

Bay St. 27

Vict - Ind Bld 1982

VICTORIA MACHINERY DEPOT

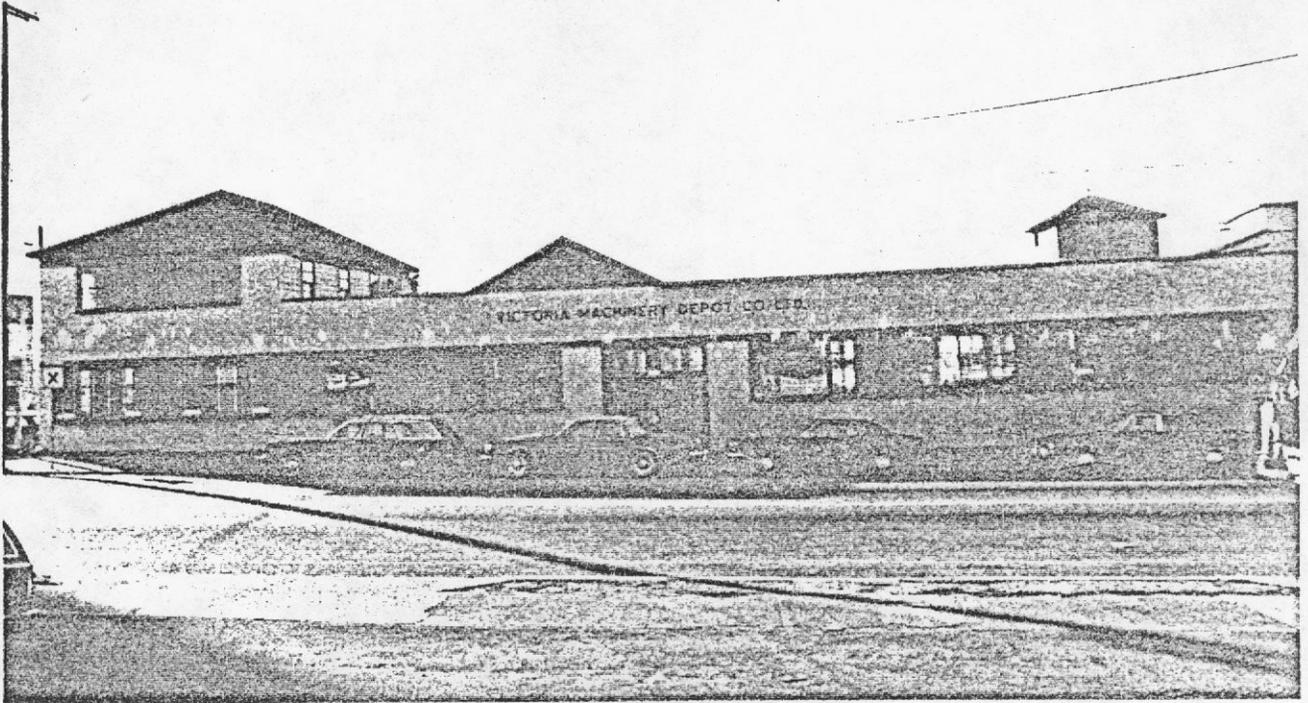


PHOTO 17-VICTORIA MACHINERY DEPOT OFFICE BLDG.

The Victoria Machinery Depot had its start in May of 1862 when Captain Joseph Spratt and Mr. A. Gray began the Albion Iron Works on Discovery Street. In 1882, Capt. Spratt sold out his share of the Discovery Street plant and built a machine shop and foundry on Bay Street under the name of the Victoria Machinery Depot. The company concentrated on industrial production initially but then entered the ship-building and repair field.

In 1870, the company built its first ferry, the CITY OF VICTORIA which was the second of four ships for the British Columbia Toll Authority ferry system. The first VMD slipway was built in 1882.

In 1888, John Charles Vancouver Spratt succeeded his father as the head of the company. He triggered a period of expansion and growth for the company. In 1898, the VMD was incorporated and in 1907, it constructed a marine railway at the Bay Street Plant.

Shortly after the slipway was completed the plant destroying or gutting the existing. The plant was, however, quickly rebuilt and the company was in a good position to take on

During the Second World War, two new at Bay Street in order to meet the demand of corvettes for the RCN. This demand led to the construction of seven acres of land in the Ogden Point area. In March 1941, the shipbuilding industry. In March 1941, the company expanded its twentieth 10,000 ton "Victory" ship.

