



Vancouver's first permanent courthouse after the addition, opened in 1890 and fronted on Cambie and Hastings Streets. The courthouse was torn down in 1911, and the location became Victory Square after the Great War. The square incorporates the steps of the original courthouse.

Vancouver's Courthouses

THOMAS SORBY, who also designed the the first Hotel Vancouver, was the architect of the first courthouse built by Turnbull and Company of New Westminster at a cost of \$18,000. The upper floor consisted of a single courtroom, the judge's office and a law library, while the bottom floor housed the county registrar, the timber inspector, an assessor and a janitor.



Themis, the Greek Goddess of Justice, by sculptor Jack Harman, stands on the 4th floor of Vancouver's Law Courts. The city's third courthouse was designed by world-renowned Vancouver architect Arthur Erickson in 1973.

During the construction phase, assessor A. E. Beck questioned its size, and by completion date the new courthouse proved to be too small and had to be enlarged by more than three times its original size. N. E. Hoffar designed the new addition, which was built by J. M. Luckie and Edward Cook at a cost of \$47,000. The top of the addition was crowned with a raised cupola, on top of which stood a statue of Justice. Even with the new addition, Vancouver's first permanent courthouse had a short life span. In 1905 architect Francis M. Rattenbury won the contract to build the second courthouse.

A civic reception by Vancouver Mayor James Findlay at the new courthouse welcoming the Duke and Duchess of Connaught on 12 September 1912 proved to be a highlight in the city's pre-war era. As soon as the second courthouse opened for trials, the original building went under the wrecking ball and was torn down. At the end of the Great War the site became Victory Square, and a cenotaph was erected to commemorate the soldiers who had died in France and Belgium. By design or by coincidence, the site was directly across Hastings Street and opposite the Dominion Building. According to folklore, this beautiful historic structure, at one time the tallest building in the British Empire, was built with the Kaiser's money.

- 1 Hastings Mill
- 2 Flack Building
- 3 Inns of Court Building
- 4 First Courthouse
- 5 *The Province* Office
- 6 Victoria House Boarding School
- 7 Central School
- 8 City Hospital & Grounds

VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE HOLY ROSARY CATHEDRAL. Looking northeast towards the intersection of Pender and Hamilton Streets clearly shows the original courthouse with the larger addition that was crowned with the cupola with the Statue of Justice, circa 1910.







Above

James Findlay was the first Vancouver mayor to wear the new gold civic chain of office at the official opening of the courthouse by the Duke and Duchess of Connaught on 12 September 1912. The ornate chain was designed by Henry Birks Jewellers. Wrought in 14-karat gold, the chain is of handsome design and splendid workmanship. It is composed of five shields that are each carved with designs depicting the five principal industries of the province: Forestry, Shipping, Manufacturing, Mining and Tourism.

Right

Mayor James Findlay welcomed the Duke and Duchess of Connaught to a civic reception at the newly-completed Vancouver Court House on 18 September 1912. The arrival of the "horseless carriage," the automobile, greatly altered the character of the royal tour. Only two teams of horses appear in this photo. The licence plate numbers on some of the cars can be clearly seen in pioneer Vancouver photographer Stuart Thomson's image, and from them one can determine that William J. Edgett of 1350 West 10th Avenue came in his Wonin automobile, and John C. Dill of 2466 West 6th Avenue came in his Hudson. Vancouver's military as well as local boy scouts turned out "in spit and polish" to welcome "The Duke," Queen Victoria's third son, who was at the time Canada's Governor General. The enthusiasm of the crowd can be measured by the 92 Union Jacks that can be counted in this picture.





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Yaletown

PREMIERS OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

C – Conservative Party

CL – Conservative/Liberal Coalition

L – Liberal Party

N – New Democratic Party

S – Social Credit Party

1871–1872	John Foster McCreight	
1872–1874	William Alexander Smith alias: Amor De Cosmos	
1874–1876	George Anthony Walkem	
1876–1878	Andrew Charles Elliott	
1878–1882	George Anthony Walkem	
1882–1883	Robert Beaven	
1883–1887	William Smithe	
1887–1889	Alexander E. B. Davie	
1889–1892	John Robson	
1892–1895	Theodore Davie	
1895–1898	John Herbert Turner	
1898–1900	Charles Augustus Semlin	
1900	Joseph Martin	
1900–1902	James Dunsmuir	
1902–1903	Edward Gawler Prior	
1903–1915	Richard McBride	C
1915–1916	William John Bowser	C
1916–1918	Harlan Carey Brewster	L
1918–1927	John Oliver	L
1927–1928	John Duncan MacLean	L
1928–1933	Simon Fraser Tolmie	C
1933–1941	T. Dufferin Pattullo	L
1941–1947	John Hart	L
1947–1952	Byron I. Johnson	LC
1952–1972	W. A. C. Bennett	S
1972–1975	David Barrett	N
1975–1986	William R. Bennett	S
1986–1991	William Vander Zalm	S
1991	Rita M. Johnston	S
1991–1996	Michael F. Harcourt	N
1996–1999	Glen Clark	N
1999–2000	A. Daniel Miller	N
2000–2001	Ujjal Dosanjh	N
2001–	Gordon M. Campbell	L

WHEN VANCOUVER BECAME the western terminus of the Canadian Pacific Railway in 1886, one of the first decisions Mayor MacLean and his council made was to offer to the CPR a 20-year exemption from taxes if they opted to build rail yards and repair facilities on the north shore of False Creek. As a result, the railway company agreed to move its machinery and employees from its former shops at Yale in the Fraser Canyon to the new site. Some of the railway employees at Yale loaded their homes onto flatcars and sent them to the new “Yaletown” in Vancouver. Many of the bachelor railroaders lived in rooming houses such as the Yaletown Hotel.

