

“We Want Pictures so Kodak as You Go”: Promoting Winter Recreation in Banff in the 1920s

Lauren Wheeler, University of Alberta

Abstract

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In February 1917 the residents of Banff, Alberta hosted the first Banff Winter Carnival. Aimed at a regional middle class market, the winter carnival became the base of local efforts to get people to visit the Rocky Mountains at a time of year when external promoters, like the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), were not interested in bringing tourists to the region. Local boosters used the established representation of Banff as a wilderness area and incorporated photographs into promotional text to create a different image of place informed by the experience of living in a national park. A careful examination of the 1920 promotional booklet, *Banff Winter Sports: Banff Canada's National Park in Winter, Canada's Winter Playground*, illustrates how Banff boosters used winter recreation and a visual emphasis on people at play in the mountains to make the town a place worth visiting in the winter months.

Introduction

This article traces the emergence of sustained local boosterism of winter tourism to the Canadian Rockies by the residents of Banff, Alberta in the 1920s. It examines the

visual images of winter recreation and the accompanying textual descriptions created by boosters to establish the mountains in winter as a space for interaction with the landscape through recreation. This is distinct from the dominant image of the Rockies as an empty, yet beautiful, wilderness forwarded by the CPR and similar externally based promotional institutions. By examining the nature of the early Banff Winter Carnival and tracing the use of amateur photographs in promotional material, the article will unpack the first sustained local initiative to create a second tourist season rooted in the winter recreation potential of the mountains. To achieve this, boosters incorporated the language of mountain as wilderness established by the CPR along with carefully placed captions to support a visual narrative centred on people pursuing familiar activities against a mountain backdrop. The result is a visual reconfiguration of Banff as a space where people could be part of the landscape through the recreation activities they participated in and was informed by the experience of living in a national park. The distinct re-imagining of the mountains local boosters circulated is expressed in the 1920 booklet *Banff Winter Sports: Banff Canada's National Park in Winter, Canada's Winter Playground*. |7

The Inaugural Banff Winter Carnival, February 1917

The Citizens of Banff are submitting this illustrated booklet of typical winter sports which can be enjoyed in and around Banff, Canada's Winter Playground, during the

Canadian Winter do so with the hope of encouraging an agreeable impression of the Canadian Rockies as an ideal winter resort for the visiting tourist.¹

The Banff Winter Carnival was a winter attraction incorporating recreation activities with demonstration events and athletic competitions. It attracted world-class competitors in speed skating and ski-jumping, while still catering to amateur participants in activities like curling, hockey, and trap shooting. New events were added over time including dog sled races, children's events, packers' competitions, ski racing, boxing, and, for a short time, motorcycle ski-joring. Other features of the carnival included the Stoney Nakoda First Nations, from the nearby reserve at Morley, who were invited to erect tepees along the middle of Banff Avenue and perform "pow-wows" for the visitors. A carnival queen was instituted in 1918 to officially preside over the events, present awards, and be the face of the carnival for its duration.² To become carnival queen, the young woman had to prove her skill in various winter activities and receive the most votes from carnival attendees. By the mid-1920s, funny money called "Karnival Kapers" was printed for use exclusively during the winter carnival. The carnival found patrons in the president and vice president of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR), the Commissioner of Dominion Parks, the Lieutenant-General

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¹ B. W. Collison, *Banff Winter Sports: Banff Canada's National Park in Winter, Canada's Winter Playground* (Banff: Crag and Canyon, 1920), 8.

² A photograph of the carnival queen as printed on the front of the event programs along with her name and hometown. Banff essayist Jon Whyte commented in a 1970s newspaper column that even after all the young women had completed the events it was the prettiest girl who was voted next year's queen.

of Alberta³, and the local Member of Parliament, who for a time was also Prime Minister.⁴ Despite the prominent patrons, the driving force behind the carnival was the residents of Banff and the intention was to establish the town as a winter tourism destination.⁵

Festivities of the first carnival in 1917 began on February 5th and lasted through February 17th. The Tenth Annual Banff Bonspiel opened the carnival with games for local and visiting rinks, and ample trophies to be won. Hockey games between teams from Banff, Canmore and Bankhead were held on the weekends as part of the regular rotation of games for the Park Hockey League. Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights offered fireworks at the ice palace and dancing at Brewster's Hall.⁶ Snowshoeing, skating, tobogganing, swimming and trapshooting were some of the competitive events with prizes awarded for first and second place.

The results of the carnival events were printed in the February 17, 1917, edition of the weekly newspaper *The Crag and Canyon*. It shows Banff residents dominating the competitions. The newspaper heralded the carnival a success worthy of repetition. An editorial on the tourist

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³ The Lieutenant-General of Alberta in the 1920s was Banff resident Dr. R.G. Brett.

