

Proud symbols of progress in Canada's third city! There's no finer span in this country than the new eight-lane Granville Bridge. Vancouver also boasts the most modern metropolitan transit system in the nation.

as four routes a year were changed from rails to rubber, in line with the directions of a joint City-BCE Planning Committee. Since 1950 Vancouver has had Canada's largest fleet of trolley coaches. (Today's total: 327).

Come April 22, the last route — Hastings East — will convert to buses. In July trolley coaches will take over. Vancouver can then boast the country's most modern transit system—with few equals, for that matter, anywhere on the continent.

Project Rails-to-Rubber is all but done!

This doesn't mean we at the B.C. Electric can—or plan to—sit back and say: "Well, that's that." A transportation system must change, adapt,

grow, improve as the people and the city it serves may require.

In less than a man's lifetime Vancouver has developed beyond all recognition—and the transit system with it.

If the next 65 years are anything like the last, there will be lots to keep us busy—whether it's street cars or helicopters!



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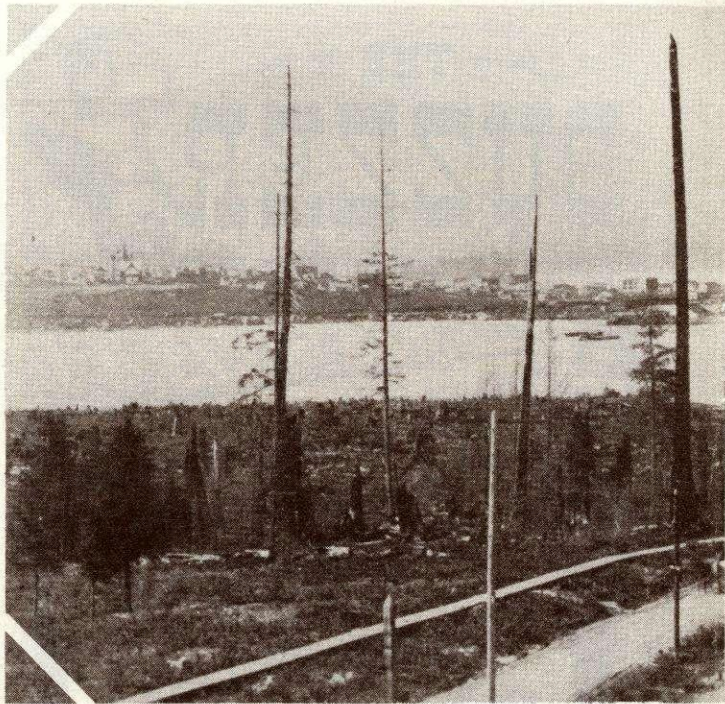
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1950 "RAILS-TO-RUBBER" ISSUE 1955





1889. *This is Vancouver, aged 3. View is north along Westminister Ave., now Main St. Note bridge across False Creek.*

Family Album

In those days, 65 years ago, Vancouver was a few score wooden buildings and uncounted shacks. One man lived in a roofed-over stump.

Virgin timber walled in the town on three sides. From the fourth could be seen, across Burrard Inlet, an unbroken mantle of evergreen reaching to the beaches on the North Shore.

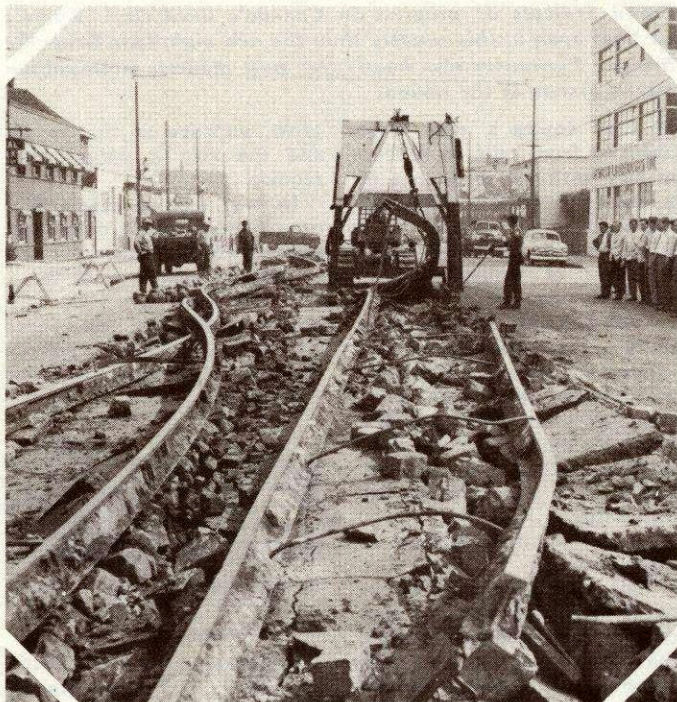
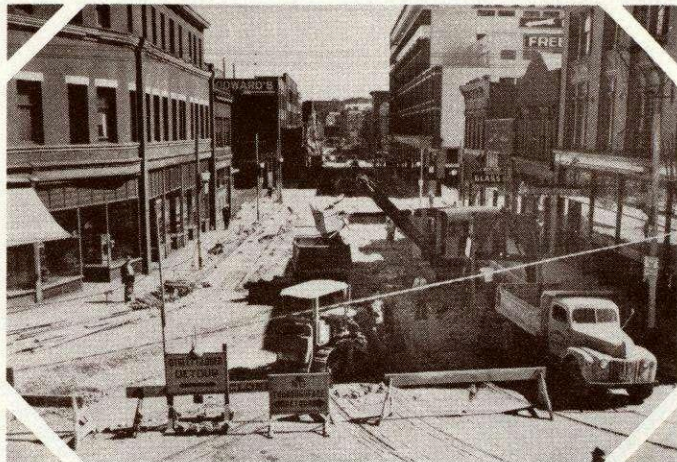
There may have been 10,000

