

Pacific Northwest Labor History Association



PNW LABOR HISTORY QUARTERLY

WINTER 2021-22

PNLHA CONFERENCE 2022 –
Mark Your Calendar
April 22-23 (tentative date)
Portland, OR



Join PNLHA members and other labor activists, allies, students and scholars for an informal Friday evening get-together followed by a day of workshops, panels and a public plenary dedicated to “Using Labor’s Past to Mobilize for Labor’s Future”.

We all know history matters, but the past often gets lost or deemed irrelevant in the struggles of the moment. When it comes to the history of working people and organized labor, knowing our history can empower current struggles and visions for the future. The 2022 conference will feature concrete examples, strategies, and opportunities to generate and share ideas for collecting and using labor histories to

organize and mobilize today’s workers. Attendees will have the opportunity to tour an exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society featuring the 30th Anniversary of Portland Jobs with Justice, and to join a PNLHA co-sponsored public plenary inspired by the exhibit (see exhibit announcement in this newsletter).

We are looking forward to an in-person conference, with contingency planning in these uncertain COVID times. Here’s a brief overview of the conference as its taking shape; stay tuned for more information and registration.

- Friday evening: informal no-host reception
- Saturday morning: coffee hour, welcome plenary, concurrent workshops and panels
- Saturday afternoon: lunch, public plenary and tour of PNLHA co-sponsored exhibit at the Oregon Historical Society, annual PNLHA business meeting



PNLHA Brings Labor History to the Oregon Historical Society

“Building Solidarity
for 30 Years: Portland Jobs with Justice”
will be open for public viewing in the
Community Gallery of the Oregon
Historical Society, February 11-May 15,

2022. The exhibit is co-sponsored by PNLHA-OR chapter and Portland Jobs with Justice, and co-curated by historians and OR PNLHA members, Laurie Mercier and Nikki Mandell.



This is a local story with national and global reach. Founded in 1991, Portland Jobs with Justice [JwJ] became a vibrant part of a “new labor movement” taking shape across the country at the turn of the century. This was a time when globalization, labor law, and declining union membership contributed to rising insecurity for an increasing number of American workers. Starting with a handful of organizers, Portland JwJ grew into an expansive coalition of a hundred organizational members and thousands of individual pledge supporters. Committed to restoring workers’ rights and empowering workers, Portland JwJ has supported workers engaged in organizing and union contract campaigns and partnered with labor, faith, and social justice groups to further public policies for the common good. The exhibit looks at the different stages of JwJ’s growth by delving into some of the campaigns and actions undertaken over the course of the last thirty years.

- Discover how Oregon led the nation in efforts to raise the minimum wage.
- Learn how humor, creativity, and public forums can open dialogue on difficult topics.
- Explore the ways local events and conditions are affected by national and international situations.

- Reflect on the challenges and rewards of acting in solidarity with others for social justice.

WCSA 2022 Conference

In Spring 2022, the **Working Class Studies Association Conference** will be held in Corvallis, Oregon from June 20th to June 23rd. See the 2022 Conference Call: This is the first time that a WCSA Conference will be held in the US West. The theme for 2022 is: *Class Dynamics at Work*.

<https://wcstudiesassociation.wordpress.com/wcsa-2022-conference/>

Any questions should be directed to wcsa2022conference@gmail.com



Marion-Polk-Yamhill Labor Chapter chooses four holiday projects

The Marion-Polk-Yamhill Counties Central Labor Chapter (MPYCCLC) didn’t hold its annual Holiday Party at the Elsinore Theatre again this year due to COVID-19. Instead, leadership chose to support four regional projects for the holiday season.

The projects are the **Labor of Love** effort sponsored by Labor’s Community Services Agency, the **Christmas Family Adoption Program** in the Salem area, the **Oxford House Linfield Center** in McMinnville, and the **Keizer Business Alliance gift collection** effort that reaches families in the Keizer-St. Paul area.

PNLHA Student Winners

Every year PNLHA, through our endowment at the University of Washington, Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, gives awards for the best undergraduate labor history papers or projects.

The awards are \$500, a year's membership in PNLHA, and free registration to the following year's conference.



The 2021 student award winners are:

Liam Collins, *Point Defiance Podcast*

Amrine White, *Unstable Foundations: Poor Whites & the Economic Fight for Emancipation*

Selma El-Badawi, *The Sweet Fruit of Labor: An Examination of Black Labor Unions in South Africa*