⁴ As Banff was part of the Calgary-West riding when R.B. Bennett was Prime Minister, he was also the Member of Parliament for Banff.

⁵ Donald G. Wetherell, "A Season of Mixed Blessings: Winter and Leisure In Alberta Before World War II," in E.A. Corbet and A.W. Rasporich (eds), *Winter Sports in the West* (Calgary: The Historical Society of Alberta, 1990), 38.

⁶ The Ice Palace was built by POW's from the Castle Mountain Internment Camp the first three years of the Carnival and placed in front of Brewster Hall on the corner of Banff Avenue and Caribou Street or the Canadian Imperial Bank on the corner of Banff Avenue and Buffalo Street.

potential of the event recognized that “this will cost money, but we are building for the future and if we build well and true the future will bring compensations.”⁷ The man behind this editorial and the publisher of *The Crag and Canyon*, Norman Luxton, was also one of the original proponents of a winter carnival.⁸ Luxton and magistrate B.W. Collison envisioned the carnival as a means of attracting tourists in the winter using the activities popular with residents of Banff. As the 1917 program stated, “the town belongs to you during carnival weeks and the citizens of Banff have only one desire – that you find thorough enjoyment and supreme amusement.”⁹ The Banff Winter Carnival was a success due to the work of citizens and events rooted in popular winter recreation activities. |10

The Banff Winter Carnival began the push to establish the town of Banff as a winter tourism destination. Publicity was directed at a regional Canadian audience and relied on photographs to sell a new idea of Banff based on winter recreation centered in the town. The distinct image that local promoters presented is best illustrated by the 1920 booklet *Banff Winter Sports: Banff Canada’s National Park in Winter, Canada’s Winter Playground*. This booklet used textual descriptions of the amenities and recreation opportunities in Banff alongside carefully-arranged photographs of people pursuing winter recreation which

⁷ Norman Luxton, “Plan Early for the 1918 Carnival,” *Crag and Canyon*, 24 February 1917, 1.

⁸ Luxton’s use of the newspaper to promote the carnival to residents is to be expected as he regularly used it as a platform to promote his other business ventures.

⁹ 1917 Banff Winter Carnival Program, p. 2, Info-file, Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies (hereafter WMCR), Banff, Alberta.

were drawn from the collections of residents. The photographs visually reconfigured Banff as a space for people instead of a space for nature and wilderness. This image was informed by the experience of living in a national park. The local boosters who worked to create a second tourist season also selected the photographs used in Banff Winter Sports. These images are reflections of the identity of Banff citizens just as much as they are constructions of place for the consumption of potential tourists. The promotional image was directly informed by the experience of living in Banff National Park. | 11

The CPR's portrayal of Banff

Alan MacEachern summarized the early twentieth century definition of what made a landscape deserving of being set aside as a national park as: "The parks had meaning and value because they were beautiful, and they were beautiful because they were wild and natural, and they were wild and natural because they were mountainous."¹⁰ The mountains were the reason to visit the western Canadian national parks and early promotion of the region by the Canadian Pacific Railway capitalized on this. The CPR hired artists to paint romanticized versions of the mountains along the railway line and photographers to capture them in the best natural light.¹¹ Marketing was

¹⁰ Alan MacEachern, *Natural Selections: National Parks in Atlantic Canada, 1935-1970* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 33-34.

¹¹ In E.J. Hart's *Trains, Peaks and Tourists* (Banff: E.J.H. Literary Enterprises Ltd, 2000), Chapter 3 details the careful cultivation of an image of the Rocky Mountains by artists hired by the railway. For an art history perspective on the

directed at elite tourists with the money and time to spend travelling around the mountains in luxury. The CPR sold what tourists could see rather than what they could do and controlled where they went inside the park.¹² This approach was specific to the summer months, leaving a void in winter advertising which local boosters used to create an alternative vision of the mountains.

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The image the CPR presented focused on the rejuvenating qualities of the mountains - fresh air, scenic vistas and the thermal waters of the Sulphur Mountain hot springs were advertised as a miracle cures for the ailments of modern urban life. The mountains were to be observed and cherished as one of the last remaining pristine landscapes in North America. To facilitate easy viewing of the mountains the CPR established a string of luxury hotels.¹³ These allowed wealthy travelers to experience the landscape in controlled comfort and enforced the idea that the mountains were for seeing, not touching.

