiding questions

Lesson Activity 3: Re-writing and Righting the Langley Advance

Appendix 1: Hidden Legacy

**Additional Suggested Materials**

[“These were the reasons….” Chapter 7 Fighting for Equity” The 30’s, the War Years, and a Shoreworker’s Story](https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/list?q=these+were+the+reasons&p=1&ps=25)

[“These were the reasons….” Chapter 8 Taking on the Government: Wage controls, the Health workers’ story and the teachers’ story](https://teachbcdb.bctf.ca/list?q=these+were+the+reasons&p=1&ps=25)

**Lesson Activities**

1. Students will benefit from the preliminary vocabulary and terminology work. This may be either an individual or a group task. In the latter case, divide the vocabulary list (Lesson Activity 1) into sections that are consistent with the number of groups in the class, assign each group a section to research and define and then have each group report the definitions to the whole class.
2. In small groups students will create responses to questions from the Question Bank (Lesson Activity 2) about the Vignette: Connie Jervis and the reading The Hidden Legacy of Connie Jervis (Appendix 1). Students will present their ideas to the whole class to spark discussion.
3. Students will engage in “Re-writing and Righting the *Langley Advance”* and its perspective on Connie Jervis, the Langley Teacher’s arbitration struggle and the rights of workers (Lesson Activity 3) Teachers may chose to refer to “Lesson Activity 2: Teaching suggestions and guiding questions” to help structure this activity. Students will produce newspaper articles on the issues and events narrated in both the vignette and the reading *The Hidden Legacy* (Appendix 2) the assignment could be completed as individual, pairs or small groups.

Credit: Teaching Activities and Lesson Plan developed by Marcy Toms

**Vignette Questions**

1. How many teachers were employed by the Langley School board in 1939?
2. How old was Langley Teachers Association President Connie Jervis at the time of the dispute?
3. What actions did the Langley School board take when the teachers sued the board for failing to respect the arbitration award?
4. How did the Langley School Board respond to the order of the Department of Education to pay their teachers the arbitration award?
5. What methods did the teachers use to defend the re-assigned teachers?
6. What was end achievement of the Langley Teachers’ strike that impacted future labour disputes?
7. Xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx?