



WORKERS
HISTORY MUSEUM
MUSÉE DE L'HISTOIRE
OUVRIÈRE

ANNUAL REPORT 2023



A YEAR IN REVIEW

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT

This has been a landmark year in the history of the museum.

We hired our very first full-time employee, Leslie Hutchinson, as Curator and Collections Manager. To say that her work over the past year has been transformative for the museum would be an understatement. We moved into new premises at Saint Paul University and have enjoyed a very fruitful relationship with everyone at the Mauril-Bélanger Social Innovation Workshop (l'Atelier) where we installed an artwork commemorating the city's municipal workers gifted to us by artist cj fleury. We adopted a new committee structure to govern our activities and enjoyed one of our best years ever in terms of fundraising.



As President, my main role has been to facilitate our meetings and ensure that we move forward on all fronts. To this end we set out goals in our first in-person board retreat since the pandemic held in April and time was set aside at each Board meeting to discuss a targeted issue. As well as wrestling with issues such as restructuring and collections management, this gave the Board time to develop action plans for our walking tours and the E.B. Eddy project which will bear fruit in 2024. Long running projects such as the pandemic exhibit and the Jewish peddlers comic are close to completion while new online exhibits on the Social Gospel Movement and Homelessness after the Second World War are nearly ready for posting on the website. Two new walking tours for 2024 are also in the works and great progress has been made by the energetic team working on the CUPE 2204 child care project.

As well as our regular events such as the Canadian Labour International Film Festival (CLiFF) and Trivia Nights and our annual calendar commemorating workers' housing, we were proud to celebrate our collaboration with Bonnie Robichaud when her book *It Should be Easy to Fix* was a finalist for the Ottawa Non-Fiction Book Prize and thrilled to receive Krystal Gray's powerful drawing about the nine-hour day which won the Pat McGrath Scholarship for persons with disabilities. And at long last, we were able to mark our sponsorship of Juan Bello's documentary film *Never Forgotten. The Story of the On-To-Ottawa Trek* with a screening at the Atelier in January 2024. Members will also be pleased to learn that we received a Certificate of Appreciation from Joel Harden for our contribution to Ottawa's neighbourhoods and residents.

Looking forward to 2024 I feel that one of our priorities must be revisiting our mandate and practices in light of the Canadian Museums Associations report on how museums in Canada can become more compliant with the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples. We also need to work to bring greater diversity and youth into the museum and look into the effectiveness of our website and communications strategy.

So, we look back with pride on our achievements this year and look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead as we carry on telling important stories about labour, work, and working life in our region in innovative and exciting ways.

David Dean
President



BOARD RETREAT 2023 REPORT

by **President David Dean**

The agenda set out for a very well attended Board retreat held at the Atelier at Saint Paul on Saturday 15 April 2023 was a deceptively simple one: where should the museum be in 2024?

We began by identifying some keywords and phrases. Those with the greatest consensus were (in no particular order):

1. Greater unity/integration within the museum's organizational structures.
2. Stronger use of our artifact and image collections.
3. Strengthen our connections to unions, neighbourhoods, and the Francophone community.
4. Attract more members and volunteers, especially to help our museum be more diverse and youthful.
5. Improve our outreach strategies.
6. Work towards a stronger sharing of collective memory.
7. Engage much more than we have done with Indigenous histories and experiences.

Break-out groups workshopped issues clustered around three areas: Resources, Projects, and Outreach & Recruitment.

As the various reports in this Annual Report reveal, progress has been made towards reaching these goals, particularly 1, 2, and 3 (besides Francophonie). Some progress has been made in terms of outreach (5) and we have begun the process of thinking about Indigeneity (7). We look forward to following up on all of these initiatives and reflecting on how far we have come, plus next steps at the Board Retreat in 2024. As always, should you have any thoughts or suggestions please contact me at info@workershistorymuseum.ca or info@museedelhistoireouvriere.ca





BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President:

David Dean

Vice-president:

Megan McLeod

Secretary:

Paul Harrison

Treasurer:

Barb Stewart

Members-at-large:

Penny Bertrand

Christine Goneau

Richie Allen

Bob Allen

Arthur Carkner

Wilbray Thiffault

Institutional members:

David Yazbeck

Chris Gunter

Trustees:

Robert Hatfield

Bonnie Robichaud

Linda McLaren

Arthur Carkner resigned from the Board in the fall of 2023.