A small proportion of early travelers ventured into the back-country or ascended unnamed peaks in their desire to experience the wilderness away from the railway tracks. They went there in search of the wilderness promised by the CPR, to get away from the crowds along the CPR lines and to see what was beyond the tracks in the wider mountains.¹⁴ These travelers temporarily left the

impact of the railway artists on the way Canada is imagined, see Lynda Jessup's "Canadian Artists, Railways, the State and the 'Business of Becoming a Nation,'" PhD Dissertation, University of Toronto, 1992.

¹² Leslie Bella, *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987), 23-24.

¹³ See Chapter 3 of Hart, *Trains, Peaks and Tourists*.

¹⁴ Late nineteenth century travelers like Walter Wilcox, Samuel Allen, A. P. Coleman and Mary Schaffer frequented the Canadian Rocky Mountains yearly,

luxuries offered by the railway to take back-country trips, to make scientific observations about the mountains, to claim first ascent of peaks and participate in the elite culture associated with membership in the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC). Even for these travelers who ventured away from the railway lines, the draw of Banff National Park was the opportunity to be in a wilderness landscape. For them the town of Banff was the last outpost of civilization before reaching the wilderness which was the main attraction.¹⁵

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Local residents' portrayal of Banff

The greatest challenge Banff boosters faced was bringing the town out of the shadow of the mountains and making it the place worth visiting. The monopoly of the CPR on summer tourism forced local promoters to turn their efforts to the winter season. The image of the town that emerged around the carnival was tailored specifically to entice people to visit during what was then considered to be the off-season. Local promoters had to adjust the summer image of the mountains used by the CPR to attract a new type of tourist. To accomplish this, the established wilderness idea of the mountains was worked into the

publishing accounts of the back-country beyond the railway line. They were in the minority of travelers from this time, but their proficiency in writing and photographing their adventures has made their accounts the most accessible for those interested in studying early tourism to the region. There has been a recent resurgence of interest in their writing in the mountain parks' area with the re-issue of many of these works by Calgary based Rocky Mountain Books as part of their Mountain Classics Collection.

¹⁵ See, Mary Schaffer, *Old Indian Trails of the Canadian Rockies* (New York: G.P. Putnum and Sons, 1912) and Walter Wilcox, *The Rockies of Canada* (New York: G.P. Putnum and Sons, 1900).

presentation of Banff as a civilized town in the midst of the wild.¹⁶ The town was the focal point and the landscape was alluded to in an attempt to make the activities of the Banff Winter Carnival distinct from those of other carnivals. Not every winter carnival offered snowshoeing tramps to mountain summits followed by swimming in thermal waters. The attention boosters drew to the peopled area of the park emphasized the town as a modern and civilized place in the wilderness and made the wilderness accessible.

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For the carnival to be successful it was essential that the promotion cater to the consumerism of the middle classes while not abandoning the wilderness ideal of the mountains entirely. Banff could not be presented as overly urban because the anti-modern desire for wild nature that developed in the late nineteenth century was still part of the motivation for people to visit the mountains.¹⁷ William Cronon asserts that “the concept of wilderness had to become loaded with some of the deepest core values of the culture that created and idealized it: it had to become sacred.”¹⁸

Designated wilderness areas like Banff National Park were sacred because they were perceived to contain

¹⁶ Bella, 23.

¹⁷ Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995); John Sears, *Sacred Places: American Tourist Attractions in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and Ian McKay, *Quest of the Folk: Antimodernism and Cultural Selection in Twentieth-Century Nova Scotia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1994). All these works identify anti-modernism as driving factors in tourism to various places marketed as wilderness.

¹⁸ William Cronon, “The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature,” in *Uncommon Ground: Towards Reinventing Nature*, ed. William Cronon (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1995), 73.

no settlements or permanent resident populations. It was, however, necessary to assure potential winter visitors that they would be comfortably taken care of during their visit and show that the area was accessible to the general public. This subverted what Leslie Bella characterized as the CPR's control of the mountains when she observed "businesses that might be patronized by the working class were not sufficiently aesthetic [for the CPR]. Access to the mountains was provided instead to the upper and middle-income tourists willing to pay substantial sums for a sanitized view of the mountains."¹⁹

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By pitching the town of Banff through the winter carnival to a regional middle-class tourist base the boosters were connecting with the consumerism characteristic of this socio-economic group and making the anti-modern wilderness ideal available to a wider range of visitors. The quiet co-operation from the CPR allowed people living outside the park to travel to Banff for the day during the carnival on discounted fares. This was not the demographic the railway targeted during the summer until the mid 1920s, when it established bungalow and car camps as affordable alternatives to their luxury hotels.²⁰ For the regional middle class visitor the affordable fares along with the familiarity of the events offered at the carnival made Banff a safe, yet exotic destination for a winter day-trip.

