



MAP A

19th Century Toronto: Labour History Walking Tour

Introduction

First things first: we acknowledge the Mississauga of New Credit, the aboriginal people whose ancestral lands Toronto is built on.

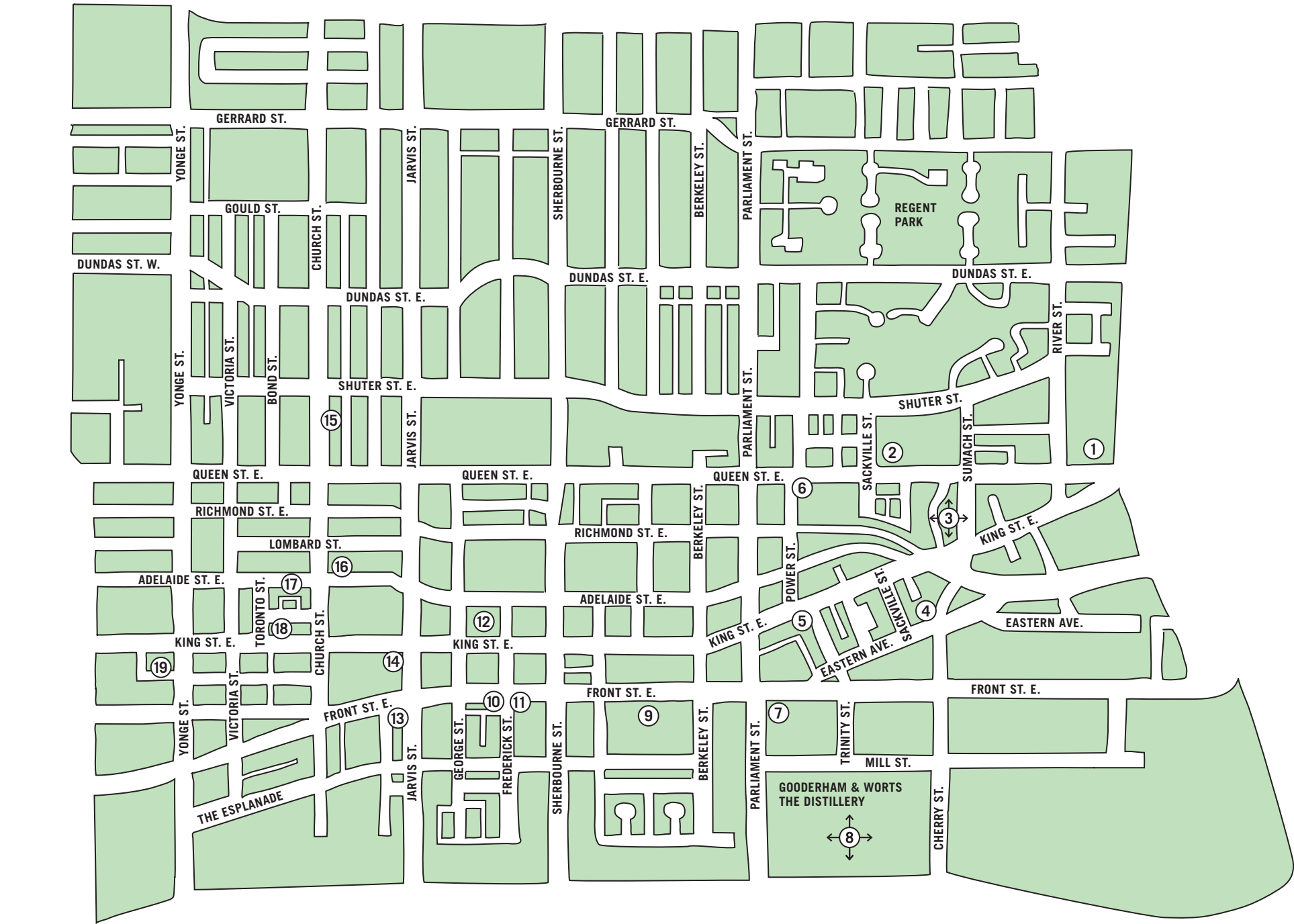
Toronto's rich and dramatic history of working people—the unions we organized, and the key battles we have waged and won—has largely been buried in official histories of the city. Just as city naturalists have uncovered the buried creeks that criss-cross the city in a process they call “sunshining” a river, *Mapping Our Work: Toronto Labour History Walking Tours* is a way to bring some of our union history into the light of day.

Mapping Our Work includes three walking tours, each covering a different time period and area: *Map A, 19th Century Toronto*, begins the city's working history; *Map B, Early 20th Century Toronto*, records Toronto's early industrial growth; and *Map C, Post-War Toronto*, takes us to key labour sites from the end of World War II to the present.

Mapping Our Work: Toronto Labour History Walking Tours (and an accompanying *Toronto Labour History Timeline* of key historical events in Toronto's labour movement) celebrate and chart the places and events of significance to working people. From Toronto's earliest days, through recessions and boom periods, through wars and peace-time, workers' organizing and militancy have achieved major social and political gains that continue to benefit everyone: an end to child labour, the legalization of unions, publicly funded education and public control over the “street railways,” now the Toronto Transit Commission. That militancy continued throughout the 20th century and into the present to ensure better housing, workers' compensation, health and safety legislation, medicare, unemployment insurance, equal pay, and human rights legislation, including the protection of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) rights.

The walking tours were developed by the School of Labour at George Brown College and CUPE Local 79's David Kidd, at the request of Toronto and York Region's Labour Council. We hope you enjoy reading about our proud history, and that you take an organized or self-guided walking tour. We encourage you to add your knowledge to this history and create new tours and new local histories.

Both the *Toronto Labour History Timeline* and *Mapping Our Work: Toronto Labour History Walking Tours* will be available at <http://www.labourcouncil.ca/> and www.georgebrown.ca/schooloflabour. Check these sites for updates, walking tours and podcast information.



A1. The Don Brewery (39 Old Brewery Lane, just N of Queen St E, E of River St; now the Malthouse Townhouses)

One of the three main brewery buildings, built as early as 1834, still stands today. Purchased in 1849 by Thomas Davies, it remained in the hands of the Davies family until the business was dissolved in 1910. Making beer required the craft skills of well-trained brewery workers. Initially they had strong bonds with the master brewer who owned the company, but by the turn of the century they were ready to form a union, the United Brewery Workers, to defend their own interests. In 1903, Toronto brewers created a common front to break the new union, but workers won their strike. All the city's breweries then recognized the union and accepted its union label.

