A COMMUNITY OF WORKING MEN:
THE RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT OF EARLY NANAIMO,
BRITISH COLUMBIA, 1875 – 1891

by

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We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
April, 1982

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Date April 26/82
Abstract

This thesis discusses the growth of the coal mining town of Nanaimo, British Columbia an industrial settlement in a New World wilderness. The people who settled Nanaimo came, for the most part, from British coal mining regions. They came to improve their standard of living, but, as in Britain, worked in a capital and labour intensive industry. This thesis examines their patterns of settlement in this new town on the Pacific and stresses the analysis of occupational mobility, residential segregation, and levels of home ownership. Parallels to and departures from British experiences are discussed.

Initially Nanaimo's land was relatively cheap, wages were steady, the town was clean, single family dwellings made an "open" settlement, and some opportunities existed for upward occupational mobility. For these reasons British miners found Nanaimo an improvement over British colliery towns. Yet as Continental Europeans and Asian immigrants increased in number, as the total population grew, as neighbourhoods became more segregated, and as coal markets softened unrest mounted. Increases in land costs, racial animosity, and residential segregation were all forces shaping Nanaimo in 1891, the final year of the study.
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Figure 1: "The community is essentially a community of working men, who are struggling hard to obtain a home for themselves and family." (Photo date unknown, Provincial Archives of British Columbia)
Introduction

"There is no 'typical' American small town any more than there is a typical American city, typical region, or typical human being. Towns, districts and people all own peculiarities and eccentricities that, by their very deviation from ordinary norms, lend flavor and interest to their personalities. Conversely, to be sure, no place is utterly unique, and it is usually the mixture of communality with individuality which makes places (and people) interesting and worthy of notice."

From Nanaimo's beginnings in the 1840s, the coal mining industry dictated and, in many ways, determined the pattern of its social and economic development. These patterns were impressed on the townscape and on the surrounding countryside. This work examines this settlement as it developed from 1875 to 1891 — the period of Nanaimo's early growth and incorporation.

The permanent white settlement of the province of British Columbia languished until the Canadian Pacific Railway opened its transcontinental service in the 1880s. The majority of the province had only been superficially explored by members of the Northwest and Hudson's Bay Companies and later by gold seekers. During this era of British merchantilism and rough, roguish Gold Rush fever, Nanaimo developed as a coal mining town. In the province it was the first industrial settlement; it was at Nanaimo where large-scale corporate mining began, where labour unions started, and where the first export-oriented industrial
economy (and landscape) evolved. Nanaimo during the 1870s and 1880s was a bellwether for places that would grow throughout the province as industrialization and settlement proceeded.

This thesis uses both qualitative and quantitative methods to understand more fully the city of Nanaimo — both as it was and as it was seen to be by those who lived there during the late nineteenth century. A simple statistical analysis and mapping of salient social characteristics is nested within a more wide-ranging qualitative examination of the perceptions of the people of Nanaimo. Census data are used to reconstruct population components. Landscape patterns are examined as are some of the recognized perceptions of the people. This blending of both qualitative and quantitative approaches enriches the analysis and adds to the current body of British Columbian urban and economic development literature.

Nanaimo's size and unidimensional economic development would seem to make its geographic study relatively straightforward. From 1874 it was a city by definition alone — it had fewer than 7000 people until the mid 1890s. In many ways, however, Nanaimo was a British colliery town overseas. For this reason discussion focuses on the emigrants who peopled Nanaimo, on their reactions to North America, and on the social patterns that were reflected in the cityscape. It deals with the pulls and pushes of British emigration and with their effects on the nineteenth
century urban landscape of a small Western city.

The Canadian census first enumerated British Columbians in 1881. A ninety-nine year freeze on the publication of this data was lifted in 1980. This information provides the main body of data in this work. The nominal data listed a resident's name, birthplace, age, ethnic descent, religion, occupation, as well as a spouse's name, birthplace, descent, and religion. From other sources (newspapers, city directories, city property tax assessment rolls) the residences of many of these people can be found. Maps have been produced that examine Nanaimo's white population patterns and characteristics. These data are then integrated with a chronological examination of the city's development. Chapter Two (Nanaimo: 1875–1891) traces the development of Nanaimo using census sources as well as local municipal documentation.

The settlement of Nanaimo was dominated by British immigrants. Their lives in the New World replicated yet also departed from British traditions. These differences and similarities are described in Chapter Three (Nanaimo: Coal Town of British Columbia) and are ultimately examined in light of the labour conflict, segregated landscape, and social life that characterized the city in the early twentieth century.
Footnotes — Introduction


Chapter One – Coal Mining in Great Britain To The 1890s

1. The Men, Women, And Children Of British Mining

Coal has been mined in Great Britain from the reign of Elizabeth the First. Typically, an Elizabethan mine was simply an open, shallow pit where coal was extracted by hand. Men, women and children were often employed in these works. As long as mines remained shallow and relatively open, the mining of coal did not involve many of the dangers that would later become commonplace. Yet work was backbreaking and as mines became deeper, conditions degenerated.

As the earliest and most easily mined coal deposits were exhausted, new methods were devised to push tunnels and chambers deeper beneath the earth. As shafts began to deepen and crude machines were rigged to move deep coal to the surface, a division of labour took place within the mining workforce. Men performed the skilled jobs while women and children did more menial ones. Some men were miners who cut or knocked off great chunks of coal from rock faces while others broke–up the coal for women and children to carry to the surface. As boys matured they would take on the task of mining. In turn, their children would often become miners. A working tradition had been established in only a few generations. People were born into mining families and lived in mining regions (Figure 2).

Working conditions were terrible. Rats, standing,
FIGURE 2: COAL MINING AREAS OF BRITAIN*

putrifying water, foul air, almost unbearable heat and unending darkness along with long, torturous hours of labour (often upwards of 14 per day), made mining a most deplorable, dehumanizing pursuit. Despite this, men, women, and children worked in these conditions. Their existence depended on their ability to extract coal from the mine for the collier owner or "butty".¹

Early in the 19th century children worked in most mines. Since few or no (or very laxly enforced) government regulations limited the collieries' abuses of these young people, mining companies and owners saw no reason not to exploit this segment of the workforce to its fullest. Assigned to the most menial (yet often most critical) tasks, children were forced to work long hours pushing heavy coal carts, standing watch at traps,² or filling coal carriages at the surface. Not until 1842, with the publication of Children's Employment Commission's First Report on Mines,³ did public concern force legislation that limited the worst excesses of child labour in the mines. Yet lack of policing and lenient penalties perpetuated child abuse well into ensuing decades.

Adults too worked in brutal conditions. Constant bending over in enclosed areas often deformed backs, black dust coated lungs, rocks crushed arms, fingers and legs, coal dust permeated cuts and abrasions leaving black scars, eyesight dimmed, knees and elbow stiffened, and hearing was often damaged by explosions. By a relatively young age, the
mine worker was an empty husk, a used-up human who was cast from his job because he could no longer work.

The British government began to regulate the operation of coal mines in the 1840s. Until then there had been no legislation to improve working conditions or mining practices. Between the publication of the Report of the Commission on the Employment of Women and Children in Mines and Collieries of 1842 and the improvements contained in the "General Rules of Coal Mining" of 1869, a number of safety and social regulations came into effect. Among these were the banning of women and children from underground work, the employment of regular mine inspectors, safety regulations concerning ventilation and open flames underground and, by 1860, the creation of the position of a democratically elected checkweighman (a go-between who verified the weight of coal delivered by a miner to the surface). Yet few of these improvements made mines safer places to work. Often enforcement of the law was ineffectual and penalties for transgressions were paltry.

2. The Urban Landscape of Coal Mining

From the time of the first development of coal mines, colliery owners found it expedient to establish living quarters for their workers near the mining site. Such housing was usually on land belonging to the mine. Mine workers therefore became both employees and tenants of the colliery owner. They depended upon the mine for both
livelihood and housing.\textsuperscript{5} There were typically two types of British colliery settlements. As demand for the mining of coal increased, one of these types, the 'new' colliery towns, sprang up all through coal regions. There, life was focused on the pithead and the railway station. Older, established coal towns had developed slowly, their foci changing as they evolved from agrarian market villages to industrial based towns or cities. These older settlements were significantly different from the newer coal towns. Providing a framework within which industrial settlement took place, they often resembled a "...queer jumble of the Old England and the new."\textsuperscript{6}

Both old and new mining towns were grimy places where the pall of smoke and coal dust almost obiterated the sun and turned snow to a sludgy, brown mass. Housing, often constructed quickly and cheaply (Figure 3 shows reasons why cheap housing, built quickly, proliferated), did little to cheer the scene. There were few single family detached units. Usually, row or detached houses were built...

"(there were) ...two great hollow squares of dwellings planked down on the rough steps of a hill, little four room houses with the 'front' looking outward into the grim, blank street, and the 'back' with a tiny square brick yard, a low wall, and a W.C. And ash pit, looking into the desert of the square, hard, uneven, jolting black earth tilting rather steeply down, with these little back yards all round and openings at the corners."\textsuperscript{7}

"the houses themselves were substantial and very decent...but that was outside, that was the view on the uninhabited parlours of all the colliers wives. The dwelling room,
FIGURE 3

- Cheshire
- Northumberland
- Staffordshire
- Durham
- South Wales
- Derbyshire
- Leistershire
- Nottinghamshire
- Warwickshire
- Worchestershire
- Lancashire

210 190 170 150 130 110 90 70

Percentage increase

POPULATION INCREASE (%) - COAL MINING REGIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1841 - 1851*

Thousands of dwelling units

-5 0 5 10 15 20 25 30 35 40 45 50 55

INCREASE IN NUMBER OF INHABITED DWELLINGS COAL MINING REGIONS OF GREAT BRITAIN, 1841 - 1851*

*adapted from, The Census of Great Britain, page xciv.
the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scruffy back garden, and then the ash pits. And between the rows, between the long line of ash pits, went the alley...the actual conditions of living in the Bottoms...were quite unsavoury because people must live in the kitchen, and the kitchens opened onto that nasty alley of ash pits."

For such housing, a miner typically had to pay approximately one day's wages per week (Table 1). In periods of either low wages or of underemployment (when few days per week were spent working) such a burden ran to 33% of weekly wages while in relatively better times less than 20% of weekly wages went for housing. The less a miner made, the greater the burden of housing costs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>years</th>
<th>weekly average rent</th>
<th>average daily wage</th>
<th>average days worked per week</th>
<th>average weekly wage</th>
<th>% of weekly wages on rent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1860s</td>
<td>3s.4.5d.</td>
<td>4s.3d.</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>22s.11d.</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870s</td>
<td>3s.9d.</td>
<td>3s.6d.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14s.10d.</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880s</td>
<td>3s.9d.</td>
<td>3s.4d.</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10s.</td>
<td>37.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890s</td>
<td>4s.1.5d.</td>
<td>4s.4d.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17s.4d.</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the mid nineteenth century Southern Wales developed as a coal mining region and its colliery towns may be considered to be characteristic. Typically, such towns developed in three stages. The

Initially, Welsh coal mining towns (Figure 4a) developed at a mining shaft. A railway served the town as did a parish road. Clustered around the colliery and mine
FIGURE 4: THREE STAGES OF WELSH COLLIERY TOWN DEVELOPMENT

KEY

+++ Railway
■ Railway Depot
— Parish Road
▲ Mine Shaft
● Colliery Pit
—— Housing built for colliery owner
• Owner occupant housing
• Speculative housing
• Building club housing

Adapted from, Jones, P.N., Colliery Settlement in the Wales Coalfield, University of Hull Occasional Papers in Geography, Hull, England, 1969, pages 49 - 54.
shaft (collieries were usually located at the first shaft) was housing owned by the colliery owner. Most often these were row houses, rarely, detached single family units. Row houses were rarely owner-occupied. Often only mine managers or owners were resident home owners. As the colliery's output grew and new coal seams were mined, the settlement's population swelled. New housing units were built. This new housing was more likely built by private investors or speculators, not by the colliery owner. By the second stage of growth (Figure 4b), urban development at shafts had almost ceased. New railway spur lines ran to these new mines and neighbourhoods of common housing developed around the colliery. These were areas of speculative building. This stage also marked the beginning of building by building clubs. Owner-occupants increased in number. The settlement was elongated, stretched-out along the railroad line that served as a link out of the valley and as transport for colliers to and from work.

The third stage of growth of a Welsh colliery town was characterized by the evolution of a complex settlement around a number of collieries (Figure 4c). No new settlement occurred around mine shafts. Strung along the railroad track, housing was constructed exclusively by private investors or building clubs. A town 'nucleus' had evolved. More areal differentiation emerged within the townscape. Neighbourhoods differed. A hierarchy of settlement was established. Larger collieries had larger
populations and more services nearby. The improvement of railway service ensured the dominance of certain towns and eventually changed the townscape itself...

