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FRAMING IDENTITY: MATTIE GUNTERMAN, GERALDINE MOODIE
AND THE SOCIAL PRACTICE OF PHOTOGRAPHY IN CANADA
(1880- 1920)

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines the practice of two turn of the century women photographers, Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie. From a revisionist point of view, it argues that photography is a social practice used by women professionals and amateurs as a vehicle to explore and establish identity.

The Introduction provides an overview of cultural and photographic theorists. Chapter One examines the implications of the change from amateur to professional practice for women photographers. Chapter Two situates Gunterman's photographs as a form of personal narrative within the context of the family album and the practice of amateur women photographers. Chapter Three examines Moodie's portraits of Native people in terms of professional photographic practice and discourse on the representation of Self and Other.

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Table of Contents

Abstract		iii
Acknowledgements		iv
Photograph of Geraldine Moodie		vi
Photograph of Mattie Gunterman		vii
Preface		viii
Introduction: Photography, Women and Identity		1
Chapter 1	From Amateur to Professional: Contexts, Contacts and Codes of Production	38
Chapter 2	Mattie Gunterman & The Family Album	71
Chapter 3	Geraldine Moodie: Self and Other	127
Conclusion		178
Appendix 1	Mattie Gunterman 1872-1945 Chronology	183
Appendix 2	Geraldine Moodie 1854-1945 Chronology	187
Appendix 3	Gunterman Moodie Contextual Timeline	190
Illustrations		191
List of Illustrations		230
Bibliography		234



Geraldine Moodie (1854 - 1945)



Mattie Gunterman (1872 - 1945)

Preface

The conceptual base for this thesis is an investigation of how women use photography to explore identity. It was developed in part from research. As I searched through Canadian women's photography, I became aware of common issues and themes in women's images. It is also informed by my own photographic practice. I had for some time observed that my own work and that of other women dealt with issues revolving around identity; self-portraits were a common practice. Two women photographers, Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie were chosen because they are representative of the relationship between women and photography at the turn of the century in Canada. Mattie Gunterman is an example of the amateur who explored identity through the creation of a family album/ visual narrative. Geraldine Moodie represents how women were able to establish a professional identity through the practice of photography. Lucy Lippard (1976) points out that the women's movement has given us a new freedom to approach art and criticism in a more personal, autobiographical way, if that seems called for. The choice of photographers was also a personal one. Geraldine Moodie lived and ran a successful commercial photographic studio in Battleford, Saskatchewan from 1905 to 1906. My hometown of North Battleford is only a few miles away, just across the North Saskatchewan River. I had grown up with Fort Battleford as the focus of my early studies of Canadian History. Mattie Gunterman's work was familiar as well through the Photographers Gallery in Saskatoon where I was an active member when the Gallery held the first exhibition of her work in the 1970s.

Introduction

Photography, Women & Identity

Not only do we have to grasp that art is a part of social production, but we also have to realize that it is itself productive, that it actively produces meanings. Art is constitutive of ideology; it is not merely an illustration of it. It is one of the social practices through which particular views of the world, definitions and identities for us to live are constructed, reproduced, and even redefined.¹

Photography has become a household word and a household want; it is used alike by art and science, by love, business, and justice; is found in the most sumptuous saloon, and in the dingiest attic—in the solitude of the Highland cottage, and in the glare of the London gin-palace—in the pocket of the detective; in the cell of the convict, in the folio of the painter and architect, among the papers and patterns of the mill owner and manufacturer, and on the brave breast of the battlefield.²

Although some revisionist work has been done in Britain and the United States to explain the role of women in the history of photography, little has been published about the role of women in photography in Canada. To date, the photographic canon in Canada described by Greenhill and Birrell is a patriarchal presentation featuring the exploits of male explorer/ photographers active in the public domain and Stanley Triggs' examination of the studio practice of William Notman. This thesis will examine how women, as photographic practitioners, created a feminine voice / narrative through their visual images, despite the patriarchal discourses by which they were surrounded. I will develop the argument that photographs by women at the turn-of-the-century were more than

1. Griselda Pollock, Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art (London 1988), 30.

2. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, 1857, in Beaumont Newhall, Photography: Essays & Images Illustrated Readings in the History of Photography (New York 1980), 81, cited in Carol Squiers, The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography (Seattle 1990), 9.

simply pictorial studies. Their images can be seen as a gendered social practice³ that explores/establishes female identity. This thesis will provide a revisionist presentation of women's contribution to the history of photography in Canada. It will demonstrate that despite their marginalization, women played a significant role in the development of photography in Canada and that through feminist intervention in the histories of art, their work can be analyzed as social practice.

After compiling a list of professional and amateur women photographers working in Canada from 1880 to 1920, I have chosen to examine the lives and work of two, Mattie Gunterman (1854-1945) and Geraldine Moodie (1872-1945). These women serve as case studies to illustrate aspects of the role of women in the development of photography in Canada; Gunterman will be considered as an amateur practitioner while Moodie will be re-positioned as a professional. After establishing a context for each of the case studies, my thesis analyzes how photography served women as a tool for the exploration and establishment of identity. This analysis is informed by a theoretical framework which includes recent feminist art theory, cultural theory on post-colonial representation and current photographic criticism.

Chapter One, From Amateur to Professional: Contexts, Contacts and Codes of Production, examines the positioning, representation and contextualization of women in photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. This discussion focuses on the change from amateur to professional photographer and outlines

3. Social practice is defined as an activity/ritual of society reflective of social history and used in this thesis to describe the process of photography rather than elevating the end product, the photograph, to the status of an art object.

the factors of resistance or marginalization which women photographers faced. The chapter is divided into two basic elements: amateurs and their entrance to photography, support systems and areas of production; and professionals and their context and production. Art historian Deborah Cherry's book Painting Women⁴ provides a significant model for this chapter through its examination of the relationship between social history and the role of Victorian women in the arts as it pertains to the establishment of a professional identity. The work of Cultural theorist Marianne Hirsch informs the discussion of the family album.

Chapter Two considers identity and personal narrative in the images of Mattie Gunterman. Mattie Gunterman & The Family Photograph Album examines the existence of and the necessity for alternative productions of personal narrative such as the family photograph album. Marianne Hirsch's essay, "Masking the subject: practising theory"⁵, as related to self-portraiture and the creation of family albums, informs the analysis of the photographs by Gunterman. Issues of identity and the public and private nature of portraiture discussed in this chapter are informed by the writings of art historian Richard Brilliant. The concepts of "male gaze" and "woman as sign" are significant in the reading of Gunterman's visual narratives and are examined through the writings of John Berger, Elizabeth Cowie and Laura Mulvey. In his book Ways of Seeing, published in 1972, John Berger presented the gaze as masculine, arguing that

4. Deborah Cherry, Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists (London 1993).

5. Marianne Hirsch, "Masking the subject: practising theory", in Mieke Bal & Inge E. Boer (eds.) the point of theory: practices of cultural analysis (Amsterdam 1994), 109-122.

there is a gender difference between the “surveyor and the surveyed...one might simplify this by saying *men act* and *women appear*.”⁶ Feminist film theory presents a theoretical analysis of gaze/ spectatorship beginning with Laura Mulvey’s seminal article, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema ” (1975), which depicts patriarchal society as being:

...split between active/male and passive/female. The controlling male gaze projects its fantasy on to the female figure which is styled. In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong erotic and visual impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness*.⁷

Elizabeth Cowie’s founding theorization of woman as sign, developed in 1978, illustrates how women have been reduced to visual icons/ signifiers of masculine desire. Other key cultural theorists cited in this chapter include Mieke Bal, Deborah Cherry, Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock. Photo-theorists informing this chapter include Roland Barthes, Pierre Bourdieu, Halla Beloff, Estelle Jussim, Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Rosalind Krauss, Susan Sontag and John Tagg. Chapter Three explores the relationship between Self and Other, using as its subject the photographs of a marginalized group, Native people⁸, taken by a white

6. John Berger, Ways of Seeing (London 1972), 46-47.

7. Laura Mulvey, “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema,” reprinted in Art After Modernism: Rethinking Representation, Brian Wallis (ed.) (New York 1984), 366.

8. The terminology used to address Indigenous peoples in this thesis will reflect contemporary usage which interchanges the following terms: Aboriginal, Native people, Indigenous people/ First Nations people. The term Indian will be used in a historical context to reflect the image of Native people by non-Natives. I here acknowledge the direction of Professor Ruth Phillips, School for Studies of Art and Culture, Carleton University. See also Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian, The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture, (Vancouver 1992), 9.

woman, the representative of an other. This chapter entitled Geraldine Moodie: Self and Other analyzes the photographs of the Plains Cree of what is now North Central Saskatchewan taken by Geraldine Moodie, a white professional photographer with a privileged point of entry to the Aboriginal community. Moodie employed strategies to further her own professional career including taking advantage of opportunities presented by her husband's position as a North West Mounted Police officer. Her approach is considered in relation to issues of post-colonial representation as raised by Lucy Lippard in the Introduction to Partial Recall, an anthology of essays by Aboriginal artists about photographs taken of their people. The discussion of issues of post-colonialism and photography is also informed by the following cultural theorists: Mieke Bal, Trinh T. Minh-ha and Edward Said. Reading National Geographic (1993) by the sociologist, Jane Collins, and the anthropologist, Catherine Lutz, also informs the reading/analysis of Moodie's photographs of Native people. Concerned with examining how "lines of sight" are evident in photographs of non-Western/ non-dominant cultures, Lutz and Collins argue that these images are not merely representations of the exotic Other but are important sites at which many gazes intersect.⁹ The chapter "The Photograph as an Intersection of Gazes" is relevant to this thesis as it explores the significance of "gaze" for intercultural relations.¹⁰ Lutz and Collins argue:

9. Catherine A. Lutz and Jane L. Collins, Reading National Geographic (Chicago, 1993), 187.

10. *ibid.*, 187.

This intersection creates a complex, multi-dimensional object; it allows viewers of the photo to negotiate a number of different identities both for themselves and for those pictured; and it is one route by which the photograph threatens to break the frame and reveal its social context.¹¹

Photo-theorists drawn upon in this chapter include Roland Barthes, Estelle Jussim, Abigail Solomon-Godeau and Susan Sontag.

The conclusion focuses on how Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie used photography as social practice. It compares and contrasts the photographic practices of Gunterman and Moodie and positions them as amateur and professional respectively in context with the examination of women and photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century set out in the Introduction and Chapter One.

Art as Social Practice

This thesis is informed by the writings of feminist/ cultural theorists Griselda Pollock, Deborah Cherry, and Janet Wolff. Important ground work was undertaken by the “first generation”¹² of feminist art historians who recovered and documented the names and biographical facts of women artists and photographers in an attempt to resituate them within the history of photography. Pollock and Cherry are among the “second generation” of feminist art historians who have moved beyond the collection of data to the application of new

11. *ibid.*, 187.

12. Thalia Gouma-Peterson and Patricia Mathews, “The Feminist Critique of Art History”, *The Art Bulletin*, LXIX 3 (September 1987), 326-357.

methodologies in analyzing women's art and to a deconstruction of structures used in mainstream art history.¹³ Griselda Pollock states that historical recovery in itself is insufficient.¹⁴ Both Pollock and her colleague, art historian Rozsika Parker, argue that historical recovery must be part of a complete process that is accompanied by the deconstruction of existing discourses and practises of art history.¹⁵ This thesis goes beyond the mere historical recovery of photographs made by women at the turn-of-the-century to analyze and examine their work as a form of gendered social practice and is therefore written by a "second generation" feminist art historian.

Central to Pollock and Parker's argument and to those of other cultural theorists such as Janet Wolff is the view that art is a social practice.¹⁶ As one of the early arguments for the social nature of the arts which deconstructed the myth of artistic genius, The Social Production of Art (1981) by sociologist Janet Wolff argues:

Art is a social product. This book attempts to show systematically the various ways in which the arts can be understood only in a sociological perspective. It argues against the romantic and mystical notion of art as the creation of "genius", transcending existence, society and time, and argues that it is rather the complex construction of a number of real,

13. For a discussion of feminist art history and its relationship to traditional art history see Gouma-Peterson and Mathews, 326-357.

14. Pollock, Vision and Difference, 55.

15. Griselda Pollock and Rozsika Parker, Old Mistresses: Women, Art and Ideology (London 1989), 49.

16. Janet Wolff, The Social Production of Art (Hong Kong 1981), 1.

historical factors.¹⁷

Wolff's argument also considers the marginalization of women in the arts as well as in social life. She argues:

the work [that women] produce differs in important ways from the work of men, and that there is a growing body of literature on women's art to this effect, an important analytical development in cultural studies, and one which must be made increasingly central to the sociology of art.¹⁸

In Vision & Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art

(1988), Pollock presents a series of influential yet controversial essays in which she draws from Marxist, psychoanalytic and deconstructionist theories to present "feminist interventions" in mainstream art history. Pollock traces the development of feminist art history and argues that simply adding women to art history is not the same as producing a feminist art history.¹⁹ Pollock contends that sexual difference results from social conditioning. She rejects the traditional art historical methodology and instead suggests a feminist approach where pertinent issues are analyzed as reflective of their social historical context. This thesis employs Pollock's approach and examines photography as social practice and explores the framing of self with four central themes: identity, personal narrative, situating or locating self and self/other. The focus of this thesis is on the reading/analysis of a number of photographs made by women at the turn-of-the-

18. *ibid.*, 1.

19. *ibid.*, 43.

19. For the complete development of these issues, see G. Pollock, "Feminist interventions in the histories of art", Vision and Difference, 1-17.

century in Canada, followed by an examination of how these images reflect these issues of identity.

Photography as Social Practice

In addition to these cultural theorists, this thesis is also informed by a group of photo-theorists, many of whom, like Abigail Solomon-Godeau, work from a revisionist position. Solomon-Godeau, one of the few “second generation” feminist critics writing directly about photography, echoes Pollock’s assertion that traditional art history adheres to a patriarchal system. Solomon-Godeau states that the official history of photography “unsurprisingly, [is] officially (his) story. It must therefore be the task of the feminist photography critic to revise it.”²⁰ In Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices, she critiques the representation of the photographic image as art object or document. Her argument utilizes postmodern and poststructuralist theory to challenge the traditional notions of the documentary nature of photography and its elevation to High Art. A final section of this book titled Photography and Sexual Difference, brings together three key essays on women and photography.²¹ This series of essays has been cited by the noted art historian, Linda Nochlin, as

20. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, Photography at the Dock: Essays on Photographic History, Institutions, and Practices (Minneapolis:1991), xxxiv.

21. See Photography at the Dock, “Reconsidering Erotic Photography: Notes for a Project of Historical Salvage,” 220- 237, “Just Like a Woman,” 238-255, and “Sexual Difference: Both Sides of the Camera,” pp. 256-280.

seminal in its contribution to the ongoing cultural critique of photography.²² Solomon-Godeau raises a basic question “that a gendering of photographic discourse suggests : what, if anything, changes when it is a woman who wields the camera ? ”. ²³ This question is considered in the textual readings of the photographs of Gunterman in Chapter Two and Moodie in Chapter Three.

Photographer Jo Spence and film-maker Patricia Holland bring together a number of essays dealing with the construction of a personal narrative in Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography. This collection illustrates how the photographs in family albums are double-coded: to the outsider they function as social document, while to the family member they are frozen memories.

Family photography can operate at this junction between personal memory and social history, between public myth and personal unconscious. Our memory is never fully ‘ours’, nor are the pictures ever unmeditated representations of our past. Looking at them we both construct a fantastic past and set out on a detective trail to find other versions of a ‘real’ one.²⁴

The idea of photography as social practice rather than art object challenges the traditional photographic canon with its onus on standards of connoisseurship. As writer/curator Carol Squiers (1990) points out, until the 1970s, the debate around photography centred around issues of raising its status to that of an art form. Squiers provides context :

The photographers who were trying to express a private vision, either by

22. Linda Nochlin in Solomon-Godeau, Photography at the Dock, xv.

23. *ibid.*, 257.

24. Patricia Holland, “Introduction: History, Memory and the Family Album”, in Family Snaps: The Meanings of Domestic Photography (London, 1991), 14.

making visual metaphors for their emotions and psychology or by seeking to reveal in pictures truths about the state of mankind, assiduously distanced themselves from the imagemakers who trafficked primarily in commercial rather than the purer realms of personal photography. Critics and journalists who championed the medium adopted a similar attitude and gave prominent place to the photographers' words or biographies.²⁵

This debate was fueled by European thinkers such as Walter Benjamin and Roland Barthes whose ideas began to influence a variety of theoretical writings on arts, culture and politics.²⁶

The German cultural theorist, Walter Benjamin, has produced a number of seminal works on photographic theory. Benjamin's essay "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction"²⁷, published in 1936, set the stage for the medium to be seen as a democratized art form that moved away from the aura of the art object. Benjamin and the French philosopher/critic Roland Barthes influenced the American writer Susan Sontag. Roland Barthes' reflections on the power of the family photograph in Camera Lucida are based on the identification of two elements/themes, *studium* and *punctum*, which may be present in a photograph.²⁸ (See Chapter Two). Sontag brought the ideas of these European intellectuals back to North America and presented them in a series of essays

25. Squiers, The Critical Image, 9.

26. *ibid.*, 9.

27. Walter Benjamin, "Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," reprinted in Photography in Print, Writings from 1816 to the Present, Vicki Goldberg, (ed.) (Albuquerque 1981), pp. 319-334.

28. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography, translated by Richard Howard, (New York 1981), 26.

accessible to the general public. Her book On Photography outlines Benjamin's questions about the relationship between the mass reproduction of imagery and its spiritual effect. Benjamin states that the changes brought about to art through mass visual reproduction link it to revolutionary and social movements. It would be easier to convey messages about social concerns advocating change if a less elite art form such as photography was used. As established in the opening quotation by the British writer, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, photography was an accessible and versatile medium of communication that was more than just "a vehicle for artists but also a tool with endless potential uses—for commemoration, information-gathering, surveillance, and profit." ²⁹

Squires points out that photographic history was slow to be influenced, but a small group of writers, including Rosalind Krauss, Douglas Crimp, Martha Rosler, and Allan Sekula in the United States and Victor Burgin and John Tagg in Britain, began to deal with issues raised by semiotics, structuralism, Marxism, feminism psychoanalytic theory and post-structuralist thought.³⁰ These writers began to analyze the medium in terms of its relationship to social history; as a result writers from a variety of disciplines considered the same position in their examination of photography.

In her book Camera Culture, psychologist Halla Beloff examines the meaning of photography and how the medium has affected our social lives. Beloff discusses photography as a form of social exchange:

29. Squires, The Critical Image, 9.

30. *ibid.*, 12.

If we follow the model of social interaction applied to photography, it becomes obvious that one way of considering the problem of morality, contract, ethics, relative status of photographer and subject relative power must be in terms of social exchange.³¹

Influenced by the writings of Roland Barthes ³², Allan Sekula published his seminal essay “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning” in Artforum 1975. Sekula (after Barthes) thought that photographs should be read as cultural images, not merely aesthetic objects or documentary pictures. He argued for a “photographic discourse” which would provide “ a system within which culture harnesses photographs to various representational tasks.”³³ Sekula’s article presented a significant challenge to the photographic canon and therefore is a key reference in the reconsideration of the status of the photograph. Squires concurs:

By making Stieglitz, the high priest of artistic aspiration, a major target of his essay, Sekula issued a challenge to the entrenched ideas of generations of artist-photographers and their supporters, from Stieglitz and his *Camera Work* to John Szarkowski and the Museum of Modern Art.³⁴

In his essay “Currency of the Photograph: New Deal Reformism”, John Tagg examines how photographic practice has become part of many of the social rituals, such as weddings, that it records. Tagg argues that the social function of

31. Halla Beloff, Camera Culture (Oxford 1985), 223.

32. Allan Sekula, “On the Invention of Photographic Meaning” 1975 reprinted in Photography in Print, Vicki Goldberg (ed.),452.

33. *ibid.*, 455.

34. Squires (ed.), The Critical Image, 10.

the photograph is its value, or currency. He writes:

What I am trying to stress here is the absolute continuity of the photographs' ideological existence with their existence as material objects whose 'currency' and 'value' arise in certain distinct and historically specific social practices and are ultimately a function of the state.³⁵

In her essay, "A Note on Photography and the Simulacral", art historian Rosalind Krauss cites sociologist Pierre Bourdieu who published his examination of photography as social practice, Un art moyen, in 1965. Bourdieu begins his analysis by defining photography as *art moyen*, a practice carried out by the ordinary person which must be defined in terms of its social practice.³⁶ These functions are defined by Bourdieu as relating to the structure of the family in the modern world with the family photograph as an index or evidence of unity that at the same time is a tool in the production of that unity.³⁷

Krauss expands this argument:

The photographic record is part of the point of these family gatherings; it is an agent in the collective fantasy of family cohesion, and in that sense the camera is a projective tool, part of the theatre that the family constructs to convince itself that it is together and whole.³⁸

This examination of family photography as social practice informs Chapter Two which considers the personal narratives of Mattie Gunterman.

35. John Tagg, The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories (Minneapolis 1988), 165.

36. Rosalind Krauss, "A Note on Photography and the Simulacral", The Critical Image: Essays on Contemporary Photography, Carol Squiers (ed.) (Seattle 1990) 19.

37. *ibid.*, 19.

38. *ibid.*, 19.

Literature Review

As the literature review will confirm, there is much to be done in the way of primary research on the subject of women and photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. There are few publications that discuss Canadian photography, and those that do originate in Canada. Fewer still are publications about women and photography in Canada; these are limited to brief biographical references in exhibition catalogues, short articles and minor references. The remainder of this introduction presents a literature review which discusses these publications on women and photography at the turn-of-the-century in Canada.

Only recently is attention being paid, on an international level, to women's role in photography.³⁹ As noted earlier, little work has been done on Canadian women photographers active prior to 1970. Some material has been published about Gunterman and Moodie, but most of it is of a biographical and descriptive nature; little theoretical analysis has been done on their work.

General texts:

The inclusion of women photographers in general references about women artists is not a common practice and usually occurs only in more contemporary studies.

Basic photographic histories, including Beaumont Newhall's History of

39. See C. Jane Gover, The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America (Albany 1988); Naomi Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers (New York 1994) and Val Williams, The Other Observers: Women Photographers in Britain, 1900 to the Present (London 1991).

Photography⁴⁰, considered by some to be the definitive history of the medium and now in its fifth edition, have recently been revised to include women photographers.⁴¹ Such publications, however, seldom mention Canadian photographers; Newhall is no exception.

In 1965, Ralph Greenhill published Early Photography in Canada, a ground breaking book which has become a standard text on this subject. Greenhill discusses only three Canadian women photographers,⁴² all of whom are positioned in relation to their husbands: Mrs. Fletcher from Montreal is mentioned as being the first female daguerreotypist in Canada; Hannah Maynard, a professional photographer, is referred to only as Richard Maynard's wife; and the back of a *carte-de-visite* mentions a Mr. and Mrs. Miller as photographers in St. Catherines c. 1865.⁴³ In 1979, Greenhill revised his text, Canadian Photography: 1839-1920, now co-authored with Andrew Birrell. They present an updated history which includes new research, two additional chapters and many more illustrations. This book provides general information about what

40. In 1940 Beaumont Newhall became the first Photography curator at the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York. The History of Photography was first published as an exhibition catalogue for the MOMA.

41. Beaumont Newhall, The History of Photography, 4th edition (New York 1978). The women photographers included are Bernice Abbott, Margaret Bourke-White, Julia Margaret Cameron, Imogen Cunningham, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, Gertrude Käsebier, Tina Modotti, Barbara Morgan, Sonia Noskowiak and Marion Post Wolcott.

42. The celebrated British portraitist, Julia Margaret Cameron is the only other woman photographer mentioned.

43. Ralph Greenhill, Early Photography in Canada (Toronto 1965).

occurred in Canada during the first eighty years after the invention of photography in Europe. There are four women photographers mentioned only briefly in this volume: Lady Aberdeen⁴⁴, Mrs. Fletcher, Hannah Maynard and Geraldine Moodie. Once again, all are marginalized and positioned in relation to their husbands. Geraldine Moodie is situated as an amateur and her extensive body of Arctic photographs trivialized:

Superintendent J.D. Moodie, who established the first NWMP posts in the Eastern Arctic, and his wife were both keen photographers. Mrs. Moodie took *one* unusually attractive portrait of an Eskimo woman and child during their residence in the North.⁴⁵ (emphasis mine)

Photography struggled in Canada, as it did elsewhere, to gain recognition within the traditional arts. Despite its popularity, photography was seen as a second-rate image making process practised by amateurs or simply as a folk art of the masses. It is not surprising then, that the medium has only recently been included in general art history texts and is no longer confined to separate studies. When Greenhill's book was published, debate still continued about the aesthetic nature of this mechanical image making process.

44. Lady Ishbel Marjoribanks Gordon, Countess of Aberdeen, was a turn of the century social activist, who founded Canada's National Council of Women (NCWC) in 1893. She first came to Canada in 1890 and was instrumental in the founding of the Aberdeen Association, an organization to provide reading material for isolated settlers, and the Victorian Order of Nurses in 1897 to provide visiting medical help. Her husband was the Governor-General of Canada from 1893 to 1898. See Alison Prentice, et al. Canadian Women: A History (Toronto 1988)180-181. "Lady Aberdeen", as the Countess of Aberdeen was generally called, was an amateur photographer who documented a cross-Canada trip in 1891. Her snapshots were published as Through Canada with a Kodak. See Greenhill and Birrell, Canadian Photography: 1839-1920 (Toronto 1979), 126.

45. Greenhill and Birrell, Canadian Photography,126.

When one looks back with a revisionist's eye, one can recognize that many studies, including Greenhill and Birrell's volume, are now dated. While Greenhill and Birrell do outline the evolution of photography in Canada, they do not venture far beyond discussing the images made by white males. It is interesting that while only four female photographers are mentioned, studies of city directories conducted at the National Archives of Canada show that there were over two hundred women commercial photographers working in Canada before the turn-of-the-century.⁴⁶

The Expanding Eye: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind (1981), written by Alan Thomas, discusses the role of photography in Victorian society. The importance of the family chronicle-- the family photograph album, as a "living social document"⁴⁷ is confirmed, and a reading is done of the family albums kept by three upper and middle class British women.⁴⁸ Several references are made to Canadian photographers such as William Notman or to locations photographed in Canada, but Canadian women photographers are omitted. This is a useful reference for the contextualization of the family albums of Mattie Gunterman examined in Chapter Two.

In 1984, Sometimes a Great Nation: A Photo Album of Canada, 1850-1925 by Edward Cavell was published. Cavell states clearly in his introduction

46. I here acknowledge Andrew Rodger, photo archivist at the National Archives of Canada, for drawing this survey to my attention.

47. Alan Thomas, The Expanding Eye: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind (Toronto 1981), 43.

48. *ibid.*, 43-64.

that he has not set out to write a history but will let the images themselves document the times. This book then is meant to be perceived as a kind of family photo album for the nation. Throughout his text, Cavell makes allusions to the way that photography functions as a document and reveals Canada's social history.

Canada and photography entered the new world of the industrial age arm in arm, new entities in a society being propelled into the future by the power of steam..... Science and technology expanded the boundaries of the Victorian world beyond any previous concept. An integral part and logical extension of the technological society, photography recorded both the birth and maturing of the new nation and was a profound influence on the lives of its inhabitants. The legacy of the photographic image allows us to view ourselves in context with what has gone before. The hue and patina of the vintage prints confirm an almost physical bond with our past. Like a cabinet of curiosities, photographs yield a plethora of details and subtle realizations. The minutiae allow us to conceive a more complete vision of the whole.⁴⁹

Despite occasionally using some of the same images chosen by Greenhill and Birrell for their survey, Cavell presents a much more dynamic and varied practice of photography in Canada. He includes only four women photographers in his visual tribute to Canada, two of whom are Canadian: Geraldine Moodie and Hannah Maynard.

Cavell argues that photography was instrumental in the development of national identity:

A national identity is as visual as it is ideological. How we perceive ourselves is how we are perceived by others and --in a self-perpetuating loop--how we perceive ourselves. It's all too easy to be totally preoccupied with non-Hollywood imperfections, rather than concentrate on our natural

49. Edward Cavell, Sometimes a Great Nation: A Photo Album of Canada, 1850-1925 (Banff: 1984), 7.

strengths. Our image of the present becomes an essential link in the visual code. Unspoken, quietly pervasive, our visual identity, like red hair, is passed through the generations. Certain images have ingrained themselves in our Canadian collective consciousness; the Last Spike, a Mountie embracing some sweet young thing, a Krieghoff snow shoer , or perhaps a Tom Thomson sky.”⁵⁰

Cavell’s discussion on national identity describes the type of imagery made by male photographers representing the dominant patriarchal discourse in photography commented upon in the opening of this Introduction.

Considering the marginalization of photography in general reference texts on art history, it is not surprising that standard references such as the Dictionary of Women Artists: An International Dictionary of Women Artists Born before 1990 (1985) by Chris Pettys, or By a Lady Celebrating Three Centuries of Art by Canadian Women (1992), Maria Tippett’s overview of Canadian women artists, excludes any turn-of-the-century women photographers.

Revisionist texts:

Several important revisionist studies on women in photography have been published during the last ten years in Britain and the United States. Since little has been published on Canadian women photographers at the turn-of-the-century, it is necessary to consider studies on women and photography from this period on an international basis.

In 1984, art historian Naomi Rosenblum published A World History of Photography, a comprehensive photographic history which has quickly become a

50. *ibid.*, 15.

standard revisionist text. It was revised in 1987 and contains references to 82 women photographers, including three Canadians, two of whom are contemporary and the third, Margaret Watkins, was active in the 1920s.

C. Jane Gover's The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn-of-the-century America (1988) examines the lives and work of women photographers in turn-of-the-century America. Gover examines the effect that technology had upon the lives of women in this period. Photography, she states, offered "a voice to every person using a camera, creating a text that could be read."⁵¹

In 1990, Women Photographers edited by Constance Sullivan was published. The book contains a selection photographs by women and an essay, "Her Geometry" by Eugenis Parry Janis. The strength of the volume is in the presentation of images by a number newly discovered women photographers and publishes some less well known images by the more celebrated. Sixteen women photographing in the nineteenth/early twentieth century are included. The sole Canadian mentioned is Margaret Watkins who was active in the 1920s.

Societal attitudes towards women and photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century were similar to those in Victorian Britain. This is not surprising considering that Canada was one of the British colonies. In her book The Other Observers (1991), Val Williams examines women photographers in Britain since 1900. Her opening chapter, "Photography in Transition: An Overview 1840-1939", describes the relationship of women and photography in turn-of-the-century Britain. Williams seeks to resituate well known women photographers

51. C. Jane Gover, The Positive Image, xiii.

within a women's tradition, and she also rediscovers the work of others whose images are less known.

A few revisionist surveys of photographic history do specifically mention Canadian women photographers. Photographers: A Sourcebook for Historical Research (1991), edited by photo historian Peter Palmquist, is an excellent tool for archival research and includes a number of essays on how to conduct research on early photographers. This volume includes an extensive annotated bibliography compiled by Richard Rudisill, curator of Photographic History, Museum of New Mexico. This is an excellent source of international material relating to early photography and includes numerous references to women and photography in the nineteenth-century. There are thirteen items cited relating to early Canadian photography and those pertaining to women and photography are discussed in this literature review.

As Palmquist comments, however, this book is more than "a mere primer on how to conduct research about photographers" because the writers share their experiences in the field, often using case studies as examples.⁵² Palmquist has done extensive research on early American women photographers and published a number of books and articles on this subject.⁵³

52. Peter Palmquist, Photographers: A Sourcebook for Historical Research (Brownsville, California 1991), 1.

53. See Peter Palmquist, "California Nineteenth Century Women Photographers," The Photographic Collector, Volume 1, No. 3 (Fall 1980), 18-21; "19th Century Photographers," Yesterday and Tomorrow: California Women Artists, Sylvia Moore(ed.)(New York: 1989), 282-191; Shadowcatchers: A Directory of Women in California Photography before 1901, (Arcata, California:1990);(ed.) Camera Fiends and Kodak Girls: Fifty Selections by and about Women in Photography, 1840-1930 (New

Naomi Rosenblum's A History of Women Photographers (1994) is the most comprehensive publication to address the lack of representation of women photographers in general photographic histories. The first four chapters relate to the activities of women photographers chronologically from 1839 to 1920. In the introduction, Rosenblum argues for the necessity of a separate study on the history of women photographers and states that photography presented women with the opportunity to "earn a living and express ideas and feelings".⁵⁴ Only five Canadians are included in this book: Mattie Gunterman, Geraldine Moodie, Minna Keene (1861- 1943), Margaret Watkins (1884-1969) and Edith Watson (1861- 1943). Useful research tools contained in this book include a biography section by Jain Kelly and a selected bibliography by Peter Palmquist.

