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Celebrating Women in the Parks: From Goddesses to Ministers of the Crown

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Introduction

This keynote address at the Celebrating the Parks Conference will illustrate several of the roles that women have played in the history of national parks and identify some of the major gaps in our knowledge base. In plotting the purpose of the keynote, I want to achieve some objectives for the conference as a body, for you as individuals and for myself.

For the conference as a body, I would like to set the scene in focusing on parks history and set the tone in terms of celebrating the joy of inquiry into our shared heritage.

For the audience as individuals, I want to challenge the listener. In doing that I hope that I not only reinforce some of the listeners' individual and collective knowledge, but also add some new stuff to the listeners' individual and collective knowledge, and perhaps I will create some scepticism. I certainly hope that I will provide a stepping off point for more research.

For myself, this has given me the opportunity to clarify my research direction, to complete some of my research, and to start to clarify a model of the findings. It certainly made me write the damn thing, as nothing

galvanizes, and on occasion paralyzes, the creative mind like a deadline - in this case getting on an airplane and leaving all the research materials half a world away.

In the end, I hope that we will develop more questions for both your and my research and create the basis for future celebrations of the parks and not wait another 100 years.

Some of my past work included preparing a research bibliography that is currently available through my home page on the web titled 'Women: the Invisible Pioneers in Recreation and Leisure.' The women of whom I will speak in this address were not invisible, in thought, word or deed.

Drawing from mythology, personal accounts, biographies, media portrayals, and current research literature I will review the contributions of selected women to the creation, preservation, development and operation of national parks in Canada, the United States and Australia. I will also attempt to draw your attention to the gaps in our understanding of the contributions made by women. The national park systems in the United States and Canada began in the mountains with Yellowstone National Park being

established in the US in 1872 and Banff being reserved in Canada in 1885.

Early parks in the Australian system were mountain parks, with Mt. Buffalo, established in 1898, being a fine example. I find it interesting that Banff was described in many tourist brochures as being 'Fifty Switzerlands in One' and Mt. Buffalo was described as being the 'Switzerland of Victoria'.

The Goddesses

Mythology gives us examples of the mystical powers of the mountains and the goddesses who dwelt there. I will share with you a recent article in a new Canadian magazine, called Mountain Heritage, wherein the author notes that:

... Throughout history, mountains all over the world have held mystical properties. In ancient societies mountains were considered the dwellings of the Gods. Gods and Goddesses passed down their laws to mere mortals on the mountaintops. . . What is it about mountains that makes us mere mortals revere them? Perhaps we fear their lofty peaks; perhaps we are in awe of their beauty. Did ancient peoples try to conquer that fear and awe by giving mountains nurturing qualities: likening their sloping valleys and snow-covered peaks to the female form? There are historical archetypes to suggest they did:

The Sumerian Mountain Mother, Ninhursag gave birth to the world She was a Cow-goddess, milk giver to the kings who qualified for the throne, by becoming her nurslings.

The Welsh goddess Caillech, creator of the world, was 'Hag of the Dribble'. She started the world by making mountains. She 'dribbled' stones from

her apron to make the mountain ranges, dribble which some believe was her milk.

Before Zeus took over Olympus, his grandmother Gaea Olympia ran the show. The mother of all gods: The Universal Mother, Oldest of Deities: the Deep-breasted One.

In Tibet, Mount Everest is known by a female name, as one of the oldest deities, Chomo-Lung-Ma, Goddess Mother of the Universe.

From her place on the Central Holy Mountain, the Babylonian Earth Mother passed on tablets of law to ancient Babylonian kings and to the rulers of Minoan Crete.

The Iranians have High Haraiti, the birth-giving mountain at the centre of the earth. She was the 'fountain of all the waters', her milk the four rivers of paradise. (MacDonald 1998: 11)

My personal belief in the goddesses is growing, but that is another story for another day. I did receive an email from a friend in Calgary as I was struggling with writing the text of this address. The email read 'just checked, the goddesses are out there dancing and enjoying the morning among the shiny, snowy peaks [of the Rocky Mountains]. They're okay, so you can be too'. So, who am I to mock the goddesses?