EVENTS ATTENDED

2023 started to be a recovery year with events being held in person after the pandemic. Many of the events we normally attended were held in person.

We were able to hold two Trivia Nights this year in June and October. Everyone who attended was happy to be able to see friends in person again. Thank you to our quizmaster, Gord Smith, for making both evenings a lot of fun and filled with lots of laughter.

Barb Stewart and Linda McLaren attended the PSAC NCR regional council meeting in February which was the start of the 12 events for 2023. In March we were at the Union of Taxation Employees (UTE) President's Conference and the PSAC Women's Conference. May saw Barb in Toronto at the PSAC Ontario Regional Convention and then Linda and Barb at the PSAC NCR Regional Convention. In July Barb went to the Union of Canadian Transport Employees (UCTE) convention in Montreal. This was the first time we were able to attend as generally UCTE holds their convention either farther east or west. During August Barb went to the Union of National Employees (UNE) convention in Toronto. One of our members did some fundraising for us at the UTE National Convention held in Winnipeg since we could not afford to go ourselves. Our thanks to Alan Craig for his very successful venture. September did not slow down as there were four events held in Ottawa – the Canada Employment and Immigration Union (CEIU) convention, the UTE President's Conference and the Customs and Immigration Union (CIU) Convention held the same weekend and finally at the end of September the Government Services Union. Leslie Hutchinson helped out at the CIU convention. It is difficult to be in two places at the same time. Our final event was the Ontario Federation of Labour (OFL) convention in Toronto in November.

We were able to partner with the Atelier d'innovation sociale Mauril-Bélanger at Saint Paul University to hold three CLiFF (Canadian Labour International Film Festival) events in November. We had technical difficulties at the event we held in the auditorium, so we rescheduled, and people were able to view the videos at home.

2023 proved to be a very successful fundraising year with attending so many events where some DVDs, books, photos, and lots of maple syrup were sold. Of course, our 50/50 draws were very popular and we are very appreciative of all the support given all year.



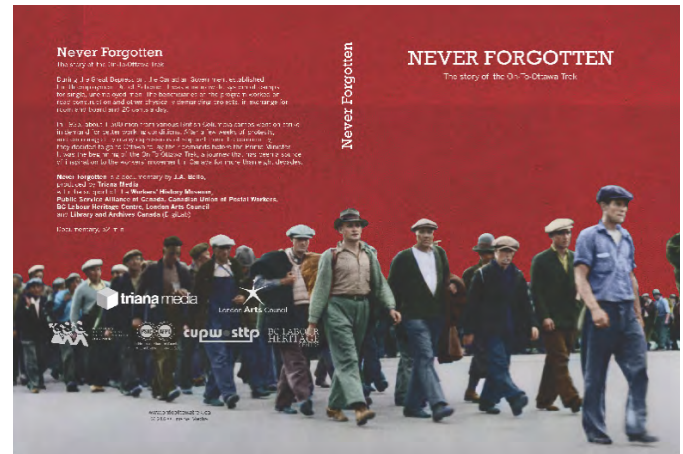
PROJECTS

Never Forgotten

The DVDs of *Never Forgotten* about the On-to-Ottawa Trek of 1935 was available in January 2023. The cost is \$20. Contact the treasurer@workershistorymuseum.ca for more details.

