

**Adding Gender to the Archival Contextual Turn:  
The Rocky Mountain Photographic Records of Mary Schäffer Warren**

by

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the significance of gender as an overlooked element of context in understanding the provenance of archival records. The relevance of gender to archival provenance is demonstrated through a case study analysis of the gendered contexts of record creation, use, and meaning. The analysis is grounded in an examination of the archival photographic and textual records of Mary Schäffer Warren, an amateur photographer, traveller, and explorer of the Canadian Rocky Mountains during the years 1888 and 1939.

Leading archivists, historians, and other scholars working with photographic records have developed important new contextual approaches in relation to that medium, rejecting the previous emphasis on understanding photographs as aesthetic images and carriers of informational content in favour of discerning the functional and contextual considerations of record creation. This thesis contributes to current archival scholarship that seeks to expand interpretations of provenance and thereby broaden our understandings of archival records. Drawing on scholarship in gender studies, history, geography, archival theory, and the history of photography, this thesis argues that gender is an important context in a record's provenance providing nuanced understandings of socio-cultural relations and processes of record creation, use, and meaning. Gender as context further empowers the principle of provenance by more fully reflecting how and why records are created which accordingly allows archivists to appraise, acquire, and describe records in ways more sensitive to gender as a socio-cultural reality. This will in turn benefit users of archival records by more fully reflecting the whole of a record's history.

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## INTRODUCTION

Recent shifts in the archival approach to records reflect a contextual turn, an acknowledgement of the importance of the historical contexts and discourses in which records are created, disseminated, and used. Archival theorist Hugh Taylor believed that “*the archival task*” is to make clear how and why records were created.<sup>1</sup> This new and deeper contextual approach to archival practice generated a renewed interest in the archival principle of provenance, the evolution of the media of records, and recordkeeping processes. Postmodern theoretical insights also influenced the contextual turn in archival practice reflecting greater understanding of the dimensions of records such as the means of communication, cultural and societal contexts of record creation, circulation and use, as well as notions of multiple and ambiguous contextualities. These insights triggered debates over the application of contextual knowledge in archival practice and discussion over how much contextual information is required to ensure the integrity of a record and to facilitate records retrieval and understanding.<sup>2</sup> Archival literature, exploring the contextual turn and the principle of provenance, now demonstrates broader understandings and knowledge of a record’s history through this expanded view of provenance.

The archival principle of provenance is the knowledge of the origins of a record or body of records that informs about the record’s many and layered meanings. The definition of provenance now includes “the social and technical processes of the record’s inscription, transmission, contextualization, and interpretation, which account for its

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<sup>1</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, “Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?” *Archivaria* 25 (Winter 1987-88), 24.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice,” *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005), 260.

existence, its characteristics, and its continuing history.”<sup>3</sup> This definition significantly enhances earlier understandings of the principle of provenance, which were premised on a monolithic, structuralist view of provenance that privileged an individual, a family, or an organization as the sole creator or recipient of records.<sup>4</sup> The new view of provenance incorporates contextual factors such as societal dimensions of record creation and the medium of a record as an element of its provenance.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, an expanded view of provenance emphasizes the complex relationship between the creator(s) and the record(s). The creating process(es) and the purpose(s) and use(s) of the record(s) by the creator(s) are made explicitly part of the purview and responsibility of the archivist to understand and incorporate into all archival functions and activities.

Leading archivists, historians, and other scholars working with photographic records have developed these important new contextual approaches in relation to that medium, rejecting the previous emphasis and focus on understanding photographs as aesthetic images and carriers of informational content in favour of determining the functional and contextual considerations of photographic record creation. As archival photography specialist Joan Schwartz explains, the content of a photograph offers visual facts, but the meaning of the visual facts is contingent upon an understanding of the

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<sup>3</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Towards a New Glossary of Archival Terminology” Part I (11.7370 History of Recorded Communication, class hand out, September 2006), and Nesmith, “Reopening Archives,” 262.

<sup>4</sup> Richard Pearce-Moses, author of the “Society of American Archivists’ Glossary of Archival Terminology,” cited in Joel Wurl, “Ethnicity as Provenance: In Search of Values and Principles for Documenting the Immigrant Experience,” *Archival Issues: Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 29:1 (2005), 67. The monolithic view of provenance is also problematized in Chris Hurley, “Parallel Provenance: (1) What, if Anything, is Archival Description?” *Archives and Manuscripts: The Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists*, 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary edition 1955-2005, 33:1 (May 2005), 110-145. One of the first critics of the traditional monolithic perspective was Terry Cook, in “The Concept of the Archival Fond in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions,” *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993), 24-37, which arguments he has expanded in more explicitly postmodern work cited later in this thesis.

<sup>5</sup> Tom Nesmith, “The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice,” *Archival Science* 6 (2006), 354.

historical, functional, technological and documentary circumstances of the photograph's creation as well as the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts in which the photograph was created, disseminated, and viewed.<sup>6</sup> Following Schwartz's call for more grounded inquiry into photographic meaning through contextual analysis, and drawing on archival educator Tom Nesmith's innovative explorations of societal provenance, gender as provenance – that is the knowledge and meaning of photographic records, for example, through a gender analysis of their historical contexts – seems to be an important additional dimension of a record's history. Exploring that dimension is the focus of this thesis. How might gender be an effective theoretical and practical consideration for understanding a photographic record's more nuanced and societal provenance?

American pioneer of gender studies, Joan Wallach Scott, has argued that gender as an analytical category destabilizes fixed identities of “men” and “women.” Gender is a social construction of sexual difference and distinguishes how sexual difference directs behaviours and attitudes. What it means to be male or female is understood through gender. Because gender is socially constructed, the meanings of masculinity and femininity shift over time and must be understood in specific historical contexts. As other gender theorists have argued, gender is the differentiation usually on the basis of sex, between social roles and functions labelled as masculine or feminine. Gender also acts as a system of meanings, assigned to individuals through a variety of cultural institutions such as the family, various associations and organizations, the law and the media.<sup>7</sup> Gender also

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<sup>6</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “More Than ‘Competent Description of an Intractably Empty Landscape’: A Strategy for Critical Engagement with Historical Photographs,” *Historical Geography* 31 (2003), 110. See also Joan M. Schwartz, “‘Records of Simple Truth and Precision’: Photography, Archives and the Illusion of Control,” *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000).

<sup>7</sup> Mary Klages, “What is Feminism (and why do we have to talk about it so much)?” <http://www.colorado.edu/English/courses/ENGL2012Klages/feminism.html> (accessed 12 September 2008).

refers to an intricate set of relations and processes. Gender historian Gisela Bock argues the necessity of thinking about gender in terms of social, cultural, and historical relations in order to understand gender both as an analytical category and as a socio-cultural reality. As Bock explains, gender as a “category” refers to an intellectual construct, “an analytical tool that helps us to discover neglected areas of history” while gender as a socio-cultural reality means that gender is a “constituent factor of all other relations.” History is male and female experience. “It should not be studied only in male or apparently gender-neutral perspectives, but also in female and gender-encompassing perspectives.” Gender is a fundamental characteristic of all cultures operating not in isolation but in relation to all other constructions of social difference.<sup>8</sup> Accordingly, Joan Scott asserts that gender analysis presents an important method for understanding the knowledge that organizes perceptions of masculinity and femininity<sup>9</sup> and thus, as an ongoing and shifting process, gender is an important consideration for contextual understandings of record creation. Furthermore, an awareness and understanding of gender acknowledges and develops the archival profession’s principles and guidelines that stipulate knowledge of social and cultural systems as well as an understanding of the institutional structures and systems that form the contexts in which records are created, maintained, and used.<sup>10</sup>

Exploring gender as a significant context and thus part, at least, of a record’s provenance is the focus of this thesis. Such study may provide nuanced understandings of socio-cultural relations and processes of record creation, and therefore of the meaning of

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<sup>8</sup> Gisela Bock, “Women’s History and Gender History,” in Sue Morgan, ed. *The Feminist History Reader* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 106-115.

<sup>9</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” *Gender and the Politics of History*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), xii.

<sup>10</sup> Society of American Archivists (SAA), [http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/ed\\_guidelines.asp](http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/ed_guidelines.asp) (accessed March 20, 2009).

these records for archival functions and for researcher's use. Exploring gender as context may further empower the principle of provenance by more fully reflecting how and why records are created. That will accordingly allow archivists to appraise, acquire, describe, preserve, and make accessible records in ways more sensitive to gender realities and that in turn will afford users of archives, including academic historians, the opportunity to examine archival records with more nuance and subtlety.

The photographic record presents a number of vantage points from which to explore gender as a contextual element of its creation, use, and meaning. A focus on images of women as the subject/content of a photograph is a predominant approach in photographic analysis, following such lines of inquiry as: how do images of women define femininity and the female? How are women depicted as inhabiting separate spheres of domestic space? How are women idealized or debased by (male) photographers for (male) audiences? Scholars exploring the gendered nature of "the gaze" have argued that male-produced images generally feature passive objects intended for a male gaze. Feminist film critic, Laura Mulvey, is widely associated with the politics of representation in theories of the gaze employing particular techniques of analysis in visual culture.<sup>11</sup> However, photography theorist Abigail Solomon-Godeau has posed the gender-sensitive question: what, if anything, changes when a woman is behind the camera?<sup>12</sup> This approach to photographic analysis explores the differences and similarities between women and men's photographic practices by such questioning as do women photographers create images that

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<sup>11</sup> Laura Mulvey has argued that visual codes operate to represent the female with passive and exhibitionistic objects and the male with active, voyeuristic subjects. See "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," *Screen* 16(3) (Autumn 1975), 6-18.

<sup>12</sup> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, "Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera," *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 257.

are significantly different from those of male photographers within the same genre, time, and place? Cultural critics and theorists of difference have reworked these approaches to images that take as their points of departure a set of positions that privilege the white and heterosexual object and subject. Professor Susan Close's analysis presents the photographic records of four women in wide-ranging spatial, temporal, and material contexts. Close examines how each of these women used photography as a means to explore individual place and perspective – or identity. Her analysis champions functional and contextual approaches to photographs, encouraging viewers to look at and consider the constructedness of the ostensibly “natural” images.<sup>13</sup>

Yet another approach to photographic analysis draws on biographical studies that address an individual photographer's life or the historical contexts in which a particular photographer worked. These approaches or vantage points identify some of the many ways one can initiate a gender analysis of photographic record production, meaning, and use. While the records of one woman photographer have been selected for detailed analysis in this thesis, it is not a biographical focus per se that structures the approach undertaken here. The photographic record as an object and the photographer's life are both important points of departure, but it is the gendered contexts of time, place, and photographic production in which the individual photographer worked and in which her work was viewed that will be examined in an effort to understand more fully the societal provenance of the records.

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<sup>13</sup> Susan Close, *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada 1880-1920* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007).

In exploring gender as context in the provenance of archival photographic records, this thesis hopes to contribute to current archival scholarship that seeks to expand interpretations of provenance and broaden our understandings of archival records. The methodology employed includes a review of the literature from the fields of archival theory, feminist theory, photography and visual culture, geography, history, and the vast field of gender studies. In exploring the significance of gender as an overlooked element of context in the provenance of archival records, the case study analysis will focus on the photographic and textual records created by an amateur woman photographer who travelled throughout the Canadian Rocky Mountains from 1889 to 1939. The focus on a woman photographer does not suggest, however, that gender and women are synonymous. Exploring gendered contexts of provenance presents opportunities for rich insights into the records of men as well as contextual understandings of historical constructions of masculinity. The analysis herein of a woman's photographic and textual records draws on Joan Scott's theoretical formulation of gender and gender historian Gisela Bock's articulation of gender as both a category of analysis and a socio-cultural reality. Women's photographic records are a neglected but significant resource for understanding not only women's role in the history of photography, but the history of photography as a whole. Gender, as a socio-cultural reality, is a constituent factor of all other relations and a fundamental, encompassing context of record production, meaning, and use. Provenance is not gender neutral. The origins of records are significantly gendered, and thus so should the archival practices of representing provenance through appraisal, acquisition, description, and access be much more explicitly gender sensitive activities and products.

The last two decades have demonstrated a renewed interest in travel and travel writing, particularly in the disciplines of cultural studies, literary theory, and geography. Similarly, gender has featured prominently in analyses of travel narratives.<sup>14</sup> The case study presented in this thesis focuses on photographic travel records rather than travel diaries, for example, in part as a decision to put into play the important contextual and functional approaches to photographic records developed by leading archivists, historians, and other scholars working with photographs by exploring gender as a historical context in photographic production. The genre of travel photography frames the discussion and analysis of gender as context in the provenance of archival photographic records. In framing the case study analysis within the genre of travel photography, it is recognized that any photography genre references specific and shifting histories, practices, ideological assumptions and expectations that reflect changing cultural structures.<sup>15</sup> Other photography genres, such as studio portraiture, fashion, family or domestic snapshots, documentary, landscape, survey, art, and scientific photographs, present distinct possibilities for an analysis of gender as context and discourse of photographic practice. For example, research into mid-twentieth-century family photograph albums and daguerreotype production of the 1840s has explored the gendered nature of photographic practice within these two genres underscoring periods of technological development within the history of photography as well as the culturally specific nature of a photographic genre.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Cheryl McEwan, "Paradise or Pandemonium? West African Landscapes in the Travel Accounts of Victorian Women," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22:1 (1996), 68.

<sup>15</sup> Liz Wells, ed. "Photography as Art," *Photography: A Critical Introduction* Third Edition (London and New York: Routledge, 2004), 290.

<sup>16</sup> Deborah Chambers, "Family as Place: Family Photograph Albums and the Domestication of Public and Private Space," in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the*

Ultimately, the length of time and space available for a Master's thesis necessitates focus, and a focus on one medium and one genre allows for a richer analysis than that of a broader approach. Travel photography is the portrayal of an area's landscape, people, culture, customs, and history. The images express the telling of a time and a place and can be created by both professional and amateur photographers.<sup>17</sup> Travel photographs are a significant medium for the dissemination of "knowledge" about specific places. The creation of images of specific places were often widely distributed, available for mass consumption in a variety of media that included lantern-slide presentations, stereographs, advertising, travel writing, and published articles. Time and place are fundamental characteristics of travel photographs; they are complex notions freighted with meaning and will thus serve as a fulcrum for exploration into gender as a historically specific contextuality in the provenance of photographic records. As photography scholar Joan Schwartz has well demonstrated, photographs are complex documents that construct and communicate meaning. The photographers carried with them on their travels "pre-texts," ideas, expectations, values, and beliefs – historically specific "cultural determinations" shaping what seemed memorable to them and thus worthy of recording.<sup>18</sup> Travel photography is a compelling genre from which to investigate the gendered contexts of photographic production, to see how one woman photographer practised within the

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*Geographical Imagination*. (London: I.B. Tauris, 2003); Lorraine O'Donnell, "Towards Total Archives: The Form and Meaning of Photographic Records," *Archivaria* 38 (1994); Robert Hirsch, *Seizing the Light: A History of Photography* (New York: McGraw-Hill Higher Education, 2000), 32-35; Alan Trachtenberg, *Reading American Photographs: Images as History, Matthew Brady to Walker Evans* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1989).

<sup>17</sup> Photographic Society of America, [http://psa-newmember.org/image\\_evaluation/photo\\_travel.html](http://psa-newmember.org/image_evaluation/photo_travel.html). (accessed 3 October 2008).

<sup>18</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, "'The Geography Lesson': Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22:1 (1996), 29.

different travel functions of enjoying leisure, constructing a sense of place, documenting experience, and remembering.

Chapter One will briefly trace the development of gendered historical analysis outlining the key concepts and theoretical directions associated with this approach. The value of gender as an analytical tool will be argued through a literature review of the gender theorists' and gender and women's historians' contributions in this field. Chapter Two will review the archival theoretical literature on the principle of provenance and the nature of photographic records. The work of archival theorists, archivists, historians, and photography specialists will be discussed as a means of demonstrating expanding perspectives of provenance in archival ideas and practice. The nature of photographs as a specific record medium will also be discussed as well as the importance of understanding the medium of a record as an integral part of a record's provenance. Chapter Three will present an extended case study as the core of the thesis. In exploring the potential for gender as context in the provenance of photographic records, personal and private records will be analyzed. The case study explores the textual and photographic records of Mary Schäffer Warren, an American Quaker and amateur photographer who first traveled to the Canadian Rocky Mountains in 1888. She returned in 1891 with her husband, Dr. Charles Schäffer, and thereafter made annual trips to the Canadian Rocky Mountains before settling permanently in Banff in 1913. The provenance of Schäffer's photographs will be explored through examination of early twentieth-century geographic and photographic discourses, as well as historical contexts of tourism, travel, and exploration, Quakerism, gender, class, and race formations.

Archival approaches to women's records reflect broader disciplinary distinctions between women's history and gender history. Societal discrimination of women has translated into biased archival acquisition practices. Correctives to acquisition mandates concerning records created by women is in large part a result of women's increased involvement in activities, offices, and institutions for official records or through collections strategies that are geared toward women's activities in the private realm. However, current contextual research and understanding that informs archival practices of appraisal and acquisition, arrangement and description, and reference functions rarely reflect gender awareness or perspectives that are significant contextual factors in understanding record creation. The acquisition and preservation of women's records is steadily being addressed by questioning who and what is preserved; a gender perspective addresses how and why they are preserved.<sup>19</sup> The case study of Schäffer's records presented in Chapter Three will reveal how Schäffer's records are made more meaningful through a gender perspective in contextual research of record creation and use.

Schäffer was a moderately wealthy American woman from the industrial city of Philadelphia, who travelled to the Canadian Rocky Mountains at the turn of the twentieth century. Constructions of gender and gender difference are not the same in all cultures, societies, or spaces. What it meant to be a woman in Philadelphia society was different from what it meant to be a woman in the Canadian Rocky Mountains during this period in which Schäffer travelled. Schäffer's historical experiences in both places bear witness to these marked differences – domestic pursuits and pink tea circles in Philadelphia to rugged

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<sup>19</sup> See also Isabel Carrera Suárez and Laura Viñuela Suárez, "The Use of Archives for Research in Migration and Gender Studies," [http://www.york.ac.uk/res/researchintegration/Integrative\\_Research\\_Methods/Carrera%20Suarez%20Archives%20April%202007.pdf](http://www.york.ac.uk/res/researchintegration/Integrative_Research_Methods/Carrera%20Suarez%20Archives%20April%202007.pdf). (accessed 12 December 2011).

Rocky Mountain travel and exploration on horseback in the Canadian West. Perceptions of women travellers are context-specific. At the turn of the twentieth century, travel had become a popular pursuit for middle-class North American and European women as a result of steamship and rail accessibility. The Canadian Rockies were aggressively promoted as a travel destination, advertising mountain climbing and trail riding to both women and men. Contextual analysis reveals the shifting nature of gender conventions and the challenges to and reformulations of women's roles and behaviour. Reading gender as a functional context in Schäffer's photographic and textual records also reveals how Schäffer negotiated the varied gendered conventions of her Philadelphia and Rocky Mountain audiences. Her travel accounts recorded in a book and various articles and photographs were created as a personal narrative of her travels in which she told her story through her words and images. Yet each of these records was created with an audience in mind. She communicated her experiences to various audiences in ways that are remarkably reflective of her negotiations of the gendered conventions and expectations of her audiences. As urban Eastern coast book reviews of her travel accounts observe: Schäffer's activities, such as fording swollen rivers on horseback, were performed while retaining her "femininity." In the Rocky Mountain town of Banff and surrounding national park, Schäffer's travel writing and lantern-slide lectures contributed to the area's popularity and the growth of tourism – specifically for like-minded women travellers. Awareness of gender as a historically specific social and cultural construction rather than as a characteristic of an individual enhances archival contextual research into Schäffer's records, more fully reflecting how and why Schäffer created her photographs and travel accounts.

This thesis argues that gender is an important contextual element of archival provenance and thereby seeks to expand interpretations of provenance and broaden understandings of archival records. Presenting one in-depth case study rather than undertaking a comparative approach of multiple analyses facilitates a depth of analysis that may not otherwise be available within the limitations of a Master's thesis. Research was made possible through the archival collections held at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, from which access for reproduction and copyright clearance was graciously received.

## CHAPTER ONE

### PROVENANCE AND GENDERED HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

Those who would codify the meanings of words fight a losing battle, for words, like the ideas and things they are meant to signify, have a history.<sup>1</sup>

Context is a governing principle of archival practice. The determination and explanation of the contexts of record creation and the mapping of the provenancial interrelationships between the creator and the record<sup>2</sup> underpins the archival profession. Provenance preserves the authoring office or individual that created, accumulated, or maintained the records, linking the records (recorded information) to the contexts and functions of institutional or personal activity.<sup>3</sup> Understanding the functions and activities of the creating body informs and governs all areas of archival practice while facilitating researchers' pursuits and interest in the records' histories. Since the 1970s, archivists exploring the nature of contextual knowledge have reinterpreted the archival principle of provenance<sup>4</sup> shifting professional focus from an information to a knowledge paradigm, from structure to function.<sup>5</sup> The structuralist view of a single provenance as a person or institution expressed through the literal inscription of a record by its creator has expanded

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<sup>1</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999), 28.

<sup>2</sup> Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (Spring 2001), 28.

<sup>3</sup> Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 97), 31-32.

<sup>4</sup> Leading archivists contributing to the archival discourse of reinterpretations of provenance include Canadians, Hugh Taylor, Terry Cook, Tom Nesmith, Joan Schwartz, Laura Millar, Richard Brown, and Brien Brothman; Australians, Peter Scott and Chris Hurley; American archivists David Bearman and Richard Lytle; South African archivist Verne Harris, and Dutch archivists Eric Ketelaar and Peter Horsman.

<sup>5</sup> Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 35-37; Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85).

into multifaceted conceptions of function, activity, and ideas.<sup>6</sup> Provenance now reflects postmodern theoretical influences that reveal expanding conceptions of context embracing both the “specific processes of records production and the wider society within which the record was created.”<sup>7</sup> Archival educator Tom Nesmith argues for the exploration of the social and technical processes and dimensions of records through their societal provenance, claiming that:

Document creation, use and archiving have social origins. People make and archive records in social settings for social purposes. They do so with a concept of how their social setting works, where they fit into it, and might change it. Socio-economic conditions, social assumptions, values, ideas, and aspirations shape and are shaped by their views and recording and archiving behaviour. Social circumstances shape what information may be known, what may be recorded, and what may not, and how it may be recorded, such as in the medium chosen. These circumstances affect who has information and why, and who may have access to it. They influence the language used to describe phenomena. They shape what is deemed trustworthy, authentic, reliable, worth remembering or forgettable, and how and when such information is used, and by whom.<sup>8</sup>

Drawing on his experience during South Africa’s political transition from apartheid to democracy, South African archivist Verne Harris argues for the importance of addressing postmodern epistemologies in archival theory and practice. Post-apartheid South African archival discourse reflects efforts to re-negotiate the country’s past in view of the oppressive political regime that shaped and manipulated particular narratives of the past through its archives. Archivists there “have successfully reimagined what they do and who they are in a post-apartheid South Africa, they have been less successful in engaging

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<sup>6</sup> Tom Nesmith, “The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice,” *Archival Science* 6 (2006), 352.

<sup>7</sup> Jeannette Allis Bastian, *Owning Memory: How a Caribbean Community Lost its Archives and Found its History* (Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2003), 81.