The railway workers built a roundhouse and other facilities on the new site for repairing the steam locomotives. The roundhouse enclosed a huge turntable with rail tracks that allowed train engines and other rail cars to be turned end for end for the return trip back east.

By 1900 an eight-block warehouse district had sprung up adjacent to the original Yaletown. Called New Yaletown, it consisted of companies receiving or shipping products by rail.

By the late 1970s much of the 175-acre CPR rail yard site on False Creek had become an industrial wasteland. It was during this period that several people came up with the idea of utilizing the area for a world exposition to celebrate Vancouver’s 100th birthday. The provincial government purchased the site from the CPR in the early 1980s and began to prepare it for Expo 86, the theme of which was transportation and communication. Prince Charles, Princess Diana, and Prime Minister Brian Mulroney opened the fair on 2 May 1986.

In 1988 most of the Expo site was sold to Concord Pacific Development Corporation, whose primary shareholder was Hong Kong billionaire Li Ka-Shing. The sale became very controversial when the purchasers complained that the site was contaminated and required a massive cleanup. In less than 25 years the Chinese development company has erected several high-rises, making the area one of the most densely populated and sought-after places to live in all of Canada.

An air photo overview to the northwest shows Vancouver during the Expo 86 celebrations.



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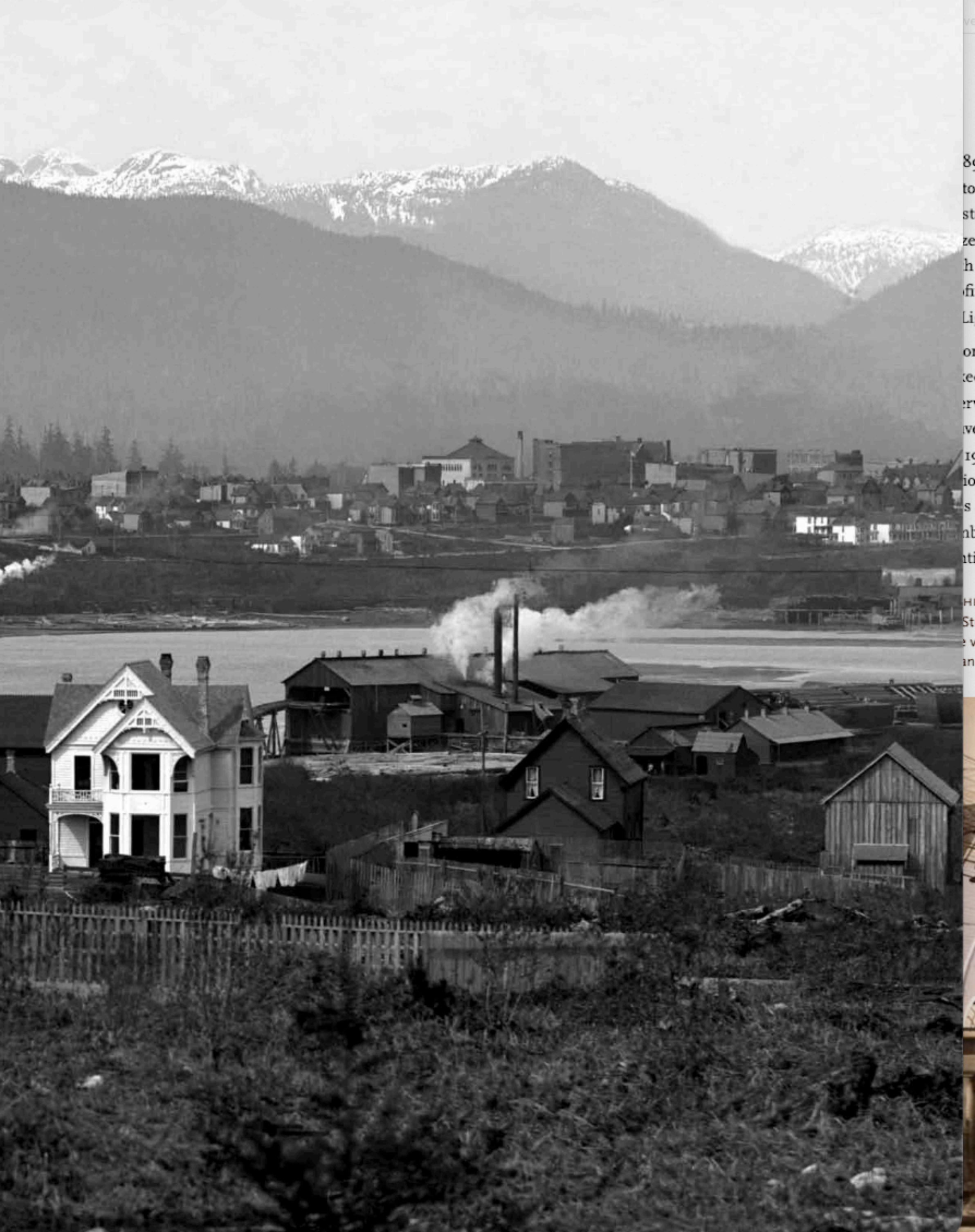