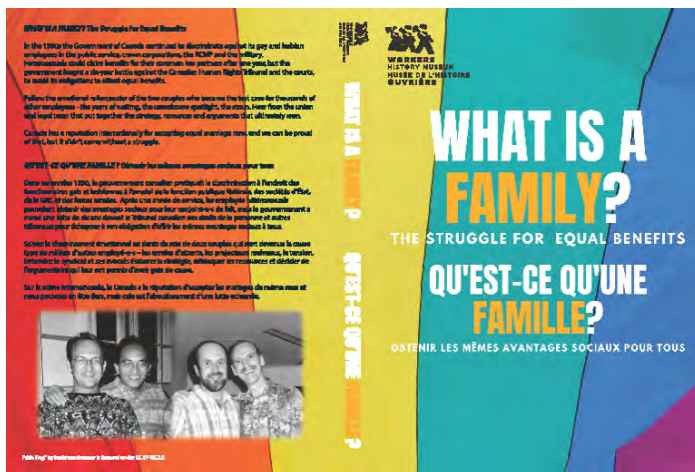
Website

We hope you have checked out the new site and will continue to do so. We are always looking for input for some of the items on both the website and on our Facebook page. Contact info@workershistorymuseum.ca if you have an idea.



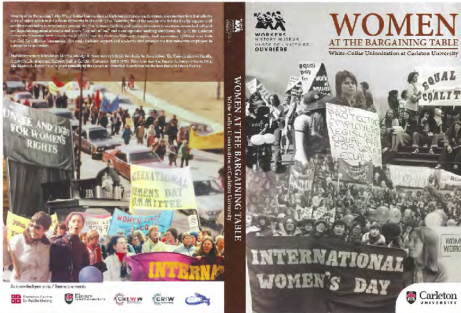
Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 2204

We began working on a project to tell the story of eight child care centres in Ottawa in the late 1970s that decided to unionize. Our project team consists of Penny Bertrand, Jamie Kass, Larry Katz, Jackie Dwyer, who were all involved in the organizing of the day care centres. Also part of the team is Richie Allen, Meranda Gallupe-Paton, Catherine Louli and Barb Stewart. We are planning on doing a podcast in 2024. The CUPE national office is generously helping us by sponsoring the project.



What is A Family? The Struggle for Equal Benefits

By the end of 2023 we were at 1506 views on YouTube. We have produced some DVDs for those of you who want your own copy. The cost is \$20. Contact the treasurer@workershistorymuseum.ca for more details.



**Women at the Bargaining Table.
White-Collar Unionization at Carleton University**

We extended our rights to use Helen Reddy's song *I Am Woman* in perpetuity with Universal Music. We have produced some DVDs for those who want their own copy. Contact the treasurer@workershistorymuseum.ca for more details.

Bonnie Robichaud Book and Interview

Between the Lines published the book May 8, 2022. In the fall of 2023, *Between the Lines* was doing the third print run. We do have some copies for sale at \$20. Contact the treasurer@workershistorymuseum.ca for more details.

We interviewed Bonnie for our website. Hear in her own words what she faced at work and how she was successful at the Supreme Court of Canada.



2023 Calendar

We dedicated our 2023 calendar to **Skilled Tradespeople** with a focus on young women joining the trades. Our thanks to the Ontario Building & Construction Tradeswomen for providing us with photos of several women apprentices in different trades.

Many trades active at confederation still exist, carpenters, bricklayers, cobblers, blacksmiths, cartwrights, etc., but they have seen many changes, including an increase in women's participation. Few blacksmiths are still around, but the number of metal workers has increased significantly. Iron workers, plumbers, pipefitters and steamfitters use techniques like electric arc welding, unknown at confederation.

Thanks to our sponsors – Union of Canadian Transportation Employees (UCTE); Union of Taxation Employees (UTE); Union of National Employees (UNE); Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU); Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); National Union of Public and Government Employees (NUPGE); AGR Insurance Brokers Inc.; Ontario Building and Construction Tradeswomen; and the City of Ottawa.

Calendar sales were good and we say thank you to everyone for supporting this project as it was one of our fundraising activities for 2022.





2024 calendar

Our 2024 Workers' History Museum calendar celebrates worker's houses and homes.