A2. The Dominion Brewery (468–496 Queen St E, N side of Queen St, between Sunnyside and Spadina) **The Dominion Hotel** (500 Queen St E, on the NW corner of Queen and Spadina)

In 1878, Robert Davies left the family business, the Don Brewery, to start up the Dominion Hotel and Brewery, a very profitable venture. Davies also owned the Don Valley Brick Works (now the Evergreen Brick Works). The Dominion Brewery operated until 1936, and in 1987, the site was reestablished as Dominion Square, a retail and commercial space. The Dominion Hotel, which originally boasted an elegant performance space on its top floor, reopened in 1998 as a bar. Bartenders across Toronto first organized a union in 1899, and posted their union sign on the walls in the city's hotels for decades after.

A3. Corktown (the area bounded by Berkeley St, the Don River, Shuter St and the Richmond St E off-ramp and expressway)

From the early 1800s onward, Irish Catholic immigrants, particularly after the 1840s potato famine, crowded into housing in this area because of work opportunities in local factories, brickyards and distilleries. Some say the name comes from the many settlers from Ireland's County Cork, while others say the preponderance of breweries, pubs and cork-making factories named this area. Examples of early workers' cottages as well as late 19th century British-style row housing are found on such Corktown streets as Bright Street, Trinity Street, Wilkins Avenue, Ashby Place and Gilead Place. (See A6)

A4. Home of the Blackburns (19 Spadina Ave, at the corner of Eastern Ave (now the site of Ingeniook Community High School; see plaque)

Lucie and Thornton Blackburn were ex-slaves who escaped with considerable difficulty and after several arrests in the US before coming to Upper Canada in 1834. Shortly after their arrival here, they built a small one-storey frame house. Using plans from a Montreal model, Thornton Blackburn contracted Paul Bishop, a local skilled mechanic, to build a taxi cab. This was Toronto's first taxi cab company and it was extremely successful. The Blackburns participated in anti-slavery and community activities, and donated both time and money to help other fugitive slaves settle in their adopted home. (See B3)

A5. Little Trinity Church (425 King St E, E of Parliament St) and **Enoch Turner School House** (106 Trinity St, just S of King St, E of Parliament)

Little Trinity Church was built in 1843 so that workers who could not afford the high “pew rents” of St James Cathedral would be able to attend church. Local craftsmen donated both their labour and the bricks from Don Valley clay. Enoch Turner, an immigrant from England, who became wealthy through his brewing business and real estate, donated a schoolhouse to Little Trinity Church in 1848. Operating until 1859, this was Toronto's first free school, and it educated the children of immigrants and the poor.

A6. St Paul's Church and Cemetery (83 Power St, on Queen St E, E of Parliament St)

Corktown was the site of Toronto's first Catholic church, St Paul's, which was originally a red brick edifice established in 1822. East of the church was the cemetery, in use from 1822 to 1857. The site also contains plaques for the House of Providence, which opened in 1857 and operated for 100 years, giving food and shelter to the desperately poor, including many Irish immigrants. The present Italianate church was built in 1889 and was designated a basilica in 1999. (See A3)

A7. Toronto Rolling Mills (Parliament and Front Sts)

The Toronto Rolling Mills was established in 1857 by Sir Casimir Ozowski as a major supplier of iron rails to the railway companies. The Mills provided employment for the unskilled, mostly Irish, immigrants living in Corktown, and skilled British puddlers and rollers. By 1867, the Mills had a staff of 300, was producing 20,000 tons of rails annually and had expanded to several acres east of Cherry Street. Railways turned to steel rails, however, and, unable to convert, the Rolling Mills was closed in 1874, and the buildings demolished.

A8. The Distillery District (the area S of Front St and E of Parliament St to Cherry St)

The first distillery on this site was opened by James Worts in the 1830s and was continued after his suicide by his brother-in-law, William Gooderham. By the 1860s it was not only one of Toronto's biggest factories, but the largest distillery in the British Empire. It had the most sophisticated machinery and a staff of both skilled and unskilled workers to make whiskey—two million gallons a year by 1902. The owners had a close, paternalistic relationship with the workers. No union appeared until the Distillery, Rectifying, Wine, and Allied Workers Union signed up the company's workers in the 1940s. The company continued to produce right through prohibition in the 1920s, and the last whiskey was distilled in 1990.

A9. Standard Woolen Mills (227 Front St E at Berkeley St)

Along with the former site of Dalton's food processing company, and a gas purifying building (where workers purified gas from coal stored at the Eastern Gas), Standard Woolen Mills, built in 1882, now forms the Canadian Opera Company's Joey and Toby Tanenbaum Opera Centre. The textile mill's architect, E.J. Lennox, also designed Casa Loma and Toronto's old City Hall. The woolen mill used a lot of female labour on the new machinery that replaced older craft techniques.

A10. William Davies Company (145 Front St E, at Frederick St)

Starting with a stall selling cured ham and bacon in Toronto's St Lawrence Market just after his arrival in 1854, William Davies expanded to this building at Front and Frederick Streets. From this location workers shipped millions of pounds of pork cured in salt to Britain annually. An expansion in 1879 relocated the company to the south side of Front at the Don River, and made it the second largest pork processing facility in North America, earning Toronto its “Hogtown” nickname. Though cleared of any wrongdoing by a Royal Commission, the Davies Company was accused of profiteering and fraudulent meat curing during World War I. In 1927, it merged with the Harris Abattoir Company and Gunns Limited to form Canada Packers, the largest meat packing and processing company in Canada. Since 1991, it has been known as Maple Leaf Foods, and many of its workers are represented by the United Food and Commercial Workers.

A11. Toronto Street Railway Stables (165 Front St E)

Now the Lorraine Kimsa Theatre for Young People, the original horse barn for the Toronto Street Railway was built in 1886–87. When in 1886 the company refused to recognize the Knights of Labor as the workers' union, thousands of citizens boycotted streetcars driven by scabs. It was the city's first big streetcar strike. On January 26, 1920, after 30 years of lobbying by Toronto Labour Council, Toronto voters chose to make the transit system a public enterprise and the Toronto Transit Commission (TTC) was created. All of the buildings and yards enclosed by Sherbourne, Front, Frederick and Esplanade were owned and operated by the TTC up until the 1960s. The Toronto Street Railway was organized by the Amalgamated Transit Union, Local 113 and the ATU who represented Toronto transit workers since 1893.

A12. Christie's Bakery (Adelaide St entrance, 200 King St E, now George Brown College—St James Campus)

William Mellis Christie, an immigrant from Scotland, became a co-owner of a Toronto bakery in 1853. In 1868, he and Alexander Brown joined forces and in 1874 they opened a three-storey Christie, Brown and Company factory at Adelaide (then known as Duke Street) and Frederick Streets. The business expanded rapidly and workers were soon shipping biscuits across Canada. Five years later Christie bought out his partner. The Christie family sold the business in the 1920s to an American firm which retained the name and still operates a large factory near the foot of the Humber River and Lakeshore Boulevard West.