Visitors and Tourists

Closer to our own experiences are the roles of women in the last two centuries. One of the reviews of the contributions of women in the mountain parks that had the most impact on me is an article by Shelagh Squires titled 'In the steps of the

'genteel ladies': women tourists in the Canadian Rockies, 1885-1939,' wherein she investigates the adventures of some of the ladies. But, more importantly for my work, she reminds us that:

... it must be recognized that there were a number of other women in the Rockies who did not travel as middle- and upper-class tourists. Native women, hotel workers, prostitutes, and wives of miners, ranchers, camp workers, missionaries, guides, outfitters, and later park wardens, all contributed to regional history, geography, and the multifaceted tourist gaze. Yet most of the women who left accessible accounts ... were writing from positions of privilege. (Squire 1995: 4)

The issue of 'accessible accounts' and women who wrote 'from positions of privilege' points out a glaring gap in many areas of historical research, not just the history of parks. How do we include those other contributors, when we have access to accounts from a limited 'pool' of information. I use the word 'pool' following from an account of nineteenth century mountaineers in New Zealand. In 'Scaling the heights, they called it 'An easy day for the lady'' Pip Lynch tells us that:

... the 'pool' from which early female alpinists were drawn consisted of the wives, sisters and daughters of scientists and surveyors; of wealthy sheep-station owners; of individuals who brought their financial success with them from Britain; of wealthy businessman-adventurers -- a minority group who had the time and money to spend on non-essential activities ... a small number who had both the interest and the financial means. (1986: 63-64)

Let's begin the review of contributions by looking at some of the women who were outside the pool of women with interest, time and financial resources. I will begin with members of the native people into whose way of life the Anglo-Europeans descended.

Sid Marty in his description of *The First Century of Canada's Parks* reminds us that the white 'discoverers' of the hot springs at Banff - an event which is viewed as the catalyst for the development of Canada's first national park - were certainly not the first users of the area. He describes the territories and boundaries of the Stoney Indians and notes that:

... Not surprisingly, the hot springs on Sulphur Mountain were a favorite stopping place for these people. Their medicine men regarded the springs as a sacred place to be used after purification by prayer. The area of present-day Banff was a spiritual locus of the tribe. They set up their Sun Dance Lodge and made sacrifices to the sun on the meadows below Bow Fall. (1984: 23)

As explorers and adventurers ventured into Western Canada, Indian and Métis families certainly travelled with them. Many explorers, working on behalf of various government and commercial interests visited the mountains in the 18th and 19th centuries. The adventurer/tourists came later. Among those was James Carnegie, the Earl of Southesk, described by Marty as 'the first tourist to visit Alberta, who visited in 1858, complete with his own india rubber bathtub and volumes of Shakespeare' (1995: 45). Squire notes that a Métis family accompanied the Earl of Southesk's party (1995: 7, citing Innes 1956) and thus Métis

women would have been early visitors to the mountains.

As the eastern mountaineers arrived to climb and explore, armed with sophisticated equipment, including cameras, they recorded some of the daily life of the Stoneys. Mary Schäffer, was an avid photographer and provides us with both written and visual records of the Indians. One of her reminiscences of four days of camping and photographing near the family of Sampson Beaver concludes with the following:

The four days of September slipped away before we knew it in this ideal playground. When I hear those 'who know', speak of the sullen, stupid Indian, I wish they could have been on hand the afternoon the white squaws visited the red ones with their cameras. There were no men to disturb the peace, the women quickly caught our ideas, entered the spirit of the game, and with musical laughter and little giggles, allowed themselves to be hauled about and pushed and posed in a fashion to turn an artist green with envy. . . Yahe-Weha [the Stoneys' name for her] might photograph to her heart's content. She had promised the pictures the year before, she had kept the promise, and she might have as many photographs now as she wanted. (Hart 1980: 71)

But, Mary's sensitive portrayal of these women was in sharp contrast to those who did refer to them as stupid and sullen.

Not just Indian and Métis women were early visitors to the areas of the national parks. European women were accompanying their explorer/writer husbands almost two centuries ago. Bella relates an account of the explorer David Thompson who took his wife

and three children to view what he called 'a sea of mountains and peaks' in June 1807 (Bella 1987: 5). Later after development and settlement, writers and promoters of the Rockies were often accompanied by their wives, sometimes with the wives sharing the duties.

One example of this latter role is that of the [unnamed] painter wife of writer Gordon Brinley who provided the illustrations for his books. In 1937 they described the Rockies from the perspective of affluent travelers who saw the mountains from the observation car of the train and from the 'table for two beside a window in the dining room of the Chateau [Lake Louise] ... enjoying what might be called a 'pontifical' breakfast' (Bella 1987: 23). LaBastille cites numerous examples of wives who contributed to their husband's scientific explorations. However, she does comment that 'unfortunately, these early women were all too often relegated to the role of helpmate and did not receive recognition for their contributions to the team's effort' (1980: 76).