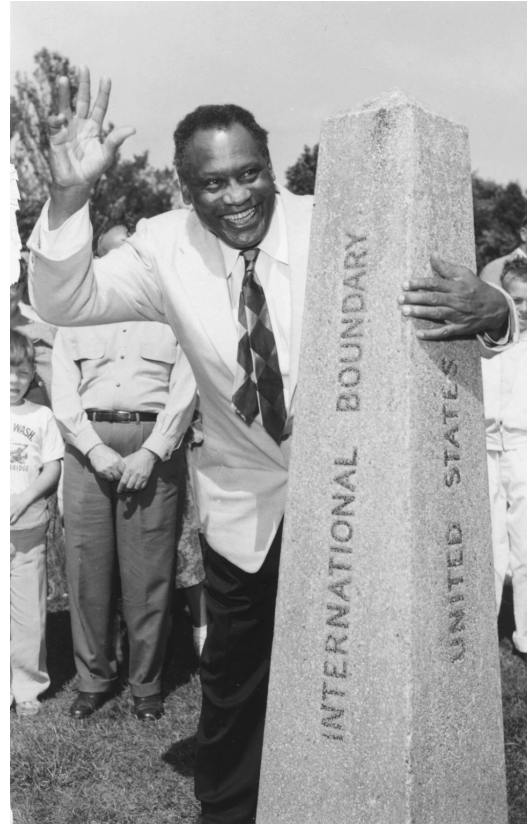
Kelly Maldonado, *A Comparative Essay on Slavery and Penal Labor*

Paul Robeson at Peace Arch

The Washington State Parks Department plans to erect an exhibit at Peace Arch State Park in honor of singer-activist Paul Robeson's 1950s Peace Arch concerts.

Parks employee Sam Wotipka has designed the exhibit that will include an interpretive panel about Robeson's concerts. "It's a story that's long overdue for telling at this site," Wotipka says.

"We're redeveloping an existing overlook into a small plaza with two interpretive panels," Wotipka explained. "One of those panels will convey the story of Paul Robeson's Peace Arch concerts (the other is focused on the history of the arch itself). Additionally, there will be a solar-powered "audio post" next to the panel about Robeson where visitors will be able to press a



button and hear a few clips of the 1952 concert."

Wotipka learned about the concerts when a colleague shared an article about it by a PNLHA member. (See Ron Verzuh, "Mine-Mill's Peace Arch Concerts: How a 'Red' Union and a Famous Singer-Activist Fought for Peace and Social Justice during the Cold War," *BC Studies*, Summer 2012).

The exhibit is scheduled for display in 2022.

'The Girls' Honored in Chehalis

Many attended a commemoration honoring the 110th anniversary of the 1911 Imperial Powder Co. explosion that killed eight young women and led to a movement for workplace safety in Washington State.

Special guests in attendance included family members of The Girls; WLSC President Larry Brown and Secretary-

Treasurer April Sims; Elizabeth Smith, Assistant Director of the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries, and other local dignitaries.

In 1911, Chehalis was booming. The



Imperial Powder Company was welcomed to a location on Coal Creek Road to supply explosives for underground coal mines and for farmers to remove stumps to clear fields for needed crops. Workers were routinely subjected to long hours, hard work and dangerous conditions.

A flame ignited the powder dust in the packaging room. The intense fire flashed so quickly that eight girls packing powder into boxes didn't have time to run for the door. Their breathing air was replaced by hot burning gasses and they died at their work benches.

The hastily called coroner's inquest jury was made up of town leaders who had invited the powder company to the area. Even though company managers were known to smoke cigarettes near the packing room, in half an hour the inquest jury ruled they didn't know the cause of the fire but the company was without guilt. The news of their decision

enraged citizens all over the Northwest and public pressure forced the state to begin serious enforcement of workplace regulations to prevent such needless deaths.

More than a century later we know that Nov. 1, 1911 was a pivotal moment in the history of working men and women in Washington State. After the loss of these eight young women, workers had the courage to point to new regulations and rely on new enforcement of safety rules in the workplace.

The Girls were so poor that only one family could afford a headstone. The location of the graves was quickly forgotten. The cemetery where they were buried was soon abandoned and became an overgrown jungle of impenetrable brush and rotting trees.

Thirty years ago, a local resident purchased the old cemetery as a volunteer project to restore it so the buried would not be forgotten. As they were scraping away the topsoil they heard a "clunk" as they struck buried concrete. They slowly exposed the foot-wide border surrounding six graves.

On the 100th anniversary of their deaths in 2011, labor and community leaders raised donations, installed and dedicated a monument to "The Girls" so they will never again be forgotten and there will be a permanent memorial of their lives and of this important event.

Source: The Stand

Rocker on Labor Song Power



Tom Morello, a guitarist with Rage Against the Machine, offers his views on Wobbly singer-songwriters and

their songs back to Joe Hill. “My guide,” writes Morello in the *New York Times* (“Opinion” Oct. 20, 2021), calling Hill “the I.W.W.’s anarcho poet warrior.” In “Songs of Justice, Songs of Power,” Morello writes that he wants to be part of the legacy of Hill, Woodie Guthrie, Pete Seeger, Phil Ochs, Billy Bragg and many others. “I’m a union man and an unapologetic musical rabble-rouser,” Morello writes. “I’ve been a member of the Local 47 musician’s union in Los Angeles for 32 years, and I’m a proud card-carrying member of the Industrial Workers of the World – it lives on?”
<https://youtu.be/61gHyyGZyXU>

Radical Songs for Radical Times

Michael Funke, the Bend, OR, producer of the radio show “Radical Songbook” on KPOV, has moved into the podcast world with monthly roundups of “songs of social significance.”