<sup>8</sup> Nesmith, “Concept of Societal Provenance,” 352.

technological revolution and the conditions of postmodernity.”<sup>9</sup> Harris challenges archival assumptions and terminology rooted in positivist approaches, arguing for consideration of indigenous epistemologies and the employment of “conceptual frameworks for meaning-construction which are rooted in South African societal realities and indigenous pasts.”<sup>10</sup>

While Harris’s rationale is informed by the dramatic transition from apartheid to democracy, the role of archives in the constructed nature of societal memory and the dimensions of archival power represent realities for all archives in all circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

Archival educator Terry Cook has asserted that the fundamental characteristic of archival practice is “original research by archivists into the history and contemporary nature of archival records, record creators, recording media, and recordkeeping systems.” Cook defines this original research by archivists as “the methodological investigation of the individual human, institutional, and societal dimensions of recordkeeping and documentary artifacts over space and time.” Cook proposed that the application of historical skills and methodologies to archival records, creators and their many interrelationships would allow archivists to create new contextual knowledge that would enhance archival functions and activities.<sup>12</sup> These new directions and dimensions of archival contextual knowledge draw on postmodern concepts emphasizing the means and power of communication, cultural and societal dimensions of context and the potentially boundless nature of context.<sup>13</sup> Exploring the gendered contexts of a record’s provenance is consistent with these proposed postmodern archival objectives. Gendered contexts of record production, record creators,

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<sup>9</sup> Verne Harris, “The Archival Sliver: Power, Memory and Archives in South Africa,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 82-83.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 83.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

<sup>12</sup> Terry Cook, “‘The Imperative of Challenging Absolutes’ in Graduate Archival Education Programs: Issues for Educators and the Profession,” *The American Archivist* 63(Fall/Winter 2000), 385-386.

<sup>13</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Reopening Archives: Bringing New Contextualities into Archival Theory and Practice,” *Archivaria* 60 (Fall 2005), 260.

recording media, and recordkeeping systems may generate new knowledge about the meaning and significance of records, by explaining how gender shapes the processes of a record's inscription, transmission, contextualization and interpretation, impacting socio-cultural and administrative accountability and collective memory. In order to explore these possibilities, this chapter now turns to a brief review of the historical development of gender analysis and a summary of the key concepts and theoretical directions of this approach.<sup>14</sup>

The academic study of gender evolved out of the 1960s feminist movement in Europe and North America. The academic fields of women's studies and women's history were significant developments resulting from the women's liberation movement. Early women's historians, while using the broad category of "women" as opposed to the analytical term "gender," nonetheless adopted an understanding of gender as the social construction of biological sexual difference. Widespread use of the concept began in the early 1970s when gender was employed as an analytical category that distinguished how biological sexual difference directs and informs behaviours, attitudes, and meanings of masculinity and femininity.<sup>15</sup> Through examination of historical sources and analysis of the writing of history, early women's historians exposed the gender systems at work and

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<sup>14</sup> It is recognized that other recent sensibilities beyond gender including postcolonial, ethnic, racial, class, or sexual orientation are also part of this rethinking, as is a deeper awareness of "power" and its exercise in many human activities. The focus in this work on gender as a primary lens does not suggest that it is superior to or more important than these other categories of analysis, but they are beyond the scope of this thesis in terms of its principal analytical focus.

<sup>15</sup> Jane Pilcher and Imelda Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies* (London, Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: SAGE Publications, 2004), 56.

revealed how academic disciplines excluded women's experiences and interests in the creation of history, both history as it was lived and history as it was written by scholars.<sup>16</sup>

A pioneer in the field of women's history, Gerda Lerner, noted that historical scholarship was focused on the male experience. Lerner emphasized the dominance of patriarchal values in the writing of history revealing how traditional historical sources represented a challenge to women's histories, as these sources were overwhelmingly written by or collected by men. Lerner's scholarship revealed the operation of patriarchal power in both early record creation and their subsequent location in the archives.

Women's exclusion from recordkeeping and archival processes assured their absence from the formation of societal memory.<sup>17</sup> Echoing Lerner's emphasis on the predominance of patriarchal values in the writing of history, historian Bonnie Smith explored the gendered politics of knowledge production within the historical profession in her analysis, *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice*. Smith argued convincingly of the importance of gender in the formation of the historical profession. Exploring the gendered construction of historical practice in the West, Smith's analysis of the history profession highlighted the gender differences at work that constituted and differentiated professional from amateur history writing and revealed the gendered development of a historical network of procedure, professional behaviour, and scholarly practice.<sup>18</sup>

Professional history, based on a "scientific" approach to archival research and the university-based graduate history seminar, displaced earlier "amateur" and often

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., ix-xv; Jeanne Boydston, "Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis," *Gender & History* 20:3 (November, 2008), 558-561; Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1979).

<sup>17</sup> As summarized in Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth," 26.

<sup>18</sup> Bonnie G. Smith, "Gender and the Mirror of History," *The Gender of History: Men, Women and Historical Practice* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998), 10.

predominately female approaches to historical writing situated within social and cultural histories and travel narratives. These “amateur” writings stood in stark contrast to the emerging scientific, fact-based historical practice conducted in the archival research room. As Terry Cook has posited, archivists are complicit in this process as the professionalization of history coincided with the professionalization of archivists, who were trained by, and as, historians. The separation of the feminine and the corresponding social and cultural histories of “amateur” women practitioners from professional historical practice and the archival record reveals the archive “as the site where social memory has been (and is) constructed – usually in support, consciously or unconsciously, of the metanarratives of the powerful, and especially of the state.”<sup>19</sup> Furthermore, as historian Antoinette Burton has argued, the determination of what is cultural, social, or political and what counts as history is always politically motivated. The cultural, social, or political are “not simply *found* in history, but are always produced through and by historiography and its authors.”<sup>20</sup> Feminist deconstructions like Smith’s of traditional academic disciplines have produced critical assessments of disciplinary fields and their power-knowledge nexus, revealing the social constructedness and partial nature of academic and professional discourses.<sup>21</sup>

Gender as an analytical category has been employed in a variety of approaches since its inception. Lerner argued that women’s history necessitates more than locating women’s historical records and adding them to the “empty spaces within patriarchal

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<sup>19</sup> Cook, “Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth,” 27; Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *Canadian Historical Review* 90:3 (Sept 2009), 506-507.

<sup>20</sup> Antoinette Burton, “Thinking Beyond the Boundaries: Empire, Feminism and the Domains of History,” *Social History* 26:1 (January 2001), 69.

<sup>21</sup> Barbara L. Marshall, *Configuring Gender: Explorations in Theory and Politics* (Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, Ltd., 2000), 68-69.

history;” it is a new perspective, a way of questioning traditional sources.<sup>22</sup> Demonstrating this new perspective in her landmark essay, “The Lady and the Mill Girl: Changes in the Status of Women in the Age of Jackson,” Lerner explored the changing status of American women during the period 1800-1840, offering interpretations for the shifting ideologies in American society concerning the role of American women. Lerner’s analysis of women’s experiences during this period is significant in that it revealed the historical realities for women during a period of rapid social change, modernization and industrialization.<sup>23</sup> In presenting this new perspective, Lerner’s analysis broadened the scope of this historical period revealing greater complexity and understanding by illuminating variations and dissimilarities between men and women’s experiences. Historians, like Lerner, seeking to explain the complex and ambiguous experiences of women, explored beyond the initial (and predictable) models of oppressed or heroic accounts. Historical interpretations of nineteenth-century Europe and North America are replete with the “ideology of domesticity” or “the doctrine of separate spheres,” but as Joan Scott makes plain, “to label the theme and assume we therefore know what it means is to miss the chance to see when and in what contexts these kinds of ideas were articulated as well as how, specifically, they worked.”<sup>24</sup> Lerner’s scholarship and Scott’s rationale are important for archival considerations of gendered contexts and constructed societal memory as the archival

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<sup>22</sup> Gerda Lerner, “The Challenge of Women’s History,” in *Majority Finds Its Past*, 168-180. See also Gerda Lerner, *The Creation of Patriarchy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) and *The Creation of Feminist Consciousness: From the Middle Ages to Eighteen-Seventy* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994).

<sup>23</sup> Gerda Lerner, “The Lady and the Mill Girl,” in *Majority Finds Its Past*, 14-30. See also Joan Kelly-Gadol’s “Did Women Have a Renaissance?” *Women, History & Theory: The Essays of Joan Kelly* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984), 19-50. In this important analysis, Kelly-Gadol explored the Renaissance as a period in history largely represented as an event that advanced and liberated men from social and ideological constraints. In revisiting this period, Kelly-Gadol revealed how developments in state formation, a declining nobility and the rise of the bourgeoisie combined to actually reverse the independence of the feudal noble women during the Renaissance.

<sup>24</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, “‘L’ouvrière! Mot impie, sordid...’ Women Workers in the Discourse of French Political Economy, 1840-1860,” *Gender and the Politics of History*, 157.

activities of appraisal, acquisition, description, and access can on occasion draw on these themes. Restrictive archival information architectures facilitate the dangers of essentialism. For example, the Rules for Archival Description (RAD) subject indexing signals the tendencies to see women as a separate category and to draw assumptions from this categorisation.<sup>25</sup>

The 1960s to the mid-1980s in North America is a period of women's history characterized by an emphasis on patriarchal theory and the separate spheres metaphor, both reflecting a white Western culture. Historians of race and slavery criticized narrow conceptions of gender in the field of women's history that ignored significant analytical differences like race, ethnicity, class, national identity, sexual orientation, and postcolonial positioning. Cultural theorist bell hooks argued the necessity of race and class as critical identity differences influencing (and qualifying) any possible essential experience shared by all "women."<sup>26</sup> The scholarship of historians Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham and Elsa Barkley Brown has criticized the separateness of African-American gender discourses from white gender discourses. Brooks Higginbotham has explored the notion of a collective identity of race, arguing that gender is constructed by race and, therefore, tied to one's identity and class status. This results in very different experiences and contexts for black women and white women, but also different experiences *among* black women and white women as a result of class differences and differences in sexual orientation.<sup>27</sup> Elsa Barkley Brown, in her 1992 essay, "'What Has Happened Here': The Politics of Difference in Women's History and Feminist Politics," emphasized the importance of recognizing and

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<sup>25</sup> See also Susan Bassnett, "Travel Writing and Gender," in Peter Hulme and Tim Youngs, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to Travel Writing* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 227.

<sup>26</sup> bell hooks, *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2000), passim.

<sup>27</sup> Evelyn Brooks Higginbotham, "African-American Women's History and the Metalanguage of Race," *Signs* 17:2 (Winter 1992), 258, 271-272.

understanding that all women do not share the same gender. “We have still to recognize that being a woman is, in fact, not extractable from the context in which one is a woman – that is, race, class, time, and place.”<sup>28</sup> Barkley Brown argues that the recognition of difference is not enough; the relational elements of difference must also be explored.<sup>29</sup> Thus, the importance of identity differences and their relational aspects are key considerations for the gendered contexts of archival provenance.

More recently, gender studies drawing on poststructuralist theory have shown that the meanings attached to biological sex differences are socially and culturally constructed and perhaps most significantly – unstable. Consequently, gendered meanings attached to sex differences are contingent upon specific historical contexts.<sup>30</sup> Gender theorists arguing for an understanding of gender as a cultural process – varied and changing over time – trace gender not as a single and separate identity, but intersecting with multiple axes of identities, “nested in, mingled with and inseparable from the cluster of other factors socially relevant in a given culture.”<sup>31</sup> This is significant for understanding the relationship between individual gendered subjectivities and gender as a social structure. Gender order is a “patterned system of ideological and material practices, performed by individuals in a society, through which power relations between women and men are made, and remade, as meaningful. It is through the gender order of a society that forms or codes of masculinities and femininities are created and recreated, and relations between them are organized.”<sup>32</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Elsa Barkley Brown, “‘What Has Happened Here’: The Politics of Difference in Women’s History and Feminist Politics,” *Feminist Studies* 18:2 (1992), 300.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, 298.

<sup>30</sup> Pilcher and Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, 57.

<sup>31</sup> Boydston, “Gender as a Question of Historical Analysis,” 576.

<sup>32</sup> Pilcher and Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, 61.

This understanding of gender as an active cultural process means that gender and gender relations are open to conformity, contestations, disruption, and change.

The value of gender as a historically specific social construct and its relational nature to other social and cultural categories of difference challenges simple classification and focus on women and men as historical subjects. As Claire Pajaczkowska, a lecturer in visual culture, has explained, historians locate texts and attempt to reconstruct missing pieces of the historical records. This research was the earliest and most extensive form of feminist scholarship within visual culture. But this work of restoring women practitioners to the historical record raises important questions concerning the structures and dynamics that actively consigned them to oblivion.<sup>33</sup> Joan Scott points out the limitations of those histories that attempt to prove that women had a history separate from men or that women participated in major historic events. As Scott quipped, “My understanding of the French Revolution is not changed by knowing that women participated in it.”<sup>34</sup> Similarly, the compensatory practice of capturing “women’s” documentary heritage within recordkeeping and archival practices, while a fundamental corrective to past archival mandates of preserving male-dominated social memory and documentary heritage, still permits key epistemological assumptions to remain unchallenged. The archival discipline, much like history, “operates as a particular kind of cultural institution endorsing and announcing constructions of gender.”<sup>35</sup> Scott’s poststructuralist approach to gender analysis requires the rejection of the idea that there is anything fixed or known in advance about the terms “men” and “women” and the relationship between them. The terms “men”

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<sup>33</sup> Claire Pajaczkowska, “Issues in Feminist Visual Culture,” in Fiona Carson and Claire Pajaczkowska, eds., *Feminist Visual Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 10.

<sup>34</sup> Scott, “Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis,” in *Gender and the Politics of History*, 31.

<sup>35</sup> Scott, “Introduction,” in *Gender and the Politics of History*, 9.

and “women” are “ideals established to regulate and channel behaviour, not empirical descriptions of actual people, who will always fall short of fulfilling the ideals.” Scott argues further that there is discrepancy within the “cultural norms and social roles offered to articulate the difference between the sexes.” This discrepancy necessitates “reading for specific meanings rather than assuming uniformity in all spheres and aspects of social life.” Gender analysis does not assume the “abiding existence of a homogenous collectivity called women upon which measurable experiences are visited. Rather, gender analysis interrogates the production of the category women itself as a historical or political event, whose circumstances and effects are the object of analysis.”<sup>36</sup> This is relevant to postmodern archivists’ reinterpretations of provenance and their explorations into contextual research and knowledge in support of archival functions and activities. Contextual research requires a rejection of homogenous, ahistorical understandings and conceptions of “women” and “men.” It is contingent upon the specific meanings of female and male within the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts under examination.

Postmodern and poststructural theoretical developments challenged the fixed and ordered nature of things, arguing the importance of language and discourse in the construction of meaning and knowledge. Concerning gender, these theories destabilized dichotomous gender categories and acknowledged the significance of difference within categories of “women” and “men.” As historians of race and sexuality have demonstrated, individual status and experiences of women and men differ significantly over time, space, and culture. Inequalities and differences within and across genders pose important

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<sup>36</sup> Scott, “Some More Reflections on Gender and Politics,” in *Gender and the Politics of History*, 206-207.

relational considerations to gender analysis making it a multi-faceted, complex, and multi-inter-disciplinary area.<sup>37</sup>

Discourse analysis locates texts within historical and social contexts; postmodern theory proposes a variety of readings directed at deconstructing the concepts, belief-systems, and ideologies of power surrounding those texts. Joan Scott's poststructuralist perspective and her research in discourse analysis are significant developments within gender studies. Scott argues for a shift in thinking. Deconstructing fixed categories of "men," "women," identity, experience and subjectivity means doing away with an essential, pre-discursive reality. Gender, as a system of knowledge about sexual difference, produced a variety of meanings of the body in different times, places, and contexts. "Historical subjects were not constituted by a set of unmediated or self-evident experiences, but by particular discourses of gender, class or race that valorized and gave meaning to those experiences."<sup>38</sup> As gender theorist and philosopher Judith Butler has argued, gender and all identity categories are "the *effect* of institutions, practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin."<sup>39</sup>

Feminist opponents of poststructuralist discourse analysis argue that it undermines women's historical experience, their material and economic reality.<sup>40</sup> Proponents of discourse analysis, like Scott, refute claims to experience, arguing they are predicated on an approach to women's historical experience or subjectivity as evident and unchallenged. Historian Sue Morgan explains that poststructuralism is not anti-realist but anti-

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<sup>37</sup> Pilcher and Whelehan, *50 Key Concepts in Gender Studies*, ix-xii.

<sup>38</sup> Sue Morgan, "Introduction: Writing Feminist History: Theoretical Debates and Critical Practices," in Sue Morgan, ed., *The Feminist History Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 2006), 13-14.

<sup>39</sup> Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (London: Routledge, 1990), ix.

<sup>40</sup> Sonya Rose, Kathleen Canning, Anna Clark and Mariana Valverde, "Gender History/Women's History: Is Feminist Scholarship Losing its Critical Edge?" in Morgan, *The Feminist History Reader*, 160-191.

representationalist – that is poststructuralism is necessarily suspicious of claims to human representations of the world as “true.”<sup>41</sup> For feminist historians, this is problematic in that the historical female subject is still in the process of being recovered and made visible.<sup>42</sup> While Scott privileges discourse over experience, her critics, while agreeing with poststructuralist conceptions of the multiple and fragmented nature of discourses and subjectivities, argue that focus only on discourse without subjective experience erases the agency of historical subjects.<sup>43</sup>

One such concrete historical experience for women was travel. Literary critic Sara Mills, in her analysis of women’s travel writing within a colonial context, examines the discursive production and reception of women’s travel texts. Mills claims that femininity is a system of socially constructed discursive frameworks that map out for women “a range of behaviour patterns concerning sexuality, morality, their relations with others which are there to be contested (they are after all, only discourses), but they are also there to be complied with, in as much as that is possible.”<sup>44</sup> In her analysis, Mills finds that the discourses of femininity for many middle-class Victorian women may have been restrictive, but it is for the most part middle-class women that were travel writers. “One begins to wonder whether these images of Victorian women and their restricted lives are more discursive than actual.”<sup>45</sup> Experience and its representations in “texts” are fraught

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<sup>41</sup> Morgan, “Introduction,” in *The Feminist History Reader*, 17.

<sup>42</sup> Anna Green and Kathleen Troup, eds., *The Houses of History* (New York: New York University Press, 1999), 259.

<sup>43</sup> See roundtable discussion between historians Sonya Rose, Kathleen Canning, Anna Clark and Mariana Valverde, “Gender History/Women’s History: Is Feminist Scholarship Losing its Critical Edge?” *Journal of Women’s History* 5:1 (Spring 1993) for debates concerning poststructural theoretical concepts of discourse and experience and their application to feminist and gender history.

<sup>44</sup> Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 94.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, 27.

with complexities. For example, within the women's travel writing accounts examined by Mills, experience is difficult to grasp because it is mediated by discourse, the writing system and its rules that existed within this genre. Yet, to not discuss experience, however difficult within travel writing, is inadequate, since experience for both female and male writers is the subject matter of travel journals. The problem in most accounts of travel writing, according to Mills, is that the experience of the writer has been unproblematically displayed and presented in the text. Rather, experience is channelled into and negotiated with "pre-existent schemas which are discursive in nature." Women's travel texts are constructed in interaction with colonial textual constraints and gender constraints. "These determine the way texts are constructed, the views that writers produce, and even the way they present themselves and their experiences."<sup>46</sup> Through her gendered analysis of the discourses surrounding women's travel writing, Mills disrupts assumptions that characterize women's travel writing as unavoidably different from men's writing. Exploring the production and reception of women's travel texts, Mills explains that factors in the production process account for differences between the travel text written by a woman and a man. Factors such as a woman's access to a literary education or funding account for some of the differences. Mills' analysis of British women travel writers' texts suggests the utility and value of gendered discourse analysis in the colonial contexts of these women and illuminates the complexities and incongruities among their accounts. Mills calls for awareness of the diverse elements, gendered, socio-political, and textual, that create the text.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 36-40.

Mills' emphasis in understanding and describing the texts "in all their complexity in order to trace, not the authors, but the conditions of production and reception of their texts,"<sup>47</sup> merits consideration for archival provenance and contextual research practices. Travel writing is a medium of record creation and is produced within contexts where several textual, economic, social, cultural, political, historical, and personal constraints intrude on the writing process. Mills' analysis demonstrates that women's travel writing texts do not originate from "one determining factor, such as the author, reality, imperialism or femininity, but rather that the texts are produced in the interaction and clashing of a variety of constraining factors. Texts are heterogeneous, made up of various elements in response to different constraints on the writing process."<sup>48</sup>

This chapter has outlined the value and insights of gender through a review of the historical development of gender analysis, and the key concepts and theoretical directions of this approach. How, then, does gender analysis relate to the archival principle of provenance? Gender analysis highlights the importance of gender as a social construction and the historically specific contexts of these constructions. It illuminates gender as a process, not a single identity but interacting and inseparable from other contextual and social factors. It reveals gender as a social structure, a system of ideological and material practices through which power relations between men and women are constituted. The multiple, relational, ambiguous and interdisciplinary nature of gender and its presence as a category, as process and structure, as discourse, as identity and politics makes it a dynamic and key contextual consideration for postmodern approaches to the archival principle of provenance. Gender analysis in contextual research broadens understandings of social and

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 40-46.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid., 68-69.

cultural systems and processes, including record-making and record-keeping, and thus their relevance to archival provenance.

## CHAPTER TWO

### THE PRINCIPLE OF PROVENANCE AND PHOTOGRAPHIC RECORDS

Like all mass media, photography is routinely made – or employed – to affirm, confirm, and promote the interests, the beliefs, the social and sexual relations of the class that possesses it and as a corollary (for how, indeed, could it be otherwise?), I would submit that the history of photography is not the history of remarkable men, much less a succession of remarkable pictures, but the history of photographic uses.<sup>1</sup>

The nineteenth-century European articulation, and then implementation, of the contextual approach to archival administration is the most important intellectual development within the profession’s history.<sup>2</sup> Archival records can only be understood in context; that is, the content of records is always to be seen in relation to their structural or personal origins, and the functions and activities in which the record participated. “At the heart of the contextual approach, then, is knowledge of the provenance of documentation or the origins, original purposes, and organic characteristics of documentation.”<sup>3</sup> As discussed in Chapter One, more recent archival literature exploring new contextualities for the principle of provenance has demonstrated broader understandings and deeper knowledge of a record’s history. Archival doyen Hugh Taylor, inspired by the communication and media studies of Harold Innis and Marshall McLuhan, found relevance

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<sup>1</sup> Abigail Solomon-Godeau, *Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota, 1991), xxiv.

<sup>2</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Archival Studies in English-speaking Canada and the North American Rediscovery of Provenance,” in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance* (Metuchen, N.J. & London: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1993), 1.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 2.

in their work for archival theory and practice.<sup>4</sup> Taylor's thoughtful enquiry into the contexts of records suggested complex relationships between society and the documentary record, "between the act and the document." Taylor was a pioneer in proposing that the meaning of archival records exists not in the records themselves, but in the transactions to which they serve as evidence.<sup>5</sup> His ideas inspired Canadian archivists, generating a "rediscovery of provenance" and an intellectual zeal for contextualized information.<sup>6</sup> The "rediscovery of provenance" marked a shift in Canadian archival focus: from the content of records to the contexts of record creation, use, and meaning. It acknowledged the significance of the medium of a record as an integral part of its provenance and encouraged research into the complex and multiple relationships between the creator and the record, the creating processes, and the functions and uses of the record by the creator(s). Taylor's philosophy<sup>7</sup> inspired much of the archival scholarship that re-imagined provenance in the 1990s.<sup>8</sup> Key articulators include Terry Cook who conceptualized provenance as the "whole of identifiable and multiple relationships surrounding a record," thereby transforming data

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<sup>4</sup> Gordon Dodds, "Hugh Taylor: The Far-Away Archivist," in Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds, eds., *Imagining Archives: Essays & Reflections by Hugh A. Taylor* (Lanham, Maryland and Oxford: Society of American Archivists and Association of Canadian Archivists in association with The Scarecrow Press, Inc., 2003), 11.