Rosenblum asserts that there is a blur in the distinction between amateur and professional practice in the U. S. A. which was confirmed by the fact that the early photographic salons did not differentiate between the two.⁵⁵ It is evident by the positioning of the professional photographer, Geraldine Moodie, in the section on amateurs that Rosenblum also applies this observation to Canadian women photographers. It is disappointing that a book destined to be part of the canon in the history of women in photography does not pay more attention to the importance of positioning women as professionals. (See Chapter Three)

Women in the arts in Canada generally have been unrepresented as topics

York: 1989).

54. Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers, 7.

55. *ibid.*, 95.

for scholarly research. This has begun to be redressed in the last decade with a number of theses looking at women artists and women's art organizations in Canada.⁵⁶ Since 1970, attention has been paid to photography in Canada⁵⁷ but most of this work investigates contemporary photography.⁵⁸ To date, this thesis is the only one examining the relationship between women and photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century.⁵⁹

Monographs and Exhibition Catalogues:

Portrait of a Period: A Collection of Notman Photographs 1856- 1915

(1967) by J. Russell Harper and Stanley Triggs makes no reference to women in photography except as portrait subjects .

In 1977, Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza and Henri Robideau collaborated to present the first exhibition of the photographs of Mattie Gunterman at the Photographers

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56. Masters Theses have been written on Canadian Women Artists and Art Organizations and include: Susan B. Butlin, Making a Living: Florence Carlyle and the Negotiation of a Professional Artistic Identity , (Unpublished Masters thesis) School for Studies in Art and Culture, Carleton University, 1995; Ellen MacLeod, Enterprising Women and the Early History of the Canadian Handicrafts Guild, 1905-1936 (Unpublished Masters thesis), School for Studies in Art and Culture, Carleton University, 1994.
57. See Joan M. Schwartz, Images of Early British Columbia: Landscape Photography 1858-1888. (Unpublished Master's thesis, University of British Columbia), 1977 which includes reference to Hannah Maynard.
58. See Carol Ann Phillips, Speaking through the Still Photograph: Three Canadian Women Photographers, unpublished research essay, Institute of Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 1987. This research essay examines the work of three contemporary Canadian women photographers: Lynne Cohen, Clara Gutsche and Nina Raginsky.
59. This is confirmed by a search at the National Library of Canada, Ottawa.

Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. The exhibition catalogue Mattie Gunterman, contains some biographical details about Gunterman's life and reproductions of some of her photographs. Henri Robideau continued his research on Gunterman and has produced Flapjacks and Photographs (1995), a monograph which details Gunterman's life as documented in her family albums ⁶⁰. This book is discussed later.

In 1978, Myrna Cobb and Sheila Morgan collaborated to produce the exhibition and catalogue Eight Women Photographers of British Columbia, 1860-1978. ⁶¹ Although it includes only limited biographical information about the photographers, it shows examples of the photographs of three women active at the turn-of-the-century in British Columbia: Mattie Gunterman, Hannah Maynard and Mary Spencer.

Fact and Fiction: Canadian Painting and Photography 1860-1900 by Ann Thomas is a catalogue published in 1979 to accompany an exhibition by the same name at the McCord Museum in Montreal. This catalogue concentrates on the relationship between photography and painting and discusses some of the more celebrated Canadian photographers such as William Notman and the male

60. I wish to acknowledge Henri Robideau for generously sharing his research with me by allowing me access to his unpublished manuscript, Mattie: The Life Story of the Famous Camp Cook and Photographer, Mrs. Mattie Gunterman. This work is in press with Pole Star Books in British Columbia and will be published later this year as Flapjacks and Photographs (1995).

61. This small publication is based on a slide/tape presentation on women photographers in British Columbia completed as a media studies project by two students at Camosan College in Victoria. The three turn of the century women photographers include Hannah Maynard, Mary Spencer, and Mattie Gunterman.

photographers employed at his renowned Notman Studios in Montreal and Toronto. It represents some of the first significant scholarship done on Canadian photography, yet the only female photographer mentioned, Julia Margaret Cameron, is British. This choice is valid, however, as Cameron is probably the best known nineteenth-century woman photographer and one of that century's greatest portraitists.⁶² Thomas' catalogue presents an overview of similarities and differences between painting and photography of the period. Following a model established by Aaron Scharf in Art and Photography, this catalogue provides detailed references to the influences the two media had upon each other.

Monographs on individual women photographers active at the turn-of-the-century have only been published within the last twenty years and account for the celebrity of such figures as Julia Margaret Cameron. To date, there are only two monographs on Canadian women photographers active at the turn-of-the-century. The earliest is The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard Photographer 1834-1918 Canada by Claire Weissman Wilks (1980). It is a good source for studying the photographs of Hannah Maynard. The text provides some biographical detail and an overview of some of the technology used at the time. The second monograph is Henri Robideau's forthcoming book, Flapjacks and Photographs (1995) discussed later in this section.

Laura Jones, one of the first researchers of early Canadian women photographers and a "first generation" photo-historian, produced the exhibition and catalogue Rediscovery: Canadian Women Photographers 1841-1941 while

62. Helmut Gernsheim, Julia Margaret Cameron: Her Life and Photographic Work (New York 1975), 15.

guest curator for the London Regional Art Gallery in 1983. This travelling exhibition featured the work of 13 women photographers, including Hannah Maynard, Geraldine Moodie, and Mattie Gunterman.⁶³ This ground breaking catalogue was the first on women photographers at the turn-of-the-century. It provides brief biographical details about each photographer and includes an example of each of their images. The catalogue also includes references to women and their relationship with photography in turn-of-the-century Canada.

Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada from 1839-1940, published by the National Archives of Canada in 1983, is an important publication on this period in Canadian photography. This major exhibition catalogue, edited by Lilly Koltun, includes five sequential chapters by members of the Archives staff: Andrew Birrell, Lilly Koltun, Peter Robertson, Andrew Roger and Joan M. Schwartz. It is the definitive history of this period of amateur photography in Canada. Private Realms of Light clearly goes far beyond any of its predecessors. It provides details on a number of amateur women photographers, but only includes three in the main references that are highlighted by the inclusion of biographical sketches, reproductions and textual references ; these are Isa May Ballantyne, Edith Bethune and Geraldine Moodie. Despite the fact that Moodie was a professional photographer who operated three successful commercial photographic studios in Western Canada, she is positioned here as an amateur.

63. Other women photographers included are M. J. Dukelow, Edith S. Watson, Rosetta E. Carr, Annie G. Mc Dougall, Gladys Reeves, Millie Gamble, Minna Keene, Elsie Hollway, Madge Smith and Clara Dennis.

The exhibition catalogue William Notman: The Stamp of a Studio (1985) by Stanley Triggs, produced for the Art Gallery of Ontario in 1985, does make several references to female studio support staff. Records left behind in the Notman studio wage book confirm that women were involved in a number of behind-the-scenes activities at the studio, including working as receptionists, secretaries and colourists/ retouchers. They also worked in the printing, finishing and mailing departments. Their number grew from one, a Mrs. Burns in 1864, to eighteen in 1874; this was one-third of the staff. By 1917, when the wages book closes, almost half of the staff were women.⁶⁴

The handbook Women in Photography is a record of the presentations given at a symposium on February 24, 1985 at the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts.⁶⁵ A highlight of the symposium was the screening of a video on Mattie Gunterman. This publication includes the brief narrative essay “ Historic Women Photographers in Canada ” by Laura Jones. Jones draws on her research for the earlier Rediscovery exhibition previously cited. This essay makes reference to six women who photographed in Canada for all or part of their lives. Geraldine Moodie ⁶⁶ is described and one of her photographs from Battleford, N.W.T.

64. Stanley Triggs, William Notman: The Stamp of a Studio (Toronto 1985), 115.

66. The symposium “Women and Photography” was held in 1985 to mark the centennial anniversary of women’s admittance to McGill University and was organized by two Montreal photographers, Louise Abbott and Doreen Lindsay. This symposium was the first of its kind in Canada and the handbook was published to document the event. A copy of this handbook is in the National Library of Canada.

66. The other five women photographers include Gladys Reeves, Edith Watson, Lucy Maude Montgomery and Gertrude Käsebier. A self portrait by Mattie Gunterman is also included in the introduction to the handbook as a reference to the video that was

is included.

The exhibition and catalogue Posing for Power/Posing for Pleasure: Photographies and the Social Construction of Femininity (1988) was completed by Wendy Botting as part of a graduate course in “Curatorial Practice” at State University of New York at Binghamton. Botting’s research was carried out under the direction of John Tagg in cultural theory and the history of photography. This research concentrates on issues of identity raised by surveillance photographs such as police “mug shots”. It considers how “photographs and the social discourses to which they belong, actively construct both the social category *femininity* and its implication in the category *deviancy*.”⁶⁷ This examination of the social construction of femininity and photography informs the reading of images in Chapter Two.

More recently, Petra Watson’s exhibition and catalogue The Photographs of Hannah Maynard: 19th Century Portraits⁶⁸ (1992) challenge the notion that Maynard was simply an eccentric who experimented with trick photography. Watson follows a methodology more closely linked to the second generation of feminist art historians than to the mainstream. Her interest in Maynard’s work is

shown at the symposium.

67. Wendy Botting, Posing for Power/Posing for Pleasure: Photographies and the Social Construction of Femininity (Binghamton, N.Y. 1988), 6.

68. Petra Watson was guest curator for the exhibition The Photographs of Hannah Maynard at the Charles H. Scott Gallery at the Emily Carr College of Art and Design in Vancouver in 1992.

based on its contextualization within cultural history. This essay is one of the only examples of this kind of scholarship being applied to an exhibition catalogue on women in photography at the turn-of-the-century in Canada.⁶⁹ This essay discusses issues of representation and codes of production in Maynard's imagery, and is an important step towards a revisionist history of Canadian photography that redresses the omission of so many women photographers.

The third and most recent volume on the Notman studios, The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth-century Through a Master Lens (1993) by Roger Hall, Gordon Dodds and Stanley Triggs, includes the Notman expansion into the United States. Unfortunately, this sequel is also a step backwards in that once again, there is no mention of women as practitioners or support staff. Further discussion of the women that worked behind the scenes in large studios, including the Notman studios, will be undertaken in Chapter One.

Henri Robideau's forthcoming monograph, Flapjacks and Photographs about the life and work of the amateur pioneer photographer, Mattie Gunterman is currently in press and will be published later in 1995. As has been previously noted, this thesis is informed by Robideau's manuscript for this book, originally titled Mattie: The Life Story of the Famous Camp Cook and Photographer, Mrs. Mattie Gunterman. The book is lavishly illustrated with Gunterman's photographs and meticulously researched. Robideau provides descriptions of Gunterman's work and includes much previously unknown biographical information. As well, he provides historical background to the Lardeau region

69. Petra Watson is currently working on a book about the Maynards and a more extensive exhibition of their work. Letter from P. Watson, March 21, 1994.

where Gunterman lived and worked.

Periodicals, Reviews and Articles:

In 1974, a special edition of artscanada , entitled An inquiry into the aesthetics of photography , highlighted the collections of the National Gallery of Canada and included other feature articles celebrating the 135th birthday of photography.⁷⁰ In the entire publication, only three Canadian women photographers are mentioned; all three are contemporary.

In 1978, Lilly Koltun's article "Pre-Confederation Photography in Toronto" appeared in the History of Photography and is a comprehensive study of Toronto photographers active prior to 1867. It includes the names of several nineteenth-century Canadian women photographers.⁷¹ Koltun draws attention to the poor wages paid to women studio assistants. This matter will be discussed further in Chapter One.

In 1980, Canadian Women's Studies published a special edition on photography. This marks the first presentation of an overview of women in photography in Canada with brief biographical accounts and examples of work. In a "Rediscovery" section edited by Laura Jones, images by and biographical

70. Anne Trueblood Brodzky, ed., artscanada: An inquiry into the aesthetics of photography, Vol. XXX I, Nos. 3 & 4, Issue No. 192/193/194/195 (December 1974).

71. Koltun mentions a Mrs. Meyer, winner at the 1859 Provincial Exhibition, Miss Elizabeth Crewe (active 1866), a gallery assistant and Miss Fanny Sutherland (active 1866), who used watercolour hand colouring technique to liven her images. Lilly Koltun, "Pre-Confederation Photography in Toronto", History of Photography, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1978), 249-263.

details about the following early women photographers are included: Hannah Maynard, Sally Wood, Annie McDougall, Geraldine Moodie, M.J. Dukelow, Mattie Gunterman, Rosetta E. Carr and Mary Schaffer Warren.

David Mattison, an archivist for the British Columbia Archives, has written several articles on the Maynards including one specifically on Hannah Maynard published in 1980. "Multiple Self of Hannah Maynard" provides biographical details and a discussion of her imagery.⁷² Ironically and perhaps predictably, Hannah, who taught her husband Richard to photograph⁷³, is only marginally mentioned in the other two of these articles.

In "Hannah Maynard: Participant and Portent" (1981), published in Canadian Forum, Peter Wollheim challenges the depiction of the professional turn-of-the-century Canadian photographer, Hannah Maynard, as an eccentric. This particular view of Maynard is shared by Weissman, Wilks and Mattison.⁷⁴ Wollheim examines Maynard's work, in particular her Little Gems, a series of photographic collages depicting children, and argues that the photographing of children takes on a ritualistic importance in a society where infant mortality was

72. See David Mattison, "Multiple Self of Hannah Maynard", Vanguard, Vol. 9, No. 8 (October 1980), 14-19; "Richard Maynard, Photographer of Victoria, B.C." History of Photography, Vol. 9, No. 2 (April-June 1985), 109- 129 and "A Fair Wind Blowing, Richard Maynard's Tours on HMS Boxer, 1873-1874", Photographic Canadiana, Vol. 12, No. 4 (January-Feb. 1987), 2-5.

73. Petra Watson, The Photographs of Hannah Maynard, 19th Century Portraits, (Vancouver 1992), np.

74. Peter Wollheim, "Hannah Maynard: Participant and Portent," Canadian Forum, Vol. LX, No. 707 (March 1981),pp. 35-36.

common.⁷⁵

“The Feminine Influence: Aspects of the Role of Women in the Evolution of Photography in the British Isles” (1988) by Bernard and Pauline Heathcote⁷⁶ examines the role of women in photography, including “lady amateurs” and professionals, in mid nineteenth-century Britain .

Writing about women and photography exists outside of art/photography history. In Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science, an anthology of essays on Canadian women and science published in 1990, Diana Pederson’s and Martha Phemister’s “Women and Photography in Ontario, 1839-1929: A Case Study of the Interaction of Gender and Technology” examines issues related to technology and gender. Pederson and Phemister argue, that for the most part , women were expected to be passive consumers of photography rather than practitioners because contemporary sex-role stereotypes promoted the idea that photographic technology was too complex for women.⁷⁷ This article presents a carefully researched overview of women and photography in Ontario and emphasizes the effect brought about by changes in technology. This article will be discussed further in Chapter One.

75. *ibid.*, 36.

76. Bernard V. and Pauline F. Heathcote, “The Feminine Influence: Aspects of the Role of Women in the Evolution of Photography in the British Isles”, History of Photography, Vol. 12, No. 3 (July-September 1988), 250- 273.

77. Diane Pedersen and Martha Phemister, “Women and Photography in Ontario, 1839-1929 A Case Study of the Interaction of Gender and Technology”, in Marianne Gosztanyi Ainley (ed.) Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science (Montreal 1990), 88.

Photo archivist Brock Silversides examines the life and work of Geraldine Moodie in a brief but informative article, “Geraldine Moodie: Through a Woman’s Eye”, published in the premier edition of the periodical Epic in 1991. This is one of the rare articles written on Moodie. It provides an overview of her life and professional career and includes several examples of her photographs, including images of the Plains Cree made during her residence in Battleford.

In a review for Canadian Art (1992), Robin Laurence examines curator Petra Watson’s revisionist exhibition, The Photographs of Hannah Maynard, held at the Charles H. Scott Gallery in Vancouver from July 17 to August 23, 1992. Laurence comments that this exhibition positions Maynard as a professional whose “photographs are compelling neither as aesthetic nor technical achievements, but as social markers of the Victorian age.”⁷⁸

In “Geraldine Moodie : A Biographical Sketch”, Cultural history curator Donny White outlines Moodie’s life as the wife of an NWMP officer and highlights the building of her studio in Battleford as the beginning of her professional practice as a photographer. White states:

... it appears that the rigors of raising a family in the Canadian Territories and the constant uprooting, made her career choice rather impossible until her arrival in North Battleford. There, Geraldine photographed in earnest, even building a studio in 1895.⁷⁹

In 1994, Dorothy Harley Eber’s article “A Feminine Focus on the Last

78. Robin Laurence, “The Photographs of Hannah Maynard,” Canadian Art (Vancouver 1992), 70.

79. Donny White, “Geraldine Moodie: A Biographical Sketch,” Women Together Magazine, Vol.1, No.4 (February 1993),14.

Frontier”, published in the periodical Arctic, is another of the few publications to date that positions Geraldine Moodie as a professional photographer. Eber argues:

Geraldine was far more than an amateur— she had run her own photography studios in southern Canada, photographing activities of the NWMP, ranching life and Indians— including Poundmaker, Thunderchild, and native rituals like the thirst dance and the sundance.⁸⁰

This article discusses Moodie’s Arctic photographs made between 1904 and 1906. Eber, a collector of oral history specializing in eastern Arctic whaling, took copies of a selection of Geraldine Moodie’s Inuit portraits into the North in an attempt to identify their subjects by showing the photographs to Inuit elders. This article describes her findings and includes many previously unpublished biographical details supplied by Joan Elderidge, Moodie’s great-granddaughter. This literature review confirms the need to redress the marginalization in photographic history of Canadian women photographers active at the turn-of-the-century.

The opening quotations from the contemporary feminist theorist, Griselda Pollock, and the nineteenth-century writer, Lady Elizabeth Eastlake,⁸¹ contribute to the argument for photography as social practice. Lady Eastlake, writing only twenty years after the invention of photography,⁸² confirms that nineteenth-

80. Dorothy Harley Eber, “A Feminine Focus on the Last Frontier,” Arctic (Spring 1994), 17.

81. Lady Eastlake’s husband was Sir Charles Eastlake, a neoclassical painter and the president of the Royal Academy of the Arts in London.

82. Squiers, 9.

century women recognized its importance “as a tool with endless potential uses.”⁸³ Griselda Pollock establishes the revisionist position that art is a social practice that allows us to construct, reproduce and define identity.⁸⁴ These two quotations are key in the development of the primary argument presented in this thesis: that as photographic practitioners, women created a feminine voice or narrative through their visual images and established a gendered form of social practice.

The Introduction presents the cultural and photo-theorists who inform this revisionist examination of women photographers in turn-of-the-century Canada. The literature review considers publications related to women and photography at the turn-of-the-century and establishes the necessity for further research and publications in this area. This thesis seeks to redress this marginalization by focusing its argument on women at the turn-of-the-century. C. Jane Gover refers to this as “the golden area of photography” because it was a period of technological and aesthetic development.⁸⁵ This was also a time of opportunity for women to extend their boundaries beyond the traditional constraints of Victorian society. Gover writes:

Middle class women freed by technology from the worst aspects of household drudgery now found their lives shaped, in part, by a search for activity to fill leisured hours. By the late 1880s thousands of women, uncomfortable with this leisure, found an active, creative, and sometimes

83. *ibid*, 9.

84. Pollock, *Vision and Difference*, 30.

85. Gover, *The Positive Image*, xiii.

lucrative outlet in photography.⁸⁶

The following chapter considers the positioning, representation and contextualization of women in photography. It considers the key points of entrance, access and personal and financial support in both amateur and professional practice which sets a foundation for the case studies on Mattie Gunterman in Chapter Two and Geraldine Moodie in Chapter Three. The textual reading of photographs by Gunterman and Moodie is informed by current cultural and photographic theory as well as existing biographical evidence in order to examine how photography functioned as a social practice that allowed women to extend their boundaries and move outside the domestic sphere to pursue issues of identity.

86. *ibid.*,16.

Chapter One

From Amateur to Professional: Contexts, Contacts and Codes of Production

There is no more suitable work for a woman than photography, whether she takes it up with a view of making it a profession, or simply as a delightful pastime to give pleasure to herself and others. She is by nature peculiarly fitted for the work, and photography is becoming more and more recognized as a field of endeavour peculiarly suited to women..... The light, delicate touch of a woman, the eye for light and shade, together with her artistic perception, render her unusually fitted to succeed in this work.¹

For a woman to use a camera is a kind of theft of power, an assertion of the right to value her own capacities of observation and judgment, rather than simply to sustain someone else's exercise of these functions. For perhaps the first time in her existence she is able to effect a crucial shift in her thinking, to conceive of how she looks more nearly in the sense of how she sees, rather than how she appears.²

Richard Hines Jr. argues that photography is an appropriate activity for women, either as a genteel accomplishment or a commercial venture, provided these women do not leave the boundaries of the domestic sphere. He reflects the prevailing attitude of the nineteenth-century Victorian who saw photography as a socially acceptable activity for women as long as they functioned within the constraints of Victorian society. Susan Butler's statement that a woman's use of the camera is an assertion of power is an example of the application of revisionist methodology and current feminist theory to the analysis of nineteenth-century photographic practice. Together, Hines and Butler present a study in contrasts

1. Richard Hines Jr., Speech delivered before the Art League of Mobile, Alabama, 19 January, 1899, cited in Shelagh Wilkson et al (eds.), Canadian Women's Studies, Photography edition, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Toronto 1980), 29.

2. Susan Butler, "So How Do I Look? Women Behind the Camera", Photo Communiqué, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Toronto 1987), 24-35.

which focuses attention on the changing role of women in photography from the more passive role of amateur in the domestic sphere to the more active role of professional in the public domain. This chapter examines the positioning, representation and contextualization of women in photography in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. This discussion focuses on the change from amateur to professional and the factors of resistance and/or marginalization which women photographers faced. The chapter is divided into two basic elements: amateurs and their entrance to photography, support systems, and, areas of production; and, professionals and their context and production. The content of this chapter serves to lay the foundation for the individual case studies to follow in Chapter Two on the amateur, Mattie Gunterman, and Chapter Three on the professional, Geraldine Moodie.

Despite limitations imposed by Victorian patriarchy and societal expectations, photography became a tool that allowed women to present a feminine narrative through their visual images. Furthermore, the diverse interactions between women and the practice of photography facilitated their move into the public domain. Citing Myra Jehlen, Carolyn G. Heilbrun, in her Writing a Woman's Life (1988), states that a woman's selfhood, which she defines as the right to tell her own story, depends upon "her ability to act in the public domain."³ Heilbrun continues her discussion of women's biography by describing the importance of what Gilbert and Gubar have described as "the quest for her own story."⁴

3. Myra Jehlen, cited in Carolyn G. Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, (New York: 1988), 17.

4. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar as cited in Heilbrun, Writing a Woman's Life, 18.

For all literary artists, of course, self definition necessarily precedes self-assertion: the creative “ I am ” cannot be uttered if the “I” knows not what it is. But for the female artist the essential process of self definition is complicated by all those patriarchal definitions that intervene between herself and herself.⁵

As Diana Pedersen and Martha Phemister argue in their article “ Women and Photography in Ontario, 1839-1929: A Case Study of the Interaction of Gender and Technology” (1990), societal attitudes towards gender and technology kept women from playing more active roles in photography until the 1880s when new simplified technologies, such as roll film and basic Kodak cameras, were readily available. “Women’s place in the photographer’s studio during the early years was, for the most part, in front of the camera rather than behind it.”⁶

Women were commonly depicted in a number of stereotypical roles and poses that included woman as object or woman as mother. The portrait of Miss Annie Bell, 1872 (Fig. 1.1), a Notman employee, is typical of the images made of women at this time. Despite the fact that Miss Bell is a working woman, she is shown costumed in party dress, presenting herself as a decorative object. The portrait of Mrs. William Mackenzie, 1871 (Fig.1. 2) is another example of the objectification of the female subject and by what Berger refers to as the male gaze which is outlined in my Introduction. Mrs. Sang Kee and Children, Montreal, 1897 (Fig 1.3) is a more complex image depicting both motherhood and the exotic Other. Amateur and professional photographers alike often included their wives

5. *ibid.*,17.

6. Diane Pedersen and Martha Phemister, “Women and Photography in Ontario, 1829: A Case Study of the Interaction of Gender and Technology” in Marianne Gosztonyi Ainley (ed.), Despite the Odds: Essays on Canadian Women and Science (Montreal 1990),90.

as secondary subject figures in their landscape photographs. As well as establishing scale, these female figures were considered decorative additions to the compositions. Richard Maynard's landscape photograph made in 1899 uses his professional photographer wife, Hannah Maynard (Fig.1.4), to establish scale in the foreground. Ironically, it was Hannah Maynard who taught her husband how to photograph.⁷

Photographic histories represent photography as primarily a male occupation. Women were most commonly presented as having passive roles in photography, either as product or consumer. Victorian women first became actively involved with photography in North America and Europe as early as the 1850s and 1860s with the collecting of photographic images. Victorians were great collectors. Stereographs⁸ were particularly popular in the 1860s, closely followed by "cartomania" where, after the example of Queen Victoria, women collected *carte-de-visite* portraits of family, friends and celebrities.⁹ Queen Victoria showed considerable interest in photography and had Roger Fenton, the royal

7. This was established in the Introduction. See Petra Watson, the photographs of Hannah Maynard, np.

8. Stereographs are two photographs of the same subject taken with a camera that has lateral twin lenses. The images are mounted side by side on a small rectangular card and viewed through a device called a stereoscope, the resulting image has the illusion of three dimensionality. Naomi Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers (New York 1994), 45.

9. Pedersen and Phemister ,95.

photographer, set up a darkroom in Windsor Castle.¹⁰ This royal approval of the medium helped to spark the interest of many Victorian women.

In the nineteenth-century, woman's active involvement with photography was in the secondary position of either amateur photographer or employee in commercial photographic studios. Women were, however, a significant presence in the development of this medium and were active in a variety of significant roles in Canada.

The principal focus of amateur photography was the documentation of the family, and this was usually undertaken by women. As chief family archivists, women carefully maintained the family photographic albums, recording everyday domestic events and significant rituals/ rites of passage (weddings, births, etc.). Such intimate family documents provide a personal and private view into Canadian life at the turn-of-the-century.

As amateur photographers, women established a feminine voice/narrative through their visual images that recorded both social history and the "woman's culture"¹¹ of their period. C. Jane Gover writes: "The camera presents a new

10. Roger Hall, Gordon Dodds and Stanley Triggs, The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century Through a Master Lens (Toronto 1993),13.

11. Woman's culture existed within the private domestic sphere due to societal restrictions imposed on women during the mid to late nineteenth century. A separate artistic culture developed here of "lesser" arts including needlework, embroidery and china and miniature painting. These were considered women's arts and crafts and marginalized from the male dominated world of the fine arts. Photography, considered as "painstaking" as the decorative arts and a subordinate to painting, was quickly positioned as an appropriate pastime for women. See C. Jane Gover, The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America (Albany 1988) 1-16 and 104-134. Deborah Cherry argues that an understanding of women's culture in the nineteenth century comes from "an analysis of the heterogeneity of femininity in a social formation

way for women to represent and record their lives. The photo album replaced the sampler, the quilt and the miniature portrait.”¹² Photo-historian Beaumont Newhall praises Lady Elizabeth Eastlake for her essay, Photography 1857 as arriving “ at the surprisingly modern conclusion ”¹³ that photography is “ a new medium of communication. ”¹⁴ Her statement confirms that photography was viewed as a tool of communication or voice as early as the mid-nineteenth-century (See Introduction).

The majority of women employed in the commercial studios were support staff; however, as this chapter will establish, an increasing number of women did become professional photographers.

Framing Change: From Amateur to Professional

The turn-of-the-century in Canada marked a time of significant social change for Canadian women.¹⁵ The Victorian age had seen women primarily as domestic

shaped by contending social, economic and political forces.” See Cherry, Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists, (London 1993), 16.

12. Gover, 5.

13. Beaumont Newhall (ed.), Photography: Essays & Images: Illustrated Readings into the History of Photography (New York 1980), 94.

14. Lady Elizabeth Eastlake, “Photography 1857” in Newhall (ed.), Photography: Essays & Images, 94.

15. See Alison Prentice et al (eds.), “The New Pioneers: The Mid-Nineteenth Century to the End of the Great War”, Canadian Women : A History, 107-217 and Jane Ethrington, “Pioneers and Suffragists”, Changing Patterns : Women in Canada, Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code and Lindsay Dorney (eds.), 52-79, for detailed accounts of the social history of

figures defined by family responsibilities within the private sphere. Victorian women were schooled by the ideology of feminine accomplishment and passivity. Domestic femininity as “the preferred mode of womanhood ” was exemplified by the roles of dependent daughter, wife or mother in the nineteenth-century.¹⁶ Deborah Cherry comments that by the middle of the century, domestic femininity had positioned itself in a variety of sites from the new category ‘wife’ on the census records to the large quantity of literature that dealt with issues of behaviour, language and appearance for a ‘lady’.¹⁷ Cherry argues:

Profound shifts in the definitions of gentility were registered in the declassing of the term ‘woman’ and the currency of the word ‘lady’, shorn from its eighteenth-century aristocratic associations and increasingly used from the 1840s to identify a middle-class femininity ordered around conduct and appearance rather than given by birth or rank. ¹⁸

Cherry establishes that after 1830, it was apparent that the public and private spheres were differentiated by gender:

While femininity was assigned to home and family, masculinity by contrast was apportioned the public world of city streets and urban institutions, administration, finance and paid productive labour.¹⁹

The twentieth century, however, brought opportunities for the “New Woman” in

Canadian women at the turn of the century.

16. Cherry, 120.

17. *ibid.*.

18. *ibid.*

19. *ibid.*, 121.

the public sphere.²⁰ For many women, photography provided a bridge between the private domestic world and the wider public sphere.

[The] choice of photography made the professional life somewhat easierThe dilemma over career and marriage, for example was often avoided; women photographers were able to pursue a career without necessarily leaving the domestic environment. Even for amateurs the camera gave women the chance to experiment with an example of the new technology while affirming domestic values in the pictures they took.²¹

Photo-historian William C. Darrah observes certain patterns in the careers of early American women photographers. He suggests that women gained entrance to the photographic profession in a variety of ways: through inheritance, family business, as support staff who worked their way up in a commercial studio or through paid instruction from an established professional. Darrah's observations are, in Pederson's and Phemister's view, equally inherent in the careers of women photographers in Ontario,²² and by extension, to women photographers in all parts of Canada.

Pedersen and Phemister argue that despite the positive response of women toward photography, this technology " was initially used in accordance with

20. For further details about the perception and expectations of women in the Victorian age see Deborah Cherry, Painting Women, C. Jane Gover, The Positive Image: Women Photographers in Turn of the Century America and Julia Gualtieri, The Woman as Artist and Subject in Canadian Painting (1890-1930) MA Thesis, Queen's University, 1989.

21. Gover, 133.

22. Pederson and Phemister, 97.

preexisting gender roles, and consequently, came to reinforce those gender roles.”²³ Photo-historian C. Jane Gover concurs:

If indeed every age needs an image, then the late Victorians found their reflection in the photography produced by the women of that period. And, for the most part, the women photographers confirmed the prevailing societal view of their work.²⁴

As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, this prevailing view of women's work was one that restricted women to the private sphere of the home. After 1860, the boundaries gradually expanded to include charitable work or paid employment were deemed appropriate.²⁵

Once established as practitioners, women were free to choose their own codes of production. Codes of production²⁶ reflected stylistic conventions and varied from romantic Pictorial imagery to more straightforward documentary. Lilly Koltun comments on the nature of Pictorialism:

Pictorialism sought to emulate traditional art media by using broad compositional design, suppression of detail, atmospheric effect, selective highlighting, and diffused or “soft” focus to create photographs that could be judged as works of art..... These images often looked little like photographs, and much more like charcoal sketches, or distant cousins of paintings and prints. Deliberately anonymous subjects predominated: unidentified

23. *ibid.*, 88.