A13. St Lawrence Market (92 Front St E, at Jarvis St)

The original Market Block (from Front to King Streets, and from Church to Jarvis Streets) was proclaimed in 1803 by Governor Peter Hunter. The City of Toronto was incorporated from the Town of York in 1834 and for the first eleven years, city council members met in temporary quarters in a market building which once stood on the southwest corner of King Street East and Jarvis Street. That brick structure, the second market building to occupy the site, was built in 1831, but burned down during a great fire in 1849. It was replaced in 1850 by St Lawrence Hall which still stands today. The police station and a basement jail were also located here, as were public stocks to punish criminals. The market was an important location for workers' rallies in the 1800s.

A14. St Lawrence Hall (157 King St E, SE corner of King and Jarvis Sts)

Built in 1850, St Lawrence Hall has been the site of many historic public meetings, including a talk in the 1850s by former slave Frederick Douglass, an abolitionist and supporter of women's suffrage. Meetings and a rally for the Nine Hour Day movement were held here, as were in the 1890s, talks by American Federation of Labor (AFL) organizers. In 1967, Toronto tradespeople and skilled crafts workers from England restored the building as a centennial project.

A15. The Atheneum Club (E side of Church St, S of Shuter)

This was the location of Toronto's Labor Temple, home for many years to the Toronto Labour Council and several other union locals. The first local labour council, the Toronto Trades Assembly, was launched in 1871 in the Moulder's Hall on King Street East, west of Parliament Street. That body collapsed a few years later, but the Toronto Trades and Labour Council was born in 1882. It met in a rented hall until 1904 when it moved into its own Labor Temple on this Church Street site, where it met until 1968. The council then moved into the suburban headquarters of the Ontario Federation of Labour at Don Mills and Eglinton. The Labor Temple's façade was retained when Concert Properties and the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS) put up the current building in 2005.

A16. The York Mechanics' Institute (NE corner of Church and Adelaide Sts)

The Mechanics' Institute moved from rented quarters into an impressive building of its own on this site in 1861. The aim of the Mechanics' Institutes movement, which started in Britain, was to give workers an opportunity to learn the applied technology of the crafts and manufacturing processes introduced in the Industrial Revolution. This building housed the original working man's library, when unions were still not legal, and lectures and classes for workers were given here. In 1884, the holdings of the Mechanics' Institute were transferred to the city to be part of Toronto's first public library, which was housed here. The site is empty now, and its nearest neighbour is a coffee shop.

A17. The York County Court House (S side of Adelaide St E, E side of Toronto St)

Now a restaurant, this courthouse was built in 1852. In 1872, along with other employers, George Brown, the Liberal owner of *The Globe*, had his printers in the Toronto Typographical Union charged with criminal conspiracy for going on strike for the nine-hour day. The Toronto printers were tried and sentenced here. Later that year, in order to gain workers' support, Conservative Prime Minister John A. Macdonald passed the Trade Unions Act. The Act established the legality of trade unions, but retained restrictions on union activity. (See A19)

A18. Toronto's second jail (on Toronto St, at the corner of Court St and just N of King St)

Here was the gallows where blacksmith Samuel Lount and farmer Peter Matthews were hanged for their part in the Rebellion of 1837 against the colonial elites' land-granting policies and denial of political rights. Twelve rebels stood trial for participating in the Rebellion; six were convicted, and Lount and Matthews were executed. They are buried in the Necropolis in Cabbagetown, near Riverdale Farm.

A19. The Globe (Melinda St, running W off Yonge St, one block S of King St; plaque at Queen's Park, on the NE corner of Grosvenor St and Queen's Park Cres E)

In 1832 Toronto's printers organized the city's first union, the Toronto Typographical Society. Four years later, they struck for better wages against local newspaper publishers. George Brown arrived in Canada in 1843 and the next year started *The Globe*, locating it on Melinda Street. He became a sworn enemy of the union, which represented skilled typesetters (before the invention of the linotype machine). In 1872, a Nine Hour Movement emerged to demand a nine-hour day for all workers, and developed a coordinated strategy of general strikes to start in May 1872 in Hamilton. But the Toronto printers walked out in March. George Brown led the other newspaper publishers in resisting their demands and used the Criminal Code to have their leaders arrested for seditious conspiracy. In April 1872, 10,000 supporters of the printers rallied in Queen's Park. They were freed when Brown's political opponent, Sir John A. Macdonald, passed a new Trade Unions Act to legalize unions. The printers nonetheless lost their strike. A plaque commemorating the strike can be found on the edge of Queen's Park. The Toronto Typographical Union is now part of Communications Energy and Paperworkers Local 591G, the oldest continuous union in Toronto. (See A17)



Acknowledgements

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UNITE HERE Local 75 members celebrate annual Labour Day march to the CNE.

*Though in Canada “labour” is normally spelt with a “u,” some Toronto union organizations used “labor” in their names, explaining the inconsistency in the text.