¹⁹ Bella, 24.

²⁰ Automobiles were not allowed into the Park until 1917 and then were only allowed to operate on designated roads. In the winter these roads would have been impassable making the railway the sole means of accessing Banff. The Crag and Canyon, 1915-1921.

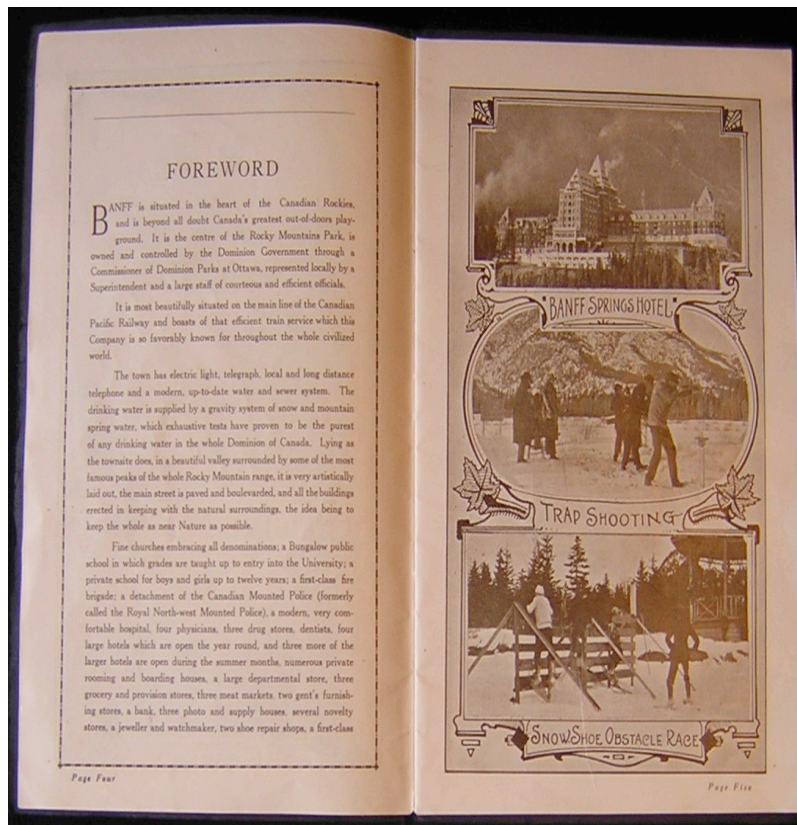


Figure 1: B. W. Collison, Banff Winter Sports: Banff Canada's National Park in Winter, Canada's Winter Playground (Banff: Crag and Canyon, 1920), 4-5.

The winter tourism potential of Banff was the topic of the Banff Winter Sports booklet.²¹ Intended to entice people from across Canada to visit, the 40-page booklet was laid out with text on the left hand page and photographs on

²¹ There is no publisher information included on the booklet. It was mostly likely published by the local newspaper, The Crag and Canyon, as Norman Luxton was the owner and publisher of the newspaper and highly involved in the founding of the Banff Winter Carnival. His was also the only printing press in the area and often printed off the posters for the winter carnival and other local events.

the right (Fig 1).²² This format balanced written descriptions of winter activities with visual proof of people participating in the activities in Banff. The attention was placed on the people instead of the landscape, creating an image of winter tourism in Banff that was distinct from the summer tourism promoted by the CPR.

Advertising winter tourism visually situated the human within the natural environment. This reflected the town of Banff as a human space within an area labeled wilderness, and the relationship residents of the town had with the mountain landscape. Creating a new image of Banff relied on photographs to show winter recreation rather than text to describe it. This was informed by established advertising techniques and overtly carried in the Banff Winter Sports booklet, which stated “the intention is to let the actual pictures, which have all been taken by amateur photographers, do the talking.”²³ Local boosters circulated images of the mountains that focused on people instead of the landscape and Banff Winter Sports used visual images alongside text to sell this new kind of tourism in Banff. The mountain landscape is downplayed in the photographs and attention is focused on familiar winter activities that could be done in mountains. The textual narrative sold the specifics of winter recreation and the winter carnival to readers. The photographs sold the experience and together these narratives created an image

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²² The reference copy of Banff Winter Sports I used had belonged to a Mrs E. Dingall who noted the names of some of the people featured in the photographs. Any notation seen in the figures is hers.

²³ Collison, 8.

of Banff in which winter opened the town and the mountains to recreation and people were the focus.