people living in the area; no one knew for sure.

It was a friendly, hopeful, bustling little community. People were proud of being an outpost of Empire. Proud, too, of the city's astonishing growth since the Great Fire just four years earlier.

The railroad, British Columbia's long-awaited link with the rest of Canada, was still a

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improvement of transit, gas and electric services.

The company team, sparked by a new young president and native son, Dal Grauer, got quickly away on the big program. Despite shortages and delays in the shift to a peacetime economy, new equipment arrived in a growing flood. Construction forged ahead.

\$50,000,000? Pacing Vancouver's speedy development with more and better utility services ate that up in three years.

Today, just a decade later, the sum is past the quarter-billion mark—and still growing in step with this magnificent city.

* * *

Beginning in 1946, fleets of buses replaced war-worn street cars in North Vancouver, Greater Victoria, North Burnaby.

In Vancouver itself, as many

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War succeeded depression and, like thousands of other Canadians, BCE men responded to the colors. Women operators stepped in to fill the gap. Here a group (above) gathers in front of a streamliner car in 1943.

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Cordova Street (above, right) though pictured from the same angle, looks a bit different from the photo on page 2, taken nearly 60 years earlier. This time the tracks are being ripped up for good. Today, trolley coaches spin along this historic street.

•

Scenes like this one (right) on Broadway near Cambie, became a standard summer item in Vancouver during the post-war decade. The \$20,000,000 job of changing the transit system over to modern, rubber-tired vehicles will be completed in July, 1955.



See Old No. 53!

"Guest of Honour" Sunday afternoon at the ceremonies in Exhibition Park marking "Rails-to-Rubber" Day will be Street Car No. 53, the oldest transit vehicle in the BCE fleet. See her on display, fresh and spruce in a new coat of paint! And bring the children, too!

Built in our New Westminster shops in '04, the little four-wheeler was the pride of the system 50 years ago. Top speed: 25 m.p.h. with a following wind.

After carrying passengers on many routes around town, No. 53 wound up her service on the Bodwell Road line in the spring of 1916. However, she put in many more years as a maintenance car.

Presented by Dal Grauer, president of B. C. Electric, to the Rail Fans Club, No. 53 will remain, through the good offices of the PNE, on permanent display as a link with Vancouver's bygone era of street cars.



headline: "Canada Is Now At War."

Just before regulations clamped down, BCE managed to get four more streamlined street cars (they're among those being retired on Friday).

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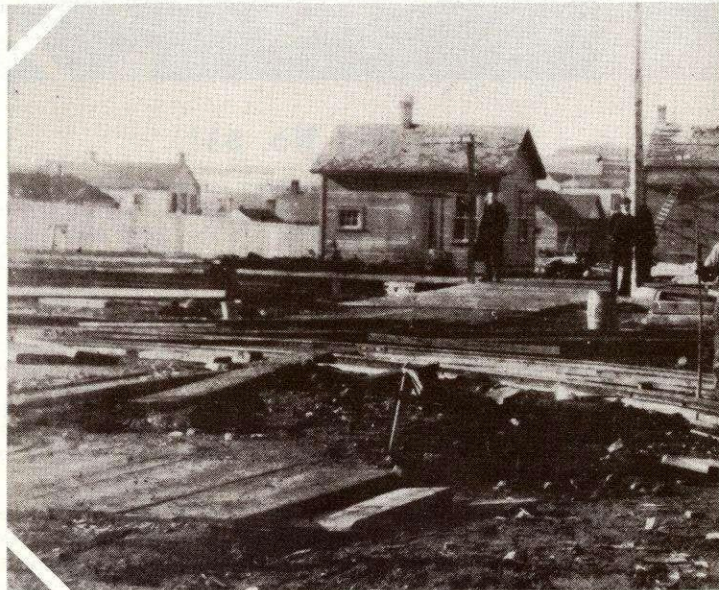
Again Vancouver men joined up in their thousands, and with them many operators and conductors. Women took on this war job, along with many others. And what a job! With gasoline and tires rationed, shipyards and aircraft plants booming, the transit system had to carry unprecedented crowds . . . and no new vehicles obtainable.