While of course all heritage houses were built by workers, it is striking how few that were both built *and lived in* by workers are protected from development. Few have even been photographed and archived.

We hope our calendar will be a small step in preserving this heritage. We know that some of the houses and homes we feature may not be with us for much longer. We want to celebrate those workers whose trades or hard-learned skills created beautiful and functional spaces in our city before they are gone forever.

Thanks to our sponsors – Union of Canadian Transport Employees (UCTE); Union of National Employees (UNE); Ontario Public Service Employees Union (OPSEU) Central and the Executive Board Members of Region 2; National Union of Provincial and General Employees (NUPGE); PSAC National Capital Region (NCR) Council; Orbit Insurance Services; Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation District 25 (OSSTF); Union of Taxation Employees (UTE); Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE); Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW); and the City of Ottawa.



NEW OFFICE LOCATION

In January we rented an office, L233, at Saint Paul University in anticipation of hiring our first permanent employee. We have had several meetings at the Atelier as well as our retreat and other events, such as CLiFF and Never Forgotten over the year and late January 2024.



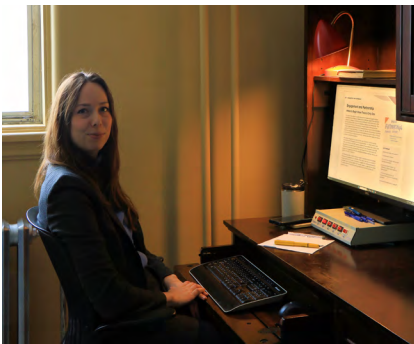
Amélie Nault is our contact at the Mauril-Bélanger Social Innovation Workshop (The Atelier) and this is her report. In the past year, the Workers' History Museum became an official tenant-member at the Atelier by moving into an office space at Saint Paul University, where we are located. We were thrilled to welcome them into our community, as they are shedding important light on workers' histories, often forgotten in today's world. We unveiled the displaying of the sculpture, *Belief*, made by the artist cj fleury in collaboration with 200 municipal employees from the City of Ottawa (on loan from the Museum) in the lounge area of the Atelier. We also collaborated on organizing a screening of the WHM's documentary about the life of Cal Best. We were able to show this part of labour history to a new audience, most of whom didn't know him or his contribution to the PSAC.



OUR FIRST FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE

May of 2023 was momentous for the museum as we hired our first permanent employee, Leslie Hutchinson, our new Curator and Collections Manager.

Leslie comes to us with a decade of cultural and heritage experience in a variety of organizations, including the Revelstoke Railway Museum and the Canada Aviation and Space Museum. She has worked in Manitoba, Ontario and British Columbia focusing on the fields of conservation, exhibit preparation, architectural restoration, archives and education. She holds an advanced diploma in Applied Museum Studies from Algonquin College of Applied Arts and Technologies in addition to a Bachelor's Degree in Music Performance from Brandon University.



Her main goal is to have the Workers' History Museum Collection accessible on-line. She started this project by getting our collection of objects, records and books better organized. She is also working with our image archivist, Paul Harrison, on the collection of photos that he has for the museum, as well as photographing the objects within the collection. Leslie works four days a week.

She is passionate about the preservation, presentation and interpretation of history, so she will fit right in with the Board members and other volunteers of the museum.

SUMMER STUDENT

We were very lucky to have Hannah McCourtie as our summer student in 2023. She worked on the 2024 calendar captions plus getting a walking tour guide started for Centretown using the homes from our calendar. It will be available in early 2024. She also prepared an exhibit for an article from a student, Elizabeth Chen-Baker, on The Social Gospel and Labour in Canada. This will be available on the website in early 2024.

Meranda Gallupe-Paton resigned from the Board in 2023 but she has continued as a volunteer and is working on our project about the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Local 2204. We are telling the story of eight child care centres in Ottawa as they organized into a union local in the late 1970s.