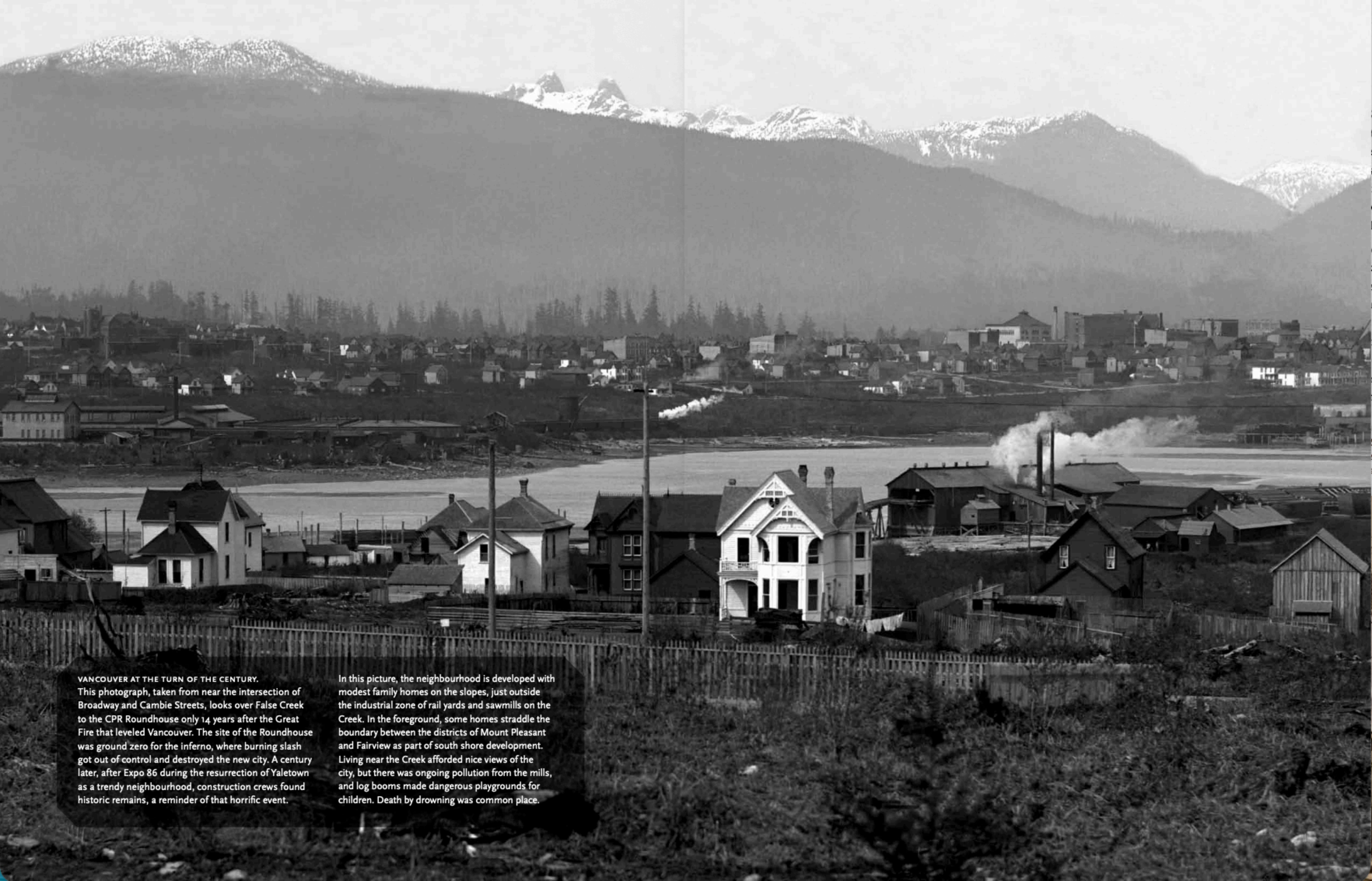
VANCOUVER AT THE TURN OF THE CENTURY.

This photograph, taken from near the intersection of Broadway and Cambie Streets, looks over False Creek to the CPR Roundhouse only 14 years after the Great Fire that leveled Vancouver. The site of the Roundhouse was ground zero for the inferno, where burning slash got out of control and destroyed the new city. A century later, after Expo 86 during the resurrection of Yaletown as a trendy neighbourhood, construction crews found historic remains, a reminder of that horrific event.

In this picture, the neighbourhood is developed with modest family homes on the slopes, just outside the industrial zone of rail yards and sawmills on the Creek. In the foreground, some homes straddle the boundary between the districts of Mount Pleasant and Fairview as part of south shore development. Living near the Creek afforded nice views of the city, but there was ongoing pollution from the mills, and log booms made dangerous playgrounds for children. Death by drowning was common place.



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A street car travels west down Cordova Street from the Carrall Street intersection during the Dominion Day celebrations on 1 July 1890. The brand-new transit system had commenced operations five days earlier.

Early Transit

TO ALLOW THE YOUNG CITY, which had been created by the advent of the railway, to expand beyond its original core developers needed a transit system. In 1889 the city decided to build a public transit system, and not only that: it was decided that the streetcars should be electric, not horse-drawn, which would make Vancouver one of the first cities in North America to have such a system.