The largest extant body of literature that celebrates women in the parks includes personal accounts and reviews of women as adventurers and mountaineers who not only climbed and explored, but founded organizations such as the Alpine Club of Canada. There were many of these women and many accounts of their lives, but I have selected five of them for discussion. They are Mary Vaux Walcott, Mary Sharples Schäfer Warren, Elizabeth Fulton Parker, Henrietta Tuzo Wilson and Phyllis James Munday - two eastern American Quaker women and three western Canadian women.

Mary Vaux Walcott (1860-1940) was one of three children in a well-to-do Quaker family of Philadelphia often known for their scientific studies of glaciers. The family began traveling to the western United States in 1881 and to western Canada in 1887, a mere two years after Canada's first national park was established at Banff. The Vauxes were avid photographers in an era when the negatives were made of glass and the production of a negative could take the good part of an hour. Their glacier studies began in earnest in 1894 when they compared their photographs of that year with those of seven years earlier and noted the movement of the ice. Mary carried out many roles in these scientific investigations, but she was responsible for the technical and printing work on the photographs. She was also renowned for her paintings of wild flowers, 400 of which were reproduced in 1925 in a five volume set titled *North American Wildflowers* published by the Smithsonian Institution. But she was an adventurer and a mountaineer who became a member of the Alpine Club of Canada in 1906 and after whom Mt. Mary Vaux is named. (Cavell 1983: 18, Smith 1989: 34-35)

The other Mary, Mary Sharples Schäffer Warren (1861-1939), was also from a wealthy Quaker family from the Philadelphia area. She first visited the Rocky Mountains in 1889 and is renowned for many alpine feats including helping survey Maligne Lake in what is now Jasper National Park in 1911. She is also the woman adventurer/mountaineer about whom the most has been written in both mountaineering and recreation/leisure circles (Hart 1980, Smith 1989, Bialeschki 1990, Reichwein 1994)

However, one of the most telling accounts of both Mary and the social mores of the time is supplied to us by author Rudyard Kipling via E.J. Hart. During a carriage ride to view the incomparable beauties of Emerald Lake on a fine summer day in August 1907, Rudyard Kipling observed an interesting spectacle. Later in his book *Letters of Travel 1892-1913*, he described the incident and a sequel to it at Mt. Stephen House that evening.

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

'Indians on the move? ', said I 'How characteristic! ' As the women jolted by, one of them very slightly turned her eyes, and they were, past any doubt, the comprehending equal eyes of the civilised white woman which moved in that berry-brown face. 'Yes ', said our driver, when the cavalcade had rounded the next curve, 'that'll be Mrs. So-and-so and Miss So-and-so. They mostly camp hereabout for three months each year. I reckon they're coming in to the railroad before the snowfalls.'

The same evening, in a hotel of all the luxuries, a slight woman in a very pretty evening frock was turning over photographs, and the eyes beneath the strictly arranged hair were the eyes of the woman in the beadwork jacket who had quirted the piebald pack-pony past our buggy. Praised be Allah for the diversity of his creatures !

Unwittingly, Kipling had described the dichotomy of the lady he had observed.

In the drawing rooms of Philadelphia, she was to her acquaintances the cultured, charming and talented Mrs. Mary Townsend Sharples Schäffer; in the wilds of the Canadian Rockies she was to the Stoney Indians, Yahe-weha, 'Mountain Woman' (Hart 1980: 2).

And Mary's version of that meeting was as follows:

... and then we struck the highway, and on it a carriage with people in it! Oh! The tragedy of the comparison! The woman's gown was blue. I think her hat contained a white wing. I only saw it all in one awful flash from the corner of my right eye, and I remember distinctly that she had gloves on. Then I suddenly realised that our own recently brushed-up garments were frayed and worn, and our buckskin coats had a savage cast, that my three companions looked like Indians and that the lady gazing at us belonged to another world. It was then that I wanted my wild free life back again, yet step by step I was leaving it behind.

We entered the little mountain town of Field just as the whistles shrieked out the noon hour. How garish it all sounded to our ears that had for months heard nothing but Nature's finer notes. Then we grasped the hands of waiting friends (who told us it was Mr. and Mrs. Rudyard Kipling we had passed on the road), and fled from the eyes of the curious tourist to that civilised but perfect luxury - the bath tub (Hart 1980: 78).