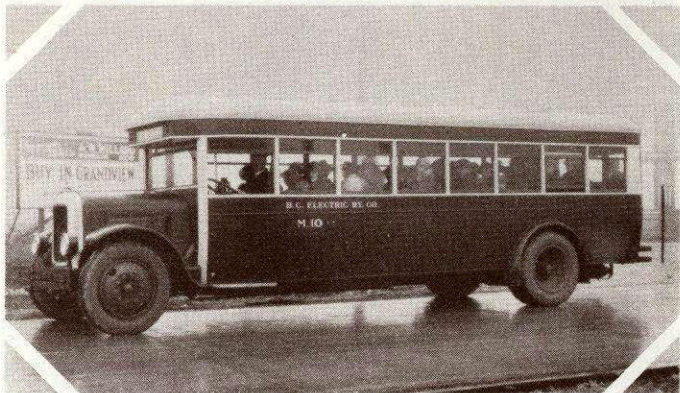
Dunkirk . . . Singapore . . . El Alamein. Sicily, Italy, D-Day and the Low Countries. V-E Day and, after nearly six years, another victory. And peace!

* * *

Would depression follow war, as in the past? Down south Henry Wallace, recently U.S. Vice-president, wondered whether 60,000,000 jobs could be found. There were dire predictions on both sides of the Border.

BCE's management didn't hold with such talk. While the war was still on its officials announced a \$50,000,000 post-war plan of expansion and





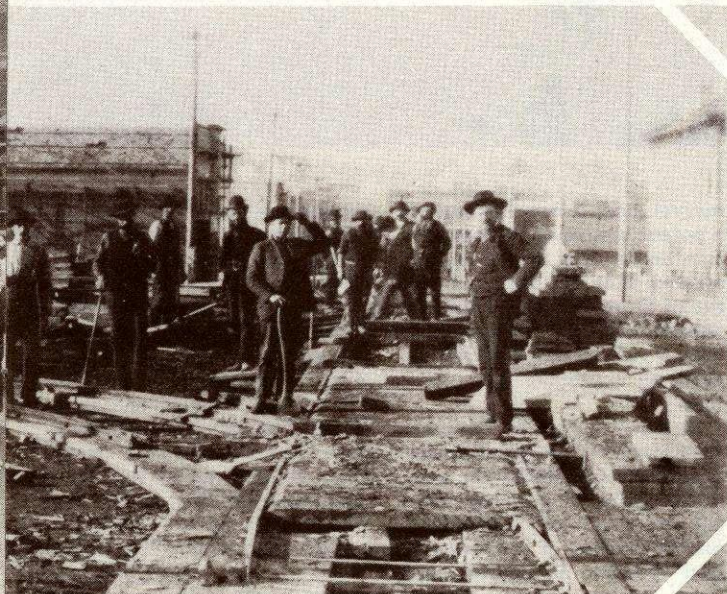
The early ugly-duckling look buses had disappeared as the '20s wore away. Here's a very business-like vehicle on the Grandview Highway run.