"In 1851 the centre [ed. The colliery established townsite – stage 1] is still the high quality area, but by 1871 the first advances toward the periphery are being made; the break-out into what was to become higher quality suburbia is just being initiated...clear industrial areas with attached working class housing were fully developed by mid century...finally, there were areas close to the town centres where the high demand for unskilled labour became linked to the general exodus of the old urban wealthy and the abandonment of the houses they once occupied creating slums which deteriorated even further and courts and cellars were built in the one time gardens." 11

As centres expanded from their original sites, they began to enfringe upon lands not owned by the colliery. Most often estates of the nobility bordered colliery towns. The result was a complex cadastral pattern. Some areas were leased portions of estates while others belonged to collieries or individual home owners.

The 1870s saw the advent of housing and zoning by-laws. Town density, sanitation and other community services were regulated by local government. This legislation, together with increasing land values pushed up rents and costs. As settlements grew, costs to miners increased.

Throughout E.P.Thompson's work The Making Of The English Working Class runs the theme that..."the greatest offense against property was to have none." 12 As a sign of status, success, and wealth, none was as obvious nor as
respected to the British as was land and its ownership. Property in Britain was expensive. In the Colonies or the United States the situation seemed much better..."In Australia the whole community may become landed proprietors; three or four years of thrift will make the Australian labourer the owner of the land which he cultivates." To a miner, the prospect of being able to acquire land through only a few years of hard work and thrift must have seemed like an opportunity that could not be ignored. In Britain, housing was expensive, land was not available, and towns were often ugly. Many left hoping to find something better.

3. Wages and Unionization

During the nineteenth century demand for British coal was directly linked to the requirements of iron and steel, transportation, and manufacturing industries. During times of high demand, a miner's work was steady and pay was comparatively high. An easing of demand led to worker layoffs and stockpiles of unsold coal. A miner's livelihood, as that of the entire colliery workforce, depended on demand for coal. Periods of layoffs were common in most coal mining areas. These idle periods, coupled with meagre wages, the exhaustion of coal seams, market manipulation by major colliery owners, and time off due to work-related illness or injury all reduced a miner's wages (Table 2). Rarely can 'day wages' be used to estimate yearly or even
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Miner's Wages/ Money per Day</th>
<th>Miner's Wages Indexed*</th>
<th>Real Wages Full Employment</th>
<th>Index of Economic Activity (6 equals full employment/days worked per week)</th>
<th>Real Wages (corrected for unemployment &amp; idle time)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>4s.3d.</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>4s.9d.</td>
<td>158</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>5s.</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>133</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1874</td>
<td>5s.</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>131</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>131</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>3s.6d.</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1878</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
<td>3s.</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>3s.6d.</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3s.4d.</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>3s.9d.</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>117</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>4s.8d.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>179</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>149</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>4s.8d.</td>
<td>156</td>
<td>178</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>148</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1895</td>
<td>4s.4d.</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Index based on Standard of Living circa 1850 (equals 100).
monthly pay. A miner's day-to-day existence was inexorably linked to economic forces, international marketplaces, his luck and skill in avoiding injury, and the 'economic rationality' (colliery owners manipulated supplies and stockpiled) of his employer.

While miners' wages were greatly reduced by lack of work, the employment of a greater number of miners (Figure 5), and technological 'improvements' within the industry boosted colliery profits...."The output of coal rose in the interval [1870 to 1884] from 230 to 318 tons per miner; thus the cost of extracting a ton of coal was 46d in 1884 against 65d in 1870."15

As collieries's profits increased because of increased production and decreasing costs, miners' lives changed. Their basic costs of living and wages fluctuated throughout the nineteenth century (Table 3). During the early 1870s their wages and working time allowed a "minimum standard of comfort", but the late 1870s and 1880s saw a substantial decrease in real income. During this period, all British miners suffered, but none more than those of the Black Country (the Midlands). Poverty was normal, "absolute starvation" was observed, and, in newspapers of the time, horror stories of destitution were commonplace.16

Low wages, irregular work and low standards and conditions of living pushed miners toward unionization. In coal mining areas the union would eventually become a strong social and economic force. The basis of organizing miners
FIGURE 5: COAL MINING EMPLOYEES - SELECTED REGIONS, GREAT BRITAIN

- Northern mining areas
- Midlands
- South Wales
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Miner's Wage per Week*</th>
<th>Amount Needed ** &quot;Minimum Standard of Comfort&quot;</th>
<th>Amount Needed *** &quot;To Subsist&quot; ***</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1865</td>
<td>21s.3d.</td>
<td>28s.</td>
<td>14s.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1872</td>
<td>30s.</td>
<td>26s.9d.</td>
<td>13s.14½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1876</td>
<td>13s.8d.</td>
<td>26s.9d.</td>
<td>13s.14½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>9s.</td>
<td>26s.9d.</td>
<td>13s.14½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1884</td>
<td>10s.6d.</td>
<td>26s.9d.</td>
<td>13s.14½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>18s.9d.</td>
<td>26s.9d.</td>
<td>13s.14½d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1892</td>
<td>23s.4d.</td>
<td>23s.3d.</td>
<td>11s.10½d.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Computed on basis of daily wage x index of economic activity (see Figure 2)

**Adapted from Barnsby, p. 229.

***Ibid.
unions in Great Britain was the lodge or local. Each lodge was comprised of miners who worked at individual collieries. A hierarchical structure emerged. Country-wide organizations became the basis of a national organization, and in 1863 a Miners National Union was formed. The 1860s were prosperous years of mining and unions made steady gains in membership. The Depression of the 1870s led to a complete collapse of the union movement, in fact ...."by the year 1880 trade unionism had reached a low ebb amongst the colliers of Great Britain." However, unions would re-emerge in the next decade.

The formation of a national union of coal miners was a difficult task. The loyalties of colliers tended to be regional, usually only focusing on a single colliery town or coal field. Even county-wide unions had difficulty in accommodating inter-county differences that grew out of village, town, or regional loyalties. Local mining populations were insular. They were well-rooted in their own land — a valley, hillside, or forest — and felt their problems were unique and their way of life special. The area was theirs' — all others were outsiders. Their forefathers, like them, had made a living under the ground that they trod. Their children would follow them, working 'within' the land upon which they lived.

The unionization of Welsh, Scottish or English coal miners reflects a desire among the men to better themselves. A strong union could work to improve life in the pits and
increase wages. Emigration was another means of change. One of the pushes that drove people from Britain was a low standard of living. Rarely could a miner or other labourer rise above a level of poverty - especially in areas of coal mining.

"...family earnings allowed just over one-quarter of the population to live above a minimum standard of comfort; 20 per cent lived almost perpetually below the minimum level necessary to maintain life, while the other 53 per cent lived above subsistence but below the minimum standard of comfort all their lives. These proportions changed little until the end of the century."\(^{20}\)

4. Non-working Pursuits

Despite its dangers and periodicity, British colliers were proud of their occupation. They found mining a 'manly' pursuit - only the physically and mentally strong could stand the rigors of a mining life. Co-existing with this admiration however was an outright hatred of the pits, a day-by-day desire to depart and never return.\(^{21}\) Miners felt threatened yet at ease in the mines. Coal was their life, and often the cause of injury or death. Attitudes concerning the aspirations of a miner's son who wanted to emulate his father were often contradictory. Initially a typical father may have forbidden the son from pit work then beamed and gloated to his mates once the boy had underground employment.\(^{22}\) The miner seemed to have a strong love/hate relationship with his occupation. He did it, hated it, yet
could not or would not do anything else.

Part of a miners feelings toward mining sprang from their view of a nineteenth century factory worker's life. While a miner's work was dirty, grimy and dangerous, a miner was at least 'his own man'; he did not work under the direct supervision of an overseer and could see the result of his labour. His was not the life of producing "a twenty-fourth part of a pin." The miner saw himself as better-off than the hand-weaver or manufacturing employee of the day. In this he found satisfaction and a sense of achievement.

Miners had many leisure time pursuits. In towns provisions were often made for such diverse activities as sports, choirs, reading rooms, and gardens. Men's clubs, both 'sporting' and 'recreational' flourished. However, one of the most universal of miner's activities, and one which was clearly impressed on the landscape of colliery towns, was the drinking that took place in pubs and beer clubs.

For British miners the consumption of beer had both a history and social relevance. Colliers had long since thought of beer as a supplement to their everyday diets (a notion of some merit given the protein content). In mining towns arrangements were often made whereby a miner had a daily ration of beer at a 'local'. These pints were provided by the coal company. They were seen to replace bodily fluids that had been lost during the toil of the day. Drinking after a hard workday was a tradition, but the pubs also served as social centres, where miners could meet
daily, away from the worries and demands of family life. At a local, a miner could socialize with other men. It served as a male enclave with drinking as the focal point. While beer drinking can be seen as a historical and social corollary of colliery life, drunkenness posed a social problem that plagued many a coal mining family.\(^{25}\)

While sometimes hard drinking, hard fighting 'rowdymen', miners were usually quiet, sober men who ascribed to ideals of tolerance and belonged to Anglican, Presbyterian, Methodist or other established churches. At the beginning of the nineteenth century most British miners were Anglicans or Presbyterians. Later, many miners dissassicated themselves from the established denominations and began attending dissident churches. Among these new groups were Methodists and Baptists. Founded by workingmen, these churches did not represent established social groups for whom miners and other workingmen had little trust. Furthermore they taught a scripture that could easily be understood by them. Followers of these churches increased rapidly in the mining districts. By the late 1820's dissident religions had begun many Sunday School programmes. Education in any institutionalized form had been sorely neglected in colliery towns.\(^{26}\) Sunday Schools were greatly valued by miners, who considered education a means whereby their children might escape the rigors of a mining life.
5. The Emigration of British Miners

During the early and middle 19th century, the United States and British North America were industrializing and coal was frequently the catalyst. It had been found in abundance, but few men with mining skills lived near the coal seams. North American mine owners and industrialists needed a skilled workforce. For these workmen they frequently turned to the continent of Europe and to the British Isles.

As mining began in North America, Continental Europeans and Britishers were employed. Frequently Italians, Englishmen, Poles, Frenchmen, and Scots worked side-by-side. All were men who had found employment in the collieries — their work was little different from that which they had done at home.

Coal miners, as well as all other immigrants who ventured to North America, had innumerable personal reasons for leaving their homes but, considered as a group, three reasons predominated: they wanted to advance their economic standing, to escape from political repression, or to find adventure. There can be little doubt that the miners of Britain sought material benefits in the New World. They came hoping and expecting to find high (or at least fair) wages, cheap and available land and housing, fair food prices (and a wider variety of foodstuffs), and opportunity for economic and social advancement. The pull of these benefits brought many a miner across the Atlantic. They saw
North America as a land of opportunity — where hard work and frugality would be rewarded with material success and social respectability.  

From the vantage of the British workingman, government was controlled by a distant elite. Despite the democratic and reform movements of the 19th century most workingmen had little impact on Britain's political system. Their voices were muffled at best. In terms of opportunity for political participation and representation, the image of a more democratic North America attracted many who sought a government more responsive to their needs. 

With the development of coal mines in Nanaimo, economic and political opportunities were presented to British miners who wished to emigrate, however, the lure of adventure cannot be underplayed. Men crossed and recrossed the new continent not only seeking fortunes, but also journeyed to observe, study or experience. Their's was often a quest for excitement, for something different. Many came to North America looking for this excitement.
Footnotes – Chapter One

1. A "butty" or the "butty system" was an independent contractor who worked a crew of men in the mine of a colliery owner. Their operations were declared illegal near the end of the 18th century due to unfair working arrangements and unjustified exploitation of men.

2. A canvas door designed to allow passage (or blockage) of air to sections of the mine.


4. In 1833 the Factory Act was passed. This restricted hours of labour within factories but ignored coal mining. The fact that many members of Parliament and the House of Lords were colliery owners may have delayed action being taken to regulate their operation.

5. The implications of the colliery owner as landlord and employer are many. Evictions in times of labour strife, poorly administered social services, and unhealthy sanitary regulations are some of those mentioned in Williams, J.E., The Derbyshire Miners, George Allen and Unwin Limited, London, Eng., 1962, pages 72 – 73.


10. Housing provision was therefore a "speculative, profit geared activity" and was "dominated by considerations of profit, income, and security of investment." It was not built to suit the needs of the consumer. Jones, ibid., pages 11 – 12.

12. Thompson, E. P., The Making of the English Working Class, Vintage Books, New York, N.Y., U.S.A., 1966, page 61. See also pages 229 – 230 of his discussion that focuses on some of the historical associations that precipitated the equating of land with security, rights, and status as well as the "rural memories" that industrial workers seemed to have had.


18. Ibid., page 61.

19. D.H. Lawrence speaks of finding "a new race of miners" not far from his home of Bestwood in Sons and Lovers, op. cit. See also Llewyllan, R., op. cit.


21. Many of the statements made in this subchapter stem from impressions that I have gained through the reading of literature set in British coal mining centres. Where possible, ideas or specific references are cited, yet some impressions or feelings have eluded notation.

