

Hayward, Robert J. *Fire Insurance Plans in the National Map Collection / Plan d'Assurance-Incendie de la Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans*. Ottawa : National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada, 1977 / Ottawa : Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans, Archives Publiques Canada, 1977. Pp. xxvi, 171. Free

Frances M. Woodward

Number 1-78, June 1978

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/1019447ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019447ar>

[See table of contents](#)

Publisher(s)

Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine

ISSN

0703-0428 (print)

1918-5138 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

Cite this review

Woodward, F. M. (1978). Review of [Hayward, Robert J. *Fire Insurance Plans in the National Map Collection / Plan d'Assurance-Incendie de la Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans*. Ottawa : National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada, 1977 / Ottawa : Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans, Archives Publiques Canada, 1977. Pp. xxvi, 171. Free]. *Urban History Review / Revue d'histoire urbaine*, (1-78), 125–127. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1019447ar>

law breakers such as book makers and drug addicts. But, after 1900 or so, there is little to illustrate the homes of the majority who obeyed the law and who lived modestly but comfortably. There is scant indication of the frenetic real estate boom before World War I or of the rapid filling-in of the city and its nearby suburbs after World War II. Well-selected photographs of South Vancouver about 1912 and again in the mid-1950s would have covered this point nicely and, at the same time, shown the living conditions of many very ordinary Vancouverites and their families.

In selecting these snap shots and vignettes, the editors were clearly conscious of contemporary interest in ethnic groups. Several pictures vividly depict the antipathy Vancouverites, as well as other British Columbians, felt towards Asians; other show that the native Indians were once prominent in the local landscape. From the displays of Union Jacks at celebrations and the crowds who came to see royal visitors (incidentally, the 1939 Royal Tour occurred more than "a few days before the outbreak of World War II") [p. 119], it is possible to deduce that Vancouverites were loyal to Britain. Apart from the Asians and the British, however, there is little indication that other immigrants resided in Vancouver. By including only one photograph of a church, and that from the 1880s, the volume misleadingly suggests that religion played no part in Vancouver life.

Vancouver's First Century, however, was not designed as a comprehensive study for historians but a scrapbook to satisfy nostalgia. In the latter role it succeeds moderately well and will undoubtedly revive many memories among old-timers. With more careful and systematic selection of material, including a judicious pruning of the pre-1900 material and more attention to the post-1945 period, this volume would have had an even greater attractiveness for nostalgia buffs and might have been of some use to urban historians. As it is, a historian who already knows something of Vancouver may find a picture or anecdote to illustrate a point but Vancouver's First Century, by itself, will not help anyone to understand the city better.

Patricia E. Roy
Department of History
University of Victoria.

* * *

Hayward, Robert J. Fire Insurance Plans in the National Map Collection/ Plan d'Assurance-Incendie de la Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans. Ottawa: National Map Collection, Public Archives of Canada, 1977/Ottawa: Collection Nationale de Cartes et Plans, Archives Publiques Canada, 1977. Pp. xxvi, 171. Free.

The National Map Collection has produced another valuable catalogue to a very important cartographic collection. Anyone interested in any aspect

of urban study should be familiar with fire insurance plans which, besides the wealth of architectural and engineering detail shown for specific buildings and blocks, provide much information on land use and commercial and population distribution and development.

The brief history of fire insurance cartography in Canada given in the Introduction is interesting and helpful. As little has been written on the subject in general, a bibliography would be beneficial. The brief bibliography appended to the Catalogue of Sanborn Atlases at California State University, Northridge (Western Association of Map Libraries, Occasional Paper No. 1, 1973) includes a few items which will help to fill in the general background and give more detail on the compiling and updating of the plans. The history of the Goad Company and the various Underwriters' Associations is helpful when trying to trace the development of the plans of a specific place, but the relationships are rather more complicated than would appear from the Introduction.