I include those anecdotes to give you a sense, not only of Mary, but also of the attitudes of 1907 when Mary was straddling two worlds - the wilderness and the drawing room. Eventually, in 1915, she abandoned the drawing rooms of Philadelphia, married her

guide, Billy Warren and settled in Banff. This Mary helped preserve and open up the mountains - two potentially conflicting acts of which she was well aware as she recorded after the 1911 expedition to Maligne Lake 'each day was a 'farewell' to some spot which for the moment had been our very own. The wedge had been driven in; in another year the secret places would be secret no longer.' (Hart 1980: 152).

Elizabeth Fulton Parker (1856-1944) was born in Colchester County, Nova Scotia, trained as a teacher, married and moved to Winnipeg, Manitoba where she eventually became literary editor of the Winnipeg Free Press. Not a natural adventurer/ mountaineer, her introduction to the Rockies came as the result of train trips in the 1880s and 1890s, going to Banff for the refreshing air and to, in the words of the day, 'take the waters' (Reichwein 1994: 4, Smith 1989: 73). The role for which we know Elizabeth Parker best is that of co-founder of Alpine Club of Canada. What many of us find intriguing is that this event happened in Winnipeg, Manitoba - in what is the flattest part of Canada. But, it makes sense when you find out that Elizabeth Parker became particularly interested in establishing a Canadian based mountain club after learning that Canadian mountaineer Arthur Wheeler was proposing that the Canadians form a section of the American Alpine Club. She found this proposal in a book that she was reviewing as part of her job. The two joined forces and are described as co-founders of the Alpine Club of Canada, although Wheeler was the first President, she was the first secretary and her daughter Jean was the librarian. The Parker home was the first A.C.C. headquarters (Reichwein 1995: 46, Smith 1989: 71). She was

not a mountaineer in the model of the other four women, but she did create an organizational culture that made it possible for women to be members of the A.C.C. and to carry out their favourite activities.

Henrietta Tuzo Wilson (1873 -1955) is known both as a mountaineer in her youth and later as president of National Council of Women of Canada and of the Canadian National Parks Association. Born in Canada and educated in the United States and England, her mountaineering exploits began in the Alps in 1896 and continued in Canada beginning in 1904. The scrapbook at Glacier House contains a splendid entry wherein she describes her ascent of Mt. Bonney, the 'first ascent by a lady, Friday, Sept 2, 1904' which began at 3:15 am with a two hour horseback ride, continued on foot at sunrise, and after the ascent and a dangerous descent over wet shale slopes and an ice field, they returned to Glacier House in the dark after being out for 19 hours. (Cavell 1983: 86). She was a founding member of the Alpine Club of Canada in 1906. Not content to climb peaks where others had preceded her, she participated in a first ascent on a peak in the Valley of the Ten Peaks that is now named Mount Tuzo. After her marriage in 1907 and subsequent move to eastern Canada, she did not actively engage in mountaineering, but rather became extremely active in social and outdoor causes (Smith 1989: 135-142). Her climbing career was short, but her career as an activist carried on for several decades after she ended her mountaineering days. It is in these latter roles that she had substantial impact upon the lives of later mountaineer/ adventurers (Griffiths 1993: 178, Strong-Boag 1976: 374).

Phyllis James Munday's (1894-1991) mountaineering exploits included not just herself, but her husband and her child. She and her husband Don were described as the premier husband-and-wife mountaineering team in the world. In Don's words, 'She and I formed a climbing unit something more than the sum of our worth apart' (Smith 1989: 163). Their child Edith went on her first climb at the age of 11 weeks in a 1920's version of a snuggly. Her carrying apparatus is described as follows: 'At first Don carried Edith in a hammock across his shoulders, so that he could support her head with his arm. When she got bigger he made a papoose-style canvas carrier, with a hood and mosquito netting.' (Smith 1989: 168). Phyllis' climbing career lasted well into her 60's. She is credited with about 100 ascents 'a third of which were first ascents and many of which were first female ascents' (Reichwein 1995: 49). Mt. Munday in the Coast Mountains of British Columbia is named after Phyllis and Don. Her contributions are legion and include not just mountains discovered and climbed, but also attitudes about mountaineering and the inclusion of all members of the family in mountaineering.