22. The most illustrative discussion of these dichotomous feelings exist in the D.H. Lawrence work in Trilling, op. Cit. And Llewellan, op. cit.


31. E.P. Thompson, op. cit., found that for frustrated workers, "It was easier to emigrate than to resist; for reinforcing the exploitative relationship [that which existed between the ruling or owning and working classes] was that of political repression." Page 225.
Figure 6: Nanaimo and its harbour in 1858: (painting of E. Bedwell, crew member H.M.S. Plumper) Note the neat cottages of Hudson's Bay Company employees, the Bastion, the coal and ash burning chimney and the Indian canoe in the foreground (Provincial Archives of B.C.).
Chapter Two - Nanaimo, B.C.: 1875 - 1891

1. The Hudson's Bay Company

The first coal mining on Vancouver Island was a response to demands made by the Royal Navy. The Pacific Fleet's new steam ships required coal, and costs could be reduced if it were found in a Pacific colony. Although Fort Victoria had been a secure base since 1843, the Royal Navy did not seek coal on Vancouver Island until after the establishment of the American frontier in 1846.¹ During the period of preliminary exploration, the Navy lobbied the British government to force the Hudson's Bay Company to search for coal. It wanted the Company to open and administer mines, and in this policy it succeeded. In June of 1849, the Hudson's Bay Company found significant deposits at Fort Rupert (Figure 7). Shortly thereafter a number of colliers were imported from Britain.² By September, coal was being removed from a number of shallow pits.

In the early mines of Vancouver Island experienced miners from Great Britain worked alongside native Indians. Living conditions and mining methods were primitive and led to complaints, for Britishers, "...were experienced coal diggers, who regarded themselves as being far above the status of common labourers."³ Because of these conditions and the fact that they were indentured to the Hudson's Bay Company for a period of five years or more, miners often deserted to the California gold fields. Once they left,
FIGURE 7: VANCOUVER ISLAND AND BRITISH COLUMBIA

Fort Rupert

Cumberland

Comox

Nanaimo

1:2,500,000

Victoria

1:500,000

NanOOSE Bay

Departure Bay

Newcastle Island

Wellington

East Wellington

NANAIMO

Cedar

South Wellington

NANAIMO AREA
these men were treated as criminals, and the Company (with the co-operation of the Colonial government) tried to force them to return. However, many escaped. In 1850, when miners called a general strike, the Hudson's Bay Company brought more men from Great Britain. By this time the Company foresaw the possibility of supplying coal to San Francisco. However, given the labour situation (and the shortcomings of Fort Rupert coal), it seemed unlikely that such a venture could have been undertaken profitably. At this opportune time coal was found at "Sne-ny-mo" or, as it would later become known, Nanaimo.

In a letter of August 24, 1852 from Governor James Douglas to Joseph McKay, the supervisor of Fort Rupert, McKay was instructed to ....

"Proceed with all possible diligence to Wentuhysen Inlet commonly known as Nanymo Bay and formerly take possession of the Coal bed, lately discovered there for and in behalf of the Hudson's Bay Company."

Within two months Douglas ordered miners moved from Fort Rupert to the Nanaimo area and by early 1854 the Hudson's Bay Company was advertising for miners in English newspapers. In the summer of 1854 the barque Princess Royal left London carrying, among others, 23 men and 23 women bound for Nanaimo. From Brierley Hill, Staffordshire, each of the men had been indentured to the Hudson's Bay Company as "[a] Working Collier, Miner, Sinker or Labourer for a complete term of five years from the date of embarkation." Almost a year earlier the company had begun preparing
Nanaimo for the arrival of entire families...

"the company recommended putting up 20 detached houses, containing 4 rooms in each with chimney in the Centre so that they may accommodate either one or Two families according to their Numbers, giving them separate Doors of entrance for each family. Such buildings as so described should be about 40 x 25' feet. We shall begin some houses on that plan when Cote has finished 4 smaller houses."

Nanaimo was about to become a town with a population not only of single men but also of women and children.

By the end of 1854, after the earliest mines had been operating for almost two years, Nanaimo had 52 dwellings, 3 stores and shops, 6 "outhouses" and one school (with 29 regular students)—all located on a peninsula. The Company selected this site because of its proximity to the mines and the harbour, and because it could be defended more easily than other locations nearby. Of the 142 people who lived there, 52 were under the age of ten (38 boys; 14 girls), 40 were between ten and twenty (21 men; 19 women), and 85 were over twenty (61 men; 24 women). Only one man was over forty. Nanaimo was a settlement of young people, both male and female, many of whom were married. Family settlement was Company policy for it was thought families provided a stable community environment that miners would not desert for California.

Yet the Hudson's Bay Company did not vigorously encourage permanent settlement. Coal mining was a sideline, a new undertaking for company officers in England, Canada, and Vancouver Island—one they often found awkward and
difficult. While output increased during the Hudson's Bay Company tenure, it did not do so consistently. The nature of Nanaimo coal made mining difficult. Quality was often inconsistent and a high sulphur content made mining dangerous and often limited the coal's industrial use. Because of the exhaustion of seams or gas leakages temporary layoffs were frequent. By 1860, the Hudson's Bay Company monopoly over merchantile activities in the West had been broken and the Company wanted to sell its mining interests and 6000 acres of associated land. In 1862 the property and mines were acquired by the Nanaimo Coal Company.

By this date Nanaimo had grown to a population of approximately 700 (400 "whites" and 300 "Indians"). In a census of 1863, more than half of the whites were listed as English, 24% were Scots and 7% were Irish or Welsh (Figure 8). Almost half of the adult population was "married" (including cohabitators). Obviously, the Hudson's Bay Company policy of recruiting married men from British mining areas had been successful.

When the Hudson's Bay Company sold its interests in Nanaimo, the nature of the coal industry changed. It became the major undertaking of a coal company and not a fringe pursuit of a fur trading company. In addition, management of the mines and of the town was located much closer to the site and was more concerned with problems of mining and settlement. With these changes "industrial, and not bureaucratic or commercial attitudes now dominated the coal
FIGURE 8: NANAIMO - CENSUS, 1863

2. The Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company

In 1862 a company of investors interested in purchasing a working colliery bought Nanaimo's mines. These men formed the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and, after several months of negotiation, paid the Hudson's Bay Company 40,000 pounds sterling for 6000 acres of land, all coal mining equipment, and a number of other buildings in the Nanaimo area. The new company emphasized colliery improvement, profit-making, and permanent settlement. While most of the directors of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company resided in England or Canada, the Company placed a resident manager at the mine site who controlled local
affairs. This "resident manager system", combined with a new "industry-first" attitude on behalf of the managers, introduced Nanaimo to a period of steady growth.

During the 1860s Nanaimo began to grow outward from its peninsular nest. The Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had foreseen this trend and had prepared a town plan. The plan imposed a radial pattern, one that pushed streets upward and outward from the central peninsula (Figure 9).

As Nanaimo grew during the 1860s, the Company and people of the town encouraged the growth of social institutions. By the middle of the decade there were three churches (as well as two Indian Missions) — a Methodist church (1859), an Anglican (1865), and a Presbyterian (1866). Presumably the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company considered churches to be a stabilizing influence, for it donated land for church sites. Concern with education is best exemplified by the construction of the Mechanics Literary Institute. The Institute had operated since 1862 in the confines of the offices of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. In 1864, Nanaimo's citizens raised funds and the coal company donated land to construct a permanent stone building. The opening of the library and reading room was an important event, epitomizing the people's pride in the growth of their community and their hope for high education standards.

...bunting, flags and triumphal arches festooned with evergreen...giving a gala appearance to the town. Governor Kennedy led a procession to the site of the new building
FIGURE 9: NANAIMO, B.C., circa 1891

Based on map of J.J. Honeyman and A.R. Heyland, Property of the New Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Co.

Scale 1:14400
where he was met by a guard of honour...there, with due ceremony, he laid the cornerstone...the building was one of the largest in Nanaimo."

Clearly, the people had not overlooked the symbolic and practical importance of such a structure.

Burgeoning social and economic development in Nanaimo caught the city in a peculiar balance of power between civic and company rights. When it came to undertakings that concerned the whole population, company guidance was often the only that was available.

"the community traditionally thought in terms of the company rather than the government for its immediate sustenance and local improvements...this feeling of dependence was accelerated by the marked government disregard for public works. It was the Coal Company that built the roads and bridges, furnished the low priced homes and property for the impecunious miner, and generally controlled the town in an economic sense."

Dependence on the company, rather than the colonial (or, later, federal and provincial) government was a feature of the early town. Although the Company maintained a paternalistic attitude regarding public works and social development, Nanaimo was relatively free of any serious worker-management conflict that such an approach could cause. There were a few desertions but demand for coal was steady; wages were stable and deemed fair.

Judging by the accounts of travellers and writers Nanaimo was not a typical, grimy coal town. "Nanaimo presents little of that sooty, opaque appearance, either physical or moral, so common to the colliery village of
England."

Although Nanaimo did not outwardly resemble an English colliery town, mining practices were similar. The mines of Nanaimo had become much more than open, shallow pits dug into beaches or outcrops at sea-side. As production figures rose, tunnels became deeper and were often located under sea water. The deeper and more productive the mines, the greater the number of accidents. Combined with the hazards of asphyxiation and rockfalls were those of train derailments and explosions — new technology employed by the end of the decade brought new dangers. Throughout the 1860s these technological changes created a more dangerous workplace as production increased.

3. Nanaimo — 1875
A) The People

Upon incorporation in 1874, Nanaimo had a white population of 1884. A sample has been taken of these residents that comprises 337 adult males. Males mentioned in the Canadian census of 1881 were 'traced back' to 1875 through the local Nanaimo newspapers (Nanaimo Free Press), town directories,\(^1\) provincial voters lists,\(^2\) and city property ownership records.\(^3\) It was assumed that much of the 1881 data had not changed since 1875 (religion, birthplace, descent) but that other factors may have (marital status, occupation, property ownership, residence); therefore, unless the latter were known for 1875, the data were not included in the sample. While this method is
biased (only white, adult males, and only those who had remained in Nanaimo for at least six years were included), the number of those sampled represents at least one-third of the white men in Nanaimo. In addition to restricting the sample to residents for a period of at least six years, both native Indian and Orientals have been omitted. While these two groups each formed substantial minorities throughout the second half of the nineteenth century, tracing their residences, movements, and occupations would be well-nigh impossible given the data available.

The policies of both the Hudson's Bay Company and the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had brought a British population to Nanaimo. In 1875, 83% of the sampled white males had been born in England, Wales, Scotland or Ireland (Figure 10). In descent, the population was also overwhelmingly British. The 10% of the population born in British Columbia, Canada, or the United States were, for the most part, the sons of first-generation immigrants. They were listed as English, Welsh, Irish or Scottish in descent, not as Canadian or American. These second-generation men, combined with the new immigrants, made Nanaimo's white population over 90% British.

The people of Nanaimo represented many different religious denominations. Given the dominance of British men, it is not surprising that over 70% of the population sampled were listed as Anglican, Presbyterian, or Methodist. Anglicans and Methodists accounted for 64% of the sample;
FIGURE 10: NANAIMO - WHITE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

a) Birthplace  n = 275

b) Descent  n = 275

c) Religion  n = 275

d) Occupation
English and Welshmen for 64%; 26% of the population were Presbyterian while 28% were Scottish; 3% of the men were Catholic and 3% were Irish. While not all Englishmen, Scots, or Irishmen were Anglicans or Methodists, Presbyterians or Catholics, respectively, the religion that each group brought to North America seemed to have remained their religion in Nanaimo.

The work force of Nanaimo, circa 1875, was dominated by labourers. Figure 10d shows the occupations of Nanaimo in 1875 (See Appendix I). Skilled workers along with the semi and unskilled labourers, comprised over 60% of the sample. They were the backbone of working Nanaimo. It was upon their paypackets that most of the town's other workers (store owners, clerks, farmers), not to mention women and children, depended (Figure 11).

The second largest occupational group of Nanaimo were those employed in some type of agriculture, either as farmers, farm labourers, or as hands on the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company farm. Many of these men lived outside city limits.

In 1875, mining companies in the Nanaimo area claimed that 396 white men worked in their mines. Of the skilled labourers, three quarters were white employees of the coal mining companies (the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, Dunsmuir, Diggle and Company, and the Harewood Coal Company). In addition there were 176 Chinese and 51 Indian employees. White miners employed were mainly from
Figure 11: Nanaimo's economy was dominated by the coal company. In this undated photograph (pre 1886) the coal cars of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company dominate the landscape of sea side Nanaimo. These cars transported coal from the mines to ships in the harbour.
the British Isles (Figure 12); if not they tended to be of American, Canadian, or British Columbian birth and identified their descent as British. In religious affiliation they seemed inclined to Methodism in its two forms and to Presbyterianism and were underrepresented among the Anglicans. Their working-class religious heritage was replicated in North America.