Banff Winter Sports begins by situating the town within the wilderness associated with the mountain parks. Banff is presented as greater than any other town in Western Canada because of its mountain surroundings. It is described as the perfect combination of wilderness and civilization:

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[I]n a beautiful valley surrounded by some the most famous peaks of the whole Rocky Mountain range, [Banff] is artistically laid out, the main street is paved and boulevarded, and all the buildings erected in keeping with the natural surroundings, the idea being to keep the whole as near Nature as possible.²⁴

The mountains are used as the first ploy to grab the reader's attention in the text but the photographs draw attention away from the mountain backdrop and towards people at play. The three photographs situated opposite this excerpt are not of the mountains or even the town. They show the Banff Springs Hotel, trap shooting, and a snowshoe obstacle course race (Fig 1). The mountains are not the focus of these images, instead the people are shown "as near Nature as possible." From the opening pages the dual narratives of Banff Winter Sports reference the

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 4.

mountain wilderness textually while visually picturing people pursuing outdoor recreation.

The text of Banff Winter Sports is steeped in a booster dialogue that offers an alternate version of Banff. It sells popular winter activities in a sublime location and identifies the infrastructure in the town that provides comfort for winter visitors. The mountains are described as enhancing activities like skating, snowshoeing and tobogganing. The text is designed to speak to the average family looking for something to do in the winter that is different but affordable, and is used to sell the specifics of visiting Banff in the winter. This leaves the accompanying photographs to give visual proof of what activities are offered and the people participating. To do this, the booklet's text continually draws attention to the 73 photographs as illustrations of the experience described.²⁵ Because the photographs are about showing rather than telling, they maintain a stronger connection to the local understanding of place than the text and suggest the importance of visual culture in how residents identified with their location. The centrality of images to promoting winter tourism is emphasized by the last sentence of Banff Winter Sports, "Kodak as you go."²⁶

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The text of the booklet is about the specifics, contextualizing the activities possible at Banff within a universal Canadian winter experience and promoting the

²⁵ Early use of images (painted and photographic) by the CPR to promote travel to the Rockies and frequent corporate and visitor reframes that the beauty is impossible to put into words established a precedent of using images over words to entice tourism. See Hart and Jessup.

²⁶ Collison, 38.

town as a safe place to visit in the winter. The photographs had to show that a brief winter retreat to Banff was attainable for the average person. The text indicates the photographs were “taken by amateurs,” suggesting Banff was not just for the wealthy because by the early twentieth century, photography was an established pastime of the middle class.²⁷ The request directed visitors to bring their Kodak cameras and take pictures to send to friends not fortunate enough to join in “this paradise of winter beauty.” This message encouraged them to engage visually before they even arrived²⁸ and supports the assertion by Miles Orvell. He remarked that “photography stands mid-way, so to speak, between the descriptive and image-making art of literature and the concreteness of the material world.”²⁹ In Banff Winter Sports, the photographs stood in for the actual experience in selling winter tourism and represented it after visitors returned home from Banff. |20

Text and images in the promotion of winter recreation

The inclusion of photographs indicates a faith in the ability of photographs to confer importance and construct meaning independent of what surrounds them, and speaks back to the assertion that the photographs “do the talking.”³⁰ This allows for the creation of two narratives

²⁷ Miles Orvell, *The Real Thing: Imitation and Authenticity in American Culture 1880-1940* (Chapel Hill & London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 75.

²⁸ Collison, 38.

²⁹ Orvell, xxii.

³⁰ Collison, 8.

within Banff Winter Sports. The textual narrative is about coming to the mountains for the purpose of recreation. The photographic narrative is about people doing the activities mentioned in the text. In this way the extensive text functions to frame the photographs just as captions do. Clive Scott has asserted that through captions, “meaning itself is displaced, removed from the image; the image is either only part of a metaphor or the instigator of a presiding voice which, in return endows it with a justification.”³¹ The text potentially overwrites the message of the photographs but the spatial separation of the two narratives on opposing pages helps to negate this effect. The booklet can be read purely as a piece for textual information about visiting Banff in the winter if the photographs are completely ignored and alternatively, the text can be forgotten and the photographs become a story of their own. However, the booklet’s form and the practice of captioning the photographs causes the two narratives to speak to each other. |21

The continual interaction between the text and photographs in Banff Winter Sports allows the booklet to function in a similar way to the photographic essay. In his analysis of four notable photographic essays W. J .T. Mitchell explains:

The text of the photo-essay typically disclose a certain reserve or modesty in its claims to ‘speak for’ or interpret the images; like the photograph,

³¹ Clive Scott, *The Spoken Image: Photography and Language* (London: Reaktion, 1999), 53.