Funke, a former staff member at *Solidarity*, the award-winning magazine of the United Auto Workers, has been pleasing audiences for years with tunes drawn from the Wobblies’ *Little Red Songbook* as well as contemporary artists like Mary Lou Fulton.

Funke has mastered the art of podcasting by keeping his listeners excited about the next item and it goes beyond great selections of music. “Tune in to my conversation with Jason Graham, aka MOSley Wotta, a radical creative artist who lives and works here in Bend, Oregon. Plus there’s cooking Danish pancakes with the Wood sisters and angling for big Bull Trout with Jeff Perin.”

The November edition also includes Len Wallace singing “L’Internationale,” Anne Feeney telling us to “Dump the Bosses,” Rebel Voices on

“Commonwealth of Toil,” and the special addition of Jill Sobule striking back at the Texas law banning abortions.



Just before the *Quarterly* went to bed, Funke added a new tune, Mat Callahan and Yvonne Moore’s “Free Leonard

Peltier.” Peltier has been in prison since 1977 for crimes he did not commit, writes Funke. He asks his listeners to join the campaign to free Leonard. For more, go to

www.whoisleonardpeltier.info.

Funke also encourages emails to President Joe Biden at

www.whitehouse.gov/contact/ “to urge him to Free Leonard Peltier Now!”

“Podcast power to the people,” says Funke, and he’s definitely doing his bit to make that happen. His podcast is available at

www.theradicalsongbook.com

and on YouTube.

Nobel Shows Min. Wage Impact

Those hoping to find labor history evidence that a higher minimum wage negatively affects unemployment will find themselves in error.

Canadian-born labor economist David Card is among a trio sharing the 2021 Nobel Prize for economic sciences. His work “has challenged . . . the idea that higher minimum wages led to lower employment” (*NY Times*, Oct. 11, 2021)

Card co-authored influential studies on that topic, using the New Jersey and Pennsylvania border “to test the effect of a minimum wage change . . . (and) the research found that employment at fast food restaurants was not affected by

an increase in New Jersey's minimum wage."

Card also researched how influxes of immigrants affected "employment levels among local workers with low education levels." Again he found minimal impact.

Card's Nobel co-winners are American Joshua D. Angrist and Dutch-born Guido W. Imbens. Their research helps "economists to use real-life situations to test big theories, like how additional education affects earnings."

MAKING HISTORY TODAY: Starbucks Workers Brew Pact

The United Steelworkers union (USW) has brewed up a first collective agreement for the workers at the Douglas Street Starbucks drive-thru location in Victoria, B.C. The workers have unanimously ratified their new three year collective agreement.

The union was able to bargain health and safety provisions, including contract language aimed at preventing workplace violence and aggressive behaviour, to help keep workers safe.

The union was successful in securing language for up to 10 paid days leave for any member facing situations of domestic violence. The workers will also receive a wage increase of up to \$2.47 per hour based on years of service and each worker will receive a lump-sum payment upon ratification.

"It felt like a really big battle to bargain with a company like Starbucks," said Sarah Broad, USW bargaining committee member, "but I am very happy that we did and I cannot wait to see the impact that the changes will bring not only for us but for other baristas too."

For more details, contact Tara Cavanagh, USW Staff Representative, 250-318-0108, tcavanagh@usw.ca.



Buffalo Starbucks Union Effort

Buffalo made international news recently for the efforts undertaken by workers at Starbucks to join a union. On Aug. 30 workers at three Starbucks locations petitioned the National Labor Relations Board to hold an election so that workers could vote on whether they wished to be represented by Workers United.

Each store employs about 25 workers. Instead of agreeing to allow a vote at each store, Starbucks hired high-priced lawyers from Ohio, New Jersey and Long Island to launch an all-out war against the workers. The stated goal is to prevent unionization at all costs.

Because the National Labor Relations Act has not been meaningfully updated to protect workers since it was created in 1935, its antiquated procedures allow employers to delay an election for weeks and game the system in many ways, including surveilling, intimidating, cajoling and dividing and conquering workers.

Against these odds at least one of the three stores in Buffalo voted in December for union representation. Word has it that there are organizing attempts now at Starbucks in Mesa, Arizona, Boston MA, Seattle WA and elsewhere.

Starbucks Raising US Pay

Starbucks said it is raising its U.S. employees' pay and making other changes to improve working conditions in its stores. "We look forward to making more improvements when we negotiate our contract," Michelle Eisen, an 11-year Starbucks veteran, said.

Starbucks said that the union vote was not the impetus for the announcement. The company, which has no unions at its 8,000 company-owned stores in the U.S., has said it respects workers' right to organize but doesn't believe a union is necessary because of its pro-worker policies.