Photo Credits

Map A

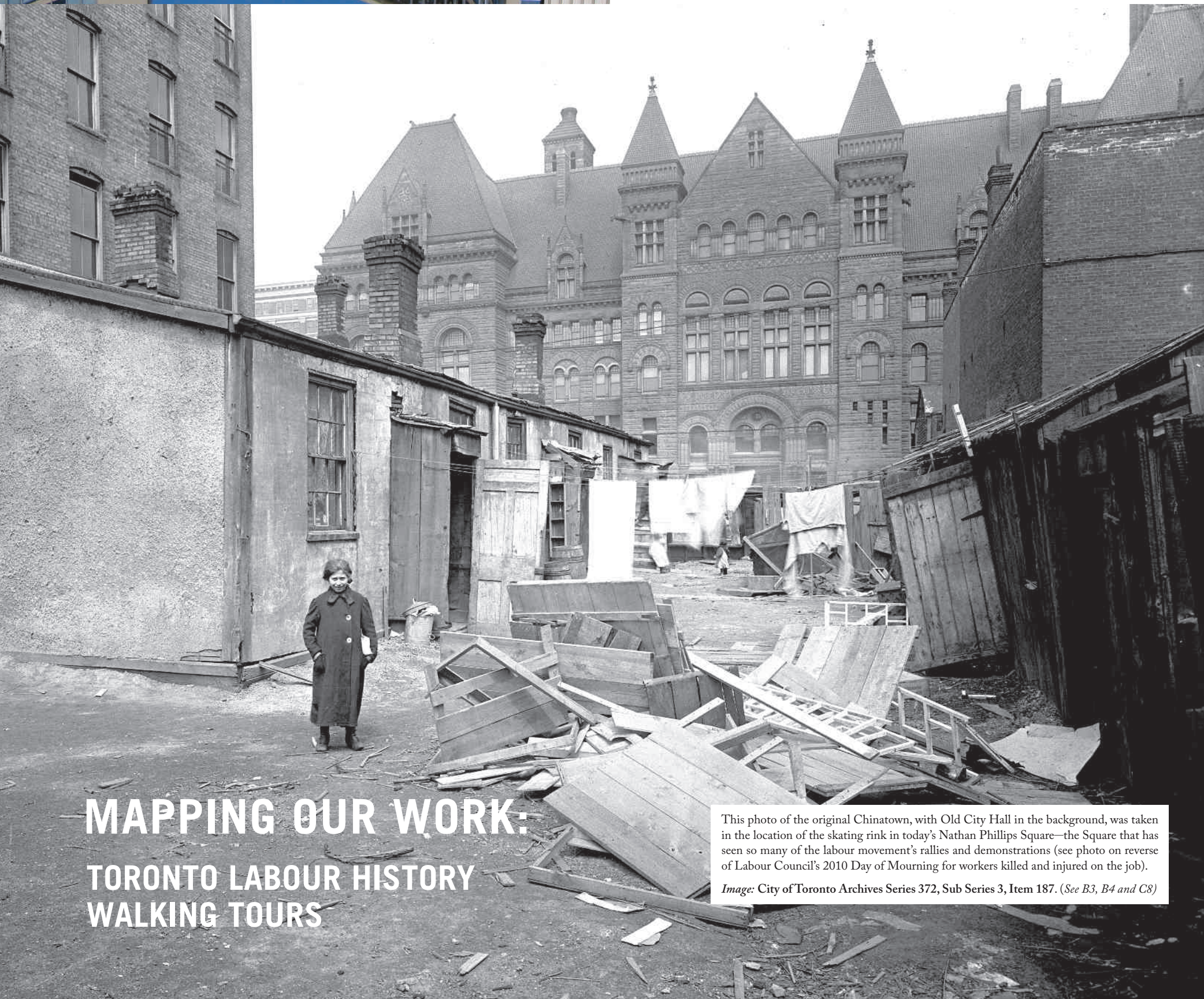
A1: “Booze in Old Town Toronto,” Enoch Turner Schoolhouse, www.virtualmuseum.ca and J. Timperlake, *Illustrated Toronto: Past and Present* (Toronto: Peter Gross, 1877), p. 270; A2, A3, A4, A5, A6, A8, A9, A10, A11, A12, A13, A14, A15, A17, A18, A19: Maureen Hynes, 2010; A7: William Armstrong, 1864 pastel, *Toronto Rolling Mills* in Edith G. Firth, *Toronto in Art: 150 Years through Artists' Eyes* (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside, 1983); A16: William Denby, *Last Toronto* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1978).

Map B

B1: Labour Management Documentation Centre, Cornell University (5780p, # 1600), in Ruth A. Frager, *Sweatshop Strife* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992); B2: John MacLennan, 2010; B3: City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Sub Series 32, Item 320; B4: City of Toronto Archives Series 372, Sub Series 32, Item 187; B5, B7, B8, B10, B11, B12, B13, B14, B16: Maureen Hynes, 2010; B6: Maureen Jennings, 1984; B9: International Ladies' Garment Workers in Rosemary Donegan, *Spadina Avenue* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985); B15: http://farm1.static.flickr.com/117/John_MacLennan_2010.

Map C

C1: John MacLennan, 2010; C2: City of Toronto Archives: Series 381, File 37, Item 6679-1; C3, C4, C6, C7, C9, C10, C11, C13, C14, C15, C16: Maureen Hynes, 2010; C5: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Old_Toronto_Star_Building; C8: <http://www.opseu.org/organizing/history/1990/Day-sOfActionOct96.jpg>; C12: *The Torontoist*, http://torontoist.com/attachments/jaimc%20w%2007_11_21_Maple_Leaf_Gardens_Turns_76.JPG; C17: Toronto Telegram, York University Archives (Box 354, 2347) in Rosemary Donegan, *Spadina Avenue* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985); Toronto and York Region Labour Day photo above photo credits: John MacLennan, 2009.