<sup>5</sup> Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 34.

<sup>6</sup> The term "rediscovery of provenance" is attributed to archival educator Tom Nesmith. Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 36.

<sup>7</sup> Both Terry Cook and Gordon Dodds describe Hugh Taylor as the first philosopher of archives. Cook and Dodds, *Imagining Archives*, 14, 18.

<sup>8</sup> David A. Bearman and Richard H. Lytle, "The Power of the Principle of Provenance," *Archivaria* 21 ((Winter 1985-86); Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds: Theory, Description and Provenance in the Post-Custodial Era," in Terry Eastwood, ed., *The Archival Fonds: From Theory to Practice* (Ottawa, 1992), 52-64; Peter Horsman, "The Last Dance of the Phoenix, or The De-discovery of the Archival Fonds," *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002); Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives," *Archival Science* 1 (2001); Tom Nesmith, "Archives from the Bottom Up: Social History and Archival Scholarship," in Tom Nesmith, ed., *Canadian Archival Studies and the Rediscovery of Provenance*; Joan M. Schwartz, "'Records of Simple Truth and Precision': Photography, Archives, and the Illusion of Control," *Archivaria* 50 (Fall 2000); Brien Brothman, "Orders of Value: Probing the Theoretical Terms of Archival Practice," *Archivaria* 32 (Summer 1991); Chris Hurley, "What, if Anything, is a Function?" *Archives and Manuscripts* 21 (November 1993); Chris Hurley, "Ambient Functions – Abandoned Children to Zoos," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995); and Chris Hurley, "Problems with Provenance," *Archives and Manuscripts* 23 (November 1995).

and information into knowledge<sup>9</sup> and Tom Nesmith's advocacy of research by archivists into the "history of the record" and the notion of "societal provenance"<sup>10</sup> resulted in the reapplication of historical skills and research methodologies for Canadian archivists whose conceptions of provenance prior to the 1970s was limited to the subject content of records created by a single individual, family, organization, or government department. This sense of ambient, broad, functional, rather than narrow, direct, structural, provenance was also explored by Australian archival theorist, Chris Hurley, in a series of provocative articles.<sup>11</sup>

Against this generalized rethinking of provenance for all media of archival records, pioneering archival photographic specialists at the then National Archives of Canada, Joan Schwartz and Lilly Koltun, have argued, in a similar way, that scholarship and practice concerning photographic records has focused for too long on the photograph as aesthetic image and emphasized its subject or informational content, while suppressing important contextual information and provenancial knowledge of photographs that in turn can, and should, affect archival determinations of a photograph's appraisal, value, arrangement, description, preservation, and access. Privileging image and content also marginalizes functional considerations that are embedded in a photograph's materiality. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, professors at the London College of Communication, posit that "photographs are both images and physical objects that exist in time and space" and

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<sup>9</sup> Cook, "What is Past is Prologue," 48; Terry Cook, "From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives," *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85); Terry Cook, "The Concept of the Archival Fonds in the Post-Custodial Era: Theory, Problems and Solutions," *Archivaria* 35 (Spring 1993).

<sup>10</sup> The term "history of the record" is attributed to archival educator Tom Nesmith. Tom Nesmith, "What's History Got to Do With it?: Reconsidering the Place of Historical Knowledge in Archival Work," *Archivaria* 57 (Spring 2004); Tom Nesmith, "The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal-European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* (2006):6.

<sup>11</sup> Chris Hurley, "What if Anything, Is a Function?"; Chris Hurley, "Ambient Functions: Abandoned Children to Zoos,"; Chris Hurley, "Parallel Provenance: (1) What, If Anything, is Archival Description?" *Archives and Manuscripts: The Journal of the Australian Society of Archivists* 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Edition, 1955-2005, 33:1 (May 2005).

therefore necessitate consideration of intention, creation, distribution, consumption, use, and disposal – all things impacting how photographs are understood. Photographs have “inextricably linked meanings as images and meanings as objects; an indissoluble yet ambiguous melding of image and form, both of which are direct products of intention.” The materiality of photographs is an important consideration and a gateway to the essential context “in which objects are made to mean.”<sup>12</sup>

How can archivists access the multiple meanings of photographs as images and objects articulated by Edwards and Hart? Joan Schwartz has explored these issues of the photograph as visual image and physical object in her analysis of *The Niagara Suspension Bridge*, a photograph taken by William England in 1859 for the London Stereoscopic Company. As Schwartz explains, the Niagara Suspension Bridge, spanning the Niagara Gorge, was constructed by renowned civil engineer John Augustus Roebling. The photograph provides visual information about the construction of the bridge and therefore serves “as a document about the society which both produced and consumed it, a society enthralled with signs of progress, fascinated with feats of engineering, and struggling with the findings of both Charles Lyell and Charles Darwin.” As a material object, the formats of the photograph bear analysis. Schwartz describes the photograph as an albumen print from a wet-collodion negative that “cannot be understood apart from the historicity and specificity of the photographic processes and practices which brought it into being and made it look the way it does.” Consideration of archival photographic formats and their accompanying photographic processes and practices necessitate reflection on the

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<sup>12</sup> Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, “Introduction: Photographs as Objects,” in Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart, eds., *Photographs Objects Histories: On the Materiality of Images* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 1-6.

photographic technologies available, exposure times, planning and composition; decisions that factor into the meanings of photographs for viewers. *The Niagara Suspension Bridge* as physical object – the format – contributed to its meaning-making abilities. The photograph was taken in two formats, perhaps anticipating widespread market appeal. The image produced as a mounted print “communicated meaning within a hierarchy of economic and cultural factors.” Similarly, “its production as a card-mounted stereoscopic view with letterpress title, logo, and text within a series devoted to American scenery followed a very different social trajectory, bearing less prestige but carrying greater impact.”<sup>13</sup> Complementing the stereoscopic format was the likelihood of greater exchange and circulation of the images as the stereoscopic format along with the stereoscope device were also designed and produced as forms of entertainment within nineteenth-century popular culture.<sup>14</sup>

The advent of photography in 1839 was a pivotal development in nineteenth-century visual communication. Following earlier developments in image reproduction and printmaking like wood engraving and lithography, photography emerged as the dominant mode of nineteenth-century advances in visual communication.<sup>15</sup> The technological developments in photography triggered a revolution in visual culture. The subsequent rapid production and reproduction of images following these developments had significant consequences for the ways in which information was created, disseminated, and used. Serialized production of photographs like the *carte-de-visite* signalled an entirely new

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<sup>13</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretive Choices, and Alternative Narratives,” in Terry Cook, ed., *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions. Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 79.

<sup>14</sup> Suren Lalvani, *Photography, Vision and the Production of Modern Bodies* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996), 174.

<sup>15</sup> Jim Burant, “The Visual World in the Victorian Age,” *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984-85), 114.

arrangement of technical, economic, and cultural processes. The invention of the half-tone process<sup>16</sup> in 1880 made possible image reproduction in newspapers, advertisements, magazines, and other published media, heralding the introduction of photojournalism and documentary photography. The photograph, or rather the image, became mobile, increasingly circulated and exchanged: “Where earlier technical efforts had concentrated on increasing exposure rates of a single image,” one scholar observes, “these new developments multiplied the extent to which individuals would be exposed to images.”<sup>17</sup> Dramatic changes in the kinds of images created were also part of this revolution in visual culture. Photographic technologies broadened powers of observation as well as the scope of observable space; “at a time when steamships, railways and the telegraph made the world physically more accessible, photographs made it visually and conceptually more accessible.”<sup>18</sup> The revolution in visual culture was hastened by advances in photographic reproduction media and the numerous forms of information technologies and imaging systems that continue to have “profound implications on the way we create, record, manipulate, circulate, store, interpret, remember, and use information.”<sup>19</sup> The

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<sup>16</sup> The half-tone process enabled the reproduction of photographs in printed matter via a printing press. The image is broken up into a grid of dots of different sizes reproducing a full range of tones in a photograph. Before the invention of half-tone processes, the reproduction of images in printed matter was a time-consuming effort requiring a skilled engraver of wood blocks or metal plates. John Tagg has described the half-tone plate as the beginning of “the era of throwaway images;” the amalgamation of the chemical photograph with print technology facilitated the economical and limitless reproduction of photographs in books, magazines, advertisements, and particularly newspapers. John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), 56.

<sup>17</sup> Lalvani, *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies*, 86.

<sup>18</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, “Introduction: Photography and the Geographical Imagination,” in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 2.

<sup>19</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “Negotiating the Visual Turn: New Perspectives on Images and Archives,” *The American Archivist* 67 (Spring/Summer 2004), 108.

photographic image acquired “a mutational form in being able to express a multiplicity of meanings depending on the context in which it occurred.”<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, understanding visual materials necessitates developing a visual literacy. Visual literacy reflects the ability to think and learn in terms of images.<sup>21</sup> Historian Estelle Jussim’s elaboration on this definition resonates with recent shifts in archival approaches to photographic records. Jussim articulates a distinction between visual information and visual communication: visual information she defines as “the visual content of documents” and visual communication as “the purposes, social interactions, context or other variables of the larger process.”<sup>22</sup> Consequently, the importance of photography as a “media of historical investigation”<sup>23</sup> does not rest principally in its art form or even necessarily its surface informational content, but rather in its powerful ability to shape thought, to influence behaviour, and to define society.<sup>24</sup> This ability lies in the intellectual underpinnings of the photograph’s specific historical contexts and discourses in which it was created, disseminated and used. As Jonathan Crary, professor of Modern Art and Theory, has pointed out, ways of seeing are historically specific, linked to specific discursive and cultural structures and power relations.<sup>25</sup> This is important for exploring as archival context the discourses and practices in which photography as a technology of vision operated.

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<sup>20</sup> Lalvani, *Photography, Vision, and the Production of Modern Bodies*, 86.

<sup>21</sup> John Hortin, as discussed in Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin, “‘Mind and Sight’: Visual Literacy and the Archivist,” *Archival Issues: Journal of the Midwest Archives Conference* 21:2 (1996), 111.

<sup>22</sup> Estelle Jussim, “The Research Uses of Visual Information,” *Library Trends* 25 (April 1977), 763-764.

<sup>23</sup> Eduardo Cadava, *Words of Light: Theses on the Photography of History* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1997), xviii.

<sup>24</sup> Gisele Freund, *Photography and Society*, cited in Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 7.

<sup>25</sup> Jonathan Crary, *Techniques of the Observer: On Vision and Modernity in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1990), 6-8.

Archival practice in photographs has, until recently, and then but sporadically, demonstrated a visual illiteracy. Photographs are arranged and described primarily for their informational content value and according to their creator. Limiting to what Estelle Jussim identified as visual information, photographs are “robbed of their functional context and communicative power” which translates into a limited use and misuse by researchers.<sup>26</sup> The contextual turn in scholarship and the expanded notions of provenance in new archival theory, offers the promise to circumvent this misuse of photographs through research into the form, structure, and authorship of photographic records, “coupled with a broader understanding of the animating functions, structures, and interrelationships of the creators that contextualize those isolated, individual documents.”<sup>27</sup> This shift in focus from informational content to functional context involves the study of the origins, forms, and transmissions as well as the interrelationships between documents and their representations and their creators.<sup>28</sup>

Diplomatics, a seventeenth-century discipline, endeavours to authenticate the authority of individual documents and their reliability as evidence of the actions that generated them. A renewed interest in diplomatics by some archivists complemented the rediscovery of provenance. Diplomatics, as articulated by archival educator Luciana Duranti, has relevance for modern archival practice. Duranti argues that diplomatics is focused on the archival record, particularly on a record as evidence of the acts and transactions of its creator, and employs methodical research into the form, structure, and authorship of documents. Joan Schwartz investigated these claims for the relevance of

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<sup>26</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “‘We Make Our Tools and Our Tools Make Us:’ Lessons From Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomatics,” *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995), 19.

<sup>27</sup> Cook, “What is Past is Prologue,” 37.

<sup>28</sup> Schwartz “We Make Our Tools,” 4.

diplomats to photographic records.<sup>29</sup> Issues of authority resonate in multiple ways in the history of photographic analysis. Notions of photographic authority and validity originate in nineteenth-century beliefs in the photograph as an accurate reflection of reality, as a moment of “truth” captured by the camera.<sup>30</sup> These earlier claims to an unmediated truth and past perceptions of photographs as facsimiles of reality have been much undermined by postmodernist understandings of photographs as representations with subjective and multiple interpretations.<sup>31</sup> This shift from empirical observation to postmodernist perspectives of photographic record analysis reveals the narrow and inadequate application diplomats has for archival practice concerning photographs. While diplomatic analysis may be suitable for an individual document such as a legal form or deed, whose structure and format is clear and present, diplomats, according to Schwartz, is not applicable for a single photograph.<sup>32</sup>

Archival photographic analysis is not so much concerned with truth or seeing photographs as simply “records of simple truth and precision;”<sup>33</sup> a photograph’s message is rather relayed through its functional origins and as a mode of inquiry. A shift in focus from the indexicality of a photograph’s image to its instrumentality means moving beyond subject content and photographic realism to the multi-layered functions in which photographs were created and figured in the production of knowledge and meaning.<sup>34</sup> Schwartz argues for the destabilization of notions of photographic truths for more

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<sup>29</sup> Ibid.

<sup>30</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia,” *Archivaria* 5 (1977-78), 33; Burant, “Visual World in the Victorian Age,” 117.

<sup>31</sup> Tim Schlak, “Framing Photographs, Denying Archives: the Difficulty of Focusing on Archival Photographs,” *Archival Science* 8 (2008), 87.

<sup>32</sup> See Schwartz, “We Make Our Tools.”

<sup>33</sup> Schwartz, “Records of Simple Truth and Precision.”

<sup>34</sup> Schwartz, “We Make Our Tools,” 3, 11 and passim.

grounded inquiry into photographic meaning, thus locating multiple sites of meaning in the historical and functional contexts in which the photograph was created, circulated and viewed.<sup>35</sup> As John Berger has stated, “photographs do not in themselves preserve meaning. They offer appearances – with all the credibility and gravity we normally lend to appearances – prised away from their meaning. Meaning is the result of understanding functions.”<sup>36</sup> Articulating her concerns with the narrowness of diplomatic analysis that seeks stable, single origins, rules, laws and analysis at the level of the individual created product/image, Schwartz advocates instead the broader and deeper analysis of the intentions, processes, and technologies of creation and then the subsequent multiple uses of photographs.<sup>37</sup>

In her research article “More Than ‘Competent Description of an Intractably Empty Landscape’: A Strategy for Critical Engagement with Historical Photographs,” Schwartz articulates this shift in focus from indexicality to instrumentality in an analysis of the functional contexts of creation, distribution, and viewing of the 1858 photograph by Humphrey Lloyd Hine, *The Prairie, On the Banks of Red River, Looking South*. In her analysis, Schwartz argues that nothing in the photograph’s surface content reveals what it is about, why the photograph was taken, or what the photograph meant. The photograph’s content serves merely as an index of visual fact: a bald prairie somewhere, sometime, in the past. “The meanings invested in and generated by those facts are constructed, negotiated, and contingent – inextricably tied to the technological, historical, functional, and documentary circumstances and to the social, cultural, political, and economic contexts

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<sup>35</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “More Than ‘Competent Description of an Intractably Empty Landscape’: A Strategy for Critical Engagement with Historical Photographs,” *Historical Geography* 31 (2003), 110; Schwartz “Records of Simple Truth and Precision.”

<sup>36</sup> John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), 55.

<sup>37</sup> Schwartz, “We Make Our Tools,” and “Records of Simple Truth and Precision,” *passim*.

in which it was created, circulated, and viewed.”<sup>38</sup> This wider perspective then must be the archival focus, she argues, when managing photographs.

Shawn Michelle Smith, a professor of visual and critical studies, argues that photographs also shaped the very discourse that in turn gave the photograph its meaning.<sup>39</sup> Smith’s study, *American Archives: Gender, Race, and Class in Visual Culture*, analyzes photographs for their power to produce subjectivities. Smith argues that nineteenth-century photographs signalled a biased representation of what gender and race looked like. Nineteenth-century middle-class Americans used photographs as a blueprint to inscribe racial and gender identity, which identities the resulting photographs then reinforced, thus both reflecting and shaping the meanings of photographs and the photographs themselves in turn both incorporating and creating more broadly societal values about gender and race.<sup>40</sup>

These then are the strengths and challenges of archival photographs as a media of historical investigation and as evidence. Yet, with some few sterling exceptions among archivists, like Joan Schwartz herself, archival practice fails to engage with photographs on this level.<sup>41</sup> Schwartz argues that while photographs, among other visual records, are viewed as historical within the archival profession, they have yet to be understood as archival, and while visual records are seen as informationally rich, they are not considered

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<sup>38</sup> Schwartz, “More Than ‘Competent Description,’” 110.

<sup>39</sup> Shawn Michelle Smith, *American Archives: Gender, Race and Class in Visual Culture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 5.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, 5-12.

<sup>41</sup> See also Bronwen Quarry, “Photograph/Writing with Light: The Challenge to Archivists of Reading Photographs,” (MA Thesis: University of Manitoba, 2003), at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/obj/s4/f2/dsk4/etd/MQ91280.PDF>. (Accessed 3 September 2011).

as evidential sources.<sup>42</sup> In an attempt to awaken the archival profession to the possibilities of visual communication and specifically for photographic records, Schwartz presented a critique of standard archival descriptive practices concerning photographic records. Beginning with archival terminology that categorizes photographic records within catchall phrases such as “special media” and “non-textual” materials, Schwartz argues that these terms do not sufficiently describe the medium and in the process denigrate photographic records to secondary status. Terms like “non-textual” push visual materials to the margins, in the process decentring photographs as not “normal” records.<sup>43</sup> Another indication of the photographic record’s inferior archival status is the broad classification that groups photographic records with documentary works of art (paintings, drawings, sketches, prints, and medals for example), all under the “graphic materials” designation. Archival description using the Canadian descriptive standard RAD (Rules for Archival Description) describes photographs within this broad category of “graphic materials” at the item level. This content-focused descriptive practice decontextualizes the images from the contexts of their creation and the “pre-texts” brought to the process of viewing the images.<sup>44</sup> Indexical description of photographic records at the item level separates the photograph from its context and function. This results in photographic archives resembling what Schwartz disparagingly calls “stock photo libraries,”<sup>45</sup> where photographic subject content always usurps broader contextual meanings. As Schwartz points out, categorizing photography with art obscures their specific functional origins and promotes their visual

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<sup>42</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “Coming to Terms with Photographs: Descriptive Standards, Linguistic ‘Othering’ and the Margins of Archivry,” *Archivaria* 54 (Fall 2002), 146.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 148.

<sup>44</sup> “Pre-texts” are the preconceived intellectual knowledge, ideas, values and beliefs that audiences and viewers bring to the process of viewing. The term is used by Schwartz in “More Than “competent description of an intractably empty landscape,”” 110.

<sup>45</sup> Schwartz, “Coming to Terms,” 157.

content/information as the primary characteristics of interest to researchers. In obscuring the functional origins of archival photographs, the classification “graphic materials” collapses distinctions between “overtly mediated” art and “purportedly objective” photography.<sup>46</sup> As discussed, while the photograph as a visual image and a physical object must factor in classificatory and descriptive practice, the meaning “invested in and generated by” the image’s content is anchored to the historical and functional origins of the photograph.<sup>47</sup>

As a means of demonstrating the significance of Schwartz’s call for a shift in archival focus from the indexicality of a photograph’s image to its instrumentality, from a focus on subject content and photographic realism to the multi-layered functions and provenance in which photographs were created and figured in the production of knowledge and meaning, historian Carol J. Williams’ analysis of the photographs of Hannah Maynard is instructive. The photographic records of Hannah Maynard, held in the British Columbia Provincial Archives, document the perspective of a Euro-Canadian woman and professional portrait photographer who lived and worked in Victoria, British Columbia, from 1862 to 1918.<sup>48</sup> Williams reads Hannah Maynard’s photographs for meaning and understanding of one woman’s role in the production and reception of photography as a profession in the white-settler Victorian society of British Columbia during the years 1880 to 1900.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid., 150.

<sup>47</sup> Schwartz, “More than ‘Competent Description,’” 110.

<sup>48</sup> This case study of Hannah Maynard’s photographs presents Carol Williams’ contextual and functional approach to historical photographs in her gender analysis of the photographic records of nineteenth-century British Columbia. What remains of Maynard’s photographic archive is on deposit at the British Columbia Archives. A significant number of Maynard’s photographs are digitized and accessible through the British Columbia Archives’ website, but not all of her records. Carol Williams, *Framing the West: Race, Gender and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003).

Connecting Hannah Maynard's photographs to their specific historical contexts and discourses in which they were created, disseminated, and used, Williams' reveals how Maynard's commissioned photographs and her artistic photomontages contributed to constructions of gender and racial differences in late nineteenth-century British Columbia. This is evident in their creation, dissemination, and viewing. Maynard conceived of a studio promotion in which she cut and pasted the portrait prints of all the children she had photographed in a given year. The entire work was re-photographed and the resulting cards distributed. For Hannah Maynard, the assembly of her photomontages was an annual tradition from 1880 to 1898. The *Gems*, which Maynard fondly called the photomontages, are a remarkable indication of her pride in her portrait photography work and the success of her business. While the content of the images show numerous cherubic faces peering out of the photographs, the *Gems'* meanings are derived from their contextual analysis. The health of children, regarded as a precious national resource in an era of rampant childhood morbidity and lower life expectancy, factored significantly in nineteenth-century promotions of settlement. Naomi Rosenblum equates settlement promotion with women photographers' proficient portrayals of the significance of nurturing as a critical part of the "civilizing" process in the "Wild" West: "The era seemed consecrated to images of tender mothers and healthy, clean and beautiful children, from the thousands of baby pictures turned out by small-town studios to the genre images of children."<sup>49</sup> As Williams has pointed out, the portrait photography genre of babies and children was not exclusively a personal expression; "the visual representation of motherhood was a confirmation of women's procreative contribution to colonial growth." The *Gems* were a savvy business strategy of Maynard who capitalized on the "appetite of a burgeoning and socially mobile

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<sup>49</sup> Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers* (Paris, New York: Abbeville Press, 1994), 82.

female clientele who eagerly wished to aggrandize their patriotism, respectability, prosperity and fecundity.”<sup>50</sup>

Originally conceived as a studio promotion, the *Gems* proved popular and Maynard annually distributed a print to each of her customers to draw return business.<sup>51</sup> Looking at the *Gems*, one is struck by the cherubic collection. Grouped together by Hannah’s painstaking process of cutting and pasting the many faces for re-photographing, one is overwhelmed with the sheer number of children she photographed in the course of a year. The design of each of the *Gems* varies but all show considerable forethought in presentation. Within the images, white babies float on hand-painted clouds above a cascading water fountain; additional faces peer out from a fountain placed at the bottom of one image. The imagery of the fountain is significant and while caution must be exercised in avoiding anachronistic associations, the interplay of the water fountain and the babies calls to mind a fountain of youth. In another image, white children’s portraits are pasted to the leaves of a dieffenbachia plant. Faces in the potting earth and on some of the leaves are from earlier *Gems* and the plant pot has a photograph of the Gorge at Victoria on it.<sup>52</sup> The longevity of the *Gems*’ popularity is clear indication of a sustained social and political importance of motherhood and children to white settler society.<sup>53</sup> Further indication of the importance of children to settlement projects is cued by “Victorian sentimental symbolism”<sup>54</sup> found within the *Gems*. Widely distributed, the *Gems*, when positioned

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<sup>50</sup> Williams, *Framing the West*, 129, and passim.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.*, 126.