Why did I choose these five women? They were all members of the Alpine Club of Canada. They were part of a group that Reichwein refers to as being 'characteristic of the forward-thinking, twentieth century 'New Woman' who was aware of, and increasingly participated in, politics and social reform movements Seeking health and fitness through sport was one facet of the expanding range of activities outside the private domestic sphere of women's lives' (1995: 47). They shared common socioeconomic characteristics in that they were middle and upper

class urban Anglos and they were joiners who believed in organized activities. They believed in the power of the mountains as places to which one could escape, could develop skills, and could re-create oneself. This set of beliefs continues to be held by today's outdoors women particularly those who subscribe to an ecofeminist ethic (Henderson and Bialeschki 1990-91: 4)

Media Images

A subtheme that came out of the review of the women who were mountaineer/ adventurers was the media's portrayal of these visitors to the mountains. The Canadian Pacific Railway produced brochures and posters featuring 'Alpine Annie' inviting potential tourists to experience 'the challenge of the Rockies.' Visitors to the Mt. Buffalo Chalet, the site of this conference, will find one of the Alpine Annie posters in the hallway outside the conference room. The CPR also featured young women arrayed decorously beside the swimming pool at Chateau Lake Louise, or gazing out from the Chateau toward the mountains, or with a red coated Mountie standing protectively beside them (Hart 1983: 146). The theme of the protective and decorative members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police set against the mountains is one that was used in several Hollywood films of the 1930's to the 50's including the classic *Rose Marie*, starring Nelson Eddy as the singing Mountie and Jeanette MacDonald as a fair damsel. Alan Ladd and Shelley Winters appeared in a 1953 film *Saskatchewan*. Marilyn Monroe appeared in Banff to film *River of No Return* in 1953 and the photograph archives of the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies contains several photos of her leaning languidly and decorously against

various fences and props including a Mountie.

While the print and movie media used women and the mountains as caricatures and props, one piece of advertising used the real life exploits of an American mountaineer as part of its advertising. Georgina Engelhard Cromwell was known as a fast climber who held her own with the male guides and climbers. Her exploits became the subject of a print advertisement for Camel cigarettes that includes reference to purported scientific evidence that Camels have an 'energizing effect' with the heading 'Get a LIFT with a Camel' and the following words attributed to Georgina 'A Camel picks me up in a few minutes and gives me the energy to push on - when people tell me of being tired out or lacking 'pep' I don't know of a better advice to give than you'll find in the suggestion -'Get A Lift With A Camel!'" (Smith 1989: 250)

Advocates

A more lasting role of women in the parks was as part of pressure groups who advocated preserving the parks from destruction. There are several remarkable examples from the United States and Canada. Kaufinan (1996: 27-55) reports extensively on the group that she calls 'early park founders and advocates.' She provides evidence of the role of women in efforts to preserve cliff dwellings in the Mesa Verde, to oppose a reservoir in the high country of Yosemite, to support new parks and national historic sites and establish a national parks service. In Canada, the National Council of Women of Canada began to address the issue of conservation in the 1920's - coincidentally with the high profile role played by its president, Henrietta

Wilson (née Henrietta Tuzo) known in her youth as a mountaineer (Strong-Boag 1976: 374, Griffiths 1993: 78). Not only did the N.C.W. have committees dealing with conservation, parks and recreation matters, but there was also a very strong link with the national pressure group the Canadian National Parks Association which had been formed to oppose a proposed hydro-electric dam in Banff National Park (Bella and Markhain 1984: 15). At one point in the early 1930's the two organizations were both presided over by Mrs. Wilson. I believe that this was a rather symbiotic relationship as the C.N.P.A. gained the attention of a wide group of women who could act to exert pressure at both the local and national level and the N.C.W. gained a publicity vehicle for some of its concerns about conservation.

Women worked not just to preserve the mountains, but also as promoters of the mountain parks and operators of tourist establishments and lodges to serve parks' visitors. The first, and in my mind, the most interesting, promoter was Lady Agnes MacDonald, wife of the Prime Minister of the time. Although she might not have considered herself to be a park promoter, she was just having a darned good time and flaunting the social conventions of the day. Squire provides a delightful description of the mountain portion of Lady Agnes' trip across Canada with her husband in 1886:

... Lady Agnes elected to ride upon the cowcatcher, or line-clearing device at the front of the train. In later accounts, her decision has been portrayed as 'a way of advertising to the world the safety of the new road' (MacBeth 1924:146). In her own

description, however, she notes that although her husband and railway officials attempted to dissuade her from the idea, she persisted because 'I can think of nothing but the novelty, the excitement and the fun of this mad ride in glorious sunshine and intoxicating air, with magnificent mountains before and around me' (MacDonald 1887: 298 ; Squire 1995: 7)

A more conventional way to promote the mountain parks had been followed by Princess Louise, wife of the Marquis of Lorne, former Governor General of Canada. Her drawings 'tastefully illustrated' a pamphlet containing the text that her husband published in an English journal - text that the executives of the Canadian Pacific Railway used for tourist promotion beginning in the summer and fall of 1886 (Hart 1983: 23).