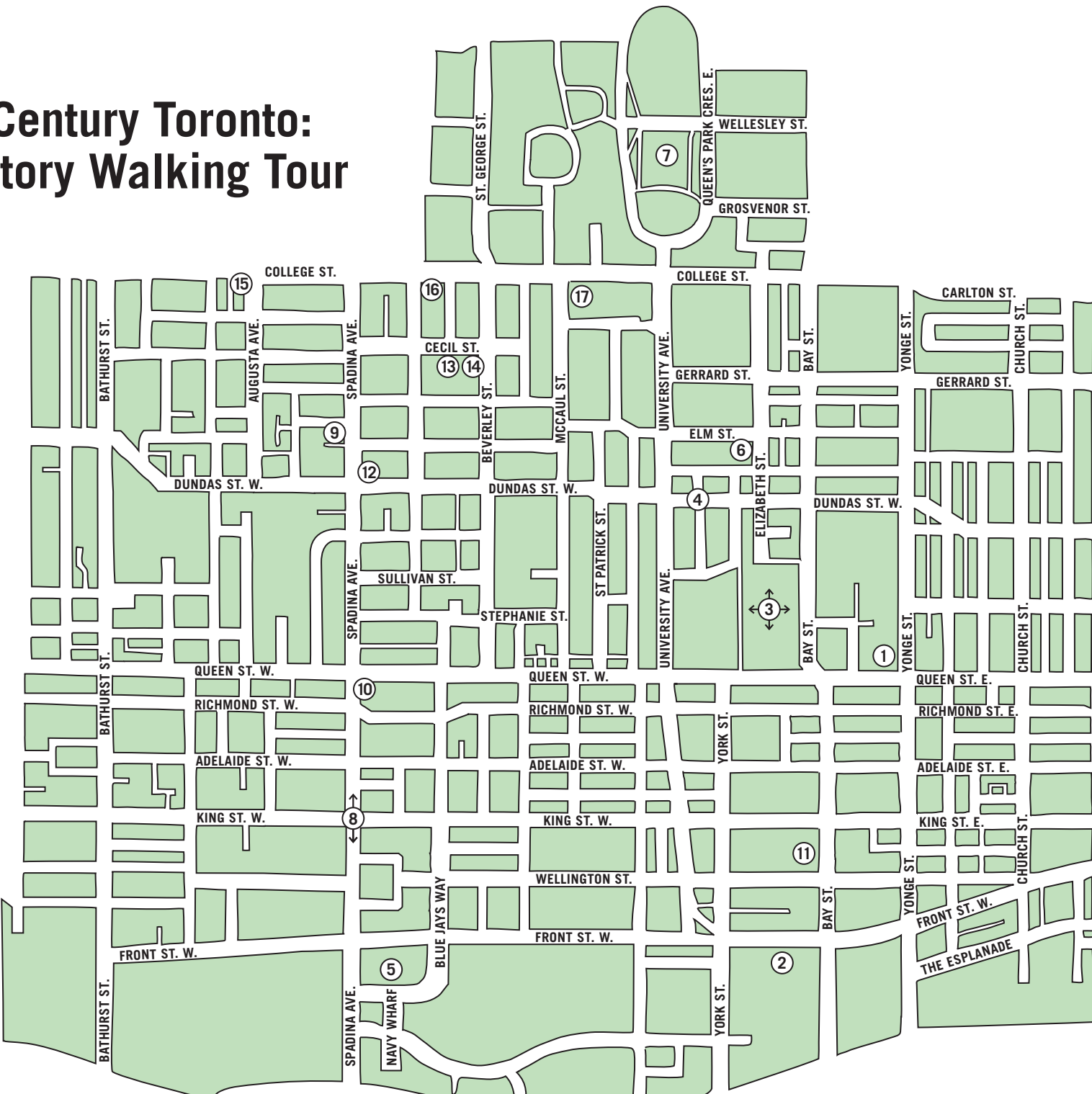
MAPPING OUR WORK: TORONTO LABOUR HISTORY WALKING TOURS

This photo of the original Chinatown, with Old City Hall in the background, was taken in the location of the skating rink in today's Nathan Phillips Square—the Square that has seen so many of the labour movement's rallies and demonstrations (see photo on reverse of Labour Council's 2010 Day of Mourning for workers killed and injured on the job).

Image: City of Toronto Archives Series 372, Sub Series 3, Item 187. (See B3, B4 and C8)

MAP B

Early 20th Century Toronto: Labour History Walking Tour



B1. The various Toronto Eaton's stores and factories (at Queen and Yonge Sts; on Bay St at Terauley; Eaton's College St; and later, in the Eaton Centre at Yonge and Dundas)

The T. Eaton Company employed large numbers of workers in their factories to make garments for their stores. These were the sites of huge organizing efforts by the International Ladies' Garment Workers' union from the 1910s to the 1930s and by the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union (now part of the United Steelworkers) in the 1940s and again in 1987. In this photo from 1912, people show support for the (mostly Jewish) women who sewed linings into coats and who were laid off when Eaton's decided the men who made the coats could also sew in the linings. *(See C11)*



B2. Union Station (63 Front St W between Bay and York Sts)

Union Station, originally constructed in 1872, has been the reception depot for many immigrants, their first contact with the city. The railway and Union Station helped transform Toronto from a sleepy town to a busy industrial and commercial centre. Starting in the 19th century, railway stations like Union Station were also the sites for significant unionizing drives for railway employees—first the engineers, firemen, conductors and trainmen on the trains—and eventually the less privileged workers, notably the African-Canadians who worked as sleeping car porters. Toronto's Stanley Grizzle was a key leader in the Canadian drive of the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters. *(See B15 and C2)*



B3. St John's Ward, known as "The Ward" (the area between College St, Queen St, University Ave and Yonge St; it was centred on Terauley St)

In the 1830s Thornton Blackburn, a fugitive slave, purchased land around the area and provided other fugitive slaves with inexpensive housing. By the 1850s, many Black families had settled in the Ward. It was a gateway neighbourhood for immigrants seeking refuge from the 1848 European revolutions, the Irish potato famine, and oppressive regimes in Russia and Eastern Europe. For the many Jewish, Italian, Chinese and other newcomers, jobs were close by, and housing was cheap, though often run-down. The area was Toronto's best-known "slum," and many social reformers worked here to improve living conditions. Many of the lanes and streets have disappeared as the Ward was razed first for the construction of the Toronto General Hospital, and later for the construction of the new City Hall, Nathan Phillips Square and office towers. *(See A4 and C9)*

Image: City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Sub Series 32, Item 320.



B4. The original Chinatown (along York and Elizabeth Sts)

After the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway, many Chinese railroad workers arrived in Toronto. Toronto's first and earliest Chinatown (1878-1960) was close to Union Station. Early Chinese migrants set up various mutual aid associations in order to survive and overcome marginalization and discrimination. In the 1950s, to make room for Toronto's new City Hall and other facilities, much of the original Chinatown was razed. This photo, with Old City Hall in the background, was taken where Nathan Phillips Square's skating rink now stands. *(See C9)*

Image: City of Toronto Archives, Series 372, Sub Series 32, Item 187.



B5. Memorial to Chinese Railway Workers (Blue Jays Way and Navy Wharf Court)

In 1989, this sculpture by Elizabeth Garnett was dedicated to the Chinese Railroad workers who, though they remain nameless, "helped construct the Canadian Pacific railway through the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and British Columbia, thus uniting Canada geographically and politically," as the monument's inscription describes their work. Between 1880 and 1885, 17,000 men from Guangdong province in China worked on the western section of the railways in intense danger and social isolation. More than 4,000 Chinese workers died during this period; survivors had no means of going back to China and many drifted for years, destitute, along the completed track.



B6. House of Industry (87 Elm St near Elizabeth St)

The House of Industry was built in 1848 (architect William Thomas). It was the site of the original "relief" or social assistance office for Toronto from the 1830s on. Homeless and unemployed people, orphaned and abandoned children, recent immigrants and the families of servicemen who demonstrated need could get lodging, services, firewood and food. Many men were obliged to do physical labour to "earn" a relief payment. The government started to assume more responsibility for these services, and the House of Industry was phased out in 1947.



