THE VIEW FROM THE HILL

National Park Culture and Gatineau Park

1920-1960

by

ALISA CATHARINE APOSTLE

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ABSTRACT

During the 1920s and 1930s a specific Nature aesthetic came to be associated with the young nation of Canada. This Nature ideal was promoted in many cultural circles, but in none was it so clearly and physically manifest as in the National Parks projects of the time. Bound up with a new government-administered national tourism industry, Nature tourism in the 1920s and 1930s was inextricably linked to an emerging iconography of Canadian Nature.

This project is a two-part study. The first focus explores the emergence of a Canadian national park culture during the interwar period. The characteristics of this national park culture were premised upon a particular image of Nature, an aesthetic that echoed, for example, in the work of the Group of Seven. Though Canadian Nature was presented as 'pristine' and usually 'un-peopled', this thesis demonstrates that this ideal was very complex and culturally-embedded. Presented in nationalist narratives as the geographic and ideological origin of the Canadian nation, Canadian Nature was, in fact, the product and result of many very deliberate undertakings. As this paper shows, these influences ranged from the imperatives of defining a Canadian identity and the pressures of the growing tourism and automobile industries, to Canada's cultural identity as a post-colonial territory with mixed loyalties to the 'Empire' and its own systems of colonization.

The second half of this project is an examination of the creation of the Gatineau Park. Gatineau Park is a national park located in Quebec, on the other side of the Ottawa River from the nation's capital. Created throughout the 1920s to 1960s by the government organization the Federal District Commission (FDC), Gatineau Park is a perfect example of the physical construction of national culture. The FDC was a national government body, created by Prime Minister Mackenzie King, that enjoyed great power and autonomy during that period. The national culture of Nature was so compelling that during the height of the Depression the FDC was able to expropriate thousands of acres of land to create an enclave for its own national park. This thesis demonstrates how the FDC adopted many of the themes and rhetorics of National Park culture in order to 'naturalize' its own vision and presence in the Gatineau. Through its use of the language and imagery of Canadian Nature, the FDC made Nature the agent responsible for the creation of Gatineau Park. That the FDC was successful in its endeavors is a demonstration of the strength of the Nature ideal initially cultivated in the national parks during the 1920s and 1930s.

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ABBREVIATIONS

CGTB	Canadian Government Travel Bureau
CNPA	Canadian National Parks Association
FDC	Federal District Commission
NCC	National Capital Commission
NCD	National Capital District
NCR	National Capital Region
OIC	Ottawa Improvement Commission

CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION

There is indeed nothing more surprising than the way in which the national park idea has spread and taken hold of the public imagination...in the past few years we have seen the national parks movement spread over the entire civilized world,
- Canada, National Parks Branch, *Annual Report of the Commissioner*, 1927, 1.

In the 1930s people from all over North America and the British Commonwealth wrote to the Deputy Minister of Canada's National Parks for souvenirs. Many of them had never been to any of Canada's eighteen national parks, but that did not matter because what they wanted from him were souvenirs. In 1937, for example, Mr. A. Hoffman of New Zealand sent the Publicity and Information Branch of the National Parks an offering of bumper stickers and a photograph of a New Zealand "native". In exchange, he wanted the Canadian government to send him one of the Canada Parks buffalo license plates he had seen some fellow countrymen sporting.[1] Mr. Hoffman was merely one of thousands pursuing part of an emerging Canadian national park culture in the 1920s and 1930s.

This thesis is an examination of the early years of government-sponsored nature tourism in Canada, and the set of images and icons that grew up around it. This process was part of, and drew upon, a broader discourse of Canadian nationalism during the interwar period. The marriage between nature tourism and nationalism produced what I

[1] National Archives of Canada (NAC), RG 84, vol. 2049, letter to Deputy Minister, July 20, 1937.

term a Canadian 'national park culture'. The set of icons and practices that emerged with this culture gained currency in Canada and abroad.

To explore this phenomenon more explicitly, I investigate, in the second half of my thesis, the history of Gatineau Park, a national park across the river from Ottawa, in the province of Quebec. The Gatineau Park project was begun in the 1920s and carried on well into the 1950s. My thesis will examine the ways in which the Federal District Commission, the government body responsible for the creation of the park, drew upon the rhetorics and strategies of a national park culture to legitimate transformation of an area of mixed farming, woodlots and cottages into a national park.

This introduction provides an outline of the topics I am looking at, and the primary sources I have researched for the project. These are followed by a brief conceptual discussion of Canadian nature, nationalism and national iconography. I will conclude the introduction with a look at some contemporary theories on the themes of 'nature' and 'tourism', and an overview of the following chapters.

Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, Canada's National Parks Branch was a partner in a growing international tourist exchange. One main product of this exchange was the Nature* specifically found in national parks. The Parks Branch devised a number of promotion schemes to cultivate a market for this relatively new type of tourism. Intense

* Throughout this thesis, I shall use "Nature" with a capital N to denote a specific cultural represenation of the natural world.

promotional campaigns transformed the parks into immediately recognizable travel destinations. The national parks became symbols of Canada's emerging identity. In Canada, music scores with such titles as *Heart of the Rockies Waltz, Lake Amethyst Minuet,* or *In Nature's Cathedral,* were played to radio listeners across the country. Countless photographs and dozens upon dozens of articles about national parks appeared in Canadian and American magazines. At the Empire Exhibits in London, during the 1920s, photos of the Rocky Mountains were put on display next to buffalo-fur coats, bearskin rugs, mounted buffalo heads and pictures from Banff Park's Indian Day celebrations. My thesis looks at the production of those symbols associated with Canadian National Parks, and the way in which they served to help cement a unique association between Canada's identity as a young nation and the images of a Nature flawlessly preserved in its national parks.

In the 1920s, at the same time that the national park 'idea' was taking shape, Prime Minister Mackenzie King and his newly-organized Federal District Commission (FDC) decided that they wanted their own national park in 'Ottawa's Backyard'.[2] Ottawa's Backyard was, in those terms, all the land on the other side of the Ottawa River in the province of Quebec visible from the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. This area was, and still is, known as the Gatineau Hills. During the inter-war period some Ottawans were in the habit of cross-country skiing in the Gatineau for recreation. Still

[2] I use this term from a December 15, 1951 *Maclean's Magazine* article entitled, "Ottawa's Beautiful Backyard". This view of the Gatineau evokes the whole discussion best attributed to Raymond Williams, but very often used, of City-Countryside, Metropolis-Hinterland, and the subsequent problems in describing these relations in such binary terms. Much of this analysis can apply to Ottawa's relationship to Gatineau.

other Ottawans, wealthy citizens and members of Parliament, had summer cottages in the area. For the most part, the area was still made up of small towns founded during the lumber trade, rural farm areas, and individually-owned wood lots.

The Gatineau was re-created as a park whose main purpose was to serve the national capital and its rhetorics of nationalism. My thesis identifies four main themes, or stages, in this transformation. The first part of the process began in the 1920s and 1930s with the call for a national park for the use of both Ottawans and tourists to the capital. The FDC was able to capitalize on the already existent language and strategies of national park-building invented by the National Parks Branch during the same period. Using this language, the FDC created the myth of Gatineau Park, well before any such entity had come into being. The second stage I identify includes the strategies employed by the FDC to acquire the land necessary for the implementation of its idealized park. This was done through large-scale land purchase and the unilateral exercise of the FDC's power - granted to the agency under Mackenzie King - to expropriate privately-held land for its own purposes.

The third stage in the transformation of Gatineau Park occurred during the 1940s and 1950s and involved the actual planning and landscaping of the physical territory. The FDC, having acquired all the necessary land, wanted to create a park that could lay claim to the same characteristics found in other Canadian national parks. During this period the FDC employed many of the same tropes used in earlier national park literature

to define its specific vision and plans for Gatineau Park. The final stage I examine in the FDC's Gatineau Park project brought the whole process full circle. I will look at how, having defined and then created its national park, the FDC re-wrote the park's history. Starting in the 1950s and carrying on to the present, the FDC's official histories attempted to erase its own role in creating the park. Gatineau Park was thus redefined as a physical presence as natural as the Canadian Shield on which it was located.

The sources I use to explore the creation of a national park 'idea' draw mainly on correspondence and documents from the records of the National Parks Branch. I have looked at most of the Parks Branch's files from the 1920s to 1940s that relate to general promotion and tourism initiatives. The Branch's Annual Reports of the Commissioner of this period also provide important insights into the development of a national park culture. Not just departmental reports, the commissioner's publications distributed in Canada and abroad doubled as popular publicity booklets. These sources present what might be termed the 'official discourse' that was generated as part of the Parks' projects. The first national parks, or 'forest reserves' as they were then called, were developed in Canada in the late nineteenth century. However, it was only in the decades following the Great War, with an increase in domestic and intra-national tourism, that a national park 'idea' was deliberately fostered by the various interested organizations. To illustrate this point, I draw on the dozens of guidebooks issued throughout the 1920s and 1930s by the National Parks Branch, the National Development Bureau, and later the Canadian Government Travel Bureau. Reprints of some of these guidebooks also appeared, along

with other articles, in the *Canadian Geographical Journal*, one of the National Parks' biggest non-governmental enthusiasts.

The second half of my thesis focuses on an investigation into the mechanisms of national park creation through the example of the Gatineau Park. The Gatineau Park project was a relative late-comer to the national park system. Gatineau Park was also invented and administered, under a completely separate and autonomous body, the FDC. Unlike the other national parks at the time, which were overseen by the National Parks' Branch, Gatineau Park was created by a government body that enjoyed an autonomous mandate, jurisdiction and budget. The FDC, relatively new to the field of national parks, was further challenged by its project's idiosyncratic location: this Nature was not located across the continent from urbanized Canada, on some wild, imagined colonial 'frontier', but rather within sight of the capital and on previously-settled land. The Nature planned for Gatineau Park was superimposed upon hundreds of people already making their livelihood in the Gatineau.[3]

The decades of the 1930s to the 1950s are an undeveloped topic in FDC official history. Nevertheless, much material exists in the FDC's archival holdings for this period. The sources I draw upon are based mainly on the government documents that

[3] The difficulties of creating nature in areas already 'settled' became more common for the Parks' Branch in the 1930s onwards as Eastern provinces demanded national parks in their territories. During the 1930s national parks, in general, moved eastward. But in 1932, only three of the eighteen national parks were east of Manitoba; two of those, Fort Beausejour and Fort Anne, were National Historic Parks, meaning their attraction was their 'historic' significance, rather than their Natural character. Canada, National Parks Branch, *Annual Report of the Commissioner 1932.*

relate to Gatineau Park, and correspond to the four stages I have identified in the establishment of the park. I look at early FDC documents, correspondence and newspaper clippings that supported the calls for a national park in the federal capital district. The second stage in the park's development involved the appropriation of thousands of acres of land during the 1930s and 1940s. The FDC records contain the plans that facilitated those measures. I draw upon maps, survey reports, expropriation plans and general correspondence to outline the strategies employed by the FDC. The third step in the FDC's project involved planning the new Nature aesthetic that would come to define Gatineau Park. For this I will look at the 'Master Plans' drawn up during the 1950s. I will compare these official plans to the national park culture that was developed in the inter-war period by the National Parks Branch. A general and consistent formula for 'Canadian nature' can be identified in this literature. Finally, to examine how the FDC/ National Capital Commission (NCC) re-invented Gatineau Park, I will review their own official interpretations of events.[4] A set of mythologies grew up alongside, and following, the creation of Gatineau Park. The concluding Gatineau section of my thesis will contrast the hegemonic discourse defined in Ottawa with the otherwise invisible strategizing that made it possible.

Canadian Nature, Nationalism and National Iconography

During the interwar years Canada entered a period of nation-building, during which much time and energy was devoted to defining a uniquely Canadian cultural

[4] In 1958 the Federal District Commission (FDC) was renamed the National Capital Commission (NCC).

identity. The Canadian government and intelligentsia embarked on various projects of romantic nationalism in their attempts to create myths, or national narratives, that would ground the young nation firmly in its national territory.[5] My thesis examines the creation of a nationalist myth that located Canada's identity in its Nature, in what was defined as a specifically Canadian geology and topography. This national identity, presented as 'unique' to Canada, was easily adapted to Canada's growing tourist industry and the national park culture that ensued. The national park culture I identify functioned domestically as a tool of nationalism and territorial consolidation. Simultaneously, the national park culture served to give Canada a national identity and accompanying iconography that could be presented to the 'outside world'. On the topic of "National and Official Culture", Zoe Wicomb writes, "There is, of course, nothing natural about it....We could say that a national culture is indeed synonymous with export culture; that it refers not so much to how we see ourselves, but rather to how we wish others to see us; that is, we promote a particular image of ourselves that we offer as representative".[6] Likewise, the set of symbols developed around Canada and Nature in this period were transformed into an export product and tourist commodity.

A specifically Canadian aesthetic of Nature was developed during the interwar period, an aesthetic to which nationalist narratives were easily affixed. Victor Konrad

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[5] It is fairly commonplace, in Canadian history, to characterize the interwar period in this manner. A general text that provides a good overview of this theme of 'elite' nationalist cultural production is John Herd Thompson and Allen Seager, *Canada 1922-1939: Decades of Discord* (Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1985), chapter 8.
[6] Zoe Wicomb, "Tracing the Path from National to Official Culture," *Critical Fictions: The politics of imaginative writing*, ed. Philomena Mariani (Seattle: Bay Press, 1991), 245.

calls this phenomenon 'environmental iconography'.[7] On the topic Konrad writes, "Throughout Canada's brief history as a nation, the country's unique natural attributes were sought as distinctive emblems for a land caught between Britain's lessening hold and the United States' increasing grip".[8] Nature, as painted by the Group of Seven and exemplified and sold by the National Parks, became a foundational 'idea' in dominant stories of Canadian identity. In the creation of a Canadian national identity, Nature-idealized functioned as the beginning of a narrative of origin. A.D. Smith identifies a type of 'naturalism' in nationalist myth-making in which the past "should be as organic and natural as conceivable, and our histories interpreted as if they were extensions of the natural world...any past must appear seamless and unified".[9] The Nature that was commodified in Canadian national parks was transformed into an historical agent, one that lent historical authority and authenticity to Canada's presence. Smith underlines a consequence of this 'Naturalization': "with the fusion of community and terrain through the identification of natural with historical sites....natural features become historicized; they become actors in the reconstructions of the past which nationalist intellectuals elaborate".[10]

Nature, and the national parks in which it was preserved, also served a territorial function for the young Canadian state. In the first few decades of the twentieth century national parks were markers of Canada's physical and imagined claim to the continent.

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[7] Victor Konrad, "Focus: Nationalism in the Landscape of Canada and the United States," *The Canadian Geographer*, vol. 30, no. 2 (1986): 167-180.
[8] ibid.
[9] A.D. Smith, *The Ethnic Origins of Nations* (New York: B.Blackwell, 1986),184.
[10] ibid., 184-185.

In their early years, around the turn of the century, national parks were initially what Patricia Jasen terms 'contact zones'.[11] Parks were beach-heads through which the administrative centre of the country, in the east, could maintain a national presence on its frontier. This frontier, as Mary Louise Pratt argues, was a frontier only with respect to Europe.[12] As Alexander Wilson explains in his book *The Culture of Nature*, "the first parks in both Canada and the United States were in the West, far from most white settlement. As that settlement moved across the continent, however, the cultural value of wilderness began to change and a trade in nature became possible".[13] By the interwar period Canada's claim to its national territory was consolidated with the growth in population, urbanization and the continued efforts to 'settle' the western provinces. National parks were transformed from remote 'frontier' zones to testaments of possession. With the growth in nature tourism during this period, national parks became *souvenirs* of a frontier that could be experienced by the traveling public.

The Gatineau Park project was a good example of how Canadian Nature, as defined by national park culture, became a successful tool of nationalism. The national park 'idea' was literally injected into a terrain that, initially, appeared quite at odds with the requisite aesthetic qualities demanded by national parks standards. From the 1930s

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[11] Patricia Jasen, *Wild Things: Nature, Culture and Tourism in Ontario, 1790-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995) Jasen's use of the idea of a 'contact zone' draws from Mary Louise Pratt's post-colonial text *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York: Routledge, 1992). Pratt writes, "'Contact zone' in my discussion is often synonymous with 'colonial frontier'. But while the latter term is grounded within a European expansionist perspective... 'contact zone' is an attempt to invoke the spatial and temporal copresence of subjects previously separated by geographic and historical disjunctures.", 6-7.
[12] Pratt, 6-7.
[13] Alexander Wilson, *The Culture of Nature* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 1991), 224.

onwards, Gatineau Park, and the idea of Gatineau Park, was often described in promotional literature as the terrain visible from Parliament Hill. The take-over of the land necessary to create the park involved not just a physical expropriation, but also the elaboration of a hegemonic governmental-nationalism that was able to exercise powers of definition. The Gatineau Project drew upon the rhetorics of national park culture in order to translate the seat of government to its place on 'the Hill', and the view from the Hill into a seamless, green, range of hills, a place to be visited. This image took hold and stayed fast in the official mythologies of the national capital. In 1949 the *Report of the Advisory Committee of the Gatineau Park* stated, "The area included in the park forms part of the Laurentian Shield and therefore is typical Canadian terrain... If the park is to achieve its true purpose it must be developed in a manner which will be truly national in spirit".[14] Over forty years later NCC literature still describes Gatineau Park as "situated where the Pre-Cambrian rock of the Canadian Shield meets the rich alluvial plain formed eons ago when the waters of an inland gulf known today as the Champlain Sea receded. The topography of the area is typically Canadian in its content".[15]

Looking at Nature

So much has been written about historical and contemporary meanings of Nature that while much of it covers the same terrain, it would take another thesis to outline all the arguments. Much of the more recent literature on cultural attitudes and perceptions of Nature begins with a discussion of the difficulty of the word 'Nature'. In turn, many of

[14] NAC, RG 34, vol. 272, *Report of the Advisory Committee of the Gatineau Park*, 1949.
[15] Canada. National Capital Commission (NCC). *A Capital in the Making* (NCC: Ottawa, 1991)

these discussions turn to Raymond Williams' *Keywords,* in which Williams identifies "nature" as "perhaps the most complex word in the language".[16] His subsequent definitions provide a useful guide to the ways in which Nature is understood by contemporary western culture,

> It is relatively easy to distinguish three areas of meaning: (i) the essential quality and character *of* something; (ii) the inherent force which directs either the world of human beings or both; (iii) the material world itself, taken as including or not including human beings[17]

All three of Williams's meanings can be used to describe the way Nature was understood in the national projects that created a Canadian national-park landscape.

In their book *In the Nature of Things* Jane Bennett and William Chaloupka draw upon Williams's definitions. They offer an account of the contemporary orientation to nature:

> ...although we try to master the environment and efface traces of nature in the body, we also regard them as indices of authenticity, as guides to the good. Another way to make this point is to say that "nature" has performed an identity function allied to an ontological one. Nature is the other against which the human is defined, the raw to the culturally cooked. But nature is also the original, the given versus the made, and as such it provides the comfort of an existential foundation. Nature in contemporary environmental discourse, then, is not only the realm of beasts, but also of God, of what lies beyond or behind the precarious web of semiotic constructions.[18]

The various definitions or uses of nature that both Williams and Bennett and Chaloupka outline are often contradictory and apply to a range of meanings and functions

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[16] Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana,1976), 184.
[17] Williams, 185.
[18] Jane Bennett and William Chaloupka eds., *In the Nature of Things: Language, Politics and the Environment* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), ix-x.

for the word. In the strategies of the National Parks Branch and the Federal District Commission, nature was also a complicated and often unclear matter.

Historians William Beinart and Peter Coates describe the early twentieth-century Euro-American wilderness aesthetic as "a physical environment freeze-framed at the point after the Indians have been cleared away but before the settlers have arrived".[19] This particular image and definition of nature was adapted to an emerging Canadian national iconography during the interwar period. At this time the National Parks Branch was one site of the manufacture and promotion of a uniquely 'Canadian' nature. Another perhaps better-known source of the image of Canada as "a primordial, un-peopled 'North'" was the work of the Group of Seven during this period.[20] The Group of Seven painted what the Parks Branch sought to 'preserve' and commodify - a uniquely Canadian 'wilderness ethos'.[21] While the work of the Group of Seven may now be bound up with a set of images which fall under the category of kitschy, ersatz 'Canadiana', it was premised upon the cultural authority of an aesthetic that idealized the Canadian landscape as 'empty', 'undisturbed' and 'primordial'.

The image of Canadian nature developed by the Group of Seven paralleled the rhetoric of nature which formed the foundation of the national park culture examined in

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[19] William Beinart and Peter Coates, *Environment and History: the taming of nature in the USA and South Africa* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), 85.
[20] Brian Osborne, "The iconography of nationhood in Candian art", *The iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments* eds. Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988).
[21] Douglas Cole, "Artists, Patrons and Public: An Enquiry into the Success of the Group of Seven," *Journal of Canadian Studies*, Volume 3, no.2 (Summer 1978), 69.

this thesis. It was this aesthetic that was physically shaped and maintained in the national parks. At the same time, nature as defined by the national parks was transformed into a set of images and icons which were circulated as advertisements for the country. While a physical and visual product was made based upon the Canadian wilderness, the 'idea' of that place, or its historical significance, was simultaneously shaped to play a role in Canadian national stories. Canada became popularly defined in terms of its geology; Rocky mountains and the Canadian Shield came to be the signifiers of Canada's territorial heritage. 'Empty' expanses of mountain, lake and forest presented seemingly uncomplicated, neutral, and 'open' starting points for myths of territorial possession. Finally, as with the creation of Gatineau Park, this myth of Canadian nature as an authentic origin for the nation became a legitimating concept that allowed the expansion of the FDC to override any critics who might have questioned the ethics of throwing people off their land and re-defining their living space, simply to satisfy the needs of the nation's capital and its elite.

My examination of the uses of Nature in the Canadian national parks draws mainly on theories that maintain that in order to talk about 'nature' it is important first to question the ways in which it is understood by our culture. Alexander Wilson writes,

> Nature is a part of culture. When our physical surroundings are sold to us as "natural" (like the travel ad for "Super, Natural, British Columbia") we should pay close attention. Our experience of the natural world - whether touring the Canadian Rockies, watching an animal show on TV, or working in our own gardens - is always mediated. It is always shaped by rhetorical constructs like photography, industry, advertising, and aesthetics, as well as by institutions like religion, tourism, and education.[22]

[22] Alexander Wilson, 12.

Bennett and Chaloupka espouse the position that approaches 'nature' as a rhetoric or discursive object in Western culture. They argue that reading nature as rhetorical project provides a 'third way' beyond the two approaches that see nature as either resource management, or through the more holistic ecological perspective. Bennett and Chaloupka reject 'deep ecology' as a viable alternative to the binarisms of nature/culture in much the same way that feminist philosopher Val Plumwood does.[23] They quote Nietzsche's caution "of attributing to (the universe) heartlessness and unreason or their opposites: it is neither - ...nor does it wish to become any of those things; it does not by any means strive to imitate man".[24] Bennett and Chaloupka also reject critiques that deny that "nature" can be understood as a discursive object by appealing to the concrete-ness of trees, mountains and earthquakes as things that impact on humans. "It is worth repeating", state Bennett and Chaloupka, "that the discursive position is in no way 'idealist'. That is to say, it does not deny the reality of physical, objective events..."[25] Instead, a discursive or 'nature as rhetoric' approach wants to challenge the tradition of Western social theory that

[23] Val Plumwood, *Feminism and the Mastery of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1993). Plumwood offers a critique of mainstream environmental movements that 'other' nature, and she also critiques deep-ecologists' perspectives that emerged as a radical holistic counterpoint to mainstream environmentalism. Plumwood writes, "deep ecology has had some success in broadening the conception of the problem to include issues concerning the human self and questions of human identity and discontinuity from nature...(yet,) If mainstream environmental ethics suffers from the kind of distortions of difference which attend the problematic of individualism and rational egoism, deep ecology tends to suffer from the obverse kinds of distortion associated with incorporation...", 173-174.
[24] Bennett and Chaloupka, xi., footnote 13. This is the risk of incorporation that Plumwood identifies in the deep-ecologist solution to environmentalism.
[25] Bennett and Chaloupka, xii.

privileged the 'logic' of nature with the belief that it could and did provide the final meaning of human nature, natural resources and social relations.[26]

My thesis is not an attempt to resolve any debates about the ontological status of Nature in Canadian society. What I attempt to do is show the various meanings that were assigned to nature by the national parks projects in question, and in turn, how these uses of the concept informed other projects. Nature, as found in the national parks, was translated by official culture into a tourist commodity, an essential characteristic of Canadian identity, and a starting-point for national narratives. Through an examination of primary sources, my thesis looks at the various way in which these meanings were reproduced during the period of the 1920s to the 1950s.

Tourism

The nature tourism that developed with the popularity of national parks in the inter-war period had many antecedents. Traveling for pleasure, or for reasons not directly related to work and livelihood, has a long history in the West. This section provides a brief summary of tourism in historical perspective and how it intersected with the national parks in the twentieth century. Those who write about tourism, as a western

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[26] Other books that trace the background for contemporary perceptions of Nature include Yi-Fu Tuan's *topophilia* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1974); Donald Worster, *Nature's Economy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977); Keith Thomas, *Man and the Natural World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1983). Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), Max Oelschlaeger, *The Idea of Wilderness - From Prehistory to the Age of Ecology* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1991) and David Pepper's *The Roots of the Modern Environmentalism* (London: Croon Helm, 1984). These are all books that attempt a history of Western relationships to Nature and the environment.

phenomenon, often see the religious pilgrimages of the thirteenth and fourteenth century as early examples of organized travel around which industries and networks emerged. From indulgence handbooks to organised tours out of Venice in the fifteenth century, mass travel has long been the quest for cumulative signs and symbols that it is considered to be today. The religious relics of the pilgrims, for example, are considered to be the equivalent of modern souvenirs.[27] Other travel traditions emerged in the seventeenth to nineteenth centuries. The Grand Tour was a ritual for the sons and daughters of the aristocracy and later on for those of the professional middle class. John Urry writes about the development of a whole tourist infrastructure in the eighteenth century which was, however, the cultural prerogative of the upper classes. Few people before the nineteenth century traveled anywhere to see objects unconnected to work or business.[28]

By the nineteenth century the character of tourism, or the tour, had altered. An increased emphasis on the visual object, or 'scene', in tourism came about with the popularity of romantic sensibilities. As Urry argues, "there was a visualization of the travel experience, or the development of the 'gaze', aided and assisted by the growth of guidebooks which promoted new ways of seeing".[29] The way of 'looking' associated with earlier tourism has often been studied as a combination of an enlightenment "spirit of inquiry which valued empirical knowledge over abstract speculation" and the aesthetic imperatives of increasingly popular Romantic landscapes.[30] It is during these cultural

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[27] Ian Ousby, *The Englishman's England: taste, travel and the rise of tourism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7.
[28] John Urry, *The Tourist Gaze* (London: Sage Publications, 1990), 4-5.
[29] Urry, 4.
[30] Ousby, 9.

shifts that the marriage of Nature and the landscape contributed to a transformation of the two into a specific style of consumption. In *Wild Things*, Patricia Jasen argues that "tourism as a consumer industry was built upon selling images and arousing romantic fantasies, and that romanticism in fact established the cultural foundations of the tourist industry and supplied its strategy for success".[31] Jasen traces the aesthetic tropes in the imagery of national park landscapes and 'scenery' to such historic tools as the late eighteenth-century 'camera obscura' and the 'Claude glass' which, she argues, helped transform Nature into art. These were en-framing devices invented to enable the viewer of a landscape to look upon nature from the most pleasing perspective. The point of using them was to transform the visible into an image. [32] "The picturesque", she argues, "was not only formulaic, it objectified nature...romanticism's association between images, commodities, feelings and personal fulfillment was a vital contributing factor in the development of consumer capitalism, including the growth of the tourist industry".[33]

These forms of tourism, previously restricted to society's elite, were during the interwar period popularized and rendered part of the practices of consumer culture. The

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[31] Jasen, 13.

[32] Jasen, 8-9. A fair bit has been written on the relationship between romanticism and tourism. Ian Ousby's book gives a good analysis of the changing aesthetics of the picturesque and the sublime in England. There is also a lot of 'landscape' theory written from the perspective of cultural geography and cultural studies. These works tend to take a 'nature as culture' approach, analyzing the construction of the 'country' and the landscape with their depictions of nature as texts indicative of other social relations. Some of these works include, Simon Pugh's *Reading Landscape: Country, city, capital* (Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 1990), Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), W.J.T. Mitchell, *Landscape and Power* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1994) and Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape imagery and national identity in England and the United States* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1993).

[33] Jasen, 11.

'popularization' of nature tourism in Canada during the inter-war period is attributable to a number of connected influences, from the rise of the automobile and highway industries, to granting of holiday time to workers, the involvement of all levels of government in tourism, and new consumer items such as photography which enabled the circulation of tourist images.[34] These factors influenced the increased accessibility and commodification of tourism, but as writers like Jasen argue, many of the cultural expectations and rituals that accompanied tourism were well-developed before the twentieth century.

The emphasis on the visual was something that very much shaped early nature tourism. The visual image of nature, with its emphasis on 'the scenic' presented in tourist promotion owed much to the aesthetics of landscape painting and later, photography. This particular way of looking at nature was obviously informed by and for a specific sensibility, or gaze. Authors who write about landscape, and the gaze that consumes landscape, describe it as a motif informed by relationships of 'other-ness', shaped through actions of objectification, conquest and possession. Simon Pugh, like Ousby, likens landscape aesthetics to a certain type of knowledge.

> The rhetorical tradition of 'division' and 'partition' both divides up matter to 'increase and multiply' but also opens it up to view, to 'enlightenment', by uncovering something hidden. Epistemologically, this is the rhetoric of scientific knowledge, but it is also the rhetoric of acquisition, wealth and ownership, and leads through the emphasis on the gaze to an eroticised, even potentially prurient and voyeuristic, looking.[35]

[34] Jasen, 152.
[35] Simon Pugh, "Loitering with intent: from Arcadia to the arcades" in *Reading landscape: Country-city-capital* (Manchester University Press: Manchester and New York, 1990), 145.

The guidebooks and promotional material released by the Parks Branch in its earlier years relied very heavily on these rhetorics. The language and imagery that shaped what I call the national park culture is full of metaphors of conquest, discovery and adventure, as well as the dark 'other'. Nature is often presented as either penetrable or not, dark, dangerous, mysterious and 'unknown'. These tropes seem so obviously part of a gendered system of objectification and knowledge, premised upon the twin impulses of the male gaze and the passive female object of that gaze. It is difficult, however, to interpret the degree of intent involved in the practices of the National Parks Branch; national tourism was after all as new to Canada as was the idea of 'nation'.