At the same time as the Insurers' Advisory Organizations decided to dispose of its inventory of plans, the Pacific Region office moved into new quarters in Vancouver and transferred all of its old records and plans to the University of British Columbia Library. The records (39 feet) cover the I.A.O. and its predecessors from 1890 to 1969. The Sanborn Company mapped five places in British Columbia in 1885, and the Dakin Company did Vancouver in 1889. In 1890 the British Columbia Fire Underwriters' Association and the Vancouver Board of Fire Underwriters were founded, and in 1899 they were united as the Mainland Board of Fire Underwriters' Association and the Vancouver Island Fire Underwriters' Association. The Goad Company made plans in British Columbia for the various associations from at least 1893 to at least 1915. In 1920 the Mainland and Vancouver Island Fire Underwriters' Associations amalgamated to form the British Columbia Fire Underwriters' Association which took over the old Goad plans and began making new plans. In 1927 the British Columbia Automobile Underwriters' Association joined and the name was changed to British Columbia Insurance Underwriters' Association. In 1939 the name was changed again to British Columbia Underwriters' Association, and this name remained until 1959 when it became the British Columbia Branch of the Canadian Underwriters' Association. The various changes in name are reflected in the plans until 1959, when the Underwriters' Survey Bureau began making new plans on a smaller format in British Columbia.

As is stated in the Introduction, plans were kept up-to-date by means of correction slips, which were sent out to the various agents to paste into their copies of plans. If a plan consisted of several sheets, and enough revisions had been made, one or more sheets might be reprinted separately rather than wait for a whole new edition. This is why there are often sheets with dates differing from the rest of the plan, as can be seen on almost every page of this catalogue. The smaller format and advanced techniques made this practice preferable, and the cumbersome correction slips were eliminated.

Appendix A is a handy listing of the Northern Canneries. The Goad Company produced two editions of similar plans for the Fraser River Canneries, the only extant copies of which are in the British Library, with photocopies and 35 mm. colour transparencies in the University of British Columbia Library's Special Collections Division. In Appendix B some of the atlases held are described as being microfilm copies, but the locations of originals are not stated.

The colour illustrations of a sheet and legend of the 1878 Ottawa plan give a good idea of the use of colours and symbols on the plans, but it is unfortunate that the colour reproduction is not better. Perhaps the sheet chosen has faded, or the Goad colours are too subdued. The illustration in the Catalogue of Sanborn Atlases is much clearer. A table of the illustrations would have been helpful.

There are inevitably a few misprints, such as "Kasio" for "Kaslo" on page 126, and a few questionable points, such as the use of the word "drawings" (a rather archaic usage?) on page ix, and the date 1960 on page vi, but the catalogue itself is excellent. Any bibliography is a time-consuming task, and one involving maps, often awkward and fragile to handle, can be monumental. Robert Hayward and his colleagues in the National Map Collection are to be congratulated for persisting with this catalogue, and making the finished product so clear and concise.

This catalogue should be indispensable to anyone working on urban studies. It is to be hoped that the National Map Collection and/ or the Association of Canadian Map Libraries will take the next step and produce a union list of insurance plans. With the dispersal of stock by the Insurers' Advisory Organization in 1975, many more libraries acquired fire insurance plans of their province or region. Local collections are convenient for users if the existence of the collections and their contents are known. Fire Insurance Plans in the National Map Collection should make the compilation of a union list relatively simple.

Frances M. Woodward
Special Collections Division
University of British Columbia Library.

* * *

Boyce, Gerald E. Belleville: Birth of the City. Belleville: Richard Ellis Printing for the Quinte Kiwanis Club, 1977. Pp. 56. Illustrations.

Thanks to the momentum established in 1967, centennial histories are still enjoying a comfortable ride throughout Ontario and the rest of the country. One of the latest contributions comes from Gerald E. Boyce who has reconstructed the celebrations that attended Belleville's début as a city a century ago. To students of the regional history of eastern