<sup>52</sup> Claire Weissman Wilks, *The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard* (Toronto: Exile Editions Ltd., 1980), 19. The Gorge photograph is likely the work of Hannah Maynard’s husband Richard Maynard. Fifty-two of Richard Maynard’s Gorge photographs in various stages of bridge development are held at the British Columbia Archives.

<sup>53</sup> Williams, *Framing the West*, 129.

<sup>54</sup> David Mattison, “The Multiple Self of Hannah Maynard,” *Vanguard* (October 1980), 18.

within the broader discourse of women's maternal contributions to settlement, acquired an international significance for viewing audiences.<sup>55</sup>

The significance of white women as social and moral compasses, as wives and mothers, as key contributors to white settlement, "took root symbolically" in Maynard's *Gems of British Columbia*.<sup>56</sup> Maynard's portraits and *Gems* of white Euro-Canadian women and children were constructed in a way that linked their race and gender to an identity, to a valued domestic role within the white settlement process.<sup>57</sup> While ideologies of gender, racial superiority and nation building are symbolized within the creation process for the *Gems*, it is in understanding the distribution and reception of the photographs that makes them most meaningful, and disconnects them from their original function and purpose. Williams' study effectively challenges many contemporary historians' illustrative use of photographs, arguing instead for an understanding of "how photography constructed cultural and racial difference between settlers and Native Americans" and the "imperial, commercial, government, or anthropological motivations behind its creation."<sup>58</sup> Williams advocates the inclusion of the original purpose or function of photographs in understanding the social value of photography. This is using photographs, then, not just to illustrate the content from conclusions already drawn from textual documents, but rather employing photographs themselves as evidence, as sources of knowledge and meaning in their own right.

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<sup>55</sup> Hannah Maynard enjoyed a widespread fame of her *Gems*, having sent copies to the *St. Louis Photographer*, who agreed to reproduce them for a two year period. This exposure brought her international publicity.

<sup>56</sup> Williams, *Framing the West*, 125.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 122-125.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, 7-8.

Williams' study employs gender and race as categories of analysis in her contextual and functional approach to Maynard's photographs. As the *Gems* evidently signalled a biased representation of what gender and race looked like in late nineteenth-century British Columbia, they also became a blueprint for the construction of racial and gender perspectives in the province. Motherhood and white racial purity defined gender and race in late nineteenth-century British Columbia. Hannah Maynard's photographs thus both reflected *and* shaped the racialized and gendered formation<sup>59</sup> of a British Columbia settler identity. Echoing Joan Schwartz's contextual and functional approach to archival photographs, Williams' analysis of Hannah Maynard's photographic records of nineteenth-century British Columbia reads beyond the photograph's visual content by interpreting that content in context, in her functional analysis with consideration for the symbolism of documentary form<sup>60</sup> and an understanding of the medium of the photographic record as an integral part of a record's meaning and powerful ability to shape thought, influence behaviour and define society.<sup>61</sup>

Schwartz calls for greater visual literacy on the part of the archivist to better understand the nature of photographs as information and as evidence. With the momentum of the digital information revolution, visual literacy skills for archivists are all the more critical. Archivists Elisabeth Kaplan and Jeffrey Mifflin confirm Schwartz's appeals. As Kaplan and Mifflin point out, a "heightened access to visual materials through multimedia databases will solve neither the visual literacy problem nor ameliorate the challenges of

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<sup>59</sup> Smith, *American Archives*, 5.

<sup>60</sup> Hugh Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?" *Archivaria* 25 (Winter 1987-88), 18. Taylor queries, "Should one then spend more time considering the "meaning" of our archival materials in terms of the activities which produced them and of which they are symbols? I do not mean the minute examination or interpretation of their content (that is the role of researchers), but a more overarching consideration of the symbolism of documentary forms as an extension of diplomatic."

<sup>61</sup> Freund, *Photography and Society*, in Wexler, *Tender Violence*, 7.

visual description. It may, instead, accelerate the urgency of the problems facing archivists.”<sup>62</sup> Such digitized and digital photograph<sup>63</sup> collections are still subject to misuse so long as archivists remain visually illiterate. For visual illiteracy means the archivist is unaware of the significance of the photograph’s materiality, its object-ness and its functional contexts. Schwartz again weighs in with the consequences of visual illiteracy to photographic records: digitization results in lost provenance and contextual information whereby photographs are made accessible “only as discrete, decontextualized, and dematerialized images,” often floating decontextualized like orphans across the vast expanses of the World Wide Web.<sup>64</sup>

“The nature of photography itself is one of ambiguity and disjunction,” writes Elizabeth Edwards. “It is a medium of fragmentation, of fractured space and stilled time, of shifting meaning and of ambiguity in relating the past to the whole.”<sup>65</sup> These are the challenges and possibilities of photographs as a unique medium of recorded communication, of historical investigation and of documentary record. As Joan Schwartz has staunchly advocated, photographs are “documents, created by a will, for a purpose, to convey a message to an audience. To understand them as the product of actions and transactions, either bureaucratic or socio-cultural, we must return them to the action in

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<sup>62</sup> Kaplan and Mifflin, “‘Mind and Sight’: Visual Literacy and the Archivist,” 120.

<sup>63</sup> I make the distinction here between digitized (where analogue and chemistry-based photographic records are scanned and made digital) and born-digital electronic records where the photograph was first taken using a digital camera.

<sup>64</sup> Schwartz, “Coming to Terms with Photographs,” 157.

<sup>65</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, “Essay,” in Jorma Puranen, ed., *Imaginary Homecomings* (Oulu: Pohjoinen, 1999), 60, as cited in Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Silvester and Wolfram Hartmann, “‘Picturing the Past’ in Namibia: The Visual Archives and its Energies,” in Carolyn Hamilton, et al., eds. *Refiguring the Archive* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 2002).

which they participated. It is their functional context that transforms photographic images into archival documents.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Schwartz, “We Make Our Tools,” 42.

## CHAPTER THREE

### GENDER AND PROVENANCE: MARY SCHÄFFER WARREN

Both historians and archivists acknowledge the role of female explorers in Canada's Rocky Mountains, often within essentialist gendered discourses characterised as "extraordinary" or "special," but fail to acknowledge the gendering of exploration and discovery. Historian PearlAnn Reichwein's research reveals the important role that photographer Mary Schäffer played in the conservation of Western Canada's mountain region.<sup>1</sup> But are Mary Schaffer's explorations throughout the region extraordinary or have they been made extraordinary? The value of contextual research into the gendered provenance of Mary Schaffer's archival records reveals the historical and cultural "constructedness of assumptions" that travel, exploration and discovery are male privileges.<sup>2</sup> The perceived natural relationship between masculinity and travel, exploration, and discovery is a persistent and accepted one. This is a constructed correlation that confounds understandings of femininity and travel, exploration and discovery, often resulting in descriptive characterisations of those women who so travelled as special or different. Art historian Colleen Skidmore suggests that Mary Schäffer and other women like her "who have made up half of mountain history and culture, seem more like ordinary women who experienced an extraordinary geography and rose to its challenges and provocations."<sup>3</sup> Historian Cecilia Morgan in her analysis of English-Canadian women's

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<sup>1</sup> PearlAnn Reichwein, "Guardians of a Rocky Mountain Wilderness: Elizabeth Parker, Mary Schäffer, and the Canadian National Park Idea, 1890-1914," (Research Essay, History 24.598, Carlton University, 1990), 17.

<sup>2</sup> Angela Woollacott, *To Try Her Fortune in London: Australian Women, Colonialism and Modernity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 40.

<sup>3</sup> Colleen Skidmore, ed., *This Wild Spirit: Women in the Rocky Mountains of Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2006), 284.

production of travel texts and transatlantic tourism argues that “to treat these texts as simply reflective of their author’s subordinate status within gendered hierarchies and thus typifying a unified feminine ‘voice’ drastically oversimplifies matters.”<sup>4</sup> Historians Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson and Patricia Roome have all suggested that “the greatest strength of historical analyses that take sex and gender into account is their ability to complicate and, consequently, transcend traditional narratives and regional myths that emerged out of imperial and masculine priorities and perspectives.”<sup>5</sup> The importance of gender as a key contextual element in the provenance of archival records contributes to and advances the profession’s rediscovery of provenance as it offers a method for exploring and examining the discursive nature of social relations and institutions as new contextualities in archival provenance. In researching specific historical configurations of sexual difference, an understanding of how gender functioned and structured the lives of women and men contributes to this expanded archival provenance.

This chapter examines the photographic and textual records of Mary Schäffer, a woman who travelled and photographed in the Canadian Rocky Mountains during the period 1888 to 1939. Photographic records are products of practices, applications, or circumstances which are technologically determined, historically situated, socially and culturally constituted, and gendered. Drawing on archival photography specialist Joan Schwartz’s formulations, the following case study approaches photographs not simply as visual images, but as the visual residue of acts of communication, shaped by the equipment and processes of image-making, and by the assumptions and knowledge, values and beliefs

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<sup>4</sup> Cecilia Morgan, *“A Happy Holiday”: English Canadians and Transatlantic Tourism, 1870-1930* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2008), 27.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson, and Patricia Roome, “Introduction,” in Sarah Carter, Lesley Erickson, Patricia Roome, and Char Smith, eds., *Unsettled Pasts: Reconceiving the West Through Women’s History* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 2005), 8.

of the society in which they were originally created and subsequently circulated and viewed. The meaning of a photographic record is multiple and fluid; shaped and reshaped by disciplinary perspectives and institutional discourse. In communicating the provenance of photographic records in the following case study, an understanding of the historical environments and contexts as well as the technical photographic processes in which the photographs were created, distributed, and used is critical.<sup>6</sup> In exploring gender as context in the provenance of the following photographic records, which is the focus of this thesis, the historical socio-cultural temporal, spatial, and technological contexts are examined with critical attention to gendered discourses and the gendered institutional and social processes of photographic production, distribution, and consumption.<sup>7</sup> Photographs convey their meanings and messages through an understanding of the functions and contexts of creation, distribution, and use. Consequently, the following case study employs a functional approach to photographic records – exploring the contexts of creation, contexts of original and successive uses, and how they communicated information to various audiences. Communicating the provenance of photographic records through their specific historical contexts, functions, and discourses must be informed by an awareness of the ambiguity of photographs and their vulnerability to distortion and shifting meanings. It is critical to recognize that photographs are “embedded in shifting historical contexts, intentional or accidental hermeneutic distortions and ambiguous and multiple – sometimes competing – meanings.”<sup>8</sup> The photographs analyzed in the following case study

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<sup>6</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretive Choices, and Alternative Narratives,” in Terry Cook, ed., *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions. Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 70-71.

<sup>7</sup> On the importance of theorizing and examining social categories in relation to visual texts, see Wolff, “Cultural Studies and the Sociology of Culture,” 3.

<sup>8</sup> Marlene Kadar, Jeanne Perreault, and Linda Warley, eds., *Photographs, Histories, and Meanings* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 5.

are expanded from image to context. Acknowledging the layered and dynamic interpretations and ambiguous and shifting nature of photographic meaning is an important consideration of photographic analysis. Provenance is not just the establishment of when and where a photograph was taken, and by whom. Provenance is rooted in the historical, social, and political contexts of a particular temporal and spatial period in a photograph's life, and its subsequent re-use for new purposes for different audiences over time and space.

Tom Nesmith's concept of the "history of the record" as a key component of the photographic record's provenance will also be explored. Record creators, custodians *and* archivists' interpretations of the archival record are all part of a record's history and provenance, as articulated by Nesmith.<sup>9</sup> The contextualization, interpretation, representation, and subsequent meaning-making of the photographic record that results from archival decisions and practices will be examined as a component of gendered contextual analysis of provenance. Specifically, archival descriptive practices and trans-media shifts, that include digitization, publication, printing, web-site posting, and exhibition, all of which assign new layers of meaning to the records, will be explored through a gendered lens. Photography critic John Tagg has argued recently that the historical photographic record's "compelling weight was never *phenomenological*...but

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<sup>9</sup> Tom Nesmith, "The Concept of Societal Provenance and Records of Nineteenth-Century Aboriginal-European Relations in Western Canada: Implications for Archival Theory and Practice," *Archival Science* 6, 3-4 (December 2006), 359.

always *discursive* and that the status of the document and the power effects of its evidence were produced only in the field of an institutional discursive and political articulation.”<sup>10</sup>

Having reviewed the key concepts and theoretical directions of gendered historical analysis and the principle of provenance and photographic records, these concepts will now be demonstrated in real-world archival practice through an in-depth analysis of the photographic legacy of Mary Schäffer.

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Can we hope that the day is not far off when our  
achievements will be judged on their own merits,  
rather than over-praised because we are women?

Mrs. Dawson  
*Ladies' Alpine Club Journal*, 1931

The familiar is not necessarily the known.

Hegel

Mary Townsend Sharples Schäffer Warren was born in 1861, the third of five children to moderately wealthy Quaker parents in West Chester, Pennsylvania. Descendants of early colonists, the Sharpless<sup>11</sup> family raised their children according to Quaker values, which for Mary, the Sharpless' only daughter, meant she was provided equal access to education.<sup>12</sup> Quaker values underscored the positive relationship between

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<sup>10</sup> John Tagg, “The Pencil of History: Photography, History, Archive,” in John Tagg, *The Disciplinary Frame: Photographic Truths and the Capture of Meaning* (Minneapolis: University Minnesota Press, 2009), 224-225.

<sup>11</sup> Members of the Sharples family used one or two s's in the spelling of their name. Mary's father, Alfred, used Sharpless and Mary herself used Sharples. E.J. Hart, ed., *A Hunter of Peace: Mary T.S. Schäffer's Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* (Banff: Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation, 1980), 2.

<sup>12</sup> Quakers had significant involvement in the nineteenth-century American women's rights movement and were the primary organizers of the 1848 Seneca Falls Convention which focused on issues relating to

religion and nature, and consequently the study of natural history was a popular activity among the Sharpless family.<sup>13</sup> Moreover, natural history was a popular amateur activity during the Victorian era, both in Britain, in British North America, and in the United States in the wake of the Civil War. Mary's father, Alfred Sharpless, was a well-known amateur geologist, mineralogist, and archaeologist who shared his interest in geology and natural history with his daughter. Mary often joined him on his walks with family friend Dr. Joseph Leidy, a prominent nineteenth-century American scientist. Mary also studied floral painting as a student of George Lambdin, a renowned American floral still-life painter. Mary Sharpless's perspective was informed and framed by her Quaker values, yet she was also a product of her social and economic class. Descended from a long line of colonial settlers, she experienced a wealthy upbringing in close proximity to Philadelphia, a sprawling industrial city in the north-eastern United States and an urban metropolis of cultural institutions, science and technology. As historians PearlAnn Reichwein and Lisa McDermott have argued, Sharpless (later Schäffer) was privileged by her urban upper-middle-class status and "steeped in sensibilities that welcomed the idea of an untamed western frontier as a retreat to the unsullied beauty and simplicity of nature, far from the conventional preoccupations of modern, materialist, urban society, thereby iterating aspects of American frontierism combined with bourgeois antimodernism."<sup>14</sup>

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temperance, female property rights and the right to vote. The Convention produced the "Declaration of Sentiments" and became a foundational document in the American Women's Suffrage Movement.

<sup>13</sup> Janice Sanford Beck, *No Ordinary Woman: The Story of Mary Schäffer Warren* (Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary: Rocky Mountain Books, 2001), 9-10.

<sup>14</sup> PearlAnn Reichwein and Lisa McDermott, "Opening the Secret Garden: Mary Schäffer, Jasper Park Conservation, and the Survey of Maligne Lake, 1911," in I.S. MacLaren, ed., *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2007), 157.

Mary Sharples first visited the Canadian Rockies in 1888<sup>15</sup> at the age of twenty-eight, accompanying fellow Quakers and Philadelphia friends, the Vaux's.<sup>16</sup> While visiting Glacier House,<sup>17</sup> Mary Sharples was introduced to Dr. Charles Schäffer, a Philadelphia physician and amateur botanist.<sup>18</sup> They married shortly after meeting and from 1891 to 1903 visited the Canadian Rockies annually to collect and catalogue botanical specimens throughout the summer months. Mary Schäffer provided the drawings and photographs for her husband's data which he planned to publish in a book. She pressed and dried the flowers they collected on their trips, painting and photographing the specimens. Experimenting with her camera in order to capture accurate detail, she photographed on glass negatives and hand-painted the negatives with transparent pigments creating colour botanical slides of a quality worthy of international exhibitions. Garnering scientific and artistic interest, her work was recognized by the Philadelphia Academy of

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<sup>15</sup> While the transcontinental railway was initially intended to link the east and west coasts and was a condition of British Columbia's entry into the Dominion of Canada in 1871, the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR) in 1885 also resulted in access to the previously remote Rocky Mountains. CPR General Manager William Cornelius Van Horne expanded initial tourist promotions that featured the Rocky Mountains as part of a transcontinental railway trip into marketing the Rocky Mountains as a destination in itself and the CPR began construction of the famous CPR hotels and developed an advertising campaign to sell the Rocky Mountains. See E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1983).

<sup>16</sup> The Vaux family were photographers, mountaineers and scientists; Mary Vaux and her two brothers were frequent visitors to the Canadian Rocky Mountains during the period 1887-1907 to study the glaciers, particularly the Illecillewaet. They photographed using large format cameras, painted and climbed. The Vaux family were advantaged, well-educated Quakers. See Edward Cavell, *Legacy in Ice: The Vaux Family and the Canadian Alps* (Banff: The Peter and Catharine Whyte Foundation and Altitude, 1983) and also Vaux Family fonds, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies (hereafter WMCR), M107/V653.

<sup>17</sup> Glacier House, constructed in 1886 at the foot of the Great Glacier in present-day Roger's Pass, British Columbia, was one of the dining halls and chalets built by the CPR as a solution to the problem of the heavy dining cars climbing the steep mountain passes. The Great Glacier is today known as the Illecillewaet Glacier. Additionally, it is important to note that the CPR played a significant role in connecting the geographical locations and destinations of travellers to and within the Canadian Rockies. At the turn of the twentieth century, the CPR was *the* convenient and expedient means of transport for travellers, explorers and mountaineers.

<sup>18</sup> Europeans and Americans, rather than Canadians, were the first non-Aboriginal visitors to explore and climb in the Rocky Mountains. Cyndi Smith, *Off the Beaten Track: Women Adventurers and Mountaineers in Western Canada* (Canmore, Alberta: Coyote Books, 1989), 15-16. See also R.C. Scace, *Banff: A Cultural Historical Study of Land Use and Management in a National Park Community to 1945* (National Park Series No.2 Studies in Land Use History and Landscape Change, 1968), 49-53.

Natural Sciences and she was honoured early on with life membership in 1896.<sup>19</sup> At the Universal Exhibition in Paris in 1900, eight of Mary Schäffer's silver prints were included in the exhibit, "American Women Photographers," that was curated by Frances Benjamin Johnston, a renowned turn-of-the-century American photographer.<sup>20</sup> Johnston's exhibition featured 142 photographs by 28 American women photographers, an exhibition the *Washington Evening Star* lauded as "a revelation of what the women of this country have accomplished in triumph over the remainder of the world."<sup>21</sup>

The Schäffers' annual summer excursions to the Rocky Mountains covered the areas of Glacier, Field, Lake Louise (Laggan), and Banff in pursuit of Charles Schäffer's botanical research. Their collecting forays were all in close proximity to the railway line, as Charles Schäffer suffered from heart disease and was thus prevented from travelling too far from easy access to medical care. Charles Schäffer died in 1903, but Mary continued her annual trips to the Canadian Rockies with the intention of completing sample collections for the study begun by her husband. Mary's interest in the stories and accounts of visiting alpinists like Samuel Allen, Walter Wilcox and Charles Fay<sup>22</sup> eventually led her beyond the trails and routes nearest the railway as sample collections for the study necessitated travel into more remote areas. In 1904 Schäffer solicited Tom Wilson, a local

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<sup>19</sup> Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 18. It is possible that Mary Schäffer learned her photographic skills from her friend and fellow Quaker, Mary Vaux who learned the technical aspects of platinum printing from William Rau, a professional photographer in Philadelphia. Smith, *Off the Beaten Track*, 29.

<sup>20</sup> Naomi Rosenblum, *A History of Women Photographers* (Paris, London, New York: Abbeville Press Publishers 1994), 307; the eight prints by Mary Schäffer included in the exhibit were seven of her Canadian Rockies wild flower photographs and one print of Mount Sir Donald, a prominent peak in the Selkirk Range of the Canadian Rockies, lying adjacent to the Illecillewaet Glacier. Smith, *Off the Beaten Track*, 54.

<sup>21</sup> Toby Quidt. "Her Feminine Colleagues: Photographs and Letters Collected by Frances Benjamin Johnston in 1900," in Josephine Withers, ed., *Women Artists in Washington Collections* (College Park: University of Maryland Art Gallery, 1979), 97.

<sup>22</sup> Professor Charles Fay, president of Boston's Appalachian Club, among many first ascents in the Canadian Rockies to his credit, also guided a large group of climbers, many of them women, through the Lake Louise area in 1895. Walter Wilcox was a renowned American mountaineer and explorer. See Walter D. Wilcox fonds WMCR V85.

guide and outfitter into backcountry areas, who assigned William Billy Warren as her guide. Warren was born in Essex County, England, and immigrated to Canada in 1902. With Warren as their guide, Mary Schäffer and her husband's colleague, Stewardson Brown, a botanist and curator of the herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences of Philadelphia, made short trips collecting botanical specimens during the summers of 1904 and 1905. It was on one of these collecting trips that Schäffer met Mary "Mollie" Adams, a Quaker and geology teacher from New York. The two women developed a close friendship and they became travel partners.<sup>23</sup>

Perceptions of women travellers as highly unconventional or liberated from social constraints of class and gender while travelling are context specific. Historical geographer Shelagh Squire has researched the actions and representations of women travellers and workers in the Canadian Rockies in order to demonstrate the importance of gender ideologies to portrayals of the Canadian Rocky Mountains as attractive tourist destinations for both women and men.<sup>24</sup> The late Victorian and Edwardian periods point to changes in women's social roles in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, where women's participation in mountaineering was considered unexceptional.<sup>25</sup> In her research on Canadian mountaineering narratives, Caralyn J. Kelly has argued that a problem in existing scholarship on travel, exploration, and representation is the tendency to work within a simplistic framework that constructs mountain climbing as an activity of male conquest

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<sup>23</sup> Adams and Schäffer made numerous expeditions throughout the Canadian Rockies, including Schäffer's most famous 1907 and 1908 trips. They also travelled together to Japan and its colony Formosa (Taiwan) in 1908, where Adams died of pneumonia.

<sup>24</sup> Shelagh J. Squire, "Rewriting Languages of Geography and Tourism: Cultural Discourses of Destinations, Gender, and Tourism History in the Canadian Rockies," Greg Ringer, ed., *Destinations: Cultural Landscapes of Tourism* (London & New York: Routledge, 1998), 80-100; Shelagh J. Squire, "In the Steps of 'Genteel Ladies': Women Tourists in the Canadian Rockies, 1885-1939," *The Canadian Geographer* 39, (1995), 2-15.