The Vancouver Street Railways Company was set up to put a streetcar system into operation, but the company failed, and the Vancouver Electric Railway and Light Company took over, of which Mayor Oppenheimer was a director. The company purchased streetcars in New York, and in an attempt to make its passengers think that their company was larger, the owners didn't number the first cars of the new fleet 1 to 6 but rather 10 to 15.

A street car in the Old Spaghetti Factory in Vancouver's Gastown.



On 26 June 1890 the new transit system started operation, offering free rides to potential customers on this first day—a day later the fares would cost 5 cents. The entire system at that time was only 9.6 kilometres, but the following year it doubled in size and went south across the new Granville Street Bridge over False Creek to reach Fairview Heights. Nevertheless, it was a hard battle to keep the operation profitable, and by 1892 the company was bankrupt. The Consolidated Railway and Light Company followed, but it too failed.

Then a new company appeared: the British Columbia Electric Railway Company (BCER), backed by British money. It merged with the company that ran the Interurban service to New Westminster, so that by 1897 the entire transit system from Vancouver to New Westminster was consolidated. Ridership increased steadily until 1914, when the monthly number of passengers reached 3.5 million. But competition from jitneys—automobiles that would pick up passengers at streetcar stops and undercut the streetcar fare—and later buses were the reason that this number was never reached again. The streetcars continued to roll in Vancouver until 1955, when the system was shut down.

WAITING FOR THE STREET CAR IN MOUNT PLEASANT, 1907. Pedestrians stand at the intersection of Westminster Avenue (Main Street) and Ninth Avenue (Broadway) and await the arrival of a streetcar from downtown Vancouver. The view is to the northwest and includes the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church, H. O. Lee Grocery Store and the Mount Pleasant Pharmacy. Today the Lee Building occupies this site.





FIERCE COMPETITION BETWEEN STREETCARS AND JITNEYS, 1923.

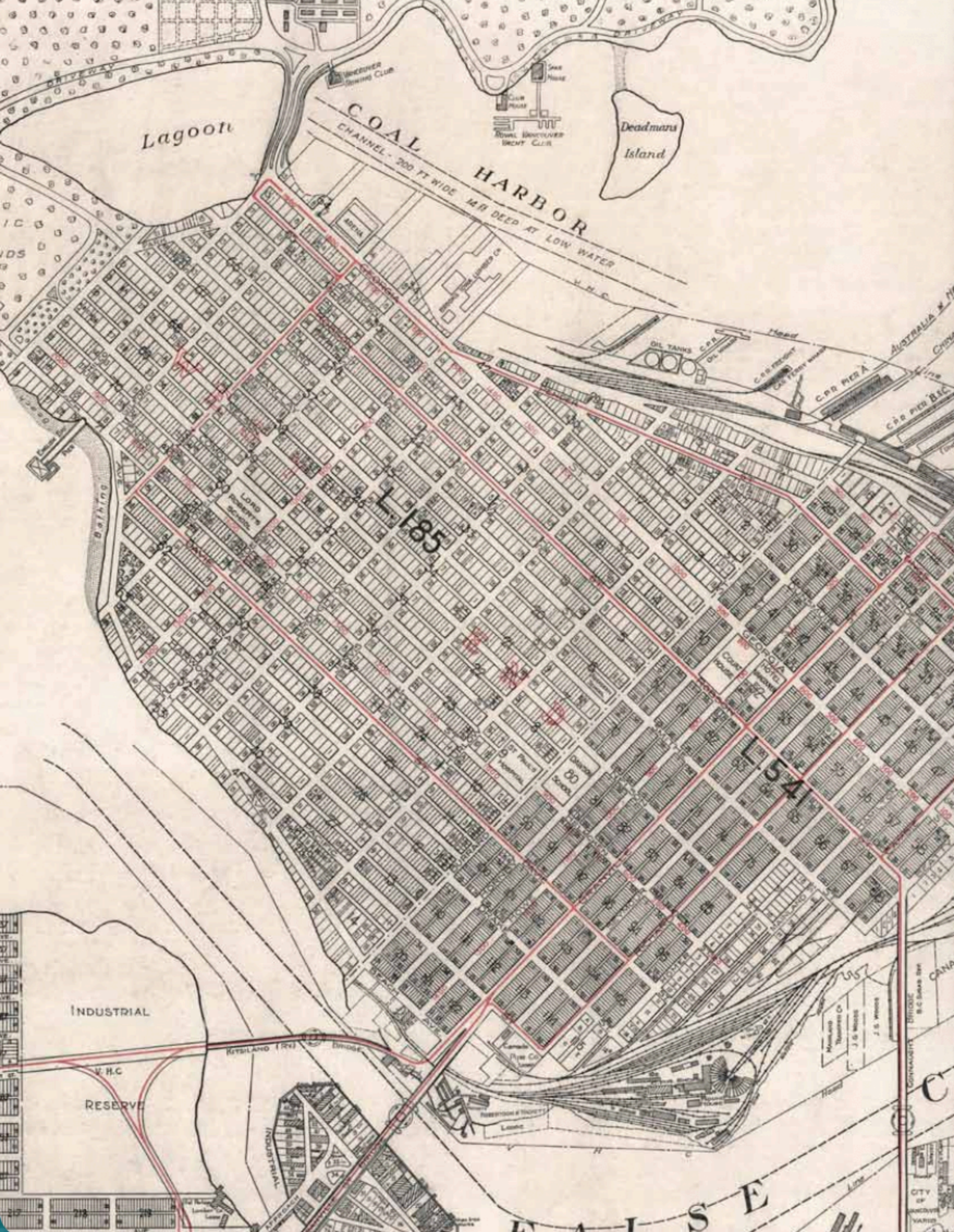
A view to the east down Hastings Street at Columbia Street after the First World War shows the fierce competition between the streetcars and the jitneys. The automobiles (driven on the left hand side of the road) were undercutting the B.C. Electric's rail line by offering to transport passengers out to Fairview for 5 cents. The electric company's directors lobbied city council to have the cars banned from picking up fares and then upped the rates. At least 10 street cars are visible in the photo with twice as many cars. The sides of many of the larger buildings function as billboards advertising international brands.