Miners tended to live throughout Nanaimo, yet were particularly concentrated in the South Ward (the area set aside for miners by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company) and were underrepresented on the Downtown Peninsula. Wellington, the site of Dunsmuir, Diggle and Company's mines, was also a miner's area. Despite a concentration in the South Ward, miners could be found in every neighbourhood as could most workers—there seems to have been little residential differentiation on the basis of occupation.

Generally, Nanaimo's white population was ethnically and economically homogeneous. The average male citizen was likely to be British (and more than likely English); a member of the Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian church, and a working man (probably a miner). To a considerable degree, the goals of the Hudson's Bay Company and the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had been realized by 1875. In terms of its white population, Nanaimo resembled nothing as much as it did a British coal town on the west coast of North America.
FIGURE 12: THE MINERS OF NANAIMO, 1875

a) Birthplace  
\[ n = 84 \]

- England
- Scotland
- Wales
- Other

b) Descent  
\[ n = 84 \]

- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Irish

-c) Religion  
\[ n = 81 \]

- Presbyterian
- Anglican
- Methodist
- Wesleyan
- Other

-d) Residence  
\[ n = 84 \]

- Wellington
- South Ward
- "Nanaimo"
- Downtown
- Cross Ravine
- Peninsula
- West Central
- Southwest
- Other
B) Urban Morphology

Initial settlement in Nanaimo centred around the harbor. Hudson's Bay Company buildings and early dwellings were on a central peninsula while Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company housing was concentrated to the south-west. After 1862, residential and commercial developments spread out in a manner conforming to the company's London plan.

In 1875, Nanaimo was still sparsely populated. Most people lived in residential and commercial districts established by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and Hudson's Bay Company (the Southward, Cross Ravine, and Downtown Peninsula). These areas' initial advantages for settlement (proximity to both earliest and later mines, tide-water, and relatively level land) had enabled them to grow relatively rapidly. In 1875 the people of Nanaimo lived close to the mines, close to the commercial centre, and close to the sea.

Nanaimo's ethnic and religious groups were evenly spread about the city (Figures 13, 14, 15). Only the over-representation of Englishmen in the Downtown Peninsula bears examination. For these residents, early arrival had been advantageous, for they dominated the city's commerce and trade. They could afford to live within the relatively more expensive commercial centre.

Figure 16 shows the dominance of labourers throughout Nanaimo in 1875. Except for significant numbers of farmers and farm workers outside the city, skilled labourers
FIGURE 13: POPULATION - BIRTHPLACES, 1875

Outside City

West Central

n = 138

England

Scotland

Wales

B.C.

U.S.A.

n = 14

England

Scotland

Wales

Australia

B.C.

U.S.A.

n = 12

England

Scotland

Wales

n = 29

England

Scotland

Other

n = 59

England

Scotland

Wales

India

Downtown Peninsula

South Ward

Scale 1:14400

N →
FIGURE 16: POPULATION - OCCUPATIONS, 1875

West Central

n = 16

Downtown Peninsula

n = 35

South Ward

n = 53

n = 13

Southwest

n = 13

Outside City

n = 14

Cross Ravine

n = 136

Skilled labour

Unskilled labour

Other

Farming

Proprietor

Professional

Semi-professional

Scale 1:14400
dominate all regions. Areas of most diverse occupational representation were the most populous (South Ward and Downtown Peninsula). Apart from these particular patterns however, there seemed to have been little to differentiate one Nanaimo neighbourhood from another.

The Hudson's Bay Company and Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company enticed miners to Nanaimo with the prospect of land ownership. Even the name of the coal company illustrates that great consideration was given to land sales. Indeed, land was within the means of many of the area's residents, for salient characteristics of land owners resembled those of the population as a whole. The main body of owners were English or Scottish; Anglican, Methodist or Presbyterian, and labouring workmen (Figure 17).

Besides town lots sold by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company, yet registered in city offices, Nanaimo's citizens bought land outside city limits. However, the prospective buyer still had to deal with the coal company because it owned most of the land in the area. From the 1860s the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company encouraged its employees to settle on five acre lots (subdivided forty acre blocks) that were "leased with option to buy." These lots were immediately to the west and southeast of the townsite. These five acre plots were thought by the company to be the key to attracting and maintaining a resident population. Just how many men took advantage of the company's "Five Acre Plan" is hard to determine. Suffice
FIGURE 17: CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND OWNERS, 1875

a) Birthplace $n = 71$

b) Descent $n = 71$

c) Religion $n = 72$

d) Occupation $n = 74$

e) Residence $n = 72$

f) Age $n = 72$
it to say that a 'suburb' did exist, aptly named Five Acres, but there is little evidence that many successfully settled there. The manner in which miners bought land was discussed in later years by the Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in B.C. These documents reveal the difficulties faced by a prospective buyer.

In 1904, while appearing before the Royal Commission of Industrial Disputes in British Columbia, S.M. Robins, a former secretary and superintendent of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company (who had served the company for forty years) stated...

"the person taking a homestead — a five acre homestead — takes it under a lease for twenty-one years. He has the option of buying at the end of ten years. A few of the homesteads in the early days were on different conditions, but the bulk of the homesteads were leased for 21 years with the option of purchase in ten. These lots being adjacent to the town, I was obliged to fix rather a fancy price on the land itself and on the rent, otherwise it would have depreciated the value of city property. People holding city property that they bought of the company years before, for which they would have paid 200 dollars to 400 dollars, these lots being one-fifth of an acre. Otherwise I would have been willing to have sold these lots for something like 50 dollars, but if it had been 50 dollars a lot everybody would go to live outside the town limits, and city property would have depreciated instantly. So it was not only that I wanted to do as well for the company as I could, but in fairness to the holders of city lots, I had to fix a very high price on the lots. These were the terms: a rental of a half a dollar per acre per annum. That would mean a man taking a five acre lot would pay the first year two dollars and fifty cents, the second year the same, the third, fourth and fifth years he would pay the two dollars and fifty cents per annum per acre.
That would bring his total payments for the first and second year to two dollars and fifty cents; for the other three years he would pay twelve dollars and fifty cents per annum for the whole five acres. After that he would pay fifty dollars per year for his five acres. It was calculated that after the first five years, when he was paying a nominal rent, that the place would be cleared, and that he would be deriving an income from the acreage that he had under cultivation."²⁸

Robins's references to the high cost of land, coupled with the problems of clearing and cultivation when the purchaser was a working man, lends support to the supposition that few men actually succeeded in making a five acre homestead. When Robins was asked; "Have there been many of these lots fallen back into the company's hands?" He replied, "Several have, chiefly on account of the owner."²⁹ Clearly, it was difficult to maintain a five acre lot.

Apart from the five acre lots that were sold for a "fancy price", were lots within the city limits. Ranging from a low price of 150 dollars to a ceiling of 600 to 800 dollars, but averaging from 300 to 500³⁰ dollars, these one-fifth acre plots seemed to have been much more affordable.

Despite the fact that the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had been selling land in Nanaimo to residents and immigrants since 1862, most city land still belonged to the company in 1875. A sample of 17 city blocks displays this effectively (Figure 18). Clearly, an incoming immigrant — who wished to purchase land — more than likely
FIGURE 16: COAL COMPANY LANDS - SELECTED BLOCKS, 1875

coal company land

Scale 1:14400

N →
dealt with the coal company. While Nanaimo was a fully incorporated city, it was still controlled outrightly by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company — socially, politically, and economically.

4. Nanaimo — 1881

A) The People

The mines of the Nanaimo area increased production throughout the late 1870s (from 81,000 tons in 1874 to 268,000 tons in 1880). Increased coal production was brought about by the expansion of existing and the development of new mines (by both the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and Dunsmuir, Diggle and Company3140, and by the use of more modern mining techniques. Employment in the mines increased from just under 400 to nearly 600. Nanaimo's population rose to approximately 2800.

Data for the analysis of Nanaimo's population in 1881 have been drawn from the 1881 Census of Canada. Recorded in the census were the birthplaces, age, descent, religion, occupation, marital status, and number of dependants for each person living in the area.

In 1881 the population of Nanaimo was 2803. The white population retained most of its characteristics from incorporation, but while the numerical dominance of the British born was secure (Figure 19), there were more men from Irish, Italian, German, and French backgrounds than before. The growing population represented more religions.
FIGURE 19: NANAIMO - WHITE POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

a) Birthplace n = 814
- England
- Scotland
- U.S.A.
- B.C.
- Ireland
- Italy
- Germany
- New Brunswick
- Australia
- Nova Scotia
- Other

b) Descent n = 814
- English
- Scottish
- Irish
- Welsh
- Other
- German
- Italian
- African

(c) Religion n = 781
- Anglican
- Presbyterian
- Catholic
- Baptist
- Other
- Lutheran
- Other

(d) Occupation n = 814
- Farming
- Skilled labour
- Unskilled labour
- Semi-skilled labour
- Professional
- Sales
- Proprietor
- Semi-professional
- Other
- Professional
A decrease in the representation of Anglicans was offset by increases in Roman Catholics and, more modestly, in Methodist and other smaller groups (Lutheran, Baptist, Diest, and Independent). There had been no substantial changes in Nanaimo's occupational structure. The city was still dominated by skilled and unskilled workmen.

As in 1875 the demographic characteristics of the white miners reflected those of the entire white population. Men of British background still dominated but significant inroads had been made by those of British Columbian and Irish birth (Figure 20). English and Scottish representation dropped slightly, as men of Irish and Italian backgrounds were employed, but Englishmen and Scots still constituted the majority.

During the earliest settlement of Nanaimo, Indians had been employed as labourers in and around the mines. As demand for labour increased, these Indian workers — whom their white employers often characterized as lazy thieves — were often replaced by Chinese. Many Chinese had come to British Columbia during the Gold Rush and in the early 1880s others came as labourers for the Canadian Pacific Railway. As placer mining opportunities faded, some found their ways to the coal mines. By 1881 there were almost 300 men and women of Chinese birth in the area, a small number of whom were employed in service industries or as domestic help (16%); the vast majority were simply "labourers" (84%).

Almost all of the city's Chinese-born population was
FIGURE 20: THE MINERS OF NANAIMO, 1881

a) Birthplace

b) Descent

c) Religion
male. Opportunities for marriage and family life were virtually non-existent. Men came and worked the mines, often sending the majority of their pay home to a wife or family. The Chinese population was employed in manual tasks and geographically segregated from the rest of the population. Their precarious social position in the community would eventually make them the foils and scapegoats for many social and industrial problems, while the loneliness of their existence cannot be too greatly stressed.

Patterns of Indian and Chinese residence were noticeably impressed on the landscape. Since Nanaimo's incorporation, most Chinese lived in a "Chinatown" (Figure 9). The few Chinese who did not live there were cooks or domestics who lived in the homes of their employers. In Chinatown, the men found stores, restaurants, rooming houses, and opium dens that catered to their needs. It was within Chinatown, not Nanaimo, that these people lived their non-working lives.

The Indian's social position differed from that of the Chinese. While a reservation abutted city limits to the south-east (Figure 9), very few people seemed to have lived there at the time of the census. Only 59 people listed as being of Indian descent lived in Nanaimo. Of these, 49 (83%) were women living with or married to men of European descent. Among the Indian men the only occupation listed was "labourer". There were two religious missions — one
Catholic, the other Anglican — in the Indian Reserve, but no stores, hotels or restaurants. Many of the inhabitants of the Reserve left the area daily to work, but unlike the Chinese, these Indians depended on Nanaimo's stores and restaurants (when they were allowed entry) for their purchases and "entertainment".

Social problems in Nanaimo often arose because of labour relationships in the mines. A miner was a highly skilled worker. Miner's assistants were usually much less skilled, their work was restricted to lifting rock or coal into or out of loading cars at the mine's face or pithead (Figure 21). They were often adolescents training to become miners. At the urging of its miners, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had restricted Chinese and Indians to the menial tasks of mining. They could only assist "skilled" miners. Other collieries, notably Robert Dunsmuir and Company, employed Chinese as miners and paid them less. In the view of the British miner, the Chinese threatened to undercut employment. They saw the Chinese as opportunists who would work for less, live on less, and work under harsher conditions. In an atmosphere of growing racial hostility white miners demanded restrictions on Oriental immigration.

Anti-Chinese feelings had existed since the early 1870s. Later in the decade, as significant numbers of Southern Europeans and Irish immigrants were employed in the mines, prejudice was somewhat redirected toward them. These men,
Figure 21: The Chinese were kept in menial positions. Here we see them pushing coal carts from the pithead (1875 photograph, Provincial Archives of B.C.).
too, would work for less; therefore, they were met with the same animosity as the Chinese. While relatively few of these men were employed by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company (most found work in Wellington), the company used the threat of importing large numbers of them to make their British employees "toe the corporate line". When miners threatened a walk-out in protest over unsafe conditions, a manager wrote to his superior...

"I think it will be necessary for us to try and get fresh men atogether (sic). But I do not think that it would be of any use for us to try white men, as I am quite sure that they would soon be induced to leave us. There is I believe a good many Italians in San Francisco, and many of them are good Miners, and if we find it necessary to get fresh hands, I think that we should try them, as they are a class that would not be easily advised or intimidated".