24. Gover, 133.

25. Cherry, 121.

26. Codes of production refer to the methods of production and reflect the coded nature of photography. See John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation : Essays on Photographies and Histories* (Minneapolis 1993) for detailed examination of the coded nature of the photograph.

portraits, landscapes, still-lives, even mythological scenes, all paralleled the concerns of artists in other media, and echoed their stylistic influences.²⁷

Pictorialism was the most significant movement in Canadian photography after 1900, slowly replacing the “familiar standard of realism established in the nineteenth century ...[with]... a new esthetic ideal”.²⁸ However prominent, the pictorialists did not dominate the practice of amateur photography in Canada; this was reserved for the so-called “straight” photographers that preferred a more documentary style image.²⁹ Koltun argues:

Strength of numbers lay with the advanced amateurs or the informal snapshooters. These picture-takers perpetuated an older idea of what constituted a good photograph. They strove for images that were well-composed and exposed, well-developed and printed, clear and exact. They were not so much in self-expression as in recording people, places and events factually, preferably as a kind of narrative.³⁰

It is to this category of documentary photography that the images of Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie belong. Commercial photography also produced variations that included a pictorial studio approach and a more anthropological approach to imagery.

Marketing techniques of the photo industry tended to reinforce the notion that

27. Koltun, “Art Ascendant”, 32. See Lilly Koltun “Art Ascendant, 1900-1914”, Private Realms of Light, Lilly Koltun (ed.) (Ottawa 1983) 32-64., for an overview of Pictorialism in Canada.

28. *ibid.*, 32.

29. *ibid.*, 50.

30. *ibid.*

women were merely the “rank amateur and passive consumer.”³¹ Pedersen and Phemister argue:

[E]xamination of women and photography in Ontario suggests that in the early years, women’s responses to photographic technology clearly differed from those of men, and that they did so in a manner which reflected social convictions about women’s scientific and artistic abilities, women’s role in the family, women’s relationship to other women, and women’s economic importance as consumers. Later, promoters of photography simply elaborated on these themes in their marketing of new forms of photographic technology. Not only did they use different promotional strategies to reach female camera buyers, but they also employed women in advertisements as an effective strategy for conveying the impression that cameras were easy to use.³²

In 1901, George Eastman launched an advertising campaign in an attempt to target the female market by presenting the Kodak Girl, a “New Woman” symbol representing “the idealized essence of contemporary young womanhood—modern, active, elegant, sophisticated, independent, but not so bold as to be thought unrespectable”.³³ The Kodak Girl³⁴ was tremendously popular and it was this image, not that of more serious amateurs like Mattie Gunterman who used more professional equipment (See Chapter Two), that was used by the photo industry as representative of women amateurs.³⁵ Gover comments on the popularity and acceptance of this symbol in society:

31. Pedersen and Phemister, 89.

32. *ibid.*, 90.

33. *ibid.*, 105.

34. For details on the Kodak Girl Campaign, see Pedersen and Phemister, 104-105 and Gover, p.15.

35. *ibid.*, 109.

With camera in hand, this woman photographer is active and curious yet accepted and welcomed everywhere. What began as an advertising symbol emerged as a symbol of a new middle class woman who, though not yet fully emancipated, could still enjoy an expanded notion of acceptable behaviour.³⁶

Pedersen and Phemister also observe that during the Second World War, Kodak attempted to market a camera with a masculine image by advertising its Vest Pocket Kodak as the “The Soldier’s Kodak”, however, they never went as far creating as a “Kodak Boy” to address gender balance.³⁷

AMATEURS:

Improvements that simplified the technical aspects of photography lead to an “explosion of amateur photographic activity” in Canada after 1885.³⁸ Pedersen and Phemister argue that only after photographic technology became more simplified and accessible in the 1880s did women become more active participants.³⁹ Research for the exhibition and catalogue Private Realms of Light,⁴⁰ indicates that of the 825 amateur photographers discovered at the turn-of-the-century, only around seven percent were women. Lilly Koltun is suspicious

36. Gover, 15.

37. *ibid.*, 105.

38. See Peter Robertson, “The New Amateur/ 1885-1900”, in Lilly Koltun (ed.), Private Realms of Light (Ottawa 1983)16-31, for details on technological advancement and the activities of Canadian amateur photographers.

39. Pedersen and Phemister, 89.

40. The catalogue Private Realms of Light for the National Archives of Canada exhibition in 1983 is the definitive study to date of amateur photography in Canada.

of this figure and states the low percentage, which reflects sources such as periodicals, camera club documents and other public records, indicates that women may have approached the medium privately.⁴¹

As outlined in the previous section, women often made their entrance to the medium of photography through the instruction of a mentor who was generally a male family member. One well known mentor was the American photographer, Alfred Stieglitz, who was considered to be the “father” of modern photography. In addition to his role as curator of the 291 Gallery that exhibited modern art and photography in New York, Stieglitz was an influential photographer and leader of the Photo-Secession.⁴² Stieglitz acted out a patriarchal role, and was mentor to dozens of female photographers.⁴³ In Canada, no mentor achieved the cult figure status of Stieglitz .

Canadian women photographers found their mentors closer to home. Millie Gamble (1887- ?) began photographing in the summer of 1904, at the age of

41. Koltun (ed.), Private Realms of Light , 55.

42. Photo-Secession was an organization of primarily American pictorial photographers that existed from 1902 to 1910. It was a “distinctive offshoot” of the Pictorialist movement that promoted art photography and allowed for darkroom manipulation of negatives and prints using a variety of graphic arts techniques. It represented the elite among photographic societies and was the North American equivalent of the Linked Ring in Great Britain.. Women accounted for 21 of the 105 members in the Photo-Secession. The eventual rejection of commercial photography by the society caused its most celebrated woman member, the professional portrait photographer, Gertude Kasebier, to leave the group. Naomi Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers, 95-97.

43. See C. Jane Gover, “Alfred Stieglitz and the Women of the Photo Session,” The Positive Image 86- 103, for a discussion of Stieglitz’s role as mentor in the development of women photographers in America.

seventeen years. She had been given a Ray No. 1 camera by an uncle.⁴⁴ Annie Grey McDougall (1866- 1952) first encountered photography at the farm of her brother-in-law Charles Millar, an amateur photographer. She bought her first camera from William Notman in 1888. Mc Dougall also received camera and darkroom instruction from the Notman Montreal Studio.⁴⁵

The camera club was the center of much of the flurry of photographic activity at the turn-of-the-century and was the primary support system for the amateur photographer. It was not uncommon for well-established male professionals, including William Notman, to join camera clubs. The fear of lost business caused by amateur photographers encouraged many professional photographers to join camera clubs in order to exert their influence and make further business contacts.⁴⁶ Most of the activities of the camera club were male dominated.

Many serious amateur female photographers wished to gain access to the benefits derived from camera club membership, including the use of darkroom and library facilities, lectures by prominent photographers, and the opportunity to exhibit their photographs and receive criticism about them.⁴⁷ Their interest in

44. Laura Jones, Rediscovery: Canadian Women Photographers, 1841-1941 (London 1983) , 22.

45. *ibid.*, 14.

46. Robertson, 18.

47. Gover, 69.

attending lectures and learning more technique conveys what Peter Robertson refers to as “ a certain Victorian desire of perpetual self- improvement.”⁴⁸

By 1890 women were admitted to the camera clubs as a way to expand membership and “create a more sociable atmosphere at meetings.”⁴⁹ Some restrictions, however, were imposed on female members; darkroom use was limited, for example, to daytime hours. The treatment of women in photographic associations such as camera clubs was indicative of the gender-oriented world of late Victorian America and Canada.

Camera clubs were, in fact, male dominated and while active as exhibitors, women’s position in the clubs were often at the forbearance of the male members. “ Proper ladies , ” unlike the marginal artistic, literary, or career women, were generally accepted as members, if not for high executive positions. Their treatment in the clubs was consistent with prevailing social practises observable in male/female relationships generally.⁵⁰

The only camera club on record in Canada to make an issue about female membership was the Toronto Camera Club which debated the admission of women as members on November 18, 1895.⁵¹ A motion to accept female members was approved at a special general meeting held one week later. At the Annual general meeting of 1895-6, only three women, Miss Helen Beardmore, Miss E. Lee

48. Robertson, 23.

49. Jones, “Rediscovery”, 6.

50. Gover, 69.

51. Robertson, 22.

and Miss McGaw, were added to the membership.⁵² Mrs. Mary Elizabeth (J.H.) McKeggie was added to this small group of women members in 1902.

The Montreal Camera Club was formed in 1893 with a Miss Evelyn Johnston, a niece of the English pictorialist photographer J. Duley Johnston, as one of the early members. The club states in its charter: "The club shows a courteous spirit towards the fair sex, ladies being eligible to membership and also to hold office."⁵³ Mrs. C. Lambert of Montreal was the only Canadian woman photographer included in Sidney Carter's "Photo- Club of Canada" exhibition in 1907.⁵⁴ Sidney Carter, a leading Canadian pictorialist and an associate member of the Photo-Secession in New York, had independently organized and curated an exhibition of pictorial photography for the Art Association of Montreal from 23 November to 7 December, 1907. The catalogue stated the exhibition was arranged by the "Photo-Club of Canada" which was a myth suggested by the secretary of the Art Association in case the exhibition was unsuccessful. The exhibition was, however, received favourably and considered a novelty.⁵⁵ The camera clubs in Canada at the turn-of-the-century did therefore provide a limited form of support system for the small number of women who had the opportunity and resources to become members. There is little documentation

52. *ibid.*, 23.

53. Jones, *Rediscovery*, 7.

54. Koltun, "Art Ascendant", 44.

55. *ibid.*, 55.

about support networks in Canada for women photographers at the turn-of-the-century as compared to those functioning during the same time period in the United States .

The principal area of production for the amateur woman photographer was the creation of the family album. The task of family archivist or keeper of the family album traditionally fell to the female family members. These albums contained the family chronicle and collection of carte-de-visite that included well known figures of the time. In The Expanding Eye, Photography and the Nineteenth-century Mind, photo-historian Alan Thomas, describes the family album “as a living social document...unique in its concrete, visual record of worlds of past experience .”⁵⁶

Looking at photographs and albums, and perhaps sharing and exchanging images with friends came to be seen as activities that were particularly appropriate for leisured women, ranking with novel-reading, letter writing and fancy needlework. In fact, it was common for photographers, in selecting props appropriate to their subject, to pose female subjects much more frequently than males with a photograph album, a stereoscope, or holding photographs in their hands.⁵⁷

Marianne Hirsch, writer / professor of Women’s Studies, bases her analysis of the family album on their self-reflexivity “as a practice that produces and reproduces

56. Alan Thomas, The Expanding Eye: Photography and the Nineteenth-Century Mind (Toronto 1981), 43.

57. Pedersen and Phemister, 95.

ideologies.”⁵⁸ The ideology of the family album will be discussed in detail in Chapter Two with regard to the amateur photographer, Mattie Gunterman, and her portrayal of life in interior British Columbia at the turn-of-the-century.

The photographs of amateur women photographers are often straightforward documents of family and friends. Most of the subject matter offers a view into the private/domestic sphere and often displays intimate images that reveal much about the social history of the time. Family images, particularly those photographs documenting the lives of children, were prominent. The images depicting children's activities are typical of this genre. In an untitled family photograph of a baby in a bathtub c.1912, (Fig.1.5), an infant is posed for the camera in a tin bath tub perched on a kitchen chair. The image has been made in the domestic sphere with the photographer/mother improvising a studio setting by elevating the child and tub on a chair and using a neutral wall as a backdrop in order to create a satisfactory documentation for the family album of the activity of bathing the baby. This image, from a series in the collection of the National Archives of Canada, is by an amateur woman photographer identified only as Mrs. Wentworth Martin. Other images in this series include baby in pram, baby in chair and baby with rocking horse. All are structured into a similar composition and depict the same infant alone with one object serving as a prop.

Millie Gamble's photographs of family and schoolchildren she taught offer an

58. Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer (eds.), the point of theory: practices of cultural analysis, (Amsterdam 1994), 11.

insight into life in Prince Edward Island from 1905 to 1920.⁵⁹ Typical of the simple facilities used by female amateur photographers, Gamble's darkroom was set up in her pantry and prints were taken outside to be washed by hand at the pump.⁶⁰

Women often contributed images related to general news and social issues to pictorial magazines. One of the strengths of the female amateur photographer was her straightforward documents of everyday life that were often sought after for publication by periodicals such as the Canadian Pictorial or the Canadian Courier.⁶¹ Although Madge Macbeth was frequently published by the Canadian Courier, and her series taken at the Connaught Races in Ottawa c.1913 is now in the National Archives of Canada photography collection, she is considered an amateur photographer.⁶²

Tourist photography presented another popular arena of production for amateur women photographers. A journey into the countryside became a popular

59. Jones, Rediscovery, 23.

60. *ibid.*, 23.

61. Koltun, Private Realms of Light, 56.

62. *ibid.*, 56. Although Madge Macbeth is positioned by the National Archives of Canada as an amateur photographer, she was a professional journalist. See Joanna Dean and David Fraser, Women's Archives Guide : Manuscript Sources for the History of Women, Madge Macbeth collection, MG 30, D 52, Ottawa: National Archives of Canada, 57.

leisure activity after the middle of the nineteenth-century.⁶³ Among these tourists were women artists seeking landscape as subject matter. Landscape painting, however, was seen as a luxury commodity in the capitalist economy of the nineteenth-century.⁶⁴ Photography was the logical next step from painting; it made the production of landscape imagery more accessible. The collecting of photographic views of landscape was a popular pastime for the ever “acquiring” Victorian.

Tourist photography was, however, less accessible to women because of the prevailing attitudes of Victorian society towards women travelling alone. Dea Birkett, in her book Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers, describes the challenges encountered by women who wished to travel, both in society and on actual journeys. Birkett cites *Punch* (1839) to confirm the societal restrictions:

A lady an explorer ? a traveller in skirts ?
The notion's just a trifle to seraphic.
Let them stay and mind the babies, or hem our ragged shirts:
But they mustn't, can't and shan't be geographic.⁶⁵

Male travellers, “privileged by the social organization of bourgeois masculinity,”⁶⁶ found it easier to travel freely. Thus, Victorian women photographers had less access to travel than their male counterparts.

63. Cherry, 165.

64. *ibid.*, 166.

65. *Punch*, 1839 cited in Dea Birkett, Spinsters Abroad: Victorian Lady Explorers (London 1989), 179.

66. *ibid.*, 169.

Technical improvements such as the pocket camera and roll film, available at the turn-of-the-century, allowed tourist travellers to use portable cameras to make their own visual records of their journeys. In 1906 Henrietta Constantine, who often travelled with her husband, a member of the North West Mounted Police, admitted being a “Kodak-fiend---tho I only began last June.”⁶⁷ Constantine produced postcard size photographs probably made with a convenient No. 3A Folding Kodak camera.⁶⁸

Ruby Gordon Peterkin’s album of photographs made during the First World War include, with tourist shots, her documents of the army hospital in Greece where she was stationed. Peterkin used the camera as a tool to frame and thereby understand a place foreign to her.⁶⁹ She also made travel photographs while on holiday away from the station (Fig. 1.6). Lilly Koltun confirms that “exotic locales and inhabitants” were a popular subject for amateur photographer.⁷⁰ Following this statement, Koltun cites the example of Geraldine Moodie who photographed the Inuit in the Hudson Bay district where her husband was stationed. Once

67. Henrietta Constantine in a letter to Edward Deville, dated March 27, 1907 (NAC, RG15,C2 file 1667)cited in Koltun, Private Realms of Light, 309.

68. *ibid.*, 52.

69. See Joanna Dean and David Fraser, Women’s Archives Guide, 70, for reference to the Irene Peterkin collection in the Manuscript Division at the National Archives of Canada. (MG 30, E160) Letters to Irene Peterkin from her sister, Ruby G. Peterkin, detail the living and working conditions in the medical stations in France and Greece during World War I. References include the difficulty of acquiring film and darkroom supplies while stationed overseas.

70. Koltun, Private Realms of Light, 53.

again, Moodie is positioned as an amateur. Moodie's professional use of photographic practice and imaging of the Other will be discussed in Chapter Three.

PROFESSIONALS:

This section focuses on the issues of context and production as they pertain to professional women photographers in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. This discussion is informed by art historian Deborah Cherry's study of professionalism and women painters in Victorian Britain. Cherry argues that professionalism was a new form of identity for women artists in nineteenth-century Britain that became attainable as new institutions were formed for middle-class occupations in addition to the older professions of law, medicine and the church.⁷¹ Nevertheless, Cherry argues that it was still a struggle for women to become professional.

Formal organizations set up outside the home controlled access and entry, provided specialist training and regulated professional practice. Professionalism was most vociferously claimed as masculine ... femininity was positioned as the very antithesis of the professional artist, as amateur, a definition secured by the inclusion in a middle class woman's education of the domestic practice of drawing and watercolours as an accomplishment, a component of femininity.⁷²

Although only a marginal presence, women were active as professional practitioners of photography. As early as 1841, The Montreal Transcript published advertisements for Mrs. Fletcher, "Professor and Teacher of the

71. Cherry, 9.

72. *ibid.*,9.

Photogenic Art ” who claimed she was “ prepared to execute Daguerreotype Miniatures in a style unsurpassed by an American or European artist. ”⁷³ Ralph Greenhill states that Mrs. Fletcher was not the only female photographer during the daguerreotype ⁷⁴ era in Canada, but she was probably the first.⁷⁵ Unfortunately, only advertisements for her work have survived. As it was not common practice for daguerreotypists to sign their work, no identified Fletcher daguerreotypes exist.⁷⁶

Women photographers were credited by society as better representing of children and family groupings and were considered as having more patience and more sensitivity with children.⁷⁷ Many Victorian women photographers, like painters of this period, maintained elegant in-home studios that were meant to put the sitter at ease. ⁷⁸ The home studio was a place/context allowed women by Victorian patriarchy and reflects the stereotyping prevalent in this society. These

73. The Montreal Transcript (11 September 1841) cited in Ralph Greenhill, Early Photography in Canada (Toronto 1965), 23.

74. The International Centre for Photography Encyclopedia of Photography defines the daguerreotype as the first practical process of photography invented by L.J.M. Daguerre in 1839. The daguerreotype was a delicate direct positive image produced on a copper plate with a silver coating. Standard “whole plate” size was 6 1/2” x 8 1/2” but more popular was the quarter plate (3 1/4” x 4 1/4”) which reduced the cost. See pp. 129-132 for further technical details.

75. Greenhill, 24.

76. Jones, “Rediscovery,” 5.

77. *ibid.*, 6.

78. Gover, 30.

home studios were practical for women as heavy equipment did not have to be hauled about and the photographer could be available to her children.⁷⁹

As Laura Jones points out in her article, “Rediscovery”, published in 1980 in special photography edition of Canadian Women’s Studies, women photographers preferred to use either the *carte-de-visite* or cabinet card ⁸⁰ format for their images. These images were printed on albumen paper which allowed for retouching and handcolouring. The commercial portraits of Mrs. Amy James of Belleville, exemplify the typical studio portraits of the 1860s used artificial props and painted backgrounds ⁸¹ (See Figs. 1.7 & 1.8). The images were printed as small cabinet cards that were designed to fit into specially made photograph albums. The poses were formal, stiff and more accommodating to the necessarily long exposures than to the comfort of the sitters. Women often stood to show off their dresses (Fig. 1.8), thus women photographers like Amy James continued the formal posing used by their male peers.⁸² Props such as chairs and tables were

79. Jones, “Rediscovery,” 6.

80. The cabinet photograph was larger than the *carte-de-visite* and became the new standard for studio photography after 1866. It was available in three sizes: 5 1/4” x 4”, 5 3/4” x 4” or 6” x 4 1/4”. All were mounted on an embossed or decorated card 6” x 4 1/4”. See International Centre of Photography Encyclopedia of Photography, 89.

81. Jones, “Rediscovery”, 5.

82. It was common practice during this period for commercial photographers to represent themselves as artists. A speech on women’s rights by Lucy Stone outlined in the Semi-Weekly Leader in March, 1855 presents the example of a successful woman photographer who became a “daguerrean artist” and “ere long was earning thousands of dollars by her profession”. Lilly Koltun, “Pre-Confederation Photography in Toronto,” History of Photography, Vol. 2, No. 3 (July 1978), 262 .

commonplace in professional photographs; they were used in an attempt to make the photographer's studio appear more home-like. The use of props and backdrops was adopted by amateur women photographers such as Mrs. Wentworth Martin (See Fig. 1.5) in an attempt to make their photographs appear more professional. Mattie Gunterman, a serious amateur, also relied on props to create images for her family album which will be discussed further in Chapter Two.

Occasionally women photographers recorded subject matter beyond the domestic portrait setting. One such exception was Mary Spencer (?- 1938), the owner of the sole photographic studio in Kamloops, British Columbia, who documented "one of British Columbia's sensational historic events, the capture and trial of train robber Bill Miner in 1906."⁸³ Spencer's coverage of the event allowed her to be the only woman in the courtroom. Her work exemplifies the ability of women to resist and overcome the societal norm through photography. Thus photography offered her a venue by which to unbind certain constraints imposed by Victorian society.

The earlier section on amateur photographic practice confirms that travel photography was pursued by women who were able to subvert the prevailing Victorian attitudes against women travellers. Edith Watson (1861-1943) was a freelance photographer who travelled throughout Canada from the mid 1890's until 1930. Her subjects reflected a broad range of Canadian society: rural Quebec in 1910, Doukhobours in 1911, Mennonites on the prairies and clam

83. Myrna Cobb and Sheila Morgan, Eight Women Photographers of British Columbia, 1860-1978 (Victoria 1978), 16.

diggers in Cape Breton. Her work appeared in a variety of Canadian publications, ⁸⁴ thus situating her as professional rather than an amateur. Edith Watson, like Geraldine Moodie discussed in Chapter Three, has been marginalized as an amateur in major publications such as the National Archives of Canada's major exhibition catalogue on the practice of amateur photography in Canada, Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839--1940. ⁸⁵ This marginalization confirms, once again, the need for the re-positioning of Canadian women photographers active at the turn-of-the-century.

Deborah Cherry comments that women often became involved with painting in Victorian times simply because it was the family business.⁸⁶ Darrah asserts that a family business was also an entrance to photography for women.⁸⁷ Elsie Holloway (1882- 1971) became interested in photography through her father, an enthusiastic amateur. After his death in 1906, Elsie and her brother Bert published a book of their father's photographs entitled, Through Newfoundland with a Camera. In 1908, the siblings opened the Holloway Studio, a business that

84. Jones, Rediscovery, 10.

85. Frances Rooney has a manuscript presently titled Edith S. Watson: Photographer (1861-1943) forthcoming. Rooney's research establishes that Watson was a professional photographer.

86. Cherry, 19.

87. Darrah cited in Pederson and Phemister, 97.

soon developed a reputation for its portraits of children. Elsie continued the business after Bert's death in the First World War.⁸⁸

Joining the family business was an acceptable entry into the public domain for a Victorian woman; and unless she was in a partnership established through family or marriage, a woman running her business independently was not perceived favourably by society. Partnership with her husband, however, was acceptable for a woman involved in commercial photography.

[M]arital relationships took many forms in the Victorian period, and in companionate marriages particularly those in which wife and husband worked together in the family business of cultural production (literature or art), a married woman was constituted an active agent in a partnership that for men and women united kinship and capital, paid productive labour and home life.⁸⁹

It is notable that in addition to Mrs. Fletcher, whose advertisement in 1841 is mentioned earlier, Greenhill, in his examination of nineteenth-century photography, mentions only two other women photographers. He positions both in context with their husbands. The first reference is to a Mrs. Miller who operated a photographic studio with her husband in St. Catherines c. 1865, producing popular *carte-de-visite* images in vogue in the mid-nineteenth-century.⁹⁰ The second is Mr. and Mrs. Maynard, "the best known nineteenth-

88. Jones, Rediscovery, 27.

89. Cherry, 33.

90. Greenhill, 32.

century photographers in British Columbia.”⁹¹ Hannah Maynard is the subject of her husband’s photograph discussed earlier (See Fig 1.3). The husband/wife partnership was an easier transition for Victorian women into the public domain than attempting to run an independent business. The price exacted, however, was that women were often marginalized by their husbands.

Occasionally, women established themselves independently as professional photographers, but this was rare because sufficient income was a fundamental requirement. One such example is Rossetta E. Carr (active 1883-1897), a professional photographer who successfully operated *The American Art Gallery* in Winnipeg from 1883-1897 by herself. With four thousand dollars of capital, her studio, specializing in portraits of children, soon became the largest photographic business in the city. By 1886, her estimated annual income was between \$10,000 and \$15,000.⁹² The significance of her photographic practice was confirmed when Carr’s work was cited as a record of the progress of the city’s “civilization” by the local Winnipeg newspaper, *Town Talk*, in 1890.⁹³

Even more rarely a woman could work her way up from photographic assistant to photographer with a studio of her own. Gladys Reeves (1890-1974) was one of the few who established herself in this manner. Hired first as a receptionist with a salary of fifteen dollars a month, and later as a photographic apprentice,

91. *ibid.*, 56.

92. Jones, *Rediscovery*, 12.

92. *Town Talk*, Vol.1, No. 1 (Winnipeg 22 March 1890), cited in Jones, *Rediscovery*, 13.

Reeves worked under photographer Ernest Brown in Edmonton for fifteen years before she opened her own photographic studio, *The Art League*, in 1920.⁹⁴

I started my own studio in 1920. I had the unfortunate position of being a woman. And in those days a woman in business was not recognized. I think I was the first woman west of Portage La Prairie to start a photographic studio of my own. And there were many, many times when I'd think I'd come to the end of my tether and just couldn't go on and then I'd be afraid they'd say 'I told you so.' And I'd start in again.⁹⁵

A more common position for women interested in photography was as support staff: receptionists, secretaries, dressing room attendants, darkroom assistants helping to retouch, handcolour and frame photographs. William Notman and his sons operated their Montreal studio⁹⁶ for almost seventy-five years and employed over four hundred workers. Research conducted on the wage book of the Notman Studio by photo-historian Stanley Triggs indicates that a substantial number of women were employed.⁹⁷ When these records begin in 1864, only one female employee, a Mrs. Burns was recorded.

[However],[i]n ten years time the number had increased to eighteen, fully one-third of the staff; and while the number of women employed was affected as

94. Jones, Rediscovery, 21.

95. Gladys Reeves, Interview with Provincial Archives of Alberta, 1966 cited in Jones, Rediscovery, 20.

96. William Notman was considered one of the most important Canadian photographers. For details of the Notman Studios in Canada and the United States, see Ann Thomas, Fact and Fiction: Canadian Painting and Photography 1860-1900, (1979), Stanley G. Triggs, William Notman: The Stamp of A Studio, (1985), and Roger Hall, Gordon Dodds and Stanley Triggs, The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century Through a Master Lens, (1993).

97. Stanley Triggs, William Notman: The Stamp of a Studio (Toronto 1985), 148.

the men were by the general rise and fall of the economy, after 1873 the percentage seldom went below one-third. The percentage continued at that level and higher, often approaching one-half from 1894 and up to 1917 when the wages book closes.⁹⁸

The wage book did not identify individuals by occupation, but Triggs states that their positions were always secondary and the photographers in the Notman Studios were always male.⁹⁹

Like Notman, women photographers running their own businesses also hired other women as assistants. Rossetta Carr employed two women on the staff of her Winnipeg studio (1883- 1897), Miss E. W. Ingo and Miss R. S. Miller.¹⁰⁰ Elsie Holloway also employed two women, Mabel Pittman and Mary England.¹⁰¹ Thus both male and female photographers recognized the advantages of hiring women as support staff.

A favoured position for a woman in the photographic studio was as a receptionist, a role that required womanly virtues such as charm, hospitality and cleanliness.¹⁰² Female receptionists were considered integral to a successful photographic business; it was their job to smooth the way for the photographer by creating a home-like atmosphere for clients:

98. *ibid.*, 147.

99. *ibid.*, 115.

100. Jones, Rediscovery, 13.

101. *ibid.*, 13.

102. C. Jane Gover, 28.

She could with a few subtle touches so metamorphose the gallery that it wouldn't be recognized . . . She will coo to the baby while enlarging truthfully to the proud mother on its perfections.¹⁰³

Women were also often employed to handcolour photographs in watercolour, oil or Indian ink. One such example is Mrs. W.K. Sargent's advertisement billing herself as an experienced and accurate colourist of photographs in an advertisement in The Globe in 1858.¹⁰⁴

Little is known about the conditions under which female support staff worked. They generally were given minor or hazardous jobs such as working in the darkroom for prolonged periods with exposure to many dangerous photographic chemicals.¹⁰⁵ In extreme cases, such conditions proved to be fatal. In 1897 Elizabeth Archibald, a studio assistant for ten years in William Topley's studio in Ottawa, died at age thirty-one. Her family suspected the cause of her death was related to photographic chemicals and poorly ventilated darkrooms.¹⁰⁶ As well as poor working conditions, women assistants received low wages. Koltun's research

103. A. Lee Snelling cited in Gover, 28.

104. Koltun cited in Pedersen and Phemister, 108.

105. Pedersen and Phemister, 109.

106. *ibid.*, 109.

confirms that advertisements for women assistants in the 1860s offered wages between \$400 and \$500 per annum.¹⁰⁷

Similarly, in large factory businesses such as Kodak, much of the preparation of photographic materials, retouching of negatives, finishing and mounting of photographs was done by women workers.¹⁰⁸ Women assembled and boxed cameras for Kodak in Toronto and prepared daguerreotype plates in the first New England factories in the early 1920s.¹⁰⁹ Despite the fact that women were employed in the photographic industry, there was little “revision of the widely held ideas about women’s scientific ineptitude and inability to cope with complex technology.”¹¹⁰ This reinforced the societal demand that woman be the helpmate not the instigator of activities like photography.

Photography was, therefore, a socially sanctioned activity for women in Canada at the turn-of-the-century provided these women still functioned within the constraints of Victorian society. Women used the camera at the turn-of-the-century as a form of self-expression, a feminine voice which will be further examined in the next chapter. By using revisionist methodology and current feminist theory, it is now possible to read the photographs of these women in a new light as documents of social history. The work of Gunterman and Moodie will

107. Lilly Koltun, “Pre-Confederation Photography in Toronto”, History of Photography, Vol. 2, No.3 (July 1978), 262.

108. Pedersen and Phemister, 108.

109. *ibid.*, 108.

110. *ibid.*, 109.

be specifically cited in the chapters that follow to exemplify these new readings of photography as a gendered social practice that, in the words of photo-historian C. Jane Gover, “gave a woman room to find her own identity while remaining close to the hearth.”¹¹¹

111. C. Jane Gover, 32.

Chapter Two

Mattie Gunterman & The Family Photograph Album

Identity and Personal Narrative

Women have pioneered forms of writing about the past which explore areas tangential to the mainstream of political and economic change. As with other marginalized groups, forms which are themselves marginal, impure, apparently trivial have offered ways of seeing the past which insist on linking the personal with the political, the mundane with the great event, the trivial with the important. Blurring the boundaries between personal reminiscence, cultural comment and social history, paying attention to the overlap between history and fantasy, using popular entertainment, reading official histories between the lines and against the grain, these exploratory styles fit easily with the *bricolage* and the loose ends of the family album.¹

Questions we have all asked ourselves such as Why am I doing this? or even more basic What am I doing? suggest the way in which living forces us to look for and forces us to design within the primal stew of data which is our daily experience. There is a kind of arranging and choosing of detail – of narration, in short– which we must do so that one day will prepare for the next day, one week will prepare for the next week.... To the extent that we impose some narrative form unto our lives, each of us in the ordinary process of living is a fitful novelist...²

Patricia Holland argues that the creation of the family photograph album is social practice, a practice allowing women the opportunity to construct a personal history/ narrative which transcends the boundaries that traditionally separate the personal from the political . Phyllis Rose points out that the narration of our daily lives is part of an ordering and understanding that assists

1. Patricia Holland, "Introduction: History, Memory and the Family Album," Family Snaps, The Meaning of Domestic Photography, Edited by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London 1991), 9.