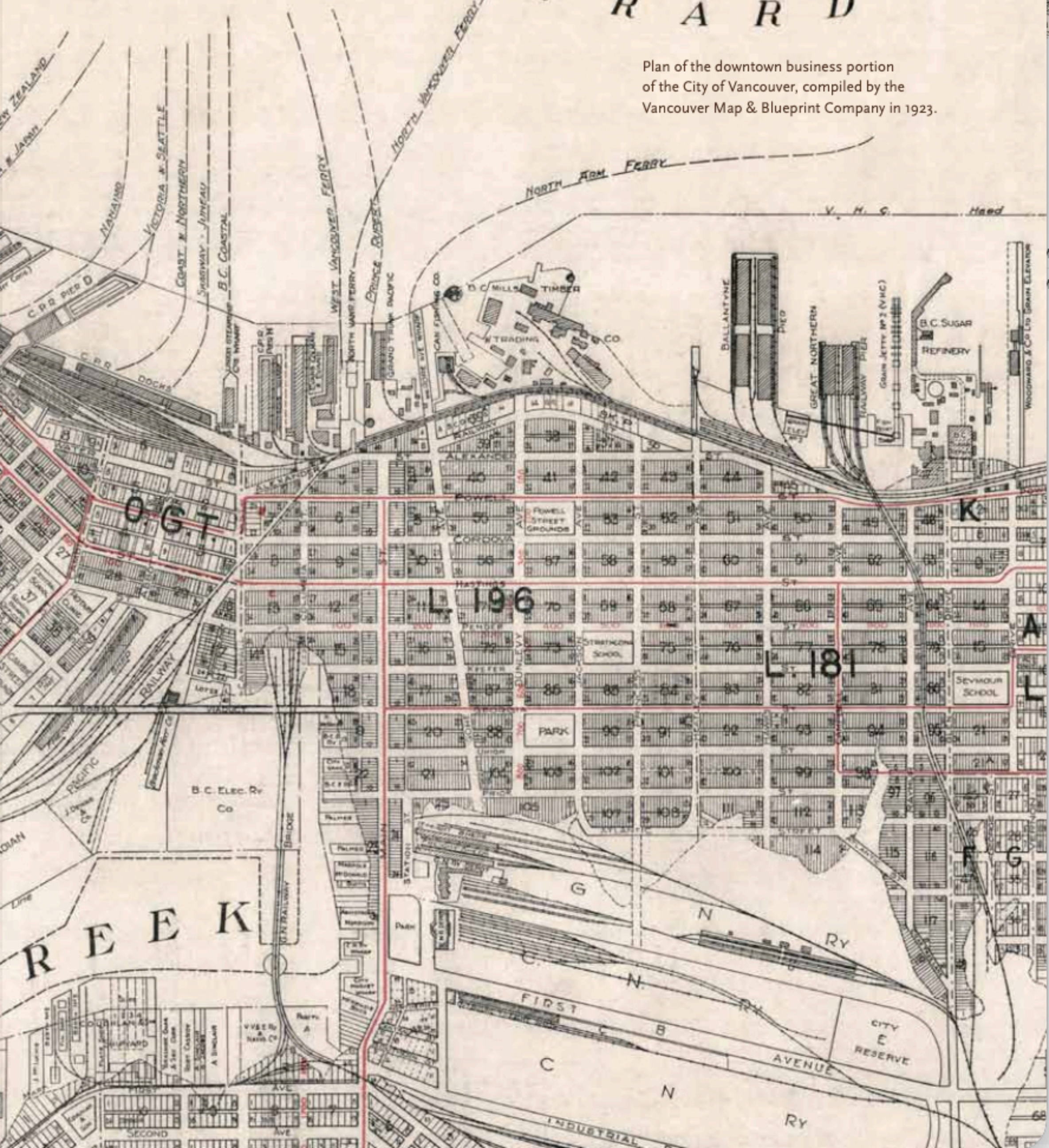


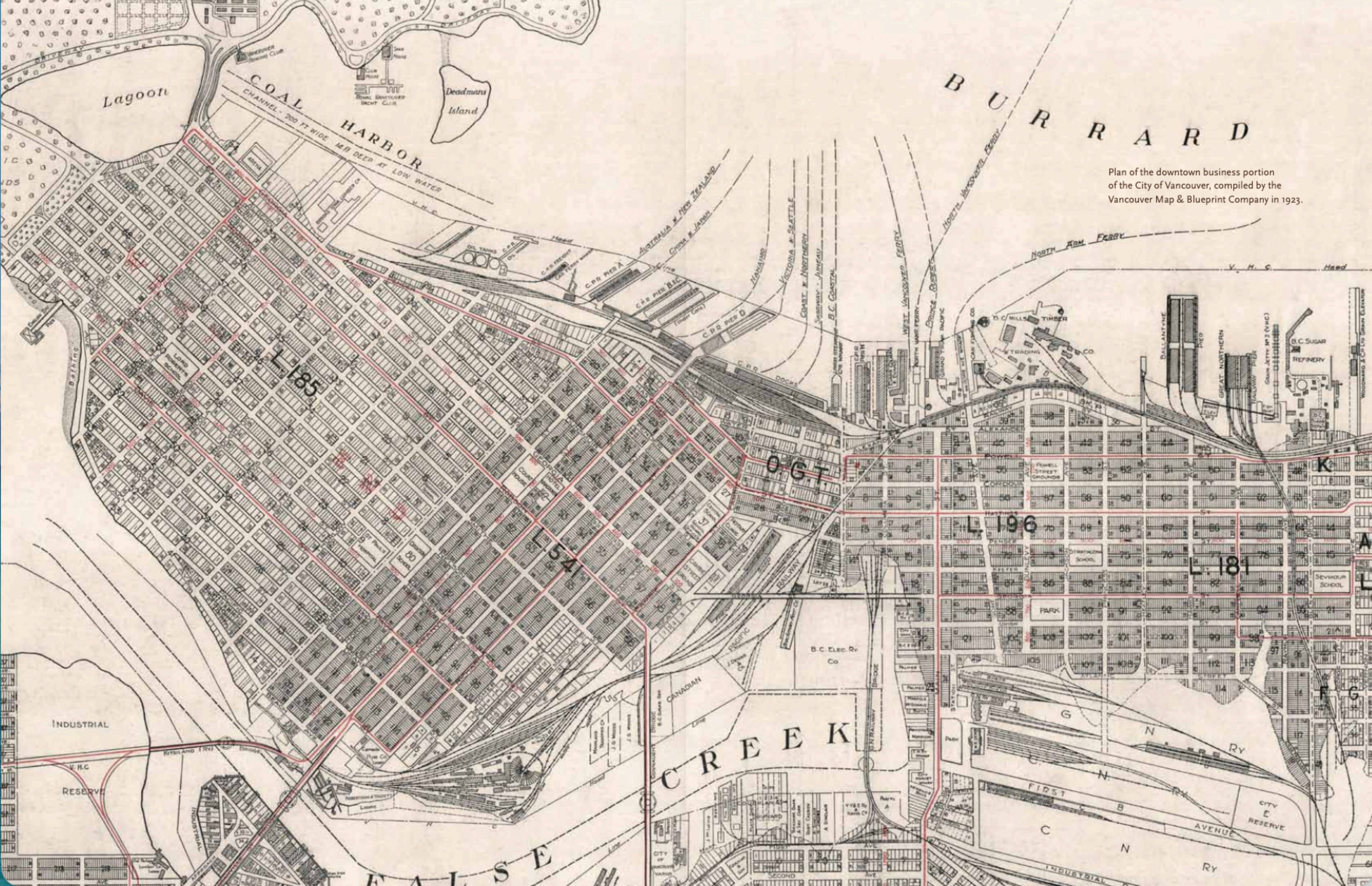
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Plan of the downtown business portion
of the City of Vancouver, compiled by the
Vancouver Map & Blueprint Company in 1923.





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Father of Chinatown

by Henry Wing Yip

Grandson of Yip Sang and Dong Shee



YIP SANG (1845-1927). Sang spent the first half of his life in poverty, but during the second he was awash in fortune.

YIP SANG WAS BORN in Taishan County, Guangdong Province, China, in 1845: the grandson of a wealthy man but unfortunately the son of a poor father, who died when Sang was still a boy. His mother passed away when he was still a teenager, and then bandits abducted his older sister, so he was left all alone at a time when China was engulfed in the chaos of the Taiping Rebellion. During his long life he would go from rags to riches.

In 1864, at the age of 19, Sang sold his few possessions and used the money to buy a passage on a sailing junk from Hong Kong to San Francisco, a voyage that in those days lasted two months. In California he washed dishes and cooked in a restaurant, later rolled cigars, and eventually laboured at panning gold to earn enough money for a trip back to China, where, according to family lore, he saw a girl that he promised himself he would marry. He returned to San Francisco and from there departed for Montana, where he worked as a cook to save enough cash to return to his homeland and get married. His wife bore him two children. He sailed for San Francisco again, leaving his family in China, but a telegram notified him that his wife had become ill and died. He returned to China and took a second wife to raise the two children, but she was too young and flighty to run a household. Yip—as Chinese custom allowed—took a third wife. He left both wives and his family in China and again returned to California only to realize that the gold there had petered out, so he headed north to try his luck in the Cariboo gold rush.