<sup>25</sup> Caralyn J. Kelly, "'Thrilling and Marvellous Experiences': Place and Subjectivity in Canadian Climbing Narratives, 1885-1925" (Unpublished doctoral dissertation: University of Waterloo, 2000), 18.

over real and symbolic space. This framework, Kelly argues, proceeds from assumptions that women did not climb or climbing held little interest for women. As Kelly's and other scholars' research has shown, women did climb and the number of women doing so grew steadily. By the late-nineteenth century, women in a climbing party may have been unusual but not surprising. By 1906, however, the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) was formed with women representing one-third of the membership and Elizabeth Parker, a founding member of the ACC, held a leadership role within the organization.<sup>26</sup> Indeed, the first women members of the Alpine Club of Canada, which included Mary Schäffer, were characteristic of the twentieth-century "New Woman," politically aware and involved in such social reform movements as women's suffrage, conservation, and public welfare.<sup>27</sup>

Schäffer's annual summer trips to the Canadian Rockies continued following the completion of her husband's book.<sup>28</sup> On one such occasion, Schäffer was invited to accompany a local prospector, Charles Deutschman, along with Mary Vaux and Swiss guide Edward Feuz, to Nakimu Caves, which Deutschman had recently "discovered" in the Selkirk Range.<sup>29</sup> Schäffer and Vaux brought with them two cameras, 8x10 and 4x5

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<sup>26</sup> Kelly, "Thrilling and marvellous experiences," 16-17, 60; PearlAnn Reichwein, "On Top of the World: A Woman's Place," *Canadian Alpine Journal* 78 (1995), 46-49.

<sup>27</sup> Reichwein, "On Top of the World," 47.

<sup>28</sup> Botanical specimen collections for the book were completed in 1905; Stewardson Brown, Charles Schäffer's colleague, provided the text for the book and *Alpine Flora of the Canadian Rocky Mountains* was published in 1907. The text "Illustrated with Water-Colour Drawings and Photographs By Mrs. Charles Schäffer" appears on the book's title page beneath Stewardson Brown's name and opposite the frontispiece bearing a botanical drawing by Schäffer.

<sup>29</sup> Deutschman's "discovery" of the system of caves in the Cougar Valley area of Rogers Pass in 1904 and his subsequent filing for mineral claims initiated the Dominion government's development of the area. The caves were surveyed and mapped, trails were built and Deutschman himself conducted a number of tours throughout the caves. Edward Feuz was a CPR Swiss guide. He was the son of one of the first Swiss guides who were brought to the Canadian Rocky Mountains by the CPR during the years 1899 and 1954. At the end of the nineteenth century, in response to international interest in mountaineering, the CPR employed professional Swiss guides to lead tourists interested in mountaineering on numerous first ascents and provide instruction in safe climbing practices during the summer months. Indeed, the histories of the Swiss guides and mountaineering tourism in the Canadian Rocky Mountains intersect. Feuz's archives are held at the WMCR, M93/V200. See Ilona Spaar, "Swiss Guides: Shaping Mountain Culture in Western Canada,"

formats, as well as a vasculum<sup>30</sup> for the collection of plant specimens. Schäffer wrote an article recounting her exploration of the caves that was later published in the *Calgary Herald*. A Revelstoke newspaper reported on Schäffer's trip, drawing on her account in the *Herald* with the headline "First Ladies to Visit Cave." The article credits the discovery of the cave to Deutschman, but reports that "on July 31<sup>st</sup> a different phase of investigation was made, and the cave was explored for the first time by two women." The article describes Schäffer's recommendations to women for the proper way to dress for "so rough a trip." Schäffer based her written account of the trip and her authority on her years of experience in the Canadian Rockies. "...leave skirts behind and use a pair of stout bloomers. A skirt in the cave is an impossibility and the walk through the valley and up the steep slopes loses one-half the fatigue with the freedom thus obtained."<sup>31</sup> In eschewing formal dress when travelling in the mountains, Schäffer drew on and made particular reference to her considerable travel experience in the Canadian Rockies. Of significance in the recorded account is Schäffer's ambiguous tone, both instructive and diffident – she wrote: "Having spent a number of years in the Canadian Rockies, we had some faint idea of the proper way to gown for so rough a trip as this one was reported to be, and as I hope this little description will reach those who would venture, if they but knew the delights and pleasures of the expedition, a hint as to the same might not be amiss."<sup>32</sup> Also of significance is Schäffer's intended audience for this recorded account; addressing women's fears in wilderness travel, Schäffer offered assurances and instruction in appropriate dress, items to bring, and the importance of a positive attitude. Other articles written by Schäffer

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(Vancouver: The Consulate General of Switzerland, Vancouver, 2010).

<http://www.tourismgolden.com/files/Swiss%20Guides%20Exhibit.pdf>. (accessed 05 May 2011).

<sup>30</sup> A vasculum is a cylindrical container used to store botanical specimens collected in the field.

<sup>31</sup> Newspaper clipping from Revelstoke, B.C., August 10, 1905, Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/9B [3].

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

and published in journals of the Geographical Society of Philadelphia and the Canadian Alpine Club differed in content from the newspaper article, perhaps as a result of the differences in intended audiences. Schäffer's articles appearing in the journals were informative accounts providing geographical data and maps and were illustrated with Schäffer's own photographs. Schäffer published in a variety of periodicals and magazines, identifying her audience in each and adjusting her content and style accordingly.<sup>33</sup> Writing was a legitimate vocation for women<sup>34</sup> and manifestations of the "New Woman" furnished both content and audience for women writers.<sup>35</sup> As Colleen Skidmore has argued, travel became a popular pursuit for middle-class North American and European women through the accessibility provided by steamships and trains; women's rights and roles were simultaneously a significant political issue at the turn of the twentieth century in North America and Europe. The Woman Question and manifestations of the "New Woman" were featured in and framed women's travel accounts, that alike "defied convention while nodding to it," usually via self-deprecatory humour.<sup>36</sup> Mary Schäffer clearly reflected this changing context in her words and deeds.

In addition to Schäffer's published articles, she wrote of her 1907 and 1908 expeditions throughout the Rockies and published them in a book. *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies: Incidents of Camp and Trail Life, Covering Two Years' Explorations*

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<sup>33</sup> Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> Kelly, "Thrilling and Marvellous Experiences", 67; Anne Innis Dagg, "Canadian Voices of Authority: Non-Fiction and Early Women Writers," *Journal of Canadian Studies* 27 (Summer 1992), 107-122.

<sup>35</sup> The "New Woman," while difficult to define and delineate, shares a common "rejection of woman's traditional role as it was defined by every society in the world: rebellion against oppressive notions of the 'womanly' understood to be a life devoted to subordinating one's own needs and desires to those of men, family, and children." Linda Nochlin, "Foreword: Representing the New Woman – Complexity and Contradiction," in Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco, eds., *The New Woman International: Representations in Photography and Film from the 1870s through the 1960s* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2011), vii; Elizabeth Otto and Vanessa Rocco, "Introduction: Imagining and Embodying New Womanhood," in Otto and Rocco, eds., *New Woman International*, 1-17.

<sup>36</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 78-79.

*Through the Rocky Mountains of Canada* was based on accounts from her travel diaries and included eighty of her photographs produced during these two trips. The book was published in 1911 by the noteworthy American publisher, G.P. Putnam's Sons. A book review of *Old Indian Trails* appearing in *The Chronicle* in 1911, a weekly newspaper for women, reported that the book was an "inspiration to go and do likewise, and the beautiful illustrations, reproduced from Mrs. Schäffer's own photography, with which the book is lavishly interleaved, will complete what the letterpress has begun – lead other women to go out on the trail in the most wonderful region in Canada, the Rocky Mountains."<sup>37</sup> Other reviews of Schäffer's book are equally favourable as well as offering insights into gendered discourses of the time concerning women's travel narratives. "In reading 'Old Indian Trails' by Mary Schäffer, it is difficult to decide just what impresses us most ... For always the wildernesses have belonged to the male. Physiological facts and temperamental tendencies have seemingly ordained that it should be so." The review continues: "From the beginning, the author realized that the virgin country was a man's country. She had studied all available writings bearing upon that region and the writers were all men." The review concludes: "Although there was much picturesque scenery along the various trails, there are no verbal flights of sentimental ecstasy to be endured, nor is there any attempt on the part of the author to prove to the reader what a rarely sympathetic soul she has. She is sincere, as all good travelers should be." What is significant about this review is that, while it is overwhelmingly positive and supportive of Schäffer's unorthodox accomplishments, or at least what the reviewer considers to be unorthodox accomplishments for a woman, and of her narrative and photographic skills,

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<sup>37</sup> Review by J.W.H., *The Chronicle: A Weekly Newspaper for Women*, Vol. 1, No. 8, October 20, 1911, 21. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/10A.

embedded throughout the review is an articulation of the expected unadventurous and conventional gendered roles and activities.<sup>38</sup>

The Rocky Mountains of Canada was the setting “against which a number of culturally constructed attitudes, values, and social mores, were played out and inscribed.” Some of these attitudes and mores were related to women’s roles and female behaviour. But as Shelagh Squire has argued in her analysis of the historical geography of tourism in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, a number of discourses of femininity and women’s experiences in the mountains are chronicled in women’s textual and photographic records, highlighting how prescribed gender conventions concerning ideas of proper dress and “ladylike” behaviour came to be challenged and reformulated. A range of social trends then altering women’s roles and behaviours in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were “instrumental in according women new freedoms; not least in terms of personal mobility, liberation, less restrictive clothing, and activity choices.”<sup>39</sup> For example, cultural historians have argued that the bicycle in the nineteenth century was both a symbol of middle-class prosperity and increased mobility for women. For middle-class women, riding bicycles in the nineteenth century was a symbol of their entrée into the public sphere.<sup>40</sup>

The late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries were a period in late Victorian culture freighted with significance. As historian Kathy Peiss argues, nineteenth-century women’s access to the public sphere was connected to middle-class status and commerce

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<sup>38</sup> “Two Women in an Untrod Land: Exploring in the Canadian Rockies, They Add a New Lake to the Map,” *N.Y. City Times*, (July 16, 1911), 32. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/9B.

<sup>39</sup> Squire, “In the Steps of ‘Genteel Ladies,’” 6-7.

<sup>40</sup> Kathy Peiss, “Going Public: Women in Nineteenth Century Cultural History,” *American Literary History* 3:4 (Winter 1991), 818.

and usually functioned in the form of recreation. Women's access to the public sphere was not just about political barrier breaking; it was as consumers with leisure time gaining freedom of movement. Increased mobility was a middle-class phenomenon as working-class and non-white women constantly negotiated different and more difficult public and private boundaries in the course of their lives.<sup>41</sup> Carolyn Kelly has argued in her research that transgressive acts such as women wearing men's clothing is spatially limited: women wearing trousers on a glacier was expected, at times required, whereas a woman wearing trousers on the streets of Banff would have likely been considered more transgressive, owing to spatial contexts.<sup>42</sup> For example, returning from their 1907 expedition, Schäffer and Adams passed English author Rudyard Kipling in a carriage on the trail to Lake Louise. Kipling recorded the encounter with Schäffer on the trail and again later at Mount Stephen House<sup>43</sup> in his book, *Letters of Travel, 1892-1913*. Kipling's account is illustrative of the relational nature of gender, class, and racial discourses operating at this time:

As we drove along the narrow hill-road a piebald pack-pony with a china-blue eye came round a bend, followed by two women, black-haired, bare-headed, wearing beadwork squaw-jackets and riding straddle. A string of pack-ponies trotted through the pines behind them.

“Indians on the move?” said I. “How characteristic!”

As the women jolted by, one of them very slightly turned her eyes and they were, past any doubt, the comprehending equal eyes of the civilised white woman which moved in that berry-brown face...

The same evening, at an hotel of all the luxuries, a slight woman in a very pretty evening frock was turning over photographs, and the eyes beneath the strictly-arranged hair were the eyes of the woman

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid.

<sup>42</sup> Kelly, “Thrilling and Marvellous Experiences,” 263.

<sup>43</sup> Mount Stephen House was a CPR Hotel built in Field, British Columbia in 1886. It was torn down in 1963.

in the beadwork jacket who had quirted the piebald pack-pony past our buggy.

Praised be Allah for the diversity of His creatures! But do you know any other country where two women could go out for a three months' trek and shoot in perfect comfort and safety?<sup>44</sup>

Kipling's uneasy account is a result of his inability to properly "place" Schäffer when he encountered her on the trail because of the absence of visual clues that would convey class and race (in spatial contexts). Schäffer's clothing, astride a horse, and unchaperoned, were challenges to gender norms for Kipling. For Schäffer, it was less a challenge than a "negotiation of those norms in new terrain."<sup>45</sup> Schäffer was one of many middle-class women who travelled to the Canadian Rocky Mountains following the completion of the CPR. These women travellers frequently published their narratives in articles and books which proved very popular with their audiences. As Skidmore has argued in her analysis of travel narratives of the Canadian Rocky Mountains, women travellers and their readers "were living in a complex moment." The travel narratives engaged "a combination of exhortations to break boundaries and invocations of readers' understanding that the writer throughout had retained her femininity, demonstrating at all times socially sanctioned good behaviour and appropriate modesty, especially in serviceable and safe dress choices." These travel accounts represented more than exploration and discovery; "they were also an exploration of the debate and confusion of women's appropriate social role that was appreciated by readers who were themselves considering, arguing, and seeking their own position on the Woman Question."<sup>46</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> Rudyard Kipling, "Mountains and the Pacific," *Letters of Travel, 1892-1913* (MacMillan and Co. Limited, 1920), 188-189.

<sup>45</sup> Kelly, "Thrilling and Marvellous Experiences," 266.

<sup>46</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 94.

Schäffer's travel articles, lantern slide lectures, and her book, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*, contributed to the creation of the Canadian Rocky Mountains as something more than a CPR tourist destination.<sup>47</sup> Her lantern slides were intended for broader distribution than photographic prints exchanged with family and friends would warrant. Lantern slides and their accompanying narrated presentations are a "historically specific period of photographic technology and a culturally specific genre of photographic imagery."<sup>48</sup> Schäffer used a Pony Premo No. 6 folding plate camera, (Figures 1 and 2) that could be handheld for instant photography or tripod mounted for timed exposures. The 4 x 5 format was appropriate for Schäffer's glass-positive transparencies, which she transformed through her own hand-colouring into lantern slides. The Pony Premo No. 6 is a descendent of the Folding Rochester, a self-casing American folding plate camera that was more compact and easier to use than earlier bulky and complex operations. The folding Rochester cameras were produced by the Rochester Camera Manufacturing Company, founded in 1891. Producing view cameras and accessories for professional and advanced amateur photographers, the view camera was designed to be lighter and simpler to operate. The self-casing folding-bellows design of plate cameras was an important development in the history of photographic technology. The American plate cameras were the earliest cameras to incorporate the lightweight, collapsible flexibility of view cameras into an exterior protective case providing greater portability, and thus much increased mobility for the photographer.<sup>49</sup> Figures 1 and 2 are digitized images of Mary Schäffer's

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<sup>47</sup> Ibid., 279.

<sup>48</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, "The Geography Lesson: Photographs and the Construction of Imaginative Geographies," *Journal of Historical Geography* 22:1 (1996), 18.

<sup>49</sup> David Silver, "The 1892 Folding Rochester" (2005)  
<http://www.photographyhistory.com/CS06/foldingrochester.html> (accessed 17 April, 2011).

Pony Premo No. 6 camera held in the Heritage Collection of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies.<sup>50</sup>

**Figure 1**  
**Mary Schäffer's Pony Premo No. 6 Camera / Front**  
**WMCR/catalogue no. 104.41.0007**



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<sup>50</sup> The WMCR Heritage Department condition report describes Schäffer's camera as well used; bearing surface scratches and wear with a broken catch release and a small chip in the glass developing plate. The camera case is well worn with a tear in the lining and a large worn spot on the front right of the case. WMCR Heritage Department Condition Report TL06.376.

**Figure 2**  
**Mary Schäffer's Pony Premo No. 6 Camera / Back**  
**WMCR/catalogue no. 104.41.0007**



By the 1880s gelatine dry-plate technology initiated a new era in photography and owing to popular demand, ready-made glass plates, pre-coated with a gelatine emulsion, became commercially available. This development negated the need for a portable dark room as the plates could be developed at the photographer's leisure. Earlier emulsion processes, like the wet collodion process, were far more time consuming and exacting, requiring the glass plates to be prepared just before exposure – coated with an emulsion, exposed, and then immediately developed. Consequently the gelatine dry plate greatly facilitated travel photography by making picture taking in the field easier and less time consuming.<sup>51</sup> Schäffer photographed using glass plates, often hand-colouring her images and assembling them into lantern slides. The lantern slide was a nineteenth-century presentation format that projected the transparent slide onto a large screen or blank wall from a magic lantern or projector. Projecting photographs onto a large surface changed the reception of photographs from individual engagement to participation by large audiences,

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<sup>51</sup> Mary Lynne Ritzenthaler and Diane Vogt-O'Connor with Helena Zinkham, Brett Carnell and Kit Peterson, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2006), 14.

thus transforming, as Joan Schwartz has pointed out, the way they are viewed and valued, and shared communally.<sup>52</sup> Hand-tinting the images with transparent coloured dyes was a popular practice of many photographers, giving the appearance of colour photography.<sup>53</sup> Lantern slides were a popular nineteenth-century form of entertainment and education; the “magic lantern show” was a projection of the lantern slides with an accompanying narration often delivered in meeting halls and camera clubs.<sup>54</sup>

The historical means of dissemination of Schäffer’s lantern slides through the narrated magic lantern slide show bears analysis. Schäffer’s visual travel narrative presented in lantern slides was accompanied by an oral narrative identifying subjects and providing additional details about the photographs. Individual photographs are products of a cultural practice involving the photographer, the subjects, the consumers, the functional intent of the image, operating in a specific place and time. The lantern-slide presentation is also constructed for a particular purpose and the photographs selected for the presentation are not neutral images, but selected for a specific reason, with a particular audience in mind – all demonstrating the way in which photographs are used to convey different meaning in different contexts.<sup>55</sup> Schäffer’s lantern-slide presentations, located within their historical and geographical contexts, point to the popularity of travel and tourist narratives of western adventure at the turn of the twentieth century. Historian Patricia Jasen has argued in her analysis of tourism and nature in Ontario from 1790 to 1914, an important link between romantic sensibilities and the culture, economics and politics of the tourist industry – a

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<sup>52</sup> Schwartz, “*The Geography Lesson*,” 35.

<sup>53</sup> George Eastman House, “Notes on Photographs.” [http://notesonphotographs.org/index.php?title=Lantern\\_Slide](http://notesonphotographs.org/index.php?title=Lantern_Slide) (accessed 11 July 2011).

<sup>54</sup> Ritzenthaler and Vogt-O’Connor, *Photographs: Archival Care and Management*, 3.

<sup>55</sup> Nancy Micklewright, *A Victorian Traveller in the Middle East: The Photography and Travel Writing of Annie Lady Brassey* (Burlington, VT.: Ashgate Publishing, 2003), 13.

“tension and interplay between notions of civilization and wildness.”<sup>56</sup> As well, railway transportation and simpler photographic production and equipment technologies made travel and photography easier.<sup>57</sup> The Canadian Pacific Railway, in the early twentieth century, sponsored photographers and artists who rode the trains producing a visual record of the Canadian Rockies, which the CPR then used in their advertisements designed to promote tourism in the Rockies. Travelling photographers and artists visually established the myth of a western wilderness, while as the basis for the myth withered as a result of the travel and tourism which the photograph was employed to promote.<sup>58</sup> As Colleen Skidmore has argued, the CPR’s history in Canada is usually linked to political priorities and technological and industrial force, connecting the distant east and west coasts. Significantly, an overlooked great success of the CPR was its marketing of the Canadian Rocky Mountains to tourists, particularly women tourists, through women’s images. Schäffer was part of women’s overall creative work in the Canadian Rocky Mountains that “contributed to the popularity of the national parks and the growth of tourism, with its attendant enterprises, in concert with the CPR’s marketing of the region prior to the First World War.”<sup>59</sup>

Schäffer’s archives at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies consists of 35 cm of textual records arranged into four sub-series: Correspondence, 1908 - 1922; Original and published literary manuscripts, 1907 - ca.1925; Maps of Maligne Lake; and Other, 1905 - ca.1935, which contains the 1908 diary of fellow traveller Mollie Adams; a 1911

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<sup>56</sup> Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture, and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 4-7.

<sup>57</sup> Wendy Roy, *Maps of Difference: Canada, Women, and Travel* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2005), 9.

<sup>58</sup> Vicki Goldberg, *The Power of Photography: How Photographs Changed Our Lives* (New York: Abbeville Press, 1991), 43.

<sup>59</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 417-418.

diary of Mrs. H.H. Sharples, Schäffer's sister-in-law, who accompanied her on the 1911 trip to Maligne Lake, as well as original manuscripts and published reports by other writers. Schäffer's photograph series consists of 2,025 photographs (ca.1,550 lantern slides, ca.400 negatives, 75 prints) and 7 photograph albums (ca.1,760 prints). Schäffer's large lantern slide collection consists of several sub-series containing black-and-white and hand-coloured images of her trips to Maligne Lake and Yellowhead Pass; Rocky Mountain landscapes; Rocky Mountain wildlife; birds, and flowers; bison; Aboriginal people; and transportation. Also included are lantern slides of Schäffer's trips to China and Japan as well as slides from Philip Moore's Indian lecture series.<sup>60</sup> Additional lantern slides sub-series include black-and-white and hand-coloured copies of prints from a lecture on the early history of Banff, town development, and CPR hotels. Many lantern slides contained within Schäffer's photograph series are produced by other local photographers including Byron Harmon and Elliott Barnes.<sup>61</sup> These slides contain images of Alpine Club of Canada huts<sup>62</sup> and climbers, Swiss Guides, mountaineers, various mountain scenes, and wildlife. Other lantern slide sub-series include black-and-white lantern slides of flora – mainly detailed botanical photographs of species native to the Canadian Rockies, of which some of these are attributed to Schäffer; slides of copies of illustrations dating from 1777 to the 1890s pertaining to the history of the fur trade in western Canada; illustrations of the

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<sup>60</sup> Colonel Phillip A. Moore, 1879-1951, was a guide, soldier and lecturer. He and his wife Pearl Brewster Moore ran numerous CPR facilities in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, settling permanently in Banff in 1907. Col. Moore lectured widely during the 1920s and 30s using lantern slides and motion pictures. Moore Family fonds, WMCR M307/V439.

<sup>61</sup> Byron Hill Harmon, 1876-1942, was an American itinerant photographer who settled in Banff in the early twentieth century. He operated as a professional photographer and businessman in Banff and was the official photographer of the Alpine Club of Canada, travelling widely. Byron Harmon fonds, WMCR V263. Elliott Barnes, 1866-1938, was a rancher, outfitter, and trail guide as well as a professional photographer who homesteaded at Kootenay Plains. Elliott Barnes fonds, WMCR V48.

<sup>62</sup> The Alpine Club of Canada (ACC) is Canada's national mountaineering club, founded in 1906 by A.O. Wheeler. See The Alpine Club of Canada fonds, WMCR M200/S6/V14.

material culture of Aboriginal people in Western Canada including The Stoneys and Banff Indian Days activities.<sup>63</sup> Some of these photographs are attributed to professional Banff photographer Byron Harmon as well as to Schäffer. There exists a transportation sub-series which include images of the CPR, railway travel and ships. Lantern slides in the transportation sub-series are attributed to numerous sources with two images created by Schäffer. The final sub-series of lantern slides relate to Schäffer's world travels, ca.1908-192?. The slides are black-and-white and hand-coloured images by Schaffer and Colonel Philip Moore. Negatives in Schäffer's photograph series pertain to Schäffer's trips and explorations, alpine flowers, mountain views and portraits. Her photograph albums series contains images of her travels to Mexico and Asia. There appears to be an active exchange of lantern slides between Schäffer and other photographers or lecturers who lived in Banff and area. Two lantern-slide programs of Schäffer's were in the possession of Tom Lonsdale when donated by his estate to the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in 1976. In 2002, they were transferred from the Tom Lonsdale and Florence Lonsdale fonds to the Mary Schaffer fonds.<sup>64</sup> Phillip and Pearl Moore and Charles and Edmee (Moore) Reid<sup>65</sup> were also friends of Schäffer and the exchange of lantern slides among Banff residents may account for the range of images acquired through these estates.