PAT McGRATH SCHOLARSHIP

We had several students apply for the 2023 Pat McGrath Scholarship.

The successful applicant is Krystal Gray from Guelph Ontario. She is attending the Early Childhood Program at the Doon Campus of Conestoga College. She has been volunteering at the Homewood Health Centre Patient Library where she has become the curator of the bulletin board content.

Her submission was about the 9-hour day through the use of a poster with an explanation. It is on the website now that it has been translated.





CURATOR/COLLECTIONS MANAGER REPORT

Hello all,

Some of you may know me, some of you may not; I'm Leslie Hutchinson, the new Curator and Collections Manager of the Workers' History Museum. I have over a decade of cultural sector experience and I have been in my position at WHM since May 2023. The following is some of what I've been up to during the past 9 months.

The office is now set up at L233 - 223 Main Street/Saint Paul's University – Please reach out to schedule a time if you'd like to stop by and see the office! I can be reached at collections@workershistorymuseum.ca Monday – Thursday.

Additionally, the office is equipped to host small meetings and the museum has access to the *L'Atelier d'innovation sociale Mauril-Bélanger* located at Saint Paul's, if you would like to book either space for team meetings, please reach out to me!

Curator:

I began by organizing the office at Saint Paul's and assessing the current state of the museum. Shortly after I was joined by summer student Hannah McCourtie who was tasked with the research for the 2024 calendar and responsible for updating the existing and designing a new walking tour. I facilitated and participated in the calendar research, guided Hannah through the process of designing an exhibit based on submitted materials and provided her with insight into what a career in museums is actually like.

After Hannah's departure I began editing and redesigning the pandemic exhibit that will be released in a partially interactive format later this year. Additionally, I have begun research for the 2025 calendar featuring the Karsh brothers. I intend to guide the curatorial narrative to focus on generational and person to person knowledge/skill transfer (or apprenticeship). The intent is to incorporate this theme into future exhibitions and programming as not all education is provided in a formal, colonial context.

In an ongoing capacity I assist with writing and editing, for content and clarity, on a variety of projects that the museum has ongoing. I also do my best to ensure that all projects adhere to the mission and mandate of the museum. I primarily exist to provide museum focused expertise and to facilitate the growth of the WHM as a cultural heritage institution. This includes but is not limited to updates and additions to existing policy and procedure as well as planning for succession and the longevity of institutional information.

The museum sector is constantly evolving, therefore professional development, networking and knowledge sharing are all key elements to maintain a successful museum. Over the course of the past 9 months, I have also attended a variety of webinars to improve my knowledge of curation and collections management. Currently I am participating in the Canadian Museum Associations course titled "Moved to Action" a course on the application and implementation of UNDRIP (United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples) within the GLAM (Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museums) sector.



Last but not least, WHM will be participating in Heritage Day on February 20th at City Hall, so please stop by and say hello!

Collections Manager:

The WHM has a collection of over 2,000 objects, previously managed via paper records and excel spreadsheets. I made it my priority to select a collections management system, conducted research and selected CatalogIT as the best fit for the needs of the WHM and the requirements of the Board. I then uploaded/entered information for all existing collections records into the new database. Once all records, to the best of my knowledge, had been uploaded, I performed a preliminary collections assessment and provided this information to the Board, along with a proposal for removing some of the existing objects from the collection.

To facilitate the completion of records I wrote a procedure for photographing and documenting the condition of each object within the collection. In order to complete this project in a timely manner I wrote the majority of the text for the Young Canada Works grant application to have two students to assist with the photography project during the summer of 2024, pending funding approval.

In 2023, WHM officially added 15 books, 1 magazine and 1 large framed photograph to its collection. Please note that currently all donations are on hold unless they are deemed essential by the Board and myself.

IMAGE COLLECTION

Chief among image operations in 2023 was work through the winter and spring to photograph historical houses built and lived in by workers. These became the contents of our 2024 calendar, which also features a wealth of historical notes about the workers who spent their lives in them.