In 1881 he passed through Vancouver en route to the diggings. He walked along the Cariboo Wagon Road with his belongings piled into a cart. When gold eluded him, he returned to the coast to New Westminster and managed to get a job selling coal door to door. Father Luck finally smiled on him: he met Lee Piu, a Chinese foreman for Andrew Onderdonk, the contractor hired by the CPR to build the rail line from Port Moody to Kamloops. This man was so impressed with Sang's quickness that he made him bookkeeper, timekeeper, and paymaster for his work gangs. According to family stories, Sang rode on horseback along the line and paid the Chinese

labourers from sacks of gold; once he escaped would-be brigands who sought to rob and kill him. Sang became the Chinese agent for the CPR, supplying its railway with construction labourers and its steamships with sailors. Without the Chinese labourers Onderdonk's section of the rail line could not have been built on budget or on time. Poorly paid, housed, and fed, the Chinese men were given the most dangerous projects, and of 7,000 workers some 600 died in accidents. "No one was killed," ran one account of an explosion on the line, "only two Chinese." To recruit the labourers, Sang went to the Pearl River Delta in China, and while there he married a fourth wife and fathered more children.

In 1888 Sang returned to Vancouver and established the Wing Sang Company at 29 Dupont (later 51–69 Pender) Street in Vancouver's Chinatown. The following year he supervised the construction of the Wing Sang building ("Wing Sang" meaning "everlasting") for his office and personal residence, the first brick building to be constructed in Chinatown. The building was located immediately to the west of a 20-foot-wide high-tide stream that ran from False Creek northward to Burrard Inlet. The company soon became one of the wealthiest firms in the Chinatown part of Vancouver, engaging in 14 businesses that included contracting Chinese workers for the CPR, contracting passengers for the Canadian Pacific Steamships Limited, and the importing of rice and clothing. Sang pioneered the exporting of salted herring from his cannery on Vancouver Island to China, Japan, and other points on the Pacific Rim. He acquired 16 buildings in Chinatown, including one in Shanghai Alley, where immigrants could stay until they found work.

A Wing Sang advertisement from the 6 December 1891 *Daily-News Advertiser* said the company dealt in "China silks, utensils, trinkets, curios and Japanese dry goods." At the bottom of the ad a phrase in capital letters proclaimed "Importers of Opium." Opium was legal in Canada until 1908, and Chinatown had numerous opium dealers and even opium factories like the Hip Tuck Lung Company, located across the street from Sang's store. Aside from being infamous for its opium dens, Chinatown's Dupont (Pender) Street was known as Vancouver's first red-light district. It is rumoured that some of the ladies of the evening may have rented space in the Wing Sang building. In 1903 the Wing Sang Company and the Chinese Board of Trade were listed at 51 Dupont Street, "Chinese barbers" at 57, Wing Hon On & Company at 61, and Kwong Yo Yuen merchants were

The abacus used by Yip Sang to calculate payroll for the 7000 Chinese labourers employed for the construction of the Canadian Pacific Railroad through the Fraser Canyon.

Yip recruited the labourers from the Pearl River Delta in China.





Dong Shee (1866-1941) Wife No. 2



Wong Shee (1872-1957) Wife No. 3



Chin Shee (1866-1934) Wife No. 4



Yip Sang (1845-1927)



The Wing Sang & Co. Block was built in 1889 and expanded in 1901, when Sang brought his family over from China.

listed at 67. In between the Chinese businesses, Grace Hall rented 59, Carmen Hall rented 63, and "Carmelita" rented 69. Women's names disappeared from Dupont Street in 1906, when city officials and police moved the establishments over to a new red-light district on Alexander Street.

In 1901 Sang brought his entire family over from China. He built a three-storey addition onto the Wing Sang building and ensconced his three wives and their children into one floor each. The main floor consisted

of a store where patrons could buy Chinese-style jackets and pants as well as dishes and games. Imports were hoisted up to a second-floor warehouse. Although the Sang children went to English-speaking public schools, Chinese tutors taught them Chinese subjects on the third floor. This floor also included a bowling alley and a special room that contained an ancestral altar and was used for special occasions such as weddings.

Next, in 1912, Sang built a six-storey addition onto the back of the Wing Sang office to house his growing

family. Eventually Sang had nineteen sons and four daughters, who all married and produced 67 grandchildren. In time 100 family members lived in the building. The final addition included a bowling alley and a schoolroom where both a Chinese and an “English” teacher taught. Sang was a very strict patriarch and every night after supper would sit in an armchair next to the door leading to the upstairs suites. He would sit there smoking a pipe and watching everyone coming and going until curfew at 10 p.m., at which time he locked the door with the one and only key.

Sang spent the first half of his life in poverty, but during the second half he was awash in fortune. He became a philanthropist and started the first Chinese hospital and Chinese school. He organized the Chinese Benevolent Association and even sat on the board of the Vancouver General Hospital as a lifetime governor.

Sang became a major witness for the Federal Royal Commission headed by the Deputy Minister of Labour, William Lyon Mackenzie King (later Prime Minister of Canada) in the wake of the anti-Asian riots in Vancouver in 1907. He testified that the decline of the labour contract system was the result of the increase in the head tax from \$50 to \$500 imposed on Chinese immigrants in 1903.

By 1908 Sang’s company was one of the four largest Chinese companies in Vancouver with an annual revenue of \$50,000 from its import-export businesses alone and real estate holdings worth over \$200,000.

Though Sang did not speak English fluently, he valued integration into the wider society and had many non-Chinese friends—unusual in an age when Chinese were considered a separate class, forced to pay a head tax to enter Canada, from 1923 until 1947 virtually banned as immigrants, and denied voting rights until 1947. When Sun Yat-sen and his followers toppled the Manchu Dynasty in China in 1911, Yip Sang, a firm believer in modernization, cut off his queue and assumed western dress.