John Spratt died in 1941 and directorship was taken over by his wife. Mrs. Spratt guided the company through the war years and until her death in 1951, probably the only woman to have run a shipyard.

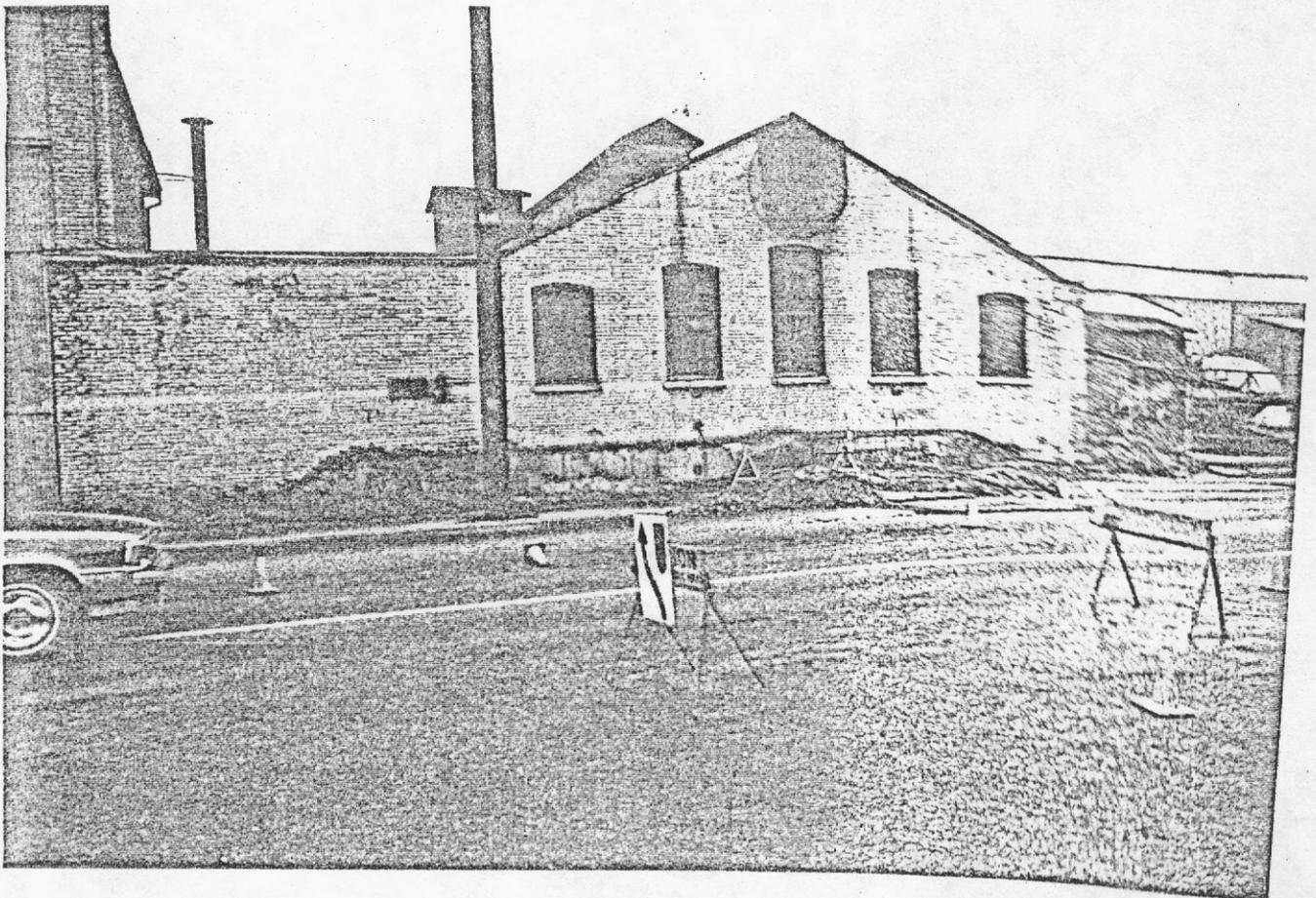


PHOTO 18 • VMD - BRICK STRUCTURE PRE-1903

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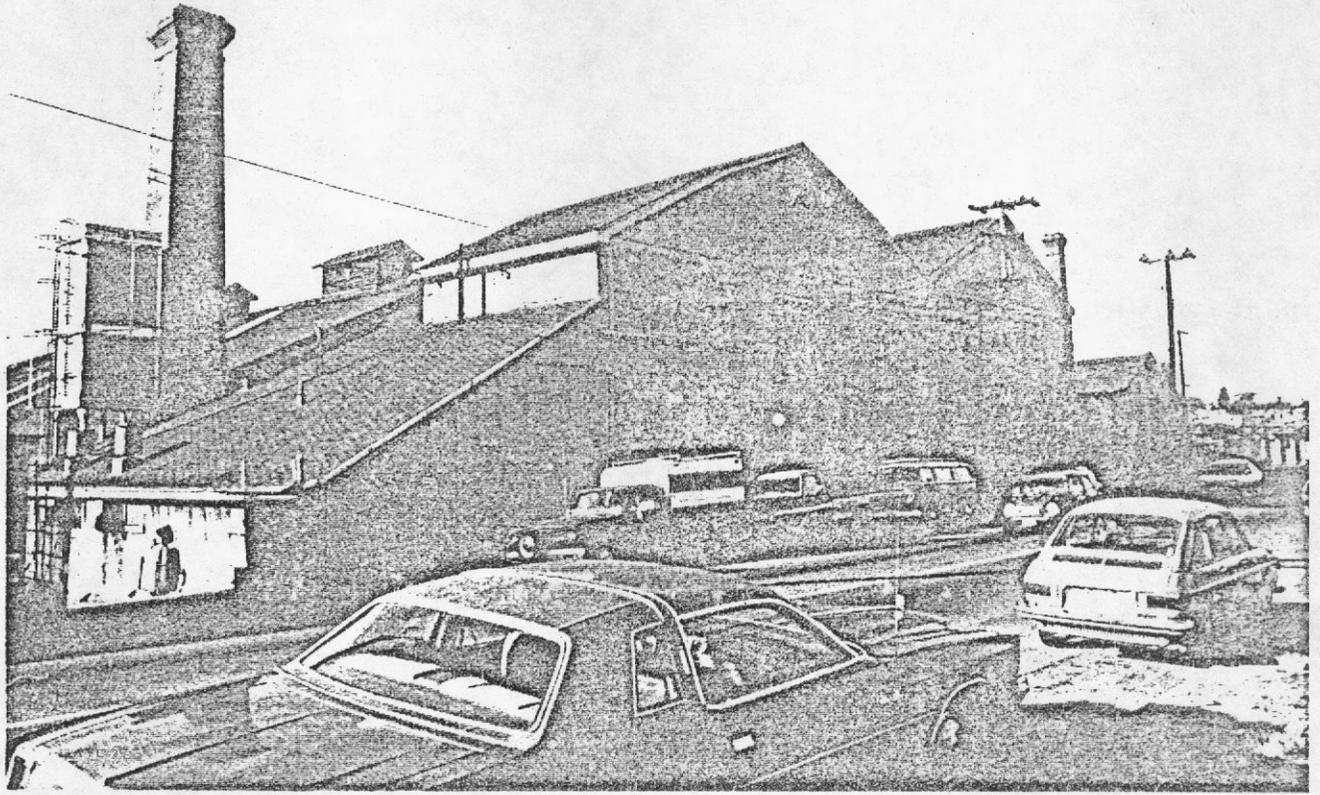