2. Phyllis Rose, Parallel Lives, Five Victorian Marriages (New York 1984), 5.

in establishing identity. These two comments/arguments by women writers have been brought together in order to focus the discussion to follow in this chapter on the existence of and necessity for alternative productions of personal narrative such as the family photograph album. As established in Chapter One, the creation of the family album, a popular turn-of-the-century activity, was primarily undertaken by women and recognized as part of their domestic duties to the family. As more women became interested in taking as well as collecting photographs, they began to use the camera to produce their own images for the family album. These photographs were often a blend of the dominant familial ideology and the photographer's own views/visions to create her own personal narrative. In this manner, women were able to reposition themselves from consumer /product of photographic imagery that has been discussed in Chapter One to a more active role as producer. This chapter examines images from the family albums of the amateur woman photographer, Mattie Gunterman, during the years 1899 to 1910 and relates the reading of her images to a broad discussion of how photography served as social practice which allowed for the construction of identity and personal narrative.

There are three existing Mattie Gunterman family photographic albums.³ The first, a commercial album, was elaborately bound and constructed of thick cardboard pages with pre-cut frames for the insertion of the popular standard size photographs, the cabinet card (4.5 x 6.5 inches) and the *carte-de-visite* (2.5 x

3. Personal Communication with Henri Robideau, Vancouver, June 1, 1995.

4.25 inches). (See Chapter One) ⁴ It consists of Mattie Gunterman's collection of studio portraits of her family and friends and covers the time period 1875 to 1893. It documents her childhood in La Crosse, Wisconsin; the early years of her marriage to Will Gunterman in Seattle, Washington and continues to include baby pictures of her only child, Henry. ⁵ Her second photographic album is a small 5 inch square album consisting of twenty pages and includes for the first time Gunterman's own photographs. These images were made with George Eastman's popular invention designed for amateur use, the Kodak "Bull's Eye" camera. This album continues the narrative of Gunterman's life and includes snapshots made in 1897 of family, friends in Seattle and travel to eastern Washington. The third photographic album is described by photo-historian Henri Robideau as a "scrapbook" because it consists of approximately 147 photographs pasted by Gunterman into a book assembled from Chinese folded paper with a sewn binding.⁶ This scrapbook contains photographs primarily made between 1899 and 1901 with her 5"x 7" glass plate camera, however it does also include several older images made with her earlier 4" x 5" glass plate camera.⁷

4. Henri Robideau, Mattie, The Life Story of the Famous Camp Cook and Photographer, Mrs. Mattie Gunterman, 10.

5. Gunterman has added only a few names under the photographs so most of the subjects remain unidentified. However, the album does contain four recognizable portraits of Gunterman that present a chronological sequence from the age three in 1875 to age seventeen in 1889. Robideau, Mattie, pp.10-11.

6. Personal Communication with Henri Robideau, Vancouver, June 1, 1995.

7. *ibid.*

All three of the existing albums are held by the Gunterman family and were not accessible for research for this thesis.⁸ In 1927 Gunterman's home in Beaton, British Columbia was destroyed and all her work was lost except approximately three hundred 5" x 7" glass plate negatives that had been stored in an outdoor shed/darkroom and the three family albums mentioned above. The thirteen Gunterman photographs examined in chapter were selected from fifty-nine modern prints in the permanent collection of the Photographers Gallery (PG) in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. They were printed by Henri Robideau from the surviving 5" x 7" Gunterman negatives now in the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) collection.⁹ Two of the thirteen photographs selected (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) are confirmed by Henri Robideau to appear in the third existing album.¹⁰ The other eleven photographs selected have not been identified with a specific album but

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8. An attempt was made to contact Avery Gunterman, Mattie Gunterman's grandson who had inherited her photographic albums. A letter from Henri Robideau, July 31 1994, confirmed that Avery Gunterman had died from heart failure in 1992 and had been predeceased by his wife, Addie in 1991. These were the last family members to know Mattie Gunterman. As it was not known what had happened to the original albums, the decision was made to conduct the research necessary for this thesis from a selection made from modern prints of Gunterman's original negatives which were accessible in the permanent collection of the Photographers Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.
 9. These prints were made by Henri Robideau from the original Gunterman glass plate negatives in the VPL collection for the exhibition, The Photographs of Mattie Gunterman, curated by Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza for the Photographers Gallery, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan in 1977. See Appendix One for details on the discovery and donation to the VPL of these negatives.
 10. Personal communication with Henri Robideau, Vancouver June 1, 1995 confirms that the third album covers the time period from 1899 to 1901. Figures 2.1 and 2.2 were made in mid 1899. See Robideau, Mattie, pp, 38-39. The other eleven Gunterman photographs examined in this chapter were made between 1902 and 1910 after the time period covered by the third album.

are part the modern Gunterman prints in the PG collection which include thirteen family portraits, three self-portraits, thirty-one community portraits and twelve landscape photographs made between 1898 and 1910. The thirteen images selected for examination in this chapter were chosen to represent Gunterman's photographs of self, family and community.

A pioneer camp cook in interior British Columbia, Gunterman's diaristic photographs narrate/ construct the story of a pioneer woman's life in Canada. Gunterman is an exemplary representative of the many amateur women photographers in Canada at the turn-of-the-century. Her photographic work remains a personal visual journal /archive that documents significant moments in the life of her family, friends and community. As the personal narrative of a single family, her work represents the way nineteenth-century women used the camera to tell their story, to find their voice.

Gunterman's practice of creating and keeping a family photograph album is part of an established nineteenth-century tradition shared by many women.¹¹ Traditionally, women have been the family archivists, preserving the family history in photograph albums and scrapbooks.¹² Photograph albums were commonly used to record, sequence and even invent narratives of family life (See

11. Val Williams, "Carefully Creating an Idyll, Vanessa Bell and Snapshot Photography 1907-46," *Family Snaps, The Meanings of Domestic Photography*, Edited by Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (London 1991), 187.

12. Holland, "History, Memory and the Family Album", 7.

Chapter One). The making of the family photograph album was a form of social practice; however, the owner/maker of the family album should not be seen as a social historian searching for a kind of 'truth' but rather as a constructor of personal truth. As Holland notes, "[o]ften guarded by a self-appointed archivist, albums construct their own versions of family history, in negotiation with the ideal."¹³ Marianne Hirsch concurs,

Even more clearly than cinema, which has formed a central focus for theoretical critique and reappropriation during the past two decades, still photography reveals how cultural practices produce and reproduce dominant ideologies, whether of gender, of class, of sexuality, or... of familiarity. Unlike film, the still picture is focused by only the camera eye, whose point of view coincides with the perspective of the viewer, aiming to shape and determine the viewer's position... we perceive what we are prepared to perceive.¹⁴

Citing Abigail Solomon-Godeau's position that "the specular mechanics of photography bear more than a coincidental resemblance to those of ideology,"¹⁵ Marianne Hirsch concludes that family photographs, in particular, "consolidate and perpetuate dominant familial myths and ideologies."¹⁶ The turn-of-the-century photograph albums of Mattie Gunterman develop a narration around the idea of her nuclear family's heroic quest to conquer the Canadian wilderness and establish themselves as part of a frontier community in interior British Columbia.

13. *ibid.*, 7.

14. Marianne Hirsch, "Masking the subject: practicing theory" the point of theory, practices of cultural analysis, Edited by Mieke Bal & Inge E. Boer (Amsterdam 1994), 109.

15. Abigail Solomon-Godeau cited in Marianne Hirsch, "Masking the subject," 109.

16. Hirsch, "Masking the subject", 109.

Hirsch uses the visual images themselves as the “point of entry” into theoretical analysis of the “power and constraints of familial mythologies”.¹⁷ Such a process of practicing theory or “stepping into the visual ” is based on the writings of Mieke Bal. Bal argues that “if we understand theory in its etymological background (which is, after all visual)...it ceases to be a dominating discourse and becomes rather a willingness to step into the visual, and to make discourse a partner, rather than a dominant opponent, of visibility.”¹⁸ Chapters Two and Three make use of this model to read/analyze directly from the photographs of Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie.¹⁹

Roland Barthes’ discussion of the power of the family photograph in *Camera Lucida* provides another theoretical perspective which is applied to the analysis of Gunterman’s work. He first reflects on the nature of photography, concluding that it contains two themes, *studium* and *punctum*.²⁰ Barthes labels photographs which are merely studies of the ordinary and designed solely to inform *studium*.²¹ His particular interest, however, lies in the few images that

17. This methodology follows that of Mieke Bal outlined in Reading “Rembrandt”, 1991.

18. Mieke Bal, Reading Rembrandt, 1991, p. 228 cited in Marianne Hirsch, “Masking the subject”, 110.

19. For biographical details about the lives of Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie, see chronologies in the appendices.

20. Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida: Reflections on Photography, translated by Richard Howard (New York 1981), 26.

21. *ibid.*, 27.

“break or punctuate” this *studium* and, in doing so, disturb the ordinary and surprise the spectator. These he refers to as *punctum*, powerful images that “prick” , “bruise” and “create a sense of the poignant. ”²² Barthes argues that these powerful emotive images are often found in family photograph albums. His reading of a photograph of his mother standing with her brother in the Winter Garden of their family home leads to his conclusion that the photograph contains *punctum*, for in it he finds the essence of his mother.²³

Citing Barthes’ reading of the Winter Garden Photograph, Marianne Hirsch argues that identity for Barthes is familial not only in a sense of “ lineage ”, but in the exchange of familial gaze; the gaze not only between brother and sister, but also between the mother represented as a child in the photograph and her son who now reads that image.²⁴ Creating and reading the family album, therefore, becomes the act of establishing identity, both for the viewer and the photographer. It is this particular linkage between the creation of the album and the creation of identity, in light of the points raised by Holland and Hirsch, which grounds the examination to follow of Mattie Gunterman’s family album.

Other key points of theory considered in the analysis of Gunterman’s photographs, particularly her self-portraits, are the concepts of the “male gaze” and “woman as sign”(See Introduction). Arguing that some nineteenth-century

22. *ibid.*, 27.

23. *ibid.*,109.

24. Hirsch , “Masking the subject,” 111.

women artists and photographers were active in the re-signing of woman, Deborah Cherry cites the collaboration of the celebrated nineteenth-century British pictorial photographer, Julia Margaret Cameron, with the artist, Marie Spartali, during the 1860s and 1870s. Cameron and Spartali shared in the production of art works that successfully re-signed woman from visual icon to woman of culture.²⁵ Cherry writes: “No longer limited to a signifier of masculine desire, woman as sign was re-signed around the pleasures invoked and invested in cultural exchanges between women.”²⁶ Many of Mattie Gunterman’s self-portraits also re-signed women around the concepts of independence and strength of the “heroic” pioneer woman; therefore, by re-signing woman in such a manner, Gunterman was able to present a new identity for herself as a woman at the turn-of-the-century in Canada.

Mattie Gunterman: Family Archivist

... it is largely (women) who have become the historians, the guardians of memory, selecting and preserving the family archive. The continuity of women’s stories has always been harder to reconstruct, but here, the affirmation of the everyday can itself assert the coherence of women’s memories.²⁷

Mattie Gunterman (nee Ida Madelaine Warner) was born in La Crosse, Wisconsin in 1872. Little is known about her family or her childhood except that

25. Deborah Cherry, Painting Women: Victorian Women Artists. (London 1993),197.

26. *ibid.*,199.

27. Holland, “History, Memory and the Family Album,”9.

she was considered to be a “delicate” child and was raised by her widowed grandmother, Mary Arnold.²⁸ Maintaining her health was a constant struggle for Gunterman that “profoundly affected her attitude toward life”²⁹ and as will be examined later in this chapter, also significantly influenced her photographs.

Photography always held a fascination for Gunterman. As was the case for many women in the nineteenth-century, she was introduced to photography by a male relative. She learned the basics of photography, including camera operation, portrait techniques and darkroom procedures, from her uncle Charles Warner, a commercial photographer in her hometown of La Crosse.³⁰ From an early age, Gunterman saw the potential in the photograph album to create a personal narrative and so began to collect commercial studio portraits of her family, her friends and herself. She assembled these into a small photograph album which is documented as being among her few possessions when she left La Crosse, Wisconsin for Seattle, Washington in 1889.³¹ It is not known why the seventeen-year-old left her hometown, but photo-historian Henri Robideau speculates that it might be attributed to better economic conditions on the west

28. Robideau, Mattie, 9.

29. *ibid.*, 9.

30. Robideau, Mattie, 10. See Appendix for details of Mattie Gunterman's biography.

31. *ibid.*, 10.

coast and the imminent remarriage of her grandmother. ³²

A member of the working class, Mattie Gunterman found employment in Seattle as a hotel maid. Her social position did not change with her marriage to William Gunterman, a candy-maker, in 1891. As the personal narrative of her photographs confirms Mattie Gunterman was employed through out her life in addition to her domestic responsibilities as a wife and mother. In 1892, the Gunterman's first and only child, Henry, was born. After the birth of her son, Mattie Gunterman's interest in photography was revived. Holland points out that "the most ardent makers of family pictures are parents with young children," and Gunterman was no exception. ³³ In 1896, Gunterman developed what was thought to be tuberculosis and her doctors advised her to seek a drier climate ; so the family took an eastern holiday in the spring of 1897. She used this opportunity to take her first photographs with a "Bull's Eye Sharpshooter" camera. This simple box camera had a fixed aperture of approximately f/18 and a single shutter speed of about 1/25 of a second and, therefore, could only be used outdoors in bright sun. It made 12 exposures on a 3.5 inch wide roll film and had the special feature of a built -in mask that provided either a square or a round image.³⁴ The family toured Washington, camping and staying with friends. Gunterman used her new camera to document the journey. The change in climate was beneficial to her health . The beginning of the Klondike goldrush

32. *ibid.*, 11.

33. Holland, "History, Memory and the Family Album,"9.

34. Robideau, Mattie,13.

in July of 1897 brought the family back to Seattle to assist Will Gunterman's mother in the operation of her hotel as this city was an important supply point for the prospectors outfitting to go north to the Yukon.³⁵

Mattie Gunterman continued to photograph, documenting her family and their everyday activities at home and while at work in the hotel. Like other amateur women photographers of this period, Gunterman arranged these family snapshots along with travel photographs made earlier that year in small photograph albums. Significantly, these were the first albums to contain only her own photographs.³⁶

The return to the urban environment of Seattle proved difficult for Gunterman whose health began to deteriorate. Prompted by her correspondence with Hattie Needham, a cousin who lived in Thomson's Landing, British Columbia, the family considered a permanent move to Canada. Gunterman's interest in photography continued to grow and she soon became frustrated by the technical limitations of her Bull's Eye camera. In early 1898, she purchased a 4" x 5" glass plate camera "that offered such features as ground glass focusing, a bright anastigmatic lens with an iris diaphragm, and a multispeed shutter."³⁷ This larger 4" x 5" camera required the use of a tripod and more technical skill to operate than her previous Bull's Eye camera. Assisted by another male, her brother-in-law Frank Smith, Gunterman quickly learned how to use the medium

35. *ibid.*, 13.

36. *ibid.*, 13.

37. *ibid.*, 16.

format camera and the darkroom techniques necessary for processing and printing. Smith also introduced her to the use of magnesium ribbon as an artificial light source in order to photograph interiors or at night, a technique which proved useful in later interior photographs ³⁸ (See Figs. 2.12, 2.13 & 2.14). This new plate camera enabled Gunterman to continue the visual journal that was to document the lives of her family and herself. She began to make self-portraits and included herself in group portraits with the assistance of an air bulb release attached to thirty feet of tubing that controlled the camera shutter button. This acted as an extension cord which allowed her to stay in the image while making the exposure.³⁹

In the spring of 1898, the Gunterman family began an arduous journey from Seattle in which they walked over 600 miles. Working their way up the eastern coast, they arrived in Thomson's Landing in June. They purchased a hillside property overlooking the town and camped while clearing their land and starting to build a log house. As the house was not completed by winter, the Guntermans returned to Seattle for the winter to settle their affairs and arrange shipment of their household belongings to their new home in Canada.

After returning to Seattle, Gunterman spent the winter of 1898 processing, printing, and arranging her photographs into home-made albums. These albums were modest, comprised of 4 " x 5 " contact prints glued into newsprint

38. *ibid.*,16.

39. *ibid.*,16.

scrapbooks.⁴⁰ Gunterman's production of family albums was considered an appropriate recreational activity for women at the turn-of-the-century. Photo-historian Alan Thomas argues that the pressures inflicted by Victorian society to conform to a rigorous set of behavioural standards, particularly for young women, confined their activities to the private domestic sphere.⁴¹ This sense of confinement popularized forms of socially acceptable romantic escapism, including the creation of photograph albums:

The photograph album widens the range of indoor occupations which developed in the Victorian period (novel-reading was the most important, and was regarded by its enemies as the death of good conversation). These pastimes gave privacy and nourishment of the inner spirit to individuals hard pressed by family care. ⁴²

In 1899, just before their permanent move to Canada, Gunterman made another serious commitment to photography by investing in a No. 5 Cartridge Kodak for \$35, a sum equivalent to her month's wages.⁴³ This 5" x 7" glass plate camera was, as Henri Robideau describes, a marvel of the most current advances in photographic technology:

The No. 5 came with a rapid rectilinear lens, Eastman pneumatic shutter, iris diaphragm f-stops, rack and pinion focusing, focusing scale,

40. *ibid.*, 17.

41. Alan Thomas, The Expanding Eye: Photography and the Nineteenth Century Mind, (Toronto 1981) 89.

42. *ibid.*, 89.

43. Robideau, Mattie, 28.

rising/falling/sliding front, two viewfinders--one for horizontal and one vertical-- three tripod legs, four plate holders and a handy leather case to pack it all around in. Her new camera was one of the best looking models released by Kodak in 1898, finished in mahogany and fine leather with buffed brass and nickel fittings. It loaded in daylight and had the novel feature of taking either glass plates in plate holders or spools of 5 inch wide roll film. It was a gem. ⁴⁴

After testing her new equipment by photographing Sunday family gatherings, Mattie Gunterman was ready to begin the documentation of her quest into what her mother-in-law referred to as the “god forsaken wilderness” of Canada.⁴⁵ From this point on, Gunterman’s camera increasingly became a tool for recording the pioneer existence of her family and friends. No doubt the creation of her own photograph albums helped Gunterman come to terms with this new environment in British Columbia. As Holland argues:

Snapshots are part of the material with which we make sense of our wider world. They are objects which take their place amongst the other objects which are part of our personal and collective past, part of the detailed and concrete existence with which we gain some control over our surroundings and negotiate the particularity of our circumstances. Snapshots contribute to the present -day historical consciousness in which our awareness of ourselves is embedded...⁴⁶

Gunterman’s photographs chronicle not only her daily activities as a working wife and mother, but also serve to position her and her family within the broader social community. Most of her adult life was spent working as a camp cook, often along-side her husband in a variety of logging and mining camps in

44. *ibid.*,28.

45. *ibid.*,28.

46. Holland, “History, memory and the Family Album,”10.

British Columbia; and this, too, is reflected in her photographs. In addition to the family, Gunterman's photographic subjects include the community in and around the Beaton, the Arrow Lakes District of British Columbia from 1898 to 1920, and her travels to the Pacific Northwest and California in 1905.

As their understanding of photographic technology grew and as a consequence of the restrictions of the female world, some women like Mattie Gunterman increasingly began to turn the camera on their personal world to position themselves within the context of family archive. Marianne Hirsch views self-portraits and family photographs as existing on a continuum, "a continuum that traces the subject's constitution in the familial and the family's visual reflection of the individual subject."⁴⁷ This is particularly relevant to the study of Mattie Gunterman's photographs since Gunterman appears as subject in over half of her photographs. Most photograph albums of the period include images of the album owners, but seldom are so many self-portraits represented. Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza, curator of the 1977 exhibition The Photographs of Mattie Gunterman, notes this characteristic: "She seems to have regarded herself more as a vital component of the life she photographed than as a photographic observer detached from real participation in the activities of the community."⁴⁸ Robideau concurs:

The importance of Mattie's photographs lies in their portrayal of pioneer life by a participant rather than a detached observer of that lifestyle. They are intensely personal statements about the presence and the role

47. Hirsch, "Masking the subject", 109.

48. Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza, The Photographs of Mattie Gunterman (Saskatoon 1977), introduction, n.p.

of a woman as a family person in a frontier environment at the turn of the century. The personal nature of Mattie's photographs is emphasized by the fact that she frequently photographed herself, or included herself with other people she was photographing.⁴⁹

Such habitual positioning of 'self' in photographs functions in much the same manner as a narrator commenting "I was there" or "I remember..." Gunterman's presence within the frame as a narrator not only underlines the role played by these photographs in the creation of her "story", but acts as "punctum".

Although only an amateur photographer, Gunterman's work often surpasses the photographs of many professionals working at the turn-of-the-century in the quality and integrity of her imagery. She avoided the soft Pictorialist focus favoured by photographers in Britain and the United States in the later part of the nineteenth-century. Pictorialism, as stated earlier, was a movement of art photography that began in Europe after 1860 involving still life and genre images or staged scenes often created by joining photographs together to form composites. Pictorialists used techniques such as soft focus to simulate qualities of painting. This movement did not take hold in the United States until 1880 because American photographers tended to prefer a more documentary approach to photography⁵⁰ (See Chapter One). As the production of artistic photographs was expensive, Pictorialists generally came from a privileged class.⁵¹

49. Henri Robideau, "Mattie Gunterman." Canadian Women's Studies, Photography Issue, (Toronto 1980), 16.

50. Naomi Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers (New York 1994), 94.

51. *ibid.*, 95.

Photo-historian Val Williams suggests that many working class women photographers simply could not afford the equipment or materials to produce anything more than snapshot imagery.⁵² Gunterman's documentary imagery was more likely a conscious stylistic choice as she had the necessary photographic equipment and technical skill to create more pictorial images had she wished to do so. Jonescu Lisitza states that it was this direct approach that gave her photographs their visual impact:

Her straightforward presentation of subject and her lively sense of the moment suggest that she was motivated primarily by a desire to record her love for pioneer life and the characters who lived it. The convincing sense of life in Mattie's work contrasts sharply with the stylized and sentimental artificialities which characterize much of the better known photography from her era.⁵³

Major improvements in photographic technology, such as the invention of the gelatin dry plate in 1880, had made photography more affordable and within reach of most amateurs.⁵⁴ Gunterman built her own darkroom in 1900 and did all of her own processing and printing until 1910. An inventive and strong amateur photographer, she resisted the confines of studio practice to work with her cumbersome cameras outdoors in order to document more completely her

52. Val Williams, The Other Observers, Women Photographers in Britain, 1900 to the Present (London 1991), 20.

53. Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza, The Photographs of Mattie Gunterman, np. The more well known Pictorialists of this period include Sidney Carter in Canada, Julia Margaret Cameron in Britain, as well as, Edward Curtis and Gertrude Kasebier in the United States. See Appendix 3 for a chronology of the period 1850 -1910 related to Gunterman/Moodie and their contemporaries.

54. Diane Pedersen and Martha Phemister, "Women and Photography in Ontario, 1839-1929: A Case Study of the Interaction of Gender and Technology" Despite the Odds, Essays on Canadian Women and Science (Montreal 1990), 102.

daily life. This section has positioned Gunterman as a family archivist with the specific agenda of creating a family/ community narrative and established a context for the reading of a number of her photographs to follow.

Reading the Photograph Albums

A Victorian family's photography album can be personally and socially revealing to a degree at first little appreciated when the leather covers fall back to expose those distant reticent faces.... repeated reading and the discovery of the facts of ownership (frequently a simple matter) transform the situation: the album becomes a living social document, ... unique in its concrete, visual record of worlds of past experience.⁵⁵

The years from 1898 to 1910 proved to be Mattie Gunterman's most productive period as a photographer. It was during this time that she and her family established themselves as part of the pioneer community around Beaton. In this section, I will read/analyze a group of photographs selected from this period. Two categories of images serve as the focus for my readings : family portraits/self-portraits and community images. As well as recording physical appearances, Gunterman's portraits of herself, her family and friends illustrate their interactions and relationships and are therefore useful as tools in the establishment of personal identity. This is particularly true for her numerous self-portraits and the portraits of her son, Henry. As Barthes argues when discussing the Winter Garden Photograph (See Chapter One), the creating and reading of the photograph album becomes significant in the establishment of the identity of the viewer and the photographer.

55. Thomas, The Expanding Eye, 43.

Technically, the images made with Gunterman's new large format camera represent a major breakthrough for Gunterman as a photographer. All of her photographs discussed in this section were made with a 5" x 7" glass plate camera. The images reflect the fine quality of detail that was possible with such an increased negative size. As has been noted, Gunterman worked in a straight forward documentary style, avoiding soft focus and romantic devices of the Pictorialists. The fine technical quality of her photographs, far beyond the reach of most amateurs at the time, is a testament to her choice of equipment and her skill in operating it.

I Family Portraits/ Self-Portraits (1889- 1910):

Through photographs, each family constructs a portrait chronicle of itself ---a portable kit of images that bear witness to its connectedness. It hardly matters what activities are photographed as long as the photographs get taken and are cherished.⁵⁶

Susan Sontag argues that photography has become a social ritual that is part of family life.⁵⁷ Gunterman's portraits of her nuclear family from 1889 to

56. Sontag, On Photography, 8.

57. *ibid.*, 9.

1910 trace a personal development of family ties and expose the close inner relationships between her family members as they work, travel and share their lives together. Notably, this was also the period when Mattie and Will Gunterman were raising their son, Henry. Gunterman was a devoted mother. She not only took photographs of Henry, but duplicated all her images and made separate photograph albums for her only child.⁵⁸ The photographing of children and the maintenance of the family records, such as photograph albums and baby books, were considered some of the duties of a good mother. Indeed, Sontag comments that not photographing one's children when they were small was viewed by society as a form of parental indifference.⁵⁹ Gunterman, however, goes a step beyond merely photographing her son; she uses his photograph as part of an epic adventure story that is played out on the pages of her albums. This is explored further in the second section of this chapter.

The Gunterman family albums also contain a number of Gunterman's self-portraits which explore identity, often in theatrically staged heroic poses indicative of the pioneer image that she sought to portray. Her family portraits also share certain dramatic characteristics which establish her personal narrative about the family's quest for a new life in Canada.

In 1899, the Gunterman family returned to settle at Thomson's Landing (later known as Beaton) in the Lardeau area of British Columbia. A significant pair of images made on this journey (Figs. 2.1 and 2.2) not only positions the

58. Robideau, Mattie, 16

59. Sontag, On Photography, 8.

family symbolically within the landscape, but also serves to record a time of transition between life in urban Seattle, Washington and their new home in the wilderness of Canada. The reading of this pair of images establishes her use of image as theatre and props consistent in all of Gunterman's photographs. The use of props, backdrop, pose and costume are all carefully staged. The use of props and backdrop is also reminiscent of professional photographers such as Amy James discussed in Chapter One (See Figs. 1.7 and 1.8). As the following analysis confirms, however, Gunterman's images are more complex and multi-layered than the standard studio fare produced by James.

As has been established earlier, health problems forced Gunterman into exile in nature from previous urban life and family in Seattle. In Mattie by tree, somewhere along the Columbia River, 1899 (Fig. 2.1), Gunterman poses by a tree butt, the case of her brand new 5" x 7" plate camera leaning against the tree's cut edge. Both the camera case and the "spectacle" of the felled tree are examples of her use of props in staging her images that will be discussed later in this analysis. Dressed as the urban dweller, Gunterman looks like a tourist stopping to record her presence in a picturesque wilderness setting somewhere between Spokane, Washington and the Lardeau, B.C. The use of photography, Sontag argues, is an integral part of tourism because it helps people "to take possession of a space in which they are insecure."⁶⁰ The process of photographing this journey, then, assisted Gunterman in assimilating the wilderness landscape that was to play such a large part in her life. By placing a frame around the landscape,

60. *ibid.*,9.

Gunterman could immediately have a measure of control over it.

Gunterman positions herself in the centre foreground of the image, seated confidently and gazing directly into the camera, appearing in control despite the confusion of the tangled branches that surround her. Her choice of a natural setting is significant as nature represents good health to Gunterman. She strongly associated the natural environment with the recovery and maintenance of her health, and her favorite saying became: "Go out and get the good air, and you'll be all right, regardless of what's wrong with you."⁶¹ Gunterman thus establishes self in nature as representative of self in good health/control as one of the primary stylistic characteristics present in her personal narratives (See Figs. 2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6 and 2.8).

The juxtaposition of the formality of Gunterman's Victorian-style dress and pose with the organic confusion of the branches of the logged tree creates a form of visual tension. Her left hand reaches up to touch the cut tree, symbolizing perhaps her own feelings of exile and a desire to connect with the natural world. This gesture establishes literal contact between her camera, a tool of the technological world, and the tree, a symbol of the natural world. Her right hand is in her lap; her fingers are curled around an air bulb release which allowed her to trip the camera shutter from her position within the frame. Cherry points out that such self-portraits by women during the nineteenth-century "were engaged in articulating women's visible presence as professional practitioners and

61. Robideau, Mattie, 13.

respectable women.”⁶² In this tradition, Gunterman has positioned herself in conservative dress consisting of a long sleeved white blouse, long dark skirt and a small straw hat. This was appropriately respectable travel attire for someone from the middle or working class:

Feminine respectability was signified through dress, hairstyling and deportment: while black was often favoured beyond the rituals of mourning, dark clothing was frequently preferred by working women.⁶³

The formality of the Gunterman’s dress indicates a desire to keep up appearances and present what Richard Brilliant refers to as the presentation of a “public self.” Brilliant states that even private portraits meant for the family album exist in a code of right behaviour and involve a conscious or unconscious desire to “put one’s best foot forward” and present only what will make a good impression.⁶⁴

Good reputation is more a given than a gain. Its suggestion in a favourable portrait is achieved by the use of representational conventions--e.g. the standing sombrelly dressed figure--developed by artists and consistent with the expectations of the viewing audience.⁶⁵

In this photograph, Gunterman appears healthy, thus reinforcing the narrative of the necessity to leave the urban world of Seattle and seek a location closer to nature due to her fragile health. Robideau notes that the constant struggle to overcome health problems profoundly affected her attitude toward life;

62. Cherry, 83.

63. *ibid.*, 84.

64. Richard Brilliant, Portraiture (Cambridge 1991), 11.

65. *ibid.*, 11.

she became “a survivor, who’s (sic) strength came from within ”. ⁶⁶ Photography undertaken outside in the landscape at the turn-of-the-century demanded a certain amount of physical strength to carry the necessary equipment and supplies, a reality which restricted many women photographers to the domestic sphere. Gunterman, however, was able to carry her large camera and its heavy case into the landscape .⁶⁷ By photographing in the landscape outside the domestic sphere, Gunterman extends beyond the boundaries of most amateur women photographers at the turn-of-the-century (See Chapter One).

Her inclusion of the camera case placed in the lower left margin of the frame assists in the establishment of her identity as a photographer. John Tagg argues that “the portrait is ...a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of a social identity.”⁶⁸ By choosing to photograph herself alone and apart from her family, this image proves the importance Gunterman attributed to a separate identity. ⁶⁹

Positioning of self in the wilderness is clearly being managed differently

66. Robideau, Mattie, 9.

67. Mattie Gunterman is one of the few Canadian women photographers who photographed the landscape. Her landscape photographs have been ignored but research conducted for this thesis indicates they make up a substantial part of her body of work. Although outside the focus of this thesis, they warrant a separate investigation.

68. John Tagg, The Burden of Representation:Essays on Photographies and Histories, (Minneapolis 1988) 35.

69. This sense of individuality was evident from Gunterman’s childhood. As a young girl, she refused to use her given name Ida, insisting on Mattie instead, a diminutive of her middle name, Madeline. Robideau, Mattie, 9.

by men and women in Gunterman's photographs. This is evident in the contrast between male use of technology to control nature as loggers and female use of technology to situate self in nature as photographer. Gunterman uses the same wilderness area that has been cut by loggers as metaphoric backdrop in her self-portrait. Thus men controlled nature through the use of the axe while women assimilated into it with the camera. Gunterman's self-portraits use nature as a metaphor for good health, the more time she spent in it, the stronger and more confident she became. Thus her personal identity was closely linked to the natural environment.