Coffeehouses Seek to Unionize

In Milwaukee, the city's largest coffeehouse group, Colectivo, was organized recently when workers voted to join IBEW Local 494 in an NLRB vote of 106 to 99. Many believe the win may encourage workers at other coffeehouses to more eagerly seek to unionize. This no doubt will bring in additional union-busting efforts by managements.

First Pact at Burgerville

As these articles show it is especially difficult to organize service workers who can be moved around with little notice. But Burgerville workers in Portland, OR began organizing in 2016 and had three stores in the Burgerville Workers Union by the end of 2018.



It took 51 bargaining sessions and more than three years, but roughly 100 employees at five Portland-area Burgerville locations are about to be the first fast food workers in America to have a union contract.

If the contract is ratified as expected by mid-December, the union will end its call for customers to boycott the company and may instead encourage the public to patronize Burgerville. Burgerville Workers Union is affiliated with the Industrial Workers of the World.

Worth Watching:

Video on Union-Busting

<https://youtu.be/Gk8dUXRpoy8>

This segment from HBO's John Oliver probably makes the most convincing argument as to why passage of the PRO Act is needed to bring fairness into the workplace and create a level playing field when a union seeks to organize. In this 24-minute segment, Oliver in his biting humor traces the union-busting practices of U.S. businesses.

Unions Closed Gap – Study

A new study in the *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, "suggests rising union membership from the 1930s to the 1960s strongly contributed to closing the income gap between the richest and poorest Americans during those

decades.” Also, there were “particular gains for racial and ethnic minorities.”

“Unions and Inequality over the Twentieth Century: New Evidence from Survey Data,” based on results 500 Gallup surveys from 1936 to 1986, also found further solid evidence. The results show that “a ‘premium’ of 10% to 20% higher income for union households compared with non-union households from the 1940s through the mid-2010s remains relatively consistent . . . , despite the large swings in density and composition of union members” documented.

The study was reported in *The Journalist’s Resource* (Oct. 4, 2021) and can be found here:

<https://journalistsresource.org/economics/inequality-labor-unions/>.

Who Supports Strikers?

HuffPost reports: Labor Secretary Marty Walsh joined striking Kellogg’s employees in Lancaster, PA on



Wednesday afternoon as they fight for a new five-year agreement with the cereal maker. Walsh’s visit came a week after Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack traveled to Iowa, where he previously

served as governor, to join striking John Deere workers on their picket line outside the manufacturer’s Ankeny plant.

Walsh and Vilsack don’t carry the same weight or name recognition of their boss. But they are high-profile representatives of the Biden administration, and their visits with striking workers are highly unusual and perhaps unprecedented.

Michigan Advance reports that multiple Democratic elected officials have shown up on pickets lines and shown support for area Kellogg strikers, but notably absent in the show of support for strikers are any Republican elected officials — even those who directly represent the Battle Creek area. Neither U.S. Rep. Peter Meijer (R-Grand Rapids) nor state Sen. John Bizon (R-Battle Creek) have publicly commented on the Kellogg strike.

Strike Wave 2021 – ?

Former federal labor secretary Robert Reich looks at the current strike wave in an historical context.

<https://youtu.be/zci1r3Yt-fw>

History Question for You

The year 1919, following World War I and the “Spanish Flu” pandemic, saw much worker uprising and strikes in the US and Canada including the Seattle General Strike and the Winnipeg General Strike. Now in 2021, about one hundred years later, following the close of the longest US war (Afghanistan) and in another pandemic (COVID-19) workers are pushing back against inequalities and corporate control with handles like “Striketober” and “Strikesgiving” and more. Is there a correlation here?

Labor Solidarity Project

The University of Washington Tacoma's Labor Solidarity Project (LSP) continues to serve as a regional incubator for scholarship focused on labor history and activism. With support from the Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies, the LSP has funded several research projects aimed at exploring the regional economy and its workers. LSP members are currently working on partnering with local unions to establish an internship program that will strengthen the connection between campus and the south sound community.

The LSP recently concluded its fall seminar, which included presentations from academics and activists covering topics ranging from labor and Indigenous resistance to organizing contingent faculty in higher education.

Over the last two years, LSP co-director Alex Miller has hosted over 30 of these events featuring guests from across the country spotlighting emerging themes in the broader field of labor studies. Nearly all of these events have been archived and made publicly available on their YouTube page

<https://bit.ly/UWTLSPArchive>.

You can stay updated on LPS-related news and events by registering for its mailing list

https://bit.ly/working_together2021

and following it on Twitter @UWT_Labor.