PHOTO 19·BAY STREET - VMD

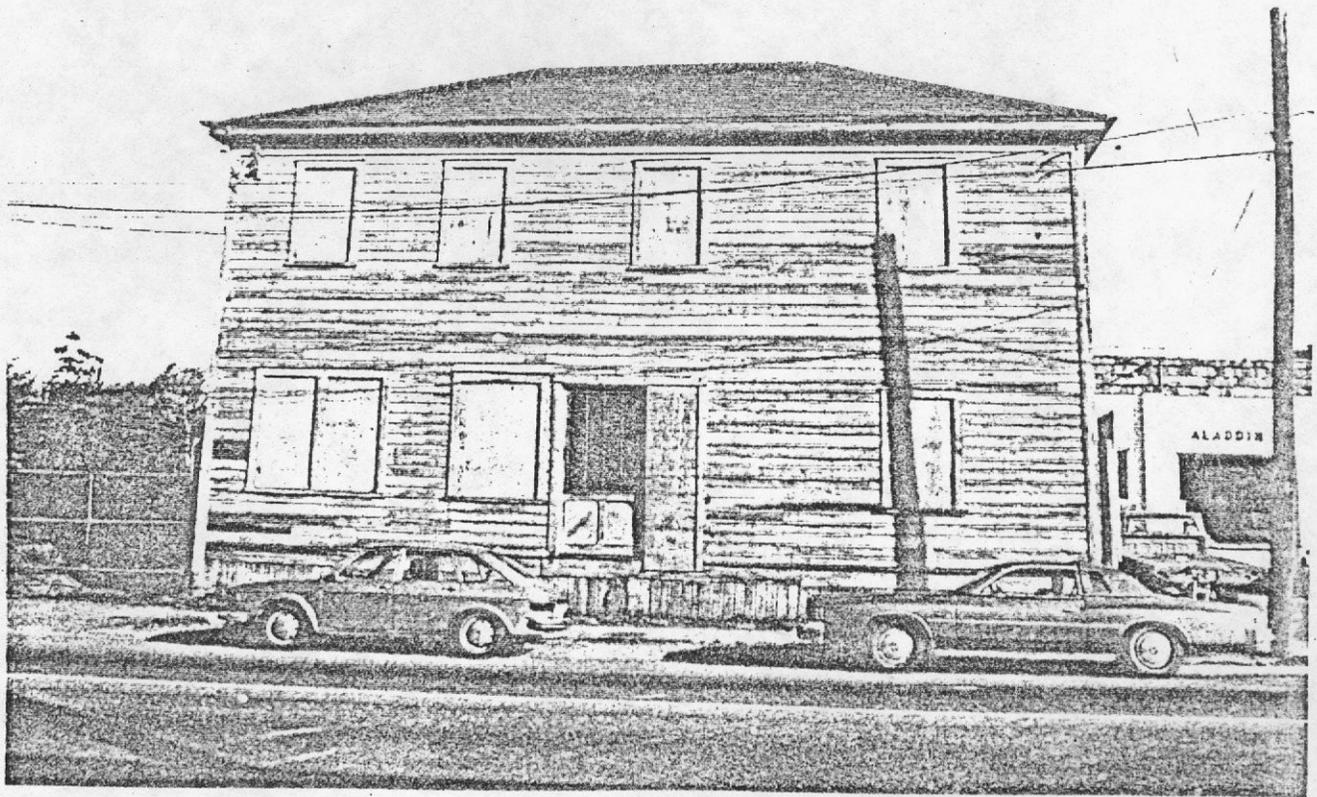


PHOTO 20·VMD STORES

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PHOTO 21-VMD STORAGE SHED

When Mrs. Spratt died, controlling interest was taken over by Harold Husband. In 1967, VMD sold its shipbuilding and ship repair operations to Burrard Drydock Co. Ltd. The VMD shipyard on Dallas Road was shut down by Burrard Drydock in January of the following year. The old wharves on the property were demolished in 1975 to make way for the \$10.5 million Ministry of Transport Base.

During its days as a shipbuilding company, VMD built twelve B.C. ferries and a number of other ships including the destroyer escort HMCS TERRA NOVA. The company made world-wide news with its completion of the deep sea semi-submersible drilling rig - the SEDCO 135F. The rig was operating off the Brazilian coast in 1981.

Although the company's shipbuilding facilities were closed, the company continued to operate its Bay Street Plant. In September of 1981, the company was sold to Bruce H. Campbell.

Many of the buildings at this plant are fairly new, being completed since the sixties. There are, however, several structures which date back to the early plant and which could be from the pre-1900 days. The brick building at the west end of the Bay Street buildings was built prior to the 1908 fire (Photo 18). It is shown on the 1903 Fire Insurance Underwriter's Map. The adjacent buildings with the corrugated iron siding date from right after the fire. The machine and pattern shop built in July of 1908 was designed by James K. Ribbeck, a construction engineer. Across a small drive is the office building for the plant which was built in 1911 (Photo 17). Across the street is a two-storey wooden structure built prior to 1903. The 1903 map shows it as being used for stores for VMD (Photo 20). The last of the marine ways were removed c.1968 but the shed which covered them still stands (Photo 22).



PHOTO 22, VMD · SHED FOR FORMER MARINE WAYS