The relationship established between Nature and the national park apparatus during the early twentieth century did involve some specific assumptions about power and ownership. The characteristics of the male gaze and 'the tourist gaze' intersected. Mary Louise Pratt refers to the figure of the tourist in landscape narratives as 'seeing-man'. "An admittedly unfriendly label", she writes, "for the European male subject of European landscape discourse - he whose imperial eyes passively look out and possess".[36] The idea of civilization that was contrasted to Nature in early tourist discourse, is one that by the constitution of that opposition is assigned a range of dominant masculine traits. These caricatures were obviously ways of organizing and advertising what might have seemed otherwise elusive commodities. Obviously not all

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[36] Pratt, 7.

tourists were men, nor could tourists to the national parks have helped but notice the degree to which their landscapes were manipulated and reproduced. What was being appealed to, however, was a narrative of conquest and discovery of nature that drew upon familiar figures in the tourist's imagination. The experience of Nature that was offered to the public involved a willingness to role-play. What is interesting about these narratives of romantic imperialism then, is the extent to which the promoters of the Canadian national parks relied on themes of civilization and colonial possession to promote their 'young Canada', even in the somewhat unlikely venue of the long-settled region of the Gatineau.

Conclusion

The main body of my thesis is organized into three chapters which are, in turn, divided into two main themes: the emergence of a Canadian national park culture in the interwar period and the creation of Gatineau Park from the 1920s to the 1950s. The first chapter is about the National Parks Branch and the national park culture. I begin with a look at the administrative structures of the national parks and the rise of a government tourism industry. I then examine the themes of national parks and nationalism, the national identity of visitors to the parks, and the idea of Nature in the national parks. The rest of the chapter looks at the reproduction and dissemination of national park imagery, the bureaucratic and tourist fetishization of maps, and concludes with a discussion of various tropes of colonialism from the romanticization of 'Indians' to the idealization of 'Empire'.

Chapters Three and Four of my thesis follow the four stages I identify in the creation of Gatineau Park. Chapter Three looks at the introduction of a need, or imperative, for a national park in the area, and then proceeds to examine how the FDC went about acquiring the designated territory for its project. Chapter Four looks at some of the opposition that emerged to the land take-over during the 1940s and 1950s, the planning process that defined the new national park aesthetic for Gatineau, and concludes with a section about the FDC/ NCC's rewriting of its history in relation to that of the park. These chapters, along with the accompanying images of maps and photographs, are all designed to reflect my central point: that national park culture and the tourist economy that emerged with it were very much bound up with the aesthetics of visual consumption and possession of national landscapes.

CHAPTER TWO

HEART OF PARKNESS: THE CREATION OF A NATIONAL PARK CULTURE, 1920-1940

During the 1920s, James Harkin, the Commissioner for the Dominion National Parks, was proudly given to describing his branch's parks as 'priceless works of art'.[1] Such a seemingly benign and flowery description of the national parks is actually quite revealing of the attitudes that shaped them. This chapter outlines some of the main themes and characteristics of national park culture as defined by the Parks Branch in the 1920s and 1930s. The first section begins with a brief outline of the administrative relationship between national parks and government-sponsored tourism during this period.

This is followed by an examination of the themes of Canadian nationalism in national park promotion. I will then argue that because tourist promotion was a relatively new field for government organizations the Parks Branch was unsure of the identity of its touring public. This ambiguity was apparent in the promotional literature in which the branch tried to appeal to as broad an audience as possible. In spite of the 'democratic' appeals of James Harkin, the ways in which the national parks framed and sold nature revealed the very specific cultural biases that informed parks enterprises.

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[1] Edwinna von Baeyer, *Garden of Dreams: Kingsmere and Mackenzie King*, (Toronto and Oxford: Dundurn Press, 1990), 206.

The rest of the chapter identifies a number of themes in the national park culture of the 1920s and 1930s. This discussion includes the idea of Nature as an 'empty' landscape shaped for tourism and organized for the automobile, the emergence of a visual iconography associated with Canadian national parks, and the government and tourist industry's fascination with mapping as a tool and souvenir of territorial conquest. The chapter concludes with a look at the ways in which the Parks Branch culture mimicked imperial relations: on one hand they established their own 'inside world' complete with the image of colonized 'Indians', and they also continued to appeal to the cultural authority of the British Empire. The aim of this chapter is to map out some of the underlying characteristics that were associated with, although not exclusive to, early national park promotion. This examination complicates the idea of Nature upon which so much appeared to be premised, and suggests the conclusion that Canadian Nature was not quite as natural as presented.

The National Parks Branch and National Tourism

In 1911 the Dominion Government passed the Dominion Forest Reserves and Parks Act. The Act called for the establishment of a separate Dominion Parks Branch within the Department of the Interior. Through this Act, Canada became the first country to have a government department given solely to the administration of national parks. This period marked the beginning of a more coherent and rationalized government approach to the national park 'idea'. Though nature parks had been developed in North America since the end of the nineteenth century and described by the Department of the

Interior as "recreation ground[s] for the people of Canada", not until the early twentieth century did a consistent methodology emerge around national park administration.[2] Prior to 1911 national parks were located solely on the western side of the continent and accessible only by rail travel. These areas always served a diversity of purposes. The early parks were not only travel destinations for the 'privileged classes' but also auxiliaries to railway routes and precursors to the opening of new lands for development and settlement.[3] The first national parks were also testaments to early North American conservation practices. Interchangeably known as forest reserves, forest parks, reserve parks, Dominion parks and national parks, these areas represented experiments in the governmental regulation of private speculation, as naturalists, bureaucrats and industrialists became concerned over the mismanagement of the country's natural and scenic resources.

By 1911 the Department of the Interior decided to establish a separate mandate and bureaucracy for national parks as tourist destinations. The creation of a separate branch marked the government's recognition of the inherent difference between the administrative aims of park tourism and promotion, and those of mere resource management. Dominion parks became entities conceptually different from 'forest reserves', and in that year Glacier, Yoho, Rocky Mountain, Jasper and Waterton Lakes Parks were all officially designated 'Dominion Parks'. This move marked the emergence

[2] NAC, RG 84, accession volume administrative outline, 4.
[3] Rocky Mountains Park, established in 1885 was the first tourist-destination park in Canada, modelled after the American Yosemite Park. As a product of the combined interestsof CPR railroad promotion and westward territorial expansion, it remained until the twentieth century a destination for wealthier travellers.

of national parks in Canada as an industry and resource in its own right and paved the way for their further development as tourist commodities.[4]

The man placed in charge of the Dominion Parks Branch was Commissioner James Bernard Harkin, former personal secretary to Frank Oliver, the Minister of the Interior. Harkin would remain with the Parks Branch for twenty five years, in a position which made him largely responsible for the shape that national park tourism took in the decades following the Branch's creation. In his 1914 Annual Report Harkin stressed the economic benefits of tourism, the importance of parks as public recreation grounds, the service they provided in the preservation of natural beauties and wildlife, and "the promotion of pride in the Canadian landscape".[5] The period of the national parks under Harkin marked the beginning of a full-scale campaign to promote the parks as tourist objects set up for the enjoyment and consumption of the public at large. One of the key concepts that emerged in park literature, and that would surface again with the Gatineau Park project, was the idea of the 'scenic value' of Canada's natural wonders. Employing a rhetoric as instrumental as any found in the contemporaneous conservation movement, Harkin and other park boosters argued that the potential aesthetic and hence tourist value of these sites ranked high above their raw resource value. Harkin articulated this approach in 1922 in a speech to the Good Roads Association of Vancouver in which he presented the group with the surprisingly exact calculation that scenery had a value of

[4] NAC, RG 84, accession volume administrative outline, 7.
[5] ibid, 8.

thirteen dollars and eighty-eight cents per acre, compared to wheatland which had a much lesser calculated value of only four dollars and ninety-one cents per acre.[6]

Before the entry of the Parks Branch into the tourism business, the main promoters of tourism on a national scale were railway companies, which encouraged travel across the country and to their hotels. These initiatives were often undertaken in conjunction with steamship companies. By the 1920s the city of Vancouver and a number of the provinces had established regional tourist boards, semi-public bodies composed of local promoters with the goal of attracting attention in general to their locality. However, with the boom of the automobile industry and the reform movements that saw vacations become a part of social life for a growing number of middle-class Canadians, tourism for tourism's sake was being viewed by all levels of government as a potentially lucrative industry. Throughout the 1920s, automobile associations, road-building associations and government bureaucrats made sure to have representatives on the boards of the various tourist organizations that were springing up across the country. Harkin, as commissioner of the national parks was not only aware of these trends, but actively promoted them. Harkin encouraged the development of automobile routes into the national parks, arguing that this provided a more 'democratic' access for travelers to Canada's natural beauties. From Harkin's point of view the automobile was a way to maximize the number of visitors to the national parks, a view shared by dozens of road and automobile associations.

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[6] Leslie Bella, *Parks for Profit* (Montreal: Harvest House, 1987), 63-64, emphasis added.

With increased national interest in the tourist business, the 1920s marked the beginning of a working relationship between private industry and the federal government in the promotion of Canadian tourism. The growing commodity culture of the period made tourism an ideal market for promoters of everything from immigration to automobile camping. The various interested parties came together in many forums. One organization that worked in partnership with the Parks Branch was the *Canadian National Parks Association* (CNPA). Formed in 1923 the association's slogan was "Patriotic Canadians from Coast to Coast in Support of National Parks and Tributary Highways". The CNPA's board included representatives from the Imperial Order Daughters of the Empire, the Alpine Club, the Girl Guides, the director of publicity for the Canadian Pacific Railways, and two members of the Canadian Automobile Association. In 1924 Robert Stead, the Superintendent of the Parks' Branch Publicity and Information Division, wrote to Harkin that while the CNPA had "no official connection with the National Parks Bureau", it did list among its objects "the conservation of the Canadian National Parks for scientific, recreational and scenic purposes, and their protection from exploitation for commercial purposes".[7]

By the early 1920s the Dominion government was fully engaged in efforts to increase tourism to and within Canada. In 1925, the Department of the Interior, still the home of the Parks Branch, declared that it had ensured that

[7] NAC, RG 84, volume 107, memo from J.C. Stead. The 'commercial purposes' referred to did not include tourism, but referred to the extraction of natural resources from the park areas.

> ...the tourist and holiday attractions of all parts of the Dominion are brought to the notice of the traveling public abroad just as widely and as effectively as in past years the attention of settlers, investors, and businessmen generally has been directed to the agricultural and business opportunities afforded by the Dominion's settlement lands, water-powers, mineral resources, timber, and other physical assets.[8]

In the mid-1920s a publicity division was established in the Parks Branch. Before 1935 the only other Dominion government tourism body was the Tourist Division of the National Development Bureau established in 1931, also a subsidiary of the Department of the Interior.[9] Effectively that meant that the Parks Branch was the first Dominion organization explicitly involved in promoting Canada as a tourist destination, and Nature in the national parks became the first official Canadian tourist attraction.

The 1930s saw a movement towards consolidation and centralization of government involvement in Canadian tourism. In 1933 the Parks Branch acquired the full responsibility for the co-ordination of Canadian tourism when the Tourist Division of the National Development Bureau was transferred to its wing. The Parks Branch became "the Dominion organization charged with the duty of promoting the tourist business", an arrangement that would not last very long.[10] Throughout the first years of

[8] NAC, RG 84, accession volume administrative ouline, 12, Department of the Interior, *Annual Report* 1924-1925.

[9] "From 1910-1930, the Natural Resources Intelligence Bureau, Department of Interior, acted as a clearing house for infromation from all sources in regard to the natural resources of Canada and related subjects. This information was disseminated by means of reports, maps and charts, and a large collections of lantern slides, which were lent to responsible persons and institutes.", *Canadian Government Travel Bureau: Brief History, 1934-1966,* n.d., 1. This is a government document of the history of what is contemporarily known as the Canadian Tourism Commission in the Department of Industry. As such, it does not recognize, or is unaware of the Parks' Branch's activities in tourism in the years prior to the establishment of the CGTB.

[10] NAC, RG 84, record group accession volume, administrative outline, p.14.

the decade, civic organizations and provincial tourist committees lobbied the federal government to get more involved in tourism. In the 1930s other groups such as the Canadian Association of Tourist and Publicity Bureaus worked to persuade "the Federal Government to undertake a publicity and advertising campaign which would supplement the work carried on by the provincial and local organizations".[11] Robert Stead became a member of the Board of Directors of this organization, to which the Parks Branch paid an annual one- hundred-dollar subscription fee. While private tourist interests were looking for more financial support from the government, what finally resulted was a new tourist organization called the Canadian Government Travel Bureau (CGTB).

The government travel bureau was formed in May of 1934 as part of the Department of Railways and Canals following recommendations of a Senate committee report of the same year. The Report of the Special Committee on Tourist Traffic was based on a number of submissions from associations with investments in the tourist industry, including one from J.B Harkin, commissioner of the National Parks.[12] The general consensus of the Senate committee was that tourism could be the most lucrative industry in Canada, and that it would be a mistake to miss the opportunity to get involved. At a 1935 Dominion and Provincial Conference on the Tourist Industry, the CGTB announced that its working policy could be summed up in one word - "Co-operation". The report continued, "while concentrating on work which is clearly a field

[11] NAC, RG 84, vol. 108, 1934 minutes of the Annual General Meeting and Convention of the Canadian Association of Tourist and Publicity Bureaus.
[12] NAC, RG 20, vol. 1; and, Canada. The Senate of Canada. *Report and Proceedings of the Special Committee on Tourist Traffic.* 1934.

for Dominion activity, with the object of realizing in as great a degree as possible the country's scenic, sporting and other recreational attractions", the bureau had "at the same time extended a very large measure of assistance and co-operation...to those bureaus which are specially interested in promoting the tourist attractions of particular localities or provinces".[13] The CGTB was at some pains to make sure it did not appear to be co-opting the activities of other bodies, private or governmental, already engaged in promotional activities. "It is no part of the Canadian Travel Bureau's policy to attempt to over-centralize Canadian tourist development effort", it claimed. "The underlying idea is that a central government organization, working in full co-operation with all bureaus doing associated work, will furnish leadership, promote good will, increase efficiency, and avoid overlapping and misunderstanding".[14] In the name of rationalizing and better organizing the Canadian tourist industry, the CGTB was by 1937 operating with a budget of $250,000 and a staff of eighteen. The establishment of this organization marked the shift of national tourism promotion from the National Parks to a more specialized agency. The National Parks continued to maintain its own publicity division, marketing and selling Canadian Nature, but responsibility for marketing 'Canada' was assumed by the more centralized CGTB.

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[13] Canada, Department of Railways and Canals, *Report of the Dominion and Provincial Conference on the Tourist Industry*, December 9, 1935, 2.
[14] ibid.

National Parks and Nationalism

Throughout the 1920s Canada consolidated the boundaries of its physical and imagined national identity. As Canadians and their fledgling Canadian identity came to occupy the far reaches of their domain, Nature in its 'primordial' state was transformed into a valuable commodity. National parks originally had been founded on the western side of the continent, far from most large white settlements. Beinart and Coates suggest that early national parks were founded westward into the Rockies as "the urban northeast sought to define its relationship with the unfolding continent".[15] Tourist sites for the relatively privileged, these enclaves served as 'contact zones' in which Nature was called forth as a buffer zone and precursor to the inevitable narrative of 'civilization'. Jasen argues that tourists, as pretend colonists, had an important role in expansionist logic, "whereby the fate of the 'unsettled' regions of Canada was identified with the interests of the metropolis".[16] The mere presence of tourists in the 'contact zones' of Canada's wilderness reserves "meant assuming a right to be there".[17] The responsibility of attracting travelers to Canada's 'remote' areas initially lay with both the railways and private industries. The Department of the Interior for its part was interested in expanding Canadian land-settlement. As the National Parks Branch assumed a central role in the promotion of Dominion tourism, it increasingly defined the nature-tourist's experience. The rapid growth and expansion of Canada's industrial and urban economies, along with

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[15] Beinart and Coates, 74.
[16] Jasen, 152.
[17] ibid.

the incorporation of 'the West' into Canada's national imagined community, meant that Nature became an increasingly valuable national resource.[18]

During the interwar years the national parks played a more familiar role in the definition of a Canadian geographical identity. The National Parks Branch undertook a large-scale publicity campaign to bring the parks to the public and the public to the parks. By the early 1930s, the Parks Branch had issued more than a dozen small publications -- guides to the various parks that ranged from ten to forty pages in length. These books were full of photographs of natural scenic beauty accompanied by descriptive texts. The Branch also published copies of these guides as articles in a variety of magazines in Canada and the United States. In 1926 the Parks Branch reported issuing 209,627 publications from head office.[19] *The Canadian Geographic Journal* which began in 1930 with a readership of 30,000 was one of the main showcases for national parks promotion. According to the Branch's annual reports, hundreds of thousands of these publications were issued for distribution. As many as 2,500 copies of the *Annual Report of the Commissioner*, replete with descriptions of Canada's "unsurpassed grandeur and sublimity" were also distributed annually.[20]

One of the core ideas that shaped the parks campaigns was the explicit attempt to define a natural relationship between the parks and Canadians. James Harkin's annual

[18] Wilson, 224.
[19] Canada. Department of the Interior, National Parks Branch. *Annual Report of the Commissioner*, 1926.
[20] *Annual Report*, 1930, 12.

reports provide diverting examples of such nationalist rhetoric. Urging Canadians to visit the parks, he wrote that the national parks were "formed by nature as a special playground for man", and were necessary to the "development of a national pride in the beauty of a country".[21] Contributing to the nationalist discourse of 'Young Canada' in the interwar decades, Harkin announced in 1927 that "the national park idea has spread and taken hold of public imagination". He went on to say that previously "Canadians as a whole" had been "indifferent to their great possessions", but a growing "alarm at industrialization" had meant that the term "'national park' has come to indicate a high standard of scenic beauty and carries with it the nation's stamp of approval".[22] In subsequent reports he continued to praise the "Dominion's citizens (for) becoming 'park conscious'". In 1925 Harkin wrote that in their efforts to "keep Canada in its original and pristine condition...the parks are rendering increasing service to the people".[23] Nature in the national parks provided an escape from the growing urban metropolis and its oppressive demands. Yet this nature was also meant to be enjoyed as a 'possession' and a part of the Canadian character. Intent on rendering the national parks 'more democratic', Harkin implored Canadians to consider them not as an extravagance, but rather as part of their national identity. In 1926 he wrote, "As knowledge of the National parks themselves and the aims behind them grow...[this] will increase and build up a strong national park sentiment....Canadians themselves are more and more coming to appreciate, and to take pride in, these magnificent public reservations".[24] Harkin's

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[21] *Annual Report,* 1928, 7.
[22] *Annual Report,* 1927, 1.
[23] *Annual Report,* 1925, 5.
[24] *Annual Report,* 1926, 1.

marketing strategy capitalized on the language of Canadian nationalism then current in other cultural circles. By directly equating the national parks with Canada's 'original and pristine condition', Harkin metaphorically presented the national parks as embodiments of Canada. His was a savvy appeal to a consuming middle class already accustomed to the appeal for a uniquely Canadian 'national consciousness' and 'national feeling'.[25]

The association of Canadians with Nature through the national parks did not stop at the topographical and physical aesthetics of nature. Beinart and Coates write of an emerging environmental determinism that increasingly shaped social perceptions during the period. Environmental discourses in the early twentieth century contained strong currents of racial determinism, evolutionary doctrines, and nationalist-informed eugenics.[26] In the 'civilized' portions of North America and the Empire, associations were frequently made between personal virility and national prowess. The men, and later women and children, who composed nations were thought to be threatened by the deleterious effects of un-natural city habitats. The national parks served as a vehicle for some of these social concerns. In 1927, according to Harkin, "Alarm at the changes in the face of the country due to rapid extension of our present industrial civilization, has emphasized the necessity of conserving a few untouched areas".[27] In 1928, the parks were said to offer "superior natural hygienic conditions". The same 1928 report quotes a 'well-known' British scientist as saying, "the cold and sun of Canada, playing upon the

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[25] Thompson and Seager, 160.
[26] Beinart and Coates, 80-81.
[27] *Annual Report*, 1927, 1.

well-fed, produce a splendour of physique, a low rate of disease, an abundant energy of mind, a *joie de vivre*, or national euphoria, which must rejoice every lover of mankind".[28] Nature was served up in the national parks as a restorative to nationalism and a tonic for the ills of modernity.

The CNPA, the national organization formed in 1923 for the promotion of national parks, also habitually used the rhetoric of 'national health' promoted by the Parks' Branch. In one of its newsletters the CNPA opened with the headline, "National Health is the most important form of national wealth". The newsletter carried on, with eerily foreshadowing undertones,

> Following the World War, Germany was the first to realize what the future required of a successful Nation... Health might be called the "god" of the German Nation. At the present time national health receives more attention from her Government than in most countries... Her most popular health-building plan is the 'Youth Out Into the Open' movement which places thousands of hikers on her roads and paths... We have in Canada a vast army of unemployed on relief. Many of them are beyond the age when they are likely to ever again find employment and so will remain a perpetual charge on the nation. Many more have most of their lives before them. Are they keeping abreast of the times and prepared to accept an up-to-date position?[29]

Along the same vein in his 1926 annual report Harkin wrote that, "Developments in connection with National parks during the past year emphasized the fact that the parks are assuming a more important place among our national possessions and are rendering a

[28] *Annual Report*, 1928, 14-16.
[29] NAC, RG 84, volume 107, file U125, Newsletter no.50, n.d.

Eyes to the Skies, Young Canada!

Figure 1. 'Eyes to the Skies, Young Canada!' From an article in the *Canadian Geographical Journal* (October, 1938), 481.

Figure 2. Scenic guidebooks. These are covers of some of the publications issued by the National Parks Branch during the 1920s and 1930s.

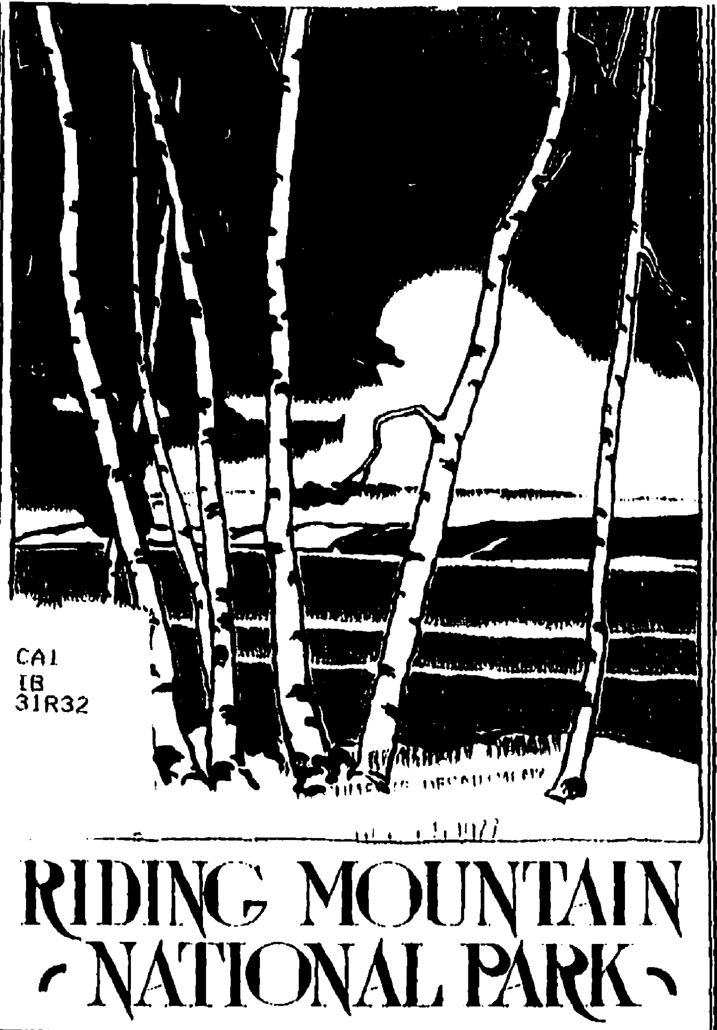

Figure 3. More scenic guidebooks. Images such as these frequently re-appeared in promotional materials during the 1920s and 1930s.

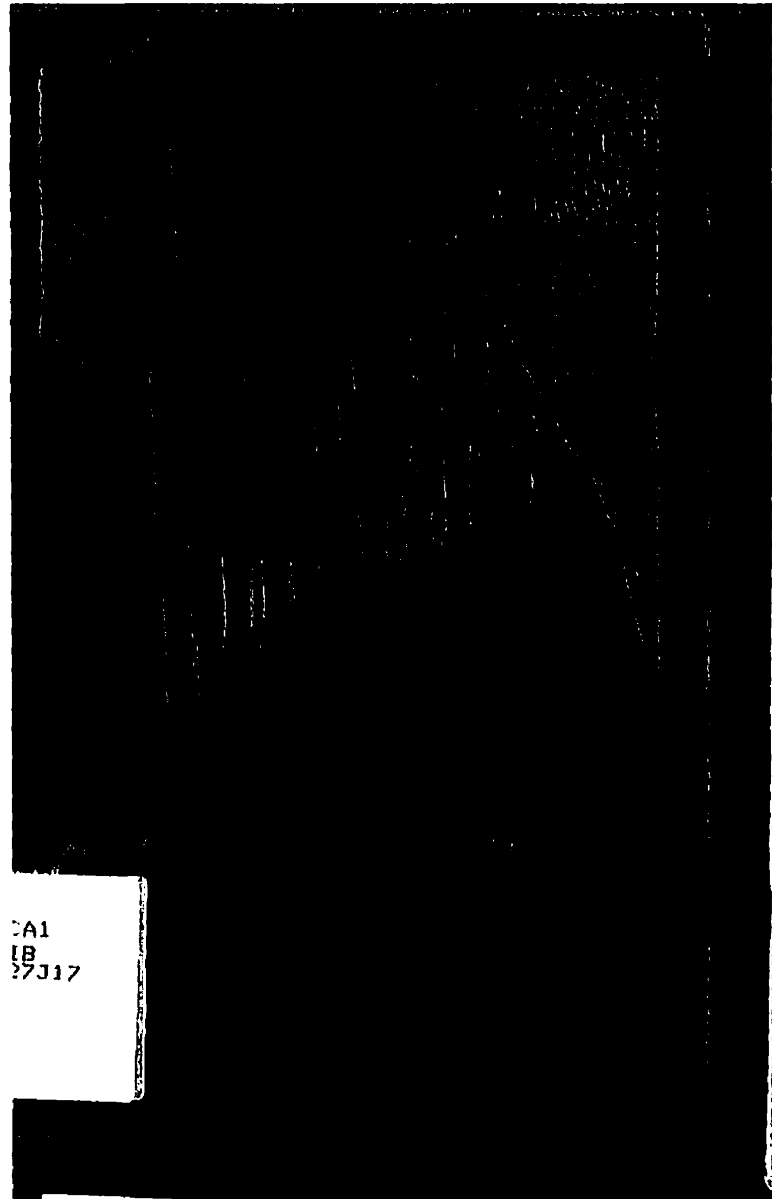

Figure 4. More scenic guidebooks for the National Parks.

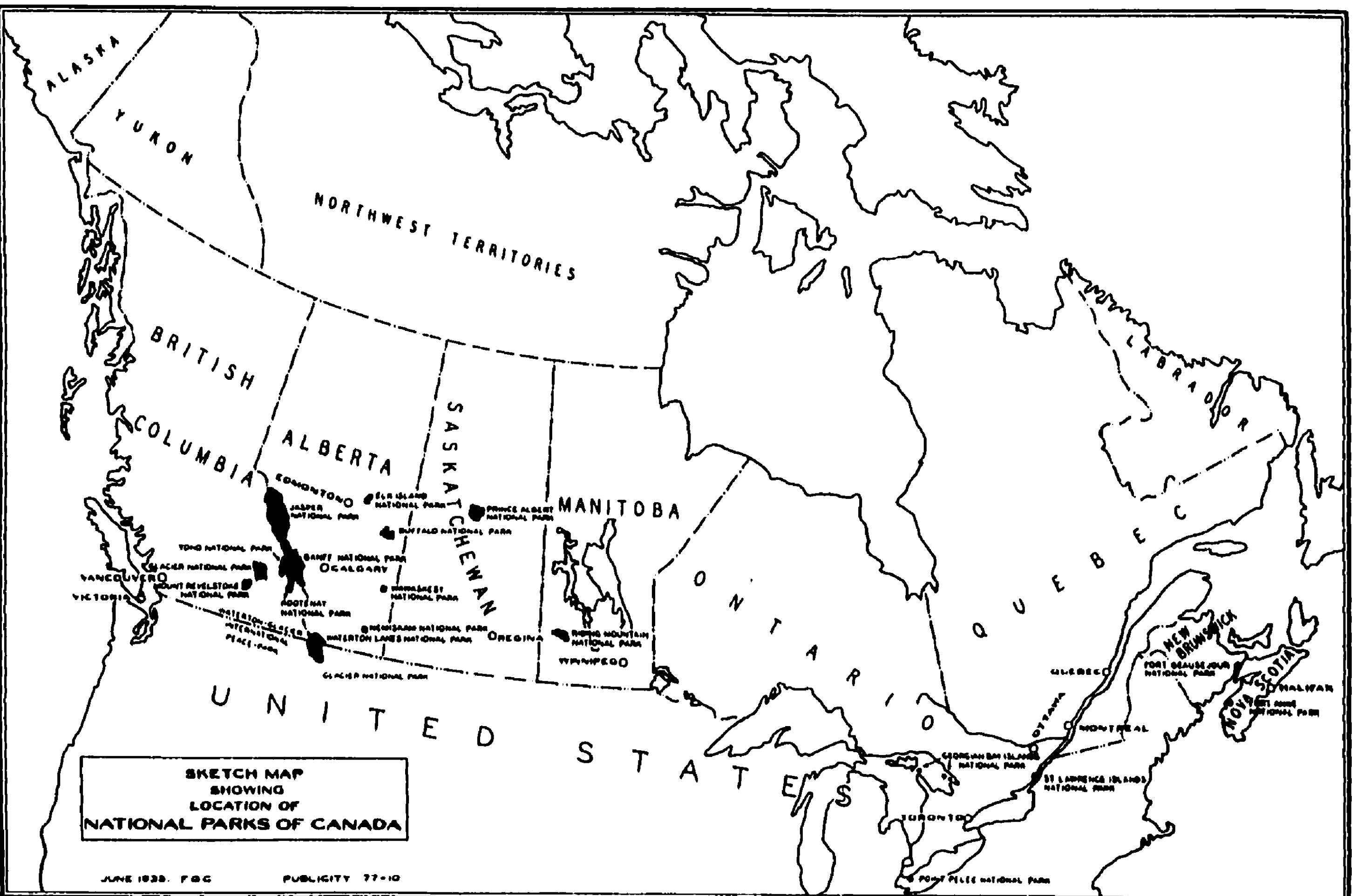

Figure 5. Map showing location of National Parks, 1935. This map, from the *Prince Albert National Park* guidebook shows that the bulk of national park territory lay on the west side of the continent.

larger service to the Dominion both *sociologically* and economically".[30] The Canadian nationalism associated with nature in the 1920s and 1930s incorporated more than the purely visual, iconographic emblems of national park culture. Canadian nature was also appropriated to the more ephemeral effects of national supremacy, through physical and sociological 'health'.