Following the French literary project of Montaigne, Barthes saw the "self as vocation, life as a reading of the self."⁷⁰ Sontag states that Barthes' work inevitably came to end in autobiography; his voice became more personal and his subjects more introspective.⁷¹ His last book, Camera Lucida about the nature of photography, reflects his adoption of "the warmest kind of realism: photographs fascinate because of what they are about." This form of realism and fascination is also true of the photographs of Gunterman which articulate her autobiography visually.

In Somewhere on the trail from Seattle to Beaton, mid 1899 (Fig. 2.2), Will and Henry Gunterman, along with Nero the dog, stand in front of a small log shed which must have served as a temporary shelter on the trail. At first glance, this image appears more spontaneously made than the deliberate posing evident in

70. Susan Sontag (ed.), A Barthes Reader (New York 1982),xxxiii.

71. *ibid.*, xxiv.

Mattie Gunterman's self-portrait (Fig. 2.1). Both male figures lean to the right as if they have just stepped out of the building. Closer reading of the image, however, indicates they are likely responding passively to instructions from Mattie Gunterman, the authority behind the camera.⁷² In contrast to the "male gaze" (See Introduction) which dominated photographic practice at this time, Gunterman's photographs present the female gaze. Will and Henry Gunterman appear "captured" like specimens of butterflies pinned down on a card in a Victorian collection. Gunterman positions her husband and son in the landscape in a less authoritative manner than she presents herself (See Fig. 2.1). The two small and rather vulnerable-looking male figures are positioned in the middle ground of the frame and are dominated by wilderness. In comparison with Fig. 2.1 these figures appear less certain and perhaps even less confident of their own abilities to cope within nature. The framing of the two males in the man-made shelter overgrown by nature suggests a sense of "engulfment" by the natural world.

As well as orchestrating the image in a manner reflective of the female gaze, Gunterman has chosen to do some deliberate darkroom manipulation that further adds to the objectification of her subjects. She has placed an ornate paper mask on the photographic paper which produced a decorative edging/frame around the margin of the image. The portrait takes on some of the characteristics of preciousness attributed to miniature painting, thereby reducing the figures to small aesthetic objects. This type of darkroom manipulation is unusual for

72. There is no evidence that either Will or Henry Gunterman ever made photographs themselves.

Gunterman who generally preferred a more straight forward presentation; this suggests that the process might have been a one time experiment.

Will Gunterman moved his head during the exposure, creating a blur and adding to the slightly off balance effect of the photograph. A canary cage hangs from the end of a horizontal post jutting out from the roof, placed just ahead of the standing figures. This unusual addition suggests that despite the seeming spontaneity, some aspects of the photograph were set-up. The family canary had to find its way to the new home in Canada somehow, yet it is ironic to see a caged domestic bird in such wilderness surroundings. This small domestic touch gives the image its “punctum” or edge: the cage is another of Gunterman’s props and functions as a symbol of her ill health. This particular reading of this prop is based on the fact that Gunterman either included herself physically or referenced herself with props in the majority of her images. As the bird is confined by its cage, so is Gunterman confined by her illness. Only nature can free her from her prison, and yet she is still not at home in the wilderness. As a “tourist” in this savage land and as a domestic bird in the wilds, both Gunterman and the bird appear out of place in nature. Henry and Will, too, look out of place. The formality of Will and Henry Gunterman’s attire appears more suitable for an urban setting and emphasizes the fact that they are merely tourists, somewhat overwhelmed by their rugged surroundings. The intersection of domestication and wilderness is an important theme in Gunterman’s personal narrative.

In Figs. 2.1 and 2.2, Mattie Gunterman represents herself and her family as tourists, using her camera to record and re-create their experiences of the

wilderness landscape. As Halla Beloff states, photography and photographs are a significant part of tourism which she defines as “the use of leisure time to seek out new experiences in strange places for their own sake.”⁷³ Beloff discusses how photographs were used to document and validate the act of tourism. One of the most popular nineteenth-century photographic endeavours was the production of “concrete memories” recording the travels of early tourists.⁷⁴ In this way, Gunterman used her camera to document “concrete memories” of work and travel and thus situate herself and her family into the frame of their new existence as pioneers in Canada. Beloff argues that the motivation which lies behind each tourist photograph is proof; proof that we were actually there. A photograph is something we can share as a form of visual and tangible evidence that a certain effect or experience has included us:

In alliance with that worthy sight, we become worthy. The picture of ourselves there proves that we made the journey. Its interest value enhances our interest value.⁷⁵

Both Figs. 2.1 and 2.2 appear in the third of Gunterman’s existing albums. The narrative established in these family photographic albums was purely visual.⁷⁶ Titles or other forms of text were not used except for the addition of a few names to identify relatives in the first album of commercially made studio

73. Halla Beloff, Camera Culture, (Oxford 1985) 201.

74. *ibid.*, 201.

75. Beloff, Camera Culture 203.

76. Personal communication with Henri Robideau, Vancouver, June 1, 1995.

portraits.⁷⁷ Gunterman appears to have arranged all three photographic albums in chronological order, pasting in new images as they were printed, this is particularly evident in the portraits of Henry that document his progression throughout childhood to adolescence.⁷⁸ The sequence of images presented in this thesis is my own but it has not altered Gunterman's chronology. It reflects the selection and isolation of a representative sample of portraits that establish the narrative of Mattie Gunterman as the self-sufficient pioneer woman who positions herself as the dominant force in her family leading them through the wilderness to a new and more productive life away from urban center, Seattle in the tiny frontier community of Beaton, British Columbia.

The description of the relationship between tourism and photography relates directly to another family portrait, Along the trail from Beaton to Camborne, Mattie and Will, c. 1901 (Fig. 2.3). This photograph documents the tourist site of the famous "Pierced Tree" on the trail between Comaplix and Camborne, B.C. This spectacle was created when an avalanche drove the trunk of one of the trees through the massive trunk of another.⁷⁹ Will Gunterman is facing the camera seated on the trunk while Mattie Gunterman stands below the tree in profile.

The figures appear diminutive in relation to the trees of the forest

77. *ibid.*

78. *ibid.*

79. Robideau, Mattie, 56.

surrounding them, emphasizing the power of natural forces. The dominant feature in a number of Gunterman's early photographs is the wilderness setting (See Figs. 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3). This reflects the importance she placed on her relationship to this environment. While there are several possible readings of this image, the primary issue is Mattie and Will Gunterman's dislocation from each other. Mattie Gunterman positions herself in nature and directs her attention to the environment rather than towards her husband or the camera. Will Gunterman is clearly comfortable both in nature and in front of the camera, he looks directly into the lens from his perch high up on the tree/ tourist spectacle. While he appears to have been a supportive and active participant in Mattie Gunterman's creation of a personal narrative, there is always a distance between them. There is never any evidence of physical contact between the husband and wife. This physical distance signifies the separateness of their identities. This is true also in the family photographs that include Henry; the figures appear in isolation from one another, each in a separate, private space within the frame (See Figs. 2.3, 2.4 and 2.5). Gunterman's personal narrative records then the importance that she attributed to individual identity.

The issue of authorship was also important to Gunterman. She signed and dated the image by writing on the negative in pencil "Mrs. M.G. 1901".⁸⁰ All her images reflect the importance she placed on controlling and organizing the frame. She staged this image to reflect an apparent "informality" to their interaction with the natural spectacle. This then could be viewed as a more complex version of the

80. *ibid.*, 56.

tourist image which documents Will and Mattie Gunterman as witnesses of this particular site. This staged “informality” is similar to fig. 2.2 where Will and Henry are shown exiting a small shelter in the wilderness. This type of tourist image is a popular pastime for amateur photographers as discussed in Chapter One. It is also an important personal narrative that illustrates the relationship between Mattie and Will Gunterman and their ability to maintain separate identities within their marriage.

Since the nineteenth-century, culturally sophisticated classes have traditionally been depicted in Western art as turning away from the camera, making themselves less available to the photographer/viewer’s gaze.⁸¹ This is the outcome of *physionotrace*, a form of silhouette portraiture that predated the invention of photography and involved tracing of the sitter’s profile and engraving it on a copper plate.⁸² The conventions of associating the upper classes with non-frontality were still maintained even after the popularization of the photographic portrait. It is possible that Gunterman was aware of these conventions as she often presented herself in profile or turning away from the camera’s gaze in her images (See Figs. 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, and 2.7).

Later photographs such as Mattie, Will and Henry, Allison Pass, B.C. Spring, 1902 (Fig. 2.4) present the Gunterman family as more rugged settlers

81. John Tagg, “A Democracy of the Image: Photographic Portraiture and Commodity Production,” The Burden of Representation, Essays on Photographies and Histories (Minneapolis 1988), 36.

82. *ibid.*, 35.

who have now conquered the formerly threatening landscape. The family, together in the snowy landscape on the Dewdney trail to Thomson's Landing, has been arranged in "one of [Gunterman's] famous classic pioneer poses"⁸³. Gunterman presents a romantic image of a staged "quest" that would appeal to the nineteenth-century mind set. In what will become a 'leit-motif' of her family photographs, Mattie Gunterman places herself in the dominant position of power. She appears, rifle in hand, to lead the family forward out of the frame and into the future. Will Gunterman follows behind with their son, Henry, and their horse, Nellie. The family has just returned from a trip to Seattle, Washington after the death of Will Gunterman's mother. Mattie Gunterman may now see herself taking on Jane Gunterman's leadership role as the family matriarch. The two adult Guntermans are presented in profile with their gazes directed to the left side of the frame as if concentrating on the path ahead. It is unlikely that this image was meant to be solely a family portrait, but is intended to symbolize their life as pioneers in Canada. Furthermore, there is no shared familial gaze between family members as each directs their gaze outward, either towards the dog or outside of the frame. Each member of the family appears quietly introspective and frozen in a symbolic tableau staged for the family album.

In 1905, the Guntermans travelled south to visit family and friends in the United States. Mattie Gunterman was particularly impressed with San Francisco and did a considerable amount of photography there. Her striking family portrait, Mattie, Henry and Will Gunterman (Fig. 2.5), made at the Japanese

83. Robideau, Mattie, 64.

Garden in the Golden Gate Park, is in complete contrast to the image of the pioneer family represented earlier. This hauntingly beautiful photograph possesses an elegantly formal simplicity that makes it a singular image among the hundreds made by Mattie Gunterman during her lifetime. She uses a simple triangular compositional device to link the three family members, yet their physical and psychological distance from each other creates three separate solitudes. Within this triangular composition, Gunterman has once again placed herself in a central position. Positioned at the peak of the compositional pyramid, she becomes the dominant figure standing above the two seated male figures. Henry Gunterman's position in the background creates perspective through the diminution of size. The relative darkness of the image creates an ominous feeling, as do the twisted tree trunk and stump to Mattie Gunterman's left. The twisted shape of the claw-like tree branch directly above Henry Gunterman's head is echoed in the position of Mattie's gloved hand. The entire image has a sombre, introspective quality as if the family had just attended a funeral. The dark simplicity of their formal clothing, attributable to the fact that they are visitors to San Francisco, reinforces the formal quality of the Japanese Garden setting and relates to Brilliant's idea of "public image." This is another example of the exotic tourist settings favoured by women amateurs and discussed in Chapter One. The image is in stark contrast to the immigrant family presented in the first image on the trail (See Figs. 2.1 and 2.2). The formal/ordered quality of Fig 2.5 reflects the serene Japanese garden setting. Contrast is achieved using a more complex compositional devices than the staged informality of the

tangled wilderness setting of Figs. 2.1 and 2.2. The props in Fig. 2.1 are both man-made, the camera case, and natural, the tree stump. In Fig. 2.2, the props are primarily man-made and include the canary cage and the small shelter. In Fig. 2.5, the props are all natural and include the stump on the right that Mattie Gunterman leans on, the two rocks that Henry and Will sit on and the twisted branch that hangs over Henry's head. It is through this variety of props that Gunterman give her images an edge or what Barthes has termed *punctum*. The posing of the three images is also quite different. In Figs. 2.1 and 2.2, taken in 1899, Gunterman has emphasized distance between family members by creating two separate images to document the family rather than include them all in one frame. It is important to remember that at this point in her narrative, Gunterman had only owned her new 5" x 7" view camera for a short time and was still learning how to use it. The subjects are simply placed in front of backdrops suitable for two-dimensional "picture" making. The compositional ordering of the frame of these early family portraits reflects a more simplified positioning reminiscent of the early professionals (See Chapter One). By 1905 when Fig. 2.5 was made, Gunterman was comfortable with her view camera and capable of more complex images that depicted perspective and were layered with possible meanings. There is, however, one significant similarity between Figs. 2.1 and 2.5: in both images, Gunterman positions herself beside the spectacle of a tree stump and makes physical contact with it, symbolizing her strong ties to nature and her belief in its restorative powers.

The use of theatrical staging is an integral part of Mattie Gunterman's

photographic style. Gunterman often positions herself on the margins of her compositions. In Figs. 2.4 and 2.5, she is placed off to the side, looking out of the frame and away from the camera. The decision to position herself as the leader/outsider carries implications with regard to the interaction between the camera, herself and the implied gaze of the spectator and to her positioning within the family group. Art historian Richard Brilliant stresses the significance of self-portraits in the analysis of portraiture, “for in them the patron, the subject, and the artist are often one.”⁸⁴ Gunterman clearly constructed her self-portraits for a small private audience. These photographic self-representations made for the family album, allow Gunterman to picture herself in the manner in which she wished to be perceived by family and friends. As we have observed, her family groupings are theatrical/heroical stagings for the camera. These images seem to narrate melodramas that were either fact or fiction in Gunterman’s life (See Fig. 2.5).

The heroic pose is evident in Near Beaton/ Mattie, c. 1905, (Fig. 2.6). Positioning herself as a lone figure standing on snowshoes and holding a rifle in one hand and a dead grouse in the other, Gunterman once again orchestrates a romantic image of herself as pioneer woman. Her gaze is directed outside of the frame to the right and she appears self-absorbed in a kind of introspection or reverie common to many of her self-portraits (See Figs. 2.4, 2.5 & 2.7). Mining operations are about to close near Beaton and it will become increasingly difficult for her family to make a living. Gunterman’s identity is closely tied to her

84. Brilliant, 141.

lifestyle, and she reacts to adversity by representing herself as a figure of solidity and self-reliance. She poses as the lone hunter able to live off the land, using as her props the snowshoes, a rifle and a dead bird to confirm her status. As in an earlier self-portrait (Fig. 2.1), she chooses the natural backdrop or 'prop' of logged trees as a metaphor to symbolize in this case, the difficult economic times the family is facing. Once again, a natural background serves as a metaphor that weaves itself through Gunterman's narrative.

Dress/costume was an important component of female self-representation. As usual, Gunterman's dress in this image (Fig. 2.6) is conservative, symbolizing respectability. However, her lace collar and suit take on an even more formal appearance against the bleak snow-covered landscape which adds to the staged quality of the image. Once again, the tourist personae re-appears. This image is also significant in that it establishes identity in Gunterman's personal narrative. As in Figs. 2.1 and 2.8, Gunterman positions herself alone in formal dress in the landscape. This reflects the strict Victorian dress code for women which applied even in the frontier wilderness of interior British Columbia. There is, however, an evolution and an assimilation into nature slowly taking place and it is evident in the posing and props used in these self-portraits. In 1899 when the earliest self-portrait (Fig. 2.1) was taken, Gunterman is content to merely sit comfortably in nature , making symbolic contact with her hand. This image records her entrance into nature and her first contact with it. Six years later (See Fig. 2.6), she appears as the female huntress with a rifle at her side; she has become more dominant in the frame. The natural setting has been reduced to a secondary

position and is not as overwhelming as it appears in Fig. 2.1. This second self-portrait depicts a new image of self that reflects Gunterman's successful integration into her pioneer life. By 1908 when the third self- portrait is made, Gunterman appears even more capable and in control of her position in nature. She poses in a new position of power, mounted on her horse Nellie. This image is discussed in detail later in this section. Thus, not only does Gunterman's formal dress appear inappropriate to the natural setting of her self-portraits, her role as self-sufficient frontier woman clearly extends the boundaries of the norms/ expectations of women in Victorian society (See Chapter One).

Investigators into the meaning of nonverbal communication agree that clothing is an important indicator of more than socio-economic status. Occupation, nationality, relation to the opposite sex, official status, mood, personality and values may all be indicated.⁸⁵

Certain forms of recreation, however, such as Masquerade parties which were a popular form of recreation during this period, relaxed and sometimes blurred these social class distinctions. These parties were popularized by the upper class nobility such as Governor General Lord Dufferin and Lady Dufferin who hosted a masquerade ball at Rideau Hall in Ottawa in 1876 for over fifteen hundred guests.⁸⁶ Soon they became important social events for the small pioneer communities as they offered a form of romantic escapism from the hard work and lack of frivolity of ordinary life. The New Year's Night Masquerade

85. Estelle Jussim, "The Psychological Portrait", Karsh : The Art of the Portrait (Ottawa 1989), 98.

86. Theresa Rowat, "Dressing Up", Apercu (Ottawa no date) n.p.

Ball at Trout Lake City was front page news in the January 9, 1902 edition of the Lardeau Eagle which lists the types of fantasy personae that were chosen:

...Japanese Lady, Mrs. Elliot; Japanese Girl, Miss Pearl Thompson; Indian Chief, William Strutt; Hospital Nurse, Miss Ehesley; Red Cross Nurse, Mrs. Dafresne; Spring, Mrs. G.B. Batho; Sunflower, Miss Batho; Lemon and Oranges, Miss Ethel Batho; Britannia, Mrs. A.C. Cummins; Night, Miss Knowlton; Scotch Lassie, Mrs. Abrahamson; Folly, Alama Thomas; Trout Lake Topic, Mrs. Taylor; Lardeau Eagle, Miss Morgan; Queen of Hearts, Mabel Thompson; Knave of Hearts, Arthur Evans...⁸⁷

Gunterman periodically photographed herself, her family and her friends in costume preparing for similar masquerade parties. Two such images from her family album that pose some significant questions about gender and identity will now be discussed. The first is a portrait of Gunterman with her fifteen year old son. The second, depicting Gunterman with co-workers from the Nettie-L mine, will be considered in the next section relating to images of the community.

In Dressed for Masquerade Ball, Beaton/ Mattie and Henry c. 1908 (Fig. 2.7), Mattie Gunterman and her fifteen year old son, Henry, appear in a flurry of feminine frills. Gunterman's costumed persona is covered in lacy butterflies and dressed in white. Henry Gunterman is dressed as a female "child" wearing a black dress, a white apron tied in bows at his shoulders and a large frilly bonnet tied under his chin. The attention to detail in his costume, such as the shiny black laced women's boots and long dark evening gloves in combination with his rather refined features, make Henry Gunterman easily pass as female. The physical similarity between Mattie and Henry Gunterman, from the elegant arched eyebrows to the angular noses and thin lips, make this image appear to be a

87. Lardeau Eagle, Beaton, British Columbia, January 9, 1902, 1.

mother/daughter portrait and adds the element of *punctum* to the image. The facial similarity appears mask-like, contributing to the quest for “likeness” in the family album. Roland Barthes argues that power of the family album comes in what it orders and validates, a continuity:

But more insidious, more penetrating than likeness: the Photograph sometimes makes appear what we never see in a real face (or a face reflected in the mirror) : a genetic feature, the fragment of oneself or a relative which comes from some ancestor.⁸⁸

Henry Gunterman presents himself frontally to the camera with his gaze directed to the lens while his mother turns slightly to the right and her gaze is out of the frame. Neither figure dominates the frame in this image; both figures are equally “decorative”. Henry Gunterman’s awkward pose, legs apart and arms dangling down at his side, does, however, confirm that he is an adolescent boy in costume. Despite the fact this is a portrait of a mother and her son, there is no physical contact between the figures.

The image is set in the private sphere, a domestic environment that echoes the nature of the costumes. The patterned tin and stencilled wall paper decorate the walls in the same manner that the lace and frills adorn the masqueraders. Such stereotypical ultra-feminine form of dressing is uncharacteristic of the pragmatic Mattie Gunterman, and thus she may appear to be as much a female impersonator as her son. In her article “Womanliness as Masquerade”, originally published in The International Journal of Psycho-Analysis in 1927, Joan Riviere notes the social practice of ‘being’ woman is

88. Barthes, 103.

learned through a series of codes.⁸⁹ Riviere argues:

Womanliness therefore could be assumed and worn as a mask, both to hide the possession of masculinity and to avert the reprisals expected if she was found to possess it---much as a thief will turn out his pockets and ask to be searched to prove that he has not stolen the goods. The reader may now ask how I define womanliness or where I draw the line between genuine womanliness and the 'masquerade'. My suggestion is not, however, that there is any such difference; whether radical or superficial, they are the same thing.⁹⁰

As far as can be determined, this photograph is the sole surviving image depicting Gunterman alone with her son. This image was made the year prior to Henry Gunterman's leaving home on his own for the first time. Henry had joined his parents and was now also working as a camp cook.⁹¹ Gunterman and her son had a very close relationship and she was particularly jealous of anyone taking her only child's attention. Gunterman's photograph (Fig.2.7) infers a complex relationship between mother and son.⁹² This mother/son portrait is the site/record of a classic struggle between the domineering parent and the rebellious adolescent. Henry is passive in letting his mother dress him like a female child yet resistant as he refuses to take up a parodic "female" stance.

89. Emily Apter, "Masquerade," Feminism and Psychoanalysis: A Critical Dictionary, ed. Elizabeth Wright (Oxford 1992), 242.

90. Joan Riviere, "Womanliness as masquerade", Formations of Fantasy, eds. Victor Burgin, James Donald and Kora Kaplan (New York 1986), 38.

91. Robideau, Mattie, 105.

92. The mother/son relationship of Mattie and Henry Gunterman warrants further research beyond the scope of this thesis.

Instead he presents himself frontally to the camera with his feet planted wide apart in a decidedly unfeminine pose. His mother, posed in a conventional studio pose, presents a graceful quarter turn of her body and tilts her head to the camera. This struggle for control between mother and son provides the image with the element of *punctum*. From her position within the frame, Gunterman is unaware of the gesture of resistance that her son makes at the moment of exposure.

After her son left home, Gunterman was faced with the loss of one of the central characters of her photographic narrative and one of the motivating factors in the creation of her albums. Gunterman did not attend the wedding nor did she ever completely accept her son's marriage to Petranella Quakenbush in 1916⁹³. Gunterman's active documentation of her son's life ended when he left home in 1910.

The final image discussed in this section, a self-portrait made in 1910, marks the end of Gunterman's most productive period as a photographer. In Beaton/ Mattie on her horse Nellie, c. 1910 (Fig. 2.8), the juxtaposition of tourist within nature/self with nature examined earlier continues (See Figs. 2.1 and 2.6). As previously noted, these three self-portraits trace Gunterman's evolution towards an assimilation with the natural environment. The primary link between the three images is the heroic pose of lone female figure isolated within a natural setting.

93. Robideau, Mattie, 135. It is ironic that one of the most important photographs in Henry Gunterman's life, his wedding photograph was not made by his mother.

In Fig. 2.8, Gunterman is formally dressed in a Victorian riding costume that sharply contrasts with the rugged environment of logging slash that makes up the background. A similar contrast between costume and environment is also present in Figs. 2.1 and 2.6. Thus “feminine respectability”⁹⁴ is established through her attire and is consistent with the presentation of public self in all her images. (See Figs. 2.1, 2.3, 2.5 and 2.6).

When this photograph was taken, Gunterman had lived in Canada for almost ten years and had maintained her strong ties to the natural landscape established in her earlier self-portrait in 1899 (See Fig. 2.1). Her self-portrait of 1905 (Fig. 2.6) is an indicator of the changes that were occurring in her representation of self. It documents the movement away from the tourist and spectacle presented in Fig. 2.1 toward a more assimilated woman in the landscape. She does, however, maintain her dependence on props and a theatrical, almost melodramatic story line in Fig. 2.6. Sontag has written of Barthes that “notions of theatre informs, directly or indirectly, all his work.”⁹⁵ This statement is also true of Gunterman. This style of making photographs may have developed from the early photographic training she received from her professional photographer uncle (See Appendix 1) or through exposure to the

94. Cherry,84.

95. Sontag (ed.), A Barthes Reader, xxix.

theatrical conventions of professional photographic studios during her youth in Wisconsin.⁹⁶

In Fig. 2.8, Gunterman presents no direct evidence to link her with the camera. Instead she appears mounted on horseback, a more active participant in the natural setting. Her horse, Nellie functions as a prop within the frame and provides Gunterman with more authority: as a mounted figure, she appears to dominate the setting. This was not the case in her earlier self-portrait (See Fig. 2.1).

We see the final merging of the tourist /pioneer as she positions these 'selves' within nature. Her heavy leather gloves, man's felt hat and delicate white blouse continue to provide evidence of her practical yet fashion-conscious nature. By clothing herself in a combination of conservative feminine dress and more practical masculine attire, Gunterman offers visual hints of some of the options allowed pioneer women at the turn-of-the-century. While a woman was expected to present a public self that conformed to societal norms, she was allowed the few eccentricities necessary to cope with the harsh wilderness environment.

As in the 1899 self-portrait (Fig. 2.1), Gunterman looks straight into the camera lens, once again representing herself as she wished to be pictured/positioned in the family album. There are, however, differences between the two self-portraits that reflect the changes that have taken place during the nine years that separate them. Gunterman uses the camera to write her own story and narrate the change from the "cut-off" exile (See Fig. 2.1) to the assimilated self-

96. See Robideau, *Mattie*, 9-11 for a discussion of Gunterman's childhood collection of studio portraits of herself, her family and friends.

sufficient pioneer woman (See Fig. 2.8), thus creating her own identity. Solomon-Godeau writes that such self-portraiture allowed women photographers a rare kind of freedom, for “ a woman might be author of her own images and through self-representation resist both photographic and social norms.”⁹⁷

Jo Spence has stated that “...visual representation privileges the nuclear family by naturalizing, romanticizing and idealizing family relationships above all others.”⁹⁸ The visual narratives that comprise the photograph albums of Mattie Gunterman, while documenting actual events⁹⁹, do allow their author to compose, edit and create her own version of self and family.

11 Images of the Community

Produced for a limited audience of family and friends, [Mattie Gunterman's] work is now valued for the social insight it provides of a vanished style of life applicable to a whole community.¹⁰⁰

As well as representing the solidity of her family unit, Gunterman used the photograph album to represent and position her family within the community. The network of friends and neighbours encompassed in the community was particularly important for women at the turn-of-the-century, and Gunterman's abilities as a photographer offered her a point of entry to her community. She was

97. Abigail Solomon-Godeau cited in Wendy Botting, Posing for Power/Posing for Pleasure: Photographies and the Social Construction of Femininity (Binghamton 1988), 11.

98. Jo Spence in Hirsch, “Masking the subject,” 119.

99. See Chapter One for a discussion of documentary photography.

100. Lilly Koltun, Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada, 1839-1940 (Toronto 1984), 55.

often called upon to document events. As has been previously noted, Gunterman appears in many of her photographs made in the Lardeau district. Photo-historian Naomi Rosenblum makes a comparison between Gunterman and the American photographer, Alice Austen, who also “often inserted herself into the images depicting the milieu in which she felt most at home.”¹⁰¹ Like Austen, Gunterman used the camera to explore her own identity and often staged /posed self portraits and included herself in group portraits with family and friends.

In many of her photographs, Gunterman records images of family or friends that reveal their subjects through the portrayal of relationships or events. Friendships with other women were particularly important to pioneer women who were often isolated on farms and homesteads.

Despite the primacy of family for most, women did not define themselves solely by their familial roles and obligations. Victorian and Edwardian women also saw themselves increasingly as individuals in their own right, with obligations and friendships outside the family.¹⁰²

Gunterman’s photograph albums also contain images of the workplace outside of her own domestic sphere. This is quite rare for two reasons: at this time, only about sixteen percent of Canadian women worked for wages ¹⁰³, and those who did seldom had access to cameras because of the cost. Furthermore, photographs were generally reserved for documenting special occasions, not the

101. Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers, 110.

102. Alison Prentice et al. eds. Canadian Women, A History(Toronto 1988), 150.

103. Frank Denton and Sylvia Ostry, “Historical Estimates of the Canadian Labour Force, 1961 Census Monograph”,in Changing Patterns: Women in Canada, Sandra Burt, Lorraine Code,and Lindsay Dorney (eds.)(Toronto 1988),14.

commonplace worksite.

- ‘ Pictures of me? At work? Well, I don’t think so, dear.’
- ‘ Catch someone taking a photo of me in my old apron!’
- ‘ Well, I’ve got plenty of me with the GIRLS from work, when we went out, but nothing in the factory, you know. Well, you wouldn’t. Why bother?’¹⁰⁴

Thus, Gunterman’s albums are exceptional records that include images such as Entrance to Tunnel #4, 1902 (Fig. 2.9). Here Anne Williams stands in front of the entrance to the Nettie-L mine where she was employed as a camp cook with Mattie Gunterman. Williams is shown standing with one arm raised, holding a snowball in a rather coquettish pose. She is accompanied by two miners, one stands next to Williams and the other stands next to the second pillar on the right.¹⁰⁵ The relatively small scale of the figure of Anne Williams in relation to the dominant landscape recalls a similar compositional balance in prevalent earlier photographs such as Somewhere on the trail from Seattle to Beaton (See Fig. 2.2). Despite the winter weather, Williams is wearing a lacy white blouse with her long light coloured cook’s apron. This combination gives her the appearance of wearing a long flowing white dress. Her pose and dress are more appropriate to the popular romantic “women in white” imagery created by the American pictorialist photographer, Clarence White, than to the portrait of a lumber camp cook. The photograph seems to be doubly-coded: it informs the viewer about a record snowfall that covered the roof of the entrance, and it

104. Jo Stanley, ‘Well, who’d want an old picture of me at work?’ in Family Snaps: The Meaning of Domestic Photography, Jo Spence and Patricia Holland (eds.) (London 1991), 60.

105. Robideau, Mattie, 78.

indirectly implies something about the construction of femininity. This is established through the use of the dress as a prop, through Williams' coquettish pose and by contrasting the female figure in white with the male figures lurking in the dark shadows. The camera angle and distance to the subjects assist in giving the photograph the appearance of a stage; the figures appear as actors/caricatures of gender stereotypes. Thus Gunterman implies that femininity is a role "played" by women "opposite" men in the *tableau vivant* of her personal narrative.

In Rose and Ann Williams, c. 1902 (Fig. 2.10), two of Gunterman's co-workers are captured washing dishes at the Nettie L. Mine. Rose Williams (left) appears rather hesitant before the camera, as if she did not expect to have her photograph made in this situation. Such mundane activities like washing dishes seldom appeared in a family album at the turn-of-the-century. She may also have been surprised by the bright light used to capture this scene. Photographs made indoors required the use of magnesium powder, small amounts of which were exploded to produce a blinding light that often caught the subject off guard and often in an awkward pose.¹⁰⁶ This image is structured to emphasize the domestic labour by having the piles of dirty dishes take up half of the frame. The documentary image is given a heightened reality by the fact that the two sisters are shown in the process of working rather than simply posing in front of the dishes.

Nettie L. Mine/ Rose Williams and Mattie (on the Stove) and Ann Williams,

106. Gisele Freund, Photography and Society (Boston 1980), 113.

c. 1902 (Fig. 2.11) was made after the image of the dish washing, Rose and Ann Williams are depicted posing Mattie Gunterman on the dining room heater. All three women are clearly enjoying themselves. The image presents the other side of the workplace by depicting the playfulness and companionship which was possible in spite of the “passivity” expected in their domestic jobs. Despite the apparent spontaneity seldom seen in images made at the turn-of-the-century, this image is theatrically posed and carefully considered. It would require careful coordination to explode the magnesium powder necessary for this image and simultaneously depress the air bulb release to trip the shutter while balancing on a stove. Gunterman was obviously not merely the victim she appeared to be. As always in her photographs, Gunterman was in control and remained the author of her narrative, however melodramatic.

The same trio of co-workers appears in Beaton/ People dressed for the Masquerade Ball, 1903 (Fig. 2.12). Ann Williams (left), Mattie Gunterman (centre) and Rose Williams (right) appear in costume for a masquerade ball being held in the town of Ferguson as a benefit for the miner’s hospital on February 13, 1903. The setting assists in positioning the photograph at the turn-of-the-century as the three figures are posed against the rugged interior of a log house. Without this positioning, the masquerade image is timeless and could be a contemporary photograph. This photograph can be read as much more than a document of a costume party and contains numerous visual signs.