The World Began on May Day

The arrival of the *Rossland Evening World* on May Day 1901 prompted the *Sandon Paystreak* to suggest that it was "the first labor daily to make its appearance in Canada." The pioneer weekly, serving mine workers in

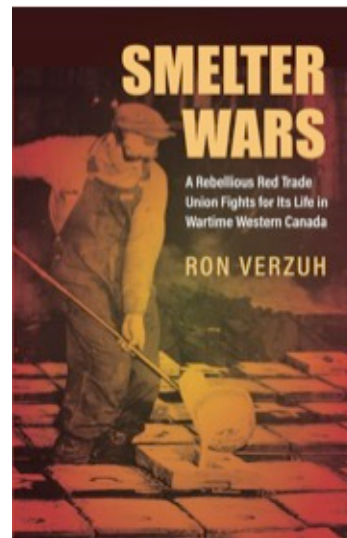
southeastern British Columbia, probably had it wrong. Still, the new paper's owners did have something to celebrate: they had founded Western Canada's first daily labor newspaper.

The owners, Local 38 of the Western Federation of Miners (WFM later the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers), were stalwart members of the sometimes-violent union based in Colorado. In fact, the WFM had a growing reputation as "the most militant" union in U.S. history.

An article on the *World* by former Oregon PNLHA VP Ron Verzuh will appear in the winter edition of *BC History* magazine.

Smelter Wars

New book by former Oregon VP



This spring, the University of Toronto Press will publish *Smelter Wars – A Rebellious Red Trade Union Fights for Its Life in Wartime Western Canada*, a

scholarly examination of a radical British Columbia trade union's struggle to survive from the 1930s to the 1950s.

In 1938, the Congress of Industrial Organizations (CIO) sent Communist union organizer Arthur "Slim" Evans to the smelter city of Trail, BC, to establish Local 480 of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers (Mine-Mill).

Six years later the local was recognized as the legal representative of more than 5,000 workers at a smelter owned by the powerful Consolidated Mining and Smelting Company of Canada (CM&S later Cominco, now Teck Resources). But its fight for survival had only just begun.

Smelter Wars unfolds that historic struggle, offering glimpses into the political, social and cultural life of the semi-rural, single-industry community. Hindered by economic depression, world war, and Cold War intolerance internationally the local faced fierce corporate, media and religious opposition at home.

Author Ron Verzuh, a former Oregon PNLHA VP and trustee, draws upon archival and periodical sources, including the mainstream and labour press, secret police records and oral histories to explore the CIO's complicated legacy in Trail as it battled a wide range of antagonists: a powerful employer, a company union, local conservative citizens, and Co-operative Commonwealth Federation (CCF) leaders.

More than a union history, *Smelter Wars* is a cultural study of a community shaped by the dominance of a world-leading industrial juggernaut set on keeping the union drive at bay.

Oregon's Lumberjack Boswell

Stewart Holbrook, *Wildmen, Wobblies & Whistle Punks* (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1992), 313 pages, available in libraries or on Amazon.

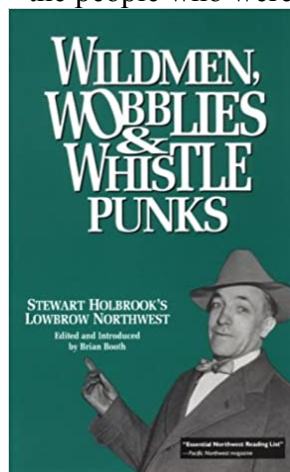
Never heard of Stewart Holbrook, variously described as the "Lumberjack Boswell," a "24-carat character," and a "lowbrow" historian of the Pacific Northwest? No surprise. He is almost forgotten today and yet his non-

traditional histories of working people still make for great reading.

One reason could be that his journalistic style of history was frowned upon by academic historians because he shunned footnotes and "laced his work with wit and playfulness," noted *Wildmen* editor Brian Booth.

Holbrook did not side with his subjects, but rather told their stories non-judgmentally. Whether it was a story about Wobbly leader Big Bill Haywood or Portland mayor Oz West, about the anarchists of Hope, WA, or the rowdy town of Copperfield, OR, he laid out the facts with flare and fun.

Without footnoting, it is difficult to trace the accuracy of the stories, but at least some of them were based on interviews with Holbrook's neighbors, the people who were actually there. The



facts in "The Wobblies Come," "The Last of the Wobblies," and other stories about the radical IWW cover the basics.

Many of the stories in this collection are about workers: lumberjacks in "Days in the Swamp," the celebrated outlaw John Turnow in "The Wildest Man of the West," or Joe Kelly in "Bunco Kelly, King of the Crimps." In these stories, many published in national magazines of the day, readers are treated to the writing of a man who "understood the American character," as the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* put it.

Perhaps best known for his work about men in the forests, the *Oregonian* said that when he wrote about a logging

camp “you could fairly smell the smoke from the cookhouse.” But he also wrote about capitalists like Canadian-born railroad baron Jim Hill, who is credited with opening up the Pacific Northwest, and the occasional madam.

Holbrook wrote three dozen books based on the stories of “unusual people and places outside the mainstream of regional life,” the *Oregonian* added. Few of the 21 stories in *Wildmen* are about traditional trade unions or standard labor history. However, they take readers into the world of many different workers, revealing their ways of life and depicting their often unusual workplaces.

These are compelling tales of individuals and groups that helped build the Pacific Northwest. Treated with Holbrook’s storyteller skills, they are stories told, warts and all, with empathy and simplicity.