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<sup>63</sup> Banff Indian Days began in 1889 when a rockslide delayed a CPR train. CPR officials contacted the Stoneys, who lived on a reserve in Morley outside Banff, inviting them to provide entertainment for the delayed travellers. The popularity of the impromptu event resulted in the annual Banff Indian Days which continued until 1978.

<sup>64</sup> Thomas Henry Lonsdale, 1886-1975, was a clergyman and teacher in Banff. Lonsdale was active in local organizations like the Banff Rotary Club and was one of the founders of the Banff Literary and Dramatic Society. Thomas Henry Lonsdale and Florence Lonsdale fonds, WMCR M189/V368.

<sup>65</sup> Charles Reid, 1904-1984 was a pharmacist and businessman in Banff. Charles and his first wife Edmee Moore were friends of Schäffer and lived in the Schäffer home following the death of Schäffer's second husband. Charles Reid fonds, WMCR M413/V487.

The two principal lantern-slide programs belonging to Schäffer that were acquired by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies as part of the Lonsdale Estate were titled, “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies with Horse and Camera, Part I,” and its sequel, “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies at the Head Waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska, Part II.” Part I is a script that was intended to be narrated to sixty-one lantern slides. The presentation relates to the mountains and wildlife of the Selkirks and Canadian Rockies areas of Banff, Lake O’Hara, and Lake Louise.<sup>66</sup> The presentation of these slides is broad in scope, commencing from a general introduction to the area and supplemented by popular Rocky Mountain images. The first image in the presentation is a map of Canada and the United States. Subsequent images include various mountain peaks visible from the Banff town-site; botanicals; and three images of Stoney Indians: “Stoney Indian,” “Indian Family,” and “Native Camp.” The presentation continues with wildlife images – buffalo, elk, moose, mountain sheep, antelope and images of the Bow River, Lake Minnewanka, Lake Louise and the Victoria Glacier, Lake O’Hara, and Takkakaw Falls.<sup>67</sup> “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies at the Head Waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska, Part II” is a sequel lantern slide presentation and consists of forty-four lantern slides and a script. The presentation relates to Schäffer’s travels to Maligne Lake near Jasper in 1908 and again in 1911, containing images of the Saskatchewan River, the Sunwapta River, the Athabasca River, Fortress Lake, Maligne Lake, various mountain peaks surrounding Maligne Lake including Sampson’s Peak, Mount Charlton, and Mount Unwin, an early Jasper homesteader, Lewis Swift, pack horses with survey material and supplies, as well as

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<sup>66</sup> Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16. Schäffer’s original presentation consisted of sixty-two lantern slides.

<sup>67</sup> Mary S. Warren, “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies with Horse and Camera, Part I,” Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16 V527/PS 2-1-61. Billy Warren was Schäffer’s second husband. Warren was Schäffer’s guide on her explorations; they married in 1915.

a few botanicals.<sup>68</sup> These are the informational values of the photographs – geographical, flora and wildlife of the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Documentation of the life of Mary Schäffer and her explorations in the Canadian Rockies are the evidential values of the photographs. Both lantern slide presentations may have been part of a lecture delivered at the University of Alberta, Department of Extension, as the accompanying scripts are stamped with the University of Alberta seal and dated 1915, four years after Schäffer’s last visit to Maligne Lake. Inexplicably, several slides are missing from both presentations. There is no pattern or theme to the missing slides, nor have they been widely or recognizably reproduced elsewhere. Some, but not all, of the missing slides have corresponding strikeout notations or an “X” next to their entry on the accompanying script. During the First World War, as part of the war effort, Schäffer sent a set of these lantern-slide presentations and accompanying scripts of her travels in the Rocky Mountains overseas as entertainment for the wounded soldiers in English hospitals.<sup>69</sup> The images in the presentations would have been recognizable to audiences familiar with the Banff area and certainly would have appealed to many Canadian soldiers – just one of her intended audiences for her lantern slides.

The earliest surviving record commenting on Schäffer’s lantern-slide presentations appeared in a review in an eastern American newspaper in 1907. Following her permanent relocation to Banff in 1912, Schäffer made several trips back east with her lantern slides and presented to Banff and Calgary audiences as well.<sup>70</sup> Contemporary viewers of

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<sup>68</sup> Mary S. Warren, “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies at the Head Waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska, Part II,” Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16 V527/PS 3-1-54. Schäffer’s original presentation consisted of fifty-four lantern slides. The copies of Schäffer’s two lantern slide scripts held at the WMCR are lecture readings from the University of Alberta, Department of Extension.

<sup>69</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 12.

<sup>70</sup> Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 115.

Schäffer's lantern slides would have approached them with pre-conceived Victorian ideas, values and beliefs. The photographs' meanings for the viewers were developed through the process of viewing within contemporary understandings of photographs as accurate observations of reality. Schäffer's lantern slides and travel accounts, disseminated to eastern American centres via the lantern-slide presentation, inscribed the Canadian Rocky Mountains and became powerful advertisements for tourism and travel to the area, as well as deeper reflections of the multiple contexts in which she lived and worked. To support these generalizations, the analysis now turns to consider a selection of Schäffer's images from those broader collections of lantern slides, albums, and prints.

The first image (see Figure 3) is a digitized image of a photograph of Sampson Beaver and his family. It is a widely distributed and frequently reproduced image from Mary Schäffer's archive, but is not one of the images contained in her lantern slide presentations. The image has been reproduced by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies (WMCR) in a variety of formats appearing framed on the walls of local businesses, private homes, in numerous scholarly publications, and tourist tokens such as posters and postcards. Photographs are "thick images with social and historical lives that are not apparent on first look," but ambiguous.<sup>71</sup> The photograph of the Beaver family and its numerous representations has consequently been subject to reinterpretations and recontextualizations in a variety of meaning-making endeavours according to the various needs of archival users. Contextualizing the Beaver family photograph and Schäffer within

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<sup>71</sup> Kadar, Perreault, and Warley, eds., *Photographs, Histories and Meanings*, 1.

their historical colonial contexts expands the photograph's societal provenance by suggesting its original rhetorical function.<sup>72</sup>

**Figure 3**  
**Mary Schäffer, Sampson Beaver's Family '06.**  
 WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 5



“There is no such thing as an innocent photograph, only many instances of naïve consumption.”<sup>73</sup> The functional contexts of the Beaver family photograph when examined

<sup>72</sup> The image of the Beaver family in Figure 3 originally appeared in Schäffer's book, *Old Indian Trails*, in black and white owing to limited publishing technologies for colour image reproductions. Of note also, the digitized colour image, available through the WMCR's website, is reversed from its original orientation. This may in part be due to the difficulty in distinguishing the emulsion side of glass-plate photographs. Furthermore, Schäffer hand-painted the non-emulsion side of many of her photographs. In addition to the hand-coloured lantern slide of the Beaver family, there exists a black-and-white glass negative of the Beaver family which was titled “Sampson Beaver, Leah Beaver, and baby Frances Louise.” The glass negative (V527/NG-124) was accessioned/transferred into the Schäffer fonds following the acquisition of the George Noble Negative Collection. George Noble was a professional photographer in Banff from 1909 to 1957. See George Noble fonds, WMCR M533/V469.

within a gendered colonial provenancial framework reveal significant complexities within women's photographic practices, complexities which are not apparent within a limited provenancial scope or essentialist understandings of women and innocent or domestic sentimental characterisations of women's photographic practices. As women and gender studies professor Laura Wexler has argued about women's photography, "the first cohort of American women photographers to achieve serious public careers as photojournalists at the turn of the century often used the "innocent eye" attributed to them by white domestic sentiment to construct images of war as peace, images that were, in turn, a constitutive element of the social relations of United States imperialism during the era's annexation and consolidation of colonies."<sup>74</sup> Wexler's study is persuasive as she highlights the significance for greater scope and focus "on the strengths and limitations of gender as an instrumental force in the field of vision," rather than on an imagined empathy of images by pioneering women photographers.<sup>75</sup> As Wexler's pointed analysis of Gertrude Käsebier's photographic record of Native Americans has demonstrated, it was only when Native Americans could no longer be regarded as a military threat, that they quickly became romantic figures for white Americans.<sup>76</sup> Historian Cecilia Morgan in her reading of travelogues has pointed out the importance of looking for fault lines and contradictions in tourists' discourse, arguing the importance for acknowledging the relationships of class, ethnicity, race, nation, empire, and gender that framed and encoded travel and tourism.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Erica Segre, Review of *Errant Modernism: The Ethos of Photography in Mexico and Brazil*, by Esther Gabara; *Looking for Mexico: Modern Visual Culture and National Identity*, by John Mraz; *National Camera: Photography and Mexico's Image Environment*, by Roberto Tejada; *Seeing Mexico Photographed: The Work of Horne, Casasola, Modotti, and Alvarez Bravo*, by Leonard Folgarait, all in *History of Photography* 35:1 (2011), 86.

<sup>74</sup> Wexler, *Tender Violence*, 6.

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

<sup>77</sup> Morgan, 'A Happy Holiday', 7-8.

While Schäffer lamented the passing of the “Wild” West and how civilization encroached on her wilderness, her antimodernist sensibility must be balanced with her active participation in the economic development of western Canada and her popularization of tourism and travel to the Canadian Rockies.<sup>78</sup>

In 1906 Schäffer and Mollie Adams planned a trip to the North Saskatchewan River Valley. Bad weather forced their group to detour into new territory and before returning to Lake Louise (Laggan Station), Schäffer and Adams travelled with cameras into the Kootenay Plains to visit the Stoney camp to photograph the families staying there.<sup>79</sup> This area called Kadoona-tinda by the Stoney people was a popular contact zone<sup>80</sup> for tourists, explorers and indigenous groups.<sup>81</sup> It was on this visit to the Stoney camp that the photograph in Figure 3 was produced. It is a digitized image of Mary Schäffer’s original hand-coloured 4 x 3 ¼ inch glass-plate lantern slide. The image features Sampson Beaver, his wife Leah Beaver, and their daughter Frances Louise; they were a Stoney family from Morley, Alberta that were camped with other families at the Kootenay Plains on the North Saskatchewan River at the time that Mary Schäffer and Mollie Adams, accompanied by

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<sup>78</sup> Lisa MacFarlane, “Mary Schäffer’s ‘Comprehending Equal Eyes,’” in Susan Bernardin, Melody Graulich, Lisa MacFarlane, Nicole Tonkovich, eds. *Trading Gazes: Euro-American Women Photographers and Native North Americans, 1880-1940* (New Brunswick, New Jersey and London: Rutgers University Press, 2003), 123.

<sup>79</sup> Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 27-34.

<sup>80</sup> Contact zone is a term coined by Mary Louise Pratt who defines contact zones as “the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other and establish ongoing relations, usually involving conditions of coercion, radical inequality, and intractable conflict.” See Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 6.

<sup>81</sup> By the first decade of the twentieth century, Banff and the surrounding area was the homeland for the Nakoda people. The Nakoda, which means “friend,” were called The Stoney Indians by white explorers because of their method of cooking with heated rocks. The Nakoda are linguistically and culturally related to the Assiniboine and the Dakota, with historical links to the Sioux nations living on the Plains in the United States and Canada. The Nakoda live mostly within Alberta and eastern British Columbia, arriving in the Rocky Mountains in the eighteenth century while fleeing smallpox epidemics. See Chief John Snow, *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places: The Story of the Stoney People* (Calgary: Fifth House Limited, 2005), 3; and MacFarlane “Mary Schäffer’s Comprehending Equal Eyes.”

their guides, encountered them. It was during this trip that Mary Schäffer was given the name Yahe-Weha, “Mountain Woman,” by the Stoneys. The Kootenay Plains had been a traditional meeting and hunting grounds and winter camp for the Stoney people, an area “where the game was plentiful, where the grassy slopes were open in winter, and where there were only itinerant white people.”<sup>82</sup> Schäffer described the area as “the golden Kootenai Plains” where “storms may rage north, south, and west, but they seldom invade this peaceful spot, where only the soft Chinook winds blow almost constantly....”

Schäffer’s observations of the Kootenay Plains are ironic:

...to appreciate them one must breathe their breath deep into the lungs, must let the soft winds caress the face, and allow the eye to absorb the blue of the surrounding hills and the gold of the grasses beneath the feet. To us, who had been storm-swept, chilled, and baked by turns in the outlying valleys, it was simply heaven. No wonder that the Indians from Morley go there year after year; I only wonder that the whole tribe does not attempt to move in, in a body.<sup>83</sup>

Many Stoneys had left the Morley reserve<sup>84</sup> in 1894 because of poor living conditions there and relocated to the Kootenay Plains area, believing that this area was part of the land promised to them in Treaty Seven. The area had become rife with political conflict, as through the use of surveys and the reserve system, the Department of Indian Affairs had opposed the relocation of the Stoneys to the Kootenay Plains.<sup>85</sup> Schäffer established a

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<sup>82</sup> Snow, *These Mountains Are Our Secret Places*, 95.

<sup>83</sup> Mary T.S. Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies: Incidents of Camp and Trail Life, Covering Two Years’ Exploration through the Rocky Mountains of Canada* (New York and London: G.P. Putnam’s Sons, 1911), 172-173.

<sup>84</sup> The Morley Reserve was established with Treaty Seven in 1877, around Reverend John McDougall’s mission church, built at Morleyville in 1873 along the Bow River in Alberta.

<sup>85</sup> Snow, *These Mountains Are Our Sacred Places*, 94-95, 250; Keith D. Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance and Resistance: Indigenous Communities in Western Canada, 1877-1927* (Edmonton: Athabasca University Press, 2009), 197-201.

relationship with the Beaver family and other Stoney families in the area as the photograph in Figure 3 demonstrates; indeed, it exudes “the warmth and ease of the Beaver Family.”<sup>86</sup>

During the period in which Schäffer travelled, the photograph was considered to be “an unmediated copy of the real world,” a transparent medium.<sup>87</sup> Photography theorist and critic Allan Sekula argues that by discovering and determining the social and historical contexts of the photographer, one can begin to grasp an understanding of meaning as related to intention. As Sekula directs, “the question to be answered is this: what, in the broadest sense, was the *original* rhetorical function” of the photograph?<sup>88</sup> Sekula argues that the sombre portrayals of American Indians were made as they were steadily annihilated. These images, when widely reproduced, serve “as an ideologically charged reification of the expanding boundaries of the bourgeois state. The mythical image of the ‘frontier’ was realized by means of photographs.”<sup>89</sup> The function of a document – what it was created to do – and the authority with which it is vested are embedded in its informational content and in its presentational form. In appraising and describing some documents, visual documents in particular, presentational form is usually overlooked or marginalized as an element of meaning-making, and, all too often, function is conflated with informational content. It must also be acknowledged that the meaning invested in a document by its author is not necessarily delivered intact to its intended audience, for elements of meaning-making are only made meaningful upon reception and in terms of potential audience frameworks of knowledge and strategies of understanding.

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<sup>86</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 17.

<sup>87</sup> Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning,” Victor Burgin, ed. *Thinking Photography* (Houndsmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire and London: MacMillan Education Ltd., 1982), 86.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 92.

<sup>89</sup> *Ibid.*, 95.

The image of the Beaver family in Figure 3, while widely reproduced since the Whyte Museum acquired Schäffer's lantern slides, did not appear in her two-part lantern slide presentation "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies." It did, however, appear in black-and-white in Schäffer's 1911 publication, *Old Indian Trails*, perhaps its original context. While the Beaver family photograph represents a peaceful and cooperative family<sup>90</sup> and an easy relationship between photographer and subject, it is a relationship encoded by colonialist and gendered attitudes. Schäffer's photography and textual records demonstrate a contradiction, an inconsistency that both challenges and accepts gendered and racial ideologies. Chapters in *Old Indian Trails* relate a growing friendship between Schäffer and some families of the Stoneys, describing photo opportunities and an exchange of handicrafts and photographs. Schäffer's account is significant "for its deliberate cultivation of an idyllic tone." Censoring any references to contemporary Indian Affairs policies of reservation confinement and residential school systems, the text and images of *Old Indian Trails* reinforced Euro-Canadian and Euro-American audiences' ideas of European-Aboriginal relations.<sup>91</sup> Lisa MacFarlane has pointed out that Schäffer's claims to a "reciprocity of the exchange between the 'white squaws' and the 'red ones' is undercut by her unconscious racism."<sup>92</sup> As in her published articles for newspapers and journals, Schäffer played and performed to societal conventions concerning gender, race and class ideologies. Schäffer's text and images contained in *Old Indian Trails* responded to and confirmed socially constructed discursive frameworks that mediated female travel accounts. Schäffer's visual and narrative account participated in discursive traditions and

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<sup>90</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 17.

<sup>91</sup> MacFarlane, "Schaffer's Comprehending Equal Eyes," 128-130.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 133.

was constructed in concert with colonial and gender constraints that determined the views produced, and the ways in which the author presented herself and her experiences.<sup>93</sup>

Writer and theorist Lucy Lippard has written about her own engagement with, and examination of the Beaver photograph through a series of “takes” in which her understanding and opinion of Schäffer and the photograph are transformed through critical exploration of the racial and gendered contexts surrounding the creation of the photograph. Simplistic “first takes” of the Beaver family photograph propose a “cross-cultural empathy” in which Schäffer is imagined to have been a welcome member of a community. This empathy is based on what gender and women’s studies professor Julia Emberley has described as an “apparent universal equivalency of the figure of mother and child.”<sup>94</sup> As a woman, Schäffer may have gained the trust and the permission to photograph the Beaver family more easily than a male photographer. Certainly, Schäffer’s cultivation of a friendship between herself and the little girl, Frances Louise, would have facilitated this trust. However, Lippard’s second and third takes of the image reveal some of the meaning-making contexts surrounding the photograph – contexts that transform interpretations about this photograph. As Lippard explains “... seeing is still believing to some extent – as those who control the dominant culture (and those who ban it from Native contexts) know all too well. In works like this one, some of the barriers are down, or invisible, and we

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<sup>93</sup> Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women’s Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 40.

<sup>94</sup> Julia V. Emberley, *Defamiliarizing the Aboriginal: Cultural Practices and Decolonization in Canada* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2007), 178. Emberley argues for analysis of the use of images “as part of the techniques of power designed to institutionalize subjects of representation for the purposes of subjugating them as economically as possible.”

have the illusion of seeing for ourselves, the way we never *would* see for ourselves, which is what communication is about.”<sup>95</sup>

The Beaver family in Figure 3 is portrayed as a happy family as evidenced by the smiling faces and willingness to have their photograph taken. However, as historian Carol Williams has argued, as a result of greater Aboriginal assimilation through “enforced acculturation and state policies,” the anthropological value of photographs of Aboriginals increased. This resulted in a growing commercial and ethnological interest in Aboriginal life subsequently creating a consumer market of tourists, anthropologists, and photographers who, recognizing that settlement had changed Aboriginal culture, wanted visual reminiscence of it.<sup>96</sup>

When compared with other images in Schäffer’s photographic work, the Beaver family image can be read as a presentation of Schäffer’s own perceptions of race. The Beaver family is positioned within the image, as they are positioned within contemporary racial discourse, as the “other.” Moreover, the organic landscape of grass and trees in which the Beaver family is situated functions to visually anchor the subjects to a place – what Schäffer would have perceived as a natural landscape for the Beaver family. Schäffer’s photographs document her travels throughout the Canadian Rocky Mountains and narrate her time on the trail. Her activities, at times especially challenging, such as fording a swollen river with a pack train of horses or climbing a steep pass, stand in somewhat stark contrast to the romantic and idyllic Stoney family portrait of Figure 3. The Beaver family image shares more in common compositionally and functionally with

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<sup>95</sup> Lucy R. Lippard, “Introduction,” in Lucy R. Lippard, ed. *Partial Recall* (New York: The New Press, 1992), 43.

<sup>96</sup> Carol Williams, *Framing the West: Race, Gender and the Photographic Frontier in the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 82.

Schäffer's photographs of mountains, passes, and alpine lakes – that is – as constructions of natural space. The Beaver family image, despite its forced naturalness, symbolized by the smiles, neatly groomed attire, and positioning of Sampson, Leah and Frances Louise, is posed within the frame ethnographically, as a presentation of “a specific and singular impressive or monumental object,”<sup>97</sup> and indicative of a specific relationship of power. Where Schäffer's photographs of her time on the trail document her activities and achievements, the representation of the Beaver family signifies their difference, and ultimately Aboriginal people acquiescing to their own conquest and marginalization by an advancing civilization of Euro-Canadians.

Within Mary Schäffer's archive are various published reports and manuscripts written by scientists, alpinists, and explorers such as A.P. Coleman, and Jean Habel, as well as Department of the Interior Reports relating to the Athabasca, Mackenzie and Yukon Rivers, and the Yellowhead Pass. Also included is an article written by A.O. Wheeler, Dominion Land Surveyor and founder of the Alpine Club of Canada. The article is titled “The Mountains of the Yellowhead Pass, 1913” and is heavily annotated with margin notes by Schäffer.<sup>98</sup> She reflected on her desire to travel further into the Rocky Mountains drawing on and following, in some cases, the footsteps of her predecessors:

There are few women who do not know their privileges and how to use them, yet there are times when the horizon seems restricted, and we seemed to have reached that horizon, and the limit of all endurance – to sit with folded hands and listen calmly to the stories of the hills we so longed to see, the hills which had lured and beckoned us for years before this long list of men had ever set foot

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<sup>97</sup> Elizabeth Edwards, “Negotiating Spaces: Some Photographic Incidents in the Western Pacific, 1883-84,” in Joan M. Schwartz and James R. Ryan, eds., *Picturing Place: Photography and the Geographical Imagination* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003), 267.

<sup>98</sup> Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/13-15.

in the country. Our cups splashed over. We looked into each other's eyes and said: "Why not! We can starve as well as they; the muskeg will be no softer for us than for them...the waters no deeper to swim, nor the bath colder if we fall in" – so – we planned a trip.<sup>99</sup>

During the summers of 1907 and 1908 Schäffer and Adams hired two local Banff guides<sup>100</sup> to take them through the Rocky Mountains north of the CPR line. Schäffer described the objective of their trip in her book, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*, to penetrate to the head waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska rivers.<sup>101</sup>

Anticipating surprise reactions to and scepticism about their plans, Schäffer wondered "why must they settle so absolutely upon the fact, that the lover of the hills and the wilderness drops the dainty ways and habits with the conventional garments and becomes something of coarser mould?"<sup>102</sup> This is another example of the contradictions contained within Schäffer's *Old Indian Trails*. In this account, she sets up and then challenges gender conventions that would restrict women's participation in exploration and travel. However, as already noted, women were active participants in Rocky Mountain mountaineering with the Alpine Club of Canada at this time. Schäffer's "straw man" argument serves the interests of perhaps another type of audience – that of the "New Woman."

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<sup>99</sup> Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*, 5.

<sup>100</sup> As PearlAnn Reichwein and Lisa McDermott have acknowledged, travelling with hired guides was also a common practice among male explorers during this period. See Reichwein and McDermott, "Opening the Secret Garden," 190.

<sup>101</sup> Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 13.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, 14.