While the Company did not follow up such threats with importation of Southern Europeans, such views, held by mine management could only lead to mistrust, miners of employers and one ethnic group of another, and formed a foundation for social tensions.

B) Urban Morphology

As the mines of the Nanaimo region expanded, the city of Nanaimo grew. Notable areas of population growth were Newcastle Township and the Northwest District, areas where new industrial development employed new residents.

Four new industries were located along the banks of the Mill Stream. While the most obvious developments were a
brewery and a tannery (especially to the noses of the citizens), the more vital to the city were a newly expanded lumber mill and a ship yard, both of which were linked to coal mining and transport. The numbers of men employed were not large, but these ventures provided alternate employment within the city. Furthermore, these industries, in concert with commercial establishments located in the Downtown Peninsula, exemplified Nanaimo's emerging economic diversity. No longer was the city merely a mining town. However, these new industries had little or no effect on the hold of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company on city lands. A sample of the ownership of city lots shows that the hold of the company remained as yet unchallenged — Nanaimo was still owned by the coal company.37

Just as the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company's holdings within Nanaimo changed little from 1875 to 1881, patterns of settlement remained rather stable (Figures 22, 23 and 24). All areas (with the exception of Chinatown and the Indian Reserve) remained dominated by the British workingman; the only change was a larger number of people from different ethnic and religious backgrounds throughout the city. The distribution of occupational groups also remained relatively unchanged (Figure 25). The only differences were a decrease in the representation of labourers in the Southwest and Cross Ravine areas as managerial, semi-professional, professional, clerical, and petty proprietal groups increased there.
FIGURE 22: POPULATION - BIRTHPLACES, 1881

Scale 1:14400
FIGURE 23: POPULATION - DESCENT, 1881

Scale 1:14400
FIGURE 24: POPULATION - RELIGIONS, 1881

Scale 1:14400
The growing social and economic diversity of Nanaimo during the late 1870s was accompanied by steady employment. These were years of security, times when long-term financial commitments could be made with confidence. A home and land could be purchased. During years of mine expansion, stability was the hallmark of housing and property ownership. Those who could afford to purchase homes were able to maintain them. Slight changes are found from the profile of 1875 land owners as people from different backgrounds purchased land (Figure 26) — an example of how steady employment allowed even the newest immigrants the opportunity to purchase a lot. Land owners were more likely married than the general population (78% opposed to a city-wide figure of 41%; furthermore only 17% of landowners were single compared to 29% of the entire population). These men were the type of immigrant who Hudson's Bay Company and Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had endeavoured to recruit. They remained on the land they had purchased or were buying. Behind the facade of the "rough and ready" miners of Nanaimo was a stable, married population.

At the beginning of the 1880s, a decade that has been described as "the period of greatest increase in the industry [coal mining] from the point of view of employment as well as of production"38, the people of Nanaimo looked ahead optimistically to the future, to a day when Nanaimo would become one of the great cities of western Canada.
FIGURE 26: CHARACTERISTICS OF LAND OWNERS, 1881

a) Birthplace \( n = 152 \)
- England
- U.S.A.
- Scotland
- Wales
- Ireland
- Other

b) Descent \( n = 152 \)
- English
- Welsh
- Scottish
- Irish
- Other


c) Religion \( n = 152 \)
- Anglican
- Presbyterian
- Catholic
- Methodist
- Other


d) Occupation \( n = 166 \)
- Skilled labour
- Semi-professional
- Sales
- Unskilled
- Professional
- Farming
- Other


e) Residence \( n = 152 \)
- West Central
- Southwest
- Northwest
- South Ward
- Cross Ravine
- Downtown Peninsula
- Newcastle

f) Age \( n = 152 \)
- 40-49
- 30-39
- 20-29
- Over 60
- 50-59


g) Marital Status \( n = 152 \)
- Married
- Single
- Widower
- Unknown
5. Nanaimo — 1891

A) The 1880s

The year 1886 was important in the development of Nanaimo for it saw the coming of a railroad...

"On August 13, 1886, the service was inaugurated with the arrival in Nanaimo of the first E. And N. [Esquimalt and Nanaimo] passenger train from Victoria. That inaugural run was done up in style, with a flagdecked engine drawing two coaches, and the official party — Prime Minister Sir John A. Macdonald, Robert Dunsmuir and their aides — wearing tailcoats and top hats." 39

Nanaimo was now linked by both sea, wagon road and rail to Victoria and by telegraph to the rest of North America. The city had a running water system, limited electrical power, and, by 1888, a small, private telephone system.

During the 1880s the population of the city grew, chiefly because of increased mining employment. Throughout the decade production in both the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and Robert Dunsmuir and Company increased (Figure 27). However, as production increased so did the number of mining accidents. Nanaimo's mines had always been dangerous, yet during the 1880s, when many new technological "improvements" were introduced, more miners than ever before were injured or killed (Table 4). Despite major disasters in 1887 and 1888 40 (Figure 28), the city continued to prosper throughout the decade and by the year 1891 had a population of over 4500.
TABLE 4: MINING DEATHS, 1880-1891*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1880</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1881</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1882</td>
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<tr>
<td>1885</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1886</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
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<td>1887</td>
<td>157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1888</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1889</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1890</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1891</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*data from, The Mining Record, various dates.

FIGURE 27: NANAIMO AREA COAL MINES OUTPUT
1830 - 1891
Figure 28: Waiting for the dead after the Great Mine Explosion of 1887. Over 150 men were killed in the disaster (Provincial Archives of British Columbia).
B) The People

According to the 1891 Census of Canada, the population of the Nanaimo census area was 6512. That figure however was calculated for a region much larger than the city. Included in it was an area stretching from Comox in the north to Cedar in the south (Figure 7). For this reason Canadian census data will be compared to a sample drawn from 1881 nominal data. However, the sample is only representative of those residents who had lived in the city from 1881 to 1891. Despite the drawbacks, an examination of each data set provides a satisfactory view of the population of Nanaimo in 1891.

By 1891, a higher percentage of the people of Nanaimo had been born in British Columbia, Canada, and the United States than ever before (Figure 29). The decrease in British-born is the result of the enumeration, over a larger area, of all residents throughout the census tract (women and children; Indian and Chinese) and the movement of more North Americans into the district. A comparison with 1881 data (Figure 19) shows that Nanaimo's ten-year residents were still predominantly British. But their superior numbers were being threatened by an increase in native born and North American immigrants.

While the birthplace of the majority of Nanaimo's residents had changed, other salient characteristics of the city's population remained stable. Although "descent" data were not included in the 1891 census, the religions of the
FIGURE 29: NANAIMO AREA – CENSUS OF CANADA, 1891

a) Birthplaces
   n = 6512

b) Religion
   n = 6512

   - Methodist
   - Presbyterian
   - Catholic
   - Anglican
   - Not specified
   - Unknown
   - Baptist

   - B.C.
   - England and Wales
   - U.S.A.
   - China
   - Scotland
   - Ontario
   - Nova Scotia
   - New Brunswick
   - Italy
   - Ireland
   - Other

   - Miners and mine workers
   - Petty bourgeois
   - Professional
   - Other wage earners
   - Skilled labour
   - Unskilled labour
   - Other

   - Sample from Henderson's Directory of B.C., 1891.
FIGURE 30: NANAIMO - NOMINAL SAMPLE, 1891

a) Birthplace $n = 309$

b) Descent $n = 309$

c) Religion $n = 310$

d) Occupation $n = 238$

e) Residence
people remained those of ten years before. The new North American majority ascribed to the same faiths as did their predecessors. As Figures 29c and 30d show, the single largest occupational group within the census tract were still miners and mine workers. Mining had remained the principal occupation of the Nanaimo region and the economy of coal still dominated the city. Among ten-year residents however, skilled labourers decreased 11% and unskilled 8% while other occupations increased significantly. Labourers and miners were moving from jobs that they had held ten years before.

C) Urban Morphology

The social geography of Nanaimo changed little during the 1880s. Spread throughout the city were different ethnic, religious and occupational groups (excepting the Chinese and Indians whose residences remained within Chinatown and the Reservation). Miners of all backgrounds still lived in the South Ward, and the Downtown Peninsula remained the dominant commercial district. Those who had lived in Nanaimo at the time of both the 1881 and 1891 census remained within their original neighbourhoods or, had they moved out, had been replaced by another long-term resident of the similar background, religion, and employment. As the figures following indicate, patterns of settlement remained stable (Figures 31, 32, 33 and 34).
FIGURE 31: POPULATION - BIRTHPLACES, 1891

Scale 1:14400
FIGURE 32: POPULATION - DESCENT, 1891

Scale 1:14400
FIGURE 33: POPULATION - RELIGIONS, 1891

Scale 1:14400
FIGURE 34: POPULATION - OCCUPATIONS, 1891

Scale 1:14,400
The coming of the railway to Nanaimo was preceded by the Esquimalt and Nanaimo's acquisition of city lands. By the end of the decade it had become the second largest landholder within city limits (Figure 35). Although these holdings were extremely localized and reflected the ribbon-like development of railway lines, they greatly influenced city property values. Land near the railway's depot and yards became more expensive, as demand for it rose among potential industrial, commercial, and residential buyers. As property values rose, taxes levied on properties throughout Nanaimo soared and, by 1891, reached unprecedented heights — often twelve times as much as ten years previously. Miner's wages did not increase at the same rate as did land values (Figure 36). Therefore the opportunity of land ownership diminished for newly landed immigrants. Those who had purchased before the coming of the railroad could maintain lands (if they could meet the new taxes) or sell at a profit. With increased land prices, the end of the decade saw the start of land speculation in Nanaimo. Newcastle Township was emerging, by 1891, as a Nob Hill region within the city. Nanaimo's homogeneous landscape began to break down and would continue to become more and more segregated as the 1890s progressed.

Throughout the 1880s the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company had been selling city and five acre lots to miners and other residents. But in 1891, their land holdings were still substantial. The company was still the single
FIGURE 35: ESQUIMALT AND NANAIMO RAILWAY LANDS, 1891

Scale 1:4400
FIGURE 36: WAGES, LIVING COSTS, AND LAND VALUES -
NANAIMO, 1875 - 1891

- Room and board costs per week (local hotel advertising, Nanaimo Free Press, various dates)
- Miners' wages - yearly (based on 21 working days per month)
- Assessed value of 30 sampled city lots (average per lot)
largest land owner and, in effect, controlled the housing and land market within and immediately outside the city. But housing construction had not kept pace with population growth.

"Several men who have families left the city today owing to their inability to secure a necessary residence for their families. One of them remarked, 'it is pretty hard for a man to be compelled to leave a city where there is plenty of work but no place to live in.'"

Nanaimo's coal company, other industries, and commercial ventures needed workers, yet in 1891 could not house them. Neither the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company nor private builders had managed to construct enough housing for the needs of a growing population.

As Nanaimo entered the 1890s it was a fairly large city (by western Canadian standards), yet the citizens saw themselves as a town dependant on coal. During the 1880's other industries had been established (which loosened the 'economic grip' of the coal company on the town), new ethnic groups had arrived, and new transportation links had eased isolation. However, Nanaimo was still "...essentially a community of working men, who are struggling hard to obtain a home for themselves and families." In 1886, problems such as Chinese labour, land and housing costs, railroad and coal company land grants, and mining safety and conditions were all being raised during provincial and federal elections. Clearly, the miners and workers of Nanaimo wanted changes in their community, changes in the mines, and changes in British Columbian society. Their amiable
relationship with mine managers and owners had begun to degenerate.
Footnotes — Chapter Two

1. Much information for the early Royal Navy investigations is contained in McKelvie, B.A., "Coal for the Warships," The Beaver, June, 1951, pages 8 – 11.


5. Indenture of Edwin Gough to Hudson's Bay Company, 1854, Provincial Archives of British Columbia, Manuscript.

6. The settlement was originally named Colviletown, but this name was not in common use after 1860.


8. All population, housing, and livestock figures are from Lamb, W.K., "the census of Vancouver Island, 1855", B.C. Historical Quarterly, Volume 4, Number 1, January, 1940, page 55.

9. It was for protection from "marrauding bands of northerners" that the famous Nanaimo Bastion was first erected — it also served as Company store and city gaol at various times.


11. Ibid., pages 13 – 15.

12. Data was published in Victoria Colonist, January 24, 1863, page 3.


14. For a more detailed examination of the purchase see Gallacher, ibid., pages 85 – 92.
15. The Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company saw the colliery as a stepping-stone to bigger and better things..."As the directors saw it, coal mining would be the basic industry upon which a wide range of economic activity ultimately would rest, and they were prepared to provide capital for land purchases before achieving significant returns from the mines. In other words...the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company was interested in exploiting more than the Island's minerals, but unlike its predecessor, the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company opted for an industry rather than trading activities as its main economic base. Moreover, the colliery's new owners were not adverse to pouring large sums of risk capital into coal mining, a step the Hudson's Bay Company had avoided since the mid-fifties." Gallacher, ibid., page 89 – 90.