Yip Sang’s death in 1927 was marked by the longest funeral procession Vancouver had yet seen, with dozens of cars of mourners, a marching band, and ranks of somber men in formal western and oriental garb. Vancouver’s premier Chinese merchant had insisted on burial in Vancouver rather than having his bones shipped back to China.

Yip Sang’s descendants sold the Wing Sang heritage building in 2001 to developer Ewen Stewart for \$850,000. In 2004 “Condo King” Bob Rennie bought the old edifice for \$1,000,000 with plans to restore it to its original state and make it his office and private art gallery.



SLIPPERS OF TEARS. The first three of Yip Sang’s four wives had their feet bound at an early age to prevent their growth. This painful procedure allowed the women to wear these tiny shoes that cost their wearers a bath (kang) of tears.

Opium Trade and Head Taxes

by John Atkin, Civic Historian

"LI HUNG CHANG AT VANCOUVER" was the headline in the 14 September 1896 edition of the *Daily Columbian*. The story continued, "Li Hung Chang, Chinese Viceroy, and party arrived at Vancouver by special CPR train yesterday at 2 o'clock. He was met and welcomed by representative Chinamen, after which he was driven around the city and Stanley Park. During the afternoon, *HMS Comus*, in harbour, fired a salute of nine guns in honour of the distinguished visitor."

The "Yellow Jacket" (bestowed upon Li by the Chinese Emperor) was concluding a North America tour and had visited Vancouver to discuss the head tax that the Canadian government had initiated against Chinese and the problems caused by the widespread use of opium.

The first Chinese labourers in British Columbia were brought in by the colonial government to build many of the early roads and trails in the colony. They soon found their welcome short-lived. Four years after British Columbia joined the Canadian confederation the legislature removed their voting rights (and that of the Natives too), and in 1885 the federal government, at the urging of British Columbia, put in place a head tax on new Chinese immigrants of 50 dollars. The tax would rise to an astounding 500 dollars in 1903—approximately 15,000 dollars in 2010.

The 7 December 1886 edition of the *Vancouver News* spoke of the "evil [that] is only beginning to shape at the foot of Carrall Street on the edge of False Creek." In the city Chinese were banned from working on municipal contracts. Despite this and other measures the population grew. If the City couldn't stop the growth of a Chinese population, they were determined to regulate it. Chinatown became a separate category of inspection for the Health Department and became the target of constant police gambling raids, because according to the 5 February 1906 *Vancouver Province*, gambling was "ingrained in the Celestial nature."

Labour unions were a loud voice in the call for a "British" or "white" province and continued to urge all levels of government to do something about the "Oriental problem." They were a major thrust behind the formation of groups such as the Asiatic Exclusion



Henry Collins, Vancouver's 5th Mayor, started out in Vancouver as a dry goods merchant before venturing into municipal politics. He served two terms as mayor during which time he hosted from Chinese statesman Li Hung Chang, Lord and Lady Aberdeen. Lord Aberdeen was the Governor General of Canada from 1893 until 1898.

A golden dragon adorns a street lamp in Vancouver's Chinatown.





ARCH OF HONOUR. Members of Vancouver's Chinese community stream through an arch in honour of Li Hung Chang on 14 September 1896. Chang is seated in the back of the coach beside Mayor Henry Collins (black Derby) while in the front seat is H. B. Abbott, general superintendent of the CPR (white Derby) and another Chinese diplomat. The two houses on the bluff overlooking Burrard Inlet stand on "Blue Blood Alley" (Georgia Street), named for the posh homes of the richest railroad families. An early Vancouver photographer stands in the middle of the crowd with his large-format camera and cumbersome tripod.

League, though in Vancouver the membership crossed all of society's boundaries. In 1907 a meeting of the League at City Hall got out of hand, and the assembled crowd marched on Chinatown, smashing storefronts and windows before turning their attention to Japantown.

The Minister of Labour, Mackenzie King, was dispatched from Ottawa to look into the matter and to assess compensation

claims from business owners. While in Vancouver he expressed his alarm and surprise at the fact that there were opium factories in the city—the two Vancouver factories in had submitted claims for damage—though the manufacture of opium was legal and widely known. Even the wife of the Governor General, Lady Aberdeen, had visited a Victoria factory in 1895 to see the production herself.

King's subsequent 1908 report, *The Need for the Suppression of the Opium Traffic in Canada*, observed that "In the coast cities of Victoria, Vancouver and New Westminster there are at least seven factories carrying on an extensive business in opium manufacture. It is estimated that the annual gross receipts of these combined concerns amounted for the year 1907, to

between \$600,000 and \$650,000." Concern was raised about women and children smoking opium (echoing a familiar theme about how Caucasian women were always at peril whenever near the Chinese), and while the government acted on King's report and outlawed the production and sale of opium by the Chinese, they did not ban the inclusion of opium in popular patent medicines.

King's report added to the calls to limit immigration and convinced Vancouver officials to step up their harassment of Chinatown. Ultimately this led to the Exclusion Act of 1923, when King was Prime Minister, which cut off further Chinese immigration to Canada. The Act wasn't repealed until 1947.

Haley Twaites, great-great-granddaughter of Yip Sang, poses in traditional Chinese silk in Chinatown's Dr. Sun Yat-Sen Park adjacent to the Dr. Sun Yat-sen Classical Chinese Garden, the first full-size Chinese garden built outside of China.

