

Between home and work: Towards a living heritage of labour and mobility

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ACHS 2016, Montreal
6 June, 2016



OUTLINE

1. A story from Hong Kong
2. Conceptualizing labour, mobility and heritage
3. Research: mobile work in Newfoundland and Labrador's construction industry
4. Empirical findings: the past and present of mobile work
5. Towards a living heritage of labour and mobility

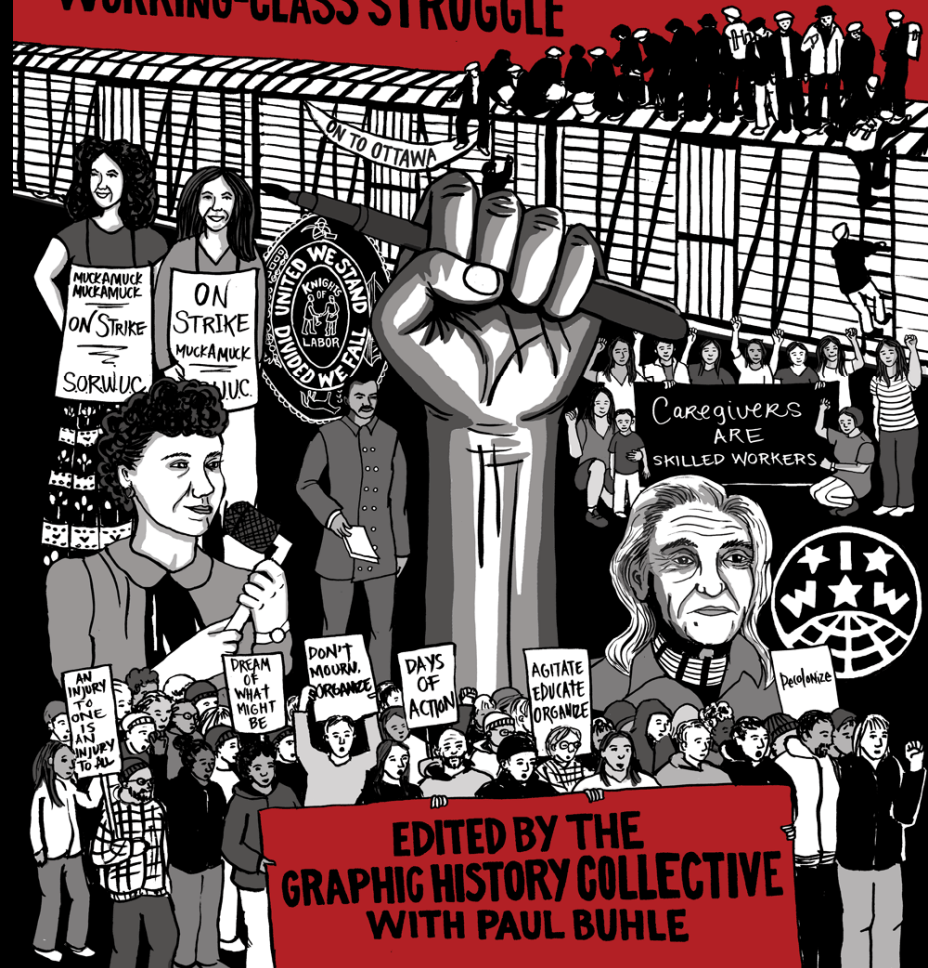


CRITICAL HERITAGE STUDIES OF LABOUR

- Disconnect between labour movement and heritage activism
- Can heritage studies of labour be a tool for progressive change?
- Going beyond knowledge production to work on solidarities, collaboration and action
- An urgent task in the context of the entrenchment of precarious work – part-time, flexible, contingent under neoliberal capitalism

DRAWN TO CHANGE

GRAPHIC HISTORIES OF
WORKING-CLASS STRUGGLE



MOBILITY AND HERITAGE

- “New” Mobilities (Cresswell, Sheller and Urry, etc.) constituted by and constitutive of social and economic relations under global capitalism
- Mobility, work and success
- Immobility, inequality, loss of place



RESEARCH BACKGROUND



The On the Move Partnership: Employment-Related Geographical Mobility in the Canadian Context

Our research: the construction industry



labour
studies

migration
studies

“new
mobilities”

THE TASK

1. Acknowledging and representing histories of mobile work with a view to making legible the struggles and sacrifices of working people
2. Recognizing the potential or actual losses occasioned by a reliance on mobile work in the present, particularly in peripheral locations
3. In order to inform and strengthen contemporary labour movements





“Well there was work home some part of the year, but in order to work pretty well all the time you had to travel. And that’s the nature of a Newfoundlander... A Newfoundlander lives out of a suitcase, works out of a suitcase.”

Source: Heritage Newfoundland



Source: Morrow Company

Well, I was born in ----- up on the southern shore. I started working **in St. John's**. Well, actually I went to trade school in ----- 1976, and did a plumbing course and my first job was in St. John's at the Village Mall. And then from there I went **[out west]** in 1979, working high-rises there downtown. The office buildings were going crazy back then. And then I come back from Calgary and got married, had a couple kids, and then I ended up working on the ---- Hospital. I built that and I think that was in '83 maybe. And then... where did I go from there... I went back to **St. John's** again and you know that ---- bank there on Water Street? And then from there I worked on the College of the North Atlantic. Yeah, a little bit. And then in '86 I went to **Toronto** and started working the high-rises again. And then from **Toronto** I came to **Hibernia**. Then I got into the industrial side of it, and went to the U.A. training centre in **St. John's** and went on a refresher course and got my pipefitting ticket. And then... after Hibernia I started going **out west again**. And then we came **home** for the Terra Nova project. Then I went to **Saint John, New Brunswick** for the King of Cats, Irving's new big expansion in Saint John... Then I worked up in **[Ontario]**... they did an expansion there [...] then **[elsewhere in Ontario]**. And then where did we go after that? Then we come... then we went... Then I moved back **[out west]** again. I worked **up north** for a bit and then I worked at Petro-Canada in **[Alberta]**, Shell in ---- , worked in **Regina** one winter at the upgrader there... the co-op upgrader right in **Regina**... and then it was home again, worked **Voisey's Bay**, two thousand-**** ... I was up in **Voisey's Bay**... And then this started here and I come here...



“Yeah, there was actually fellas that just slept in their vehicles. They just drove right across the island and hit every hall... They’d drive to Ontario’s hall and stop in and say hey do you have anything? If no, go to Manitoba.”







Burin, Newfoundland and Labrador

“Those guys grew up learning from their dads, right? Because back then you had to do everything yourself. You weren’t going paying somebody to do it. You know what I mean? And then for my generation, I guess... Like I learned a lot from my old man, right? It’s probably dying out now though.”

“I mean if you take a lot of young fellas they’re not so handy as the older guys, right? They’re not so well-versed in so many things.” (TI #2)





Social Sciences and Humanities
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en
sciences humaines du Canada

Canada

The On the Move Partnership is a project of the SafetyNet Centre for Occupational Health & Safety Research at Memorial University. On the Move is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Research & Development Corporation of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Canada Foundation for Innovation, and numerous university and community partners.

Le partenariat en mouvement est un projet du Centre *SafetyNet for Occupational Health & Safety Research* à l'Université Memorial. En mouvement est subventionné par le Conseil de recherche en sciences humaines du Canada, par la *Newfoundland and Labrador Research & Development Corporation*, par la Fondation canadienne pour l'innovation, ainsi que par de nombreux partenaires et universités.