16. The Institute was part of an educational programme begun in the 1860s in Great Britain to promote the education of working men.


20. While figures for the Nanaimo mines are not available for these early years, the works of Arnot, Williams, and Wright discuss the role of technological developments and worker injuries during this period (or earlier) of development.


23. City Hall Archives, Nanaimo, B.C., 1875 – 1891.

24. Sessional Papers, Mining Record, B.C. Legislature, 1876, page 617.

25. While the main mine of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company was located within the South Ward, other mines were further away, however, mine trains (and an aerial tramway operated by the Harewood Coal Company) allowed easy
access for men employed at the pithead or mine face.

26. City records, of course, were only kept for city lands and Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company records have long since been destroyed.

27. Department of Labour, Minutes of Evidence, Royal Commission on Industrial Disputes in B.C., 1904, Government Printing Bureau, Ottawa, Ont., page 299.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid, page 298. Corraborated by city tax records, Nanaimo City Archives.

31. Dunsmuir, Diggle and Company became Robert Dunsmuir and Company in 1880 when, under rather suspicious circumstances, Dunsmuir bought-out his former partner for a price apparently well below market value of his share.

32. Most Indians employed were Coast Salish people, although some west coast Vancouver Island and northern people were hired.

33. Common complaints against Indian labourers were that they stole, were lazy, and independable. See correspondence, Douglas to McKay, in Norcross, op. cit.

34. Mar, P., "From Segregation to Integration", in Norcross, op. cit., page 92.

35. Chinese mine workers were often blamed for many deaths and accidents; the major reason cited being their inability to speak or understand English. In addition, the police would often search Chinatown first for any burglarized goods or fugitives - often without due cause.


37. A sample of the same 17 city blocks examined in 1875 shows the Company owning 50 – 100% of 8; 25 – 49% of 4; 1 – 24% of 2; and 0% of 2.


40. Listen to Sister Mary Lucas, "Saint Ann's Convent and
Academy, "Nanaimo", Oral History Tape, May 12, 1974, Nanaimo Centennial Museum Archives for an excellent account of social conditions in the city after the mining disaster of 1887.

41. Tax Records, City of Nanaimo Archives, City Hall.


43. 50 - 100% of 16 sample blocks; 25 - 49% of 1 ; 1 - 24% of 2; and 0% of 7.


Chapter Three - Nanaimo: Coal Town in British Columbia

1. The Workplace and Population

Every night at six o'clock a shrill whistle pierced the evening air of Nanaimo. Two short blasts and colliers were idle the next day. One and it was work as usual. Nanaimo was little different from any colliery settlement—the mines and mine work were the lifeblood of the community and a way-of-life for their employees. Under the ground or sea, methods of mining and the physical conditions of mining were not different from those of Britain. The lamps, shovels, explosives, coal cars, and rail tracks were indistinguishable from those of British collieries. Miners used the same skills they had learned from their fathers and workmates in Shropshire, Northumberland, or Wales. Below the ground, in the mines, the men could have easily been toiling 9000 miles away in the Midlands.

Just as the mining technology and physical conditions were the same as in Britain, so were many economic and social aspects of mining. Miners were directly supervised by underground foremen. Every day coal was weighed at the pithead by a check weighmen (not always democratically elected), then at month's end wages were calculated on the basis of tons of coal delivered to the surface. From this base, deductions were made for powder, wages for assistants, room and board (if applicable), and medical insurance or expenses. Without independent auditing the Company
calculated the wages. Clearly, miners spent their working hours under direct supervision of the coal company, and depended on the company's honesty when collecting wages. Western North America had not changed miners' hours or methods of work, or the manner in which they were paid. In the mines or out of them, the colliers of Nanaimo were still part of the industrial capitalist system that characterized late nineteenth century British coal mining.

People of British background dominated Nanaimo's population except for two minority groups. Chinese and Indians occupied separate residential areas. The British majority dominated the city's social institutions and made the new Canadian life of a British immigrant rather familiar. Social clubs, churches, political institutions, and even libraries all had a British flavour. Even the presence of the ships and officers of the Royal Navy added to this "home-away-from-home" feeling since the officers' education and culture supplied the city with an air of quality that was otherwise absent in this isolated, frontier outpost.

Non-working activities of Nanaimo were those that were popular in Britain. Some men spent time hunting and fishing, but these were rarely considered recreational pursuits — they supplied additional food for the family and supplemented its income. More popular leisure activities included football, cricket, pigeon raising, horse races, gardening, bicycling, and baseball (an American tradition
that was adopted. For many men however, the landscape of leisure focused on public houses, of which there were many within the city (Figure 37). As in Britain, the pub was an enclave of the working man, serving as both boarding house (when a pub was part of a hotel) and drinking club. Because of the proliferation of saloons and the drinking habits of many of the patrons, city gaol records of 1881 show alcohol-related crimes as the most common (Table 5). Leisure activities in Nanaimo were much the same as those which had evolved in British working class towns during the nineteenth century.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5: PROSECUTIONS IN NANAIMO, 1881*</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Total prosecutions 197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol related 151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other &quot;various&quot; 19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acts against property 18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violent acts 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*see Appendix III, Crimes and Classification.

In 1881, and through the 1880s, Nanaimo's commerce and social life were dominated by the British-born. 81 proprietors, professionals, semi-professionals, and managers dominated the political, economic, and social life of the city. At least 30% were English born (Figure 38) and at least 25% were Anglican. These men owned many of the city's prime lots; almost two-fifths of them owned more than one
FIGURE 37: THE SALOONS OF NANAIMO

Miner's Exchange (1869)

Nanaimo Hotel (1870s)

Britannia Hotel (1881)

Chinatown

Provincial Hotel (pre 1887)

Dew Drop Inn (pre 1881)

Newcastle Hotel (1876)

Old Flag Inn (1874)

Occidental Hotel (1887)

Commercial Hotel (1880)

Royal Hotel (pre 1886)

Identical Hotel (1874)

Oriental Hotel (1874)

Scale 1:14400

N →
Of this 1881 group, 59 (73%) had been in Nanaimo in 1875 and 49 (60%) remained until 1891.
lot and 14% owned land valued at more than $1000. \(^3\) While few were wealthy, they were an influential and overwhelmingly British middle class.

Miners had left their homes in Britain to travel halfway around the world to Nanaimo for many reasons. Yet most came to British Columbia to improve their standard of living and their prospects. Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company advertising fostered the belief that through hard work and frugality a working miner could buy land, build a home, plant a garden, make a decent wage, and raise a family in a setting far removed from the filthy colliery-head towns of Britain. These were most miners' goals. They were rooted in British experience and as in Britain they would have to be worked out within the power relations of industrial capitalism. Yet Nanaimo was not a colliery town in Britain. It bordered a different ocean, grew out of a recent wilderness, and contained new people who were quite alien to British experience.

2. New Manners and Standards of Living

In Britain, the people of colliery towns and cities were overwhelmingly native born. Some areas were ethnically differentiated (Irish ghettos for example) and these may have been poor areas, but in Britain segregation was based less on racial than on economic differences. \(^4\) While Nanaimo's Indian and Chinese minorities were poorer than most people, they lived apart because they were not white.
Sharp racial conflict was expressed in the residential landscape. Mistrust, discrimination, and bigotry formed the basis of segregation. By keeping those of minority racial groups in isolation, planners of the town, managers and directors of the coal company, and the federal and provincial governments institutionalized conflict in the landscape and kept overt acts of racial violence from erupting. In the mines of the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company Chinese and Indians were restricted to menial tasks. While these restrictive practices seem to have been based on racial differences (stereotypic images, suspicions, and mistrust of Orientals and Indians characterized the Europeans' view of these people and their lifestyles), discriminatory relationships were fueled by miners' fears that their wages would be undercut by the importation and increased employment of Chinese and Indians. In Nanaimo, racism was encouraged by economic fears. The segregated landscape had its basis in both race and class relationships, with each supporting and adding impetus to the other.

Running contrary to the segregation and bigotry that characterized the relationships between Indians and whites were a number of mixed marriages or co-habitations involving Indian women and white men. There were 49 such relationships in Nanaimo in 1881, many of them formed when Nanaimo was a much smaller settlement. In those early years white women of a marriable age were not plentiful in the
city (few single women had emigrated to Nanaimo). The men turned to native Indian women. Once common, this practice declined as white women became available. By 1881 most of the men who had married Indians lived outside the city in isolated agricultural or logging communities such as Cedar, Nanoose Bay, or Englishman River.

For British miners Indian and Chinese minorities in Nanaimo were new and threatening elements of their new home. Racism existed from the beginning of the settlement. Mistrust and anger that could have been directed towards company policies and management was often aimed at Chinese or Indians who were accused of being unable to learn the methods or appreciate the dangers of mining. Mine explosions and accidents were often blamed on the Chinese and brought about strong movements for Oriental exclusion. The Chinese were exploited as cheap labour by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company and served as scapegoats for workday problems.

Although the Chinese and Indians were recognizable minorities they still made up less than 8% of Nanaimo's population. While the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company threatened to import "foreign" (such as "Italians from San Francisco"), British-born and North Americans of British background continued as the major supply of labour well into the twentieth century.

By 1860 Great Britain was criss-crossed with canals and railways. Coal mining areas, especially newer ones, were
principally served by railroads. Settlement focused on the station and spur lines served the mines. By the middle of the century, colliery towns situated at tidewater, evolved into more economically diversified centres of manufacturing and trans-shipment. Nanaimo's plan, its single industry economic base, and its lack of local, manufacturing and secondary industry resulted in a different type of settlement.

While railroads were the main mode of transportation in Great Britain, railways to Nanaimo's mines were laid in the 1860s but a railway between Nanaimo and Victoria was not built until 1886. Far from influencing the design of the settlement, as they had in many British colliery towns, rail lines simply cut across pre-existing city blocks (see Figure 29). Nanaimo had been planned as a seaport and remained oriented to the harbour after the railroad's construction.

Unlike many British colliery towns, Nanaimo was planned as an industrial settlement. With the exception of the central business district, the plan adopted a radial pattern that spread outward from the harbour and first mines. Blocks formed by the street pattern were divided into lots that were suitable for detached single family dwellings or for commercial development. This pattern differed significantly from older British colliery settlements, where a coal mining landscape had been superimposed on an earlier town. The towns of D.H.Lawrence's Lancashire childhood and the characteristic Welsh colliery towns described by
P.N. Jones were very different from Nanaimo (see Chapter 1). There amid the pall of burning coal were back-to-back houses, winding narrow streets, dominating slag heaps, and tiny gardens devoted to a few flowers or vegetables. In Nanaimo most lots were one-fifth of an acre and, when developed, had only one house. Many people had large gardens and grew flowers, vegetables, or hardy fruits. Throughout the city, streets were wide and straight and the air was relatively clear and clean. East and west of the townsite rose mountains, their forested slopes reminding the newcomers of their new situation. Clearly, the natural setting and planned 'openess' of Nanaimo was vastly different from what immigrants had known in Northumberland, Ayrshire, or South Wales.

In Nanaimo in 1881 at least 30% of land owners were skilled workmen, most of whom were employed by the Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in the valleys of Monmouthshire and South Wales, only "19.2% of houses were owned by colliery workmen." Because of this figure the miners of South Wales were seen as "remarkably successful in becoming house-owners." Compared to these "rural" coal mining areas of Britain, the miners of Nanaimo had increased access to land and homes. Because of lower land costs on Vancouver Island during the early years of Nanaimo (to approximately 1890) it was not uncommon for a miner or other labourer to buy a city lot. Of the miners who lived in
Nanaimo in 1881, approximately one in six (17 per cent) owned land in the city (Figure 39). One of two lived in rented detached single family homes - either alone or with a family - and one-third of Nanaimo's miners lived in rented shared accommodations (hotels, boarding houses, and "group" homes). While many of Nanaimo's residents lived in detached single family houses, most of these homes were very small. A typical house was 10 x 20 feet and had two rooms; a bedroom and a sitting room. "Tacked-on" to the back were a kitchen and a pantry.9 Outside, away from the house, was a well and, further away, an outhouse. Small though these homes may have been, the fact that they were detached and were set upon a rather large lot greatly impressed miners coming from overcrowded, urban, industrial Britain.10 In 1871, Cardiff, Wales averaged 7.4 persons per inhabited house; in 1881, 6.8 persons; and in 1891, 6.3 persons.11 In Nanaimo the figure was 4.2 in 1881, when the city averaged 1.00 household per house.12

The acquisition of a home was paramount among immigrants desires. Housing, especially its accessibility, distribution, and style, was the factor that most differentiated Nanaimo from the colliery towns of Great Britain. As the century progressed, land and housing costs would become one of the most contentious issues concerning the workingmen of Nanaimo.