The fact that the creator/ photographer is female and appears in the frame disguised as a male accompanied by other females in costume raises

significant questions. In their essay “Woman as sign in Pre-Raphaelite Literature: the representation of Elizabeth Siddall”, Griselda Pollock and Deborah Cherry analyze the “reciprocal positioning of the masculine creator and the passive feminine object” in art historical texts on Pre-Raphaelitism.¹⁰⁷

Gunterman, dressed in formal dark man’s clothing and a full face mask, has set out to deliberately take on another gender. Her costume is the opposite of the feminine one chosen for the masquerade portrait with her son, Henry (See Fig. 2.7). It also serves to heighten the contrast with Ann and Rose Williams who disguise themselves in archetypal flowing feminine dresses and wear their hair flowing loose down their backs. These dresses are, however, very different. On the right, Rose Williams wears a more workaday plaid. Her identity is further obscured by black face and the black paper/cloth tiara on her head. This may be an attempt to portray Williams in “black face”, as a mummer or play actor in a folk play, or as representative of the exotic other, a black woman. It is, however, more likely that she represented a black woman in the role of servant or slave. This might account for her costume of working clothes. With her ruffled white dress, Ann Williams appears to represent a more universal/stereotypical vision of woman “as a cipher of male dominance, the scene of male fantasy.”¹⁰⁸ Besides the costumes, both the Williams sisters have little specific characterization or identity.

107. Griselda Pollock, Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art, (London 1988), 11.

108. Rozsika Parker and Griselda Pollock, Old Mistresses, Women, Art and Ideology(London 1989), 132.

Ann Williams' long flowing hair is reminiscent of the 'Siddal' (Elizabeth Siddall), a woman who functioned as a muse for the Pre-Raphaelite movement.¹⁰⁹ Even the positioning of Ann Williams' head and the hand holding her hair is very similar to Rossetti's painting Lady Lilith (1868) (Fig. 2.13)¹¹⁰

Named a witch, the term invented for women who contest the patriarchal orders of theological or medical knowledge, Lilith's spell works by a penetrating, castrating gaze.¹¹¹

It is unlikely that Gunterman would have been aware of this painting by Rossetti but she may have been aware of the archetypal femme fatale/ witch sorceress. This photograph presents a multiplicity of meanings with regard to the representation of women. The image can be read as representing woman as fantasy object, slave, exotic other or, in the case of Gunterman who is disguised as a man, as a male alter-ego. Gunterman's cross-dressing may also be read as an attempt to escape the role of woman as decorative object presented in Fig. 2.7. By representing women in a variety of roles, Gunterman re-signed them in a manner similar to that of Julia Margaret Cameron who also played with "the masquerade of femininity and the making of appearance."¹¹² Gunterman engaged her friends/co-workers, Ann and Rose Williams, in a collaboration to

109. Pollock, Vision and Difference, 92.

110. See Pollock, Vision and Difference, 140-146 for a discussion of Rossetti's Lady Lilith, (1868).

111. Pollock, Vision and Difference, 144.

112. Cherry, Painting Women, 197.

create a *tableaux vivant*, a photograph with invented characters.¹¹³ In this photograph, the *tableau vivant* presents many representations of female identity. This layering of meaning and masquerading of identity would have appealed to Gunterman's theatrical sensibility which is evident in all of her photographs.

The mask that Mattie Gunterman is wearing is vaguely unsettling because she faces the camera directly but shows no expression. Roland Barthes makes reference to masks in his comparison of photography to theatre. He discusses the mask's association with death and the cult of death while describing as the Japanese Noh mask.

...however 'lifelike' we strive to make it (and this frenzy to be lifelike can only be our mythic denial of an apprehension of death), Photography is a kind of primitive theatre, a kind of *Tableau Vivant* a figuration of the motionless and made-up face beneath which we see the dead.¹¹⁴

The use of the mask in Gunterman's photograph is reminiscent of a contemporary series of photographs based on masking within the family album. In her discussion of the familial look and gaze, Hirsch references a series of haunting, enigmatic photographs, The Family Album of Lucybelle by the American photographer, Ralph Eugene Meatyard (1925-1972). These photographs were published posthumously in 1974. There are numerous parallels in the construction of Gunterman's and Meatyard's albums. Mattie Gunterman appears in many of the photographs in her album as does Meatyard's wife, Madelyn who poses as Lucybelle Crater. They are both the heroines of their

113. *ibid.*, 100.

114. Barthes, Camera Lucida, 32.

own story narrated on the pages of the family album. In both cases, the family album was used as a personal narrative to establish identity through the representation of the family members in a variety of situations/events and relationships. Each photograph is a glimpse into the lives of the individuals represented and provides further insight into their identity. An image within Meatyard's series, Lucybelle Crater and Close Friend Lucybelle Crater in the Grape Arbor, 1971 (Fig. 2.14), is notably similar to Gunterman's masquerade images and invites comparison. In the Meatyard photograph, the photographer and his wife have reversed gender. Ralph Meatyard wears the female mask and is dressed as a woman, his body appearing frail due to illness. His wife Madelyn is dressed in man's clothing and appears the dominant character in the frame. Gunterman, also depicted cross-dressed and masked, is similarly dominant in her photograph. Roziska Parker and Griselda Pollock discuss the development of sexual identity and conclude that "masculinity and femininity are culturally determined positions."¹¹⁵ Both these family albums are visual documents that provide evidence of this process.

Leisure activities and community events were popular subjects for amateur photographers at the turn-of-the-century. Gunterman's camera appears to have been an accepted, almost expected part of community activities. In Lux's Ranch, Upper Arrow Lake, 1905 (Fig. 2.15), a group of bathers stands in the lake posing for Gunterman's camera. The town of Beaton is in the background. The bits of junk wood and loose logs floating in the water around the group are from the mill

115. Parker and Pollock, Old Mistresses, 132

across the lake at Comaplix and indicate heavy activity in the forest industry.¹¹⁶ The group simply lines up in front of the camera; there is no attempt made to make a candid image, probably because the subjects were required to stand still during the long exposure time. The photograph includes only women and female children, with the exception of Henry Gunterman who stands in the centre of the frame. Mattie Gunterman has deliberately arranged the composition of this image so that her son is the central figure. As has been established, Gunterman's photographs are carefully staged and seldom show any physical contact among subjects. It is unusual to see a large group portrait such as this where the subjects all appear somewhat isolated from each other, each in their own space. This is particularly noticeable in a photograph that documents mothers with their children who are usually depicted in closer physical contact with each other. This photograph provides a symbolic view into Gunterman's world. She positions her only child at the centre, her female friends with their children on the margins and her small beloved community of Beaton in the background. Gunterman has captured her "universe" in one still image.

This section of community photographs (Figs. 2.10, 2.11 and 2.12) indicates the diversity of female life and community. This grouping of images provides insight into the multi-faceted life of the woman pioneer that included domestic labour (Fig. 2.10), friendship (Fig 2.11) and motherhood (Fig. 2.12). As well, they indicate how photography allowed Gunterman to position herself and her family in the community:

116. Kobideau, Mattie, 109.

...obviously the family photograph album encourages self-perception and a certain degree of objectification of self and family; the figures in its pages play out, as it were, roles and stories to an audience of family and friends. Naturally it is possible for the owners to shape these stories, in conformity, of course, with the data, and guided by prevailing ideas of what the facts mean.¹¹⁷

After the close reading of one of Gunterman's photographs, it becomes apparent that little in the image, particularly in her self-portraits, exists within the frame by chance. Gunterman plans her images as if they are still photographs for the theatre. She controls each element of the image, including the characters, their position and their costume. She chooses the necessary props and appropriate background necessary to stage her narratives. Her photographs trace her evolution from urban dweller/tourist to self-sufficient pioneer woman, and they consistently reinforce her strong tie to nature. The belief that the natural environment and "good air" were responsible for her return to good health dictated her preferred backdrop of wilderness.

Mattie Gunterman's photographs are more than simply documents of pioneer life at the turn-of-the-century. They were created and edited to construct a family narrative. In Canada at the turn-of-the-century, women photographers were not only women of privileged background looking for a leisure activity. Most Canadian women who became involved with photography were similar to Mattie Gunterman: they sought a method to narrate their lives and document their families; they wanted a voice. By controlling the camera and selecting a framed vision of her existence, Gunterman was able, at least in her own photograph

117. Thomas, The Expanding Eye, 57.

albums, to be the author of her own narrative. These images illustrate Gunterman's vision of her own personal identity. As argued by Barthes, the creating and the reading of the family photograph album become acts of establishing identity for the viewer and the photographer. At the turn-of-the-century when few women had real control over their own destinies, photography allowed women at least some control in representing their identities.

The family album exists outside the canon of photographic practice—it is a gendered form of social practice that allowed women to author their own narrative. Mattie Gunterman was able to extend the boundaries of the conventional photograph album by photographing outside of the domestic sphere. She used photography as a social practice that helped her pursue personal identity. Geraldine Moodie, to be discussed in the following chapter, also used the camera to extend existing boundaries and establish her professional practice. She ventured outside her studio to record Native people and their rituals such as the Thirst Dance. These multi-layered and complex images are examined in context with her photographic contemporaries and their reading is informed by current post-colonial theorists.

Chapter Three

Geraldine Moodie: Self and Other

Camera as Witness/ Issues of the Other

...while portraiture was quantitatively the principal product of photography's first two decades, it was by no means its only application. Within this first period of its development and expansion, photography was applied to various documentary functions (e.g. topographic views, architecture and monuments, battlefields, and the depictions of those lands and peoples in the process of being colonized or otherwise exploited) within the framework of European triumphalist imperialism.¹

To photograph is to appropriate the thing photographed. It means putting oneself into a certain relation to the world that feels like knowledge— and, therefore, like power. ²

Abigail Solomon-Godeau argues that from a feminist perspective, there are many linkages between the nature, use and terminology of photography in its historic context and its contemporary uses; many of the issues and problems of the medium are shared .³ The camera as “an instrument of appropriation, possession and objectification ”⁴ has been discussed by numerous writers on photography, most notably Susan Sontag. Even the vocabulary surrounding the medium is reflective of this aggressive function: to aim the camera, to

1. Abigail Solomon-Godeau, “Photography,” Feminism and Psychoanalysis, A Critical Dictionary, Edited by Elizabeth Wright (Oxford 1992), 328.

2. Susan Sontag, On Photography (New York 1978), 4.

3. Solomon-Godeau, “Photography”, 328.

4. *ibid.*, 328.

take/shoot a picture, and to capture the subject.⁵

As Solomon-Godeau notes in the opening quotation of this chapter, the camera has long been a tool of the colonizer. She further observes that “...photography was from relatively early on conscripted for the project of visually objectifying and classifying various categories of ‘otherness’ --- criminals, deviants, hysterics and ethnic others.”⁶ In the years since the invention of photography, the medium has been used for a variety of documentary purposes. The term documentary as a type of photographic practice was first used internationally by John Grierson in 1926, who defined documentary as “ a selective dramatization of facts in terms of their human consequences . ”⁷ More recently, critics and photographers have begun to challenge the established discourse of documentary photography, questioning and criticizing its method of representation.⁸ One such photographer/critic, Martha Rosler, concurs stating: “Documentary, as we know it, carries (old) information about a group of powerless

5. *ibid*, 329.

6. Solomon-Godeau, “Photography,” 327-331. For the studies referred to commenting on photography and the Other see: Mallek Alloula, *The Colonial Harem*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, Sander L. Gilman, *The Face of Madness: Hugh W. Diamond and the Origin of Psychiatric Photography*, Secaucus NJ: Brunner- Mazel, 1976 and John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: Essays on Photographies and Histories*, Amherst, Mass: University of Massachusetts Press, 1990.

7. Nan Richardson, ed. *Aperture: Storyteller*, No.112 (New York 1988), 1.

8. Brian Wallis, “Questioning Documentary”, *Aperture: Storyteller*, No.112 (New York 1988), 60.

people to another group addressed as socially powerful.”⁹ Another photographer/critic is the Vietnamese American filmmaker, musician and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha. In her book Woman, Native, Other, Trinh questions the language of cultural representation, difference and identity and offers alternatives based on the telling of stories and memories as ways of deconstructing the hegemonic devices of white society.¹⁰ Nan Richardson, editor of Aperture, agrees:

The inherent fascination of a photograph comes from its duality as truth-teller and story teller. Where truth-telling penetrates and describes reality, story telling fills the timeless need to create fables.¹¹

In semiotic terms, photography has an indexical as well as an iconic status. This gives the photograph a “causal relation to its referent, as with footprints or X-rays.”¹² It is this indexical nature that allows for the removal and classification of the photograph’s subject. This has made photography particularly useful in the establishment of a number of the hegemonic devices of colonialism. Lucy Lippard cites as a common example of such practice the isolation of the Other in another time and place, the Past, even in cases when the chronological time is

9. Martha Rosler, “in, around, and afterthoughts (on documentary photography)”, The Contest of Meaning: Critical Histories of Photography, ed. Richard Bolton, 306.

10. Lucy Lippard, Mixed Blessings, 54.

11. Richardson, Aperture, 1.

12. Solomon-Godeau, “Photography”, 327.

actually the present.¹³

This chapter explores the relationship between Self and Other, using as its subject the photographing of a marginalized group, Native people, by a white woman, the representative of the Other. Specifically, it analyzes the photographs of the Plains Cree of what is now North Central Saskatchewan taken by Geraldine Moodie (1854- 1945). I will relate a reading of Moodie's images to the discussion of how photography serves women as a social practice in the establishment of a new identity: professionalism. Moodie exemplifies the kind of woman professional who, in Deborah Cherry's words "challenged the exclusivity of masculine claims to professionalism," yet has been categorized as an amateur, "particularly [because she was] married and not financially independent."¹⁴ Moodie came from an upper middle class background and married an a North West Mounted Police (NWMP) officer which allowed her a privileged status.¹⁵ She active as a professional photographer in the Canadian West where she operated three photographic studios from 1895 to 1898. Moodie accompanied her husband on official NWMP trips into the North in 1904 and again between 1916-17. She was the first white woman to photograph in the Canadian Arctic and made numerous portraits of the Inuit.

13. Lucy Lippard, ed., Partial Recall, Photographs of Native North Americans (New York 1992), 37.

14. Cherry, Painting Women, 9.

15. An outline of Moodie's biography appears in the next section, Geraldine Moodie: Representation of Native People, which discusses Moodie's lineage and its significance. See Appendix Two for further biographical details.

To date, Moodie has been marginalized and her photographic practice has been described as amateur in the few photographic histories that do contain references to her work.¹⁶ She is constantly linked to her husband, J.D. Moodie and his position within the NWMP. One of the aims of this chapter is to re-position Moodie as a professional photographer rather than a marginalized amateur. It examines a number of strategies she employed to further her professional career including use of copyright, the establishment of a commercial studio, the negotiation of government commissions gaining entrance through associations with her husbands connections and the depositing of her images in the collections of significant institutions. At present, Moodie's oeuvre consists of approximately 60 photographs in the Museum of Mankind in London, England; 62 photographs in the National Archives of Canada in Ottawa, Ontario; 48 photographs in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan; and 14 photographs in the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Archives in Ottawa, Ontario. As well, Moodie's photographs are also in the collection of the Glenbow Museum in Calgary, Alberta; the Medicine Hat Museum, Alberta; and the Maple Creek Museum, Saskatchewan and are held by

16. As was noted in the literature review, Greenhill and Birrell's A Canadian Photography 1839-1920 has positioned Moodie in connection with her husband and marginalized her to a one sentence entry in a section titled, "The Amateur and Pictorialism". Greenhill and Birrell, A Canadian Photography, 69. This has occurred despite the fact there is documentation that Moodie operated three professional photographic studios in Western Canada from 1885 to 1898 and it was her husband that was the amateur photographer. Surprisingly, art historian Naomi Rosenblum has continued this marginalization of Moodie in her recently published A History of Women Photographers. In a chapter titled "Art and Recreation: Pleasures of the Amateur, 1890-1920," Rosenblum positions Moodie in a discussion about amateur photographers with a predilection for the exotic as "wife of a governor of the Hudson Bay Company". Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers (New York 1994), 110-11.

her family.¹⁷ The majority of these images are photographs of Native people, primarily Inuit portraits made in the Canadian Arctic. This thesis chooses to focus instead on Moodie's photographs of a Plains Cree Thirst Dance made in Battleford, North-West Territories in 1895. The selection of seven representative Moodie photographs of the Thirst Dance includes six from the National Archives of Canada (C. Wentworth Bagley Collection 1942-037 and Canada Patent and Copyright Office Collection 1966-094) and one from the RCMP Museum, Regina, Saskatchewan (Geraldine Moodie Collection). This selection was made for two reasons: the strength of Moodie's copyrighted Thirst Dance series which confirms her professional status and the fact that no previous examination has been made of this sequence of images. Moodie's documentary approach to the Thirst Dance clearly extends the boundaries of professional photographers of the era who tended to represent Native people in studio Indian portraits.

As a professional woman photographer active in the Canadian West and the Arctic during the years 1895 to 1916, Moodie's photographs are a rarity.¹⁸ There were only a few other professional women photographers working in

17. The numbers of photographs cited are approximate as there is much to be done in identifying Geraldine Moodie's oeuvre, the research for this thesis identified twelve previously unidentified Moodie portraits in the RCMP Archives in Ottawa. The extent and location of Moodie's oeuvre is currently being catalogued by Donny White, Cultural history curator at the Medicine Hat Museum, Alberta. This study is not yet available.

18. Brock Silversides, The Face Pullers: Photographing Native Canadians 1871-1939 (Saskatoon 1994), 3. See also Lippard, Partial Recall, 18.

Western Canada during this period.¹⁹ From this group, only one other, Hannah Maynard (1834-1918), also photographed Native people.²⁰ This confirms the significance of Moodie's photographs as one of the only women photographers of Native people in Canada at the turn-of-the-century.

Historian Daniel Francis²¹ argues that at the turn-of-the-century the photographing of Native people was part of a strategy to invent a new identity for Euro-Canadians: "The image of the Other, the Indian was integral to this process of self-identification. The Other came to stand for everything the Euro-Canadian was not."²² For some women photographers, exploration of identity went beyond the creation of personal narratives in the family photograph album as described in Chapter Two. Women such as Geraldine Moodie used their camera, to frame/position themselves in relation to Others. By studying the Other, they formed a clearer vision of Self. This process has been described by Edward Said in

19. Other documented professional women photographers in the Canadian West include: Hannah Maynard (1834-1918), Victoria; Gladys Reeves (1890-1974), Edmonton; Rossetta E. Carr (active 1890), Winnipeg.

20. This was merely a passing interest for Maynard who only made a small number of portraits of Native people almost exclusively in her Victoria, B.C. studio and did not venture into the field to produce a large body of work on the subject as did her male counterparts along with Geraldine Moodie. See Petra Watson, The Photographs of Hannah Maynard: 19th Century Photographs (Vancouver 1992), 2.

21. Daniel Francis suggests the use of the word "Indian" to refer to the image of Indigenous people by other groups such as Euro-Canadians. See Daniel Francis, The Imaginary Indian, The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture, (Vancouver 1992), 9.

22. Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 8.

relation to the Orient; he states that “ European culture gained in strength and identity by setting itself against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self.”²³ Images of Native people were also made as part of the quest for self in relation to the Other and Nature that is a significant focus of Euro-American culture.²⁴

Although both genders photographed Native people, the images made by women photographers are often distinctive. Lippard suggests there is an empathy displayed by gender to subject in photographs of Native people. She has also noted that portraits made by women tend to be “ less grim, more eye-to-eye” than those made by men.²⁵ This chapter analyzes how Geraldine Moodie’s images of Native people differed from those made by her white male contemporaries, particularly her distinctive images documenting family relationships. This analysis is informed by two important models of cross -cultural reading/ analysis of visual images: the writings of Mieke Bal and the recent publication Reading National Geographic by anthropologist Catherine A. Lutz and sociologist, Jane L. Collins.

In her article “The Politics of Citation”, Mieke Bal is critical of the manner

23. Edward W. Said, Orientalism (New York: 1979), 3.

24. Lippard, Partial Recall, 37.

25. *ibid.*, 38.

in which some post-colonial critics work with visual materials.²⁶ Bal calls for a “de-distancing” or removing of false distance in order to analyze images from the colonial past in a politically responsible and effective intellectual manner.

Her conclusion lists the “minimal conditions” that should be included in the analysis of visual images in post-colonial criticism:

A first possibility may be a thoughtful, sparse use of visual material where every image is provided with an immediately accessible critique that justifies its use with specificity...Second...what could be thematized in such analyses is not the represented object, which is only too easily passed off as “true,” “authentic,” or “erotic,” but the subject looking at the image and what the subject is exactly doing there. In such a perspective each image has its own critical viewer within it. Third, a critical analysis that involves the critic could gain strength by making explicit the *narrative* dimension of the images...[which refers to] the way the reading of the image happens... .Narrativizing the image-viewer interaction makes room for differentiated viewing positions.²⁷

In Reading National Geographic, Lutz and Collins also present suggestions/ guidelines for the close reading of images by breaking down the “multitude of gazes” to include the photographer’s gaze, the magazine’s gaze (the institution), the magazine reader’s gaze (the viewer), the non-western subject’s gaze, a direct viewer’s gaze, and the refracted gaze of the Other. Lutz and Collins conclude that these disparate points of view account for the different kinds of meaning found in

26. The studies that Mieke Bal critiques in “The Politics of Citation”, diacritics, spring 1991, vol. 21.1, 25-45 include: Malek Alloula. The Colonial Harem, Trans. Myrna Godzich and Wlad Godzich. Intro. Barbara Harlow. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P.1986; Raymond Corbey. Wildheid en Beschaving: De Europese Verbeelding Van Afrika. Baarn: Ambo, 1989. and Sander Gilman, Difference and Pathology: Stereotypes of Sexuality, Race, and Madness. 1985. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1990.

25. Bal. “The Politics of Citation”, 41-43.

photographs:

...at the root of a photograph's ambiguity, each gaze potentially suggesting a different way of viewing the scene... .It is the root of much of the photograph's dynamic as a cultural object, and the place where the analyst can perhaps most productively begin to trace its connections to the wider social world of which it is a part.²⁸

The next section provides a context for Geraldine Moodie as a professional woman photographer using photography as social practice. This is followed by a discussion of her images of the Plains Cree which were made between 1895 and 1896 while she operated a commercial studio in Battleford, North West Territories. Her work is first examined in context with issues of representation of Native people and then compared to the work of contemporaries who photographed similar subjects. This analysis serves as a foundation for the more detailed reading /analysis of the ritual of the Thirst Dance in the final section of this chapter.

Geraldine Moodie: Representation of Native People

Geraldine Moodie was one of the few professional women photographers active during the early days of the Canadian West.²⁹ She was raised in a family

28. Lutz and Collins, Reading National Geographic, 214.

29. By 1891 there were 135 female professional photographers in Canada; 102 women photographers active in Ontario, 19 in Quebec, 5 in Manitoba, 2 in British Columbia, 2 in Nova Scotia, 2 in the North West Territories, 1 in New Brunswick and 1 in Prince Edward Island. See Jones, Rediscovery, 6.

with a tradition of producing strong, articulate women. Her maternal grandmother was the well-known Upper Canadian writer, Susanna Moodie; her great aunt, Catherine Parr Traill, was another accomplished writer.³⁰ These female role models played a significant role in the development of Geraldine Moodie's own independent spirit and no doubt influenced her decision to seek a career in a medium which, like writing, would give her an opportunity to develop her own voice. As Barbara Michaels writes:

Women had been involved with photography almost since the medium's introduction in 1839, because formal academic training was not necessary to become a photographer, as it was to be an accepted painter or sculptor. Photography was more like writing; some talent, patience and a will to learn were the prime requisites, although, of course, photographic equipment cost more than paper and pen.³¹

While it is not known how or when Geraldine Moodie came to photograph, it is probable that, like most women at the turn-of-the-century, she was either self-taught or instructed by a male family member, possibly her husband. She had married a distant cousin, John Douglas (J.D.) Moodie, while in England in 1878. Two years later, the couple emigrated to the Canadian west, settling as farmers near Brandon, Manitoba.³² Since J.D. Moodie was an amateur photographer there

30. See Marion Fowler, The Embroidered Tent, Five Gentlewomen in Early Canada (Toronto 1982) for an account of the lives of Susanna Moodie and Catherine Parr Traill.

31. Barbara L. Michaels, Gertrude Käsebier, The Photographer and her Photographs (New York 1992), 11.

32. Donny White, "Geraldine Moodie: A Biographical Sketch", Women Together Magazine, Vol. 1, No. 4 (February 1993), 14-15.

is some confusion over the attribution of certain Moodie photographs. Although J.D. Moodie was probably responsible for most of the landscape imagery, it Geraldine Moodie who took the majority of the portraits. We see division especially in the photographs made during their later trips to the Canadian Arctic in 1904 and 1916-1917.

In 1885 after the outbreak of the Second Riel Rebellion, the Moodie family with their three children, returned to Ottawa where J.D. Moodie was appointed an Inspector of the North West Mounted Police (NWMP).³³ Over the next six years, the Moodies were posted to various locations throughout the West,--- Calgary, Medicine Hat , Lethbridge and Maple Creek. There was little opportunity for Geraldine Moodie to take on activities beyond the domestic responsibilities of family and home. Why then did she feel the need to photograph? Most likely she saw the camera as a means to record her experiences as well as an opportunity to earn income and assist in supporting her family of six children. Geraldine Moodie's extraordinary balancing of a professional career with her large family is striking. She must have had domestic help and been well organized. Her professional photographic career was a significant part of her life as is evident in the fact that even after the lengthy illness and death of a son in 1895, she continued to operate her studio. Photography not only gave her the opportunity to have an independent career while her husband was away on his numerous excursions and exploratory missions, it also allowed her the flexibility to raise her

33. White, "Geraldine Moodie", 14.

family at the same time.

As with Mattie Gunterman, photography provided a significant outlet from domestic responsibilities and enabled Moodie to make inroads into a variety of new communities in which she found herself. Again like Gunterman, she was often called upon to document social events of importance to the community:

We have to thank Mrs. Moodie for a fine photograph showing the interior of St. George's Church as decorated for Christmas. These decorations were more artistic and ambitious than are usually to be found in rural churches, and are admirably brought out. The picture is the largest ever taken here, being 8 x 10 inches, shows the minutest details.... Mrs. Moodie is to be congratulated for the manner in which she did the work of photographing and the developing of this interesting scene.³⁴

Geraldine Moodie's social position in the community was also established by her husband's job as an officer in the NWMP. As J.D. Moodie rose in the ranks of the force, his wife gained access to a variety of events and rituals in both the Euro-Canadian and Aboriginal communities of the early Canadian West and North. Her husband's position may have also contributed to her success as a professional photographer on another level by giving her the opportunity to meet a number of government officials whose patronage led to the series of Government commissions to be discussed later in this chapter.

By 1891, the family had finally settled for a period of five years in the prairie town of Battleford, NWT. During this period, Geraldine Moodie, like Mattie Gunterman, took many photographs recording daily life on the frontier. Moodie's images included portraits of the NWMP, townspeople and the Plains Cree

34. Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford no date February 1896), cited in Brock Silversides, "Through a Woman's Eyes, Geraldine Moodie," Epic, March 1991, 29.

of the area. She was interested in recording the life of the Native people and documenting the sacred native ceremony known as the "Thirst Dance".³⁵ Unfortunately Moodie has left no written account indicating why she chose these subjects. Clearly Moodie was ambitious, as is evidenced by the fact that she made a practice of depositing her images of Native people with "official bodies concerned with Canadian and Indian affairs."³⁶ Possibly she saw Native people merely as an interesting subject drawn from the "daily life" of her duties as the wife of a NWMP officer. However, it is more likely that she was aware of the potential of such subject matter to draw attention to her work and thus assist in furthering her career as a professional photographer in Western Canada. Moodie also deposited her work in the collection of the Museum of Mankind in London, England, formerly known as the Department of Ethnography of the British Museum. This collection contains some 120 photographs of Native peoples: over half of these were taken by Geraldine Moodie during the years 1891 to 1917.³⁷ She elected to copyright those images she considered most significant, including

35. The Thirst Dance, or Sun Dance as it has been commonly called in English comes from a translation of the Plains Cree term, *ni.pa.kwe.simo.win*, this has been literally translated into English as the " beseeching- for -water-to allay-the-thirst-dance", Dusenberry (1962) cited in Lloyd O'Brodovich, "Plains Cree Sun Dance, 1968 " Western Canadian Journal of Anthropology, Vol.1. No.1 (Calgary 1969), 72.

36. Rosenblum, A History of Women Photographers, 111.

37. Patricia Pierce, Canada—The Missing Years, The Lost Images of Our Heritage, 1895-1924 (Don Mills 1985), 11.

photographs of Native people in Western Canada and the North.³⁸ As far as can be determined, Moodie was the only woman photographer in Canada during this period who held the copyright for her photographs.

As well as protecting her work with copyright, Moodie took other steps to position herself as a professional photographer. During her last two years in Battleford (1895 and 1896), she further confirmed her professional status by building and operating her own studio.³⁹ The completion of her professional studio is significant as it suggests that Moodie had moved beyond viewing photography as a “flexible” field allowing the management of domestic responsibilities. The Saskatchewan Herald documents the progress in Moodie’s professional career.⁴⁰ The first announcement of the building of her studio is noted on April 12, 1895: “Mrs. Moodie is having a photographic gallery built near

38. The Moodie material was among some “exceptional” photographic material transferred to the British Museum when it merged with the British Library, a copyright deposit library. Jonathan King, Keeper of the Museum of Mankind, London cited in a letter from Betty Issenman to the National Archives of Canada, April 18, 1991. King writes: “There were three Canadian copyright deposit libraries—in two Canadian cities and London. One of those in Canada burnt; the other library was sold off. The London material was never catalogued. Therefore this department took one or two exceptional photographic items when the British Library were one and the same. In particular we have an album of Geraldine Moodie photos—she was the best pre-Flaherty photographer of the Inuit.”

39. White, “Geraldine Moodie”, 14.

40. There is no existing archival evidence of Geraldine Moodie’s professional career except the references made in the Saskatchewan Herald between 1895 and 1896. This is confirmed by personal communication with Bill MacKay, Curator, the Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan, December 1, 1994 and by Donny White, Cultural History Curator, Medicine Hat Museum, Medicine Hat, Alberta, March 27, 1995.

the Presbyterian church ".⁴¹ And on July 12, 1895, the opening of the studio is reported: "Mrs. Moodie opened her photograph gallery, which is finished with an outfit of the latest and most improved kind. Open Wed. and Sunday afternoons."⁴²

Two months later, Moodie received her first major commission, a photographic "souvenir" of a visit to the North West Territories by Prime Minister Mackenzie Boswell. Boswell was accompanied by other government officials and representatives of the NWMP, the Hudson Bay Company and the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). The purpose of their trip was to examine this area and consider its potential for further settlement. The tour included stops at Edmonton, Victoria Mission, the Saddle Lake Reserve, Frog Lake, Onion Lake, Fort Pitt, the Battlefords and Prince Albert. As a result of a promising visit, the decision was made to promote settlement in these areas. Moodie's contract was to photograph the trip as a souvenir for Boswell who had particularly enjoyed it.⁴³ Reports of this major Government commission are found in the Saskatchewan Herald:

Mrs. Moodie has been commissioned by the Government to take a series of historic and other important points on the line of the Premier's travels, including Pitt, Onion Lake and as far as Cold Lake.⁴⁴

No documentation survives relating to Moodie's contract. Only one half-tone

41. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol. XVI No.11(Battleford 12 April 1895).

42. Saskatchewan Herald,Vol. XVII No. 23 (Battleford 12 July 1895).

43. Brock Silversides,"Geraldine Moodie: Through a Woman's Eyes." Epic 1 No.1 (March 1991), 28.

44. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol. XVII No. 33 (Battleford 20 September 1895).

reproduction exists, Typical Police Camp on the Trail Sir Mackenzie Bowell's Party Encamped on Onion Lake, 1895, and is included in E. J. Chamber's Royal Northwest Mounted Police: A Corps History.⁴⁵

Archivist Brock Silversides confirms that such Federal Government support, "as well as patronage from the local NWMP detachment, accelerated her professional acceptance by the community."⁴⁶ It appears that Geraldine Moodie's business quickly became the main photographic studio in the area. In 1894, the opening of another photographic studio opposite the Queen's Hotel in Battleford⁴⁷ and the arrival of an itinerant photographer, D. Cadzow from Edmonton is advertised in The Saskatchewan Herald.⁴⁸ However, in the years following 1895 there is no further mention, either in reporting or advertisements, of other such photographers or studios.