Visitors

According to the National Parks' reports, the majority of park tourists were Canadian, while the remainder were American visitors (with only a handful from Britain and 'other' destinations). The ways in which visitors were perceived and documented by the Branch suggest who and what the Parks Branch was looking for in its tourists. The National Parks Branch kept detailed record of the number of visitors to its various locations. In 1914 Canada's national parks received a total of 54,064 visitors; in 1925 that number was 271,996; and by 1935 the total visitors had increased to 710,778.[31] Due to the depression of the 1930s the visitor figures dropped for a couple of years, but by 1935 there was again a steady increase. Overall there was a marked growth in business for the national parks. The manner in which the parks were presented and sold to Canadians in park literature, specifically as 'national playgrounds', was likely in part a reflection of the awareness that the majority of national park tourists were Canadians.

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[30] *Annual Report*, 1926, 1. Emphasis added.
[31] *Annual Report*, 1935. The total population of Canada in 1931 was 10,376,786. F.H.Leahy, ed. *Historical Statistics of Canada*, 2nd ed. (Ottawa: Statistics Canada, 1983) table T147. At this time the vast majority of visitors to the parks were reportedly Canadian residents.

National tourism was still a fairly new industry, and those in charge of selling it were still in the process of identifying their consumer markets. During the depression, when industry everywhere in the country was facing difficulties, business promoters, local councils, and provincial and federal governments were turning to tourism as the next most significant industry in Canada and the Western world. It was in 1930 that the *Canadian Geographic Journal*, a quasi-scientific travel magazine, issued its first publication with a feature article lauding the tourist industry that carried the hopeful title "Five Million Tourists". The article was written by Theodore Morgan, the chairman of the Canadian Association of Tourist and Publicity Bureaus. In 1927 Harkin identified the "widespread growth of travel as one of the marked features of this century".[32] That this was a widely-held perspective on the new industry was emphasized by the growth of national interest and government investment in tourism. The 1934 Senate Report on Tourist Traffic, the establishment of the Canadian Government Travel Bureau, and the follow-up Dominion and Provincial Conference on the Tourist Industry of 1935, all indicated a growing national awareness of the potential of tourism. It was not, however, until after World War II that full-scale sociological and economic analysis of 'the tourist' emerged.[33]

In spite of the relative lack of sociological 'data' on the tourist industry in the interwar years, some common trends were identified and tourist destinations were framed

[32] *Annual Report*, 1927, 1.
[33] One of the earlier Canadian studies of was David Ivor's *A Study of the Economics of Tourism in Canada*, prepared for the Department of Resources and Development, 1952. Ivor's study draws on material and conclusions compiled in the 1930s, that due to the interruption of World War II, did not gain currency for several years.

accordingly. By the 1930s there was a new emphasis in the Canadian industry on American tourists. The perception was that the wealthier a country, the more its people would be inclined to spend disposable income on 'economic services' and 'leisure'.[34] The American market was perceived by the Canadian tourist industry as a lucrative source of tourist dollars. However, the Canadian industry to its dismay was never able to capitalize on the American market to the extent that matched its expectations.[35] In the Parks' annual reports this direction is emphasized by the distinction between 'domestic' and 'foreign' tourists and calculations of the average length of stay and money spent by foreign, especially American, tourists.[36]

While Harkin's reports show some confusion around the nationality of the ideal tourist for the national parks, he was able to subsume these differences to the unified 'democratizing influence' of the automobile. In 1925 Harkin wrote

> While the increasing volume of travel is important from the economic point of view, the most gratifying feature is the more democratic use being made of the parks themselves. Time was when visitors consisted almost wholly of wealthy tourists who made the parks a stopping place for a few days on a transcontinental tour. The coming of the motor car and the

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[34] ibid.

[35] In his paper Ivor wrote, "The conclusion is inescapable that despite 20 years of effort to attract more foreign, especially American tourists to Canada we have completely failed. Our advertising and publicity, our attempts to improve roads and accomodation, have resulted in no perceptible increase in our tourist revenue, after making proper allowance for the changes in the value of the dollar. During the proceedings of the Special Senate Committee on Tourist Traffic in 1934 which inaugurated a more vigorous attempt to attract tourists, there were references by several members and witnesses to $500 millions as our objective in revene from foreign tourists. It is obvious that we are no closer to that objective now than we were then. In view of the fact that *before the war over 90 percent of our tourist revenue came from Americans* and that now almost 94 per cent is derived from their visits, it is evident that we should study American tourist behaviour to ascertain what has happened." ibid., 16. emphasis added. There was obviously some confusion around what a tourist was, and also about the distinction between domestic and 'foreign' tourists, a distinction that would increasingly crystallize in the post-WWII years.

[36] For example, in 1936 the average length of stay of an American tourist was four days, and the overall percentage of tourists that were American showed an increase to twenty percent.

> establishment of motor camp sites and small bungalow hotels in practically every one of the parks had brought the national playgrounds within reach of thousands.[37]

The interwar period marked the beginning of an increasingly complex tourism industry. A new economic analysis of a 'service industry' was emerging, which sought to transform the newly-created leisure and recreation time into another arena of consumption. At a time when the strategies of target-marketing were in an early stage of evolution, the National Parks' rhetoric of democracy sought to provide an unbiased and generalized accessibility to western consumers. Not sure whether he should be attempting to reach 'upper-class' tourists or 'all classes of tourists', foreign or domestic visitors, Harkin sought to appeal to them all.

In spite of this lack of focus and perhaps because of the messages implicit in the national park schemes, the parks attracted mainly a Canadian, North-American, motoring middle class.[38] While the profile of the national park tourist remained somewhat ambiguous from the perspective of those shaping promotion discourse, the specificity of the objects of consumption, the national parks, was in contrast sharply defined. Whether for the enjoyment of loyal Canadians, Americans visiting the wonders of the North, or Europeans visiting the far reaches of the empire, national parks were marketed as uniquely and essentially Canadian products.

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[37] *Annual Report*, 1925, 5.

[38] This is according to the visitor accounts in the *Annual Reports*.

Nature in the National Parks

"It is a technology that fits well with the North American psyche...The individual hero on the road, pushing back the frontiers and discovering this land for "himself": this myth has a long and bloody history... and the car continues to play a part in it."[39]

One of the main characteristics of national park tourism in the interwar period was the birth, and apparently immediate popularity, of auto-tourism. It was during this period that national parks became synonymous with auto-camping and motor circle tours. Commissioner Harkin favoured accomodating the automobile and road-building industries. Within a decade Canadian ownership of automobiles more than doubled. In 1921 there was one car registered per 19 people; in 1931 this had increased to one car per 8 people.[40] With the development of auto-touring, the tourist experience in the national parks was scripted to suit the new technologies. Ironically, the language that was called upon to describe the new auto-touring experience of Nature drew upon historical metaphors. One of these was the theme of the nineteenth-century Grand Circle Tour. Motoring tourists were also scripted as adventuring 'nomads', exploring primordial nature en masse.

While they were touted as democratic and for the good of thousands, roads also served other purposes. Prior to the passing of the 1930 Natural Resources Act, one of the most persuasive arguments the Parks Branch could present for the creation of a park

[39] Wilson, 37-38.
[40] *Historical Statistics*, table T147.

within a province's boundaries was the promise of road construction.[41] New roads were used not only for tourist traffic, but also facilitated the development of a province's infrastructure. One example of such politicking was the much publicized opening of the Banff-Windermere highway. This road was begun in 1911 as a Dominion-provincial project with the CPR. The goal was to build a highway through the Rockies that would succeed finally in linking Alberta and British Columbia. By 1919 it was apparent to the Dominion government that it would have to provide more money for the project as the provinces were unable, or unwilling, to do so. The Dominion government agreed to complete the project on the understanding that it be allotted a strip of land ten miles wide, lying five miles on either side of the highway. This strip of land was administered by the Parks Branch and transformed into a new national park called 'Kootenay Park'. The park served as spectacular window dressing for the new Banff-Windermere highway, an early example of what in contemporary park parlance is known as 'a buffer zone'.

The opening of the Banff-Windermere Highway was a much publicized event, and one that confirmed both the Parks Branch's middle-class aspirations and its status as an engine of state-manufactured Canadian culture. A new guide book was issued for the event, whose cover picture was taken from a familiar photograph that appeared widely in other promotional literature. In addition to the published material, the Parks' Branch held a commemorative poetry contest. In a department memo Harkin wrote,

> The English Lake district was made famous by Wordsworth; loch Katrine by Scott's 'Lady of the Lake'; the Lakes of Killarney by one famous song,

[41] Bella, 72. The 1930 act transferred to the respective western provinces jurisdiction over natural resources within their boundaries. NAC, RG 84, accession volume, 13.

and Grand-Pre - to come nearer to home - by Longfellow's 'Evangeline'...If, therefore a striking poem commemorating this achievement could be written it would be published in every newspaper in Canada and attract immediate attention among the class of people whom it is desired to reach...[42]

Canadian poet Duncan Campbell Scott was recruited as a judge for this event, and the poem that eventually won the contest was an extremely long 'choric ode'. The winning ode was also made available to the public in a booklet format.[43] This 'literary' event once again marked the ambiguity in early tourist promotion between the 'right' class of people, and the tens of thousands the democratic park system was meant to serve.

Other popular tourist devices in early national-park auto-tourism were Loop routes and circle tours. In 1923 Harkin wrote,

The opening of the Banff-Windermere Road will signalize the completion of the last link in the great 6,000 mile system of modern highways known as "The Great Circle Tour", which will furnish what is probably the most spectacular motor route in the world.[44]

This route circled along the west coast of the North American continent, passing as far south as the Grand Canyon, and through every national park on either side of the border.

As national-park Nature came to be defined by the 'view from the road' the Parks Branch pioneered many of the techniques that mediated the experience of Nature in relation to the highway. Highway planning in national parks involved roadside

[42] NAC, RG 84, vol. 169, 1923 memorandum from Harkin
[43] NAC, RG 84, vol. 169, *Publicity - Poems.*
[44] *Annual Report*, 1923, 5.

landscaping in which planners "designed tourist movement into the land itself".[45] The explicit objective of such planning was to design a landscape that would make an attractive picture from the highway. Alexander Wilson identifies a number of strategies employed in the landscape management of scenic highways. The first strategy, employed by the Parks Branch, was to control everything within the field of vision of the highway. The road allowed for no commercial traffic, or society, except those dictated by the parks' needs, or those needed to facilitate the tourists' experience - i.e. souvenir shops or 'rest stops'.[46] Another technique of highway landscaping, and one that inhered in all the Parks' plans, was the production of nature itself. Breath-taking vistas were designed to afford the tourist "a maximum of scenery in a minimum of distance", in Harkin's memorable words.[47] A smaller version of the 'Great Circle Tour' was begun in 1925. Harkin wrote in anticipation,

> As soon as the road from Field west to Golden is completed the motorist will have within reach what will undoubtedly be one of the finest loop routes in the entire world. He will be able to proceed from Calgary to Banff to Lake Louise, thence to Field and Golden, thence by the Windermere valley to the Sinclair Hot Springs returning over the Banff-Windermere highway to Banff, and every mile of the way will be among scenery of the most spectacular kind.[48]

Circle tours also provided a great way for the tour promoters to ensure that tourists got a maximum of their "product" in a minimum of distance.

[45] Wilson, 35.
[46] ibid, 36-37.
[47] *Annual Report*, 1924, 23.
[48] *Annual Report*, 1925, 6.

Prior to the opening of the parks to automobile traffic only the 'upper classes' had been able to afford the railway travel to the Rockies and to stay in the luxurious railroad hotels. With the mobility and illusion of independence afforded by automobiles, the middle class could, by the 1920s, use their cars to travel and camp in many new auto-campgrounds.[49] These were set up by the national parks, and by the 1930s came to be replaced by roadside 'auto bungalows', precursors to tourist motels.[50] Harkin's vision of the automobile-friendly national park was so pervasive that in 1929 the annual reports began listing visitor statistics by the number of cars entering the parks. That year, according to the report, a total of 34,997 automobiles entered Banff National Park, carrying a total of 120,878 passengers.[51]

Another technique pioneered by the Parks' Branch Circle Tours was highway signage - the erection of road signs and mileposts. Mileposts served to organize and demarcate the movement of the automobile. They introduced the notion of progress to the landscape in which "the miles tick off as nature unfolds magnificently".[52] In 1920 Harkin received this letter from the Calgary Auto Club, an organization affiliated with the Calgary Good Roads Association:

> I am forwarding to you by the parcel post one of the 'Banff Grand Canyon Road' signs, which I thought might be of interest to you. Various interested associations in Arizona, Utah, and Montana have erected these signs, practically every mile from the Grand Canyon of the Colorado in Arizona to Glacier Park. From Glacier Park to Banff I have had them placed about one to every five miles...This means that every motorist who

[49] Bella, 71.
[50] *Annual Report*, 1934.
[51] *Annual Report*, 1929.
[52] Wilson, 35.

gets on any section of the trail of 2,200 miles will know that he is on the Banff-Grand Canyon Road.[53]

Automobile circle-tours brought a new tourist aesthetic to the Grand Tour theme of the nineteenth century. The automobile and its necessary highways made it possible for National Parks' promoters to better supervise the consumer's journey and make it more efficient. This new mode of touring also rationalized the tourist's effort. Circle tours provided the ultimate travel mini-adventure for the 'modern' tourist. The circle highway trip offered a journey with closure in which all the landmarks along the way, while pre-scripted, could be approached as 'new'. Travelers could simulate the experience of exploration and discovery yet always be assured of returning to where they began. The adventure began at the park entrance, a gateway into the other from which the auto-tourists, armed with circle tour map and camera, could make their excursion.

In early themes of popularized nature tourism, Nature in the national parks was often presented as the apotheosis to 'man' and civilization. Nature was a 'she', dark, unknown, and belonging to the realm of eternal laws of existence. National parks 'preserved' nature with much the same cultural intent that put native peoples in reserves in the nineteenth century, as testaments to man's origins, his 'original state' of a bygone era. Nature presented a piece of history that had great legitimacy and authority for its 'timelessness' but nevertheless was seen as fatally at odds with mankind and progress. These relationships, between 'man' and Nature were dramatized by the tourist narratives

[53] NAC, RG 84, vol. 107. July 24, 1920, letter to Mr. Harkin from Calgary Auto Club.

in the publicity of the Parks Branch. A publicity article about the Banff- Jasper highway proclaimed,

> Mountain highways have always possessed a peculiar fascination for mankind. It is not only the wealth of scenery that they command... It is a sense of penetration of the unknown, of overcoming obstacles which for ages have been barriers to human progress.[54]

Nature, as created by the national parks, served as a foil in nature tourism's adventure stories. The trope of the tourist as explorer, discoverer and conqueror was rationalized in parks literature to fit the new consumer technologies of the automobile and the camera. The annual reports were immersed in a neo-colonial language of discovery. Every year 'new' regions were 'opened up' to the consuming public. Another guide book, written in the 1920s, boasted,

> Some day some poet may praise worthily the pathfinders and roadmakers of this new continent, the men who made the way straight into the wilderness for those who were to come. For practically every road we travel now so easily represents a one-time victory, a triumph of human energy, courage and intelligence, over the harsh forces of Nature. [55]

Some of the sensationalist hyperbole of these pieces tapped into familiar adventure fantasies. During the 1920s and 30s the western 'civilized' world experienced a degree of disenchantment with technology, modernity and urbanization. Nature tourism offered the opportunity to throw off the shackles of 'progress' and re-enact encounters with the 'new world', the wild, mankind's 'other' nature. In the twentieth century North Americans

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[54] Edward E. Bishop, "The Banff-Jasper Highway," *Canadian Geographic Journal*, (January, 1940.)
[55] Canada. Department of the Interipr, National Parks Branch. *The Kicking Horse Trail Scenic Highway from Lake Louise, Alberta to Golden, British Columbia*, 1928.

were well-familiar with the adventure stories of Teddy Roosevelt; even Harkin quoted Roosevelt in his annual reports.[56] This was the period that also saw the increased popularity of the Girl Guides, the national parks' own 'Trail Riders' and 'nature-lover' Ernest Thomas Seton's 'Woodcraft Indians' - the model for Baden-Powell's Boy Scouts.

Tourist narratives were plotted along adventure-storylines already familiar to their audience, and the protagonist in these adventures, the tourist, was generally scripted as the white, Euro-American male explorer. Though women and men both took part in nature tourism, the traditions the industry drew upon were ones which typically featured the myth of the adventurer/ explorer, a role culturally reserved for men at the time.[57] In a promotional piece about Jasper, the author praises David Thompson, the first 'white man' known to have 'penetrated' the region.[58] Using language permeated with metaphors of male discovery, Harkin described a trail along the Snake Indian River which permits "the penetration and patrol of this section".[59] Nature was also transformed into a pilgrimage across not just space, but time as well. Nature, in the national parks became an 'anachronistic space' whereby "geographical difference across *space* (is) figured as a historical difference across time".[60] Tourists visiting the national parks were not just going to another place, they were traveling back in time. In one promotional piece the

[56] *Annual Report*, 1928, 9.
[57] Gail Bederman, *Manliness and Civilization: A Cultural History of Gender and Race in the United States, 1880-1917* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1995) Her book provides excellent background on some of the mythologies that were revived around middle-class masculinity in this period.
[58] R.W. Cautley, "Jasper National Park", *Canadian Geographic Journal*, (October, 1930)
[59] *Annual Report*, 1924, 22.
[60] This is an analysis developed in Ann McClintock's *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York and London: Routledge, 1995) 26-27.

Figure 6. Park entrances. These photographs appeared in a 1938 *Canadian Geographical Journal* article entitled, "Playgrounds of the Prairies". Park entrances marked the auto-tourists' arrival into Canadian Nature.

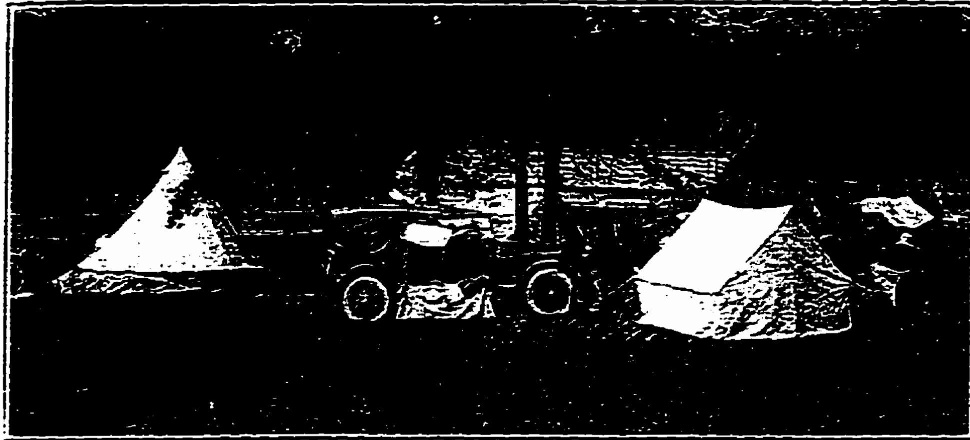

Figure 7. Auto-camping. These pictures were published in *Canadian Geographical Journal* articles, the top photograph in 1930, and the bottom one in 1938.

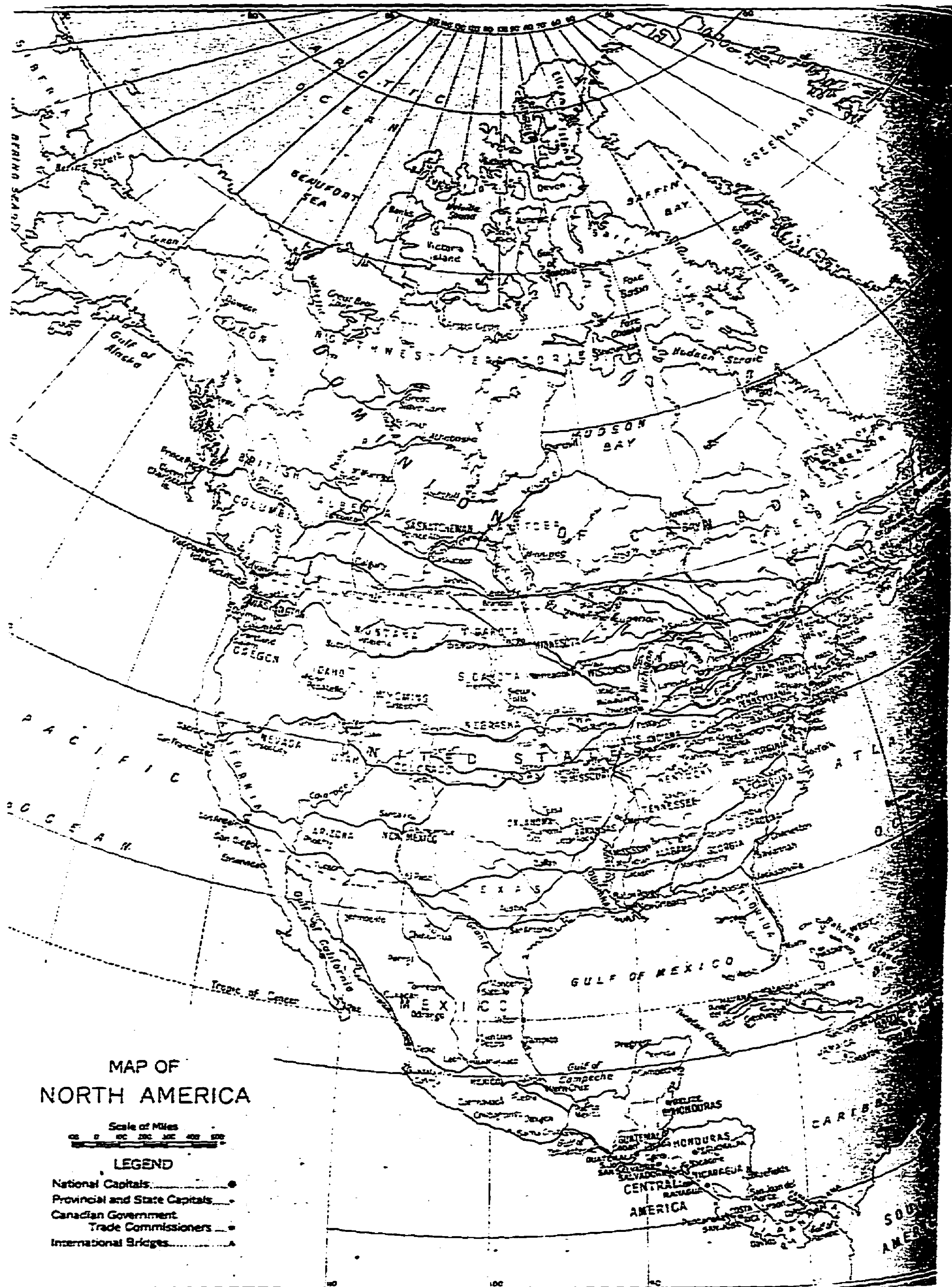

Figure 8. North-american highways. This map, from a 1940 *Canadian Geographical Journal* article entitled "Western Pilgrimage", shows the westward expansion of highways across the continent.

Figure 9. Sinclair Canyon. This particular image, of automobiles traversing the narrow canyon passage, was a stock picture in the promotion of the Banff-Windermere highway.

Figure 10. Automobile driving through the trees. A photograph from the *Canadian Geographical Journal*. 1940.

author wrote, "Civilization is reverting to its nomadic instincts...Places that a few years ago were remote and inaccessible have been brought within reach of the multitude".[61] In another article, the caption beneath a picture of a young white couple sitting at a picnic table in front of a 'wicki-i-up' (a tent) read, "The crumbling remains of many ancient camps still stand in remote spots within the Riding Mountain. Long ago Indians built this wikci-i-up leaving the skeleton for the use of other nomads who might pass that way..."[62]

The Work of Nature in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction

The techniques of the early National Parks guidebooks, circle- tour and trail maps were forerunners of the present-day Kodak picture-points which are structured into the tourist experience in such sites as Disney's Epcot Centre. Owing to the particular historical conjunction of the 'discovery' of the national parks as a tourist mecca, and the emergent technologies of photography, the Rocky Mountains became the most photographed mountains in the world.[63] The Parks Branch was in large part responsible for capturing the images of nature-commodified that would become a familiar part of the Canadian iconographic landscape. In 1926 the Branch distributed 4,200 images of "park scenery" and an additional 300 enlarged photographs. In 1929, "the Photographic Library was increased by several hundred negatives and 18,544 new prints were added to the collection. Prints distributed totaled 18,830, enlargements, 1,812, transparencies 73; coloured slides were also added to the collection, 68 prepared lectures with slides were

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[61] W.H. Currie, "Western Pilgrimage", *Canadian Geographic Journal*, (May, 1940).
[62] Ruth D. Goldman, "Garibaldi Park", *Canadian Geographic Journal*, (1931).
[63] Konrad, p.178.

loaned".[64] By the 1920s, images of the national parks' most felicitous and majestic scenes were very familiar to travelers to the parks. These images offered another scripting device for the tourist experience of the park; his goal was transformed into the excitement of re-enacting, 'capturing', the shot. This type of sensibility, that involved the tourist simulating well-established images, was overwhelmingly a romantic one.[65] Of this aesthetic, evident in the national parks, Patricia Jasen writes, "tourists are engaged in a quest for signs, and it is up to the industry to point them out... Romantic values endowed a host of places with evocative meaning, luring ever-growing numbers of people to travel... and to be ready purchasers of any goods that might serve as souvenirs through which the essence of these precious experiences could be captured".[66] The promotional material of the national parks was overwhelmingly visual, rendering nature into a formulaic experience, a host of simultaneously familiar and 'new' images.

The role the tourist was to occupy in early National Park scenarios often echoed early twentieth-century adventure stories. The earlier days of big-game hunting, wilderness safaris, and dangerous mountain-climbing treks with the promise of discovery were subsumed and domesticated in the national parks, rendered accessible to 'the multitude' by paved roads and state signage. Just as Teddy Roosevelt had given up big-game hunting for the thrill of 'hunting with a camera', Parks films such as 'Hunting Without a Gun' encouraged travelers to point and shoot with their cameras.[67] Memories

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[64] *Annual Report*, 1929, 17.
[65] Jasen, 9-13.
[66] ibid.
[67] *Annual* Report, 1933, 11. Bederman, 213.

of glory days were evoked from the discrete autonomy of the automobile. Like Roosevelt on his well-publicized trip to 'Pleistocene Africa' in the early twentieth century, tourists to Canada's national parks were enjoined to act out, on the one hand, the role of the white man visiting the Primitive Age, and on the other, the romance of the Mighty Hunter on the lookout for rare specimens in the wild.

The Monarch-of-all-I-Survey

> "In modern times the greater the administrative complexity of the state - and the more pervasive its territorial and social ambitions - then the greater its appetite for maps."[68]

During the 1920s the invention of the aeroplane captured popular imagination in North America and provided another visual perspective onto the Canadian landscape. Emergent in this period with the more widespread use of aeroplanes, were aerial photography and new techniques of topographical map-making and surveying. "Seen from a plane window the landscape flattens out to something like a map: it is a landscape of fact".[69] The new technologies complemented each other well in the projects of the Department of the Interior which set up its own Topographical Surveys Branch. The services of this Branch were often in demand from other departments in the government, including the Parks Branch and the Federal District Commission, the body responsible for the Gatineau Park. Harkin's annual reports invariably contained a discussion of the ongoing mapping and surveying projects in the various parks. Mapping might even be

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[68] J.B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge, Power," *Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the symbolic representation, design and use of past environments*, eds. Cosgrove and Daniels (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988)
[69] Alexander Wilson, 34.

said to have been somewhat of a bureaucratic-government fetish during the interwar period, a technique that appealed to the aesthetics of rationalism. A map, writes McClintock, "professes to capture the truth about a place in pure, scientific form, operating under the guise of scientific exactitude and promising to retrieve and reproduce nature exactly as it is".[70]

The new techniques for approaching nature were mass-produced and disseminated for the aesthetics of tourism. Many of the guidebooks distributed by the parks had fold-out maps in the back indicating various trails and points of interest, increasingly defined by highways and auto-routes. These maps ended at the boundary of the park, delimiting the imagined territory of the Parks Branch. Maps were also 'technologies of possession', icons of imperial 'truth' that promised "that those with the capacity to make such perfect representations must also have the right to territorial control".[71] The government fascination with mapping in the 1920s and 1930s tapped into the memory of colonial discovery and possession: "map-making became the servant of colonial plunder, for the knowledge constituted by the map both preceded and legitimized the conquest of territory".[72] When the technology of mapping met with the popularity of auto-tourism, what emerged was the opportunity for tourists to employ yet another dis-engaged historical device of exploration and 'discovery'.

[70] McClintock, 27.
[71] McClintock, 27-8.
[72] ibid.

On the West Peak of Mount Victoria—Banff National Park.

Figure 11. The Monarch-of-All-I-Survey. An image and caption on the first page of the 1931 *Annual Report* of the National Parks Branch.

Figure 12. Hikers on a mountainside. Pictures such as this one suggest that national parks promotion could be aimed at adventurous couples. In most images with both a man and woman tourist, the man occupies a proprietary stance, surveying the scene; while the woman presents a more casual role. *Canadian Geographic Journal*, 1931.