From the early years of Nanaimo, until the mid-1880s, the miners of the city could attain a relatively higher
FIGURE 39: MINERS AND THEIR HOMES - 1881

n= 259

48% (124)
single family or single person rental units

36% (92)
boarding houses, hotels and shared rental units

city lot owners

17% (43)
standard of living than they had known in Britain. The cost of land was much lower in Nanaimo than in Britain. In 1875, a miner would have spent approximately 51% of his annual wages to buy a house on an average lot in Nanaimo.\textsuperscript{13} In the Black Country of Great Britain, at the same time, a miner was spending 25% of his income on rent. In 1881, the figures were 49% and 37.5%, respectively. Compared to Britain, a Nanaimo miner could buy a home for somewhat less than twice what it cost a British miner to rent one for a year. Clothing and other manufactured goods may have been more expensive in Nanaimo than in Britain but lower housing and rental costs were more than sufficient compensation. Food costs were not extraordinarily high in Nanaimo. Boardinghouses in Nanaimo charged $6.00 per week for room and board throughout the study period\textsuperscript{14} (see Figure 36). Food and board, for a single miner, would have made up approximately 30% of his annual wage. While food costs for a family were higher, they were not out of line with British costs — perhaps even lower. The natural environment surrounding Nanaimo and the layout of the city were very different from the densely settled, dirty colliery towns of Britain. Immigrants saw the city's setting as a real advantage. Ability to purchase land amid this scene was a privilege — one that would have outweighed the disadvantages of isolation, Oriental and Indian populations, and the expense of manufactured goods.

But not all immigrants found life better in Nanaimo.
Some found the city too isolated, failed in business ventures, missed the Old Country, or were completely dissatisfied with what they found. For them, differences from Britain outweighed the advantages Nanaimo offered, but many of those who remained, whether they were successful or not, had improved their standards of living.

The existence of opportunity - an immigrant's chance for social and material advancement - cannot be accurately measured. One man may view success as meat on the table five evenings a week; another perceives it as the chance to turn a small mining claim into a large company. However, opportunity may be analyzed through an examination of the upward mobility of Nanaimo's population.

All population samples in this study are based on the 1881 Census of Canada. Samples were taken in 1875 and 1891 of working men who resided in Nanaimo. These yielded 275 and 235 men, respectively. Because of the manner in which residence was established (finding the same man and his occupation listed or mentioned in the Nanaimo Free Press, city directories, city tax assessment rolls, or provincial voters lists), the samples may be "top-heavy"; there may be over-representations among the higher occupational groups because of their greater propensity to own property, to take out newspaper advertising, or to be contacted by directory compilers. One way in which this may be tested is by comparing the sample of men who changed jobs and stayed between 1875 and 1881 to the population sample of 1875 and
to compare the sample of men who had changed jobs between 1881 and 1891 to the population of 1881. To facilitate this, Nanaimo's working population has been divided into ten categories (see Appendix I). In effect, the questions being asked are: Who remained in Nanaimo during the aforementioned periods? Were these "stayers" from certain occupational groups? If there were over-representations from upper groups can they be accounted for by the sampling methods?

To test whether the samples are significantly different from Nanaimo's population in 1881, the Kolmogorov–Smirnov one-sample test has been used. However, since we are using only a sample from 1875 (not the entire 1875 population), and only sampling those who had remained for at least six years (and not examining the total 1875 population and comparing the occupational distribution of "stayers" to the occupational distribution of the total 1875 population) an important assumption must be made, namely that changes in the occupational character of Nanaimo between 1875 and 1881 were not significant.

Results of using the K–S test in comparing the 1875 sample to the 1881 population distribution indicate that the sample is representative of the population (Appendix IV). While close to being significantly different, the findings indicate that those who remained in Nanaimo represented all occupational groups; no single occupational group was over-represented among those who stayed for six years. In comparing the 1881 population to the sample of those who
remained until 1891, the results previously obtained were replicated. Again, there were no significant differences between the sample and the "theoretical" population. While the samples seem to indicate that men from all occupations were likely to have remained in Nanaimo for the periods discussed, some patterns emerged in the data. Figure 40 shows that underrepresentation was evident (but not significant) among skilled workers; the replication of the patterns of the "stayers" 1875–1881 and 1881–1891 would indicate some "lean" toward those of higher occupational status remaining. However, given the supposition of upper group bias and the sampling technique used, it would seem that any member of any occupational group in Nanaimo was equally likely to remain in the city during the study period. While somewhat indicative of bias in the sampling method, the fact that results did not disprove the null hypothesis that samples were representative of the population, shows that all categories of workers remained in Nanaimo for the periods sampled. As the city aged and grew, no single occupational group increased in number relative to any other. The occupational character of Nanaimo in 1891 was much the same as in 1875.

Because it has been found that men of all occupational groups stayed in Nanaimo through the study years, patterns of representation among the sampled occupational groups may now be tested for change. For this test there are two separate samples. Men who stayed from 1875 to 1881 and men
FIGURE 40: THE OCCUPATIONAL STRUCTURE OF NANAIMO

1875 - 1881 Sample

1881 Population

1881 - 1891 Sample
who stayed from 1881 to 1891. Only men who remained through these periods (and their occupations) were sampled. For grouped data such as these we may use Kendall's tau test which produces a non-parametric correlation coefficient that indicates strength, direction, and significance of change. Over time, we are testing the differences between occupations that men held to see whether occupational mobility existed in Nanaimo, the direction of this mobility, and its significance.

Because of the nature of the data gathered and its arrangement in ordinal categories, a further test may be run "within" each sample. Testing focuses on sub-groups of each sample. Each sample has been divided into upper and lower status occupations — if mobility, either upward or downward, existed, where were the effects felt most? With this breakdown of the samples, such a test is possible.

Based on the Kendall rank correlation coefficient, changes in occupational status among men who resided in Nanaimo and changed jobs from 1875 to 1881 were not statistically significant (Appendix V), nor were those from 1881 to 1891, but each coefficient was negative — indicating a "lean" towards upward mobility. The second period's changes were very close to a significant level, much closer than the earlier six year period. Given such results, and the results of the additional "sub-group" tests (Appendix V) that showed significant degrees of upward mobility among farming, petty proprietal, skilled labouring, semiskilled
labouring, and unskilled labouring groups (and results indicating no significant mobility among higher occupational groups — although the positive coefficient indicates a lean toward downward mobility), it can be stated that there was upward occupational mobility in Nanaimo, especially during the 1881–1891 period and that those who were more likely to have risen in occupational status were those from the lower ranking occupations. While the statistical analysis only hints at the presence of opportunity, the trend that emerges in the results and the conservative nature of Kendall's rank coefficient indicate a general movement among Nanaimo's working men toward higher ranking occupations.

When compared with the workingman's situation in late nineteenth and early twentieth century Britain and in much of eastern North America Nanaimo shows higher levels of upward occupational mobility. Miners and skilled workers of Nanaimo were more able to raise the level of their occupation than were their counterparts who had remained in Britain, steelmill workers of Steelton, Pennsylvania, or petroleum workers of Warren, Pennsylvania. Research into changes in occupations among British men from all occupational categories, over three generations, from 1870 to 1949 concluded that "...the picture of rather high stability over time is confirmed." In Pennsylvania, "the common experience for an individual who remained in late nineteenth century Steelton was to encounter little upward or downward mobility." The workers of Nanaimo seemed to
be able to rise a little more readily in occupational status, thereby attaining, however modestly, some measure of success. Reasons for these differing levels of opportunity were: 1) The miners of Nanaimo were skilled labourers; therefore wages were higher than for many unskilled workers employed in Britain or Pennsylvania. Higher wages meant more opportunity to leave the mines and purchase or rent a farm, home, or business. 2) Land, on the west coast, was cheaper and more available than in Britain or Pennsylvania. With higher wages and cheaper land, it was relatively easier to purchase land and a house. 3) The workers of Britain or Pennsylvania tended to remain in the same job they originally held. Jobs were found and maintained. The threat of massive labour importation from the American South and Eastern Europe made the eastern North Americans' job tenure insecure. Once men found a job they kept it, not wishing to take the chance of not finding another. Since most miners in Nanaimo had come to Nanaimo to finance a move from the mines to a more attractive way of life, they dared to change occupations. In North America, especially on the isolated west coast of Canada, their skills were highly marketable. The miners recognized this and changed jobs, took risks, and dared where the eastern labourer would not.

If occupational mobility reflects some measure of opportunity, then residential mobility may also be indicative of status enhancement or degeneration. However, within Nanaimo, as has been shown, there were few if any
socio-economic differences between neighbourhoods (excluding Chinatown and the Indian Reservation). In addition, there was little or no suburbanization around the city. People lived near their workplace, therefore any relocation outside the centre usually meant new employment — often one associated with farming. While the number of sampled people moving into and out of the city between 1875 and 1891 was not large, their movements are significant. The movements of these people have been examined with respect to the areas of Nanaimo that they left or went to and with attention given to the nature of their resettlement — was it rural or urban?

Most population movements of 1875 — 1881 were within the city; from one urban area to another (Figure 41). Very few people moved to rural areas surrounding Nanaimo, more came from the surrounding rural areas to the city. There was some urbanization of the outlying population, although the small number of men moving precludes generalization.

During the period 1881 — 1891, there seems to have been more movement out of Nanaimo to rural areas (Figure 42). More people went to rural areas surrounding the city than moved to urban areas. This may be indicative of success — long-term residents were able to move from Nanaimo to land outside the city. However, it cannot be ascertained whether these movers purchased or rented their new homesites, nor if this movement in any way satisfied a dream of property acquisition. Suffice it to say that as the length of
FIGURE 41: INTERNAL RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY OF 1875 SAMPLE.

1875 - 1881

Number gained
Number lost

NANAIMO AREA
FIGURE 42: INTERNAL RESIDENTIAL MOBILITY OF 1881 POPULATION.

1881 - 1891

Number gained
Number lost

NANAIMO AREA
residency of Nanaimo's population increased the number of long-term residents who relocated on rural lands increased.

3. Tradition Re-established

Aside from the Indians and the Chinese, the social landscape of Nanaimo from 1875 – 1891, reflected little national or occupational segregation but, by the end of this period there were indications that a more segregated social geography was emerging. Newcastle Township's designation as a "Nob Hill", concentrations of miners and labourers in the South Ward, and the over-representation of proprietors, professionals, and semi-professionals in the Cross Ravine and Downtown Peninsula, imply that changes in residential patterns had begun. More expensive land on the Downtown Peninsula and its commercial nature made it a prime residential area for "white collar" workers, and while there were relatively few of these people in Nanaimo they chose to live on the Downtown Peninsula or across the ravine that split the city. However, Nanaimo was still a city of working men. In 1891 Nanaimo had few wealthy citizens (in 1891 there were only 10 houses made of stone or brick – perhaps some indication of wealth – while 1326 were made of wood). Nanaimo was not segregated along class lines, but the seeds of further residential differentiation had been sown.

As the population grew and as merchants, professionals, and managers prospered, patterns of residence changed. A
large increase in population from 2800 to over 4000 (estimated from the census area population of 6500 in 1891) during the 1880s had increased demand for land thereby decreasing its availability. Pressures on available housing had increased dramatically and by 1901, there were 4.8 persons per dwelling (an increase of .6 from 1881) and 1.01 families or households per house. While costs of living remained stable through the study period, (Figure 36) land costs had risen drastically. As the 1880s drew to a close, a miner and his family were finding that the costs of owning a home and lot were becoming prohibitive. Given that one of the major attractions of Nanaimo was the availability of land and housing and that housing costs made up the single largest factor of the costs of living, cost increases and a low vacancy rate for rental accommodation struck at the very heart of miners' aspirations. With housing expensive and becoming scarcer, their dissatisfaction increased through the 1880s. Rising land costs led to many of the grievances miners would later voice.

The immigrants who settled in Nanaimo hoped to advance their standard of living. Success depended on wages and the chance to work. Pay had to be fair and work had to be steady. In addition, wages had to keep pace with increases in costs of living. While miner's daily wages would, at first glance, seem comparable to other occupations (Table 6), they were probably lower and, perhaps more importantly, were more likely to be affected by seasonal and daily
fluctuations. Rockfalls, market instability, unseasonable weather, and debilitating injuries all prevented "full" pay. Although wages were not predictable, they seem to have been high enough for a single miner to meet his immediate expenses and have cash left over at month's end. However, for a married man, with wife and children to support, the budget would have undoubtably been tighter.

**TABLE 6: OCCUPATION AND ANNUAL WAGES, CIRCA 1885**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>Annual wage in dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>coal miner</td>
<td>832*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>government agent</td>
<td>1200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mine inspector</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>constable</td>
<td>900</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>convict guard</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher—principal</td>
<td>1080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>—assistant</td>
<td>720</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>carpenter</td>
<td>693**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
<td>504**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chinese mine labourer</td>
<td>285**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*see *The Will of Henry Arnold, June 1884*, Nanaimo Centennial Museum Archives.

