

BC LABOUR HERITAGE CENTRE

August 2019 Newsletter

This newsletter is produced monthly by the staff of the BC Labour Heritage Centre on behalf of our board of directors.

Rossland Miners Union Hall



Left: Miners Union Hall c. 1910, Right: 2012. Photos: City of Rossland

Local 38 of Western Federation of Miners led fight for 8-hour day and worker safety.

The Rossland Miners Union Hall was completed in 1899 and remains a proud feature in the community. The hall [has just received national recognition as an important historical site](#). The Rossland Miners Union, Local 38 was one of

thirteen local unions of the Western Federation of Miners in the Kootenays.

The Miners Union Hall holds great significance to the BC labour movement. Speaking in 1952, George Casey - who was once the secretary of Local 38 - said, "it was in this hall that the first Eight Hour Day Act for underground workers was drafted in 1898, and in this hall in 1902 the first Workmen's Compensation Act was drafted."

The hall hosted many famous labour speakers over the years: Labour MLA [James W "Jim" Hawthornthwaite](#), [Eugene Debs](#), ['Big Bill' Haywood](#) and [Elizabeth Gurley Flynn](#).

Source: Mike Solski and John Smaller, Mine Mill: The History of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers in Canada Since 1895.



A display window in Vancouver, September 6, 1950, promoting union-made products by Dairyland Foods. "Products made and distributed by union craftsmen", members of International Union of Operating Engineers, Teamsters and International Association of Machinists are shown. Photo: Vancouver Public Library, 81417.

Look for the Union Label!

The use of the union label and promotion of goods made by unionized workers was the mandate of the Vancouver, New Westminster and District Trade Union Label Council. Its first meeting, in September 1939 was the start of the union label promotion. In 1956 the Canadian Labour Congress came on board in support of the Buy Union movement. The union label committee's classic campaigns began in the 1950's and continued until the late 1970's. The Union Label Trades Council formally shut its doors in December of 2010. The [records of the Vancouver, New Westminster and District Union Label Trades Council are held at UBC Special Collections.](#)

Many BC unions have provisions in their collective agreements to allow the union label to be affixed to products they produce. If you know of other examples of union labels in BC, [send them to us!](#)

Source: <http://www.shopunion.ca/>





Labour Day on Hastings Street in the 1890s. City of Vancouver Archives, Major Matthews Collection, Str P371.

Early Labour Day Parades

by Bob McDonald

This article is reprinted from the Vancouver Historical Society newsletter. Bob McDonald, one of BC's leading historians, passed away on June 19, 2019.

This image is from a Labour Day parade on Hastings Street in Vancouver in the late 1890s. Here we see a forty-foot replica of the *S.S. Umatilla*, a ship that connected Vancouver and San Francisco. Constructed in 1898 by local stevedores, and named for the village of Umatilla on the Columbia River, the miniature vessel belched steam along the entire route of the Labour Day procession with upwards of 140 marching longshoremen eyeing their creation proudly from behind. Labour Day parades, which began on 6 September 1890, featured numerous such examples of floats constructed by unionized workers.

[Read the rest of the article.](#)

UPCOMING EVENTS FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

- Monday September 2, **Labour Day at Jack Poole Plaza**, Vancouver, 12 noon, Vancouver District Labour Council
- Monday September 2, **Labour Day at Holland Park**, Surrey, 11:30am-2:30pm, New Westminster Labour Council
- Monday September 2, **Labour Day Picnic**, Hollywood Road Education Centre, Kelowna, Noon - 3 pm, North Okanagan Labour Council
- Monday September 2, **10th Annual Labour Day Picnic**, Mill Lake Park, Abbotsford, 11 am-2pm, Fraser Valley Labour Council
- Monday September 2, **Labour Day Picnic**, Dougall Park, Gibsons, Noon-4 pm, Sunshine Coast Labour Council
- Monday, September 2, **Victoria Labour Day Celebration**, BC Legislature lawn, 11 am-2pm, Victoria Labour Council
- Saturday, September 7, **Prince Rupert Labour History Walking Tour**, details TBA.
- Thursday, October 3, [Tribute Dinner for Ken Novakowski](#). Riverway Golf Course, 5 pm. Details to follow.

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