**Artifact 1**

**Artifact 2**

**Artifact 3**

**Artifacts/Images**

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**Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters**

For several decades until the late 1980s, this site was a large coach yard where sleeping car porters working for the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) prepared passenger cars for travel to the United States and across Canada, which could take up to four days and nights. Black men were preferred for the job because of their long history in domestic service to whites. Porters working for Canadian railways came from Black communities in Canada, but were also recruited from the United States and the Caribbean.

Porters faced institutional racism in all aspects of their work; their pay was lower, they were barred from promotions to supervisory positions, and they were excluded fromwhite railway workers’ unions. They began to organize, most successfully in 1939, by joining forces with the Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters (BSCP), an American union created in 1925.

On May 18, 1945, the BSCP became the first Black union in Canada to sign an agreement with its employer, the CPR. Among other benefits, porters starting salaries increased, they received pay for downtime on the road, and, after 1955, they could be promoted to sleeping car conductor. The BSCP’s organizing efforts and civil rights advocacy left a powerful legacy that influenced human rights policy and labour relations in Canada.

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