Moodie's work also had a commercial appeal, and her inscribed picture postcards, available at her studio, were popular Christmas or New Year's gifts.⁴⁹ One such example is a 1895 Christmas greeting postcard inscribed "Some Scenes in the Barracks" depicting various views of barracks life in the NWMP, C Division, Battleford. Such cards were photo-composites surrounded by decorative

45. Silversides, "Geraldine Moodie", 28.

46. *ibid.*, 28.

47. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol. XVI No.5 (Battleford 6 May 1894).

48. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol XVI No. 694 (Battleford 8 June 1894).

49. Silversides. "Geraldine Moodie," 29.

drawings and signed by Moodie herself. Most of the images have romantic titles such as "Some Troopers of the Great Lone Land".⁵⁰ Whether or not also Moodie sold postcards or prints from her portraits of Native people as souvenirs or greeting cards is unknown. By April of 1896, Moodie's photography business was so successful that the studio had to be expanded:

Mrs. Moodie has just added a number of improvements to her photographic studio making it complete in every detail. She can now take pictures from the carte- de- visite to 11 by 14 inches; can do enlarging and copying, and take interiors by flash-light. Hand-painted backdrops and the best material procurable for the work are a guarantee that all sittings will be satisfactory. The smallest size in carte de visite are \$3 a dozen and others are at the old prices. The studio will be open every Saturday afternoon and at other times by appointment.⁵¹

Although we have no documentation on the kind of cameras used by Moodie, the fine quality of her photographs indicates that they most likely would have been large format view cameras requiring a thorough understanding of the technical aspects of photography:

During this period [late nineteenth and early twentieth century], the act of photographing demanded a great deal of skill, while the equipment and materials were quite primitive.... Professionals, without exception, used view cameras ---large wooden boxes with bellows and primitive lenses--- which needed to be supported by a tripod. This meant the photographer had to spend several minutes setting up and composing a shot...There were no built -in exposure meters to tell the photographer how long to leave the shutter open. Professionals developed a finely tuned awareness through daily experience of how much light was falling on their subjects.⁵²

50. This photo postcard is in the collection of the National Archives of Canada. (C. Wentworth Badgley Collection, 1942-037,C-10097).

51. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol XVII No.12 (Battleford 17 April 1896).

52. Silversides, Face Pullers, 5.

Most professional photographers on the Canadian prairies continued to use the awkward and delicate glass plate negatives up to the mid-1920s. The weight of these glass plates restricted the type of field work photographers were able to do and limited the kind of transportation required. Lighter plastic roll film in various formats was available and in use by amateur photographers as early as 1895.⁵³

The fact that most of Moodie's early professional portraits were made in her studio may be due to the weight of her photographic equipment and materials. Notwithstanding, she did travel to photograph Native people in their own environments and may have used lighter plastic roll film although most of her work appears to be done with the glass plates used by professionals.

By taking photographs of the Plains Cree, Geraldine Moodie joined the ranks of the "shadowcatchers", a name given to photographers by some Native peoples who felt that the transfer of their images meant that some part of their life force was diminished; the shadow refers to death or the death of the soul.⁵⁴ Of this almost exclusively male group of shadowcatchers who travelled extensively to seek out their Indian subjects, the best known was the controversial American photographer, Edward Sheriff Curtis (1868- 1952). Curtis was a turn-of-the-century Pictorialist whose involvement with the E. H. Harriman Expedition to Alaska in 1899 (See Appendix 3) led to a keen awareness of the importance of

53. *ibid.*, 5.

54. Lippard, *Partial Recall*, 30.

documenting the “vanishing ways” of Indian people.⁵⁵ After returning to Seattle, Curtis set himself the task of documenting the North American Indian. From 1900 to 1906, Curtis, with a team of assistants, photographed Indian tribes in the Great Plains, Southwest and the Pacific Northwest. With the financial backing of J. Pierpont Morgan and the endorsement of President Theodore Roosevelt, Curtis was able to publish this work as a twenty volume set entitled The North American Indian.⁵⁶ These photographs, now seen as exemplifying the romantic myth of the “Noble Savage”, were an attempt to capture the “vanishing race” of the North American Indian. Curtis aestheticized and fictionalized many of his images, dressing the natives in unauthentic or incorrect clothing, wigs and make-up to enhance his version of the Indian, thus limiting the capacity of his photographs to serve in their intended documentary function. Curtis’ imagery enjoyed a certain posthumous commercial success in the 1970s. More recently, as a consequence of deconstructions by both Indigenous and Euro-American postcolonial writers, his work has been subjected to increasingly critical reviews.⁵⁷

The portrait, Oglala Sioux, The Medicine Man—Slow Bull, 1907 (Fig.3.1) exemplifies Curtis’ mythologizing imaging of the Indian. The photograph depicts Slow Bull, turned slightly to the right and looking away from the camera. Clothed

55. Christopher Lyman, The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions, Photographs of Indians by Edward S. Curtis (Washington D.C. 1982), 37.

56. Lippard, Partial Recall, 23.

57. See Lyman, The Vanishing Race, 13.

in a light sheet like fabric wrapped around his body, his chest, right shoulder and arm are exposed. Curtis was infamous for the fabrication of costumes for his subjects and this fabric may simply be a piece of canvas tarp as was featured in other portraits of Indigenous People.⁵⁸ With his left hand Slow Bull holds the fabric against his body, while his right hand holds a ceremonial peace pipe. The pipe and the skull are symbols of a Medicine ceremony or prayer.⁵⁹ Slow Bull's chin is lifted high and his gaze directed beyond the camera as if surveying some distant point. The camera angle chosen is lower than the subject in order to emphasize the figure; and the "burned-in," sky creating a darker area at the top of the print gradually lightening toward the horizon line. The setting is ambiguous due to selective focus.

In this photograph, the photographer's gaze and the viewer's gaze overlap and are "intangled".⁶⁰ The viewer's eye is encouraged to follow the photographer's sightline up to the face of Slow Bull; the low camera angle, the strong vertical of the standing figure and the narrow drapery hanging from the pipe facilitate this movement of the eye.

Slow Bull's gaze is directed by Curtis' romantic vision of "Indian Medicine Man". This "far away" look may be an attempt on Curtis' part to portray a dreamy,

58. See Christopher Lyman, The Vanishing Race, 70, for the discussion of posing and the use of props in the photographs of Edward Curtis.

59. Captions and notes written by Curtis from the original edition of The North American Indian cited in Joseph E. Brown, ed. The North American Indians, A selection of Photographs by Edward S. Curtis (New York 1972), 91. confirm that Curtis saw these artifacts as symbolic.

60. Lutz and Collins. Reading National Geographic, 104.

introspective or spiritual nature in his subject who appears to be a willing participant in this theatrical portrayal of the image of Medicine Man. Since Slow Bull does not confront the camera with his gaze, the viewer is given license to look at him as long as he/she wishes. Curtis has thus objectified his subject to ensure the viewing comfort of his audience. The Medicine Man is put on display as an exotic Other, a cultural visual artifact that can be collected in a photographic image and consumed by the viewing public.

This type of romantic imaging of Native people as Noble Savage is the premise on which historian Daniel Francis bases his book The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture. Francis argues that the Indian was a creation of the Euro-American with the camera playing a significant role in the creation of the myth of the “Noble Savage”.

Whether Moodie shared Curtis’ view of the “vanishing Indian” is not documented. It is clear, however, that stylistically their work was very different. Moodie’s straightforward documentary approach to photography (Fig. 3.2) was very different to the illusionistic Pictorial view of the Native people represented by Curtis (Fig. 3.1). The only illusion in Moodie’s image is the site of production, her studio with figures placed against a painted background. There is no manipulation of the negative or the print in a Pictorial manner to suggest the image was made by hand rather than a camera. Her subjects appear to have just stepped in front of the camera and stood still while the shutter was pressed. Rather than adopting the role of myth maker (a la Curtis), Moodie attempted a more direct realistic representation of her subject, as seen in her photograph,

Indian in Full War Dress (Fig. 3 .2) taken at her Battleford Studio in 1895. The directness of the title reinforces a documentary rather than a myth making approach. Nevertheless, the image is a contradictory one. The use of text printed on the photograph, “INDIAN IN FULL WAR DRESS,” serves to clarify and objectify the subject of the photograph. With this caption in place, the viewer is directed to see “the warrior Indian” as representative of a type rather than an individual.⁶¹ Presumably, this caption was intended to function like a traditional newspaper caption. Although the intention may have been merely to illustrate text, the reverse occurs. In analyzing the press photograph, Barthes argues that “ the image no longer illustrates the words, it is now the words which, structurally , are parasitic on the image...”, and concludes “ ...the text loads the image, burdening it with a culture, a moral , an imagination.”⁶² A secondary caption has been added to the photograph that identifies it as “Indian Chief Fine Day holding a flintlock musket of the Hudson’s Bay Company trading gun type.”⁶³ This caption suggests the image might have been used commercially by the Hudson’s Bay Company but no evidence exists to confirm this speculation.

61. Moodie did not caption her photographs; only her images found in the collections of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Archives in Ottawa and the RCMP Museum in Regina have captions, presumably this is where the captions were added.

62. Roland Barthes, “The Photographic Message” Image, Music Text, translated by Stephen Heath (New York 1977) in A Barthes Reader, ed. Susan Sontag (New York 1982), 204-205.

63. This photograph is from the RCMP Museum in Regina. It was part of donation of photographs and Native artifacts donated to the museum by the Moodies on the occasion of its opening. It is presumably the RCMP Museum that added this secondary caption.

Fine Day is dressed in a wrapped skirt that appears to be cut from a blanket and held in place by a wide leather gun belt. His legs, arms and chest are bare except for a fur stole that is draped diagonally across his chest. He wears a horned hat with some type of plumage on his head. The gun and gun belt are symbols of Fine Day's acculturation that would have been removed had this image been made by Curtis. Fine Day's rigid posture with his rifle at his side, echoes a formal military posture and indicates the further intersection of two cultures. Fine Day's gaze meets the camera directly but not confrontationally. His facial expression is relaxed and confident with a trace of a smile; it appears that he is comfortable in presenting himself to the camera.

Estelle Jussim states that in order for an image to be a portrait, the subject must be aware that s(he) is being photographed.⁶⁴ This does not mean, however, that every time someone is aware of being photographed, a portrait is being made. Although Chief Fine Day is certainly aware of the camera, this photograph can only marginally be considered a portrait, for it reflects little of the man's character. Rather, it is what it says it is, an "Indian in full war dress", just as the caption promised. The fact that Moodie copyrighted her photograph is indicative of her view of the image as a commodity and her desire to maintain control over the publication and sale of this commodity. Indian photographs were a popular commodity, a curiosity that provided income for their producers.⁶⁵

64. Estelle Jussim, "The Psychological Portrait", Karsh: The Art of the Portrait (Ottawa 1989), 32.

65. Silversides, Face Pullers, 3.

Photography...emerges at a historical moment that witnesses simultaneously the birth of what the French Situationist Guy Debord (1983) termed 'the society of the spectacle'-- an evolution of capitalism characterized by a commodity culture privileging image, display and visibility...⁶⁶

As no documents exist, one can only speculate why Moodie's portraits of Native people were made. It is probable that these images had a double edge: although they may have been commissioned by their subjects, they were also taken to be sold, thus reinforcing Moodie's career as a professional photographer and contributing to the commodification of the Native people.

In his Introduction to Orientalism, Edward Said reflects on the difference between pure and political knowledge, stating that the individual cannot disclaim the main circumstances of her actuality. She comes to a circumstance, event or geographical location with a certain amount of "baggage".⁶⁷ At the turn-of-the-century, most Euro-Canadians' views could be termed inherently racist:

To those who were inclined to see the world as a struggle between good and bad, God and the Devil, Indians were "pagans, devil worshippers. To those who accepted Darwin's theories of evolution, Indians were seen as halfway between men and beasts, simple people who needed to be eventually "raised " to the level of Western civilization through education and training. ⁶⁸

Cultural historian/ curator Donny White states, however, that Geraldine Moodie did not share the views of her husband or her grandmother, Susanna Moodie who

66. Solomon-Godeau, "Photography", 328.

67. Edward Said, Orientalism (New York 1979), 11.

68. Deborah Doxator, Fluffs and Feathers: An Exhibit on the Symbols of Indianess, (Brantford 1988), 13.

regarded Indians as “inferior and savage.”⁶⁹ White states that Geraldine Moodie had “ a special rapport with the Indians of the area.”⁷⁰ These views must be placed in their historical contexts. Both Susanna and Geraldine Moodie were products of their periods and responded in light of this, however it is apparent that Geraldine Moodie had a more romantic view of Native people that reflected the idea of the Vanishing Indian popular with the shadowcatchers of her time.

Although the documentary style of her approach differentiates Moodies’ images from the Pictorialists, her studio portraits of Native people are stylistically similar to one of her male colleagues who photographed for commercial purposes. A portrait of a member of the Blackfoot tribe, Deerfoot (a.k.a Bad Dried Meat), 1885 (Fig.3.3) by Calgary photographer Alex J. Ross (active 1885-1891), bears a striking stylistic resemblance to Moodie’s portrait of Chief Fine Day (Fig. 3.2) Both images present adult male figures dressed in Indigenous costume, wearing gun belts and holding rifles. Both photographs are made in indoor studios. The two figures appear out of context against the painted backdrops simulating a natural environment. Their stiffness, along with the painted wooded scene in the studio backdrop, gives the viewer the impression they are looking at a mannequin in a store window or a wax figure in a diorama. Lucy Lippard suggests that it is due to social discomfort or the long exposure times that most of the portraits of Indigenous people at the turn-of-the-century similarly lack gesture

69. Donny White quoted in Todd Nogier, “Battleford photographer’s life researched”, The News Optimist, (North Battleford August 1993), 6.

70. *ibid.*, 6.

and appear wooden and lifeless.⁷¹ The Ross photograph predates the Moodie portrait by one year and so it is possible, although undocumented, that Moodie might have seen the earlier portrait.

Although there are numerous similarities between the two portraits, the most significant difference is that Chief Fine Day's gaze is directed into the camera while Deerfoot turns his head slightly to the right and directs his gaze to the right and out of the frame. In this way, Deerfoot avoids any contact with the gaze of the photographer/viewer. While Moodie allows her subject to make contact with the camera, and by extension, the photographer/spectator.

Like many women professional photographers discussed in Chapter One, Moodie's particular strength was in taking family photographs. What made her work unique was that these were often images of family relationships between Native people. Although it is unlikely that Geraldine Moodie intended the photograph of Chief Fine Day (Fig.3.2) to be part of a diptych, this reading of the "Noble Savage" image is altered somewhat when we view a second photograph (Fig. 3.4) in which Chief Fine Day is joined in the frame by his adopted son, Calf Child.⁷² The dynamic of the first image is altered; the "Warrior" has become a father figure, his gun is held casually and his expression has softened. Fine Day is still shown "in full war dress", yet his position as a warrior is secondary. Here the viewer is confronted with a softened image that reflects a

71. Lippard, Partial Recall, 15.

72. Identification of Chief John Fine Day and his adopted son Calf Child, also known as Moosooos Awasis is confirmed the Glenbow Archives in Calgary, Alberta.

father/son relationship. These sensitive portraits of family relationships position Moodie's work as outstanding among portraits of Indigenous people.

Geraldine Moodie also photographed Indigenous women, but only a few examples have survived and these are generally group portraits that include women. There is, however, one exceptional portrait (Fig. 3.5) in existence of a young Cree woman with a child. The photograph is a striking example of how Moodie was able to go beyond the commercial portraits of Indians made by her male colleagues. The photograph is unidentified except for a caption on the back that states "Cree Indian woman and child".⁷³ The viewer's/photographer's gaze sees two figures posed frontally to the camera and dressed in elaborate costumes. The young woman wears a blouse with a wrap style skirt and high moccasins, and an intricate necklace extends down below her knees. The small boy at her side wears a highly decorated shirt and pants with a beaded sash tied diagonally across his shoulders. This photograph is more than simply an ethnographic study of costume; the most striking element of the image is the relationship between the two subjects. The child presses his body tightly against the woman who has circled her arm around his tiny waist protectively. A straw bale under the toddler's feet allows him to stand close to the woman's side and be caressed reassuringly during the pose. There appears to be only about twelve or fourteen

73. This photograph was found unidentified except for two labels on the back "Cree Indian woman and child" and "Donated by Supt. J.D. Moodie's granddaughter, Mrs. Gerald Percival, Nanton, Alberta". Personal communication with Donny White, Cultural History Curator, Medicine Hat Museum, March 27, 1995 confirms that there is also another copy of this photograph in a private collection in Maple Creek which is positively identified as being made by Geraldine Moodie. It also states that the photograph was made in Maple Creek but White argues it was made in Battleford noting the backdrop is the same as the one used in her Battleford studio.

years difference in age between of young woman and the little boy at her side. It is possible that they are mother and child, but it is more likely, because of the closeness in age that they are siblings. This ambiguity in connection with the affection between the two subjects gives the image its *punctum*.

There is no exchange of gazes between the subjects or returned gaze to the photographer/ viewer. The young woman's gaze is off to the right side of the camera, and it appears she is watching something occurring outside the edge of the frame. The child's gaze is also to the right, but his facial expression is less serene than the young woman's; his eyebrows are raised and he appears somewhat alarmed. The subject matter of woman/child is similar to the images of motherhood promoted by the Pictorialist photographers (See Chapter One); however, the technique is much more straightforward, indicative of the documentary approach preferred by Moodie.

Silversides confirms that there is no documentation of any Native photographers active at this time:

As far, as can be determined, there is no professional Indian photographers active in western Canada who could have produced an alternative vision of the Native in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. There were undoubtedly a number of amateur Native photographers active after the turn-of-the-century . Their work would be of immense significance, helping to balance an obviously one-sided view of their people. If any collections still exist, it is hoped that they will eventually find their way into archives and become available to the public.⁷⁴

The possibility of contextualizing Geraldine Moodie's work by comparing it to

74. Silversides, *Face Pullers*, 5.

photographs made by a Native woman photographer is obviously remote. There were, however, several other Euro-American professional women photographers photographing Native people at the turn-of-the-century, including the celebrated American photographer , Gertrude Käsebier (1852-1934), Harriet Smith Pullen (active 1906), Mary Schaffer (1861-1939), Kate Thompson Cory (active 1905-1912) and Frances Benjamin Johnston (1864-1952). In Canada, another professional photographer, Hannah Maynard (1834-1918), is known to have made some portraits of Native people in her Victoria , B.C. studio.

Käsebier (1852-1934), the most celebrated of this group, was a professional photographer in New York where she had established a studio in 1898, and was active in the Photo-Secession movement . By 1899, one of the patriarchs of modern photography, Alfred Stieglitz, described Käsebier as the leading portraitist of the day.⁷⁵

Although known primarily for her images depicting motherhood, Gertrude Käsebier made a number of significant , yet relatively unknown, portraits of Native people. Early in her career, she began inviting members of the Sioux Nation, who were in New York as part of Buffalo Bill's Wild West troupe , to pose for portraits in her studio. Käsebier maintained a lifelong fascination with Native people, dating probably from her earliest years when, as a child growing up in a small Colorado town the majority of her playmates had been Native .⁷⁶ She

75. Michaels, Gertrude Käsebier, 11.

76. *ibid.*, 11.

once stated that they were the “only truly honest people that she knew.”⁷⁷ Constantly looking for a subject to reflect her own views of Native people, Käsebier stated, “I want a real raw Indian for a change... The kind I used to see when I was a child.”⁷⁸ This she found in Chief Iron Tail, whom she depicted in the manner of the regal yet “wild” Indian (Fig. 3.6). This was exactly the kind of image that not only the public wanted, but Iron Tail himself preferred.⁷⁹

Käsebier’s Indian photographs were all made in New York from 1892 to 1912, for unlike the male shadowcatchers, she never went out into the field, choosing instead to host and photograph Indigenous members of the Wild West troupe and their families at her studio. In her monograph on Käsebier, Barbara Michaels states that Käsebier seems to have been trying “two concurrent, if conflicting aims” in these photographs: to capture the archetypal Indian and, at the same time, to reveal the individual personality.⁸⁰

Käsebier made a series of photographs of a young Sioux woman, Zitkala-Ša (Red Bird), also known as Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. Zitkala-Ša was a talented

77. *ibid.*, 30.

78. *ibid.*, 30.

79. When Käsebier photographed Iron Tail without his headdress, sitting simply looking like an old man gazing into the camera in a less stereotypical “Indian” manner, Iron Tail ripped the photograph in two and threw it on the floor. (Michaels, Gertrude Käsebier, 32.)

80. Michaels, Gertrude Käsebier, 30.

writer and musician and an early activist for Native rights.⁸¹ This series revealed the cultural duality that was present in this young woman's life, two of the nine portraits show Zitkala-Ša in Sioux costume (Fig 3.7) , while in the other seven "there is nothing recognizably Indian about her " (Fig. 3.8).⁸² John Tagg argues that "the portrait is therefore a sign whose purpose is both the description of an individual and the inscription of a social identity. " ⁸³ Zitkala-Ša's social identity is flexible and dependent then on which of Käsebier's images is being analyzed. This duality is present in other photo projects. The idea of photographing the subject in Indigenous and Euro-American dress has become a common photographic practice in the representation of Indigenous people. Käsebier shows a preference for photographing her young subject as an individual rather than a member of a community. This was in contrast to Joseph Keiley, another male photographer who made portraits of Zitkala-Ša. Keiley gave his images allegorical or general titles, such as The Indian Madonna, in order to make the image more readable to a white audience.⁸⁴

In Zitkala-Ša, 1898 (Fig. 3.7), Käsebier poses her subject in profile, shading her eyes. The gesture is referred to by Michaels "as more than a conventional Indian pose, but an expression of yearning for the West with which

81. *ibid.*, 42.

82. *ibid.*, 43.

83. John Tagg, The Burden of Representation, Essays on Photographies and Histories, (Minneapolis, 1993), 37.

84. Michaels, Gertrude Käsebier, 44.

Käsebier empathized.”⁸⁴ It is unusual to see portraits of Indigenous people made in profile during this period. Käsebier, however, used this device when photographing both Zitkala-Ša and Chief Iron Tail (Fig. 3.6). As was established in Chapter Two, the profile was still a preferred pose in portrait photography at the turn of the century, denoting a more civilized sitter. John Tagg states that being photographed frontally “signified the bluntness and ‘naturalness’ of a culturally unsophisticated class.”⁸⁵ As a professional photographer, Käsebier was aware of these conventions which she used to emphasize the “nobility” of the aging Chief Iron Side and to confirm the “civilized” status of the cultured musician Zitkala-Ša/ Gertrude Simmons Bonnin. In Fig. 3.7, the gesture, costume and long unravelled hairstyle emphasize an exotic otherness about the subject. She is protected/ distanced from the photographer/viewer’s gaze by her pose. Her gaze is directed out of the frame suggesting she is “forward looking, future-oriented and determined”⁸⁶ In the other portrait, Zitkala-Ša, 1898 (Fig 3.8) the subject is represented as a talented young violinist holding her instrument and no reference is made to her cultural heritage.

This section has positioned Geraldine Moodie as a professional woman photographer whose images both reflect the dominant colonial hegemonic ideology and present an alternative and more realistic view of Indigenous

85. *ibid.*, 43.

86. Tagg, The Burden of Representation, 36.

87. Lutz and Collins, Reading National Geographic, 203.

people . Her work and methodology are compared to the male shadowcatcher, Edward Curtis, as well as to Gertrude Käsebier, an American woman photographer who also photographed Native people. The next section examines a series of photographs that Moodie made of the Thirst Dance/ Sun Dance ceremony and reads /analyzes her imagery documenting Indigenous people involved in this sacred ceremonial ritual.

The Thirst Dance Photographs

From June 20 to 23, 1895, the Plains Cree from the district surrounding Battleford, in what is now Saskatchewan, held a Thirst Dance between the Battle River and the Thirteen-Mile Lodge.⁸⁸ The Thirst Dance, or Sun Dance as it has commonly come to be known, is a sacred native ritual in which the participants hoped to gain “ spiritual strength and comfort through fasting and purification.”⁸⁹ Geraldine Moodie made a series of photographs of this event which she later presented, along with other photographs and a collection of Native artifacts, to the Royal North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) on the occasion of its sixtieth anniversary in 1933 which was celebrated with the opening of a museum.⁹⁰ Along with her donation of photographs, Geraldine

88. Saskatchewan Herald, Vol. XVII No. 23 (Battleford June 28 1895) 1.

89. Abel Watetch, “The Sun Dance” oral history, April 1949. The Royal Saskatchewan Museum, Regina.

90. In 1873 the North- West Mounted Police was created by Sir John A. Macdonald as a police/military force in North-West Canada. See Peter Waite, “Between Three Oceans: Challenges of a Continental Destiny (1840-1900),” The Illustrated History of Canada,

Moodie included a short note:

A collection of twelve photographs, taken at the last Thirst Dance where the Police were instructed to see there was no cruel Brave-making, in 1895 North -West of Battleford. These are copyrighted pictures. Size 8 "x 10".⁹¹

Whether these photographs were commissioned or made for commercial purposes is undocumented. It is unlikely, however, that these images were simply meant to be historical documents; and it is probable Moodie would have sold them had the opportunity arisen.

Of this collection of twelve photographs, nine are presently held by the National Archives of Canada. This series has been labelled alphabetically by hand, probably by Geraldine Moodie herself. This does not seem to be an attempt to put the images into a sequence, but may be a reference to a list of captions or titles. The series includes three types of photographs: one establishes the location of the ceremony and documents the construction of the Thirsting Lodge inside of which the actual ceremony took place; the second shows variations of a group photo of the dancers and other participants; and the third is a series made inside the Thirsting Lodge.

The Thirsting Lodge shown (Fig. 3.9) was reported in the Saskatchewan Herald to be circled by approximately one hundred and sixty smaller lodges in a

Edited by Craig Brown (Toronto 1991), 350. In 1904 the name was changed to Royal Canadian North West Mounted Police (RNWMP) and in 1920 the name was changed to the present form, Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP). See R.C. MacLeod in The Canadian Encyclopedia, Vol. 3, pp.1893-1894.

91. Geraldine Moodie, cited in Edward McCann, "Geraldine Moodie, Saskatchewan," Canadian Women Studies, ed. Shelagh Wilkinson et al, Vol. 2, No. 3 (Toronto 1980), 14.

circle that was approximately six hundred yards in diameter.⁹² Moodie's first photograph of the site is made from some distance away and provides context for the ceremony, situating it for the viewer beneath the endless sky in the prairie grasslands.

Moodie then makes a closer view (Fig. 3.10), isolating the Thirsting Lodge and recording the participants gathered around to complete its construction. These figures provide some indication of the size of the Lodge. In the middle ground are some of the branch fences with a few small groups of people seated near them. The photograph provides information as to the construction of the Lodge. It was erected from forked poplar poles set in the ground. Horizontal logs, held in place by strips of bark, were laid into the forks and suspended from the tops of the center poles to set up rafters. The tent covers were spread over the top to finish the structure which, when completed, was approximately forty feet in diameter.⁹³

The image shown in Fig. 3.11 is one of a series, all of which present variations of a group portrait of some of the participants and observers present at the Thirst Dance site. The photograph represents an intersection of two cultures, by depicting the colonizer, the NWMP, and the colonized, the Plains Cree. All variations of this group portrait feature a number of the Plains Cree ceremonial dancers who pose conventionally in a "team" stance. The formality of their frontal pose contrasts dramatically with their casual appearance. Rather

92. Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford 28 June 1895), 1.

93. *ibid.*, 1.

than looking enthusiastic, the Cree seem to have resigned themselves to having their photographs made and appear passive; some have their eyes cast down, simply avoiding the camera altogether. This variety of sightlines among the group gives the image a “ disconnected and unfocused look .”⁹⁴ Behind the dancers, who appear to be authentically costumed,⁹⁵ is a row of five Cree men on horseback. One is wearing a Western style “cowboy” hat, evidence of the acculturation that has taken place. It has been suggested that these mounted figures are “dog soldiers,” a name given to a type of tribal police.⁹⁶ This group appears to be less passive, their gaze being directed confrontationally into the camera lens. They are on horseback and carrying rifles; therefore, like the photographer are potentially ready “to shoot”.

Only two individuals , Thunderchild (seated on the ground in the first row, third from the right) and the interpreter, Sam Ballantyne (seated on the left margin of the frame) have been identified by name .⁹⁷ The three non- native males dominate the image through their positioning at the outer limits of the group. This framing gives the appearance that they have “lined up” the “Indians ” for the photograph. Indeed, Native people were the most highly

94. Lutz and Collins, Reading National Geographic, 202.

95. National Archives of Canada, C. Wentworth Bagley Collection, 1942-37 (Information source: Professor Michael Wilson, University of Lethbridge, September 1990).

96. Personal communication Gerald McMaster, Curator of Contemporary Indian Art at the Canadian Museum of Civilization, Ottawa, April 4, 1994. Gerald McMaster is a Plains Cree who grew up in Battleford, Saskatchewan.

97. This identification was made by the Glenbow Archives, Calgary, Alberta.

controlled and regulated group in Canada during the nineteenth-century. After the second Riel Rebellion (March to May, 1885), Indigenous people had to get permission from their Indian agent to leave their reservation.⁹⁸ The group is framed by two standing members of the NWMP, Constables Jarvis and Evans.⁹⁹ Their police uniforms are symbols of authority that mark the presence of the colonizer in the frame. Both constables look directly at the camera, appearing indifferent to the camera but confident of their power position relative to the other members of this group portrait. The positioning of interpreter, Sam Ballantyne seated to the extreme left of the group on the margin of the image is significant. Ballantyne, as interpreter, represents a link between the photographer and her subject because he facilitates communication. His gaze is to the left, out of the frame; he appears introspective, waiting on the sidelines to fulfill his role in facilitating communications between the two cultures.

At first glance, all the figures in the photograph appear to be male, but upon closer examination, there appears to be one Plains Cree woman present (seated to the left, behind Thunderchild.) Her gender is distinguished by her somewhat finer, smaller facial features and the way the blanket is held in a shawl-like manner over her shoulders. This figure is not costumed like the dancers and does not appear to be wearing eagle feathers. Although she is clearly positioned as a subordinate behind Thunderchild, her gaze into the

98. Doxtator, Fluffs and Feathers, 59.

99. This identification was made from a note on the back of a copy of the print in the RCMP Archives in Ottawa.

camera is so direct that, once noted, she becomes a focal point. Her intense gaze seems to penetrate through the camera lens to the photographer/ woman behind the camera. It is in this confrontation between two women, one white, behind the camera, and one Cree, in front of the camera that one moves into the realm of what Barthes describes as *punctum*. This edge is created by the exchange of gaze between the two women. Barthes' classification of photographs into two groups, *studium*, for images that inform and *punctum*, for images that emote, is described in Chapter Two. Moodie's presence in this image is reflected in the reaction of some of the Plains Cree, however she does not try to stage the image (as does Gunterman) but merely records what is occurring in front of the camera. This very direct approach to documentary photography contrasts with her more conventional studio work and those of her colleagues (See Appendix Three for a chronology positioning other photographers cited in this thesis).