it admits its inability to appropriate everything that was there to be taken and tries to let the photographs speak for themselves or 'look back' at the viewer.³²

Based on this and the three distinct characteristics of the photographic essay laid out by Mitchell, it is possible to examine the booklet as a photo-essay. Such an approach makes the interference of the text into the photographs, in the form of captions, even more important. At the root of the photo-essay is the idea that despite any attempts to make the visual and the textual separate, the two medium will always influence each other. The essay is a partial explanation that relies on the photographs to deepen its message while the counter is true of photographs in the use of captions to illuminate further on what is presented as visual proof. The most obvious and intrusive way text can mediate a photograph is in the form of captions, a technique used throughout Banff Winter Sports with various results. |22

Captions

Captions incorporated into the photograph pages of Banff Winter Sports function much as captions in newspapers. According to Scott, "the caption, as mediation, offers a promise of a contact between the viewer and the

³² W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Photographic Essay: Four Case Studies," in *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 289.

viewed.”³³ Most of the captions are straightforward descriptions of the photograph, for example “dog races,” “tobogganing,” “curling,” and “ladies hockey.” Others invoke a sense of what it would be like to participate in the winter carnival. A good example is the last page of the booklet where all three photographs are captioned in ways that place the viewer in the image. Three youths on a toboggan are labeled “Fun on the toboggan,” a boy on a sled pulled by a dog is “All Ready,” and three men waiting to dive into a pool are “Swimming in Hot Pool” (Fig 2).³⁴ For these images the captions attached are the mediator that draws the viewer into activities depicted through the use of the present participle. All three captions insinuate activity on the part of the people depicted, confirming Scott’s remark: that the present participle, by shifting the focus from the act to the agent and by making the act itself temporally indeterminate, condemns the protagonist to a kind of passivity, an embroilment in the act, rather than allowing him/her to perform it.³⁵

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The captions also intensify Susan Sontag’s observation that “photographs may be more memorable than moving images, because they are a neat slice of time, not a flow.”³⁶ In this case the little boy and his dog are left in a perpetual state of “All Ready” and the three men at the hot springs pool are forever about to dive-in to go “Swimming in Hot Pool.” This captioning technique draws

³³ Scott, 54.

³⁴ Collison, 40.

³⁵ Scott, 118-119.

³⁶ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1977; New York: Picador, 2001), 17.

the audience into the activity because it “seems to negate both what we already know, and the nature of the photograph itself, which has been snapped out of time and space as a random, mercurial fragment.”³⁷

The captions are also part of the arrangement of the photographs in Banff Winter Sports in a scrapbook fashion. Along with the captions the photographs have been cropped, placed inside carefully drawn borders and the occasional pen and ink illustration is inserted between photographs. This shows that careful thought and planning were put into the arrangement of the photographs in relation to each other, but the same cannot be said of the text placed opposite the photographs. Scott has argued that “we need to understand the psycho-perceptual triggers activated by the embedding of a photograph in newsprint, and particularly the linguistic features peculiar to the captions that project it.”³⁸ Though he is speaking specifically to photographs in newspapers, the idea of “linguistic features peculiar to the captions” is important in shaping how an image is understood and is applicable to the text-photograph relationship in Banff Winter Sports. Rarely do the photographs in the booklet relate directly to the text closest to them. For example, the page textually describing figure skating and hockey is paired with images of skiing, tobogganing and trap shooting.

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³⁷ Scott, 118.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 99.



Figure 2: B. W. Collison, Banff Winter Sports, 40.

Cropping

The scrapbook style treatment of the photographs facilitates cropping most of them to fit inside the decorative boxes. Cropping photographs around the active people in them compliments the photographic narrative about people in the mountains. It draws attention to the overall theme of Banff Winter Sports, bringing visitors to Banff to be active in the mountains, not to merely look at them. The people pictured are nameless but the activities are familiar, allowing the viewer to imagine they too are pursuing the activities featured alongside the smiling faces of the locals. Cropping frames the activities described in words with careful layout and placement of the photographs on each

page. The treatment of photographs with such consideration indicates the conscious efforts to create an image of Banff in winter by the local boosters behind the booklet and the winter carnival.