Our museum is always on the lookout for ways to boost its income to further our many projects. The image collection joined this effort in 2023 with the selection and creation of seven very handsome unique photographs, sized and matted to suit offices, waiting rooms and home environments. They can be purchased at our tables at events, or online at our website's Boutique.



The image collection now numbers over 7,000 images and related documents. Among new entries during 2023 were those captured some years ago as part of our effort to create a record of Ottawa and valley historical monuments, as recognized by various levels of government.

The photographs (and occasionally lithographic equivalents of earlier times) are sometimes extracted from long out-of-print publications, where they accompany elaborate descriptions of industrial operations and processes that have



long since been transformed. To preserve this information, the accompanying text is extracted using optical character reading (OCR) software, then stored and indexed with the images as PDF files. Examples last year were from the Street Railway Journal of the 1890s. It featured the Ottawa and Hull electric railways systems, described with a detail meant to appeal to transport engineers and system operators of the day, but telling us much about what the workers must have seen, used and maintained.

A similar rich trove was extracted from a 1975 Centennial edition of the now-defunct Palmerston Observer. While not geographically within the Ottawa remit of the Museum - Palmerston is 50 km north of Kitchener - it contained stories of daily life, careers, public services, industries and industrial accidents that would have been familiar to Ottawa residents of the early 1900s, and so were well worth preserving in an archive of worker's lives.

Looking forward to 2024, we expect – under the expert supervision of our new collections manager, Leslie Hutchinson – to photograph the artifact collection, completing a formal cataloging that has long eluded us.

Also, upcoming will be drawing on the E B Eddy plant collection for photos that will prompt oral history commentary from former employees that are now being recruited.



And, as always, all Museum members and volunteers are urged to dig into their own personal and family albums for those shots depicting the working lives of themselves or their family. You don't have to give up the originals; pick-up, scanning and return can be provided, and you will receive complimentary expertly digitized copies.



Street Railway Journal

Vol. XII: NEW YORK AND CHICAGO, JULY, 1898. No. 7.

THE HULL ELECTRIC RAILWAY

By F. C. ARMSTRONG

At the present stage of electric railway development, there is no subject more attractive to the electrical engineer, or which more seriously demands the consideration of the steam railroad manager, than the possibility, as yet mainly undefined, of the profitable conversion to electrical operation of existing roads operated by steam. In the street railway field, the success of electric traction has been of the "veni vidi vici" order; the mule, the horse and the cable are in process of becoming memories within the short stretch of less than one decade. A sim-

ilarly successful attack on the larger field at present occupied by the steam locomotive, is another matter. For one thing, the steam locomotive is admittedly doing its work and doing it well and economically; for another, the transmission factor is at present, working it out in any way we choose, a serious limitation of range in the substitution of electricity for steam, even in suburban practice. The work of the past two or three years, however, has established certain important points, even to the mind of the most prejudiced steam railroad manager. The B. & O. installation at Baltimore has demonstrated the possibility of constructing and operating electric locomotives capable

of exerting a greater tractive effort than the most powerful steam locomotives anywhere in use. The work on the New York, New Haven & Hartford branches, on the elevated roads in Chicago and elsewhere, and on the important suburban lines which control the local business centering in Cleveland and other cities, has shown clearly the commercial advantages to be gained by the conversion to electricity where quick and frequent service is demanded over distances up to 25 and 30 miles. There is no doubt that even with our present transmission limitations, a very



ELECTRIC FREIGHT AND PASSENGER TRAIN—HULL

large field exists for the electrical equipment of suburban and branch lines of steam roads, where the present or possible business is of such a nature that its full development can only be attained under the special conditions of operation rendered possible by the use of electric traction. An excellent example of the successful realization of this possibility is found in the case of the Hull Electric Railway.

The Hull Electric Railway runs from Hull, a city of 15,000 inhabitants, lying immediately across the river from Ottawa, the capital of the Dominion of Canada, to Aylmer, a village of 2,500 inhabitants.