Lizzie Rummell (1879-1980) worked for all of her adult life as the operator of various tourist lodges in Canada. She was born in Germany, but came to Canada as a child and was transformed from the Baroness Elizabeth von Rummel into Lizzie Rummel, rancher and later wilderness mountain lodge operator. She was retitled by Oltmann as the 'Baroness of the Canadian Rockies.' She operated lodges in Banff, Lake Louise, Skoki and Assiniboine, 'bringing mountains and people together.' She was inducted into the Order of Canada in April 1980 (Oltmann 1983).

At the park in which we are currently meeting, Mt. Buffalo National Park, Alice Manfield operated a guiding service. As 'Guide Alice' she 'was a no-nonsense woman who, dressed in a tracksuit outfit of her own design' (Webb and Adams 1998: 53). She was

a photographer, naturalist, ornithologist, ecologist, guide and hostess at Granny's Place on the mountain.

Other examples of women working as promoters of tourism were brought to my attention by Elery Hamilton-Smith when informed me that 'women were of immense importance in tourism because of their role as guest house proprietors and hoteliers' (e-mail, 9 April 1995). According to his research, while the histories of tourist resorts often describe the role that men played in shaping the industry, the accommodation directories for the areas all name women as the proprietors of the guest houses and hotels.

Workers - Paid and Unpaid

Following in the vein of those who worked in the parks are the unpaid and paid workers for the parks systems. The notion of unpaid workers may be foreign to many who are interested in park systems, however, that is one of the best descriptions of the spouses of national park staff. Various biographies of male park wardens, such as that of Lemuel Garrison, who dedicated his autobiography to Inger, whom he describes as his 'wife and partner in these adventures' (1983: v), refer to the role that their wives played in running the parks. However, two works focus on the role of women. Polly Kaufman's work *National Parks and the Woman's Voice* includes a chapter titled 'Park Service Wives'. This fine chapter describes the evolving role of the park service wives, including changing the military culture, being 'honorary custodians without pay', 'providing schools and community services', 'responding to emergencies' and finally, having their National Park

Women's Organization recognized by the parks service establishment (1993: 92-117). Kaufman attributes to park wives the role of paving the way for today's women park service professionals (Bialeschki 1997: 361).

While Kaufman's carefully researched book is a fine study, I find Ann Dixon's collection of reminiscences of the wives of national park wardens, titled *Silent Partners*, to be more compelling as the stories appear to be unsynthesized and unedited accounts of life in the Canadian Parks Service. Dixon acknowledges that 'little is known about this very special, small group of pioneer women simply because their thoughts and impressions were seldom committed to paper (1985: 3). Among the accounts are ones such as the story of Annie Staple who was the wife of the Game Warden for the Eastern Division of Banff National Park. She became Chief Gate Keeper, a position that she held for three decades until she retired in 1948, several decades after the death of her husband.

By 1978 the Canadian Parks Service appeared to recognize the importance of the wardens' wives, but, as noted in this letter to Constance Holroyd, whose husband was a warden from 1920 to 1947, the service also appeared to believe that this unpaid employee relationship would and should continue:

... Though the times and numbers have changed, the lessons to be learned, the values to be instilled, must largely remain the same if a quality warden service is to survive. So too, does the warden's wife, the other half of the employment package, remain an unchanging asset to a successful career. Without formal promise of

pay, or praise, whether as an offside packer, or as the unofficial park information centre, she is often the extra mind, the extra pair of hands, the added strength, that all married wardens recognize as their advantage in a sometimes difficult occupation. (Dixon 1985: 32-33)

The isolation faced by these silent partners is well described by two sections in Dixon's book. Beginning the section 'Trails' is this account of both isolation and the partnership:

... Each of the Canadian National Parks contains a complex trail system that could take one into the most remote corners of any number of warden districts in a particular park. Some of these same trails led the warden and his family to his warden station and home. For the married warden of yesterday, a constant travelling companion and partner was his wife who usually became as deft and proficient at the various methods of trail travel as the warden himself. If the two were blessed with children, they too learned the ropes.

Likely the most routine trip for the entire family was the one from home to headquarters to replenish the larder and deliver the diary at month's end. In those years, park trails in the mountains dictated travel by foot, horseback, skis, snowshoes, or dog team, according to the season.