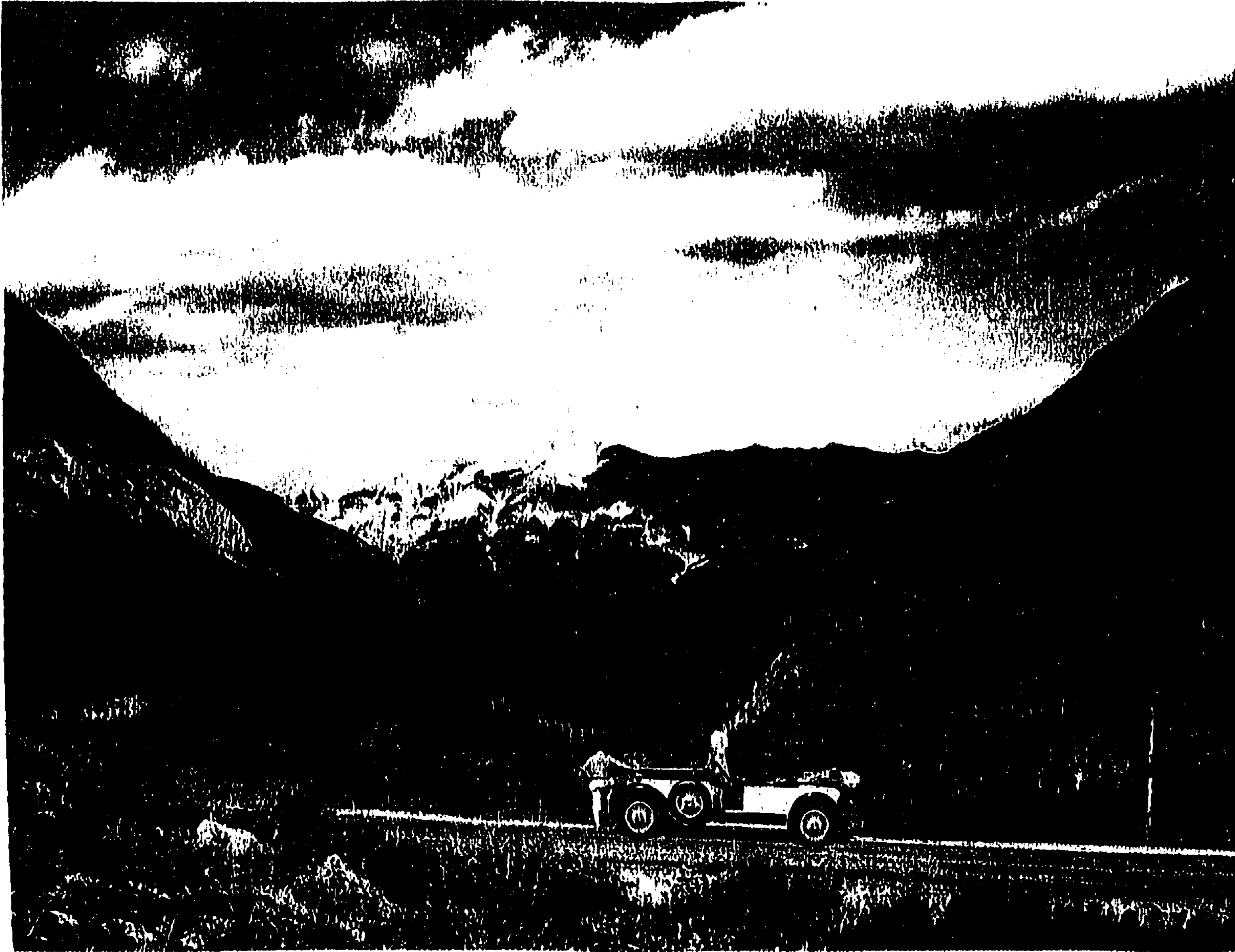

Figure 13. The view from the road. A lookout point on the Banff-Windermere Highway. *Canadian Geographical Journal*, 1937.

Figure 14. National Parks of Canada. This photograph appeared in an article entitled "Canada's Mountain Playgrounds" in the *Canadian Geographical Journal*. 1937.

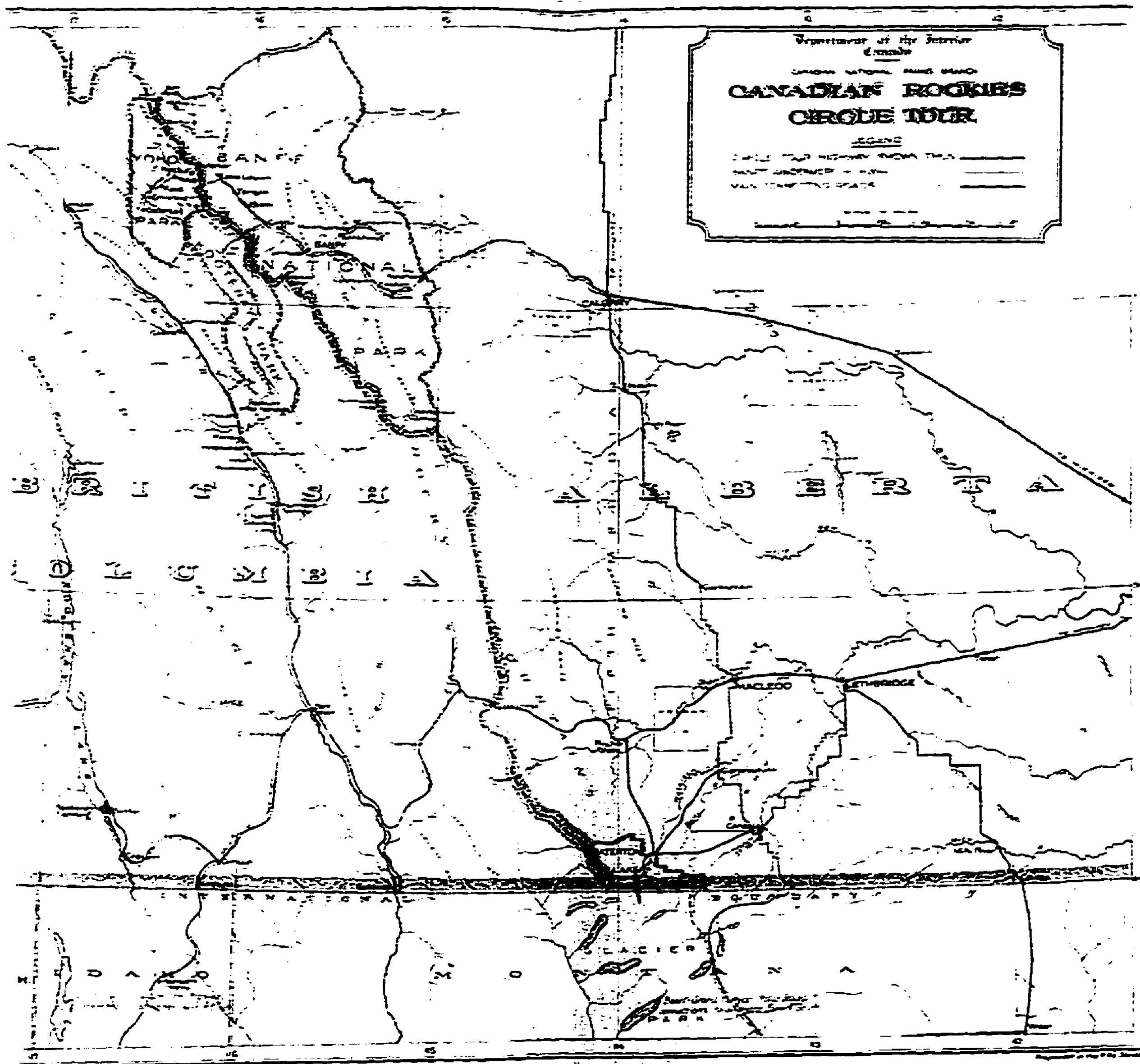

Figure 15. Canadian Rockies Circle Tour. This fold-out map of the circle tour came with the *Banff-Windermere Highway* guidebook issued by the Parks Branch in 1923. An adaptation of the Grand Tour of the nineteenth century, James Harkin was fond of this theme in national park tourism.

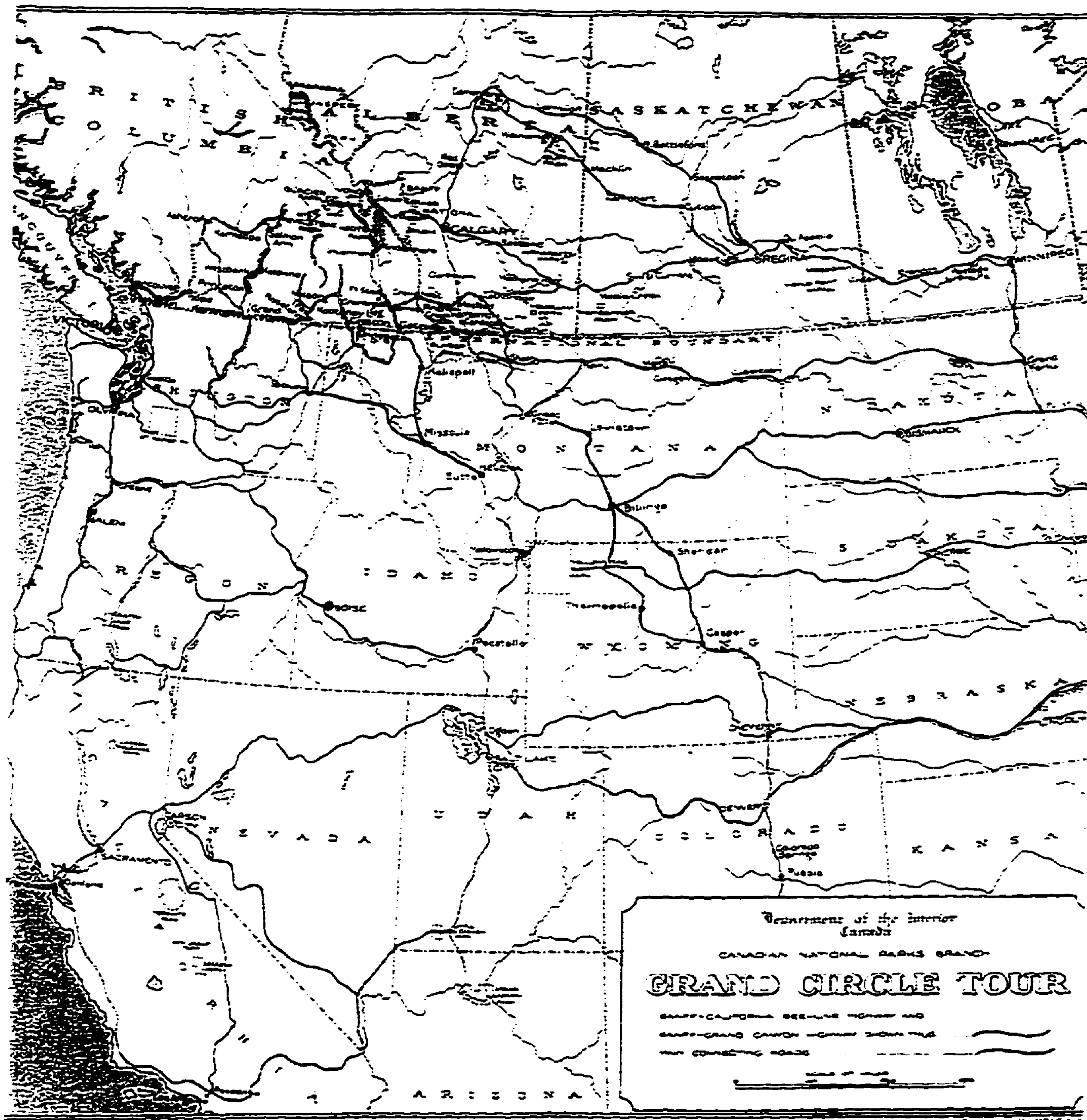

Figure 16. The Grand Circle Tour. This map, also included in the *Banff-Windermere Highway* guidebook, incorporated much of the North American west coast. Such a project on the part of the Parks Branch would have needed the co-operation of the American Parks as the proposed route passed through many of them.

Finally, the practice of government map-making can be accounted for in what Mary Louise Pratt calls the 'monarch-of-all-I-survey-genre'.[73] The point of view that is set up by the map, as in photography, is one of privileged invisibility. With the new mapping techniques, this point of view was also, symbolically, a view from the air. Part of what Pratt calls a 'rhetoric of presence', maps, like photography, were also intrinsic to the heroic genre of exploration. Maps served as metaphors for discovery, a way of looking which "set aside rather aggressively what actually constituted the heroic dimension of all the geographical, material, logistical, and political barriers to the physical and official presence of Europeans".[74] Guidebooks and circle-tours offered tourists the harmless opportunity to trace the boundaries of these adventures in nature, devoid of the nasty associations of conquest, and safe in the knowledge that they were only visiting, and what they were visiting had already been tamed.

The 'Inside World' - the Parks Branch and 'Indians'

While the Parks Branch's intellectuals endorsed and fostered a sense of Canadian nationalism, they were also engaged in their own rhetoric of national park territorialism. In the annual reports Harkin often made reference to the 'outside world', implying that the parks themselves were discrete spaces that operated by their own rules.[75] The 'outside world' referred not only to other countries or nations, but to all of the geographical territory beyond the boundaries of the parks. By defining the national parks in this

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[73] Pratt, 201-204.
[74] ibid.
[75] *Annual Report*, 1920-1935. This manner of discussing the 'outside world' occurs repeatedly in almost all of Harkin's annual reports.

relational way, the Parks' literature imitated the language and exercise of statehood. It also served to give visitors the illusion of having traveled to another land, somewhere exotic.

The national parks, like their own host country at the time, were given to displaying the artefacts of the indigenous peoples in the area. Indian 'rituals' and 'talismans' were standard currency in national park culture. One of the big events in Banff National Park in the 1920s was 'Indian Day'. In 1924 Harkin reported with some pride,

> The annual celebration of Indian Day held in the park on July 25 and 26 was the most successful yet held. In addition to the usual races and contests the Indians themselves arranged pageants depicting life in the early forties, which they carried out with a dramatic seriousness and attention to detail that greatly delighted spectators.[76]

'Indians' were mentioned in the Annual Report only in connection with these 'fetes', as they were called at the time. No mention of the history that preceded Indian Day, or the interaction of Indians with, or their dislocation from, the national parks is made in the official literature. Like the Nature that was 'colonized' in the parks, the image of the Indian served as a narrative point in the plotting of civilization.[77] Objectified and romanticized, Indians in the 'natural' setting provided tourists with an imagined primeval past, one that was captured and static in the national parks.

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[76] *Annual Report*, 1924, 17-19.

[77] Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Candian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992). Francis writes that white Canadians "set themselves the task of inventing a new identity for themselves as Canadians. The image of the Other, the Indian, was integral to this process of self-identification", 8.

The nature tourism of the national parks also tapped into the contemporary trend of Euro-Americans 'going native' for a holiday. Hailed as 'fellow-nomads' natives were simultaneously romanticized and appropriated by the culture that consumed their image then returned to the city. White North American culture despatialized and re-invented the image of the 'wild man', "as Native people were pushed from the everyday lives and consciousness of urban Canadians, and as the latter became more and more preoccupied with the debilitating effects of city life".[78] Camping in tee-pees, outdoor movements such as the Woodcraft Indians, and the National Parks' own 'Indian' ranger 'Grey Owl' all signaled the paradoxical relationship between an idealized image of the 'Indian' and the white culture's perception and fear of the growing physical and cultural distance between itself and its 'roots'.[79]

Native culture was displayed in other ways in the National Parks. In 1925 the Parks Branch began to collect totem poles. A large cache of poles was found existant in the Skeena River native villages of Hagwelgeht, Kitwangs, Kispiax, and Gitsegeulka.[80] In the 1920s with the construction of the Skeena Valley railway line, these villages were placed right on the mainline of the transcontinental railway. In co-operation with the

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[78] Jasen, 14.
[79] Francis, 131-135. "Grey Owl" was the personification of white man's invention of the romantic Indian figure. During the 1930s he was hired by the national parks to work as a park ranger and was well-known for his work with his little mammal 'friends' the beavers. Much has been written about the upper-class Briton who went 'native', and he was also mentioned in the Parks' annual reports.
[80] *Annual Report*, 1925.

Department of Indian Affairs and the Victoria National Museum, the Parks started a project of "Preservation of Indian Art". The Annual Report for that year stated,

> In view of the rapid disappearance of totem poles within recent years and the virtual death of the art among the present day Indians it was decided that steps should be taken to preserve, in so far as possible, the poles of this region.[81]

The *Annual Reports* did not mention that the disappearance of the totem poles was due to the fact that for decades collectors had been "stripping coastal villages of native artifacts and selling them to museums around the world".[82] The Parks Branch decided that it, too, wanted to display some of these 'most highly prized' totem poles and called it 'preservation'. Harkin was on the interdepartmental committee responsible for this project. In 1928 Harkin reported that, "there are still twenty-four poles standing within sight of the railway and sixty others within a radius of 15 miles which should be preserved".[83] The totem poles were placed within sight of the railway, and as a result became a major tourist attraction; "one Montreal newspaper calculated that they were the most photographed spot in Canada after Niagara Falls".[84] Preserved as 'art' these artefacts would also have served tourists as flags or symbols, announcing that they had arrived in another land, complete with its own indigenous artistic tradition.

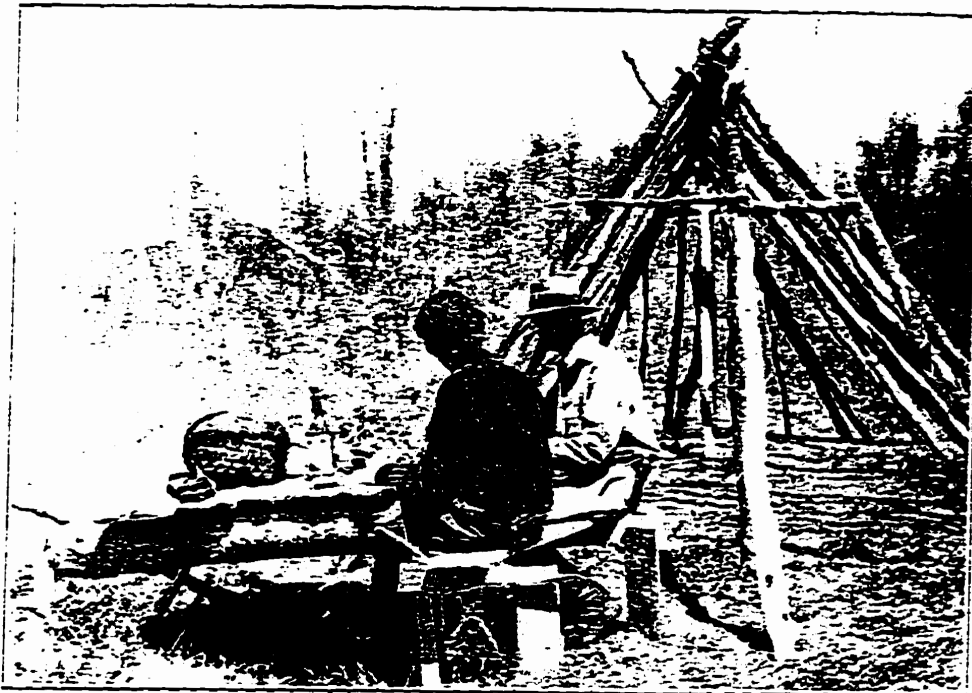
Stereotypes of 'Indian' culture were also drawn upon in the National Parks' first souvenir schemes. In the early 1920s the Parks Branch invented a souvenir for visitors

[81] *Annual Report*, 1925, 25.
[82] Francis, 183.
[83] *Annual Report*, 1928, 28-29.
[84] Francis, 183.

coming to the Parks. Initially the souvenir was in the shape of a small aluminum coin bearing the figure of a buffalo. This token served primarily as a reminder to tourists to be careful about the danger of forest fires. However, the little gimmick soon took on a life of its own as the Parks Branch started receiving requests from visitors for more tokens to take away as souvenirs. In response the Parks' Branch adopted the token as a means of promoting the parks generally. By 1923 the little medallion was issued in an envelope with an accompanying booklet entitled 'Buffalo Medicine' which explained its 'origins'. In a department memo one of the branch officials explained, "it is a small aluminum coin bearing the figure of the buffalo which was believed to be the strongest 'medicine' of all the animals, since the buffalo was sacred to the sun and supposed to transfer 'sunpower' to those whom he took under his protection".[85] Along the bottom of the coin, beneath the image of the buffalo, was the inscription "Canadian National Parks - Playgrounds of the World". The accompanying text read,

> Among the American Indians the possession of a 'fetish' was believed to ensure extreme good fortune... What it was was of little importance. It might be any object, however incongruous, though usually something small and portable, such as a bone, a feather... Its importance lay in the fact that by some *mysterious agency* this object had become possessed of consciousness, volition and immortal life....in return for the favours it bestowed the fetish demanded adoration and among some tribes it was frequently smeared with oblations of blood from animals slain in hunting as it was believed this kept it alive and strengthened its occult power... The enclosed charm is "Buffalo Medicine". It symbolized sun power. It comes to you from the Canadian National Parks with the hope that you may, during your stay in the Parks, derive some of the magic power which the sun bestows upon all who visit his Lodge-of-the-Great-Outdoors.[86]

[85] NAC, RG 84, vol. 2049, general correspondence, February 21, 1921.
[86] NAC, RG 84, vol. 2049, "Universal, publicity, souvenirs". Emphasis added.



The crumbling remains of many ancient camps still stand in remote spots within the Riding Mountain. Long ago Indians built this wick-i-up leaving the skeleton for the use of other nomads who might pass that way. An axe head rusty with age was found nearby bearing the stamp of the Hudson's Bay Company.

Figure 17. Tourists and 'tee-pees'. These photographs appeared in articles in the *Canadian Geographical Journal*. The top picture is from 1931 (note the caption), and the bottom one from 1940.

TOTEM POLES OF GIT-SEGYUKLA — EDWIN H. HOLGATE, R.C.A.

WHERE THE NATIVE 'PARADISE LOST' OF TEMLAHAM USED TO STAND — ANNE D. SAVAGE

Figure 18. Canadian Art. Artwork that appeared in a 1938 *Canadian Geographical Journal* article entitled "The Story of Canadian Art". The top painting is an illustration of the 'totem poles' preserved in the mid-20s by the project in which James Harkin was involved. These images formed part of the Canadian Nature iconography of the time.

Figure 19. Maligne Lake. Another juxtaposition of tourism and icons of 'Indian' culture. *Canadian Geographical Journal*. 1937.

The development of this souvenir by the Parks Branch marked one of the junctures between Romanticism and commodity consumerism inherent in the new tourist trade. While the thought of 'smearing' the Parks' fetish with oblations might have been appealing in imagination only, the mythology of 'l'homme sauvage' was intended to conjure up the tourists' trip back to Nature.

National Parks and the Empire

While the Parks Branch was fostering a tourist relationship with Canadians and their neighbours to the south, it also maintained a cultural 'imagined-community' with the British Empire. As with the rest of Canada in this period, the National Parks Branch seemed stuck in the paradoxical situation of defining itself as uniquely Canadian, yet still desirous of the cultural prestige that accrued to associations with empire. By the 1930s, Harkin's vision of the National Park 'idea' colonizing the entire civilized world seemed to have come true. In 1933 an International Conference for the Protection of Nature was held at the House of Lords in London, England. The conservation and preservation of natural reserves all over the western-colonized world had been perceived as an issue since the turn of the century, but the 1933 conference was the largest forum of its kind to date. In addition to the observers from North America, the conference was attended by representatives from the Union of South Africa, Belgium, Egypt, Spain, Abyssinia, France, Italy, Portugal, the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan and the United Kingdom. Many of the policy decisions and initiatives adopted at this conference were inspired by the North

American National Parks systems. Americans and Canadians were seen as pioneers in the field of park preservation.[87]

Further ambiguity is evident in the relations between the Parks Branch and the symbols of England in the Branch's near-obsession with visiting royalty as part of its cultural landscape. Part anglophilism, part class-appeal, this passage in the 1928 Annual Report conveyed the tone:

> The growing reputation of the national parks of Canada abroad is reflected in the number of distinguished names among the visitors' list ... Among such guests last year were Their Royal Highnesses the Prince of Wales and Prince George... Earlier in the year Banff was honoured by a visit from Their Excellencies Lord and Lady Willingdon, who spent a few days there on their first trip to the West".[88]

Later Harkin wrote that such distinguished guests had been presented with "buffalo robes, mounted as floor rugs, from the Government at Wainwright park".[89] Harkin attempted to maintain an affiliation and association with the trappings of British royalty. At the same time, Harkin tried to create the impression for Canadians, and for whomever read his reports, that the Canadian National Parks, 'Playgrounds of the World', could hold their own on the international stage.

Another method the Parks Branch used to maintain its links with the Empire was to distribute its promotional material abroad. In 1925 the Director of Publicity went to

[87] John Mackenzie, *The Empire of Nature: Hunting, Conservation and British Imperialism* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1988), 216.
[88] *Annual Report*, 1928, 11.
[89] ibid.

England for the opening of the Empire Exhibit at Wembley. There he remained, in charge of the parks displays, until the exhibit's close in the autumn. The Parks Branch became a regular participant at the Empire Exhibit where it distributed thousands of promotional pamphlets. One such example was the 1925 pamphlet 'Canada', an advertisement more for the country as a nation than as a nature-tourist destination. As part of the Department of the Interior, the presence and image of the Parks Branch served a dual purpose. The 1926 Annual Report announced, "forty-eight lectures were delivered, and 123,555 publications were distributed in England..together with the release of prepared articles assisted in making known the opportunities that Canada has to offer in the way of tourist holidaying and permanent settlement".[90] The national parks were promoted in England as advertisements for Canada. The spectacular nature presented in the national parks was a testament to a promised land, symbols of a successfully-tamed continent.

Conclusion

The Nature that was both idealized in and shaped by the national parks during the interwar period was, in scenic terms, an empty and spectacular set of landscapes. This landscape could be presented as 'empty' from the point of view of the government administrators and promoters because the Euro-American perspective equated native peoples, and the invented 'Indian' culture of the parks, with the primordial nature preserved within them. Nature in the parks was ideally everything that 'settled' Canada

[90] *Annual Report*, 1926, 9.

was not. But it did not only present Canada with the promise of the 'other'. Nature was also appropriated to Canadian national identity and installed as the beginning point, the origin of Canada's national geographical presence. The Parks Branch, heavily involved in tourism during the interwar period, articulated its own brand of nature tourism to the emerging imperatives of the automobile, tourist and national culture industries. This chapter has demonstrated that the invented Nature established by national park culture was presented as both natural and 'pre-historic', and that these characteristics lent themselves well to the nationalist iconography that emerged with 'young Canada'. Nevertheless, far from being an organic product, underlying the Nature of early Canadian nature tourism was a set of assumptions, aesthetic and otherwise, as deliberate as the colonial relations from which it emerged. Such a framework of assumptions could be applied very generally, to 'Western' frontier parks initially, and to 'Eastern' settled parks in due course: as the record of the Gatineau, to which we now turn, so clearly demonstrates.

CHAPTER THREE

IMAGINING A PLAYGROUND FOR THE CAPITAL:

GATINEAU PARK AS AN IDEOLOGICAL CONSTRUCT, 1928 - 1945

The twisting, tumbling Gatineau River that sweeps past the nation's capital bears its yellow pulpwood through a fabled frontier land where millionaire sportsmen and half-breed trappers rub shoulders in log-cabin hamlets with hermits, witches, and revered faith healers. - "Ottawa's Backyard", *Maclean's Magazine*, 1951

Gatineau Park is situated north-west of the nation's capital across the Ottawa River in the province of Quebec. In 1938 the park laid claim to 5,000 acres; by the early 1950s that area had expanded to 43,000 acres. Today the park area encompasses a total of 88,000 acres extending 50 kilometres north-west of Ottawa-Hull. The Park is in the shape of a large triangle, the thin edge of which is one kilometre wide where it meets the 'Hull urban area' and extending to a width of 24 kilometres along the boundary furthest from Ottawa-Hull.[1] In recent National Capital Commission (NCC) reports the Park is said to compose 7.6 percent of the total area of the National Capital Region.[2] In the words of the NCC's promotional literature,

> Gatineau Park is part of the Canadian Shield and, as such, it represents a significant portion of Canada's landscape... It is rare to find such a vast outdoor oasis on the doorstep of an urban area the size of Ottawa-Hull. Gatineau Park is the main natural park for the 750,000 inhabitants of the National Capital Region; there is no other natural area of its size or calibre within 50 kilometres of the core of the Capital.[3]

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[1] NCC, *Gatineau Park Master Plan* (Ottawa: NCC, March 1990), 29-33. also, Landon French, *Cultural Landscapes Project Gatineau Park: Historical Study*, (Ottawa: NCC, August 1995),17-18.
[2] French, 17-18.
[3] *Master Plan*, 23.

The characteristics of Gatineau Park are detailed in a recent NCC publication:

> Rising from the three lakes, the Gatineau Hills are distinct from the Plateau and continue to the Gatineau River and beyond at a lower height above sea level. Therein lie the forests where the great white pines grew, and now contain mixed forests with sugar maples and beech hardwoods dominating. Wildlife in the area includes white-tailed deer, beaver, great blue heron and osprey.

Other 'Natural Elements' in the park are then summarized by the following facts: 82% of the Park is said to be covered with forest, there are at least forty-nine lakes in the Park, and other animals to be found are turkey vultures, foxes, bears, wolves, coyotes, marten, otters, fishers plus "other fish and amphibians as may be found throughout the St. Lawrence Lowlands and Canadian Shield."[4]

Today, according to NCC reports, roughly 1.2 million visits are made annually to Gatineau Park. Park visitors are mostly local, as is apparently the case in many national parks.[5] National Capital Region (NCR) residents account for 84 percent of the visits and 53 per cent of all visits are from residents of Ontario.[6] This statistic may seem confusing, but it should be noted that the NCR includes the city of Hull and a number of small towns in the province of Quebec. Gatineau Park offers the following recreational resources to visitors to the Park:

> 300 campsites, 6 group campgrounds with accommodations from 20 to 200 people, 39 canoe campsites, 51 lakes for sports fishing, 2 boat rental centres, 25 kilometres of recreational pathways, 200 kilometres of hiking or cross-country ski trails, 16 picnic grounds, 6 supervised beaches, 3

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[4] French, 9.
[5] *Master Plan*, 31.
[6] ibid., 31.

> snack bars, and 40 kilometres of parkways providing access to beaches, trails, lookouts, picnic grounds and interpretation sites.[7]

Gatineau Park was initially considered a part of the National Capital District (NCD), defined in 1945 as a territory of 2,330 square-kilometres evenly distributed on both sides of the local inter-provincial boundary, the Ottawa River. This region was administered by the uniquely-appointed body of the FDC/NCC. The National Capital Act of 1958 gave the NCC the mandate, "to prepare plans for and assist in the development , conservation and improvement of the National Capital Region in order that the nature and character of the seat of the Government of Canada may be in accordance with its national significance".[8] The National Capital District thereby became the National Capital Region and its territory doubled to a total of 4,660 kilometres in both provinces. The expanded Gatineau Park remained a key part of the region's 'open spaces' concept.[9]

Also located 'In the Heart of Gatineau Park' is Kingsmere, Mackenzie King's summer residence. As discovered upon his death in 1950, the former prime minister willed Kingsmere to 'the people of Canada'. Maintained by the NCC it is still largely open to the public today. In his will King wrote,

> I had not been long in office before I conceived the idea of acquiring sufficient land to make the Kingsmere properties into a park which would be worthy of its location in the immediate vicinity of Ottawa, and which some day I might be able to present to my country as a thank-you... Here I have been privileged to share many happy days with my father and mother and other members of our family, as well as with close personal friends. Here, too, I have been able to entertain visitors from other lands

[7] ibid., 29.
[8] National Capital Commission, *A Capital in the Making* (Ottawa: NCC, 1991) n.p.
[9] ibid., 28.