Revolutionary Nonviolence: Organizing for Freeman

By James M Lawson, Jr.

A persuasive account of the philosophy and power of nonviolence



organizing, and a resource for building and sustaining effective social movements, with PNLHA trustee, Michael K. Honey and Kent Wong with a foreword by Angela Davis.

Revolutionary Nonviolence is a crucial resource on the long history of nonviolent philosophy through the teachings of Rev. James M. Lawson Jr., one of the great practitioners of revolution through deliberate and sustained nonviolence. His ongoing work demonstrates how we can overcome violence and oppression through organized direct action, presenting a powerful roadmap for a new generation of activists.

In *Revolutionary Nonviolence* Michael Honey and Kent Long reflect on Rev. Lawson’s talks and dialogues, from his speeches at the Nashville sit-in movement in 1960 to his lectures in the current UCLA curriculum. This volume provides a comprehensive introduction to Rev. Lawson’s teachings on how to center nonviolence in successfully organizing for change.

“This is the handbook and guide to how to build a just and democratic society, and a must-read for all.” – Dolores Huerta

On Saturday, December 11th, the UCLA Labor Center dedicated its permanent home and named it in honor of Rev. Lawson.

Save 30% by ordering *Revolutionary Nonviolence* online:

www.ucpress.edu/9780520387843

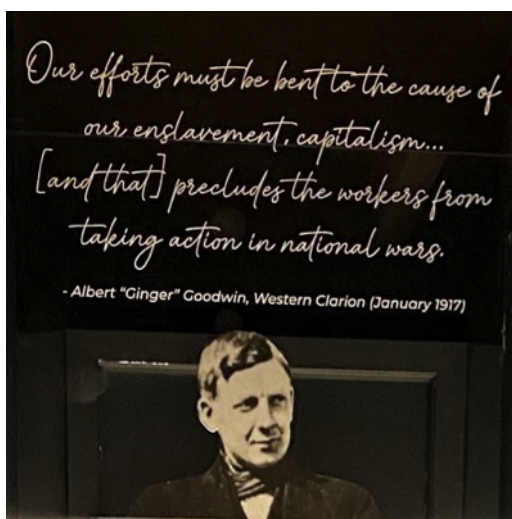
Use source code 21W2240 at checkout.

Cumberland Museum Open

It has been a long and at times bumpy journey but on November 5, 2021 the Cumberland Museum and Archives reopened to the public. The museum was closed for almost 18 months due

initially to the COVID-19 protocols and then the long planned for renovations. The transformation from old to new is quite remarkable. The old museum, much loved but in need of a cleaner, more professional look is now well lit with white washed walls and all the artifacts have concise explanations of their origins and uses.

The museum, in the Vancouver Island community of Cumberland, is also known as 'the People's Museum', because of its emphasis on working class history in this old village that was once a coal mining centre. Once you are inside, past the lobby with its beautiful Kwakiult mask carved by Carver Everson, the first exhibit is a wall of photographic portraits of Cumberland citizens from the early days.



Cumberland was a multi-ethnic and multi-racial town with the coal mines attracting workers from various countries such as Italy, China, Britain and Japan. One change to the way the exhibits are arranged is that, instead of individual exhibits focused on one ethnic group, they are incorporated into

thematic exhibits. Chinese miners and merchants, for example, are represented in photos and artifacts throughout the museum fitting into themes such as coal mining or businesses.

So the next time you are on Vancouver Island be sure to include Cumberland and the People's Museum as part of your itinerary. You can find more info at

www.cumberlandmuseum.ca

Deportee

The plane crash at Los Gatos Canyon, California, 1948

The skyplane caught fire over Los Gatos Canyon

A fireball of lightening, and shook all our hills

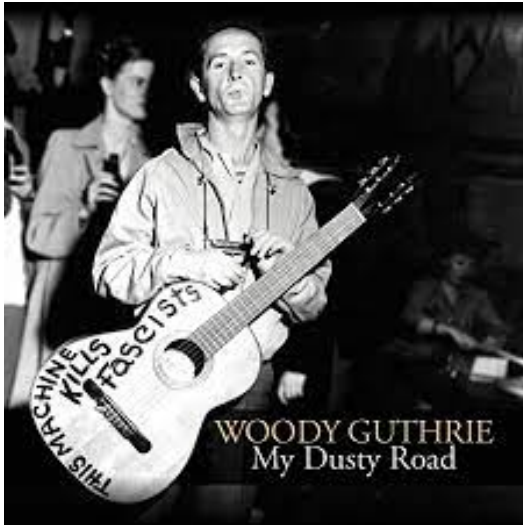
Who are these friends, all scattered like dry leaves?

The radio says, "They are just deportees".

The Song

Deportee is a ballad and a protest song whose lyrics were written by Woody Guthrie following the crash of an airplane on January 28, 1948 near Los Gatos Canyon, located 20 miles west of Coalinga, California. The crash – one of the worst in California history – killed all 32 people onboard, including 28 undocumented Mexican farm laborers.