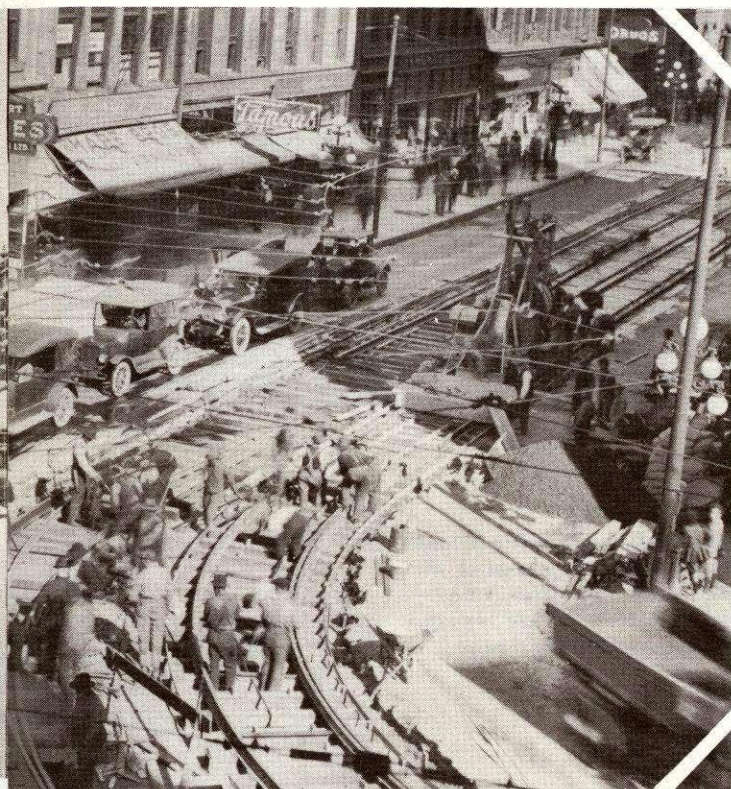
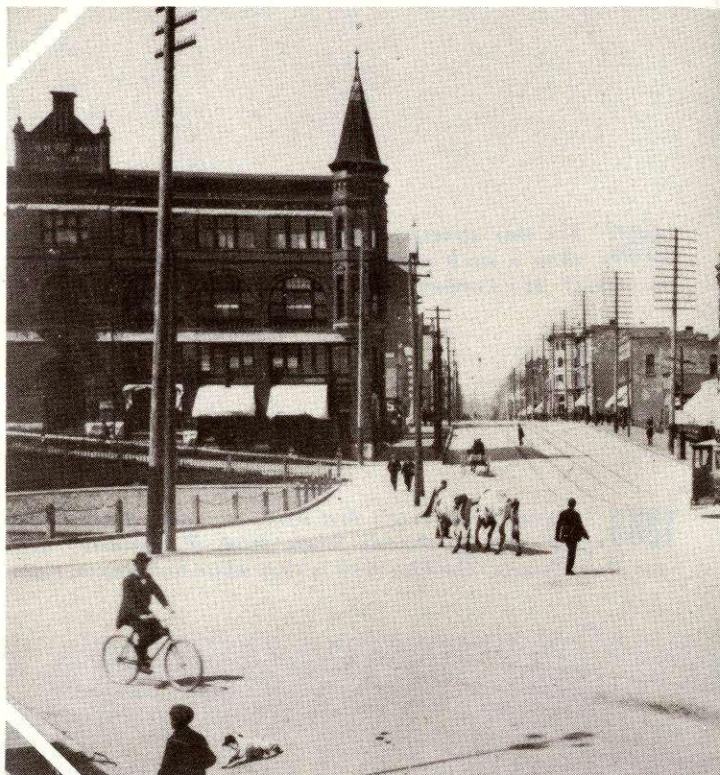
Two-car trains were introduced as early as 1927 in Vancouver. They did yeoman service on main lines for 20 years, bowing, finally, to the streamlined cars and post-war buses and trolleys. Here one loads up for the 1929 Exhibition.



1890. Six tiny street cars had been running in town less than a week when this photo was taken. Recognize the street? It's Cordova, looking East from Cambie.

1889. Laying Vancouver's first street car rails. You're looking west on Powell Street from Westminster Ave., now Main Street. The City Hall is that white building at right.





marvel and, more important, a potent source of settlers and commerce. The first train had arrived May 23, 1887, on the eve of Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee. It had, therefore, been a twin celebration, something to remember for a life-time.

Square-riggers, barques, schooners — for wind-driven ships still dominated the sealandes—called in growing number at Port of Vancouver, loaded cargoes of the magnificent Douglas fir lumber and

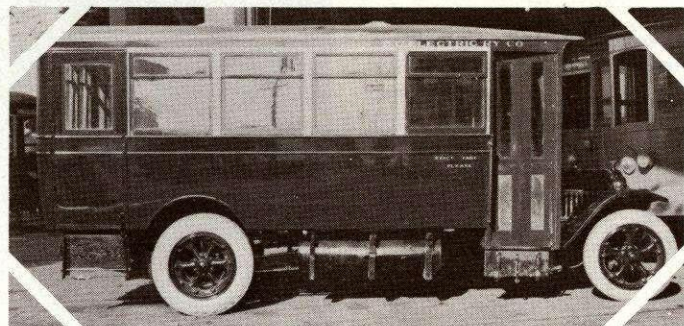
carried the city's name to the far corners of the world.

Now, in June, 1890, something new was being added: street cars! Vancouver Street Railway Co. had completed two routes, along Westminster Ave. (now Main St.) from 1st Ave. to Powell, and then along Powell and Cordova from Campbell Ave. to Granville. By the end of the year, cars were rolling south on Granville as far as Pacific.