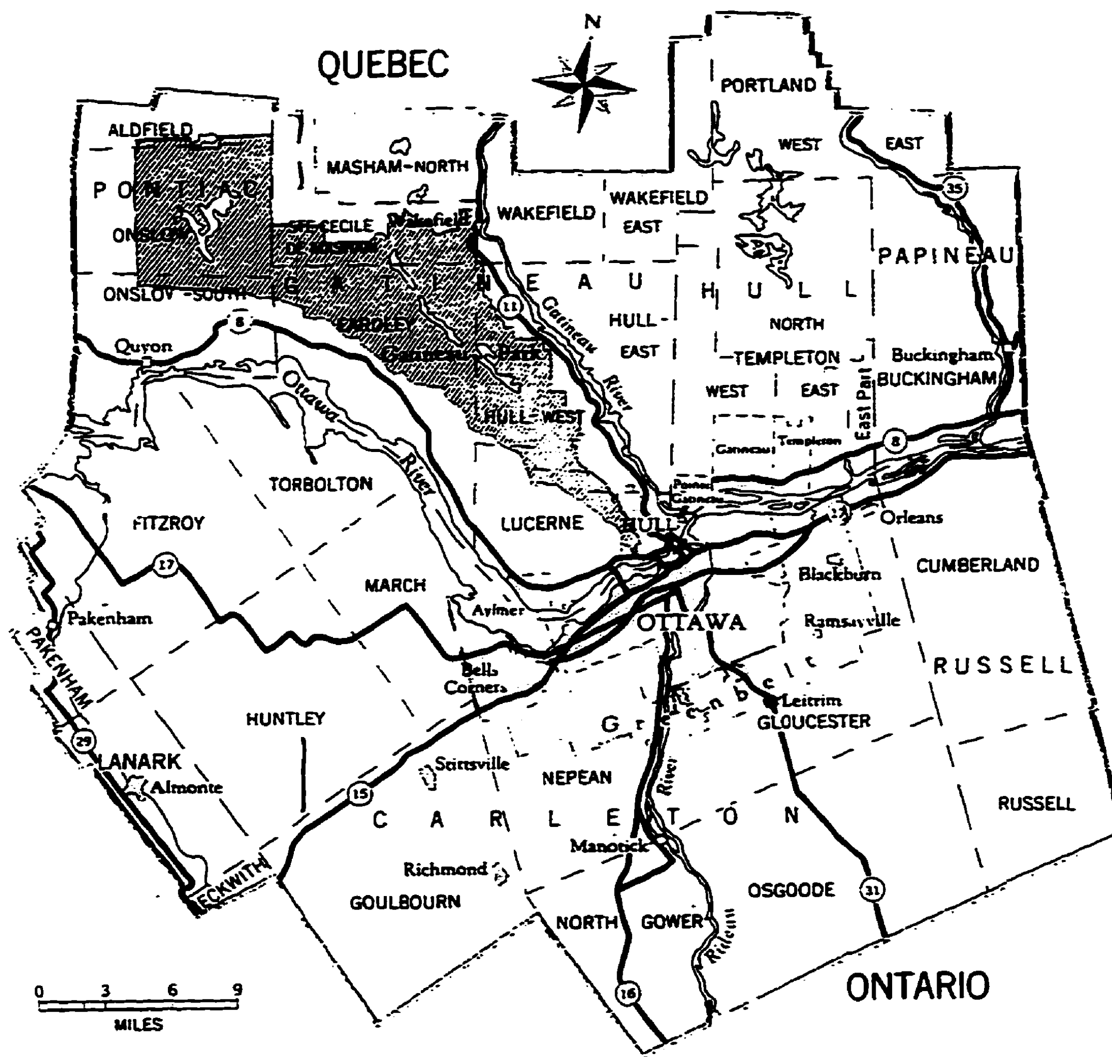

Figure 20. The NCC in 1966. This map shows the 'wedge' that was Gatineau Park penetrating the Ottawa-Hull area. *The National Capital Commission*, Ottawa: NCC, 1966.

> amidst the companionship of the Canadian countryside and the beauties of our changing seasons.[10]

Today the estate is advertised as a mere 25-minute drive from Ottawa. Visitors are invited to "Wander in the gardens, photograph the ruins and look for the 'Hidden Garden', walk the forest paths designed by King himself, enjoy waterfalls and scenic lookouts and experience the Canadian forest". One can also "Have lunch at the Moorside Tea Room".[11] Mackenzie King is remembered to tourists at the Estate as the prime minister who "shepherded Canada from semi-colonial status to full autonomy".[12]

Such is the present-day Gatineau Park. This chapter will focus primarily on the Gatineau Park in the interwar years. While the Park did not officially come into being until after the Second World War, the 'idea' of Gatineau Park existed for decades prior to that. The founders of Gatineau park drew upon the emergent national park culture in order to justify the need for a national park in the capital region. As in the other national parks, the idea of Nature evoked by this project required a pristine space untainted by signs of 'civilization'. Unfortunately for the FDC there were not any areas around the national capital that easily lent themselves to this Nature aesthetic. Gatineau itself was home to a diverse range of small communities descended from the timber trade of the nineteenth century. This chapter examines the calls for a national park in the 1920s and 1930s, the role played by Mackenzie King in the establishment of Gatineau Park and the

[10] NAC, RG 34, vol. 274, Copy of Last Will and Testament of The Right Honourable W.L. Mackenzie King, released August 8, 1950.
[11] NCC, *Mackenzie-King Estate Tour Guide*, Ottawa.
[12] ibid.

ways in which the park idea was presented and sold to the public. In order to re-shape the Gatineau in accordance with the dominant national park aesthetic hundreds of the area's inhabitants had to be removed from their land. To facilitate this process a large-scale project of surveying, mapping and expropriation was initiated by the government bodies invested in the project. This chapter will also examine how those activities took place. From national beauty to the importance of tourism, the FDC called upon familiar national park themes to justify its expansion and control of the designated area in the Gatineau Hills.

Gatineau Park was, and continues to be, as reliant upon Ottawa and the idea of a nation's capital, as the National Park culture was bound up with Canada and its national identity. The NCC traces its vision of an independently-administered capital region, inspired by Washington D.C., to the turn of the century. In 1884 Wilfrid Laurier stated, "I would not wish to say anything disparaging of the Capital, but it is hard to say anything good of it. Ottawa is not a handsome city and does not appear to be destined to become one either".[13] Twelve years later, Laurier had changed his mind and stated at a public meeting that he wanted to make Ottawa 'The Washington of the North'. This was a theme later adopted by Mackenzie King and was carried on for decades in the rhetoric of the development of Canada's National Capital Region. In 1899 the Ottawa Improvement Commission (OIC) was formed with the mandate of transforming Ottawa

[13] *A Capital in the Making*, 12

into a city, "which will reflect the character of the nation, and the dignity, stability, and good taste of its citizens."[14]

To help outline a scheme for the enhancement of the city the OIC hired Frederick Todd, a landscape architect who had studied under Frederick Olmstead. In 1912 Todd presented the 'Todd Report', a document that the FDC/ NCC still cites as seminal in laying the first conceptual foundation for the capital region. The Todd Report was also the first government-produced report that recommended a national park as a necessary complement to Ottawa. In his report Todd states,

> The Dominion of Canada is famous the world over for the extent and beauty of her forests, and for this reason it would seem appropriate that there should be reserved in close proximity to the Capital, good examples of the forests which once covered a great portion of the country... due consideration being given to the fact that it is desirable that such a reserve should contain as picturesque and diversified scenery as possible.[15]

Another precedent-setting report prepared for the OIC was the 1915 'Holt Plan', which recommended the creation of a powerful federal district. In carrying on a theme, Holt also proclaimed,

> London, Paris, and Washington are all great capitals, each of them situated on the banks of a river, but none of them has the natural beauty of Ottawa. Nature, indeed, offers a direct invitation to make this northern capital one of the most beautiful in the world.[16]

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[14] ibid., 14.
[15] Preliminary Report to the Ottawa Improvement Commission, Sessional Paper No. 51a, 2 GEORGE V., A. 1912.
[16] *A Capital*, 16.

Holt made a number of recommendations, which included "a Federal District and securing for the Federal authority some control of local government" as well as "the development of a broad and forceful policy as to further park lands." The implication was that "there should be established a National park or Forest Reserve in the Laurentian hills, under the control of the Dominion Government".[17] These plans, however, were put on hold by the advent of World War I. The ambitions of the OIC were also interrupted by the fire in 1916 which destroyed the main building of Parliament, thereby temporarily destabilizing the seat of government. These early reports, finally, held relatively little sway in terms of the degree of change they were able to render on the landscape of the capital. In later and present-day NCC literature, however, the recommendations made in them are often cited as the origin of the present-day rationale behind the National Capital Region.

It was in 1927, under prime minister Mackenzie King, that the commission really began to enjoy the unrestricted implementation of its plans. In the early 1920s, Mackenzie King began a campaign for the preservation of the area in the Gatineau Hills, which, not coincidentally, surrounded his Kingsmere residence.[18] He invoked several mechanisms to facilitate this, including the introduction of a bill in 1927 to change the OIC to the Federal District Commission. The bill, when passed, became the Federal District Commission Act of 1927.[19] With its reorganization, the FDC acquired much

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[17] ibid.
[18] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *The Citizen*, Ottawa, December 17, 1935.
[19] ibid.

greater territorial jurisdiction, including portions of the province of Quebec on the north side of the Ottawa River. The Commission's membership was increased from eight to ten, one of whom had to be from the city of Hull, Quebec. Mackenzie King retained cabinet responsibility for the portfolio that directed the activities of the new FDC. A 1928 amendment to the Act invested the new body with the right to expropriate land for its purposes, and allocated it three million dollars with which to initiate its new projects.[20] The bill, introduced as it was to enable the creation and maintenance of a Federal Capital District, generally received bi-partisan support. The District was presented as a nationalist project, fueled largely by King's rhetoric of nationalism. As King stated in 1927, "Ottawa is the focal centre of the Dominion...which is acknowledged as the first of the dominions of the British Empire. It is the heart of a nation that has grown great..." He added further that the creation of a national park would be a "fitting adjunct to the capital of our country".[21] The FDC started acquiring land in Quebec in 1928.

Developments in Ottawa itself shaped the park project. Another important capital project that came to fruition in 1927 was the completion of the Peace Tower on Parliament Hill. The tower was dedicated to the memory of the 'War Dead'. The Peace Tower came to occupy a strongly symbolic function on the landscape of the national capital over the next few decades, designed as it was to dominate the capital's skyline. (Height restrictions were placed on the erection of buildings other than those of parliament in the capital as early as 1910 and 1914. City-planning debates carried on into

[20] von Baeyer, 208.
[21] ibid.

the 1960s as to how to control the height of buildings so as not to obstruct the view of and from Parliament Hill, the symbol of the seat of Canadian government.)[22] It was this tower that also served as the symbolic eye, and provided a privileged viewpoint, onto the Gatineau Hills.

A 1995 NCC document entitled *Cultural Landscapes Project Gatineau Park: Historical Study*, represents the closest the NCC has ever come to examining the underlying mechanics of Gatineau Park's existence. In it the author writes,

> Why the national park model? There is no direct evidence answering this question. However we do know that National Parks had existed in Canada for fifty years prior to this period and it was in 1930 that the National Park Act was declared for Canadian Parks by the federal government. Thus both Mackenzie King and Bennett were likely familiar with the principles behind a national park. The difference may have been Mackenzie King's personal stake in the preservation of the woodland and his desire to improve the stature of the National Capital as a whole. While documented proof of the decision to use the national park model was not uncovered in the research for this project, it must be said that "natural national parks" was likely the only model for saving an endangered environment such as woodlands that existed at the time.[23]

By the late 1920s Mackenzie King was indeed well familiar with the national park apparatus. In 1927 the Prince Albert National Park was created in Saskatchewan. This park was a thank-you present from King to his constituents in the riding which had elected him in a 1926 by-election, and again in 1927 when he defeated John Diefenbaker, his Conservative opponent. The members of his riding presented King with a fully-furnished cottage in the area, on Waskesiu Lake. King would occasionally entertain at

[22] *A Capital*, 18.
[23] French, 16-17.

this cottage. Another lake in Prince Albert Park was named Kingsmere Lake, in honour of King's other residence in the Gatineau Hills, back in the federal capital district.[24] Mackenzie King, with his promotion of the Gatineau Park, was creating his own self-referential culture, within the broader 'culture of parkness'.

King also worked to implement his vision of a national park through other channels. In the 1930s he was a patron of an organization called the Federal Woodlands Preservation League.[25] Other members of the League included R. B. Bennett, Sir Robert Borden, and R. Percy Sparks, who was the vice-president. Percy Sparks also owned property in the park, on Meach Lake--a now famous lake that was part of the area in question. This group lobbied the government for the preservation of the Gatineau woodlands through the early 1930s and was instrumental in the development of the park.

One of the major accomplishments of the League was its involvement in what became the *Lower Gatineau Woodlands Survey*. This survey was undertaken in the early 1930s by the Department of the Interior, at the request of the chairman of the Federal District Commission.[26] The Department of the Interior, wherein were found the experts in the methodology of national park development, was the federal government department which oversaw the National Parks Branch during this period. The FDC and the Woodlands Preservation League were partners in the establishment of a Gatineau

[24] Bella, 76-77.
[25] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, letter from Federal Woodlands Preservation League, March 6, 1937.
[26] von Baeyer, 212.

Park idea, and many of the recommendations of the survey formed a framework for the measures undertaken in subsequent years. The findings of the survey were reported in the local papers and provided much of the 'preservation' rhetoric for the Gatineau Park.[27]

The interim *Lower Gatineau Woodlands Report*, submitted to the FDC in 1935, was based upon the *Woodlands Survey*. The report found that with the Depression many farmers were selling off their wood lots to obtain cash. This news was reported with a note of alarm in the local paper. In 1936, an *Ottawa Citizen* article reported on the responses of various prominent parties interested in the need for preservation strategies. Awareness of the risk to the area 'surrounding Ottawa' was raised in the papers, which announced the plans for a Gatineau National Parkway. Christie McDonald, president of the Junior Board of Trade, claimed: "If we are to preserve the woodlands in the vicinity of our national capital, then we should take bold and intelligent action immediately".[28] McDonald was also reported as stating: "Much timber too young for cutting, was being taken out by cutters who were either too indifferent or too ignorant to appreciate the immensity of the damage they were doing. Thus they were carrying the scene of their depredations right to the doorstep of the national Capital".[29] This response was typical of 'conservation' rhetoric of the time. Alexander Wilson writes, "The rationalization of the resource industry coincided with the introduction of national policies to 'protect' wildlands from haphazard development by local entrepreneurs....In other cases,

[27] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265.
[28] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen* clipping, August 22, 1936.
[29] ibid.

governments have created parks to preserve forests from local settlers".[30] The area "surrounding Ottawa" had, since Todd's first report, taken shape in the imagination of the capital's government as a terrain that (somehow) 'belonged' to Ottawa. It was, to the best of their knowledge, a 'natural woodlands'. It was only when the farmers and wood cutters who lived in the Gatineau began to alter the 'landscape' according to aesthetics that did not correspond with the young capital's self-image that the need to re-describe it as Natural took place.

The Gatineau preservation plan was sometimes endorsed as a national park project, and other times as a highway or parkway drive through the country. Sometimes the project was referred to simply as the Gatineau Parkway. In the same *Ottawa Citizen* article mentioned above, a small map of the imagined park and scenic drives was also included to present the readers with the Gatineau Park 'idea'. One of the main imperatives addressed in the Woodlands Report, and in the various news items, was the importance of maintaining the 'scenic value' of the area. Under a section entitled "Impairment of Scenic Values & Possible Remedial Measures", the Woodlands Report recommended to the government that, for the moment, "measures should be restricted to those areas *which are visible to the public from the main highways, lakes, or ski trails*. An examination of the map shows that the forest nowhere extends more than one mile from one or other of the roads or trails..."[31] In keeping with other national park

[30] Wilson, 227.
[31] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, Department of the Interior, *Lower Gatineau Woodlands Survey*, 1935. Emphasis added.

development in Canada, the emphasis in the Gatineau preservation scheme was on the 'view from the road'. With the growing hegemony of auto-culture, the scenic value and the authority of visual experience were defined increasingly by what could be viewed from the highway. Preservation of the Gatineau meant the maintenance of a landscape; and what the public could not see did not fall under the scope of preservation.

The Woodlands Report offered eight methods of preservation. The three main solutions included: 'the Land Purchase Method', the 'National Park Method', or 'Provincial Legislation Method'. The report concluded that "the latter is the most impracticable method because it means that the province of Quebec would have to legislate farmers to cut in such a way as to preserve 'scenic value'.[32] 'Scenic value' was a concept well-understood in national park development and the FDC used it as a key theme in its portrayal of Gatineau Park. Following the advice of the Report, the FDC did not choose the 'Provincial Legislation' method. The Report also recommended that the FDC look into making arrangements with Quebec to expropriate land under the provisions of the Quebec Railway Act. It turned out that this need, as suggested by the Department of the Interior, had already been anticipated by the 1928 FDC Act, which granted the Commission the right to expropriate under its own authority.

Another way in which the FDC and newspapers sold the idea of Gatineau Park in the 1930s was to present it as a possible relief project. During the Depression the

[32] ibid.

National Parks Branch received over half a million dollars a year to provide relief work in its parks. It was standard practice to have both single and married men doing work, especially road-building. The *Ottawa Citizen* in June 1936 quoted various members of the FDC in favour of the project as saying: "We have many unemployed in Canada and I feel there is no better way, from the standpoint of the men themselves and that of the country, than to provide work for them in developing the natural, national parks and playgrounds, such as the proposal to develop the Gatineau hill district".[33] A promised relief project was a plan that would not draw broad public criticism.

One of the most common and lasting ways in which Gatineau Park was promoted was as a national project, one befitting the National Capital. The *Ottawa Citizen* was an avid supporter of the Gatineau Project, and it reported on the plan's progress regularly. In 1935, the *Citizen's* editor Charles Bowman in a speech given to the Ottawa Local Council of Women, pointed out that, "Canadian visitors may go out to Kingsmere as American visitors to Washington go to Mount Vernon, to honor the memory of a great statesman... I believe the Kingsmere home of the present Prime Minister of Canada will someday be the property of the Canadian people. It would be a rare national heritage to treasure, by lake, mountain and woodlands, where the spirit of Canada is truly reflected". Bowman then went on to praise Mackenzie King's generosity:

> After mentioning how Mr. Mackenzie King had intervened in 1926 to save some of the woods above the Mountain road by personally buying woodlands which he did not particularly want, but which otherwise would have been sold to cut for firewood, Mr. Bowman concluded with a warm tribute to the Prime Minister's love of the trees, the wood trails, the

[33] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, June 1936.

countryside and the things of beauty that should be a joy forever in Canada.[34]

Another article in the *Ottawa Citizen* the following year, chastised Canadians for not sufficiently appreciating their capital, "for the layout and topography of Canada's Capital surpasses the imagination in its natural scenic grandeur of heights and dales and splendor of waterways and cataracts and recreation grounds".[35] Canada was again being mapped according to its topography in order to explain, or legitimize, how certain physical spaces were appropriated.

The planned, or imagined, Gatineau Park was enmeshed in a complex matrix of reasoning. In 1937 the Federal Woodlands Preservation League observed in a report that, "The tourist industry is now recognized as one of the most important sources of national income".[36] A newspaper article presented Gatineau Park as a potential 'Mecca for Tourists'. The same article continued, "The Citizen has sought the views of a number of prominent men and women who, in their respective official capacities, represent a large cross-section of civic and national life. In no one single instance was an expression of opposition to the project encountered".[37] It was a moment of immense drama: "the year 1937 will be a momentous one in Canadian history marking as it will the hundredth anniversary of the birth of national unity between Upper and Lower Canada and the hundredth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. The year will also be

[34] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, December 17, 1935.
[35] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, 1936.
[36] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, letter from the Federal Woodlands Preservation Committee, March, 1937.
[37] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, August 22, 1936.

important as the coronation year of King Edward VIII".[38] This 'trilogy of important events' assembled to celebrate the idea of Gatineau Park illuminated not only the complexity of meanings employed to frame the park project, but also the complexity of contemporary Canadian nationalist discourse. Simultaneously tied to the tourist industry, British Empire concerns, Canadian unity and autonomy, and finally to the country's Natural landscape, Gatineau Park was a highly determined and somewhat confused symbol of Canadian national identity.

The metaphor of the view from the hill was one that defined the discourse around the creation of Gatineau Park. As the National Parks became recreation zones for urban Canada, the 'other' to city-life, so the Gatineau became a region for the use of the city of Ottawa. Its existence came to be defined solely in relation to the vision of those in Ottawa, and on the Hill. The main purposes of the Gatineau, from the perspective of the federal government, were related back to the demands of the growing metropolis. A newspaper article in 1936, reporting on the FDC proposals, remarked that, "Parliament Hill is a high bluff rising one hundred and fifty feet from the Ottawa river. Looking northward across this river, the observer has in view the Laurentian mountains stretching away into the distance and still covered, in part, by primeval forest... Nature, indeed, offers a direct invitation to make this northern capital one of the most beautiful in the world".[39] The FDC and the other promoters of the park project viewed the Gatineau with 'urban blindness' whereby the Gatineau Hills were perceived only as an unproblematic

[38] ibid.
[39] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, newspaper clippings.

Natural expanse.[40] The area was to be transformed and 'preserved' into a suitably complementary space to the Capital District.

Mapping-out the Park

One of the technologies used by the FDC and the federal government in the organization and acquisition of land in the Gatineau was mapping. The Department of the Interior's Topographical Surveys Branch was in high demand during this period. It was frequently called upon by the National Parks Branch, and in the 1930s the FDC put it into use for the Woodlands Survey. In addition to the maps showing the timber types in the Gatineau, the Surveys Branch produced other maps which showed major topographical features and lot ownership boundaries.

In the Gatineau Park project maps served as more than technologies of possession. They also functioned as tools of transformation. As Graham Huggan writes, "maps are ultimately neither copies nor semblances of reality but modes of discourse which reflect and articulate the ideologies of their makers".[41] Many maps of many kinds were made of the area that was to become Gatineau Park. The maps and plans, as presented in the papers, and in the reports, lent a reality and identity to Gatineau Park long before it physically took shape as such. In addition to the acquisition-related maps of the Department of Interior, the FDC produced tourist maps, 'trail guides', and later, road

[40] The term 'urban blindness' is taken from Raymond William in "Between Country and City," *Reading Landscape: Country-city-capital*, ed. Simon Pugh (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1990), 17.
[41] Graham Huggan, *Territorial Disputes: Maps and Mapping Strategies in Contemporary Canadian and Australian Fiction* (University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1994),11.

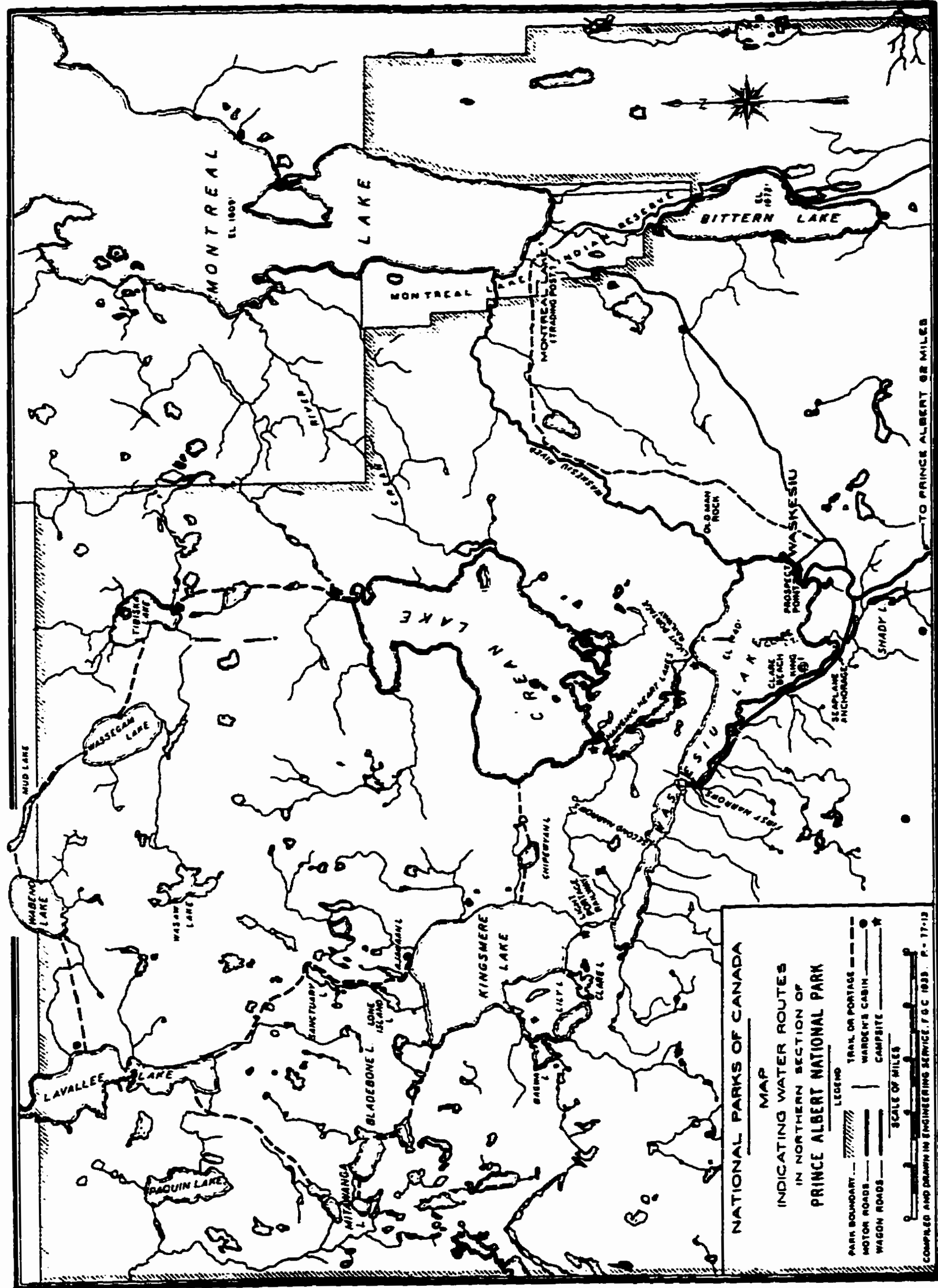

Figure 21. Prince Albert National Park. This park was given by Mackenzie King in 1927 as a thank-you present to his constituents. Note 'Kingsmere Lake' named after his Gatineau home. *Prince Albert National Park*, 1936.

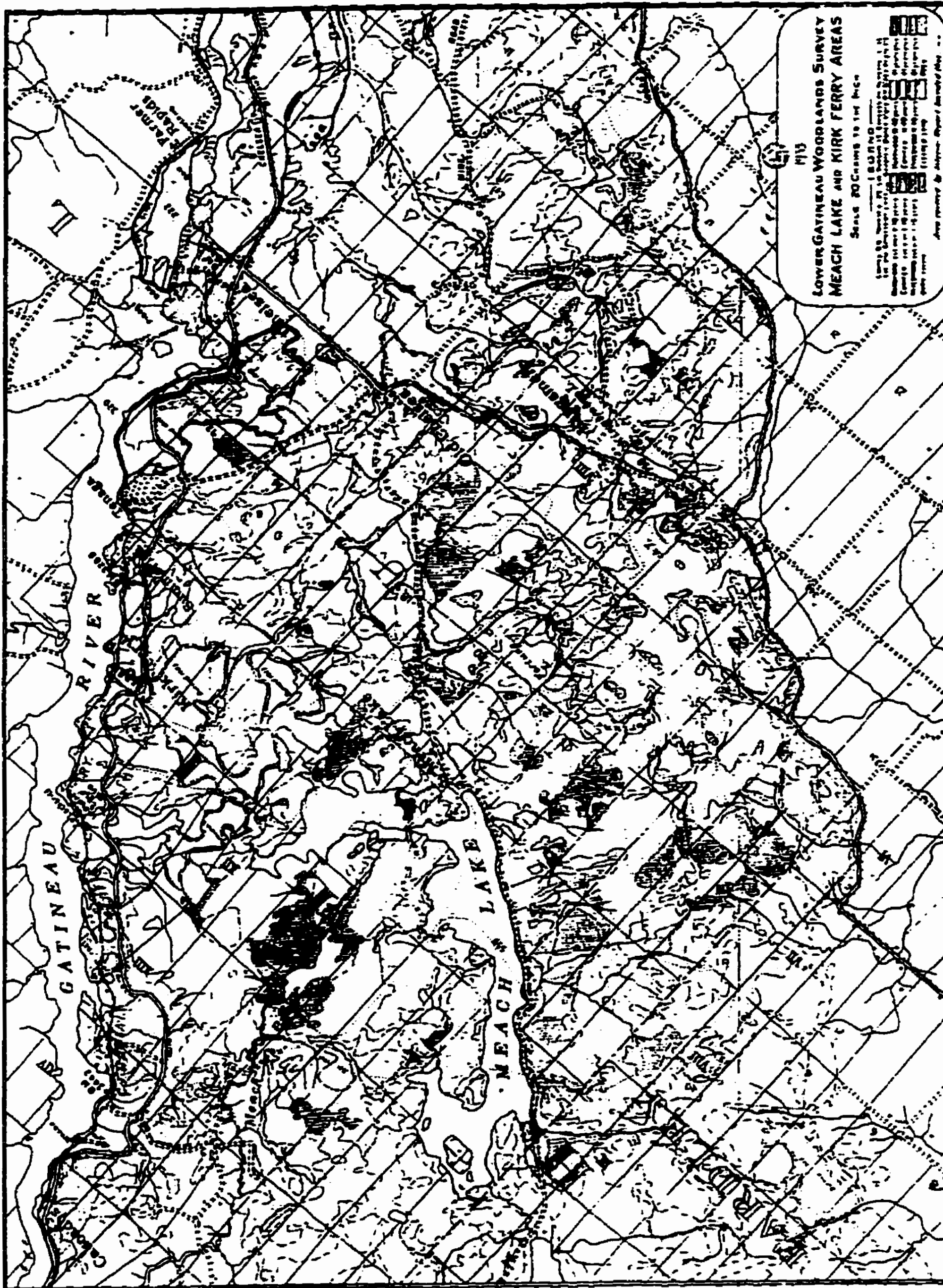

Figure 22. Lower Gatineau Woodlands Survey, 1935. This map shows the different timber types in the proposed Gatineau Park.