... Where horses were used it meant riding for miles and as a result, the women who were not seasoned riders were afflicted with unbearable saddle sores, which after many trips, eventually became a nightmare of the past. (Dixon 1985: 105-106).

More poignant is the description of the lonely life, living in isolation 'Behind Locks':

... A very different park trail was the restricted fire road. At the source of each was displayed an official sign with large black letters:

FIRE ROAD

**Department vehicles only
By Order N. P. C**

Such signs were supported by strong barricades in the form of sturdy gates shackled by heavy chains that were secured with special padlocks. All park wardens were issued with a key to the locks, for they were the fire wardens and in those years a fire emergency had top priority...

Unauthorized travellers were not welcome on fire roads unless they travelled on foot. Each intruder was compelled to seek out a keeper of the key in order to gain entry to these forbidden trails. Release keys for the lock were available from specific outlets in the parks, but only to certain people designated by the 'powers that be'. As a result, visitors for the warden and his family were rare.

Women who were obligated to live behind these locks viewed the situation as isolated confinement. These circumstances had a great bearing on the social aspect of their lives.

Throwing the fire roads open to public traffic would have been extremely dangerous, but for those families who were saddled with this detention it was

a very restricted, lonely way of life.
(Dixon 1985: 180-181)

The women in the parks paid staff of the various national parks services have only recently been studied. Polly Kauffman's work does a fine job of covering the situations faced by 'women in uniformed field positions' and 'equity issues for managers and support staff.' The number of women in all levels of the US parks service is increasing and the former anti-female, military ethic of the parks service is changing to one where about one-third of the park rangers and other park service employees are women. Kaufman attributes the presence of women with their 'socialization as nurturers and carriers of culture, their smaller size, and their outsider status' to changing various aspects of the delivery of park services, including interpretation, visitor protection, facility development, and resource management (1993: xv).

A recent Charles Sturt University study conducted by Penny Davidson and Rosemary Black moves the explorations of the role of women in parks from recognizing the masculine organizational culture of the national parks and the frustrations that women find inherent in that culture, to making a series of recommendations for women staff in the national park agencies. Their findings and recommendations are contained in *Women in National Parks: An Interpretation of Women's Experiences in Field Positions in Australian Natural Resource Management Agencies*.

Based on a two-phase study and interviews in the national parks agencies in Victoria and New South Wales, Davidson and Black produce

recommendations on management accountability, performance management, work and family, a non-discriminatory workplace, training and development, and monitoring performance that they believe are applicable to all natural resource management agencies in Australia. My recent inquiries into the state of the National Parks Service in Canada lead me to believe that the Davidson and Black study is one that has no equal in Canada. The final category of women in the parks appeared recently in Canada as the federal government minister responsible for both the preservation and the operation of Canada's national park system. The current minister of Canadian Heritage, the federal government agency within which Parks Canada, soon to be the National Parks Agency, is Sheila Copps. She is a long time Liberal member of parliament who has had a number of high profile posts including being Deputy Prime Minister. Her appointment as Minister of Canadian Heritage is viewed in some quarters as a low profile posting. However, she has turned out to be a rather passionate advocate for matters within the purview of her ministry, including coming down on the side of conservation and preservation in the debate over development within Banff National Park. Liberal governments in Canada in the past three decades have typically been advocates of the establishment and protection of national parks in Canada (Bella 1987: 146), and she is continuing in that tradition.

The current Prime Minister has been described glowingly by Gavin Henderson, past executive director of the National and Provincial Parks Association of Canada: 'no other minister did as much to expand our

national parks system and protect the parks as Chrétien . . . No other minister before or since has come close to matching Chrétien's legislative record on behalf of Canada's national parks' (*Toronto Star* 10 November 1993: A24).

Conclusions

One of the steps that I must take in this piece of historical research is to move from telling the stories and celebrating the women in the parks toward exploring the possibilities for analysis of the reasons why women, particularly those of this past century went into the parks. Some of this work has been done and came to light in the material that I reviewed for this address, but more needs to be done within the frameworks of social and political analysis. I want to look at some of the reasons that have emerged and ask a set of questions about others that should be investigated.

Why did these women go to the parks? Can we with confidence really understand their motivations? They certainly did not all go for the same reasons and they may have had a variety of opportunities for choices: the native women were already living there; the European women and the spouses of wardens may or may not have had choices when they accompanied their husbands; the adventurer/ mountaineers, the promoters and the paid employees were seeking a set of experiences or a lifestyle; and the women in pressure groups were pursuing a particular vision that may have been linked to their own personal experiences or lifestyles.