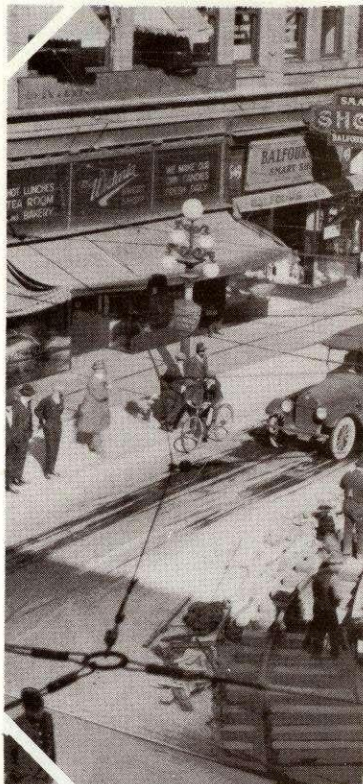
And what cars! Tiny four-

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Who let that thing in? And hob-nobbing with self-respecting street cars, as bold as brass! Yes, sir, it's a bus, and among the first purchased (in 1923) by the B.C. Electric.



1923. *The old light rail of pioneer days began wearing out. Here a section at Granville and Hastings is replaced with heavier steel. They had transit detours in those days, too!*



of the decade Vancouver set up its first automatic traffic signal.

"Lindy" and the Graf Zeppelin flew the Atlantic. Admiral Byrd sailed for "Little America". Babe Ruth hit endless homers. The market boomed higher.

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Then, suddenly, the Crash. The Roaring Twenties were over. So was prosperity. Ten years of good times and the worst war of all haven't erased the Big Depression from the memories of those

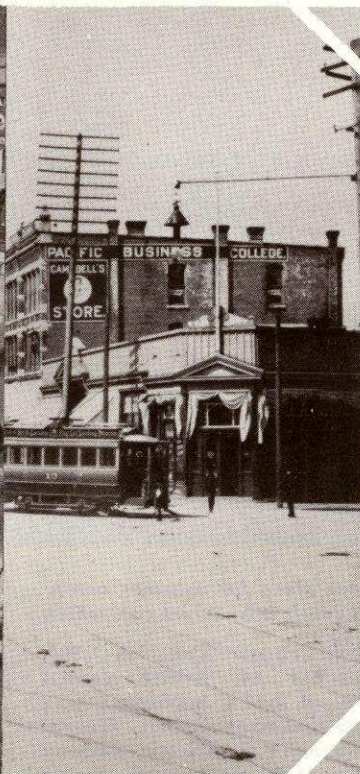
who lived through it.

Transit, the B.C. Electric and Vancouver citizens weathered it, somehow. In 1936 they took time out to enjoy the city's Golden Jubilee with a big celebration. Gerry McGeer was mayor and R. B. Bennett arrived to lay the cornerstone of the new City Hall.

The Royal Visit of Their Majesties was a bright spot in the war clouds gathering in 1938. "Peace in our time" . . . and then another grim

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1896. *Hastings and Cambie on a summer's day. This was considered the centre of town in this era. However, a dog can lie in the street and two head of cattle can be driven down the main drag without causing much of a traffic jam. Note that rule of the road is to the left; it would remain so for another 25 years.*



1895. *When Vancouver Street Ry. Co. changed to electric cars at the last minute, the horse barn was already up. Here's how it looked in mid '90's when Guerne Cab Co. owned building. Two-horse cab at right met all trains.*





1905. *Greer's Beach was a great place for summer camping! And now you could reach it by street car, which*

wheelers that bounced along at 6 m.p.h. Open sides, open fronts, fore-and-aft benches—and people loved 'em!

One thing, they ran by electricity. It had been planned as a horse-drawn system. Even the stables had been built. Then, at the last minute, the company was convinced by an engineer that electricity, a new development in the transit field, would be better than animals.

The horses were sold, the tracks bonded, and Vancouver became one of Canada's first cities to have electric street cars.

* * *

It was a cheerful beginning, but tough years lay ahead. Twice the little utility went

bankrupt. Then, in 1897, backed by British capital raised by a brilliant young Englishman, Robert Horne-Payne, B.C. Electric Railway Co., Ltd., took over. Stable at last, the new firm could turn its attentions to improving service, expanding the system to match the city's growth, and other pressing problems.

* * *

Prices in the early years of the new century were enough to make your mouth water! Ladies' coats were offered at \$2.75. Hudson's Bay was selling boots at \$1.99. Top-notch craftsmen's daily wages were \$1.75 to \$2.25. And fares were a nickel.