The crash was reported on radio and in newspapers, including the *New York Times*. The *Times* report included the names of the flight crew and security guard but ignored the names of the victims, referring to them only as "deportees".

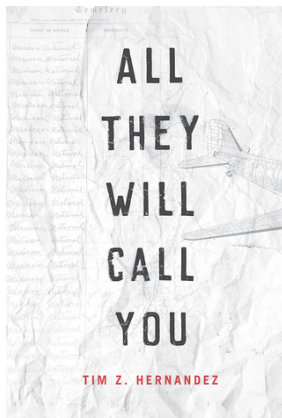


Woody Guthrie, who was living in New York City, was outraged at the *Times* article. He was inspired to write a poem assigning symbolic names to the dead.

Woody wrote *Deportee* in 1948; a decade later his poem was put to music by Martin Hoffman, a schoolteacher.

Pete Seeger began performing the song at his concerts and, since then, *Deportee* has been recorded by Arlo Guthrie, Joan Baez, Willie Nelson, Dolly Parton, Sweet Honey and the Rock, Bruce Springsteen and others.

The Memorial



marker that read, “28 Mexican citizens who died in an airplane accident near

In 2017 Carlos Rascon, the newly-appointed Director of Cemeteries led the author, Tim Z. Hernandez, to the old Holy Cross Cemetery in West Fresno where he pointed out a bronze

Coalinga, California on January 28, 1948, R.I.P.”

Rascon recounted a story he had heard from the cemetery workers. Each November, around the time of El Dia de los Muertos – a Mexican holiday that honors the dead – someone had been leaving flowers at the gravesite.

That person, they would discover, was Jaime Ramirez who grew up in central Mexico. Jaime’s grandfather and his great-uncle were immigrant farmworkers who died in a plane crash in the United States in 1948.

Ramirez’s story was brought to life by author Tim Hernandez in his book *All They Will Call You*. And so began a campaign to establish a memorial in Holy Cross Cemetery. Hernandez – after a year and a half of research – was able to identify the names of all of the victims. A granite memorial was dedicated in 2013. Nora Guthrie – the daughter of Woody and Marjorie Guthrie – along with the Guthrie Foundation assisted in the fundraising effort.

The names of the victims of the plane wreck at Los Gatos are now inscribed on a memorial in the cemetery in Fresno. And each November Jaime Ramirez still brings flowers.

Woody Guthrie’s song has come full circle.

Source: Friday’s Labor Folklore

Labor History Dictionary

What does BIPOC mean?” some PNLHA members might ask. Why do we say “Latinx” now? As our membership spans different North American cultures, it is helpful to understand these new terms. Here are a few examples.

BIPOC, an acronym for “Black, Indigenous, People of Color” is just one

of the terms described in “BIPOC or POC? Equity or Equality? The Debate Over Language on the Left” (*New York Times*, Nov. 1, 2021).

“‘Latinx’, describes people of Latin American descent.” The article notes “‘they/them’; pronouns that refer to a single person, and ‘birthing parent’ or ‘pregnant people’ instead of ‘mother’, to be inclusive of trans people, are also gaining traction.”

“Wokespeak” is a term used by some conservatives to describe the new language.

Read the article here:
<https://www.nytimes.com/2021/11/01/us/terminology-language-politics>.

Labor Prez to Canadian Senate



Four days after retiring from the presidency of the Canadian Labour Congress in mid-2021, Hassan Yussuff, formerly with

the Canadian Auto Workers, jumped to the Canadian Senate when Prime Minister Justin Trudeau appointed him to represent Ontario, the most populous of the country’s 10 provinces.

It wasn’t the first time a Canadian labor leader was made a senator. Conservative PM Sir Robert Borden appointed a telegrapher named Gideon Robertson in 1917, thinking his links to labor would help the Conservatives win support during the First World War. But it backfired.

In 1918, Borden made him labour minister. A year later, Robertson supported the police action to crush the

Winnipeg General Strike known as Bloody Sunday. Labor expected Robertson would be more sympathetic. He was not and for that he earned the hatred of the left and labor.

Also preceding Yussuff’s appointment was Teamster Ed Lawson. He was appointed by former Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau in 1970 and became the longest-serving senator until he retired in 2005.

Yussuff, who has been criticized for being too close to the Liberal government, will receive an annual salary of \$150,000. Some say senators do little for their money, although there have been important royal commissions chaired by senators.

Although such appointments are rare, several ambassadorships have also been awarded to labor leaders. Dennis McDermott, another CLC president, was ambassador to Ireland from 1986 to 1989.

Kealey Cummings, former secretary-treasurer of the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Canada’s largest union, won the ambassador-like London post of “Labor Counsellor to Britain and the Netherlands.” The position was discontinued after Cummings’ term ended.