The focus on people is clear in the careful cropping of photographs to make the people and the activities the only subject of the images. This comes partly from the scrapbook style layout as placing photographs in bordered spaces dictates how much of the image is visible. Especially for the photographs placed in oval borders, the exterior flourish draws the viewer's eye toward the centre of the photograph. This in effect is seen in a photograph of the start of a snowshoe race. Cropping the edges of the photograph automatically excludes the areas where mountains are most visible, drawing the eye away from the scenic backdrop and towards the group of men running on snowshoes and crowds around them watching. The same is true when the original shape is maintained but the size of the image is reduced. The ladies' hockey photographs are cropped down around the women on the ice at the expense of the landscape in which the sport takes place. The only photographs where cropping does not erase the mountain landscape are those of ski jumping. The nature of the sport is such that in order to capture the jumper in action and give a sense of the distance jumped it is necessary to leave environmental context intact.

The people-centric narrative of the photographs is balanced by the heavy textual descriptions of the landscapes in which the various activities are preformed. Some descriptions are specifically of the natural features

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which facilitated the activity, for example the toboggan slide is described as “constructed on the natural slope of Tunnel Mountain...the distance being upwards of half a mile.”³⁹ Other activity descriptions are based on situating the reader within the event in a way the photographs may not allow. This is apparent in the text on sleighing:

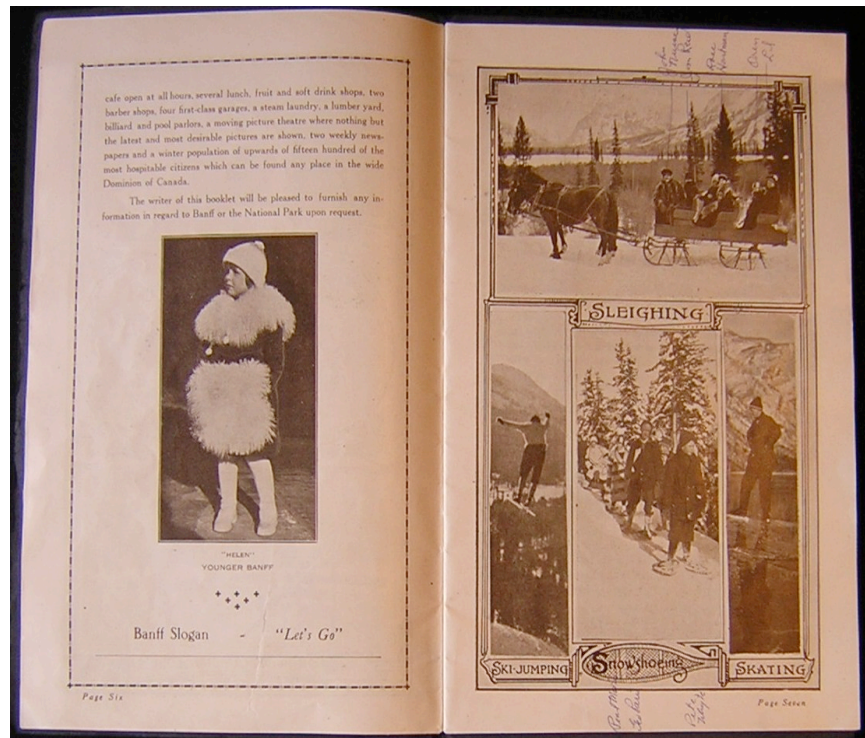
From the middle of November, there is as a rule sufficient snow on the ground to provide excellent sleighing. You may enjoy the drives by cutter, being your own “chauffer” and having your best girl with you, or you may join a party and be driven over the popular drives by an experienced driver with a spirited team hitched to a four or six-seater. The old-time sleighing parties with sleigh boxes filled with hay, lots of warm blankets and a host of pretty girls is also much enjoyed, especially among the younger people, who arrange drives to outside points where dancing and games are indulged in until midnight, or later. The drive home is one of untold pleasure, and the merry jingle of the bells, and the melody of the massed singing as it rings out on the still, frosty mountain air will long remain with you as a very happy memory.⁴⁰

It is impossible for the single photograph of six people in a sleigh to convey all aspects of the sleighing experience, so the text is used to flesh this out (Fig 3). Used thus, the text provides the extraneous information to elaborate on the activities and sell the experience to potential visitors. The text also expands the frame of the images to include the landscape that has been cropped out

³⁹ Collison, 14.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 18.

of most of the photographs. In these two ways the text helps contextualize the photographs by including information the image can not.



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Figure 3: B. W. Collison, Banff Winter Sports, 6-7.