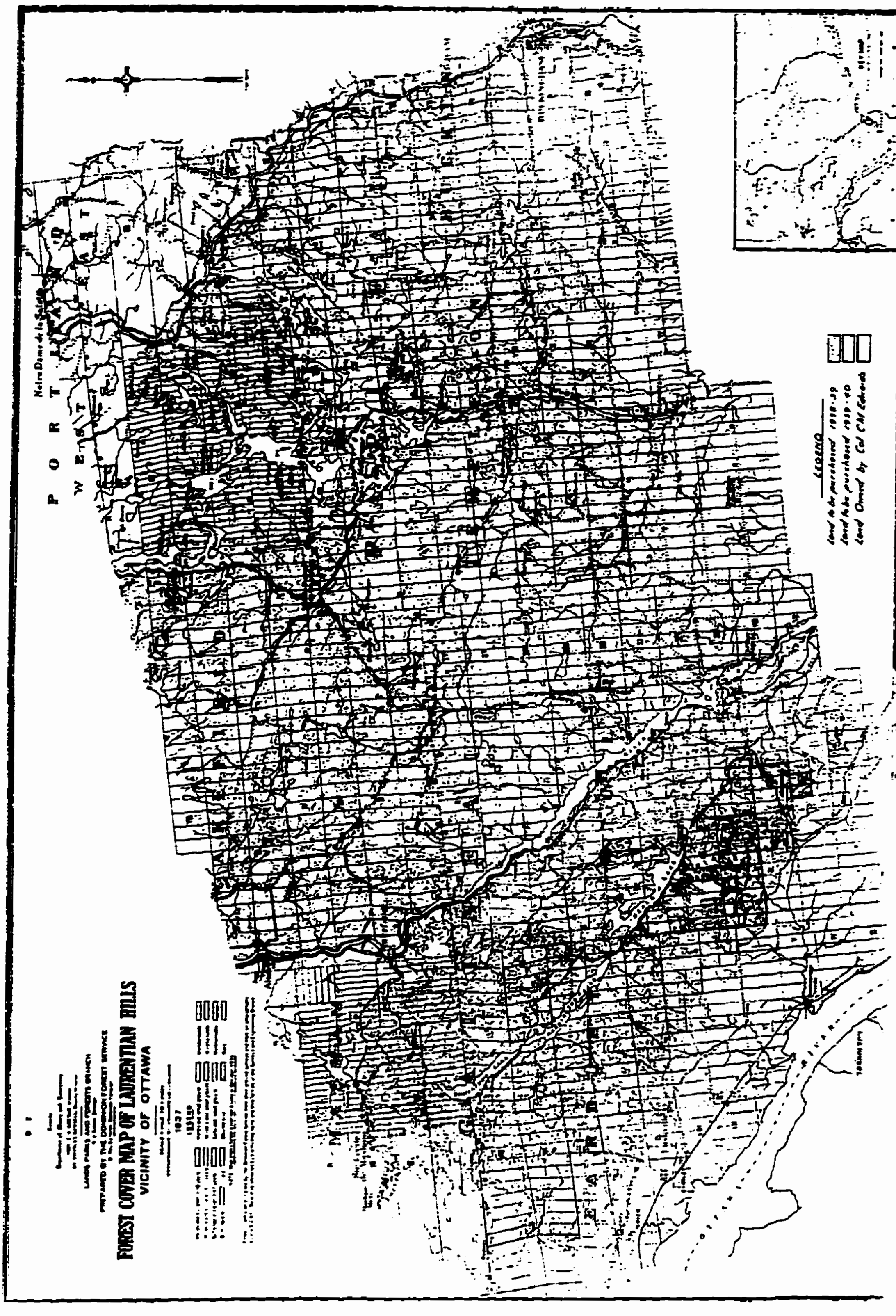

Figure 23. Forest Cover Map. This map was one of the many prepared for the FDC which delimited the proposed park and predicted the takeover of individual properties. The legend in the upper right corner depicts timber types, and the lower left-hand legend indicates the land to be purchased.

maps. While there was some variety in the genres of maps produced by and for the FDC, ultimately they were all designed to serve a particular function in relation to the Gatineau. Due to the ability to represent and transform the imagined territory of the Park, the Gatineau became a national park in the machinations of the FDC decades before it was, in fact, a national park.

Having mapped out the boundaries of the properties it wished to acquire, it was then left to the FDC to re-shape the area by emptying it of its inconsistencies. The FDC's imaginary landscapes also told of who was scripted out of the park. One of the hiking trails in the Gatineau was named 'Hermit Trail' after a man named Miles Barnes who lived on his own with his dogs in a small apple orchard, near Kingsmere Lake, at the same time as Mackenzie King.[42] But it was the hermit, a figure of romantic landscape, that was appealed to and written into the park trail maps. Miles Barnes came to occupy a bit of a mythological position among the visitors to Kingsmere during the interwar period. The 'gentleman poet' Arthur Bourinot even wrote a poem to Barnes entitled, "The Hermit", which tells of a group out walking who happen upon a beautiful clearing where they meet, "a huge and bearded man whose bulk/ like that of Atlas holding the heavy earth/ Supported on his shoulders his small home" the last line reads, "For we had found the hermit in his wood".[43] An old archival photograph has recently been uncovered with Mackenzie King posing at Barnes's 'ramshackle cabin' in the hills.[44]

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[42] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, August 22, 1936.
[43] Katharine Fletcher, *Historical Walks: The Gatineau Park Story* (Chesley House Publications: Ottawa, 1988) 34.
[44] ibid.

Miles Barnes was apparently a well-known figure in the early years of the Gatineau Park idea. But as the author of a recent book on 'Historical Walks' in the Gatineau writes,

> By and by the time to be leaving arrived, but Miles Barnes was in need of greater care than he could manage on his own. At that time the Grey Nuns operated St. Patrick's home on the corner of Laurier and Kent Streets...The sisters agreed and it was here, at St. Pat's, that Miles Barnes soon died.[45]

But Miles Barnes, the Hermit, lived on as a quaint romantic figure in the early Gatineau Park.

There were a privileged few living in the area of the proposed park who did not have to surrender their property to the FDC. One of these was Mr. P. Sparks, a prominent member and former president of the Federal Woodlands Preservation League.[46] The surveys of the Gatineau that the League had called for were begun in the mid-30s. A 1935 interim survey report submitted to the FDC detailed the way in which base maps were prepared by the Topographical Surveys Branch, on a scale of 4 inches to the mile, showing major topographical features and lot lines. The surveyor then noted that, "Through the courtesy of Mr. P. Sparks, who granted us permission to occupy a site on his property near Meach Lake, we were so centrally located".[47] Mr. Sparks gave out the use of his land for camping to enable the government employees to delineate and assess and ultimately to seize the property of his neighbours.

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[45] ibid.
[46] This was the organization, as mentioned earlier, that was co-patroned by Mackenzie King and R.B. Benett.
[47] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Interim Report*, October 22, 1935.

Sparks was also a 'gentleman farmer'. Though his property was right on Meach Lake it was never considered for expropriation. When the FDC started acquiring the properties near him, Sparks extended his hospitality and full co-operation. He also wrote the FDC a letter to put in a bid to buy some of the property adjacent to his, land that had formerly belonged to a neighbour. In his letter Sparks revealed that he had previously attempted to buy his neighbour's property, but his neighbour had been unwilling to sell. In his bid, Sparks explained to the FDC that he needed the extra land as more pasture for his flock of pure-bred Oxford sheep. [48]

The Federal Woodlands League was one of the major proponents of the FDC's involvement in the Gatineau. In 1937, based upon the government's Woodlands Survey Report, the League submitted its own proposal to the FDC. The League's proposal recommended,

> (1) the purchase of approximately 1, 000 acres of the mountainous area at an estimated cost of $10.00 an acre, this area to be improved by silva-culture operations. It is estimated by the Forest Service that 6,000 cords of fuel wood can be cut in perpetuity from the land to be purchased, and that a profit of $6,000 can be made in disposing of this wood at the roadside. On this basis there would be an annual return of 5% on the outlay of say $12,000 for the purchase of the land.[49]

The Preservation League expanded on the information provided by the Woodlands Survey and suggested, somewhat incongruously, that the FDC might take over the

[48] NAC, RG 34, vol. 266, letter from Sparks to FDC.
[49] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, letter from Federal Woodlands League, March 6, 1937.

woodcutting operations in the interest, not of halting, but of rationalizing and profiting from them. Not surprisingly, this proposal was not publicized.

The League and the FDC collaborated in other ways. At the same time that the League made the recommendation concerning the take-over of wood-cutting operations they sent a memorandum to the FDC regarding the latter's right to expropriate land,

> It is our understanding that section 13, of the Federal District Commission Act as amended in 1928 (18-19 Geo.V. Chap.26) vests the Federal District Commission with the necessary powers to expropriate lands in the Province of Quebec, as elsewhere, without the co-operation by the provincial legislature. This might be referred to the Department of Justice for confirmation or otherwise.[50]

A week later the FDC was in contact with the Deputy Minister of Justice for legal permission to begin expropriation. The Deputy Minister replied with a prompt assurance that, indeed, the FDC could enact expropriation measures in any province without the cooperation of provincial legislature.[51]

The FDC, however, did not pursue its project without first consulting the Quebec government. In 1935, one of the Commissioners for the FDC had an interview with Hon. H. Mercier, Minister of Lands and Forests, Quebec. Mercier gave his cooperation to the FDC.[52] Additionally, a Mr. Helie, a forester in charge of the provincial office in Hull, provided complete data regarding the ownership of the property abutting the principal

[50] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, memo from Woodlands League to the FDC, March 5, 1937.
[51] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, letter from Deputy Minister of justice to FDC, March 19, 1937.
[52] NAC, RG 34, FDC Minute Book, October 11, 1935.

roads and thoroughfares. This would greatly facilitate the FDC's strategies of acquisition.[53] Significantly, the *Citizen* published accounts of the upcoming Gatineau Parkway, which reported the support of Quebec politicians. Dr. R. Leduc, MP for Gatineau County, Alexandre Taché, MLA for Hull, and R. Lorrain, MLA for Papineau County, were all reported as being in support of the land scheme.[54] The FDC and its supporters went to great lengths to assure their audience that the relations between the federal government, the capital district, and those touched by the Gatineau project were wholly consensual.

The FDC's plans to begin buying land in the Gatineau were announced in the paper, as were the plans to build a parkway. In 1938 the FDC began drawing up lists of land for expropriation in the various townships within the imagined Gatineau Park. The lists were facilitated by the vast amount of mapping that had been undertaken of the properties in question. Not only were the details of ownership determined, but also the amount and type of wood on the various parcels of land, as well as potential mineral resources, were also established by the FDC. These latter considerations were not, however, factored into the prices offered to the owners. The list of land for expropriation in the Township of Hull alone included 33 owners and 44 parcels of land -- a total area of 3,388 acres. However, the expansion did not stop there. In 1939 the FDC received a letter from the Privy Council authorizing the acquisition of yet another area of land comprising an additional 13, 000 acres at an estimated cost of $95,000. The letter from

[53] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, FDC memo, July 19, 1935.
[54] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, February 2, 1938.

the Privy Council was a reply to a proposed map submitted by the FDC which marked off an even larger territory in accordance with their latest expansion of the park boundary.

Most people in the designated park area finally did have to leave. While the FDC did not employ much sensitivity in the expropriation process, considerable effort was put into drafting the exact wording of the form letter sent to the land-owners. In October of 1938 a format was decided upon and thirty-one letters were sent out in the first set of land negotiations. The letter told owners, "As you are doubtless aware, forest lands are now being acquired by the Federal District Commission, Ottawa, in the Gatineau district for the purpose of creating a national park".[55] The FDC then made and offer on the given parcel of land, and gave the owner until November 1, 1938 to accept the offer. The letter, sent out on October 21, left the property owners about a week with which to consider the situation. They were advised that if they did not accept, the FDC would proceed with expropriation. Dozens of variations of this letter were sent out over the next 18 months.[56]

The *Ottawa Citizen* helped prepare the public for the upcoming land 'transfer'. In an article published in August of 1938, the paper wrote, "Gatineau Landowners may Soon be Sorry for Taking All Trees from Hillside". The article continued,

> This morning members of the Federal District Commission made it quite clear that while they shortly may be in the market for land for the development of *their* Gatineau parkway they are interested only in well-

[55] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265
[56] ibid.

> wooded areas. As one member of the commission phrased it: 'We are buying scenery and not bare hill stripped of every vestige of scenic beauty'.[57]

The FDC was also buying wood as well as scenery, but the situation was not presented that way. In one of its expropriation letters, the FDC offered Richard Mulvihill, the owner of a 50-acre plot, five-hundred and fifty dollars for his land. Others were offered less money than that per acre. With this first round of expropriations, for example, a John Daly was offered $275 for fifty acres, William Trudeau was offered only $175 for his fifty-four acres. Some fared a bit better, Charles Benedict received $1,0500 for a hundred acres and Mrs. Henry O'Neil was offered $450 for her fifty acres.[58] The average of the prices offered worked out to even less than the ten dollars per acre suggested by the Woodlands League. The value the FDC accorded to these 'scenic' properties in the middle of the Depression worked out to be significantly less than James Harkin's 1922 valuation of $13.88 per acre of scenery.

Some landowners were, however, willing to sell their land but not at the prices offered by the FDC. On December 31, 1938, the same Richard Mulvihill wrote a letter directly to Mackenzie King. The letter stated:

> I own property here for which the Federal District Commission has forbidden us to interfere anymore with...Now we are thrown entirely out of work, four of us 3 boys and myself. We do not know what they mean to do. They have offered us a price which we cannot accept, it is ideal park grounds, and we are satisfied to part with it for some... We would like to get work for the Commission but so far we do not know what they meant to do we lost our crop last year with the hail storm... I am a Brother of

[57] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, *Ottawa Citizen*, August 12, 1938. Emphasis added.
[58] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265. copies of expropriation letters, October 1938.

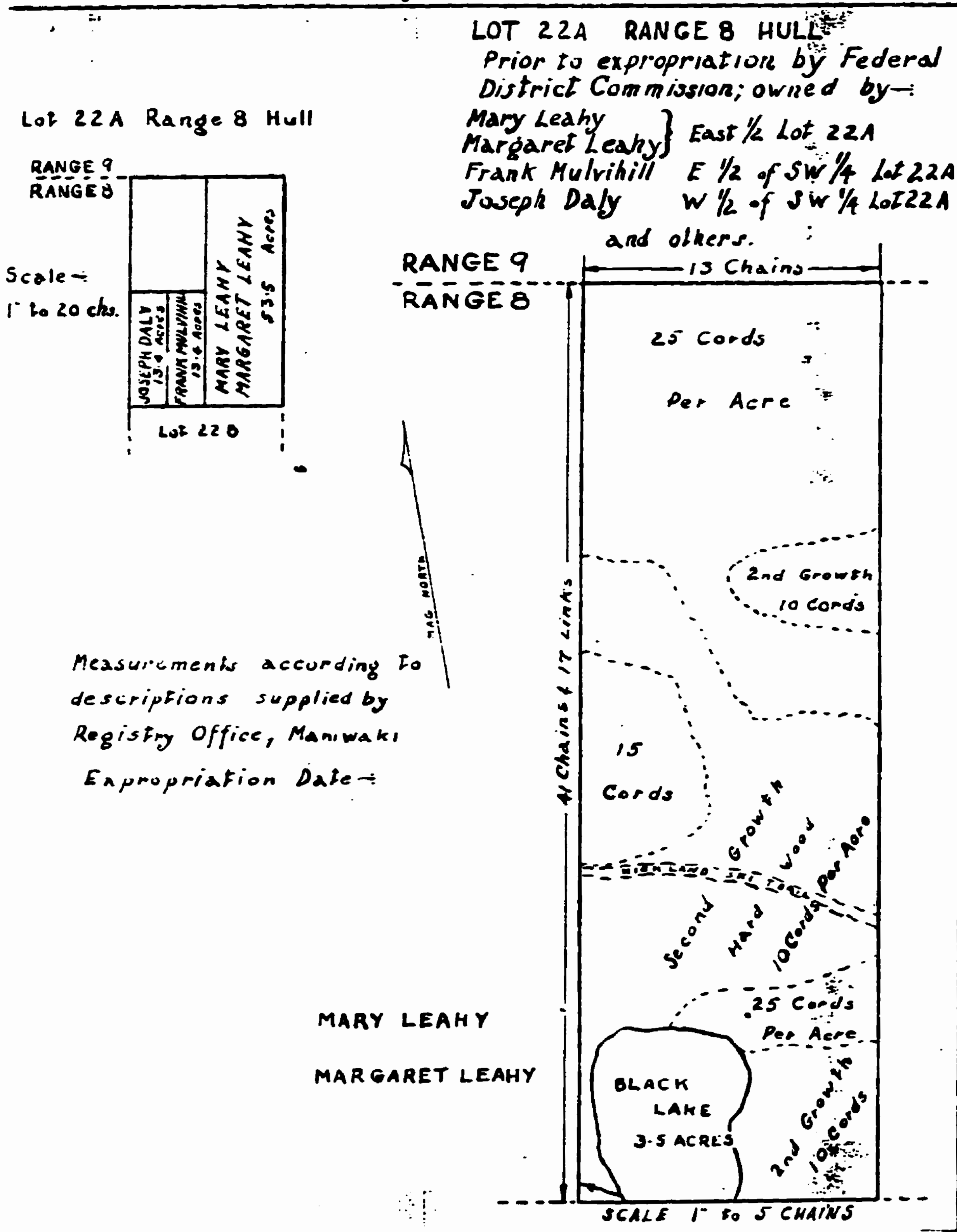

Figure 24. Individual lot map. Lot maps such as this one were often prepared by government surveyors without the knowledge, or permission, of the proprietors.

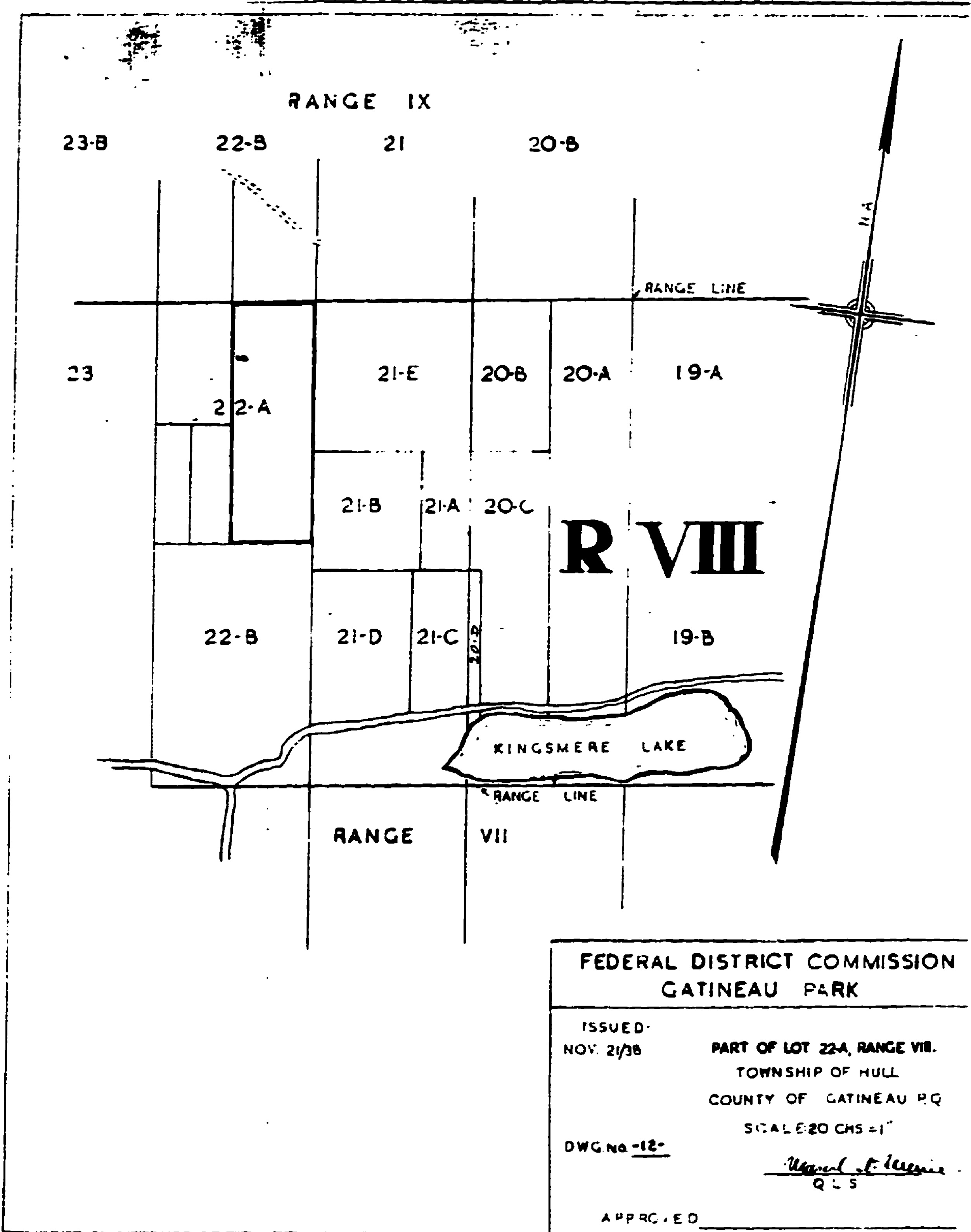

Figure 25. Lots around Kingsmere. These lots show the properties of Mackenzie King's more immediate neighbours whose lands were slated for purchase.

Michael and John Mulvihill and always a supporter of the Liberal Government.[59]

Richard and his brothers owned land adjacent to Mackenzie King's property at Kingsmere. King's secretary replied to Richard Mulvihill, informing him that it was a matter for the FDC, and that King could not do anything about it.[60]

In spite of attempts by the promoters of the Gatineau project to present a unified, unproblematic agenda, some minor criticism of the government and concern for the residents of the Gatineau appeared in the press. Dr. Edwards, Conservative MP for Frontenac, remarked in the House that "certain persons are interested in the other side of the river through having a summer home there. Is it the idea to make beautiful driveways up to the homes of those persons some of whom sit in this house?"[61] A 1935 article asked, "What are the remedies the Hon.W.L. Mackenzie King proposes to give employment to the hundreds of local residents who now earn their living with the cutting of wood in the district?"[62] Four years later, after the expropriations were well under way, a more explicit concern was raised in a letter from the municipality of West Hull. The letter informed the FDC that economic conditions in the municipality had reached a state of emergency, threatening practical starvation. The letter informed the FDC that a considerable portion of the population was under threat, greatly aggravated by the fact "that a large area of wooded land has been expropriated by the Federal Government

[59] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265. letter from Richard Mulvihill to M. King, December 1938.
[60] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265. letter from M. King's secretary to R. Mulvihihll.
[61] von Baeyer, 210.
[62] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265.

where employment of wood cutters had been in the past a means of livelihood for numbers of heads of families who are in great distress to-day".[63] The municipality suggested to the FDC that a relief project might be set up in the region; for example there were a number of roads needing construction work. A relief project had indeed been one of the promised benefits of the Gatineau Parkway project as presented to the public three years earlier.

When the park project was first announced in the newspapers the FDC received many letters from men in Ottawa asking to work on either the survey project, or as 'roadmen'.[64] Occurring in the middle of what one article euphemistically termed a period of 'industrial readjustment', the prospect of as large an undertaking as the establishment of a national park might have seemed to offer some employment opportunities. When the FDC eventually got around to doing road work, it was set up as a relief project. Perhaps in response to the concerns raised by the municipality of Hull, in 1939 the FDC was granted the authorization, under Order-in-Council, to expend $30,000 for relief work on the Gatineau Parkway. The project was lauded in the *Ottawa Citizen*, where it was reported that "the majority of the 30 men who started on the job, have families of seven and eight children, and authorities are following the general rule of giving work to men with large families first".[65] The lists of men to be considered for employment were drawn up by the FDC from relief rolls of the various municipalities affected by the

[63] NAC, RG 34, vol. 266.
[64] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265.
[65] NAC, RG 34, vol. 270.

Gatineau Park project. The work was very much in line with relief projects carried out in other national parks at the time, and generally involved dynamite blasting and general construction work. This relief project ended with the coming of the war.

As early as December 23, 1938, the year the acquisition letters were sent out, deeds for sale started coming in to the FDC. The FDC had an advocate in Hull, Marcel-Ste. Marie who represented them in the land sales. By the beginning of the second world war the FDC owned 16,000 acres of the projected park.[66] The process of expropriating and acquiring the Gatineau Park was put on hold for the duration of the war, and it was only after the war that the park as such started to take shape. The interwar period had been a time of transformation during which the national capital's representatives slowly mapped out the idea of the Gatineau. It was during this period that an appropriately 'empty' landscape was imagined and, in fact, realized in order to re-shape Nature into the area 'surrounding Ottawa'. After the war, with King's re-building projects, a much more forceful, powerful, and wealthy apparatus was imposed on the ever-expanding National Capital District.

[66] Creelman, 18.

CHAPTER FOUR

FROM IDEOLOGY TO PRACTICE: THE CONSTRUCTION OF NATURE IN GATINEAU PARK, 1945-1960

The period from the 1930s to 1950s is rarely discussed in official NCC histories of Gatineau Park. Apart from a few official landmarks such as the Greber Plan and the National Capital Act, such literature rarely mentions the federal commission's interwar and postwar planning. The ideological transformation of the Gatineau that had begun in the 1920s translated in the 1950s into the physical transformation of the landscape. The 1940s and 1950s was the period during which Nature was designed for Gatineau Park. The story that the FDC/NCC wanted to ascribe to the park in its official and promotional literature, however, was one of nature without human interference. The commission wanted to conform to the national park aesthetic that described a nature organically evolved to its present form. While this landscape was designed suitably to complement and serve Canada's national capital, at the same time it had to appear to be a 'natural occurrence'. Though the post-war period was a time of much planning and implementation of the park ideal, it was exactly these activities that the government body needed to render invisible in order to allow its image of a 'primordial' nature, untainted by civilization to flourish. The post-war period also saw an increase in public resistance to the FDC's methods in the Gatineau. Residents of the area and municipal and provincial governments all voiced their concern over what they saw as the FDC's heavy-handed practices, in the end to little effect.

This chapter looks at the continued planning and growth of the FDC and Gatineau Park in the decades following the war. It will then look at some of the hostile responses and challenges to the park project that emerged at the time. The rest of the chapter is an examination of the ways in which the FDC/NCC went about crystallizing the identity of Gatineau Park as a national park. As a means of naturalizing the park, the organization drew on many of the techniques first presented in the Parks Branch of the 1920s and 1930s. After the park was secured physically and the FDC had acquired enough land to begin construction, it went about creating new histories for the park. These stories were designed to erase the fundamental role the FDC had played in the transformation of the Gatineau and to erase the traces of the park's governmental infrastructure.

Expansion and the Greber Plan

The expansion of the National Capital District and the Gatineau Park resumed immediately after the war. An Order-in-Council was passed on August 16, 1945, which defined the territory of the National Capital as "an area of 900 square miles embracing the whole of the Cities of Ottawa and Hull and 26 other municipalities in whole or in part".[1] In 1946 the FDC's annual grant was raised from $200,000 to $300,000 in order to buy more land. A large National Capital Region (NCR) was part of Mackenzie King's vision of post-war greatness. He too hoped to create a national capital that would rival Canberra

[1] NAC, Annual Report, 1949, Federal District Commission.

or Washington. At the Paris World Exhibition in 1937 Mackenzie King had been introduced to the exhibit's chief architect, Jacques Greber. King immediately hired Greber to come to Ottawa and help advise on plans to design the capital.[2] After the war King submitted a proposal to Parliament that suggested the development of a Capital Region as a memorial to the soldiers of World War II.[3] The government agreed to the further development of Canada's National Capital "in lieu of any other memorial of the war just ended".[4] Greber was employed to return to the capital where he worked as a consultant to the National Capital Planning Committee, a body set up in 1946. Together their goal was to make the National Capital a "reflection and symbol of the country".[5] In 1949 they came up with a Master Plan for the National Capital. This plan came to be known as "the Greber Plan" and is still referred to in NCC literature as the benchmark in the National Capital's planning history.

In 1951 Greber's Master Plan was approved by the FDC and the government of Prime Minister Louis St-Laurent. Canada was entering a period of prosperity and economic expansion in the early 1950s and it was a good time for the government to invest millions in the National Capital Region. The large-scale works recommended by Greber served as a blueprint for the NCR well into the 1970s. His main

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[2] *A Capital*, 22.
[3] NCC, *Report on Master Plan for the Development of the Gatineau Park*, Gatineau Park Advisory Committee, 1952.
[4] ibid, 24.
[5] ibid.

recommendations included extension of the parkway network, the creation of a greenbelt, and the enlargement of Gatineau Park.[6]

At the same time that Greber and his committee were compiling their proposals the FDC set up an advisory committee to deal specifically with the Gatineau Park. The Gatineau Advisory Committee made a proposal to Greber's Planning Committee in which they requested that the territory of the park be expanded to embrace some 50,000 to 60,000 acres. However, as it turned out Greber was a great supporter of the Gatineau Park idea and his own plan recommended that the park expand its territory to the size of 82,000 acres. In the chapter on "Recreation and Tourism" Greber's Plan stated,

> Our essential recommendations relative to the enhancement and the appropriate treatment of what we might call "The National Playground of Canada", involves *no artificial embellishment*, very little additional expenditure, but certainly calls for *serious protective measures*. By their nature, such measures pertain to matters of aesthetics....[7]

Greber's Plan echoed many of the then current imperatives of the growing tourist market. He wrote, "It is unnecessary to emphasize the advantages accruing from *tourism* as a factor in the prosperity of the National Capital."[8] In Chapter Nine of the Greber Report, entitled "Aesthetics", one found this discourse linking beauty to capitalist economics:

> Beauty is neither a luxury nor a refinement only for the enjoyment of privileged classes. Even the primitive tribes, in the course of their hard and precarious life, adorned their tools, weapons or fragile shelters. Aesthetic aspirations are natural and vital characteristics of the human mind...If, by its aesthetic merits, composition constitutes the centre of attraction, it adds to the economic assets of the important industry of

[6] ibid.
[7] Jacques Greber, *Plan for the National Capital: General Report*, National Capital Planning Service, 1950, 235. Emphasis his.
[8] ibid.

tourism, and ensures increased values and permanency of character to adjacent lands and developments.[9]

Echoing James Harkin's promotional Parks Branch material, Greber's plan thus appealed to the benefits of the tourist industry as a means and justification for the preservation of nature in the Gatineau. In his text there was also the implicit understanding that 'preservation' would keep out unwanted development and protect the property values of adjacent properties. Like Harkin, Greber appealed to the benefits of nature from a civic-minded perspective: "From the social point of view, aesthetics as a factor in urban life have direct positive and constructive reactions. They foster the growth of civic spirit, and invite the citizens to become more conscious and proud of their environment".[10] Because Greber was speaking from the perspective of an urban planner and developer, the language of his report was somewhat different from that used by Harkin. Nevertheless, the FDC's rationales for preserving and displaying 'nature' followed the same line of justification as had the Parks Branch in its appeals to a democratic tourist aesthetic, nationalism, and good economics.