**Figure 4**  
**Mary Schäffer, Fortress Lake at Head of Athabasca R[iver], [1907]**  
**WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 24**



Figure 4 is a digitized image of Schäffer’s hand-coloured lantern slide of Fortress Lake. The photograph was taken during their summer expedition to the headwaters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska rivers in 1907. Fortress Lake was a planned stop on their expedition. Having read previous explorers’ accounts of the Fortress Lake region, Schäffer marvelled at a chance encounter with A.P. Coleman, the geologist and Canadian Rockies explorer credited with “discovery” of the lake, which provided an opportunity for Schäffer and her group to question a recognized authority on the area. Following in the footsteps of previous explorers and locating Fortress Lake, Schäffer’s photograph in Figure 4 can be

read as her mark of achievement in reaching the famous lake and she documented her presence there by photographing it.<sup>103</sup>

In addition to their stated goal of reaching the headwaters of the Saskatchewan and Athabasca Rivers, Schäffer and her party, including her friend and travelling partner, Mollie Adams, wanted to explore the area in search of a lake called Chaba Imne, “Beaver Lake,” by the Stoneys. Schäffer’s first four-month expedition into the Rocky Mountains in 1907 was in part in pursuit of Chaba Imne. Schäffer had first heard of Chaba Imne from conversations with local guide and hunter, Jimmy Simpson, who had heard of it from his own contact with the Stoneys.<sup>104</sup> Reaching the headwaters of the North Saskatchewan and Athabasca rivers but not able to locate Chaba Imne, the party turned back at the end of the summer of 1907. Returning from this trip, Schäffer met Sampson Beaver again at the Kootenay Plains on the North Saskatchewan River, and questioned him about the lake’s location. Schäffer described her encounter with Sampson Beaver and the transfer of the sketched “crude map of the desired section,” along with “sundry advice on the subject in still more crude English,” in an article she published in the *Bulletin of the Geographic Society of Philadelphia* in 1909: “Indians have little desire to give the secrets of their hunting-grounds to the white man, but after two years’ acquaintance with us, Sampson had evidently decided that the two white women were not rival sportsmen.”<sup>105</sup> This account of the exchange of the map is interesting when compared with another account regarding the

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<sup>103</sup> The digitized image of Schäffer’s hand-coloured lantern slide of Fortress Lake appearing in Figure 4 is reversed from the original black-and-white lantern slide WMCR V527/PS 1-22. This view of Fortress Lake also exists as a black-and-white film negative in Schäffer’s archives. WMCR V527/NA-108, NA-109.

<sup>104</sup> Reichwein and McDermott, “Opening the Secret Garden”, 159-160.

<sup>105</sup> Mary T.S. Schäffer, “A Recently Explored Lake in the Rocky Range of Canada,” *Bulletin Geographical Society of Philadelphia* VII. 3 (1909), 123. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/9B.

exchange of Beaver's map that Schäffer described in a letter to Miss Minnie Nickell around 1930:

He had a very shrewd eye and instantly cocking it at me, said: "What you pay me?" I was indignant enough and after all Indians are only tall children so I grew very indignant telling him of the flour, tea, sugar, a dress for his little girl, a nice doll thrown in, that had come to his tepee and said very sharply: "Now draw me the picture of how to get there."<sup>106</sup>

Elizabeth Vibert in her analysis of fur-trader narratives of encounters with indigenous peoples has argued that traders' narratives are "constructions of indigenous lifeways, rather than faithful reconstructions," because the traders viewed indigenous societies "through the refracting lenses of their own cultures, and of their own immediate purposes."<sup>107</sup> It is important to acknowledge that these are not Beaver's words, but Schäffer's words, reflecting her awareness of contemporary western gender and racial ideologies and power systems. Avril Madrell's analysis of British women geographer's war service has related how women's achievements have been reported alongside "reassurances of their feminine attributes." This suggests a "discourse in which women were permitted to be intellectuals and even undertake secret war work, as long as they conformed to feminine norms."<sup>108</sup> Schäffer's descriptions of the exchange of Sampson Beaver's map portrays her nuanced views of the strengths and limitations of her gender and race, and they raise questions about the reason for two very different accounts of the map exchange – one in a professional journal, the other to a female friend with whom she

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<sup>106</sup> Minnie Nickell became acquainted with Schäffer during the 1930s via Mrs. Armstrong of Owen Sound, Ontario. Nickell and Schäffer shared an occasional correspondence based on their travels and mutual acquaintances. Archives General File, WMCR M8/acn.4005.

<sup>107</sup> Elizabeth Vibert, *Trader's Tales: Narratives of Cultural Encounters in the Columbia Plateau 1807-1846* (Norman, Oklahoma: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997), 15.

<sup>108</sup> Avril Maddrell, "The 'Map Girls' British Women Geographers' War Work, Shifting Gender Boundaries and Reflections on the History of Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 33:1 (January 2008), 133.

shared travel stories. Schäffer's account of the map exchange published in the Geographic Society's journal anticipated a specific audience and was therefore constructed in association with colonial, racial, and gendered discourses, a discursive tradition buoyed by institutional and cultural conventions. In contrast, Schäffer's account of the map exchange to a friendly correspondent, Minnie Nickell, occurred many years later when Schäffer's reputation throughout the Rocky Mountains was firmly established and she had herself moved to the area permanently. In the second account of the map exchange, Schäffer nonetheless invokes the merits of her gender, race, and class relating again a specific relationship of power. The two different accounts of the map exchange are significant in that they convey the importance of context, intention, and audience, and thereby revealing contradictory accounts of interactions between Schäffer and Sampson Beaver.

While at Kootenay Plains that summer of 1907, Schäffer and her party visited with Elliot Barnes, an American who immigrated to Canada in 1905. Barnes was a rancher, trail guide, and professional photographer who homesteaded on the Kootenay Plains. The group was gathered one evening around a fire when Sampson Beaver and another Stoney named Silas joined them. Schäffer questioned Silas at length on Stoney gendered roles. Describing her interrogation as a "missionary effort," Schäffer asked Silas whether he let his "squaw" saddle and pack his horses, fix the tepee-poles, erect the tepee, gather firewood, cook and tan skins. Schäffer replied to Silas's affirming nod: "You should be like the white men, you should do the work for your squaw. *We* do not put up our tepees or pack our horses or cut the wood, our men do that." Schäffer recounted Silas's reaction to her admonition, "Taking his pipe from his mouth and inspecting me from head to foot

leisurely, he said, “You lazy!”<sup>109</sup> Schäffer explained in *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* that this exchange provided much amusement for the rest of the group. Silas’s response to Schäffer’s next question “What do you do while your squaw works?” was to fold his arms, close his eyes and puff on his pipe. Schäffer’s reaction to Silas’s response is significant: “His look of contempt had swept round and included every man who had so demeaned himself as to be placed in such straits by a woman.”<sup>110</sup> In her analysis of three Western frontier women’s narratives, historical geographer Jeanne Kay discovered a surprisingly expanded definition of the heroic male that included domestic activities. Kay argues that “although the West was a place where Anglo women might enter the commercial economy, perhaps with more freedom than they could do in the East, the West was also a place where men strongly entered the domestic sphere,”<sup>111</sup> cooking and cleaning for themselves, and sometimes for women as well. Schäffer’s ways of being and knowing the world derived from her historical background, life experience, and perhaps most directly, from her position in the social environment. Vibert’s reading of trader’s narratives demonstrated “a distinct gender dimension to the perception that the fishing peoples of the Columbia were indolent. While the men were portrayed as layabouts, the women – when they were portrayed at all – were frequently cast as overburdened workhorses. Embedded in this image was perhaps the most damning critique of Indian men: their failure to adequately fulfill that basic responsibility of British manhood, providing for the family.” While Vibert argues against any explicit indication of feminization in the records of the fur traders, she advises that the signs are there. The

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<sup>109</sup> Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 181-182.

<sup>110</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>111</sup> Jeanne Kay, “Landscapes of Women and Men: Rethinking the Regional Historical Geography of the United States and Canada,” *Journal of Historical Geography*, 17. 4 (1991), 445.

trader's accounts represent Aboriginal men as averse to labour and women were given tasks that in the "natural" order of things would be considered masculine duties.<sup>112</sup>

Schäffer wrote in her *Old Indian Trails* "that one of the greatest trophies we carried with us when leaving the next day for the North Fork of the Saskatchewan was a tiny grubby bit of paper on which Sampson had with much care traced the lake we had tried so hard to find...."<sup>113</sup> Figure 5 is a digitized image of Schäffer's lantern slide of Sampson Beaver's map of Chaba Imne.<sup>114</sup> The photograph of Sampson's map appeared in Schäffer's lantern-slide presentation. Slide 18 of "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies Part II" describes Schäffer as "lucky in getting an odd sketch map from an Indian who had seen the lake in his boyhood."<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>112</sup> Vibert, *Trader's Tales*, 17, 127.

<sup>113</sup> Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, 182-183.

<sup>114</sup> Sampson's map appeared in Schäffer's book originally in black and white. The digitized image available through the WMCR is reversed and inverted.

<sup>115</sup> Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR, M79/16, 5.

**Figure 5**  
**Mary Schäffer, Sampson's Map '08**  
**WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 53**



In June 1908, Schäffer, Adams, three guides, a botanist, and twenty-two horses ventured north from Banff in search of the mythical Chaba Imne. Figures 6, 7, and 8 are digitized images of Schäffer's lantern slides from that trip.

**Figure 6**  
**Mary Schäffer, Camp at Maligne Lake, 1908 [b&w]**  
**WMCR/V527 / PS 1 - 70**



**Figure 7**  
**Mary Schäffer, Camp at Maligne Lake, 1908**  
 WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 69



Figures 6 and 7 are images of Schäffer's campsite on the shores of Maligne Lake. They reached the lake in 1908, following the sketched map provided by Sampson Beaver. There, Schäffer photographed several glass-plate images of Maligne Lake (the assigned Euro-Canadian name for Chaba Imne), and the two images above are compositionally similar. Figure 6 is a black-and-white image of the group's campsite at the lake; Figure 7 is a tighter image and the camera had been moved to the left of its vantage point in Figure 6. Figure 7 also demonstrates Schäffer's proficiency at hand-colouring her slides. The images depict tents and an outdoor cooking area – they portray presence, occupation, success on the long quest for the lake. Why would Schäffer choose to portray the lake with

a human presence rather than uninhabited? It could be argued that Schäffer felt a need to document her achievement in finally reaching Maligne Lake, after previous unsuccessful attempts. Schäffer's account in *Old Indian Trails* relates the difficulties her party encountered in locating the lake and an entry in her 1915 lantern-slide lecture conveys Schäffer's efforts to locate the lake: "Maligne Lake lies in the fastnesses of her hills, much more easily reached than in those days of toil..."<sup>116</sup> Much was made of Schäffer's "discovery" of the lake and much is still made of her "discovery." Schäffer wrote of the achievement in *Old Indian Trails*: "...the long quest was over, the object found."<sup>117</sup> Schäffer modestly deflected characterisations of her achievements that were couched in masculine exploration tropes; there was no talk of conquest or discovery or heroism.

Figure 8 of the Narrows of Maligne Lake is another image of a photograph taken by Schäffer on that trip. Maligne Lake is a large lake, approximately 22 kilometres in length. Schäffer and her guides travelled the lake by a makeshift raft they constructed. As they swept through The Narrows, renamed "Sampson's Narrows," the "setting sun touched a symmetrical snow-tipped peak on the eastern shore of the lake, the dark waters before us caught up the picture, threw back to us an inverted rosy summit, and we named it "Sampson's Peak" for him who had sketched us the little map."<sup>118</sup> Schäffer and her group located Chaba Imne during the summer of 1908 and as they explored the shores, naming the surrounding peaks and topographical features, Schäffer renamed Sampson's "Chaba Imne" as Maligne Lake.<sup>119</sup> Maligne Lake is considered one of the most beautiful and most

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<sup>116</sup> Mary S. Warren, "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies," 14. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16.

<sup>117</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 94.

<sup>118</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 98.

<sup>119</sup> Many of the peaks were named for Schäffer's guides, such as Mount Warren and Mount Unwin, and for Schäffer's friend Mount Mary Vaux, and Sampson's Peak and Sampson's Narrows for Sampson Beaver who had provided the hand-drawn map to Chaba Imne.

photographed locations after Lake Louise in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Today, images of Maligne Lake appear on postcards, placemats, mugs, T-shirts, recreational vehicle rentals and other souvenirs. It is curious that Schäffer (re)named topographical features after Sampson Beaver and other guides and surveyors but not after herself or her companion Mollie Adams. In Schäffer's lantern-slide presentation, "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies, Part II," she explained how Sampson's Peak and Sampson's Narrows came to be named: "Above us frowned a peak which was specially brilliant, and it was suggested to name it for the Indian who had given us the rather sketchy map. As it lay closely to the narrows which the man had drawn for us, we just naturally named it Sampson's peak and Sampson's narrows...They are perhaps the most picturesque part of the whole lake."<sup>120</sup> Schäffer's honorific naming of the many mountains surrounding Maligne Lake reflected American, Canadian, and British exploration and mapping traditions.<sup>121</sup> Schäffer herself offered some explanation in a letter to Minnie Nickell: "I never claimed to have 'discovered' it. I doubt if there is a spot in the world to DISCOVER. We merely re-located and mapped it."<sup>122</sup>

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<sup>120</sup> Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16, 6. Schäffer dedicated her book *Old Indian Trails* to Mollie Adams. The dedication text reads: "To Mary Who With Me Followed the 'Old Indian Trails' But Who Has Now Gone On The Long Trail Alone." Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails*, iii.

<sup>121</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 288.

<sup>122</sup> Mary Schäffer letter to Minnie Nickel. Archives General File, WMCR M8/accn. 4005.

**Figure 8**  
**Mary Schäffer, Looking Back at the “Narrows” of Lake Maligne, 1908**  
 WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 66



In their recent history of photographic meaning, Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson have traced how photographic meaning, rather than referencing “an expressively rich (artistic) or ethically withheld (scientific) subjectivity, increasingly pointed back to the suspect institutions, ideologies, and discourses that produced, selected, or contextualized it.”<sup>123</sup> A newspaper article at the time, titled “Romance in Heart of Rockies,” described Mary Schäffer and her friend Mollie Adams in a revealing fashion, as “...society women of Philadelphia, [who] have invaded the wilderness and in spite of the har[sic]ships and difficulties of negotiating a hundred Switzerlands in one, have gazed on the scenic

<sup>123</sup> Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson, “Introduction: Photography’s Double Index (A Short History in Three Parts),” Robin Kelsey and Blake Stimson, eds., *The Meaning of Photography* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2008), xxi.

grandeur of the Yellowhead. They are the first white women to look on the glories of Mount Robson or to visit the embryonic townsite of Tete-Juan Cache<sup>124</sup> and will have the unique honor of enlivening the pink tea circles of the Quaker city this winter with stories of travels in a country where few men and no women have ever set foot before.”<sup>125</sup> Mary Schäffer and Mollie Adams are characterized as the “first white women” to visit the area. The “pink tea circles of the Quaker city” suggests that Schäffer’s lectures will be of particular interest to women and the “stories of travels in a country where few men and no women have ever set foot before” erases Aboriginal history and presence from the area.

The “empty” and secluded wilderness country of the Miette and Yellowhead country that Schäffer and her group travelled through in 1908 changed significantly in the years following Schäffer’s “discovery” of Maligne Lake. The wilderness was transformed with the construction of a second Canadian transcontinental railway line, The Grand Trunk Pacific (GTP). The Canadian Government was developing the area along the GTP’s line as part of Jasper Forest Park. Just prior to the release in 1911 of Schäffer’s *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*, Dr. Donaldson B. Dowling of the Geological Survey of Canada, and a member of the Geographical Board of Canada from 1900 to 1925, had recommended to Howard Douglas, Commissioner of Dominion (later National) Parks, that Schäffer perform the topographical survey of Maligne Lake. The significance of surveying and mapping to colonial projects and nation building cannot be underestimated. This was a period of rapid settlement, immigration, and an increase in travel to the West as well as transformation and development in the administration of Canada’s parks system. On May 19, 1911, the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act* was inaugurated, which created

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<sup>124</sup> Tete-Jaun Cache is a small town located 100 km west of Jasper, Alberta.

<sup>125</sup> “Romance in Heart of Rockies,” Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/9B [14].

separate branches of the Department of the Interior for administering federal forest reserves and national parks. The reorganization signified the importance of the national parks, warranting its own administrative branch, and as the new Commissioner of Dominion Parks, J.B. Harkin, proudly pointed out, the reorganization of Parks administration created the world's first separate agency for operating national parks. However, as a result of the reorganization, national park boundaries were greatly reduced.<sup>126</sup> The reduction of Jasper Park boundaries, in particular, provoked protest and Schäffer, familiar with the area, was acutely aware of the implications to wilderness conservation. As well, the Maligne Lake region had been cut out of Jasper Park as a result of the Parks and Forestry reorganization. Dowling's interest in the Maligne Lake survey was calculated, and he argued that in addition to the collection of information required about the area, it would advertise the area to tourists and travellers already familiar with Schäffer's reputation and fame through her photographs, lantern-slide presentations, and published articles of her explorations in the area. Much of the literature on Mary Schäffer has focused on the unusual and remarkable occurrence of Schäffer's assignment to survey Maligne Lake, especially in view of the fact that the experienced and well-known Dominion Land Surveyor, A.O. Wheeler, was still in the area. D.B. Dowling recommended Schäffer for the job because of her fame and close association with the disputed area and because she could serve his deeper interests. Dowling himself instructed

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<sup>126</sup>Among the national park areas reduced as a result of the reorganization of parks administration, Rocky Mountains Park (Banff) was reduced from 4,500 to 1,800 square miles and Jasper Park from 5,000 to 1,000 square miles. Total area of Canada's seven Dominion parks was reduced from 11,136 square miles to 4,019.5 square miles. Park boundaries were reduced to reflect areas that park administrators felt they could effectively manage. Areas outside of the new park boundaries fell under the Forestry Branch's administrative control and as a result were not afforded the same protections as park lands received. Jasper Forest Park had been established in 1907 through the efforts of Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior. See Reichwein and McDermott, "Opening the Secret Garden," 164.

Schäffer in the log-and-compass method of surveying.<sup>127</sup> While surveying the lake, Schäffer named a mountain peak after H.R. Charleton, an adroit political decision as Charleton was a strong supporter of increasing the boundaries of Jasper National Park. Schäffer's survey of Maligne Lake communicated the importance of the lake to the scenic integrity and tourist potential of Jasper National Park and the necessity of its inclusion for wilderness conservation within the parks.

In an ironic twist, given the role of Sampson Beaver's map, the Stoneys' claims with the Department of Indian Affairs to reserve land as part of Treaty Seven in the Kootenay Plains thus became more problematic. As a result of the establishment in 1911 of the *Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act*, which set aside forest reserves and national parks for the protection of timber, water resources and wildlife, and the conservation of minerals to say nothing of tourism and government revenues, administrators of the Rocky Mountain Forest Reserve wanted to include the Kootenay Plains Area.<sup>128</sup> The Stoneys' interest in the Kootenay Plains was nearing resolution in 1910 and Frank Oliver, Minister of the Interior, was considering the allocation of 26,000 acres there for reserve land. It was ultimately rejected in favour of commercial resource extraction.<sup>129</sup> Schäffer, Harkin, and Douglas were eventually successful in their aims. Jasper National Park boundaries were expanded to include Maligne Lake. Schäffer has been credited with commencing the "first real flow of Eastern tourist traffic"<sup>130</sup> to the

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<sup>127</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 11. It is important to note Schäffer's connections with Dowling and her subsequent naming of Mt. Charlton after H.R. Charlton who was a publicity agent for the Grand Trunk Pacific Railway and an important advocate for the expansion of Jasper National Park boundaries; Charlton also co-sponsored Schäffer's survey expedition to Maligne Lake. See Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 106.

<sup>128</sup> Snow, *These Mountains are Our Sacred Places*, 95-107.

<sup>129</sup> Smith, *Liberalism, Surveillance and Resistance*, 199.

<sup>130</sup> "Mrs. Wm. Warren Banff Oldtimer and Explorer of Rockies Passes," *Banff Crag & Canyon*, January 27, 1939. News clipping file. WMCR "Mary S. Warren.

Rocky Mountains and her promotion of Maligne Lake, through her publications and lantern-slide presentations, represent an integral responsibility for the Lake's inclusion and conservation within Park boundaries.

Schäffer recorded in her lantern-slide lecture presentation "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies Part II," that she had received "a good deal of criticism" regarding the name she gave the lake and which the Royal Geographical Society upheld. She explains why she chose "so unfortunate a name:" "...the Maligne River runs into the Athabaska, and that last arbiter of Geog.[sic] commendation or censure says one name must be retained as much as possible. So there are at present Maligne Lake, River, Pass, Mountain and Valley. Easy to remember, not easy to forget once seen."<sup>131</sup>

Figure 9 is a digitized image of Schäffer's lantern slide photographed during her return trip to Chaba Imne, (now named Maligne Lake) to survey the lake. The image depicts deep snow, a cleared path, and a pack train of horses burdened with equipment and supplies. En route to Maligne Lake, the group encountered winter snow in mid-June. The group named this passage "Shovel Pass."<sup>132</sup> Owing to the unexpected snow drifts the group encountered and the arduous journey through the Pass, it is likely Schäffer stopped to photograph the scene by way of documenting their difficulties.

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<sup>131</sup> Mary S. Warren, "In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies Part II, 8. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/16. A Jesuit missionary, P.J. de Smet, is credited with referring to the river as the Maligne River, "La Rivière Maligne," owing to the difficult current of the river. The name was given to the river in 1846 and in 1875, H.A.F. McLeod, who explored the lake on CPR surveys, named it Sorefoot Lake. Maligne mountain was named in 1911. Eric J. Holmgren, Patricia M. Holmgren, *Over 2000 Place Names of Alberta*, Expanded Third Edition (Saskatoon: Western Producer Prairie Books, 1976), 172.

<sup>132</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 144.

**Figure 9**  
**Mary Schäffer [?], Making a Trail in Spring [on Shovel Pass], 1911**  
 WMCR/V527 / PS 1 – 130



Mary Schäffer was celebrated as the “first white woman” to see Maligne Lake. In an era of exploration and firsts – the first ascent of a mountain, the first to the pole – Schäffer’s photographs were evidence of such appealing adventures and claims to conquest. However, Schäffer’s textual records indicate that Schäffer herself did not support these claims, her motives simpler, and her objectives more modest. She wrote in a letter “No one may know I went among those hills with a broken heart and only on the high places could I learn that I and mine were very close together. We dare not tell those beautiful thoughts, they like to say ‘explorer’ of me, no, only a hunter of peace. I found it.”<sup>133</sup> Schäffer made several references to her preference for the wilderness over

<sup>133</sup> Mary Schäffer Warren, from a letter cited in Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, unnumbered page.

civilization throughout her textual accounts, and one could speculate that her Quaker upbringing was in part responsible for her modesty concerning her achievements and renown. Rather than conquest, Schäffer sought comfort, contentment, and peace and she “learned to value at its true worth the great un-lonely silence of the wilderness, and to revel in the emancipation from frills, furbelows, and small follies.”<sup>134</sup>

**Figure 10**  
**George Noble [?], [Mary Schäffer at Tarry-a-While], ca.1920**  
 WMCR / V527 / PC (NA66-527)



The 1911 trip marked the last of Schäffer’s extended expeditions into the Canadian Rocky Mountains. She was fifty years of age and she decided to try living in Banff over the winter, as she had grown tired of Philadelphia. Her trail guide and friend, Billy

<sup>134</sup> Mary Schäffer cited in Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 16.