By 1905, construction was well along on the North Van-

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1922. *Here's the maintenance gang who rebuilt the doors on all the street cars—in only hours—when the rule-of-the-road changed from left to right. There were just 24 men, but what a team!*





1918. *Main and Hastings while the rule-of-the-road was still to the left. Man, what a gas-eater that must have been, parked at the curb!*

exit doors on all street cars from one side to the other. Switches, overhead wires and other equipment also had to be adapted. The boys made the grade without inconveniencing a single passenger . . . cars went into service on the right-hand side on Jan. 1, 1922.

Vancouver's first transit buses rolled along the new

Grandview Highway route in 1923. Eight more began carrying students when the University moved to Point Grey in 1925.

Steel two-car "trains" were introduced on main lines. Tungsten lamps replaced the old-style carbon bulbs on street cars. Toward the end

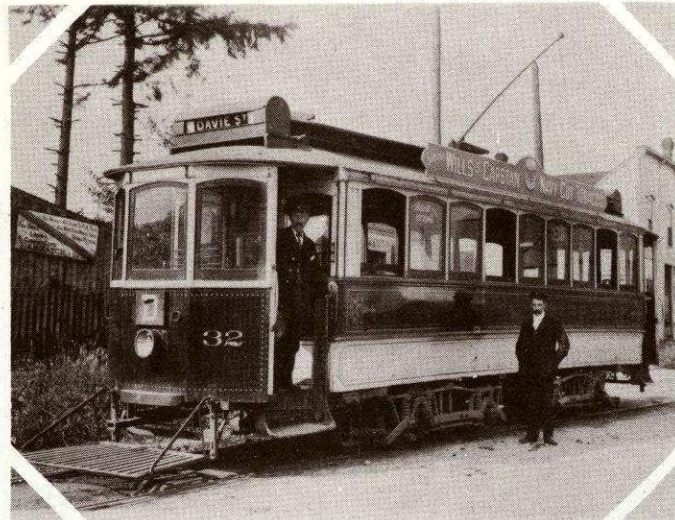
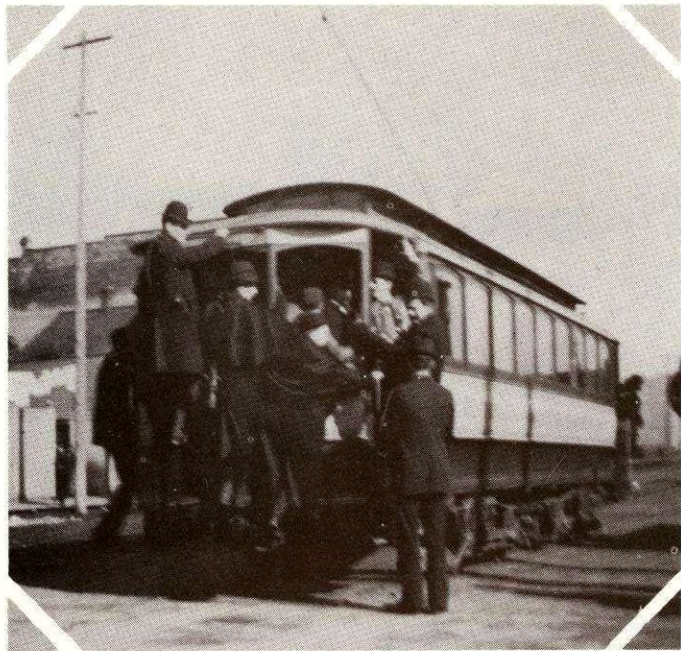
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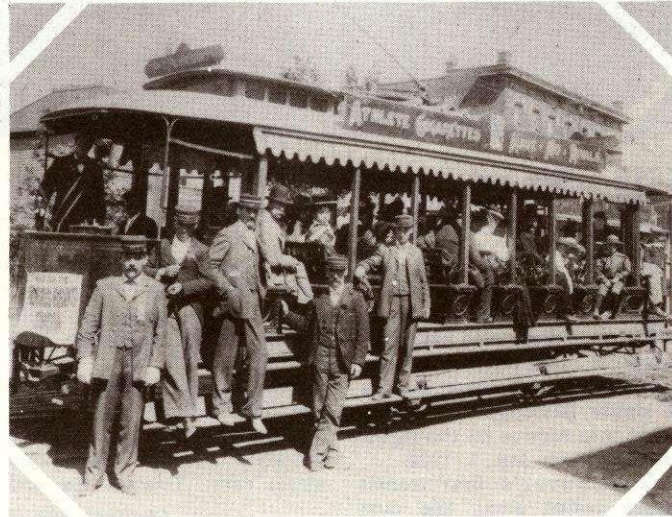
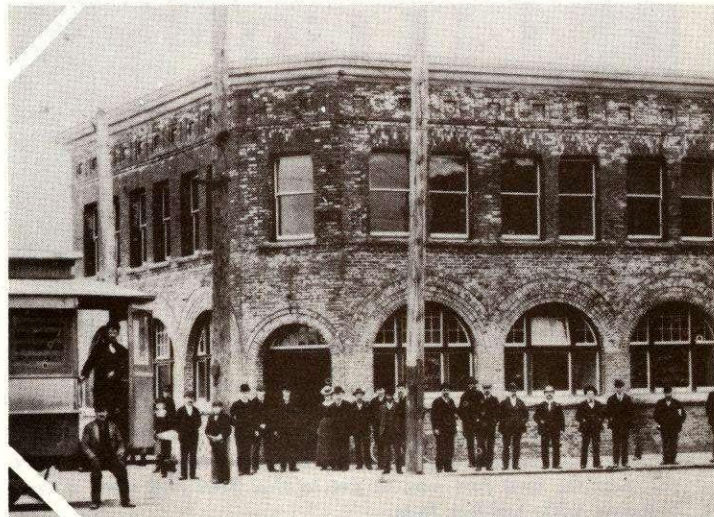
took you to the foot of Vine St. Kind of hard to recognize as Kitsilano Beach, but that's what it is . . . 50 years ago.