**based on an average 21 day working month. Other wages from the Nanaimo Free Press, various dates.

From the beginning of mine labour on Vancouver Island there were worker's organizations. The earliest self-organized miners groups were not unions but loosely formed brotherhoods or associations. These had been formed to protect members from the coal company's excesses, to educate members in mine safety, or to insure members against injury or death in the mines. There were strikes in
Nanaimo\textsuperscript{27}, but these disputes did not embitter miners toward the Company.\textsuperscript{28} Very early in the history of the Nanaimo colliery there was co-operation between miners and mine management. This situation was often the result of the conciliatory nature of the managers and workingmen's leaders involved\textsuperscript{29} or of the fact that "the grievances and frustrations of Nanaimo's miners were channelled more often into vigorous outdoor sports and heavy drinking in the numerous pubs in town than into labour disputes."\textsuperscript{30} However, by the mid 1880s, a union, the Miners' Mutual Protective Association, with interests in acquiring political power (through the Workingman's Party), emerged. Significant numbers of miners wanted to change their working situation and alter the goals and substance of Canadian society.

In Britain, the 1880s saw the resurgence of a number of strong county unions and a stronger national organization.\textsuperscript{31} Miners who emigrated to Nanaimo in the 1880s brought an affinity toward organized labour and an appreciation of its importance in maintaining worker's rights. Conditions that existed in Nanaimo did not dispel the miner's attachment to unionism; in fact, they fueled its growth and promoted their acceptance among growing numbers of Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company employees throughout the decade.\textsuperscript{32}

By 1890, miners unions were politically active, presenting a platform that urged men to vote only for those who spoke in favour of principles they established. They believed that...
"the first principles of Representative Government should be to accomplish the greatest good for the greatest number. To secure the workers the full enjoyment of the wealth they create, sufficient leisure in which to develop their intellectual, moral, and social faculties, in a word to enable them to share in the gains and honours of advancing civilization..."

They also published a number of criteria which a voter should apply to each candidate.

"...therefore vote only for men who will advocate the following demands:
1. That the land, the heritage of the people be reserved for actual settlers, not another acre for Corporations or speculators, and all land so held at present to be taxed to its full retail value.
2. The adoption of measures providing for the health and safety of those engaged in mining, manufacturing, and building industries, and for the indemnification of those engaged therein for injuries received through lack of necessary safeguards.
3. The enactment of laws providing for arbitration between employer and employees, and to enforce the decision of the arbitrators.
4. The adoption of a Mechanics Lien Law giving to Mechanics and Labourers a first lien upon the product of their labour to the extent of their full wages.
5. That a clause be inserted in all Charters granted by the Provincial Government, prohibiting the employment of Chinese.
6. The repeal of the unjust laws passed at the last session giving vast tracts of land and royalties on minerals therein to railroad corporations.
7. That we condemn the policy of creating and fostering monopolies, as they tend to prevent legitimate competition, leaving it possible for the few to accumulate vast fortunes at the expense of the many.
8. That we consider the present system of taxation to be unjust, therefore we demand that a graduated income tax be levied.
9. That we do all in our power to further the advancement of the short hours movement.
10. In the interests of Education we consider that the control of the Schools
should be left in the hands of the local Board, the Government merely exercising a general supervision over them."³⁴

By 1891, the final year of this study, the miners of Nanaimo had become politically active through labour unions. The end of the "contented community" was at hand. Looming in the future were bitter and violent strikes that characterized labour/management relations in the early twentieth century.

Miners who came to Nanaimo had expectations and hopes for a better life than they had experienced in Britain. For them Nanaimo was a place where land was cheap, the natural environment was clean and wild, most of the people were British, and work was steady and well-paying. The Vancouver Coal Mining and Land Company promoted Nanaimo as a city where opportunities abounded — where many typical British working class aspirations could be satisfied with hard work and frugality. Miners who arrived in Nanaimo as immigrants from British collieries initially viewed Nanaimo as a city of opportunity — and it was. Brotherhodds and loose associations of miners did not engage in politics, nor were there strong movements towards universal unionization. But by the end of the study period, when new immigrants who had participated in strong political unions in Britain, the older immigrants' offspring, and other North American migrants made up the majority of the mining workforce, unions took on a new role that was more socialistic and militant. As a backdrop to these developments the natural
beauty of Nanaimo's setting remained, but to a population reared there, or raised in other North American settlements, the dichotomy between British colliery towns and Nanaimo did not mask social and economic problems. Older miners, who remembered the back-to-backs of Yorkshire or Northumberland may have revelled in the openness and single family landscape of Nanaimo, but the newer miners, more schooled in socialism and aware of exploitative relationships that dominated the city, were not dissuaded by the sea, mountains, and open sky. By the middle of the 1880s, increasing numbers of miners saw the need for a union—they saw the need because many of their expectations were not satisfied. Instead of a land of opportunity, they found a city with a rising population, increasing social discord, skyrocketing land costs, a lack of family housing, unabashed corporate influence over government, and massive increases in colliery production and profit. Embodied in the Workingmans' Platform, each of these factors embittered miners to their British Columbian situation. They formed unions, as agents of social, industrial, and political change. By the 1890s, many of the benefits and advantages of Nanaimo that had defused overt class and racial tension and conflict were loosing their effectiveness. Housing and land were no longer inexpensive; the atmosphere of cooperation between miners and management was fading; the homogeneous British population was becoming diluted with North Americans, Orientals, and Continental Europeans; and even though
opportunities for occupational mobility, residential mobility, and material advancement did still exist, these alone did not diffuse class and racial tensions as well as they had in the past. The "safety valves" of Nanaimo, the workingman's community, could not prevent the emergence of militant unionism, segregated neighbourhoods, and violent class conflict that characterized the city in the early years of the twentieth century.
Footnotes — Chapter Three

1. Although most tools and technology used in Nanaimo's mines were American, they were comparable to those used in Britain. The miners protested against British Columbia joining confederation because of the high tariffs that were imposed on American manufactured items.

2. For a complete list of the sports and service clubs and their histories in Nanaimo see Brechin Superior School, History of Nanaimo, Brechin Superior School, 1939 (P.A.B.C.) and Nanaimo Senior Secondary School, Nanaimo Past and Present, Nanaimo Senior Secondary School, 1962.

3. Calculated from City Property Tax Assessments Rolls, 1881, Nanaimo City Hall Archives.

4. The works of Dennis, N., et al., op. cit.; Hammond and Hammond, op. cit.; and Roberts, R., op. cit. All discuss residential differentiation in the British context.


6. This percentage is based on 166 landowners in 1881, 30% of whom were skilled workmen, 4% who were unskilled, 6% who were semi-skilled, 7% farming, 4% clerks, 3% semi-professional, 6% professionals, 8% proprietors, and 30% were of unknown occupations.


8. Ibid.


13. These figures are based on a miner's salary of $832 per year (see Figure 36), average land costs in Nanaimo (Appendix II), and an average of $300 for house
14. Boardinghouse charges of $6.00 per week for room and board were found throughout the years 1875 to 1891 in the Nanaimo Free Press. In addition, these lodgings had excellent reputations for putting out "good spreads."


16. "The Kolmogorov–Smirnov one-sample test is a test of goodness of fit...it is concerned with the degree of agreement between the distribution of a set of sample values (observed scores) [the 1875 sample or 1881 sample of changed occupations] and some specified theoretical distribution [the 1881 population]. It determines whether the scores in the sample can reasonably be thought to have come from a population having the theoretical distribution...the sampling distribution indicates whether a divergence of the observed magnitude would probably occur if the observations were really a random sample from the theoretical distribution." From Siegel, S., Nonparametric Statistics for the Behavioural Sciences, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Toronto, Ont., 1956, pages 47-48.

17. "the Kendall rank correlation coefficient tau, is suitable as a measure of correlation...if at least ordinal measurement of both the X and Y variables has been achieved, so that every subject can be assigned a rank on both X and Y, then tau will give a measure of the degree of association or correlation between the two sets of ranks. The sampling distribution of tau fall under the null hypothesis, and therefore tau is subject to tests of significance. Ibid, pages 213-214.

18. Debate may focus on this point because of the nature of the data. Whether or not the data is arranged and ranked in an ordinal manner is a contentious issue, but the work of Luria, J. And the manner in which he credits Thernstrom and others for its development satisfies me as to the applicability of the statistical tests used in this study.


20. Bodnar, J., Immigration and Industrialization,


22. Glass and Hall, op. cit., page 188.

23. Bodnar, op. cit., page 68.


25. See the Will of Henry Arnold, June 1884, Nanaimo Centennial Museum Archives.


28. "The anti-labour conditions at Dunsmuir’s mines contrasted sharply with those at the Nanaimo colliery after 1881. The new manager, S.M. Robins, maintained industrial peace for 20 years. He was willing to co-operate with the men and negotiate with unions formed later, a willingness that did not endear him to Dunsmuir." Phillips, op. cit., page 8.


31. See Arnot, The Miners, op. cit. For a full discussion of the growth of a national miners union in Great Britain in the 1880s.


34. Ibid.
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I would also like to cite the oral history tapes made available to me by the Nanaimo Historical Society and the tapes held at the main library of Malaspina College, Nanaimo.
Appendices

Appendix I

The occupations of Nanaimo and their "groupings"

Proprietal

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<th>Occupation</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mining foreman</td>
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<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
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Professional

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>clergyman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>medical doctor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>attorney</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mining inspector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>architect</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Managerial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mining foreman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warfinger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>watercarrier</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>innkeeper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Semi-professional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>mariner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>policeman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>druggist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>politician</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>contractor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>butcher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>engineer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>accountant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Clerk - sales

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>clerk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>merchant</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>agent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hotel worker</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>storekeeper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>salesman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>druggist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>bookeeper</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Farming

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>farmer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>labourer</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Petty Proprietal

tailor  merchant
salesman  storekeeper
innkeeper  grocer
fisherman

Skilled Labour

butcher  miner
carpenter  mason
smith  machinist
baker  contractor
tinsmith  tailor
shoemaker  apprentice
politician  painter
watchmaker  compositor
printer  brewer
fireman  weighman

Semi-skilled Labour

gine driver  teamster
cook  hotel worker
contractor  painter
shipwright  Sawyer
shinglemaker  mariner-seaman

Unskilled labour

servant  labourer
stage driver  lumberman
millhand  telegraph operator
watchman  lighthouse keeper

All categories are based on the classification system of Luria, J., who credits Thernstrom and others for forming the basis of his system.
Appendix II

City Lot Appraised Values, 1875–1891

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City lot</th>
<th>Value in Canadian Dollars</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1875</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I5</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III16</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV12</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII14</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII10</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X10</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII12</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XV3</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVI6</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XVII11</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XX14</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXI17</td>
<td>120</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XXXVII13</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLI1</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLII10</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVI15</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLVIII18</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XLIX11</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIII8</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIV9</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIV19</td>
<td>185</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LV7</td>
<td>130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVII2</td>
<td>400</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVII20</td>
<td>600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LVII25</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K10</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Z1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV8NEWMCASTLE</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix III

The Crimes of Nanaimo, 1881

"Alcohol Related" crimes include:
giving intoxicants to Indians
drunk
intoxicants in possession
having intoxicants in an Indian's house

"Acts Against Property" include:
larceny
wounding cattle
unlawfully killing sheep
obtaining money under false pretenses
recieving stolen goods
malicious damage
housebreaking

"Violent Acts" include:
assault
cutting and wounding
using threatening language

"Other Various" include:
unsound mind
dessorption from ship
vagrancy
obstructing a constable
conveying tobacco into gaol

All crimes were committed in Nanaimo during the year 1881, from City Gaol Records, 1881.
### Appendix IV

**The Kolmogorov - Smirnov Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1875 sample</th>
<th>1881 population</th>
<th>1891 sample</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proprietor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managerial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi-professional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerk</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farming</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petty proprietary</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skilled labour</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>437</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semiskilled labour</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unskilled labour</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

n = 275  
n = 872  
n = 235

- **1875 - 1881**  
  \[ d = 0.079 \]  
  \[ d(0.05\text{sig level}) = 0.082 \]

- **1881 - 1891**  
  \[ d = 0.167 \]  
  \[ d(0.05\text{sig level}) = 0.089 \]
Appendix V

Kendall's Tau

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>1875</th>
<th>1881*</th>
<th>1881*</th>
<th>1891</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>proprietor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>professional</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>managerial</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semi-professional</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>clerk</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>farming</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>petty proprietal</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>skilled labour</td>
<td>126</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>111</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>semiskilled labour</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unskilled labour</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

SAMPLE SIZES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>n=275</th>
<th>n=235</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

1875-1881 — tau=−0.063 sig=.119
1881-1891 — tau=−0.086 sig=.082

1875-1881 — "upper occupations" (proprietor, professional, managerial, semi-professional, clerk)
    tau=.124 sig=.18

"lower occupations" (farming, petty proprietal, skilled labour, semiskilled labour, unskilled labour)
    tau=−.099 sig=−.057

1881-1891 — "upper occupations"
    tau=.077 sig=.288
    "lower occupations"
    tau=−.142 sig=−.012

* 1881 samples are based on those who had been in Nanaimo either six years previous to the census year or those who had remained until at least 1891.