And Stephen Lewis, a former New Democratic Party leader in Ontario, was appointed ambassador to the United Nations in the mid-1980s by then Conservative PM Brian Mulroney. The Lewis family has long been associated with the labour movement and progressive social causes.

Hussan has been quiet since his appointments, but he has been a firebrand for workers’ rights before and may be so again if the Senate rules allow.

Labor Educator Retires



Author, organizer, educator, PNLHA member, Bob Bussel is retiring.

Bob did security for Cesar Chavez. He had lunch with the

real Norma Rae. And he spent 27 years as a labor educator, training generations of labor leaders. On December 15, age 70, he retired after 20 years directing the Labor Education and Research Center (LERC) at University of Oregon.

LERC trains union leaders on how to negotiate contracts and defend members, and produces research reports that help advocates pass pro-worker legislation. But year after year, Bussel has had to deploy every bit of political skill he could muster to keep it funded.

Over the 27 years he worked as a labor educator, Bussel says he got his greatest fulfillment from helping local union members gain a sense of confidence and hope that through organization and solidarity, they can change their lives.

Bussel leaves LERC in the hands of its two remaining faculty: Gordon Lafer and Mark Brenner. They will serve as co-chairs while the center hires two more faculty in the next year.

“In our culture, the dominant gene is individualism, self-interest, personal freedom,” Bussel said in his retirement address. “But there’s a recessive gene in our culture, and that’s our faith in collective action, solidarity and mutual aid. It’s the Knights of Labor concept,

that an injury to one is the concern of all.... We may not win every fight in the labor movement, but we are always, always, always fighting for the right things.”

Source: Much of this article is reprinted from the *Northwest Labor Press*.

Remembering Joanne Temcov

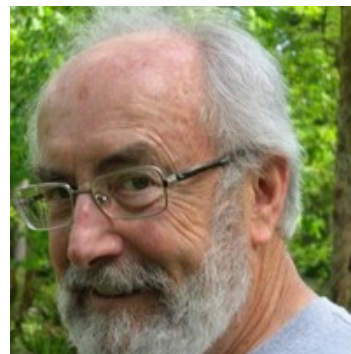
PNLHA recently lost one of our most senior members, Joann Temcov.

Joanne Little Temcov, age 95 of Forks, Washington passed away September 30, 2021. She was born in Montesano, WA on April 26, 1926.

A lifelong advocate for labor, disability and health care rights, she worked for the Employment Securities Department, served with the National Organization for Women, and authored two books.

Remembering Ross Rieder

On December 14, 2021, we lost one of our founders, a long time PNLHA President, the heart and soul of this organization. It is hard to put into words what Ross Rieder meant to northwest



labor history and to his many friends. Here are some comments from Ross’s closest

comrades and community allies. We will have a fuller remembrance of Ross Rieder and his impact on preserving the heritage of workers in the Pacific Northwest either in the next issue of the *Quarterly* or a broader venue.

“Oh no! This is tragic. He has been such a presence, such a model, such a

force for labor and for social justice through all these many decades. And that doesn't even get to what he has meant for Labor History. Truly the end of an era."

"When I first came to the Pacific Northwest about 30 years ago, Ross introduced me to PNLHA. I thought, what a marvelous thing, to have a teacher who becomes a union organizer and union organizer who leads a labor history association. He put everything into it and made it quite professional, with a wonderful calendar and a way of working with union leadership to support the PNLHA financially. That is all hard to do but he made it look easy. He was fun to be with, had a sense of humor, and was always looking ahead to what needed to be done next. I enjoyed him as a person, and his wife Brenda as well, a really nice combination."

"I remember very clearly how Ross would orchestrate those events—always with a twinkle in his eye, and always with the intent of presenting labor history as a popular event, that anyone could take part in, whether you were a factory worker or an university professor. This was a delightful change from the stodgy academic affairs I was used to attending.

He was the heart of our organization and his passion and organizing ability made the PNLHA the unique organization it is."

"He was a kind man always ready with great historical recountings, memorable anecdotes, and sharp insights. His legacy as a labor historian committed to social justice will live on."

"I remember how gracious Ross was when I first came to Oregon, and his welcoming me to PNLHA and the labor community.

Ross's commitment to promoting the history and heritage of labor in the Pacific Northwest is a legacy that will continue to inspire and endure."

He will be missed.

Labor History Calendar & Dues



Order your union's 2022 Labor History Calendars at pnlha.calendar@gmail.com, and remember to pay your 2022 PNLHA membership dues. Do so online at www.pnlha.org or mail a check with your name, address, phone and email to: PNLHA, PO Box 75662, Seattle, WA 98175.



PNW Labor History Quarterly

We have expanded the *Oregon Labor History Quarterly* to include the rest of PNLHA. Welcome to the first edition of the *PNW Labor History Quarterly*. I edited this issue with the help of Ron Verzuh, former editor of the *Oregon Labor History Quarterly*, but we hope to find someone with the skills and dedication to put out the newsletter. If you are interested please let me know. Tom Lux, PNLHA President, pnlha2@gmail.com.