Challenges to the FDC

While FDC land acquisition had slowed during the war, it regained momentum thereafter. Landowners started to challenge the FDC's land appropriations before the war and the cases brought to court were settled as early as 1940. Often such cases were the result of a landowner being dissatisfied with the terms offered by the FDC. One of the

[9] ibid, 243.
[10] ibid.

most important cases in this regard was that of Mary Leahy and Margaret Leahy, the respective wives of Michael McCaffrey and Frank Mulvihill.[11] Frank was the brother of the neighbour of Mackenzie King who had written him in dispute of the offer made by the FDC for his property. Richard Mulvihill had tried to appeal to King directly, as a neighbour and a fellow Liberal. The land in question belonged to the Leahy sisters, left to them upon the death of their mother. Their case was one of five heard against the FDC at the time, and served as the precedent for later land disputes in the Gatineau area.

The Leahy case was settled in the Exchequer Court of Canada and was based on a challenge to the offer made for their land by the FDC, an offer the Leahys argued was grossly under-estimated. The FDC had offered the Leahys $800 for their property. The man who conducted the FDC's land estimates at the time was the same Marcel-Ste. Marie who had served as the FDC's representative in the court cases, and who handled the land transfer contracts. Therefore, an impartial valuation of the private property-holder's land could hardly have been expected from him. When the Leahys had their land assessed by another land surveyor, he included the value of the wood on their lot in his overall assessment, leading them to claim the much higher sum of $8,260 from the FDC. The judge however rejected their claim and pronounced it highly inflated. He also stated that he did not consider the value of the wood on the lot to be a relevant factor in the FDC's estimation of the land. He concluded the case by awarding the Leahys an increased compensation of $1,150, three hundred and fifty dollars more than the FDC had offered,

[11] NAC, RG 34, vol. 270, a copy of the complete judgement was in the file.

yet $7,000 less than the Leahys had asked. The case was an example of a local landowner's attempt to challenge the FDC's top-down appropriation strategies. The Leahys did not necessarily dispute the expropriation, rather, they wanted more money for their property. The terms of settlement of this case set a precedent for the FDC whereby it was legally determined that the value of wood on expropriated land did not have to be taken into account in determining the compensation offered to owners.[12]

In the early 1950s, as the FDC carried on with its development of Gatineau Park, there was some "Public Uneasiness Expressed Over FDC Land Grabs in Gatineau", as stated in an article in the *Citizen*.[13] The newspaper reported that the FDC had been required to modify some of its practices after Premier Maurice Duplessis of Quebec issued a statement asking them to respect the residents of the area. The newspaper article reported that there was some fear raised in the Lower Gatineau Chamber of Commerce that the FDC was, in 1952, reverting to its questionable pre-war practices. This reversion was apparently heralded by:

> Recommendations by certain members of an FDC subcommittee that all private homes in Gatineau Park limits be taken over by the Government; 'Rumours and reports that the FDC would not allow new buildings to be erected on vacant land in the area', and, 'Invasion of privately-owned land in the Park area by FDC workmen staking out roads, cutting trees and running survey lines in the Meach Lake area'.[14]

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[12] ibid.
[13] NAG, RG 34, vol.270, newspaper clipping from *The Ottawa Citizen*.
[14] ibid.

One example of the hostility engendered by the FDC was expressed in an angry letter from 'Quain & Quain', barristers and solicitors to the Commission in 1955. The lawyers represented a Dr. Murray whose property on Meach Lake had been trespassed upon a number of times. The doctor was threatening legal action and stated that he did not care if the FDC had contacted him to 'warn' him that surveyors would be present. He maintained that their presence was nevertheless against the law and he wanted it ceased immediately.[15] Landowners were likely getting nervous that, following the precedent of the 1930s, land surveyors might lead to land expropriation. Undaunted by the bad publicity, the FDC compiled a "list of land Expropriated and Forming Part of Gatineau Park". In this report they claimed that of the total 43,000 acres that made up Gatineau Park in 1953, only 3,301 acres had been expropriated.[16] Since the average size of each individual's land in the area was between fifty and one hundred acres, this admission meant that the FDC acknowledged forcibly taking over land and livelihood from hundreds of people.[17] The rest, the FDC presumably meant, had been 'willingly' sold to the government body.

One other example of hostility to the FDC's Gatineau Park evidenced itself in 1950. J.C. Nadon, a mayor from one of the affected townships, wrote a letter to Prime Minister St. Laurent. The letter requested that the Prime Minister ensure that the municipalities that had been losing taxes due to the land expropriations get the grants

[15] NAC, RG 34, vol. 273, letter from Quain & Quain to the FDC, February 24, 1955.
[16] NAC, RG 34, vol. 270, "list of Land Expropriated and Forming Part of Gatineau Park".
[17] NAC, RG 34, vol. 265, copies of expropriation letters, October 1938.

Federal District Commission

F. E. BRONSON, CHAIRMAN
H. R. CRAM, B.Sc., SECRETARY
A. CHEVRIER, ASS'T SECRETARY

ALAN K. HAY, A.M.E.I.C., CONSULTING ENGINEER
A. STUART, SUPERINTENDENT

Ottawa, Ont. October 21, 1938.

Dear Sir or Madam:

As you are doubtless aware, forest lands are now being acquired by the Federal District Commission, Ottawa, in the Gatineau district for the purpose of creating a national park. Among other lands it has been decided to include

township of West Hull, containing acres, more or less, of which, it is understood, you are the owner.

The commission has valued this property at the sum of $ and is disposed to acquire same at this price. The commission will be pleased if you will let it know your decision on the subject on or before November 1, 1938. If no answer is received by that date, the commission will have to take advantage of the act constituting the Federal District Commission and will proceed to the expropriation of the above parcel of land, after following the proceedings prescribed in that connection. It is also within the jurisdiction of the commission to take immediate possession.

On Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays Mr. E. S. Richards, land and timber appraiser for the commission will be available for consultation or for execution of agreements of sale at our office at the corner of Carling avenue and Bell street, Ottawa; or he will call at your address if requested to do so. If the offer contained herein is acceptable to you, please advise the undersigned by mail at your earliest convenience.

Yours very truly,

HRC/M

SECRETARY.

Figure 26. Expropriation letter. This was the form letter decided upon by the FDC for the first round of land expropriation in 1938.

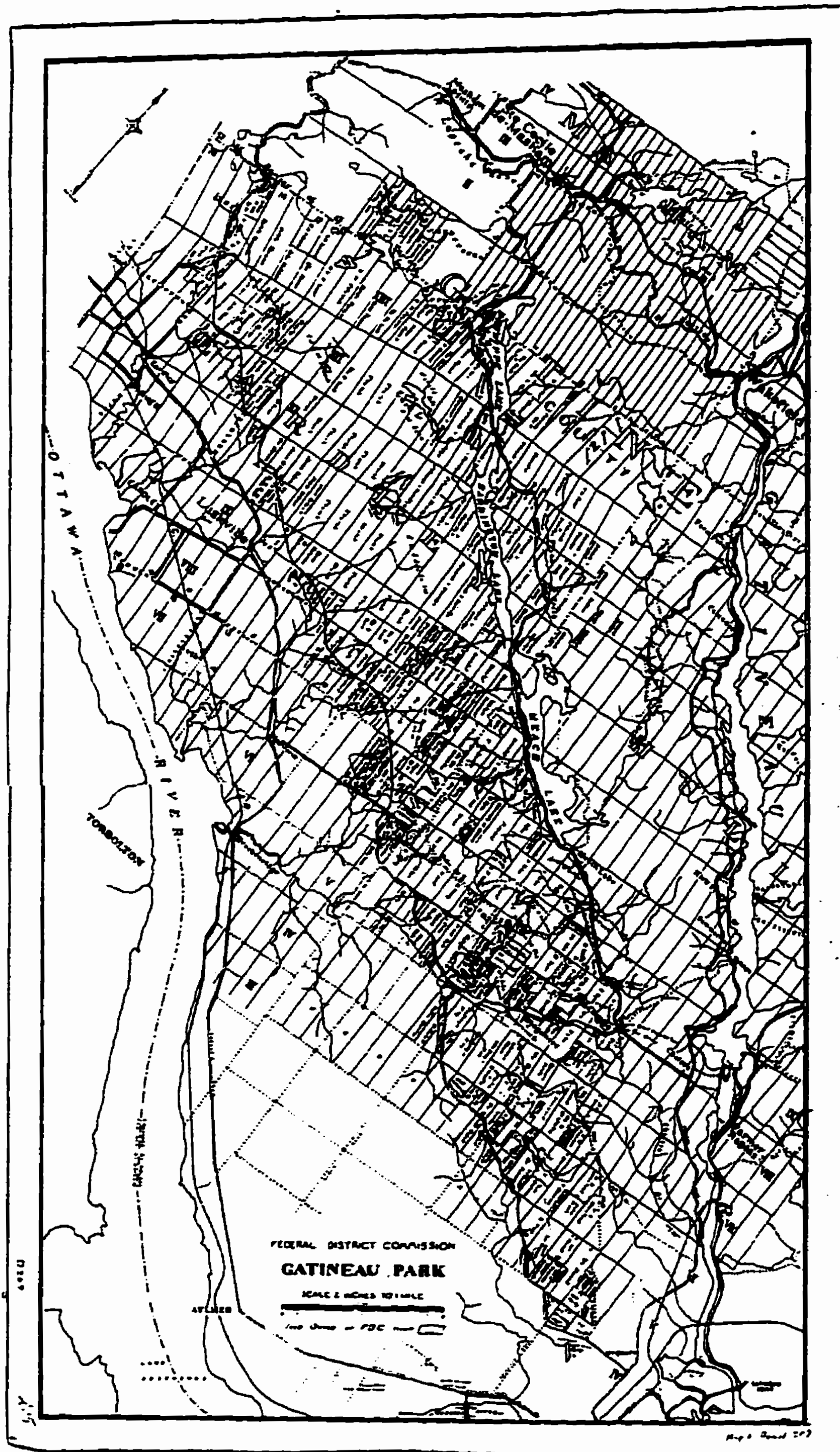

Figure 27. Land owned by the FDC. A map which showed all the land-ownership of the area which comprised the imagined Gatineau Park.

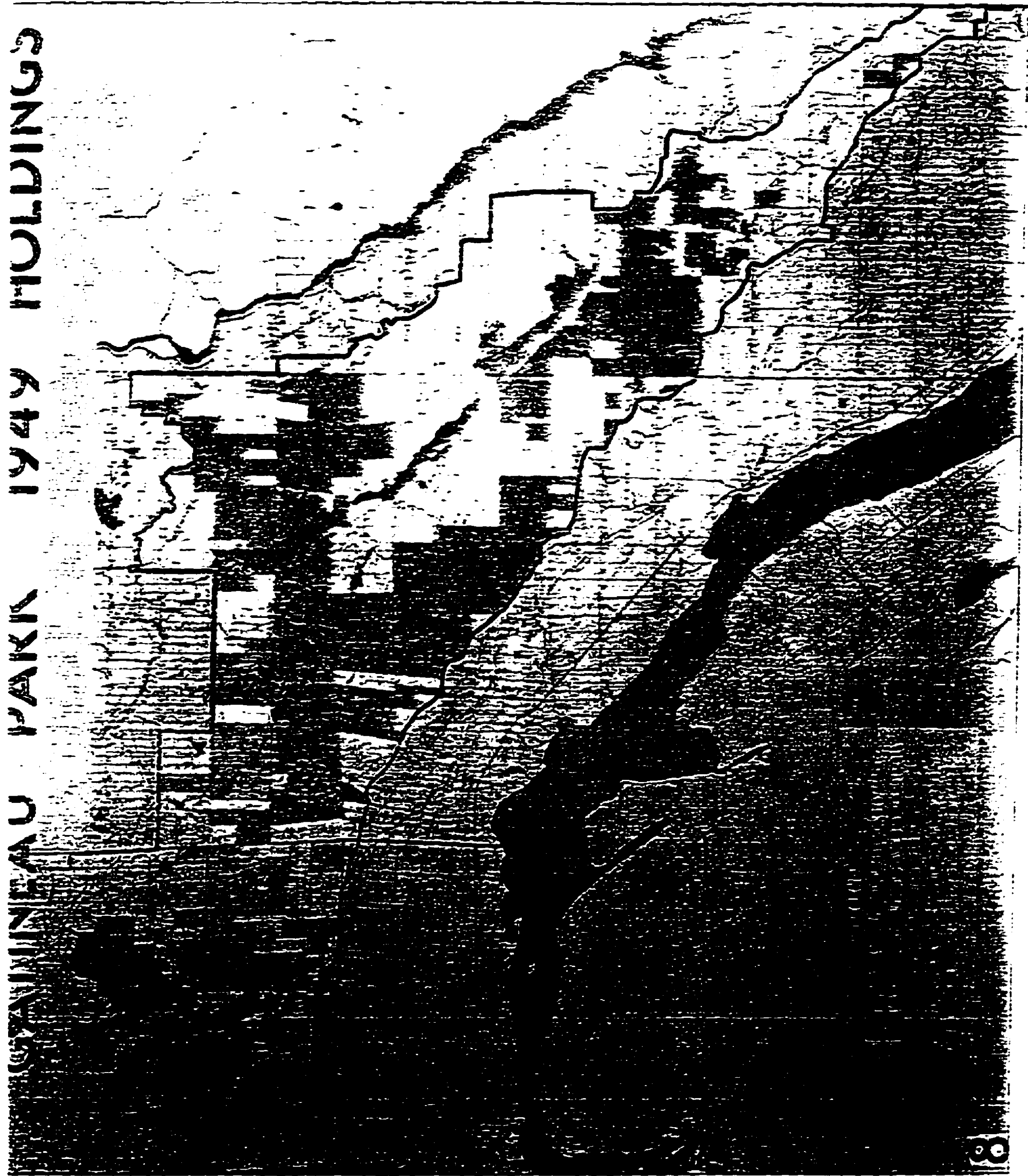

Figure 28. Gatineau Park 1949 Holdings. The boundaries of the soon-to-be Gatineau Park were quickly filled in by FDC holdings in the post-WWII period.

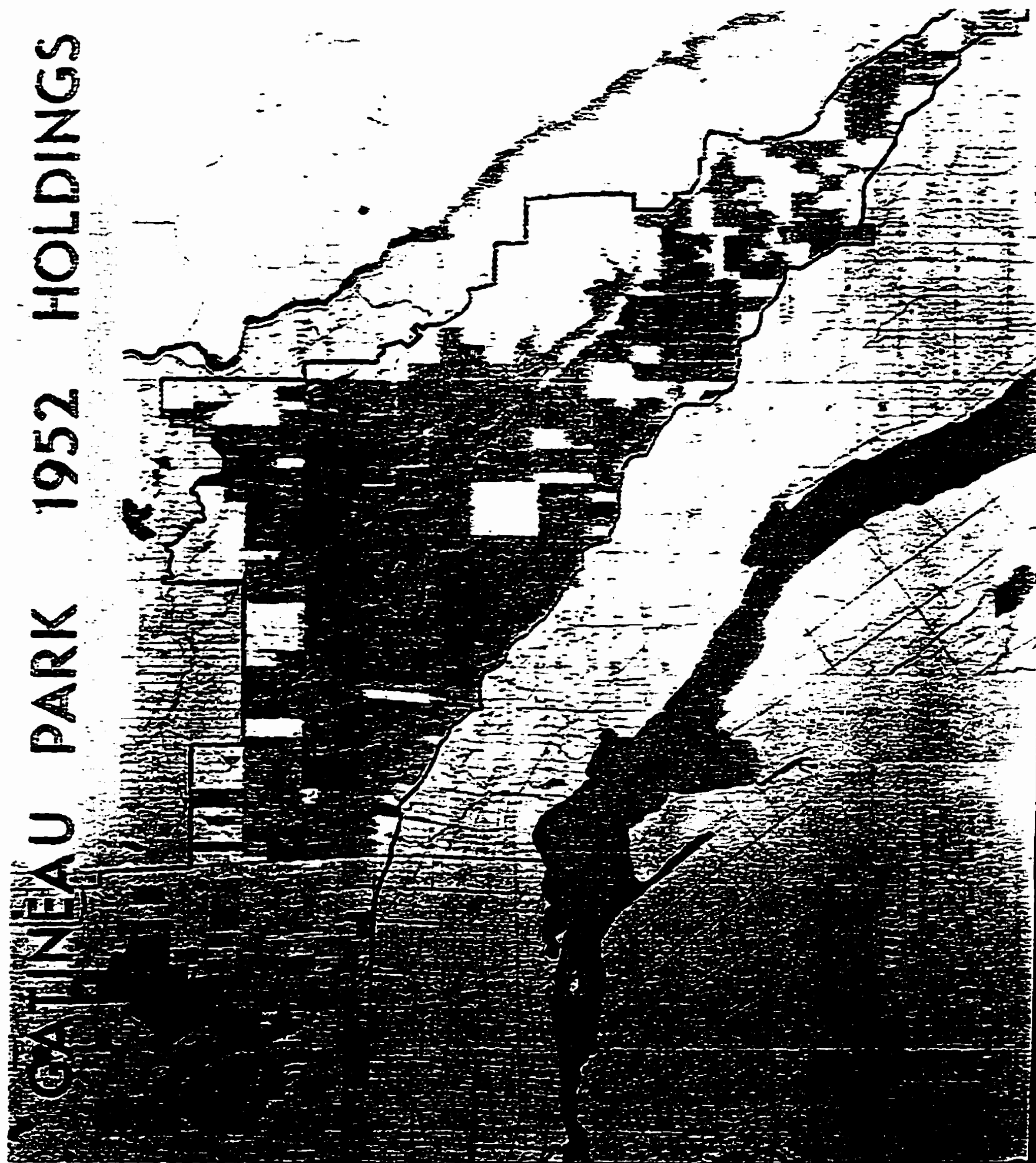

Figure 29. Gatineau Park 1952 Holdings.

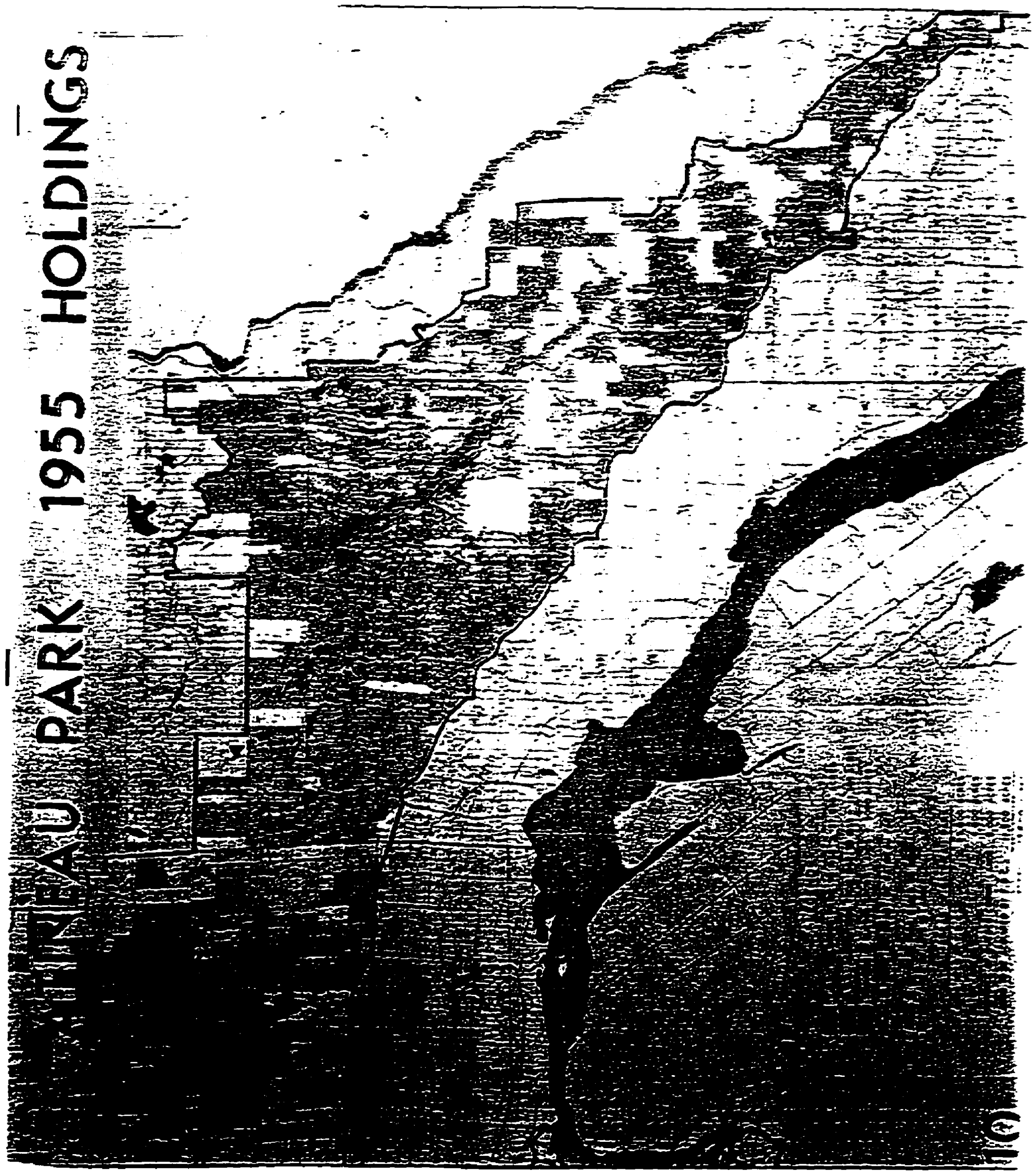

Figure 30. Gatineau Park 1955 Holdings. By 1955 the FDC had acquired enough land to begin its definition of Gatineau National Park Culture.

they were promised as compensation. Nadon wrote, "I must add too that these municipalities even complained to the provincial government and it is unnecessary to add that the prime minister of the Union nationale government took advantage of that situation. I recall that Mr. Duplessis stated publicly that the federal authorities had no right to expropriate those lands as they had done".[18] Presented as a friendly warning to the Prime Minister against the dissatisfaction of the Quebec provincial government, Nadon's letter revealed that the FDC's uniform and un-nuanced approach had the potential to create political problems. In 1951, after much debate about qualifications for grants, the FDC paid $7,730.03 to various municipal governments and school boards which had lost revenue from property taxes.[19] The FDC's 'view from the hill' was able to ignore the demands of individual citizens, but the commission hesitated to alienate completely other levels of government.

The 'Enhancement of Nature': the Development of National Park Culture in Gatineau Park

With Greber's suggestion that the FDC double the size of its planned Gatineau Park territory, the Gatineau Park Advisory Committee put together a proposal for the development of such a park. The promise of such great expansion led to the Committee's 1952 'Master Plan for the Gatineau Park', a thirty-page document which provided a blueprint for some ambitious development strategies.[20] The Master Plan outlined the

[18] NAC, RG 34, vol. 273, copy of letter from J.C. Nadon to Prime Minister St. Laurent, May 31, 1950.
[19] NAC, RG 34, vol. 273.
[20] NAC, RG 34, vol. 272, *Report on Master Plan for the Development of the Gatineau Park*, Gatineau Park Advisory Committee, May, 1952.

features and qualities that were to be injected into the landscape, now that the park land was being cleared and the project was well underway. The Master Plan was a plan for the development of the FDC's own 'culture of parkness'. Many of the themes and aesthetics drawn on by the FDC were resonant with other national park projects, while at the same time the FDC attempted to describe a place that was distinctly representative of the nation's capital. The language of the plan demonstrated that the FDC already considered the area comprising Gatineau Park to be a part of the Nation's Capital and Ottawa, truly an extension and complement to the city. The FDC operated with the confidence inspired by large-scale growth and spending, which enabled them to incorporate Gatineau into the imagined territory of the National Capital Region and begin reshaping it, even before they had finished taking over the properties.

The members of the Gatineau Committee presented two main purposes for the existence of the park. First, they stated, the park was considered one of the most important features in "developing Ottawa and the surrounding district as a beautiful national capital".[21] Second, "the development of the Gatineau Park is to provide easily accessible recreation facilities for the 250,000 people to which it is immediately available and perhaps twice the number in the years to come as the city and district increase in population".[22] The Gatineau was transformed into a recreation zone for the city of Ottawa, fused together with a rhetoric of nationalism and national unity. The report went on to state, "As part of the National Capital and thus the possession of all the people of

[21] ibid, 4.
[22] ibid.

Canada, this park should be developed in a manner in which all Canadians can take pride".[23] The territory of the park had paradoxically been vacated in order to be re-invented as a symbol of national pride that belonged to 'all Canadians'.

In a manner reminiscent of the approach of the Parks Branch in the interwar period, the advisory committee drew on the rhetoric of Canada as defined by its topography and geology as a way of describing the national identity it was to assign to Gatineau Park. In one of the earlier drafts of the Master Plan, the committee wrote,

> The vigour and power of our Canadian forebears was the result of their close association with nature as it still exists in the Gatineau Park area... The area included in the park forms part of the Laurentian Shield which extends from the Maritime provinces to Alberta and therefore is typical Canadian terrain. It consist of several ranges of granite hills and contains 24 lakes large enough to be shown on the enclosed map... If the park is to achieve its true purpose it must be developed in a manner which will be truly national in spirit.[24]

The planners' ambiguous use of the idea of Nature was articulated in the Master Plan, in a quote referenced from *Fortune Magazine*: "In any park, three minutes' walk will permit you to be alone in the primeval and this single fact is enough to justify the entire national park system... the parks are at once preserves, exhibits, and theatres of nature going on".[25] Nature was again infused with the expectation of entertainment and called upon to perform. In the North American tourist industry, by the 1950s, the Nature

[23] ibid.
[24] NAC, RG 34, vol. 272, rough draft of *Master Plan for the Development of the Gatineau Park.*
[25] ibid, 5.

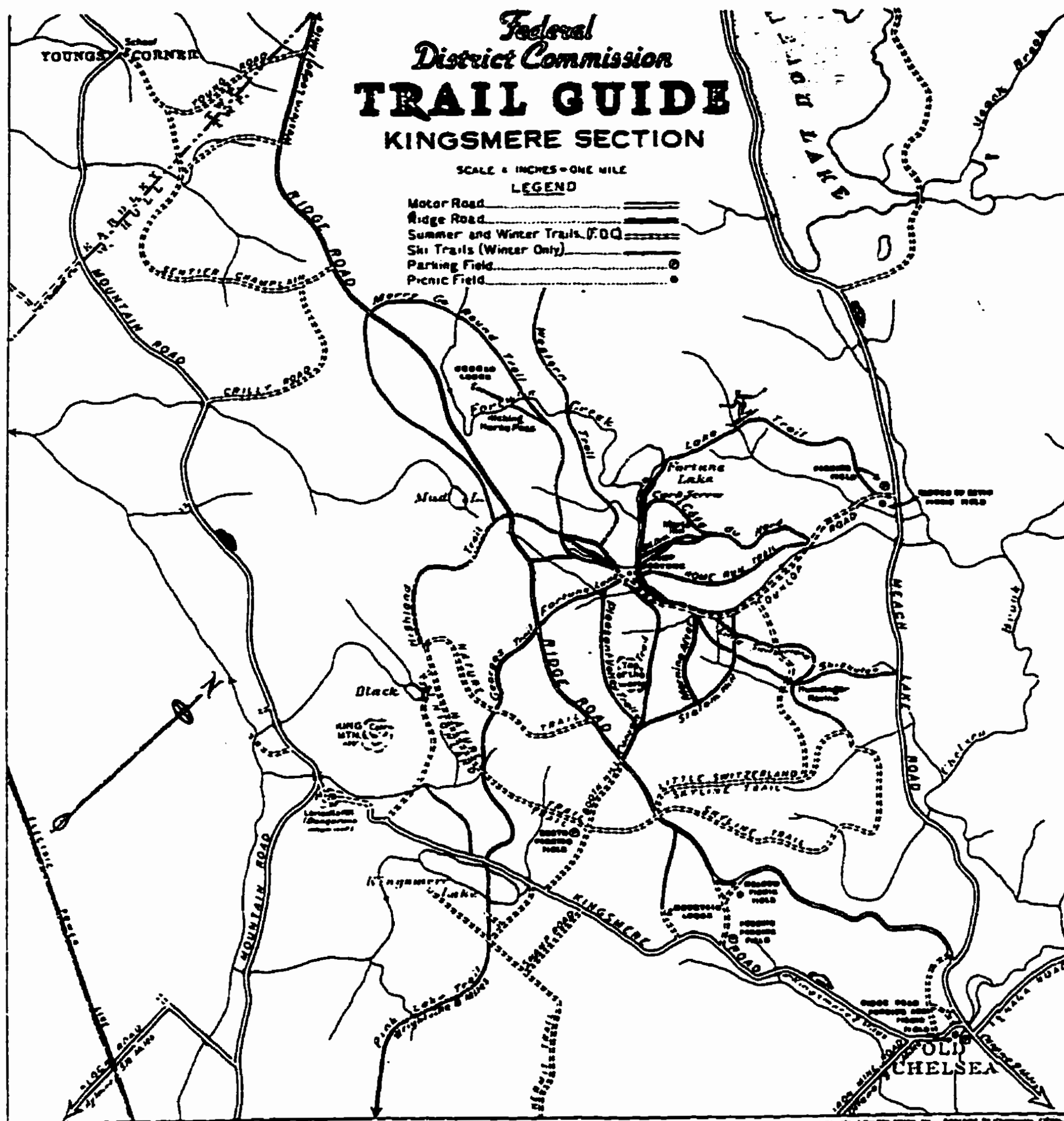

Figure 31. FDC Trail Guide. One of the first tourist maps issued for the Gatineau Park, this 'Trail Guide' was published in 1946, before the park had officially come into being.

that was 'found' in national parks came to be a definitive representation of Nature in general, in its proper state.

The Master Plan also considered native peoples part of the theatre of Nature. Just as the National Parks Branch had done thirty years earlier, the committee suggested that 'Indians' might be called upon to perform in the park. Under a subsection of the report called "Indian Handicraft" the committee suggested that "groups of Indians might be brought to the Park to carry on their native industries, such as basket making, bead work, porcupine quill work, etc."[26] The committee identified a group of Indians in New Brunswick who used a type of tree for their basket production that could be found in the Gatineau. "Perhaps", they suggested, "some of these Indians could be brought to Ottawa to carry on their industry where this type of tree is available".[27] 'Indians' who cut trees were considered benign, or harmonious with the Natural landscape. The committee, therefore, saw no tension in inviting them to use these resources. Native culture, frozen in a manufactured historical context, was considered a natural element in the romantic past of Canadian history.