B7. Queen's Park (111 Wellesley St W at University Ave N of College St)

Demonstrations and rallies too numerous to cite have been held here, but some significant ones include the 1872 rally of 10,000 in support of jailed printers in the Nine Hour Movement strike. In the 1930s, Communist and union Free Speech Movement speakers were routinely suppressed and arrested by the police's "Red Squad," but nonetheless huge May Day rallies were held in the park. In January 1970, the Ontario Federation of Labour organized a six-week vigil for medicare. The grounds contain a plaque to the Printers' Strike of 1872 (on the northeast corner of Grosvenor Street and Queen's Park Crescent E) and one to the "Mac-Paps," a unit of the International Brigades which opposed the fascist forces bent on overthrowing the government of Spain (on Queen's Park Crescent W, on the west side of the legislature near the entrance to the Lieutenant-General's residence). *(See C14)*



B8. Spadina Avenue (N from Front St to College St)

The focal point of Jewish settlement and community development from the late 1800s till the 1950s, Spadina Avenue, with its aggressive union organizing, political radicalism and inspiring cultural activity, deserves a place on this map. The upper floors of its buildings housed garment factories, providing employment for successive waves of immigrants—Jewish, Chinese, Hungarian, Portuguese, Latin American and Vietnamese. Spadina Avenue was the staging ground for union floats and marches into the "Ex," the Canadian National Exhibition. City of Toronto public art marks the cultural history of Spadina: see Stephen Cruise's *Uniform Measure/Stack*, a giant thimble resting atop large buttons (Richmond and Spadina) and Randy and Benecic's *Social Theatre* pieces (at the King and Front streetcar stops on Spadina).



B9. Toronto Labor Lyceum (346 Spadina Ave, at St Andrew's St)

The union movement had a strong presence on Spadina among the many garment factories. For four decades after it was built in 1929, this building housed many international garment union offices and a huge hall for banquets and speakers. Emma Goldman spoke here in the 1930s, and on the day after she died on May 14, 1940, a three-hour memorial for her was held here. In the photo, International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU) workers and their spouses celebrate Labour Day at a banquet here in 1940. The building now houses the Bright Pearl Restaurant.



B10. Union offices (441 Queen St E, SE corner of Queen St and Spadina Ave)

The upper floors of this building held the offices of numerous unions during the 1930s, including the United Shoe Workers of America, the United Garment Workers, the Brotherhood of Painters and Decorators and the Workers' Unity League. The Workers' Unity League was a union central organized by the Communist Party during the 1930s as a left breakaway union from the American Federation of Labor; it did most of the worker organizing during the Depression years before it was closed in 1935 and went back into the AFL. This building also housed the office of an Italian newspaper, *La Voce Degli Italo-Canadesi*.



B11. Toronto Stock Exchange murals (234 Bay St)

Designed in 1937 by Canadian artist and muralist Charles Comfort, the limestone friezes and stainless steel door medallions on the Art Deco exterior of the Stock Exchange depict a vigorous industrial and resource economy, largely dominated by men. The Stock Exchange itself was formally begun by 24 men who gathered at Toronto's Masonic Hall in October 1861. Trading on Tuesday, October 29, 1929 saw a stock market crash that plunged the world into a near decade-long depression, with disastrous results for working people and many parallels to the 2008 crash. The TSE closed in April 1997 to manage Canadian capitalism from a "floorside" or electronic trading environment.



B12. The Standard (285 Spadina Ave, just N of the corner of Dundas, E side)

Many political meetings were held in the Yiddish theatre, the Standard. In 1932 the police suppressed a performance here of *Eight Men Speak*, a radical play about the arrest and imprisonment of the Canadian Communist Party leadership. Later incarnations transformed this building into the Strand movie theatre, the Victory Burlesque, the Golden Harvest, and now, a bank and a small store.



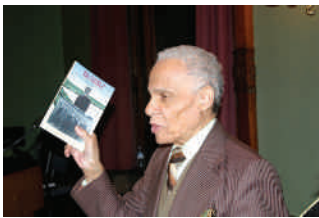
B13. United Steelworkers Hall (25 Cecil St, E of Spadina Ave)

The United Steelworkers of America moved into this building in 1972. A central meeting place of the Toronto labour movement, the Steelworkers' Hall has hosted hundreds of influential speakers, rallies, panels, coalitions, memorials and cultural events.



B14. Jewish Old Folks' Home (33 Cecil St, E of Spadina Ave)

The Jewish Old Folks' Home, built in 1918, was the predecessor of the modern Baycrest Hospital. By 1972, Toronto's Labor Lyceum had moved into the former Old Folks' Home, bringing with it many Toronto union offices. Its lettering is still on the building's front. Both 25 and 33 Cecil Street buildings are now fully owned by the United Steelworkers.



B15. United Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) (S side of College St, W of Augusta Ave)

Many in Toronto's Black community met at the United Negro Improvement Association, which hosted social events from the 1930s onwards. The Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, the first trade union in Canada organized by and for African-Canadians, had their offices on the second floor. Stanley Grizzle, pictured here with his 1998 memoir, *My Name's Not George*, was a key leader in organizing the Sleeping Car Porters' union and an important human rights champion. *(See B2)*



B16. Oddfellows Hall (229 College St, E of Spadina Ave)

This building was the site of the first meeting of the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) in 1919. Within a year, its original membership of 60 teachers had grown to over 1000 members from 14 districts. Now the OSSTF has 60,000 members.