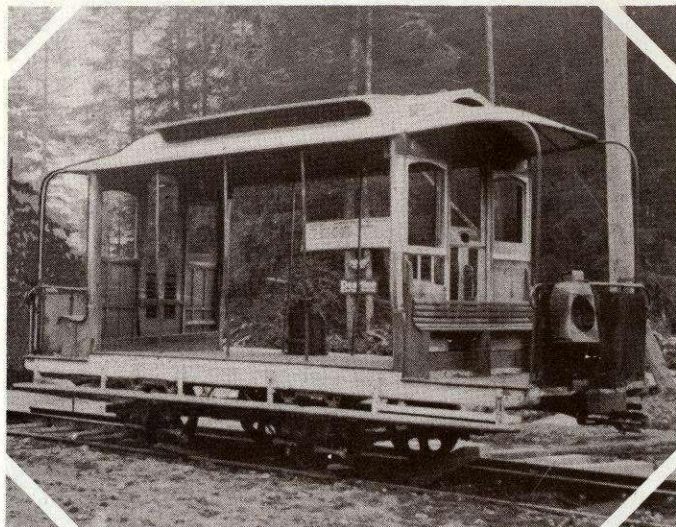


1905-10. *Off to watch their lacrosse team belt the opposition at a match in New Westminster . . . and never mind if the seats are hard and breezy! Such "specials" as this one, shown here leaving Carrall Street station, were the popular and fast way to get to the field and were always jammed with red-hot fans.*

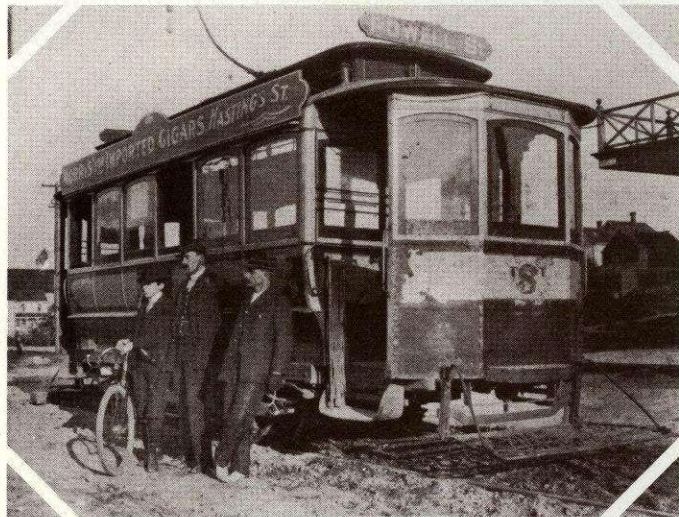


No. 32 (above) was another early model, pride of the Davie line in her day. In the Edwardian Era (lower photo) here's the car you caught to ride to and from Mount Pleasant . . . in the summer-time, that is. Must have been some pretty gals aboard—look at all those transit chaps getting into the act!



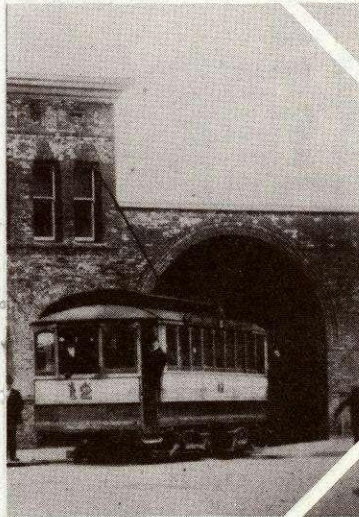


Half-pint four-wheeler, above, was one of the original six the system started with in 1890. She was a work-car when this photo was taken and fore-and-aft seats had been removed. Powell street car (below) was another four-wheeler introduced before 1900. With windows, yet!