In the Master Plan there was also a proposal to manufacture a 'Folklore' and 'Pioneer Life' character for Gatineau Park. The committee wanted to commemorate the 'lifestyle' of former pioneer inhabitants of the area. (Many of the pioneers the FDC sought to commemorate for the purpose of its park culture were undoubtedly the

[26] ibid, 11.
[27] ibid.

ancestors to those people who had themselves recently been removed from the park area.) The proposal stated,

> The park furnishes an ideal setting for posterity to envision the labours of the pioneers in the erection of shelter, from the crude log enclosure to the varied picturesque dwellings of the earlier settlers. In particular it is the latter that are of the greatest interest, reflecting as they do racial origins and instincts modified to the materials at hand.[28]

Apart from the committee's blatant willingness to appropriate the histories of the people whom they had just removed from their ancestral lands, the proposal to commemorate 'pioneer' life showed some confusion around the exact nature aesthetic the park intellectuals wanted for the park. The park planners were challenged to define a space that was at once 'primeval', but somehow at the same time quaintly historic. The historical subjects worked into the park had to be sufficiently removed from the present that their identities were harmonious with the ideal Canadian nature of the park.

Again in keeping with the tourist initiatives of other national parks, the committee proposed the manufacture of tourist commodities that would be both authentic and profitable. The park committee suggested that,

> Maple sugar cabins fit perfectly into the development of a park, the purpose of which is to retain the atmosphere of the Canadian woods. Such camps would doubtless be profitable and would attract many visitors to witness the activities of one of the oldest and most natural industries of Canada.[29]

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[28] ibid, 10.
[29] ibid. 8-9.

The Park Committee also recommended the creation of a 'Handicraft' industry. The committee wrote,

> The handicrafts developed might be taught to the native population surrounding the park, and in time a handicraft centre producing special products identified with the Gatineau area and the City of Ottawa could develop a market attractive to tourists and others who might visit the Capital.[30]

The Gatineau Park plans put forward by its committee derived from the national park culture created by the Parks' Branch over the previous few decades. The FDC, like the Parks Branch before it, tried to define an essential relationship between Canada and the image of nature represented by national parks. The park culture that the FDC drew upon, however, was a highly manufactured one, as evidenced by the suggestion that they 'teach' handicrafts to the 'population'.

Like the Parks Branch before it, the FDC called upon the stereotype of 'Indians' and 'Indian Handicrafts' as a way to convey authenticity to its product. Native peoples, however, as far as the FDC was aware, had not lived in or near the park boundaries since the fur trade of the seventeenth century. An NCC report written in 1978 states,

> Despite the fact that the Gatineau Hills were rich in fauna and flora, few traces of prehistoric settlement have been found within the boundaries of the park. This is likely due to the fact that the park is fairly inaccessible both by land and water. Moreover, its waters are, for the most part, too small and discontinuous to support a steady population.[31]

[30] ibid, 11.
[31] Creelman, 2.

One advantage for the NCC of this historical interpretation was that it provided a means of guarding against land claims on the territory of their park. Yet the knowledge that native peoples had never, as far as they knew, lived in the area made the FDC planners' commodification strategies even more historically imprecise. The committee was probably not concerned with historical accuracy. The FDC wanted to capitalize on the successful national park formula that had, by that point, taken shape all over the country. Part of that formula included a display of certain past peoples that complemented the image of the mythical primordial-ness of the park in question.

The View from a Car : Planning the Gatineau Parkway

Road building, circle tours and auto-touring in nature - which we have seen became part of the general Canadian parks formula in the 1920s and 1930s - were some of the other national park features that the FDC wanted for the Gatineau park. One year after the Gatineau Park Advisory Committee submitted its report, a separate Parkway Subcommittee for Gatineau Park presented its own proposal.[32] This latest report was prepared to address solely and specifically the planning of the parkways in Gatineau Park. The parkway committee was made up in part by members already in the FDC who had served on the Gatineau Park Committee. The proposals put forward all spoke to the various considerations involved in road planning, considerations which (the committee explicitly stated) were based on the National Parks Branch of Canada.[33] As with the

[32] Canada. Federal District Commission, *General Report of the Parkway Subcommittee for Gatineau Park*, December 1953.
[33] ibid., 10.

literature of the Parks Branch, this committee placed a high emphasis on the aesthetics of nature from an automobile. The committee wrote,

> It is to remain as natural as possible and such man-made features as are necessary to allow full enjoyment of its wonders shall be designed in keeping with nature. As a general practice, stone shall be preferable to concrete, wood shall be preferable to steel and, where necessary, natural green and soft contrasting reds and browns shall be preferable to aluminum. Nature at its best is relatively silent and never unsightly. Development plans should include provision for retaining these virtues to the greatest extent possible.[34]

The report presented a section on 'Loop Roads', designed so that, "visitors may travel part of the Parkway and return by another type of scenery".[35] The advantage of such a road, the report stated, was that a "greater variety of scenery" would be presented. As was seen in the National Parks Branch, highway construction was planned so as to display nature at its best. The 1953 report was very meticulous in its description of how this might be done:

> Variety should be sought. This will be provided in general by the different types of scenery which the park offers. It should be assisted by vista cutting. For wide panoramic views, a thinning of trees and under-brushing would allow a delightful filtered view. For points of interest within the woods, a light cutting may show a waterfall, a rock face, or some secondary feature. The element of surprise can be introduced by running the Parkway for a distance through dense woods and suddenly presenting a long spectacular view.[36]

As Alexander Wilson writes, the automobile was understood as a benign technology in the plans of early nature tourism.[37] It was the growth of the automobile industry that had

[34] ibid., preface.
[35] ibid., 3.
[36] ibid., 6.
[37] Wilson, 32.

changed the tempo of tourism in the interwar period, and by the 1950s the view from the road was the dominant, definitive perspective in national parks.[38] The automobile and its associated technologies were the twentieth-century's quintessential symbol of progress and individualism. This symbol was fittingly juxtaposed with a highly romantic tradition of nature appreciation which, as Patricia Jasen has argued, was passed on in the new consumer culture of mass tourism. What resulted, in the proposals for Gatineau Park, was the aesthetic tradition of eighteenth and nineteenth-century Romantic Nature appreciation, as passed down in nature tourism, now paradoxically married to the imperatives of the expanding hegemony of North American car culture.

In the parkway report Nature appeared as a planning device, something that would deliver entertainment to motorists. One senses this clearly in passages such as these: "attempts should be made to disclose spectacular views directly in front of the motorist. These would be ideally presented while traveling on a down grade through a cut or woods".[39] Again, as it had in the national parks, the language and aesthetics of nature-'revealed' informed the policy that was set for Gatineau Park. As had been the case with Parks Branch planning, the FDC attempted deliberately to script the experience of the tourist in Gatineau Park. Of "Overlooks, Turnouts and Drinking Fountains" the report wrote, "these fountains encourage the motorist to get out of his car, relax for a short time, and enjoy small water-falls and streams which would have otherwise been missed... In all

[38] Beinart and Coates, 78.
[39] *Report of the Parkway Subcommittee*, 7.

MAP OF GATINEAU PARK SHOWING–PARKWAYS, ACCESS ROUTES, PICNIC GF

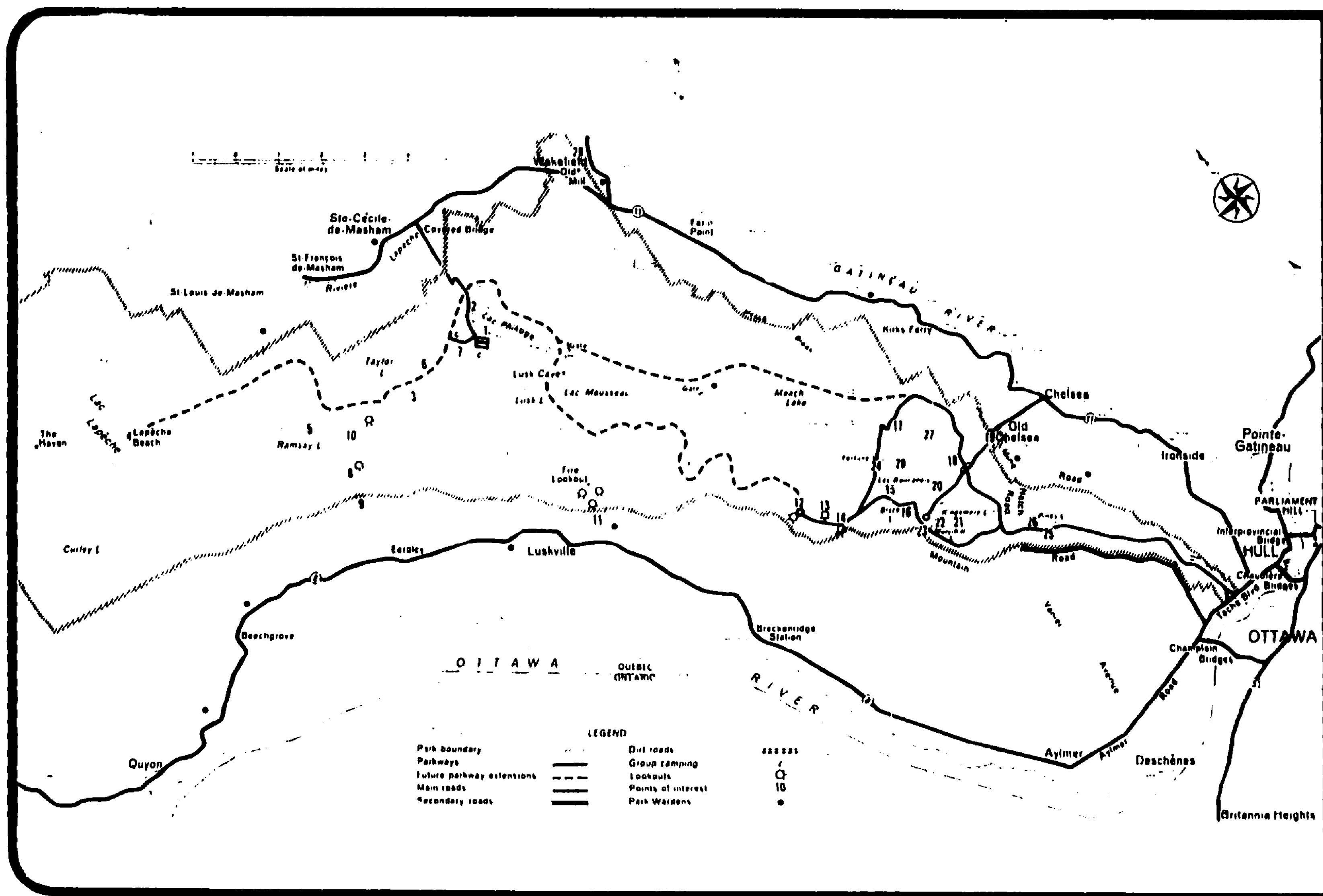

Figure 32. Tourist map of Gatineau Park. Published in the early 1960s, this map accompanied what appears to be the first tourist brochure for Gatineau Park.

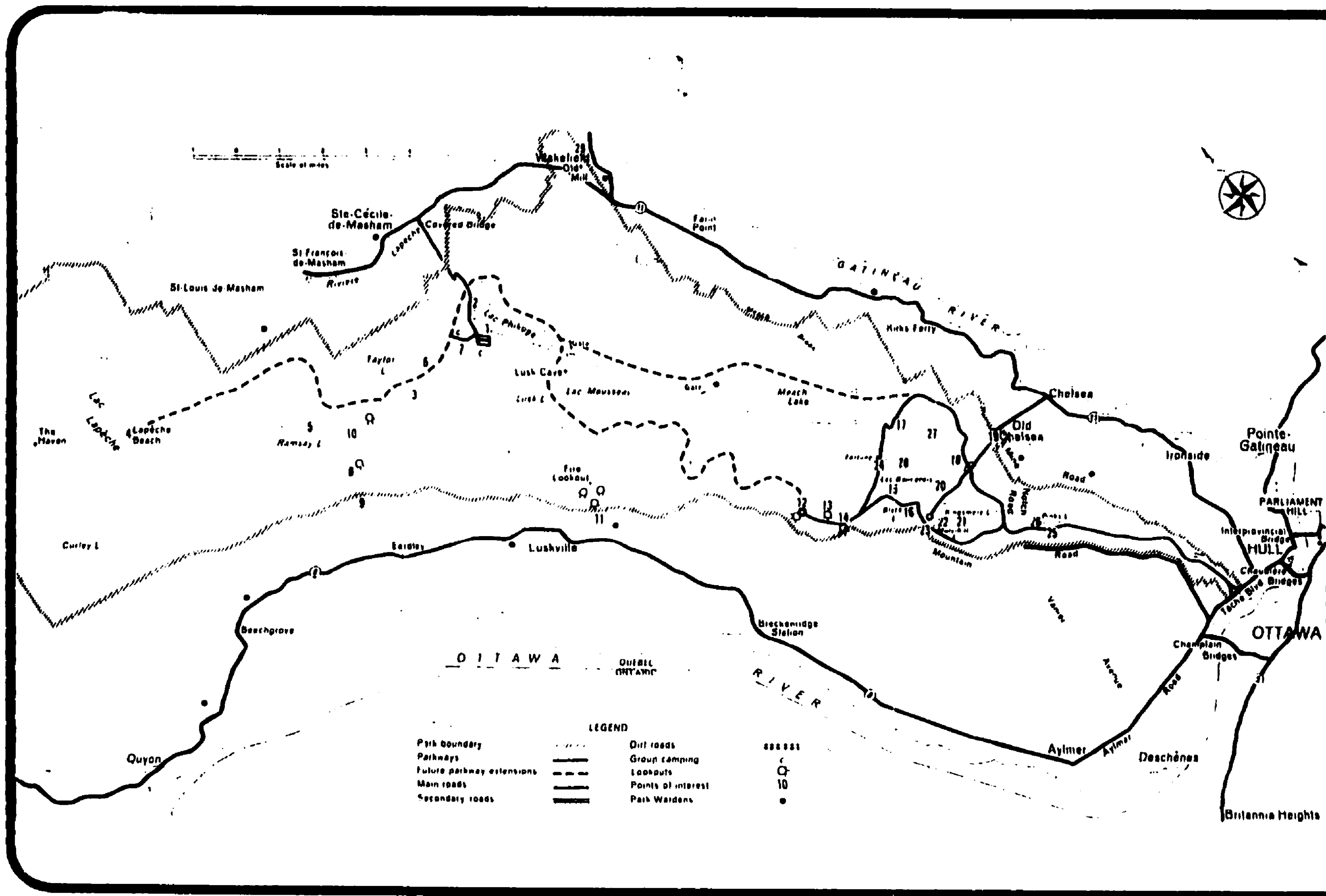

Figure 32. Tourist map of Gatineau Park. Published in the early 1960s, this map accompanied what appears to be the first tourist brochure for Gatineau Park.

cases, parkway signs indicate the rest point well in advance".[40] Explanatory texts for the tourist were to be kept short: "markers are used at overlooks and historic spots. In a description, not exceeding a hundred and fifty words, they tell the story of the surroundings. Where rules are necessary, prohibitive wording is to be avoided. An appeal to the reader's better nature is more effective".[41] Wilson describes these landscaping techniques as methods to rationalize the nature tourists' experience: "Other roads, such as the nature parkways begun in the 1930s, bar commercial traffic and in the design of their curves and rest areas instruct drivers about how best to appreciate the scenery...the car further divides the landscape, and our experience of it, into discrete zones."[42]

The main purpose of the planned roads in Gatineau Park was to make the area accessible to Ottawa. The parkway served as the main corridor by which park visitors could make use of the park in an organized and comprehensive manner, as designed by the FDC.. The report gave a concrete definition of the parkway: "For purposes of Gatineau Park, a Parkway is a strip of land set aside for pleasure travel over which the abutting property holders have no privileges or rights of access".[43] The primary function of Gatineau Park, according to the committee was,

> To preserve and present to visitors from other parts of Canada and foreign countries, scenery, recreational opportunities, and cultural subjects which are characteristic of the region and which will impart to them a sense of the beauty, wealth, and breadth of territory which our country possesses.

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[40] ibid., 9.
[41] ibid.
[42] Wilson, 34.
[43] *Report of the Parkway Subcommittee*, 1.

> It is therefore the object of the Parkway to make these attractions accessible to the public in a convenient, pleasurable and safe manner.[44]

The parkway committee wrote of the planned parkway as if it was already an accomplished fact. A number of maps accompanied the report, 'diagrammatic' maps that showed an ambitious network of looping roads through the park. The committee members were able to envision the parkway system as a 'fait accompli', at least in their minds, because the period of the 1950s was one of great expansion for the FDC, bureaucratically, financially and territorially.[45]

By 1957 enough land had been acquired, through purchase and expropriation, for the FDC to begin construction of the parkway.[46] The 1952 Gatineau Park Master Plan and the 1953 parkway report both provided the blueprints for the implementation of the Gatineau Park idea, and it was in this period that the idea finally started to materialize. In 1958 the National Capital Act was adopted in Parliament. This Act made official Greber's expansion proposal.[47] The Federal District Commission became the National Capital Commission (NCC), the same title used today. At the same time the NCC's jurisdiction was officially expanded to 4,660 square kilometres over both sides of the river.

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[44] ibid.
[45] In some of the more remote areas of the park today traces of these imagined roads can be found. There are spots along the Eardley escarpment, for example, where the bedrock of a road was once laid down, but never paved or completed, and which are now overgrown with trees and shrubs. Old dynamite-blasting holes and piles of rock can also be found among the 'wilderness' of the relatively young forests.
[46] French, 18.
[47] *A Capital in the Making*, 32.

An Old History for the New Park

The 1930s until the late 1950s marked a period of intense planning and promotion of the Gatineau Park project and the related National Capital Region. In the history of the park under the FDC it was in this period that the greatest changes and disruptions took place. Thousands of acres of land were transferred, through expropriation and sale, from individuals and small organizations to the sole administration of the government. By 1951 the FDC's assets were close to five million dollars and it had become one of the largest landowners in the National Capital District.[48] These lands were then subject to a process of landscaping and re-shaping that the FDC hoped would transform the area into a nature zone aesthetically on par with other national parks in Canada.

Though this period was the most busy in terms of the planning and implementation of the FDC/ NCC's plans, very little mention of it appears in NCC official histories. Information booklets put out by the NCC in the first decades following the establishment of the park tended to present a very top-down history of the park. 'Preservation' was described in these texts as an organic process. In 1961 Alan Hay, former chairman of the NCC, published an article in the *Canadian Geographical Journal* in which he praised the NCC with respect to the National Capital Region. Of Gatineau Park he wrote,

> Glancing across the Ottawa River to the north you will see a finger of hill country and forest starting at the centre of Hull and widening into a broad arm stretching back out of sight toward the northwest...Gatineau Park has been preserved as a wilderness area by design. Minutes away from the

[48] NAC, RG 34, FDC Annual Report, 1951.

> bustling urban area, it is a refreshing retreat for residents and visitors. Its purpose is basically to provide visitors to Canada with a section of landscape that is typical of Canadian rocky forests and sparkling lakes.[49]

Hay's standard description of the park was one that portrayed the Gatineau as a showcase for Ottawa and the nation. The assumed point of view onto the park was firmly situated on the Ottawa side of the river. The role of the NCC in the park's existence was often portrayed as benevolent and non-interfering. The FDC was presented as having protected a nature that was already inherent and essential to the area. A 1966 publication called simply 'The National Capital Commission' said only this about the park during the 1930s to 1950s: "Land purchase for this park commenced in 1938, and all but one quarter of the land required is now in Crown ownership. The park is shaped like a wedge with its point penetrating south easterly into the heart of Hull".[50]

In official NCC literature the role of the FDC in the establishment of Gatineau Park was always presented as benign. Gatineau Park was, in fact, a project that belonged primarily to the FDC; the park would not have existed in anything near its 'preserved' form if not for the interference and deliberate construction undertaken by the government body. After the FDC laid the foundations for the park, the organization then proceeded in an attempt to erase its own footprints from the park's history. The only historical agents that appeared in NCC stories of the park were the already-romanticized tropes of geology, Indians, the 'folk', and hermits. One of the first tour guide pamphlets, put out in the

[49] Alan K. Hay, "The National Capital Plan: a progress report", *Canadian Geographical Journal*, December 1961, 203-217.
[50] National Capital Commission, *The National Capital Commission*, NCC: Ottawa, 1966, n.p.

1960s, told tourists that "thanks to the visionary foresight of the early planners the National Capital has a wilderness park on its doorstep".[51] The same publication had a small section on 'Folklore' in which it wrote: "Some 300 years ago Nicolas Gatineau established friendly relations with the Indians" and "Many tales exist about people who lived here before it became a natural beauty spot. One woman improvised what may have been the first lightning conductor. When a storm struck she would run outdoors and set her axe on the ground, blade upwards".[52] These little tales were designed to enchant the park tourist with their quirkiness. They also served the function of removing any competing identity claims to the park. These stories were presented as isolated incidents which occurred sometime in the manufactured past of the park, and, by association, their narration ensured that Gatineau park was itself a harmless, folksy, non-threatening entity.

Almost forty years after the development of a widely-circulated national park culture, the NCC still appealed to the same themes designed by the Parks Branch. The national park literature drew on romanticized native culture in order to lend legitimacy and authenticity to the style of nature maintained in the parks. When the NCC created its Gatineau Park history it also drew on the associations that North American society had assigned to native culture and Nature. In a section entitled "NCC Role in Gatineau Park", the same early tourist brochure wrote,

> Consistent with the idea of conserving the wilderness character of this old Algonquin and Iroquois domain the N.C.C. has laid down clear rules for maintenance of its 88,000-acre park...A 25-mile paved parkway leads into

[51] NCC, Information and Historical Division, *Gatineau Park*, NCC: Ottawa, 196?.
[52] ibid.

> the heart of the Park...There are also some 60 miles of hiking trails, many following early Indian footpaths.[53]

The FDC/NCC thus associated the contemporary park, and the nature aesthetic sculpted into it, with native cultures from 'pre-civilization' days. By making these historical connections the literature drew an historical narrative that began in a romantic past and concluded with the FDC's 'protection' of the park. It was a seamless storyline, designed to naturalize the park by inhabiting it with past 'Indians', and thereby naturalizing the presence of the FDC and the Ottawans for whom the park was designed.

Conclusion

By the late 1950s the logic of Gatineau Park had come full circle. In the 1920s and 1930s the FDC had appealed to the national park "idea" to create an imagined Gatineau Park beyond the nation's capital. This myth of the park and the strength of the national park image facilitated the FDC's expropriation and transformation of the physical landscape of the Gatineau. In the 1950s the FDC was still a growing body. This ever-more powerful government organization had at this point laid claim to enough actual territory to begin its project of re-shaping the park. The physical terrain then had to be changed to match the national park the FDC had created in the imagined community of the National Capital Region. The initial park myth was re-invented as "natural" to the area. The national park ideal that had disrupted the lives of hundreds of people was, in

[53] ibid.

the 1950s, consolidated and re-invecCnted as something pristine, as ancient as the Canadian Shield, and very much in need of the FDC/NCC's protection. The official narratives that emerged in the decades after the physical creation of Gatineau Park were all designed to confirm the hegemonic perspective rooted in the identity of the national capital. This symbolic 'view from the hill' employed the language provided by an already current national park culture to naturalize its expansion, and appropriation, of spaces not originally defined by the imperatives of national-capital nationalism.

CHAPTER FIVE - CONCLUSION

Gatineau Park and the NCC in the 1990s

If historical endurance can be considered an appropriate measure, then the Gatineau Park project has been a relatively successful one. Barring a few minor changes, the myth that the FDC created for Gatineau Park in the 1930s is, today, both myth and physical reality. In its 1995-96 Annual Report the NCC reported total holdings of 468 square kilometres, almost ten percent of the National Capital Region.[1] Gatineau Park remains the largest property administered by the NCC, with a total area of 35, 650 hectares. The park alone had a financial 'net book value' in 1996 of 37 million dollars.[2]

Equally powerful as the park's physical presence, however, is the set of mythologies that the FDC created around the park. As this thesis has shown, the associations made by the government park promoters during the decades from the 1920s to the 1950s, sought to link the uniquely Canadian Nature aesthetic originally fostered by the National Parks Branch to an emerging Canadian iconography and discourse of nationalism. The aesthetics of Canadian Nature were highly constructed, meant as they were for the consumers of national park tourism. The set of images that emerged during that period also lent themselves very well to the narratives of young nationhood that were being deliberately cultivated at the time. The relationship between Canadian national identity and Nature is one that Gatineau Park promoters still draw upon today.

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[1] Canada. National Capital Commission, *Annual Report 1995-1996* (NCC: Ottawa), 21.
[2] ibid, 41.

The NCC still pursues territorial and administrative expansion and consolidation, married to rhetorics of nationalism, as means to preserve the 'unspoiled' Nature of Gatineau Park, and by extension, of Canada. Conversely, the cultural authority invoked by the official version of Canadian Nature is used to euphemize the NCC's ambitions of territorial and administrative control.

In contemporary NCC literature the same themes are present as first seen in the Gatineau Park Master Plan of 1951. With, of course, a few omissions. For example, 'Indians' were never imported from New Brunswick to live in the park. Neither was an indigenous handicraft industry ever created. Nor is it likely that these things are going to occur under the NCC. The latest Master Plan for the park, however, developed in 1990, describes Gatineau Park as "a haven of peace and unspoiled beauty for all who live in the National Capital Region". The 1995-96 Annual Report states, "The NCC is proud of its role in creating what is known around the world as the 'Green Capital'. The preservation and enhancement of nature in the Capital Region is, and will remain, the keystone of planning".[3] There is no doubt that Gatineau Park's identity and purpose is contained by the larger concept of the national capital. The NCC supports this perspective in the section of the Master Plan that outlines the goals and objectives of the park, which are described in these terms: "For the Park to occupy a special place among the institutions of the Capital, it must: - contribute to the vision of the Capital; - meet the expectations of

[3] *Annual Report 1995-1996*, 12.

visitors to the Capital; and - be integrated into a network of tourist attractions in the Capital".[4]

Two other themes that endure from the Gatineau Park 'idea' of the 1930s are the centrality of the Parkway, and, presented more discretely now, the acquisition of property for the park. In the same language used by the plans of the 1950s, the 1990 Master Plan describes the 'Parkway Loop' as "a window on the Park and on the Canadian landscape" and "a symbol of the role the environment plays in the Canadian way of life".[5] Land acquisition also remains a keystone in the existence of the NCC's park. The 1990 Master Plan explains that some private residences fall under the heading of "non-conforming uses under Park zoning," and subsequently three categories of priority are established for acquiring those properties. The section is concluded with the recommendation that the NCC "give preference to acquisition by mutual consent (at market value), donations, right of refusal, and purchase with occupancy rights for life rather than expropriation".[6] The latter presentation suggests that the contemporary NCC is more reluctant than its predecessor to coerce people off their properties.

The NCC's latest documents present an attempt to distance the commission from its own early, and potentially spotted, history. The expropriation tactics of the early FDC and Federal Woodlands League might present a significant blemish on the otherwise

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[4] Canada. NCC. *Gatineau Park Master Plan* (NCC: Ottawa, 1990).
[5] ibid, 91.
[6] ibid, 129.

seamless story of Gatineau Park, Nature, and the NCC. Earlier official histories, as examined in Chapter Four, attempted to re-script the narrative of the park by drawing on an ahistorical primordial Nature and mythical anecdotes about folk and native peoples. Contemporary official versions, however, do not even attempt that. Rather they ignore any potential associations with the early days of the park. The 1995-96 Annual Report, under the title "The Evolution of the Capital: a 38-year time line", writes, "The NCC began its work in 1958 with the very necessary transformation of the Capital: only in recent years has it begun to concern itself with using the wonderful public spaces of the Capital in a nationally meaningful way".[7] No mention at all is made of the FDC, the NCC's parent organization. The history of the capital region begins, officially, with the formation of the 'NCC' in 1958. The only allusion made to Gatineau Park's early past, in the entire 137 pages of the 1990 Master Plan, states, "The Park's continuing existence as a 'natural reserve' is the outcome of the conservation policies advanced by various landscape architects and urban planners working for those federal agencies, that, prior to the creation of the NCC, were responsible for Capital Region planning".[8]

The story of the park as it was prior to its official, physical transformation into Gatineau Park in the 1950s has now been detached from the contemporary NCC. Casual observers, consumers, and probably many NCC employees are presented with a park that represents Canadian Nature 'preserved', not the Canadian Nature planned and implemented in the 1930s to 1950s. The perseverance of this ideal indicates how

[7] *Annual Report 1995-1996*, 8.
[8] *Master Plan 1990*, 11.

successful the government organization was, and still is, at employing the narrative of Canadian Nature that has been the main focus of this thesis.

Overview

This thesis has examined the cultivation of a national park culture in the 1920s to 1950s. One of the main products and symbols of this culture was a specific image and aesthetic of Canadian Nature. The Nature discourse that emerged in this period was bound up with the identity of 'Young Canada', in both nationalist rhetorics and the growing government-sponsored tourism industry. Canadian Nature explained and justified Canada's geographical possessions. From the deliberately-constructed Nature iconography of the interwar period, to the more measured discourse of professional planners in the 1950s, the logic of this 'Canadian Nature' came to be reversed in public discourse. The image of a uniquely national nature came to serve as legitimation for federal government projects from nationalism to further territorial expansion. The study of the history of Gatineau Park and the FDC provides an example of how Nature, initially a tourist commodity adapted to Canada's hegemonic claims to the continent, was used to expand the physical and imagined territory of the National Capital Region.

Beginning in the 1950s, with the completion of the park project and the entrenchment of park mythologies, Gatineau Park was transformed from being a product of national iconography, to a site of idealized Canadian Nature. Initiated with the calls for a national park in the Gatineau during the interwar period, the FDC and Mackenzie

King's Federal Woodlands Preservation League drew upon the standard language of nature and nationalism to give urgency to the need for 'preservation' in the hills across the river. Through the use of the rhetorics of national park culture already familiar to Canadians in this period, these promoters were able to create a mythological identity for Gatineau Park. This myth subsumed the reality of the hundreds of people still living in the area, whom the FDC would eventually force to leave their properties. The second part of the FDC's park project involved the acquisition of the land necessary to create its ideal park. Again, drawing on the methodologies of the Dominion government, the FDC mapped out the required land and went about with large-scale land purchasing. When it was unable to purchase the desired land, the FDC exercised its unilateral and autonomous powers to expropriate the properties, powers that were granted to the FDC by Mackenzie King's government.

After the physical completion of the park, the FDC/ NCC began writing official histories that completely omitted the period before the Second World War. Rather, drawing on the idealized symbolism of Canadian Nature, the government body created a story that begins with Nature in the park and runs seamlessly to the timely appearance of the NCC and its 'preservation' agenda. Occasionally this tale is interrupted to allow for the appearance of an anachronistic 'folk' anecdote, or the existence of Algonquins hundreds of years ago. Generally, however, since the NCC intellectuals began writing about it, the only residents allowed in the history of the last one hundred years of the park

have been Mackenzie King, 'all Canadians', the Canadian Shield, and of course, themselves.

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