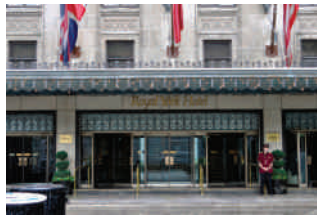
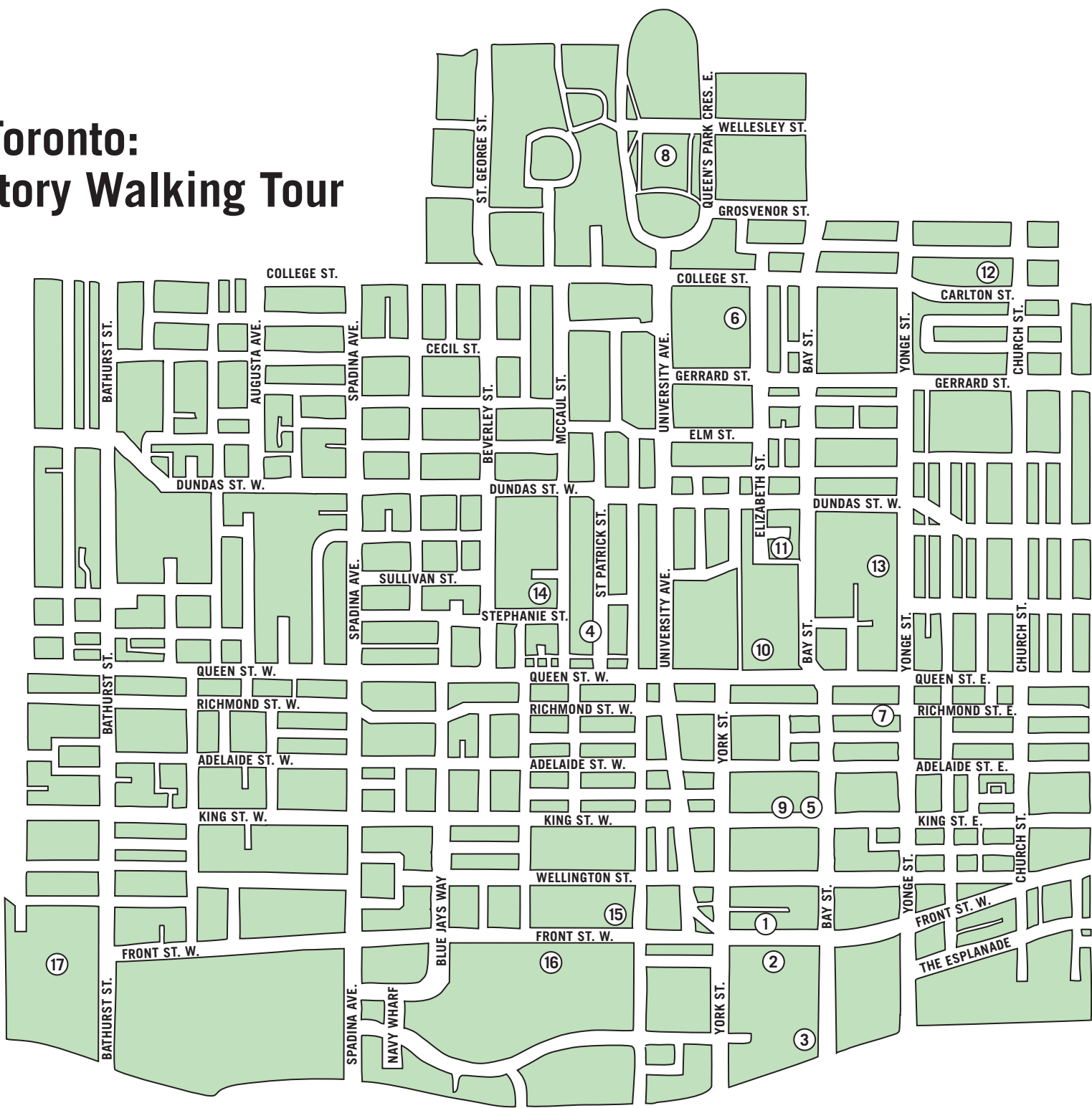


B17. Board of Education (155 College St, W of University Ave; now houses the University of Toronto's Faculty of Nursing)

From the 1870s on, Labour Council and other progressive organizations advocating for the aged, social services, emergency medical services dispatch, parks and recreation, public health and supports for public infrastructure. The union also represents workers at Bridgepoint Hospital and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The union has gone on strike three times since the city's amalgamation in 1998 to protect the workers' collective agreements and preserve public services.

MAP C

Post-War Toronto: Labour History Walking Tour



C1. Royal York Hotel (100 Front St W)

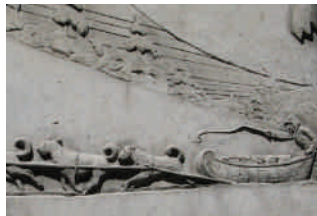
Opened in 1929 by the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the Royal York was once the biggest hotel in the British Empire, and certainly one of the most luxurious. Paul Robeson was one of many Black performers who had to use the back door to enter the hotel. In the early post-war years, most of the large downtown Toronto hotels had unionized staff. In 1961-62, the CPR solidified its intention to break union strength in Toronto's hospitality industry, gripping the 1200 members of Local 299 of the Hotel and Club Employees Union in a bitter 11-month strike. The CPR used the tunnel connecting Union Station to the hotel as a recruitment office for scabs. The strike divided the city, with some government officials crossing the picket line to hold meetings there. UNITE HERE now represents workers at the Royal York, a key location for many of its current campaigns.



C2. Toronto subway and Union Station (65 Front St W)

As it was in the early 20th century, Union Station continued after World War II to be a vital reception depot for immigrants. Union Station's importance grew with the first Toronto subway. A 1946 referendum approved the construction on the condition of federal funding—which never materialized because of a failure to agree on a post-war employment program to support the subway. The city proceeded with a scaled-back design, abandoning a second subway line along Queen Street. Post-war shortages delayed the start of construction until September 1949. An intensive "cut and cover" construction technique was used. After years of work by immigrant workers, the Yonge line was opened on March 30, 1954, to *Toronto Star* headlines of "12 minutes from Eglinton to Union Station." *(See B2)*

Image: City of Toronto Archives: Series 381, File 37, Item 6679-1.



C3. Post Office, Terminal "A" (40 Bay St, at Lakeshore Blvd W)

The Post Office, once the site of many heroic labour struggles, is now occupied by the Air Canada Centre. Its only remnants are exterior murals on the theme of "communication through the ages." Despite not having the legal right to strike in 1965, postal workers walked out, gaining a significant wage increase and a Royal Commission investigation into working conditions. In 1981, after extensive lobbying by the Canadian Union of Postal Workers (CUPW) and other unions, Parliament passed legislation guaranteeing the provision of basic postal services to all Canadians, no matter their location. Also in 1981, recognizing the injustice suffered by women workers who take substantial pay losses to give birth and raise children, CUPW demanded maternity leave. After a 45-day strike, CUPW became the first national union to win this right—and started an avalanche of other unions making the same demand. This military ultimately won for Canadian workers, regardless of union membership, the right to pregnancy and parental leave.



C4. Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 79 (34 St Patrick St)

Since 1942, CUPE Local 79 has represented thousands of City of Toronto workers who provide clerical and cleaning services, hostel care, daycare centres, homes for the aged, social services, emergency medical services dispatch, parks and recreation, public health and supports for public infrastructure. The union also represents workers at Bridgepoint Hospital and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation. The union has gone on strike three times since the city's amalgamation in 1998 to protect the workers' collective agreements and preserve public services.



C8. Queen's Park (111 Wellesley St W, at College St and University Ave)

The history of demonstrations, rallies and strikes continued here post-war: the Ontario Federation of Labour organized a six-week vigil here for medicare in 1969-70. In 1973, Ontario elementary and secondary school teachers walked off their jobs to demand the right to strike, marching from Maple Leaf Gardens to Queen's Park. Teachers engaged in mass resignations until they got the right to strike in 1975. Thousands, including many Toronto trade unionists who had worked against apartheid, cheered Nelson Mandela here in 1990. In March 1996, striking members of the Ontario Public Service Employees' Union surrounded the legislature protesting the planned layoffs of 13,000 members by the Harris government, a confrontation that turned violent. In October 1996, after unionists and their supporters shut down the city for a day, a quarter of a million people crowded into Queen's Park as part of 11 province-wide Days of Action against the Harris government. *(See B7)*



C5. Toronto Star, Toronto Telegram and Globe and Mail on strike (photo of Old Toronto Star building, 80 King St W, now the site of First Canadian Place)

In 1964, printers at all three dailies, the *Toronto Star*, *The Telegram* and *The Globe and Mail* went out on a long and disastrous strike. The printers, members of the International Typographical Union, took a stand against technological change and the introduction of more sophisticated computer equipment. However, members of the Southern Ontario Newspaper Guild continued working, and the papers continued publishing with the help of scabs. The following year, printers voted to return to work, but were then locked out. Their picket lines finally came down in 1972, but with their jobs overtaken by new technologies, the unionized printers never went back to work.