Gender, photographs, and winter recreation

The photographs selected to represent Banff to potential winter tourists construct a space of recreation for everyone regardless of age or gender. There are ladies playing hockey, children around a camp fire, girls on skis, men ski jumping, couples skating, and boys racing through

obstacle courses on snowshoes to name a few. This differs from the text in Banff Winter Sports which emphasizes “Ladies Hockey” and “Ladies Curling” as distinct events and treats them as spectacles because women were participating instead of watching the sport. The photographs of women included in Banff Winter Sports are not limited, as the text suggests, to hockey and curling. There are women pictured pursuing all activities except trapshooting, therefore visually there is little distinction between male and female recreational space. |29

The photographs show a certain amount of tolerance towards women participating in traditionally male dominated sports as well as both genders pursuing other activities together. Age, however, is a constant determinant of who can participate and who can watch. While both young and old are featured participating in winter recreation, there is a distinction made in the activities youths and adults should participate in. Tobogganing photographs only show children and youth on toboggans sliding down the hill, while the adults are left standing on the sidelines watching. The reverse is true of curling photographs which feature only adults engaged in the sport, with children and youths nowhere to be found. But some activities were open to all ages in which young and old participated together. The photographs of snowshoe tramps present the activity as one where children and adults jointly interact with the mountain environment. The five photographs of a snowshoe tramp

up Sulphur Mountain⁴¹ give the impression that an experienced adult is leading and supervising the younger participants (Fig 4). It is an activity that opens the wilderness to all, but only under the watch of someone older and more experienced.

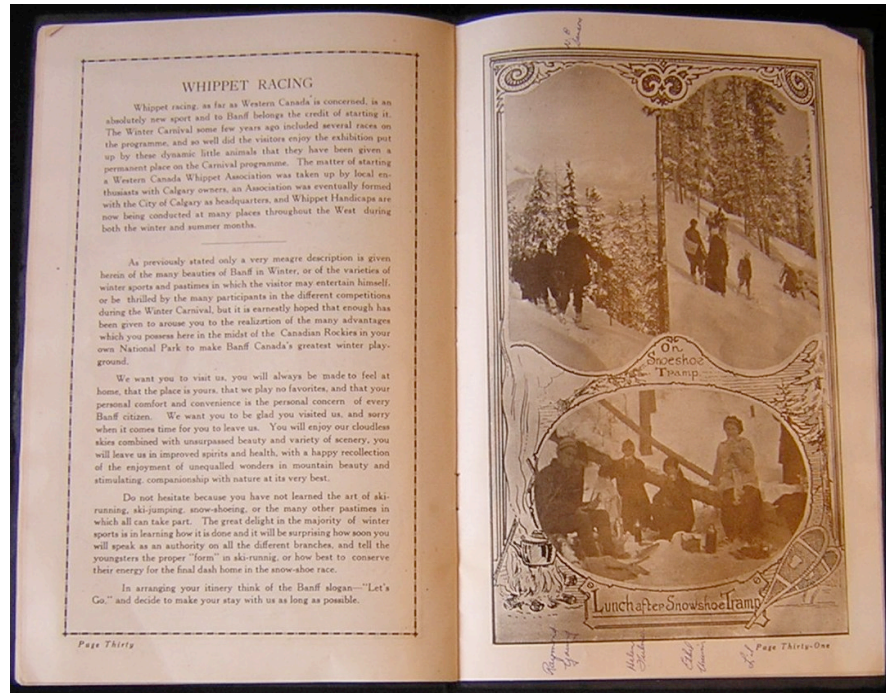


Figure 4: B. W. Collison, Banff Winter Sports, 31.

⁴¹ The photographs on pages 7, 19, 31 and 35 can be identified as from a 1918 snowshoe trip up Sulphur Mountain by cross reference to the George Paris fonds (V484) and the Byron Harmon fonds (V263), both held at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies. Only page 31 of the booklet has been included here.

Conclusion

The 1920s public image of winter in Banff was based on an idea constructed by local boosters instead of by the distant promotional machine of the CPR. It was rooted in an understanding of place that came from the experience of residents of Banff living in the Rocky Mountains and incorporated winter pastimes pursued throughout Canada. Lingering shadows of established techniques of marketing the mountains are present in this promotion, from the occasional mountain vista to the regular reminders to “Kodak as you go.”⁴² The juxtaposition of text and photographs in the Banff Winter Sports booklet allowed local boosters to narrate winter recreation in a way that facilitated imagining pursuing the specified activities in the mountains while the accompanying photographs made people, not the landscape, the focal point. The scrapbook-esque layout creates a sense of familiarity with the people and activities depicted and the captions suspend the people in a perpetual state of action. Banff boosters created a second tourist season informed by their experiences as residents of an institutionalized wilderness that was distinct from the wilderness centred promotion of the CPR. By marketing the mountains as a space for winter recreation local boosters reconfigured the visual image of Banff and established an imagining of the town and park that continues to define winter tourism promotion in Banff National Park.

⁴² Collison, 38.

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