B.C. Electric wasn't even in existence when this photo was taken in '96. You either caught the car for New Westminster or waited all day for another, so scenes like this one on Hastings weren't unusual.

1908. Here's the original depot at Carrall and Hastings, with a car heading into the shed. This was replaced by the present building in 1911. Trams in those days were just out-size street cars.



couver car-tracks. And the new line to Greer's Beach (now Kitsilano) brought hundreds out on summer afternoons.

A popular slogan was going the rounds at this time:

*"In 1910 Vancouver then
Will have 100,000 men!"*

* * *

The Granville Bridge now being dismantled was brand new then. Double tracks were laid across it, and along downtown streets. New steel stretched down 4th Ave., Fraser, Victoria, Earl's Road.

Owl service was given for the first time, but double-fare was charged after midnight. Vancouver's amazing growth had sparked a real-estate boom which reached its peak in 1912, the year Cambie Bridge was opened by the Duke of Connaught.

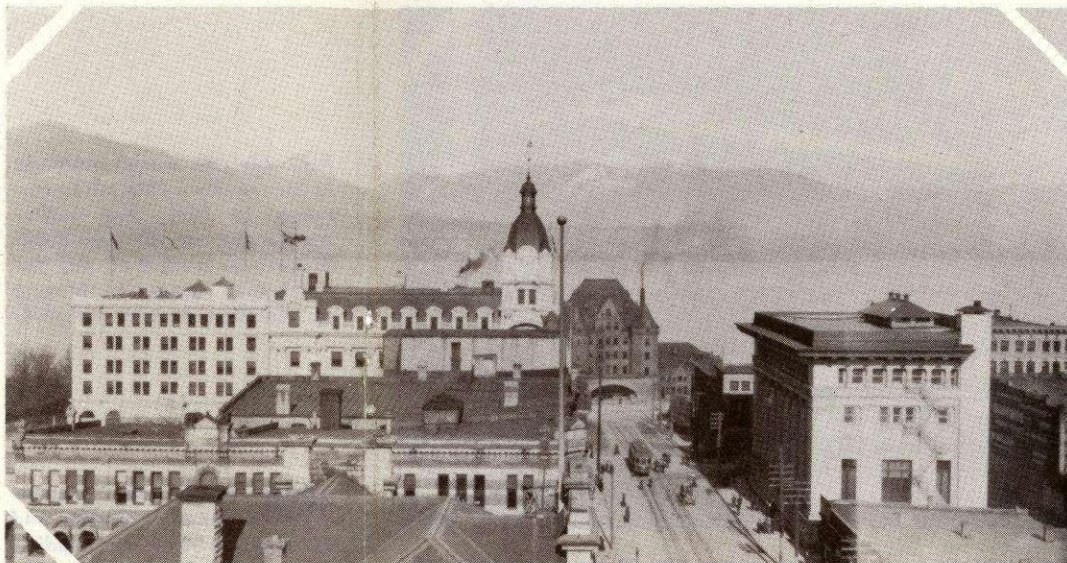
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The land bubble burst the following year and, with the coming of World War I, times grew lean. Men by the thousands joined up in Vancouver and entrained for Valcartier and France. First and Second Ypres. Paschendaele. Vimy Ridge. Finally 1918 and the Armistice Day headline: "Greatest Victory in History is Won . . ."

* * *

One of the first major jobs finished after the war was the filling-in of the East end of False Creek, where the CNR and GNR stations now stand. It had been a swamp for years, requiring a bridge across it for Main Street traffic.

1909. *Vancouver's sky-line, as this view along Granville street shows, was growing but still had a long way to go. Note the old CPR station at the foot of Granville. Post Office and bank are about all that's still standing today.*



1909. *Many remember the Old Hotel Vancouver. But who still recalls the CPR hotel pulled down to make a place for it? Here it is, and very comfortable and gay it was in its day.*

In 1919 the Prince of Wales, dashing, handsome, winning hearts everywhere, paid Vancouver a visit. He was followed three years later by President Harding of the United States. A weak, kindly man, he was only months from a last illness and the Teapot Dome scandals that blighted his administration.

Times were changing. Skirts were shorter. People talked of "flaming youth" and danced the Charleston. New fare-boxes replaced the old "coffee-pot" type.

Even the rule-of-the-road changed—from left to right. In a brief, frantic period, the BCE maintenance crew worked 'round the clock to change over the entrance and



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