C6. University Health Network, Toronto General Hospital (200 Elizabeth St, at Gerrard St)

In the winter of 1981, 14,000 Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) hospital workers across the province, including members at the Toronto General Hospital, walked off their jobs for eight days in an illegal strike against the Ontario Hospital Association. Frustrated in their fight for wage and benefits improvements by legislation that does not allow hospital workers the right to strike, workers proceeded to defy provincial back-to-work legislation. CUPE President Grace Hartmann was sentenced to 45 days in jail; two other CUPE officials, Lucy Nicholson and Ray Arsenault, also served jail time. The strike mobilized CUPE members to stand together to resist staffing and program cuts, and to improve their working conditions and provincial health care standards.



C7. Cloud Garden Park and Tribute to Construction Workers (between Yonge and Bay, Richmond and Temperance Sts)

This park, built over a parking garage, has little space to spread out so ascends in vertical space, mirroring the tall buildings surrounding it. In the middle of the park's wall on the east side, and continuing down to Temperance Street, is a monument designed by artist Margaret Priest. Inset panels of construction materials commemorate the tradespeople who built Toronto; each panel was designed and made by a different union. The red oxide steel grid framework crosses, says Priest, a gallery or a quilt sampler to make visible the contribution of construction workers to the life of the city.



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C9. First Canadian Place (100 King St W, NE corner of King and Bay Sts)

Built in 1975 on the site of the old Toronto Star building, largely by immigrant labour, the First Canadian Place is, at 72 storeys, the tallest of Toronto's downtown towers. In 1984, an ultimately successful six-week-long strike by predominantly Portuguese women night cleaners paved the way for decent wages, basic security and workplace respect.



C10. Nathan Phillips Square (Toronto City Hall, 100 Queen St W)

The huge expanse of Nathan Phillips Square is the legacy of Toronto's first Chinatown and the immigrant housing in the "Ward," both of which were razed to build the new City Hall and some of the surrounding towers, hotels and hospitals. The square has hosted countless public gatherings, concerts, rallies, commemorations and demonstrations since its completion in 1965. City workers are represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees, Locals 79 and 416. *(See cover photos, B3 and B4)*



C11. Larry Sefton Park (Bay and Hagerman Sts)

In a small site just north of the new City Hall on Bay Street, is a parkette purchased by the United Steelworkers and donated to the city. This location and its sculpture and plaques honour Larry Sefton, former director of District 6 of the United Steelworkers. Toronto and York Region Labour Council has frequently gathered members in this park to commemorate the annual April 28 Day of Mourning for Workers killed or injured on the job.



C12. Maple Leaf Gardens (60 Carlton St, just E of Yonge St)

A sports and cultural landmark in Toronto, Maple Leaf Gardens is also the site of many important political and labour rallies. In 1934, 17,000 people packed the Gardens (2,000 were turned away) to hear Tim Buck, Communist Party leader recently released from Kingston Penitentiary. In May 1965, Tommy Douglas spoke at Maple Leaf Gardens in support of medicare as part of a federal election rally. In 1997 the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation walked off their jobs for ten days to protest the Harris government's Bill 160; one of their rallies filled Maple Leaf Gardens.



C13. The Eaton Centre (Dundas St and Yonge St)

After months of organizing, 1,200 workers in six Eaton's stores in Toronto joined the Retail Wholesale and Department Store Union. In 1984, after fruitless bargaining, they walked out on a certification strike that lasted more than six months. Despite strong support from women's groups in Toronto, the contract they got was weak, and two years later, workers in five of the six stores voted to decertify their union. *(See B1)*



C14. University Settlement House (23 Grange Rd)

As a result of demands by Chinese women garment workers at University Settlement House (USH), numerous English in the Workplace programs were offered in garment factories up and down Spadina Avenue from the 1970s to the 1990s. Negotiated by unions, these programs hired ESL teachers to give workers a once-weekly class, with one hour paid for by the employer and the second hour on the workers' time. At its height, there were over a hundred union-sponsored English in the Workplace programs in the city. The USH also spearheaded organizing for better employment standards and health and safety among Chinese restaurant workers in the 1980s and 1990s.



C15. The Hundred Workers sculpture (200 Front St E, at Simcoe Park)

This monument, by John Scott and Stewart H. Pollock, commemorates the workers of Ontario who have died in the workplace. A selection of actual incidents, one from each of the years between 1901 and 2000, were chosen to honour workers who have lost their lives in workplace accidents. A blank plaque at the east end signifies the accident that has not yet happened. Pictured here is the sculpture of a kneeling worker, *Anatomy of Presention*, by Derek Lo and Lana Winkler, also sponsored by the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board.



C16. CN Tower (301 Front St W)

Besides becoming the worldwide symbol for the city of Toronto, this communications and observation tower was, from 1975 until 2006, the world's tallest freestanding construction on land. Workers began foundation work in February 1973. Once the tower's base was built, a team of 1,500 workers used the technique of "continuous concrete pour," day and night, over approximately eight months to complete the job. A large metal platform was raised about six feet a day as the concrete below set. When the tower was topped off in April 1975, two workers conducted a daring celebration. With the assistance of crane operator Winston Winton, ironworker Bill Eustace grabbed the hook at the end of a crane, let go and parachuted to ground. Both were freed.



C17. The Canadian National Exhibition (S of Gardiner Expressway, N of Lakeshore Blvd W, W of Strachan Ave)

Toronto's first Labour Day was held in 1882, twelve years before the federal government's made it a public holiday. In 1886, for the first time, the Labour Day parade marched into the Canadian National Exhibition. The photo of workers from the 1950s shows the size (and discipline!) of the trade union contingents on Labour Day. On June 26, 1961, the CNE Stadium was the scene of a rally by 17,000 Italian construction workers in the midst of their second recognition strike against the Hogg's Hollow disaster on March 17, 1960. That disaster killed five immigrant men. The activism of the labour movement led to a Royal Commission on health and safety, and ultimately new legislation to protect workers.