Warren, had located a property and built a home for her located across from the cemetery in Banff. The home was constructed with a modest exterior, but inside was spacious and beautifully appointed with brick fireplaces and the walls and ceilings finished with fine fir planking and decorated with Schäffer's collection of antiques, art, needlework, and Indian artefacts. She named her home "Tarry-a-While."<sup>135</sup> Figure 10 is an image of Mary Schäffer seated before her fireplace in her great room. In this image, Schäffer's hair is pinned up, she is wearing a dress and surrounded by the objects and furnishings typical of a middle-class woman, domesticity itself with a warm fire and a sleeping dog at her feet. Contrasted with Figure 11, the images offer visual confirmation of the contradictions that structured Schäffer's life. On the trail, in Figure 11, Schäffer is dressed in a beaded coat likely a trade she made with Suzette Chalifour Swift, a Métis woman who married Lewis Swift, a white homesteader in the Jasper Valley, whereas at home she was transformed (or returned) to expected conventionality.

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<sup>135</sup> Hart, *Hunter of Peace*, 12.

**Figure 11**  
**Mollie Adams, She Who Colored Slides, 1908**  
 WMCR / V439 / PS - 2



Schäffer married Billy Warren in 1915, who began to acquire numerous businesses in Banff.<sup>136</sup> Schäffer continued to support travel and exploration in the Canadian Rockies, and while she no longer actively participated, save shorter trips still guided by Warren, she sponsored and supported those organizations promoting interest in the area. She was consulted often by people planning trips into the Canadian Rocky Mountains who recognized her as an authority. Schäffer entertained in her home in Banff and maintained

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<sup>136</sup> Warren's business acumen and promotion of the Canadian Rockies as a tourist destination paralleled Schäffer's efforts. See MacFarlane, "Schäffer's Comprehending Equal Eyes," 122-123.

an active correspondence, exchanging letters with people seeking her advice. As Schäffer grew older, she and her husband took winter trips to various destinations on the west coast of Canada and the United States. Schäffer, however, spent most of her time writing and publishing in eastern scientific journals and lecturing with her lantern-slide presentations to geographical societies throughout the United States.<sup>137</sup> The lantern-slide lectures Schäffer used were likely the presentations “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies with Horse and Camera, Part I” and “In the Heart of the Canadian Rockies at the Head Waters of the Saskatchewan and Athabaska, Part II.” And as already stated extracts from these lantern-slide presentations were also sent overseas to wounded soldiers recuperating in English hospitals during the First World War. Two volumes of Schäffer’s photograph albums, dated 1910 - 1921, consist of various scenic views of Banff but Schäffer’s most important photographic contributions to the history of the Canadian Rocky Mountains appears to be during the years 1900 to 1911; there is little that remains of Schäffer’s photographic record after 1920. Schäffer died in 1939 in Banff at age 79.

Her own records, her archive, also have their own history. Following Schäffer’s death, her close friends Colonel Philip and Pearl Moore owned the Schäffer home, Tarry-a-While. Colonel Moore’s son-in-law, Charlie Reid, later lived in the house for many years.<sup>138</sup> The active exchange of lantern slides among Schäffer, Colonel Moore, and Banff clergyman, Tom Lonsdale accounts for the extensive array of Schäffer’s photographs acquired by the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies through these three estates. Close friends of Schäffer, the Vaux’s, also had in their possession some of her 5 x 7-inch

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<sup>137</sup> Schäffer’s personal, literary and research papers series document a productive writing career with manuscripts dated from 1908 to 1925. Mary Schäffer fonds, WMCR M79/1-7.

<sup>138</sup> Warren moved to Vancouver, British Columbia shortly after Schäffer’s death where he died in 1943. Beck, *No Ordinary Woman*, 142.

negatives from 1902 and 1903; these negatives were acquired as part of the Vaux Family donation to the Whyte Museum in 1999. Schäffer's textual and photographic records were thus acquired through donation and transfer during the years 1969 to 2006. Donations were accompanied by books, artefacts, and art works belonging to Schäffer, which were in turn accessioned by the Library, Heritage, and Art departments of the Whyte Museum. Several of Schäffer's photograph albums, prints and postcards were in the possession of Schäffer's chauffeur and caretaker, Banff resident Frank Douglas, and were acquired by the Provincial Archives of Alberta in 1990. An archival legacy of a person thus often exists as a virtual reality scattered in several physical places or amongst intellectual arrangements or groupings (fonds), with multiple or mixed provenances. And so too with Mary Schäffer: American lady of the Philadelphia drawing rooms and Canadian backwoods explorer; artist, photographer, and author; at home in quiet domestic conformity to societal norms and on the trail displaying courage and initiative, it is possible to bring a better understanding to her life through the prism of gender in the contexts of her times.

## CONCLUSION

You'd be surprised to see what's being made of you:  
 A book, a reprint of your Old Indian Trails we made anew  
 with colour reproductions of the lantern slides  
 you so long ago quite lavishly hand-coloured,  
 appended with your heretofore unpublished text  
 about the mapping and the exploration of Chaba Imne<sup>1</sup>

Archival educator Terry Cook argued a decade ago that systems of organizing and classifying information reflect “Western notions of scientific rationalism and logical positivism; conjuring notions of an objectivity within archival practice and an inherent truth in archival records.” While archival theory and practice has long focused on context – mapping the provenancial interrelationships between the creator and the record and reading through and behind the text – core tenets of the profession are rooted in a tradition that, in a “destabilized, virtual, de-centred postmodern world,” become problematic assumptions.<sup>2</sup> These traditional beliefs view records as innocent by-products of actions and administrations, limiting provenance to the single office or place of origin, and claim that the “order” and language imposed on records through archival arrangement and description are value-free recreations of some prior reality.<sup>3</sup> Cook has argued for a postmodern approach to archival practice with analysis of “the language, metaphors and discourse patterns of the words, or the document, or the entire information system, in the

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<sup>1</sup> Jon Whyte, “Letter to Mary Townsend Sharples Schäffer Warren,” in Harry Vandervlist, ed., *Mind Over Mountains* (Calgary: Red Deer Press, 2000), 140. Jon Whyte (1948-1992) was an author, poet, and journalist as well as serving as museum curator of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies in Banff, Alberta. Jon Whyte was not writing literally to Mary Schäffer, who was then long deceased, but a letter of imagination as if she were alive.

<sup>2</sup> Terry Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001), 15.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 13- 15; Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43 (Spring 1997), 17.

context of its time and place, to reveal the underlying mind, motivations, and power structures of the records creator using these patterns.”<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, this postmodern approach, advocated by Cook, and, increasingly, a growing number of archival theorists, acknowledges that “there is not one narrative in a series or collection of records, but many narratives, many stories, serving many purposes for many audiences, across time and space.”<sup>5</sup>

Postmodern theoretical influences continue to stimulate archival theory and practice whereby archives have come to be seen as products of communication processes, both between creators and their records and between archivists and the records in their care. These communication processes occur “within a given formative context of a social, historical, and material character.”<sup>6</sup> In establishing and communicating provenance, archivists confer meaning and subsequently influence how users and researchers (historians among them) will access and employ archival records. Context, in communicating archival provenance, is a rhetorical framing device and as the rhetorical turn in historical scholarship has demonstrated, meanings change with the forms in which historians choose to frame their narratives. Similarly, archivists frame archival records through archival provenance in the contexts in which they situate and foreground archival records and, equally, those contexts that they neglect or ignore. As historian Patrick Hutton has cautioned, “...in opening the past to the infinite possibilities in which its

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<sup>4</sup> Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism,” 16

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, 5.

<sup>6</sup> Tom Nesmith, “Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the ‘Ghosts’ of Archival Theory,” *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999), 144.

memory may be configured, the facts are easily mobilized to serve highly personalized visions of history.”<sup>7</sup>

Archives are sites of power. Postmodern reflections have demonstrated the power of archives and records to shape historical scholarship, collective memory, and national identity as well as to influence how we know ourselves as individuals, groups, and societies.<sup>8</sup> Hudson’s Bay Company Archivist Lisa Friesen has observed that postmodern insights into contextual analysis suggest that “acts of communication, such as contextualizing a body of records, shape rather than just reflect what we understand about the records and that human communication cannot provide a single definitive reality or truth.”<sup>9</sup> Similarly, that which is not contextualized also shapes what we understand about the record. For example, gender is not a pre-existing, transparent and independent sign, but part of an interlocking system of social and cultural meaning.<sup>10</sup> Gender analysis unpacks the common naming of experience that the socially constructed categories “women” and “men” represent. Gender analysis proposes a review of the social meanings of sexual difference as both ideology, acquired and modified through discourse, and experience within specific historical settings; in order to read records for the ways that gendered discourses “‘position subjects’ and for the ways subjects ‘talked back’ while remaining fully aware of the discursive context in which they talked and acted.”<sup>11</sup> The

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<sup>7</sup> Patrick H. Hutton, “Mnemonic Schemes in the History of Memory,” *History & Theory* 36:3 (October 1997), 390-391.

<sup>8</sup> Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Memory,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002), 2.

<sup>9</sup> Lisa Friesen, “‘Every Requisite Information’: Contextual Provenance in the Records of the Commissioner’s Office of the Hudson’s Bay Company, 1884-1910,” (M.A. Thesis, University of Manitoba, 2005), 4.

<sup>10</sup> Laura Wexler, *Tender Violence: Domestic Visions in an Age of U.S. Imperialism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), 181.

<sup>11</sup> Kathleen Canning, “German Particularities in Women’s History/Gender History,” in Sue Morgan, ed., *The Feminist History Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 165-167.

epistemological framework of orthodox histories assumes fixed identities of women and situates their differences outside their discursive constructions. Within this framework, “women” and “men” function as universally understood categories – “the undefined word creates a sense of consensus by attributing to it an assumed, stable, and shared meaning.”<sup>12</sup> The generalized male/female binary “serves to obscure the differences among women in behaviour, character, desire, subjectivity, sexuality, gender identification, and historical experience.”<sup>13</sup> Gender analysis requires the ability to de-naturalize phenomenon like “women,” “men,” femininity, and masculinity and approach these phenomenon as socially constructed cultural categories of difference, as discursive constructs and historically shifting articulations.<sup>14</sup> In order to illustrate the significance of these concepts, a review of past archival and curatorial practices pertaining to Schäffer and her archival material will serve as an example.

In 1980, the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies reissued Schäffer’s original *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies: Incidents of Camp and Trail Life, Covering Two Years’ Exploration through the Rocky Mountains of Canada* under the new title *A Hunter of Peace: Mary T.S. Schäffer’s Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies*. This new edition also included Schäffer’s unpublished account of her 1911 expedition to Maligne Lake and was introduced and edited by Whyte Museum archivist E.J. Hart. The new, re-titled edition contained many new photographs of Schäffer’s including coloured

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<sup>12</sup> Joan W. Scott, “The Evidence of Experience,” *Critical Inquiry* 17:4 (Summer 1991), 777, 788.

<sup>13</sup> Joan Wallach Scott, “Deconstructing Equality – Versus Difference: Or, the Uses of Poststructuralist Theory for Feminism,” in Marianne Hirsch and Evelyn Fox-Keller, eds. *Conflicts in Feminism* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), 143.

<sup>14</sup> Janet Wolff, “Cultural Studies and the Sociology of Culture,” *Invisible Culture: An Electronic Journal for Visual Studies*, (1999), 10. [http://www.rochester.edu/in\\_visible\\_culture/issue1/wolff/wolff.html](http://www.rochester.edu/in_visible_culture/issue1/wolff/wolff.html). (accessed 17, February, 2011).

images, which did not appear in Schäffer's original publication. Moreover, in the new edition, Schäffer's original account is prefaced by an Introduction by Hart.<sup>15</sup>

In 2009, the complete lantern-slide collection of Mary Schäffer was digitized as part of an Access to Holdings Grant, which the Archives and Library at the Whyte Museum received from the Alberta Society of Archives. With the momentum of the digital information revolution, digitization projects enable archivists to provide greater access to archival photographic collections by making available images via the internet and reference-room databases, an important consideration given the geographical location of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, located in Banff, Alberta. Digitization is admittedly an important preservation tool for fragile or deteriorating photographs and preserving archival photograph collections of glass negatives and lantern slides can be a daunting task for researchers and reference archivists who must work in tandem in order to ensure safe-handling practices. However, digitizing a photograph creates a digital surrogate, a new (non)material form with little resemblance to the original beyond its subject content. While Schäffer's photographs are made accessible through digitization and the World Wide Web, and this is undeniably a compelling reason to digitize, they are also partly decontextualized and dematerialized in the process. In preserving the fragile and original physical form of Schäffer's glass lantern slides through digitization, the original physical documentary contexts of viewing the lantern slides and their consequent meaning-making properties are jeopardized.

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<sup>15</sup> Schäffer's original *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* was never reprinted in her lifetime, although Schäffer herself did make inquiries about a reprint in the 1930s.

In 2011 the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies featured Mary Schäffer in their “Women Adventurers in the Rockies” Exhibition<sup>16</sup> and released *An Adventurous Woman Abroad: The Selected Lantern Slides of Mary T.S. Schäffer*, a book that portrays Schäffer as an extraordinary woman and a conqueror of travel.<sup>17</sup> In affiliation with this exhibition, the Whyte Museum hosted “Mary Schäffer, Mountain Woman,” a dramatic presentation of Schäffer’s life; the dramatization was publicized as “an adventurous woman, ahead of her time.” Schäffer’s travel narrative and lantern slides, when compared with the subsequent re-prints of her book,<sup>18</sup> digitized images of her photographs, exhibitions and theatrical interpretations of her life and travels, present contrasting visions of Schäffer facilitated by disciplinary perspectives and institutional practices<sup>19</sup> that frame Schäffer and the meaning of her photographs. Consequently, Mary Schäffer has been interpreted by a variety of researchers, as well as by archival and curatorial staff, as an extraordinary woman through this wide array of exhibits, digitization projects, coffee table books, republications of her *Old Indian Trails*, and the Banff and Jasper tourist industries. As historian Colleen Skidmore has made plain, researchers of Schäffer’s archives have “reclaimed Schäffer as ‘no ordinary woman’ but a spirited, independent adventurer who

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<sup>16</sup> This exhibit features five historical women and five contemporary women who have contributed to Rocky Mountain culture.

<sup>17</sup> This book features 200 of Schäffer’s hand-coloured lantern slides from her travels in the Canadian Rockies, Japan, and Formosa. Michale Lang, *An Adventurous Woman Abroad: The Selected Lantern Slides of Mary T.S. Schäffer* (Surrey, B.C.: Rocky Mountain Books, 2011).

<sup>18</sup> In addition to the WMCR’s re-issue in 1980, Schäffer’s *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* was also re-issued in 2007 as part of Rocky Mountain Books’ Mountain Classics Collection, with a foreword by Janice Sanford Beck. See Mary T.S. Schäffer, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* (Surrey, B.C.: Rocky Mountain Books, 2007). Note that the title of this re-issue of Schäffer’s book has been shortened from its original title.

<sup>19</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, “The Archival Garden: Photographic Plantings, Interpretive Choices, and Alternative Narratives,” in Terry Cook, ed., *Controlling the Past: Documenting Society and Institutions. Essays in Honor of Helen Willa Samuels* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2011), 90-91.

stepped off the beaten track.”<sup>20</sup> The gendered historical contexts of time and place in which Schäffer and many other women travellers, explorers, mountain climbers, photographers, artists, and writers who visited the Canadian Rocky Mountains at the turn of the twentieth century have been suppressed by uncritical characterisations of these women’s accomplishments as extraordinary. This perpetuates gendered assumptions of travel, exploration, and discovery as male privileges.

The case study presented in this thesis explored gender as a key contextual element in the provenance of Schäffer’s photographs – their functional origins, the technological constraints that shaped them, the authorial intentions that determined their audiences, the spaces in which the photographs circulated, and the political, economic, and socio-cultural pre-texts brought to their viewing. It is recognized that some absolute meaning of photographs can never be achieved as meanings shift “as photographs circulate and operate across institutional, discursive, and disciplinary boundaries, as well as across time and space, society and culture.”<sup>21</sup> However, as photography specialist Joan Schwartz has argued, the chief concern of archival photographs from the archival perspective should be “the preservation of the enduring elements and contexts of meaning-making which ensure that the ways in which the facts of the image were invested with and generated meaning survive intact across all archival functions...”<sup>22</sup>

Colleen Skidmore has pointed out that “Schäffer’s original contributions, as well as the complexity and colour of the era in which she made her most important contributions (c.1900-1912), are at risk of burial by mythologies...Schäffer is now known in both popular

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<sup>20</sup> Colleen Skidmore, ed., *This Wild Spirit: Women in the Rocky Mountains of Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2006), 283.

<sup>21</sup> Schwartz, “The Archival Garden,” 105.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 103.

and academic literature as an extraordinary woman.”<sup>23</sup> The problem of viewing Mary Schäffer as an extraordinary woman is that it portrays her accomplishments in a false light. In selling the Rocky Mountains as a tourist destination at the turn of the twentieth century, one type of consumer conceived and targeted was the female adventurer. Additionally, during the period prior to the First World War, travel and photography were pursuits generally limited to European and North American middle-class women. Professor Susan Close has further observed that these women photographers included not only those women in search of leisure but women who used photography as a means of narrating their own stories. At a time when few women had control over their future, some women used photography as a means of documenting and narrating their experiences.<sup>24</sup> History is an “intellectual operation,”<sup>25</sup> a representation of the past. To communicate the provenance of Schäffer’s archival records from the premise of “extraordinary” fails in the archival task of making known how and why records are created.

Mary Schäffer is but one prominent example of a woman traveller in the Canadian Rocky Mountains during this period. There were other women travelling in the Canadian Rocky Mountains and, indeed, the entire world. Schäffer’s archival records, when viewed within their gendered historical, socio-cultural, political, economic, and colonial contexts, communicate how her white, middle-class position facilitated both her opportunity to travel as well as the audiences for (and thus influencing) her written and photographic travel accounts. Examining the gendered historical contexts in which Schäffer travelled and the discursive production and reception of her textual and photographic travel accounts

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<sup>23</sup> Skidmore, *This Wild Spirit*, 284.

<sup>24</sup> Susan Close, *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada (1880-1920)* (Winnipeg: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007), 149, 95.

<sup>25</sup> Pierre Nora, “Between Memory and History: Les Lieux de Memoire,” *Representations* 26, Special Issue: Memory and Counter-Memory (Spring 1989), 8.

conveys how femininity operated as a socially constructed practice and discourse, establishing and unsettling socio-cultural conventions at the turn of the twentieth century in the Canadian Rocky Mountains. Analysis of the contexts of creation and use of Schäffer's records demonstrates how they were constructed in interaction with colonial and gender constraints, and how these constraints determined their use.

Archivists need to bring provenance into sharper relief. While this thesis has suggested the significance of gender to archival provenance through a case-study analysis of the photographic and textual records of an American amateur photographer who travelled in the Canadian Rocky Mountains, both time and space limitations prevented further exploration of this theme. Future research may offer additional insights into the significance for gendered contexts of provenance through comparison with other women photographers travelling in the Canadian Rocky Mountains; exploration of other photography genres; in different record mediums; or through gendered and comparative analysis of the contexts of male travellers and photographers.

Research by archivists into the history of the archival record through examination of the creator(s), the institutional, cultural, and societal dimensions of recordkeeping and documentary artefacts, and the means of communication over space and time,<sup>26</sup> is fundamental to the archival profession's contextual approach to archival administration. Awareness of the gendered contexts of record production is significant for the core archival functions and practical relevance of the daily work of the archivist, for it holds the potential to generate new contextual knowledge about the creation, use, meaning, and

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<sup>26</sup> Terry Cook, "'The Imperative of Challenging Absolutes' in Graduate Archival Education Programs: Issues for Educators and the Profession," *The American Archivist* 63 (Fall/Winter 2000), 385-386.

significance of archival records. Gendered contexts of archival records may well enhance the three main archival functions of appraisal, description, and reference by expanding established explanatory frameworks of the processes of record creation, transmission, use, interpretation, and collective memory. Consideration of gendered contexts of documentary records requires a shift in focus. A shift from narrow conceptions of gender as essentialist and synonymous with the category “women” to reconsideration of the historical articulations of gender and its relational categories of difference such as race, ethnicity, class, national identity, religion, sexual orientation, and colonial positioning. This will afford more nuanced understandings of social and cultural constructions of sexual difference and how these influence record production.

Archival appraisal is the determination of whether or not records have archival and therefore permanent value by assessing the creator’s functions and activities, and determining accordingly whether the record reflects these nuanced contexts of creation and use. Archival appraisal decisions ultimately determine a record’s retention in an archives and, consequently, a society’s collective memory. Appraisal is, therefore, critical to the preservation of documentary heritage. Consequently, gender is a significant consideration as a key appraisal criterion in determining the identity of a record’s creator, contexts of creation, and evidence of how the creator used the records to document their functions and activities.

Gender as context in the arrangement and description of archival records within fonds-level descriptions, biographical histories, finding aids, and other reference tools is particularly relevant in view of recent postmodern conceptions of archival description as

rooted in narrative.<sup>27</sup> Representation, through archival description, whether visual, verbal or otherwise, affects understandings of “women” and the “feminine.”<sup>28</sup> The archival function of arrangement and description is an interpretative practice that effectively shapes the meanings of records and affects how researchers locate, understand, and use records through the creation of finding aids. Finding aids are often a researcher’s first introduction to archival records and are therefore important tools, tools which enable archivists to shape documentary meaning. Archival description is a subjective practice, expressing particular viewpoints, determining and controlling the resulting narratives about records. An awareness of the historically specific and socially constructed nature of gender – specific to time and place – is thus an important factor when describing records in context.

Recent reflections on the archival reference function point to a shift from information to knowledge management, from information providers and “curators of data,”<sup>29</sup> to knowledge creation and deeper, richer contexts, of which gender is certainly one. Reference archivists, sensitive to gender as an ideological and material structure and process, can facilitate and broaden users’ understandings of records and the operation of gender within record-making and record-keeping, as well as making visible the role of the archivist in the creation of knowledge about the records that researchers use. Reference archivists facilitate researchers’ understandings of records and their use of records through their guidance and direction in the reference room and increasingly by structuring access for researchers through remote online tools and protocols. Awareness and understanding

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<sup>27</sup> See Wendy M. Duff and Verne Harris, “Stories and Names: Archival Description as Narrating Records and Constructing Meanings,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002).

<sup>28</sup> Diane Neumaier, ed., *Reframings: New American Feminist Photographies* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1995), 1.

<sup>29</sup> Elizabeth Yakel, “Thinking Inside and Outside the Boxes: Archival Reference Services at the Turn of the Century,” *Archivaria* 49 (January 2000), 141.

of gendered contexts of record creation supports the reference function of providing more information and deeper knowledge about an institutions' holdings. Reference archivists in the reference room or involved in public programming and outreach activities influence, as Joan Schwartz has pointed out, "how records are seen, by whom, how, where, at what cost, and for what purpose."<sup>30</sup>

Gendered contexts of record creation and use expand interpretations of provenance and broaden understandings of archival records. This thesis has explored scholarship in gender studies, history, geography, archival theory, and the history of photography and argued that gender is an important element in the context of a record's provenance, providing nuanced understandings of socio-cultural relations and processes of record creation, use, and meaning. Archival philosopher Hugh Taylor maintained that "defining our theories and principles solely within the terms and resources of our own discipline can be highly incestuous and suggests that records exist for their own sake and are not to be confused with the society which creates them."<sup>31</sup> Gender as context empowers the archival principle of provenance by more fully reflecting how and why records are created and reconnects archives better with the societies that generated them.

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<sup>30</sup> Joan M. Schwartz, "Felix Man's "Canada": Imagined Geographies and Pre-Texts of Looking," in Carol Payne and Andrea Kunard, eds. *The Cultural Work of Photography in Canada* (Montreal & Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2011), 19.

<sup>31</sup> Hugh A. Taylor, "Transformation in the Archives: Technological Adjustment or Paradigm Shift?" *Archivaria* 25 (Winter 1987-88), 25.

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