The notion of choice is a key concept in various definitions of leisure. What choices were available to the women in

the parks? What were they seeking when they made decisions, presumably based on some choices? And of course you might ask, is choice a relevant concept in the lives of some of these women? That is another question for another day. Let us at least explore the words of the women to give some insights.

The stories of the wives of park staff as chronicled by Dixon and Kaufman portray many different sets of partnerships. The motivations that established these partnerships are as varied as the couples. What we know is some of how they operated as partners - one paid and one often unpaid - within the parks services. What we do not know is why they decided to create this partnership - and is probably none of our business. However, the comments of one wife may help us understand the partnership based on the couple's mutual commitment:

. . . It was not uncommon, however, for a wife to think as Nancy Doerr did, that she was married to the Park Service as much as to her husband 'I didn't marry Mr. Doerr', she said. 'He married the Park Service and I married him, so I married the Park Service' (Kaufman 1996: 111).

The motives described by the women adventurer/mountaineers often revolve around the notion of freedom, not only to choose, but freedom to choose experiences that emancipated them from some of the constraints and conventions of the time. Each of the accounts of these women's lives contains some comments about freedom. Here are some of them:

Lady Agnes MacDonald thought 'of nothing but the novelty, the excitement, and the fun of this mad ride in the

glorious sunshine and intoxicating air' (Squire 1995: 7).

Phyllis James Munday started climbing in an era where women wore bloomers. 'We'd start off from home with a skirt on - you were never seen on the street with a bloomer, or a pair of pants It just wasn't done in those days'. They would take the streetcar from home, and as they started hiking up the trail they'd cache their skirts under a log. This meant, of course that they always had to return the same way, or they couldn't go home on the streetcar! (Smith 1989: 166)

The most oft-quoted comment about choice is that of Mary Sharples Schäffer Warren as she describes listening with her friend Mary Adams to the accounts of the wilderness that came from men who had travelled in the west:

... There are few women who do not know their privileges and how to use them, yet there are times when the horizon seems restricted, and we seem to have reached that horizon, and the limit of all endurance; to sit with folded hands and listen calmly to the stories of the hills we so longed to see, the hills which had lured and beckoned us for years before this long list of men ever set foot in the country. Our cups splashed over. Then we looked into each others eyes and said, 'Why not? We can starve as well as they, the muskeg will be no softer for us than for them, the waters no deeper to swim, nor the bath colder if we fall in' so, we planned a trip. (Hart 1980: 17)

These were women who made choices. They are certainly not representative of all women of their time, but they are representative of the women adventurer/ mountaineers. They sought

liberty; they sought empowerment; they sought fulfilment. Part of that fulfilment may be captured in what Clare Simpson calls the 'journey':

... there was a tendency for these women to view their experiences as a 'journey' rather than as a 'quest'. A woman's 'journey' tends to be a process of inner experience that may focus on self-realization and aesthetics as opposed to the more product-oriented 'quest' traditionally associated with men. These women involved in outdoor activities described their love of the wilderness for its beauty, the freedom it offered, the peacefulness and the solitude, and the feeling of wilderness as a spiritual home. (summarised in Bialeschki 1992: 53)

What questions need to be investigated further? I will not answer these questions, I will merely ask them. The ideas expressed above about motivation and choice addressed internal motivation, but, what drove the advocacy for the preservation of parks and the promotion of places where others could come for freedom? Was the advocacy for preservation in the public interest? or, Was it merely self interest moved into the public arena? Were these individuals and pressure groups attempting to change the status quo? or, Were they attempting to preserve the status quo to benefit themselves? And there are many more questions that could be asked.

These were some of the stories of some of the goddesses and eight groups of women who have contributed to the national parks in our respective countries and whom I have enjoyed celebrating as I wove together some of the strands of their tales.

I'm sure that you realize that I could not address all the groups in all of our countries, and that I chose to share with you the stories of women who are closest to my geographic base in Canada. This is not an apology for not covering all of your bases - that is for you to do. You will have been identifying the gaps in my coverage and I hope that you will have been figuring out ways that you could fill those gaps. One of my colleagues at the University of Waterloo suggested to me that I should hand out charts with a matrix made up of the groups of women and the countries from which we all come and have you all fill in the empty cells for which you have knowledge of some research and writing that could add to our collective knowledge.

Thank you for this opportunity to help in this celebration and to create the basis for future celebrations of the parks.

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