OTHER NEWS

Education Outreach in Both Directions

When museums talk about outreach, they mean working with community groups to achieve something of mutual benefit.

Last summer Dr. Amanda Wilson of Saint Paul University approached the museum to see if we would like to be a community partner sponsoring a hands-on learning experience for students taking her Social Innovation and Social Justice course. Simon Black, Elizabeth Fitzgerald, Anissa Louali, Destiny Abigail Okojie and Zachary Simpson explored how veterans seized empty barracks at Lansdowne and turned them into decent housing for themselves and their families after the Second World War. Their deeply researched presentation is being converted into an online exhibit by the museum.

We discovered that sometimes outreach works in the opposite direction. Elizabeth Chen-Baker, a student at Elmwood School decided to share with us an essay she had written for her grade ten history class on the influence of the social gospel movement on Canadian labour history. We were so impressed with it that we have been working with her to turn the essay into an online exhibit.

Three New Walking Tours

For many years the Workers' History Museum has offered popular walking tours of Ottawa's labour history that have received glowing reviews. Offered for free (although donations to the museum are encouraged), the tours focus on the downtown core and cover many stories about working people and their lives, notably in and around the Byward Market, the Rideau Canal, and Parliament Hill. This fall students studying public history with Carleton history professor (and current WHM president) David Dean created two new walking tours for WHM with advice from former WHM president Bob Hatfield.

The Labour History Walking Tour from the Canadian War Museum to Parliament Hill was created by Graham Baskin, Bruno De Barros, Ty Fenton, Kaya Johnson, Mike Latour, Daniel MacPhee, and Nico Mah. It highlights significant places of work, monuments, and the story of the Lebreton Flats. The Ottawa Labour Walking Tour from Carleton was created by Aidan Cunningham, Sienna Dean, Jenna Morais, Will Picard, and Eric Wang. It celebrates the little known labour history of the Carleton University area including Indigenous work and settlement, the Rideau Canal, agriculture, unionization, and student activism. We intend to sponsor student tour guides to lead these walking tours in spring and summer and during Carleton's fall orientation.

As most of you will know by now, our 2024 Calendar *Where They Lived: Ottawa's Historic Workers' Homes* features houses dotted throughout some of the historic neighborhoods of Ottawa, many of which were built and lived in by workers of the National Capital Region. 2023 Summer Student Hannah McCourtie designed a short walking tour that takes users past some of the houses featured in the 2024 calendar.

We hope that soon all walking tour maps and information will be downloadable from our website: workershistorymuseum.ca. To book a WHM guided walking tour, email info@workershistorymuseum.ca.



Partnership With Fortune Farms

Our partnership with Fortune Farms to sell their maple syrup as a fundraising event for the Museum has been very well received. This was very popular at all of our events. It is interesting how many people wondered if we were selling whiskey when they saw the bottles at our events. In 2023 we also added 500 ml bottles of syrup to our sales.



President's Challenge

We held our annual President's Challenge in November and December with the President matching the first \$500 in donations. This year thanks to everyone being generous, we raised \$2,015. This money will help cover costs for several projects.

2024 PLANS

We will be at Heritage Day in February highlighting our new walking tours and online exhibitions.

We plan on attending various union conferences and the Public Service Alliance of Canada national convention.

We are planning two Trivia nights in the spring and fall with the possibility of a third event just before the start of the summer months.

We have several projects that we hope to finalize in 2024, including the comic book about the early Jewish community in Ottawa, our pandemic exhibit, a project on homelessness in Ottawa, two to four walking tours, interviews with E.B. Eddy former employees and our podcast on CUPE Local 2204.

Our artefact collection should be online later in 2024.

We have been reminded that 2024 is the anniversary of the Eddy strike, so we are deciding how to commemorate this event.

2025 is the 90th anniversary of the of the On-to-Ottawa Trek and we are looking forward to commemorating this event, so plans will start in 2024.

Here's to another great year for the Workers' History Museum!