The four photographs that link together to form a panoramic view of the interior, however, constitute the most significant image of Moodie's Thirst Dance series.¹⁰⁰ (See Figs. 3.12a-d) These must have been taken during a lull in the activities and document the individuals present more than the actual activity of the ceremony. The first two photographs of the set (Fig. 3.12 a & b) record two rows of what appear to be male figures; one group is seated on the ground, the other is standing. The rows are divided by a screen of tree branches that extends

100. The linkage of these four photographs to form a panoramic view has not been previously recognized by the RCMP Museum in Regina that holds Fig. 3.12a in the Geraldine Moodie collection, or by the National Archives of Canada that holds Figs. 3.12 b-d in the C. Went worth Bagley collection, 1942-37. This identification is based on a formal analysis of the photographs.

halfway around the interior of the tent and separates those seated from the group of standing dancers, behind them.¹⁰¹ The figures seated on the ground are dressed in a combination of western and ceremonial Cree garments, including fans made from bird wings. The seated figures in the far left photograph (Fig 3.12a) present a mixture of sightlines, all directed away from the camera, that contribute to a sense of aversion to the surveillance of the camera and the gaze of the white woman behind it. In contrast, most of the seated group in the next photograph (Fig. 3.12b) look directly at the camera, their facial expressions are relatively neutral indicating that they are at least compliant about being photographed. All of the standing dancer figures also look straight into the camera. Their gaze is direct and appears somewhat hostile, conveying a confrontational reaction to the camera's intrusion on their ceremonial ritual. The standing group appears to be younger than the seated figures and, therefore, less resigned to the gaze of the white colonizer. Lippard confirms that Native people are not encouraging of outside presence at ceremonial dances or secular pow-wows, stating: "They don't need us but somehow, paradoxically, we need them."¹⁰²

The comment has been made that Moodie's presence at this sacred ceremony was "remarkable."¹⁰³ Perhaps the Plains Cree allowed her presence because they were less threatened by or even amused by a white woman with a

101. Saskatchewan Herald (June 28 1895), 1.

102. Lippard, Partial Recall, 29.

103. White cited in The News Optimist (North Battleford 25 August 1993).

camera. This is an interesting speculation that may even be partially correct. The main reason that Moodie's presence was tolerated, however, was simply that she paid the price of admission. This is confirmed by a small item that appeared in the Saskatchewan Herald a week after the Thirst Dance took place:

The Indians at the thirst dance adopted one civilized method. Instead of leaving payment optional as in other years they exacted a payment of twenty-five cents from everyone entering the dance tent; and this paid, the master of ceremonies with all the coolness of an old railroad conductor placed a "check" in the hatband of the visitor, to show all connected with the entertainment that he was free to come and go as he pleased.¹⁰⁴

Since the Saskatchewan Herald can be considered as a voice for the Euro-Canadian community then it is obvious that they did not see the Thirst Dance as a sacred ceremony, they viewed it simply as entertainment. Sontag points out that the "colonization by camera" that followed the opening of the west by the transcontinental railroads in the mid nineteenth century involved an invasion of tourists. Any Native activities such as sacred dances were open to intrusion by the camera; and the photographers would pay, if necessary, to get the photograph they were after and request that ceremonies be revised in order to make better "pictures".¹⁰⁵ There is no evidence that Moodie used this approach although her husband's position as an officer in the NWMP police no doubt allowed her privileged access to special events such as the Thirst Dance and guaranteed the co-operation of the parties involved.

104. Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford 28 June 1895), 1.

105. Sontag, On Photography, 4.

The third photograph (Fig. 3.12 c) includes a group of dancers on the left side and a group of women seated on the ground at the right. The focal point of the image is a man standing slightly off centre to the left . He is the only standing figure in front of the tree branch screen. His position indicates that he is the host, Thunderchild (Pa-sic-wasis) who would be responsible for this Thirst Dance.¹⁰⁶ He is wearing a medal that was given to Native leaders by Queen Victoria for loyalty.¹⁰⁷ His gaze is directed downward, and he appears to be introspective /passive in front of the camera. Behind him, another group of participants is blowing on eagle bones while drummers seated in front of the branch fence perform.

The far right photograph of the set (Fig. 3.12 d) is a continuation of the group of Cree women seated in the previous photograph (Fig. 3.12 c). The reaction of the group to the camera (and presumably to the white woman behind the camera) is varied: from tolerance, to aversion, to amusement. A number of the women look directly at the camera, several turn their back to it and another group along the right side simply covers their heads with their blankets in an act of quiet resistance . Covering of the face can be read as a cross-cultural communication signalling a “boundary erected, contact broken .”¹⁰⁸

106. National Archives of Canada, C. Wentworth Badgley Collection, 1942-37 (Information source: Professor Michael Wilson, University of Lethbridge, September 1990).

107. This information is from a caption on a studio portrait of Thunderchild taken by Geraldine Moodie at the same time that the Thirst Dance photographs were taken. It is in the collection of the RCMP museum in Regina, Saskatchewan.

108. Lutz and Collins, Reading National Geographic, 203.

Trinh Minh-ha acknowledges this aversion and gives voice to it:

Like any common living thing, I fear and reprove classification and the death it entails, and I will not allow its clutches to lock down on me, although I realize I can never lure myself into simply escaping it. The difference, as I sense it, is: naming like a cast of the die, is just one step toward unaming, a tool to render visible what he has carefully kept invisible in his manipulate blindness. ¹⁰⁹

Daniel Francis also recognizes this distaste for photography and cites the example of a British tourist, Douglas Sladen who crossed Canada by train in 1894 and wrote in his journal :

Whenever you stop at a station , all the steps getting down are packed with people taking potshots with Kodaks. American children learn kodaking before they learn to behave themselves...Crossing the prairie, every operator imagines he is going to kodak an Indian ; but the wily Indian sits in the shade where instantaneous photography availeth not, and if he observes himself being ' time exposed' covers himself with a blanket.¹¹⁰

This reluctance to be photographed is a commonly held notion about Indigenous people. Silversides concludes that the reaction to this new technology was more likely as mixed as it would be in any diverse group, some being hostile to it while others were fascinated by the process.¹¹¹

What motivates Moodie to work against her subject, to continue to photograph when it is obvious that this action is an intrusion? Sontag's statement , cited earlier, that photography assists people to claim an environment or "to take possession of a space in which they are insecure" explains

109. Trinh T. Minh-ha, Woman, Native, Other (Bloomington and Indianapolis 1989), 48.

110. Douglas Sladen, On the Cars and Off (London: 1895) cited in Francis, The Imaginary Indian, 42.

111. Silversides, Face Pullers, 6.

why photography developed in tandem with tourism.¹¹² The resulting image is not so much a souvenir as it is a symbol, for by framing an experience, event or person, the photographer exercises a certain amount of control over it. "Taking photographs has set up a chronic voyeuristic relation to the world which levels the meaning of all events".¹¹³ Moodie may also be motivated by the fact this is a commercial job and the photographs must be made in order that she receive her fee. There is, however, no documented evidence that these photographs were made as part of a Government commission or as police surveillance for the NWMP.¹¹⁴

The centre of attention in the fourth photograph, and in fact the entire panorama, is a woman who is seated slightly left of the centre of the frame. Although facing the camera her gaze is out of the frame. She appears to be aware of Moodie yet does not acknowledge the camera, seeming to be lost in her own thoughts. There is in this woman a poignancy that is clearly not contrived sentimentality. She hunches forward, her shoulders slumped, crowded in by the other women surrounding her, seemingly not reacting to the documentation taking place. Only her slightly clenched hand gives away any emotion. Once again, as in Fig 3.11, it is the image of a woman that adds the edge or *punctum* to Moodie's photograph. Moodie has deliberately emphasized this figure through

112. Sontag, On Photography, 9.

113. *ibid.*, 11.

114. Personal communication with Bill MacKay, Curator, RCMP Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan, December 1, 1994.

the use of selective focus, causing figures in front and behind her to be slightly less clearly rendered.

It is also notable that there are only Native people in this image. This is a private sacred space that the Plains Cree control, free of intervention from the white NWMP officers who are evident in some of the photographs made in the public space outdoors (Fig. 3.11) . Instead, the viewer is left with the impression that Moodie might well have been the only white person inside the Thirsting Lodge at the moment these plates were exposed. The panorama can be then read as more than merely a document of the interior of the Thirsting Lodge. It becomes a metaphor representing the reaction of the Native people to the intrusion of the non-native not only into their ceremony, but onto their land and into their lives. The act of photography becomes what Said refers to as a reductive, violent form of representation which concurs with the view held by some Native people that photography somehow diminishes its subject:

Whether you call it a spectacular image , or an exotic image, or a scholarly representation, there is always this paradoxical contrast between the surface, which seems to be in control, and the process which produces it, which inevitably involves some degree of violence, deconstruction, miniaturization.¹¹⁵

It is relevant to compare Geraldine Moodie's photographs with those taken by another photographer also documenting the Thirst Dance/ Sun Dance.

William Hanson Boorne (1860-1940) was the only documented professional

115. Edward Said, "In the Shadow of the West," *Wedge* (No. 7-8, Winter-Spring, 1985), 4 cited in Lucy Lippard, *Mixed Blessings, New Art in a Multicultural America*, (New York 1990), 45.

photographer to record the most dramatic section of the Sun Dance, the Brave making.¹¹⁶ This photograph, Indian Sun-Dance, Making a Brave (Fig. 3. 13), was made on the Blood Reserve near Fort MacLeod, Alberta on July 31, 1886. It documents the endurance of pain that was required in the ritual. This part of the ceremony consisted of placing ropes through the pectoral muscles of fifteen to sixteen year old native males who wished to join the select group of warriors. This endurance test usually lasted less than an hour and was done to fulfill a vow to spare the dancer's life in a future time of danger.¹¹⁷ This activity was considered "torture" by non-native society and resulted in the entire ritual being banned in 1895. At first glance, Geraldine Moodie's photographs may appear to be less intrusive than Boorne's, particularly as she did not record the spectacle of the "Brave Making". In reality, this part of the ceremony was prohibited by the NWMP in the event she documented. One can only speculate as to whether she would have photographed this as well, given the opportunity.

In 1906, the Thirst Dance or Sun Dance was banned completely until 1951 as described by Wes Fineday:

The Sun Dance Ceremony had been a tradition for hundreds of years among the Plains tribes. In 1906 the government in accordance with its policy of assimilation attempted to outlaw the ceremony and in so doing banished all ceremonies of any deep religious significance. Ironically dancing and singing was permitted if it had no religious purpose, and did not perpetuate those traditions and values. These actions eventually relegated some of the public gatherings of Native Indians to appear to have

116. Research for this thesis confirms that there are other photographs of Brave making during the Sun Dance ritual in the collection of the RCMP Archives in Ottawa that warrant further attention.

117. Cavell, Sometimes A Great Nation, 80.

no deeper significance than begging or entertainment. In spite of the ban many natives continued to gather for Sun Dances until the ban was officially lifted in 1951. Today the Sun Dance remains very much a central part of Native heritage. The ban itself resulted in an adaptation of ceremonies making them more acceptable in a white dominated society. Both the Begging Dance and the Pow Wow were off shoots of this era and were ceremonies introduced in this century. ¹¹⁸

In The Face Pullers: Photographing Canadian Native Canadians 1871-1939, archivist Brock Silversides describes the resistance Boorne encountered in photographing this ceremony. In his notes following the ceremony, Boorne recorded that the Indians believed that a picture made of them must take something away from them, thus shortening their lives. He was only able to photograph with the assistance of the Blood head chief, Red Crow. Boorne witnessed and recorded the brave making despite the fact he was shot at in an attempt to frighten him out of the Thirsting Lodge. One of the stray bullets unfortunately wounded a Native child who died later that evening. Undaunted, Boorne continued to photograph and later wrote a lengthy description of the entire brave-making ritual, punctuated with references “...(I got a photograph) ... (I got another photograph)...” each time he documented the painful ritual. ¹¹⁹

So it can be seen that Boorne was the exploiter, the shadow catcher that Moodie never allowed herself to become.

This same indifferent attitude to Native culture is reflected in a news item from the Saskatchewan Herald describing an event that occurred during the Thirst

118. Wes Fineday, Oral History from the The Drumming Hill Collection, Allan Sapp Gallery, North Battleford, Saskatchewan.

119. Silversides, Face Pullers, 8.

Dance that Moodie had photographed:

The “bow and arrow” showed itself in a half-a-dozen of the Industrial School boys who ran away to attend the thirst dance. They were brought back and taken to the barracks. The gravity of their offence was explained, and after being reprimanded they were sent back to school.¹²⁰

This attitude toward enforced assimilation is examined in “Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding School Experience” by Gerald McMaster, a Plains Cree who grew up in Battleford and now is a curator at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. McMaster writes about a photograph made of a group of Cree students from this same Industrial School. The photograph Battleford Industrial School Football Team, Saskatchewan, 1897 (Fig. 3.14) depicts a Plains Cree boys football team lined up in what appears to be a victory photograph. This “team effort”, represented by the trophy, is purely a European concept; from a Native perspective, it would be considered superficial.¹²¹ The photograph, McMaster argues, more accurately documents the resistance of these boys to the assimilation being forced on them.

..from my privileged position as observer (read : voyeur), these boys appeared defiant. I was intrigued by their apparent ambivalence about being photographed , indicated by clenched fist or folded arms... These boys represented the colonial alchemy, transforming the savage into a civilized human. Yet somehow their resistance remains visible.¹²²

This photograph was made two years after Moodie’s Thirst Dance series and it is

120. Saskatchewan Herald (Battleford 28 June 1895), 1.

121. Gerald McMaster, “Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding School Experience”, Partial Recall.: Photographs of Native North Americans, ed. Lucy Lippard (New York 1992), 79.

122. Gerald McMaster, “Colonial Alchemy”, 79.

almost certainly taken by Moodie as part of a commission by the Saskatchewan government to photograph the Battlefords Industrial School ¹²³

This section has considered a series of photographs of the Thirst Dance taken by Geraldine Moodie in June of 1895. Ironically, this was the same year this ritual was banned, and Moodie's photographs were presented to the RCMP Museum in Regina, Saskatchewan, the same organization that enforced the ban. These images have been read/analyzed as reflective of photography as social practice at the turn-of-the-century in the Canadian West. Moodie's portraits of Native people and their ceremonial rituals assisted in the positioning of her professional career. She used them to position herself in major collections such as the British Museum and the NWMP Museum, and sent them to government officials, including the Prime Minister, who could further her career with important commissions.

As Solomon-Godeau and Sontag note in the opening quotations to this chapter, photography has long been a tool for observation and documentation by colonial powers. This type of photographic practice has recently been challenged by other critics, theorists and photographers including Trinh T. Minh-ha, Lucy Lippard and John Tagg. Numerous studies have been completed that analyze how photography has utilized the marginalized. In her critique "The Politics of Citation", Mieke Bal has reviewed the analyses put forward in three such studies that consider that "colonialism is excised by (the author's) postcolonial intent."¹²⁴

123. Mrs. Dignam, Compilation, Women of Canada, 227.

124. Mieke Bal, "The Politics of Citation", diacritics, 21.1 (spring 1991), pp. 25-45.

Bal warns that believing does not necessarily make it so and quotes Gayatri Spivak's comment : "There is much neocolonialism in postcolonial theory." ¹²⁵

This chapter has explored the relationship between Self and Other evident in the photographs of Geraldine Moodie, a white woman photographing Indigenous people in the Canadian West at the turn-of-the-century. No matter how much sensitivity Geraldine Moodie demonstrated in making photographs of the Plains Cree of Western Canada, her photographs still reflect the societal attitudes of the dominant non-native culture toward the Indian. Vine Deloria refers to the photography of Moodie's era as:

a weapon in the final skirmishes of cultural warfare in which the natives of North America could be properly and finally embedded in their places in the cultural evolutionary incline.... One must probe very deeply into the recesses of today's psyche to see the subtle tones of racism in the perpetual fascination of white Americans for portraits of Indians. That racism...has a dualistic nature... One encounters the substance of nobility and on returning to the commonplace of daily life is a little irritated that things today cannot have the grandeur of yesteryear, when simplicity and profundity shared the same bed. ¹²⁶

Geraldine Moodie , a strong ambitious woman, was privileged by her husband's position as a high ranking officer in the NWMP which allowed her access to the Indigenous people who were the subject of her most striking portraits. The Moodie photographs of Native people follow a documentary pattern that has been established as prevalent in the Canadian West at the turn-of-the-

125. Spivak made this statement in a lecture at the University of Utrecht, May 1990, cited in Bal, "The Politics of Citation", 30.

126. Vine Deloria in preface to Christopher Lyman, The Vanishing Race and Other Illusions (New York 1982) cited in Lippard, Partial Recall, 20.

century. She was not influenced by the more sentimental approaches favoured by the celebrated Pictorialist Edward Curtis or Gertrude Käsebier. One of the few professional women photographers in Canada to photograph Indigenous people, her images do stand apart from the norm, particularly those depicting family relationships. A careful reading of her portraits of the Plains Cree and their ritual Thirst Dance, made between 1895-96 at the start of her professional career, indicates that Moodie's work contained an empathy and respect for her subjects less evident in the work some of her male colleagues such as Samuel Boorne.

Sontag concludes that photography has allowed for the positioning of self as spectator or *flâneur* in a dominant position to the subject for "...essentially the camera makes everyone a tourist in other people's reality."¹²⁷ Moodie used photography as a social practice in the establishment of a personal identity of a professional.

127. Sontag, On Photography, 57.

Conclusion

It is appropriate to return once again to the words of Lady Elizabeth Eastlake and the twentieth century revisionist feminist art historian, Griselda Pollock, as quoted in the Introduction. Pollock argues that art is a form of social practice through which identity is constructed. Lady Eastlake comments upon the democracy of the photographic image at the turn-of-the-century and confirms that photography was indeed a common place activity/ social practice accessible to most women.

Mattie Gunterman and Geraldine Moodie exemplify two women who used photography as social practice at the turn-of-the-century in Canada. Informed by cultural/ photographic theory, biographical details and evidence from textual reading of photographs, this thesis has positioned these women as photographic practitioners and examined their use of the medium to establish/re-invent identity despite the patriarchal discourses by which they were surrounded. As part of an analysis of the change from amateur to professional photographic practice, the photograph albums of Mattie Gunterman were read as personal narrative, and the photographs of Geraldine Moodie were analyzed with regard to the positioning of Self in relation to Other. This analysis concluded that the change from amateur to professional allowed women to move from the passive role of consumer/ product of photographic images in the domestic sphere to the more active role of producer in both the private and public domain. Despite their marginalization, women played a significant role in the development of

photography in Canada, and through feminist intervention in the histories of art, their work can be analyzed as social practice.

Despite the fact that Gunterman was an amateur photographer and Moodie had made the transition to professional, there are similarities between the two women and their photographic practices. Neither Gunterman nor Moodie used the popular romantic Pictorialist techniques when making photographs, preferring instead to make more straightforward images using a documentary approach. Technically, both women were highly skilled and able to operate professional view cameras and do their own darkroom work. Although Gunterman was an amateur photographer, she took the craft aspects of photography seriously and used the best quality equipment she could afford. Neither woman then was confined to the ghetto of the Kodak girl who could only access photography through the low technology camera and commercial photofinishing. Although both women had husbands who were supportive of their photographic practices, only Moodie's husband practiced as an amateur photographer.

Women at the turn-of-the-century practiced photography with society's approval provided that they stayed within the domestic sphere. Both Gunterman and Moodie challenged these limitations by going outside the domestic sphere to photograph in the public domain. Gunterman used the landscape as a metaphoric background in many of her self-portraits and family narratives. Moodie, although an established professional with a commercial studio, went into the field to document Native people and their rituals. Photography also offered

Gunterman and Moodie inroads into their respective communities and gave them an outlet from their domestic responsibilities, they were also often called upon to document significant community social events .

The primary difference in their imagery is their subject -matter and the manner in which they approached documentary photography. Gunterman, influenced by the theatre and the symbolic props and backdrops of professional photographers, carefully staged all her photographs to create a family narrative. These images were intended for a private audience of family and friends. The elegant family portrait staged in a formal Japanese Garden in San Francisco (Fig. 2.5) indicates the level of visual sophistication that Gunterman achieved with her imagery. Moodie, despite the fact she owned and operated a commercial studio and was capable of making more set-up portraits, was able to break away from this kind of tightly controlled image to simply document what occurred in front of her camera. Using access to the Thirst Dance to create a multi-layered complex panorama (Figs. 3.12 a,b,c and d) outside of the studio, Moodie extended boundaries beyond the conventions of the photographic canon that deals with "Indian- ness" in a pictorial manner like Curtis or a commercial manner like Ross. These photographs were meant for a larger, more public audience: Moodie strategically placed her images in major collections and with high ranking officials in order to make connections that would further her professional career. One of the aims of this thesis has been to re-position Moodie as a professional photographer rather than as a marginalized amateur.

This is the first Canadian thesis to analyze nineteenth-century Canadian

women photographers from a revisionist position. For this reason, it opens up a variety of possibilities for new inquiry that are beyond the scope of one thesis. Fresh lines of inquiry include further analysis of both Gunterman's and Moodie's work. Gunterman's strong relationship with nature, evident in her self portraits, should be considered in relation to the large body of landscape photographs she made. To date, little has been published about Victorian women landscape photographers, and the practice of landscape photography has until recently been viewed as strictly a male domain.

Although marginalized as a professional photographer, Moodie's Arctic photographs recently received some attention, although entirely of a biographical nature; further analytical work should be done in this area. Additional attention should be paid to her images of Indigenous women, particularly her portraits documenting the mother/child relationship. Also, previously restricted biographical material about Moodie has recently been released and raises additional questions about her photographic practice, thus warranting further investigation.

There is much to be done in the way of primary research in order to continue examining the work of turn-of-the-century women photographers in Canada. The research for this thesis produced dozens of names of women photographers and prompted the examination of countless images before the final two photographers were chosen. By focusing on the turn-of-the-century photographic practices of women, this thesis provides a substantial part of the

foundation necessary for the revisionist work the study of women and
photography in Canada.

Appendix 1 Mattie Gunterman 1872-1945 Chronology

- 1872 Born Ida Madeline Warner in La Crosse, Wisconsin.
Little is known about her family or childhood and no records exist of her birth certificate. She lived with her widowed grandmother, Mary Arnold.
- Her interest in photography was encouraged by her uncle, Charles Warner, a professional photographer who offered instruction in the basics of camera operation, portrait technique and darkroom procedures. Began her first photographic album, a collection of commercial studio portraits of herself, her friends and family.
- 1889 Completes school and moves alone west to Seattle, Washington. Better economic conditions and employment possibilities on the west coast. The fact that her grandmother is about to remarry might have contributed to this move.
- 1890 Finds employment as a hotel maid in Seattle.
- 1891 Meets and marries William Gunterman, a candy maker.
- 1892 Gives birth to first and only child, Henry.
- 1893 The stock market crashes. America suffers an economic depression.
- 1896 Begins to have health problems, develops what is thought to be tuberculosis. Doctors advise a move to a drier climate.
- 1897 Mattie, Will and 4 year old Henry make a health trek to eastern Washington, looking for employment and a new home. Makes her first photographs using George Eastman's new and popular invention, the Kodak "Bull's Eye" snapshot camera. This was a basic box camera that used roll film and was designed for amateur use.
- Klondike goldrush in Canada. Mattie and Will return to Seattle to help in Will's mother's hotel. Mattie uses her camera to photograph family and friends and makes the first album containing her own photographs.
- 1898 Acquires a small portable 4" x 5" glass plate camera. Her brother-in-law, Frank Smith an enthusiastic amateur photographer, introduces her to the use of the medium format camera and darkroom techniques necessary for processing and printing. Learns how to photograph interiors using magnesium ribbon as a light source.
- Travels to British Columbia with Henry and Will to visit a cousin, Hattie Needham.
- Purchases property overlooking Thomson's Landing (later known as Beaton) in Lardeau area. Returns to Seattle for the winter while the house is being built at

Thomson's Landing. Spends winter months developing the summer's negatives and making prints. Makes photograph albums by gluing these images into newsprint scrapbooks. These images become a journal of every day life. Prints are made in duplicate with one copy for herself and the other for Henry's album.

- 1899 Purchases a 5" x 7" glass plate camera, a No. 5 Cartridge Kodak, for thirty - five dollars or approximately one month's salary. Mattie, Will and Henry return from Seattle to Thomson's Landing, B. C. to finish their house.
- 1900 Builds a darkroom in shed behind the family house allowing her to process and print. Cousin Hattie Needham also photographs and shares Mattie's interest in darkroom work.
- Guntermans are employed as cooks in the mining camps around Trout Lake and Ferguson.
- Mattie produces a series of photographs about outings made on Harry Needham's guided tours of the area up to Fish Creek and on to Ferguson.
- 1901 Mattie, Will and Henry return to Seattle due to Will's mother's ill health.
- 1902 Mattie, Will and Henry return to Thomson's Landing after Will's mother's death.
- Employed as cook at Nettie-L mine above Ferguson. Kitchen crew worked 12 - 14 hour days. Mattie produces remarkable series of photographs of the Nettie- L mine.
- 1903 Nettie- L Mine Disaster.
Mattie and Will find new employment as camp cooks in Fish Creek.
- 1904 Beaton fire (known earlier as Thomson's Landing).
Guntermans return to Seattle for a break from the exhausting work of the camps and the strain of the mine disaster and town fire.
- 1905 Guntermans travel south to visit family and friends in Seattle, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Mattie likes San Francisco, in particular, and makes most of her photographs on the trip here.
- Family returns to Beaton in June to manage the Oyster-Criterion boarding house until 1906 when mine operations closed. Mattie is employed as cook at the Eva mine in Cambourne.
- 1908 Guntermans working in Beaton as cooks now joined by fifteen year old Henry. Mattie takes fewer photographs. Documents special occasions, including Henry's 16th birthday.

- 1909 Guntermans visit family in Seattle in October.
- Employment difficult to find due to the crash in the Lardeau area; only seasonal work found.
- 1909-1918 Guntermans work at various camps some distance from Beaton. Often the family is split up and employed individually. After 1910, Mattie photographs less frequently as Henry is now grown up and the family is away from home often in order to find employment. Takes some casual photographs with smaller lighter cameras but the photographs are not of the quality of those made with the plate cameras.
- 1913 Great Depression begins.
- 1914 World War I begins.
- 1915 On April 15, the town of Comaplex and the stern-wheeler "Revelstoke" are destroyed by fire, bringing the local logging industry to an abrupt end.
- 1916 Henry Gunterman marries Petranella Quackenbush whom he meets while visiting an aunt on Bainbridge Island near Seattle. Henry and Petranella move to Beaton.
- 1917 First grandchild, Eilene, born May 17.
- 1918 Second grandchild, Ida, born August 19.
- 1919 Third grandchild, Avery, born December 4.
- 1920 Eilene dies from cancer, May 20.
- 1927 Fire destroys Will's and Mattie's house in Beaton. Almost all possessions, including Mattie's photographs and negatives, are lost. The exceptions are approximately three hundred glass plate negatives that are stored in the outdoor shed/darkroom and three of Mattie's photograph albums given to Henry.
- 1937 Will Gunterman dies from a heart attack while in the forest hauling logs. Henry Gunterman, now separated from Petranella, moves in with his mother.
- Mattie continues to garden, fish, run a trap line and photograph occasionally, but no longer attempts to do her own darkroom work. Her primary subject during this period is the high mountain landscape documented while hiking with grandchildren and friends.
- 1939 World War II. Avery joins Canadian Forces and is sent to Europe.

1945 Mattie excitedly prepares for Avery's return and over extends herself; she dies of a heart attack during the night, June 18, at the age of 73.

Epilogue

1961 Roy D'Altroy, historical photography curator from the Vancouver Public Library (VPL) meets Henry Gunterman while on a research trip in the West Kootney's, British Columbia. Henry shows D'Altroy over 300 glass plate 5" x 7" negatives and subsequently donates them to the VPL Historical Photograph collection. The negatives are badly damaged and require extensive cleaning and restoration.

1965 Henry Gunterman dies in hospital in Revelstoke, B.C., February 22.

1971 Henri Robideau is employed as a photo technician for the VPL's Historical Photograph Section. Robideau attracted by the diaristic quality of Gunterman's photos and, curious because of the lack of information about the photographer, begins an extensive research project.

1975 Robideau travels to Beaton to interview Avery Gunterman, Mattie's grandson. Avery explains that all Mattie's work except the glass plate negatives stored in her darkroom (those discovered by Roy D'Altroy) and three albums she had given to her son, Henry were destroyed in the 1927 Beaton fire. Robideau studies these albums along with existing film negatives, prints and postcards from the 1930s and 40s in order to reconstruct Mattie's life.

1976 In 1976, Robideau spends summer in the Lardeau area researching Mattie's life. The first of his many research trips into the region.

1977 Thirty- two years after her death, the first exhibition of photographs by Mattie Gunterman opens at the Photographers Gallery in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. *The Photographs of Mattie Gunterman* is curated by Sylvia Jonescu Lisitza and consists of a number of modern prints made by Henri Robideau from original glass plate negatives in the VPL collection. This exhibition tours extensively in Canada.

1978-1993 Robideau continues his research on Mattie Gunterman and completes his manuscript, *Mattie, The life story of the famous camp cook and photographer, Mrs Mattie Gunterman*. Avery Gunterman dies of heart failure in 1993 before Robideau is able to inform him that the manuscript is in press with Pole Star Books, British Columbia, entitled Flapjacks and Photographs.

Appendix 2 Geraldine Moodie 1854-1945 Chronology

- 1854 Born Geraldine Fitzgibbon, Toronto, 31 October, the third child of Agnes Dunbar Moodie and Charles Thomas Fitzgibbon, a Toronto lawyer. Her grandfather was Colonel James Fitzgibbon, a military hero of the war of 1812. Her maternal grandmother was the celebrated Upper Canada writer, Susanna Moodie and her great aunt was Catherine Parr Traill, another accomplished writer.
- 1878 Marries her distant cousin, John Douglas (J.D.) Moodie (1849- 1947), in Thelford, England, 8 June. Their lineage is connected 15 generations back and both were descendants of Robert the Bruce, King of Scotland.
- 1879 First child, a daughter was born.
- 1880 Expecting their second child, Geraldine Moodie and her husband immigrate to Canada, settling as farmers near Brandon, Manitoba.
- 1885 Outbreak of the second Riel Rebellion, the Moodies return to Ottawa with their three children. On September 15th, J.D. Moodie is appointed Inspector of the North West Mounted Police.
- Prepared the lithographic illustrations for a book by her mother, Canadian Wild Flowers that was published in the 1880's. It is unknown where Geraldine learned to photograph.
- 1885 -1891 Moodies were posted in Calgary , Medicine Hat (1887-88), Lethbridge (1888-9), and Maple Creek (1889-91).
- 1891 Transferred to Battleford, Saskatchewan. Inspector Moodie does regular patrols throughout what is now Northern Alberta and Saskatchewan requiring him to be away at a time 2-4 weeks at a time. Geraldine looks after the family and continues to photograph.
- 1895 Built studio near the Presbyterian Church in Battleford , North West Territories in mid-July. Subjects matter included commercial portraits, NWMP activities and documented the aboriginal peoples including the Thirst Dance. Initially the studio has part-time hours and operates Wednesday and Saturday afternoons and by appointment.
- The Moodie family has now expanded to include six children.
- Made a series of photographs of the Thirst Dance held near Battleford, N.W.T. between June 20-22.
- In September, received a her first commission from the Canadian government to photograph a number of designated locations between Prince Albert and Edmonton for settlement promotion. This was meant to be a souvenir portfolio for Prime Minister Mackenzie Bowell who had visited these sites along with

various officials from the government, the NWMP, the Hudson Bay Co. and the CPR. It consisted of photographs of important historic and important points in Pitt, Onion Lake, Frog Lake and Cold Lake.

George Malcom, second son dies after a long illness.

1896 In the spring enlarged the Battleford Studio due to increased patronage, able to offer a wider range of photographic services including: enlargements, copy work and interior views by flashlight.

In June, Inspector Moodie was transferred to Maple Creek. Geraldine Moodie stayed on in Battleford until the end of the summer to honour her business commitments and close the studio on September 1st.

The autumn was spent setting up her new home in Maple Creek and considering the possibilities of continuing her photographic career.

In January Geraldine Moodie began building a new studio in Maple Creek. In March Geraldine opened a second location in a room above a new hardware store on Toronto Street in Medicine Hat. This location was an existing photographic studio that she leased from a Mr. Bennet. For the next two years she operated both these locations and raised her family. She developed a regular schedule where she would spend alternating periods on approximately four weeks in each location. Documented ranching culture in the Maple Creek district, completed some studies of flora as well as her usual portraiture and photographs NWMP activities.

In August, Insp. Moodie was ordered North to explore and map an overland route from Edmonton to the Yukon. This mission meant he was away from his family for over one year.

1898 In mid November Inspector Moodie returned home to his family from the Klondike.

1899 In April the Moodies returned east. Inspector Moodie served in the South African War. Geraldine Moodie took her family to live in Moosimin, Saskatchewan during this period, where she did not continue to operate a commercial photographic business as she had in the past.

1903 Insp. Moodie was promoted to Superintendent of the NWMP.

1904 Superintendent Moodie was appointed Governor of the Hudson/s Bay district, a position he held for 6 years.

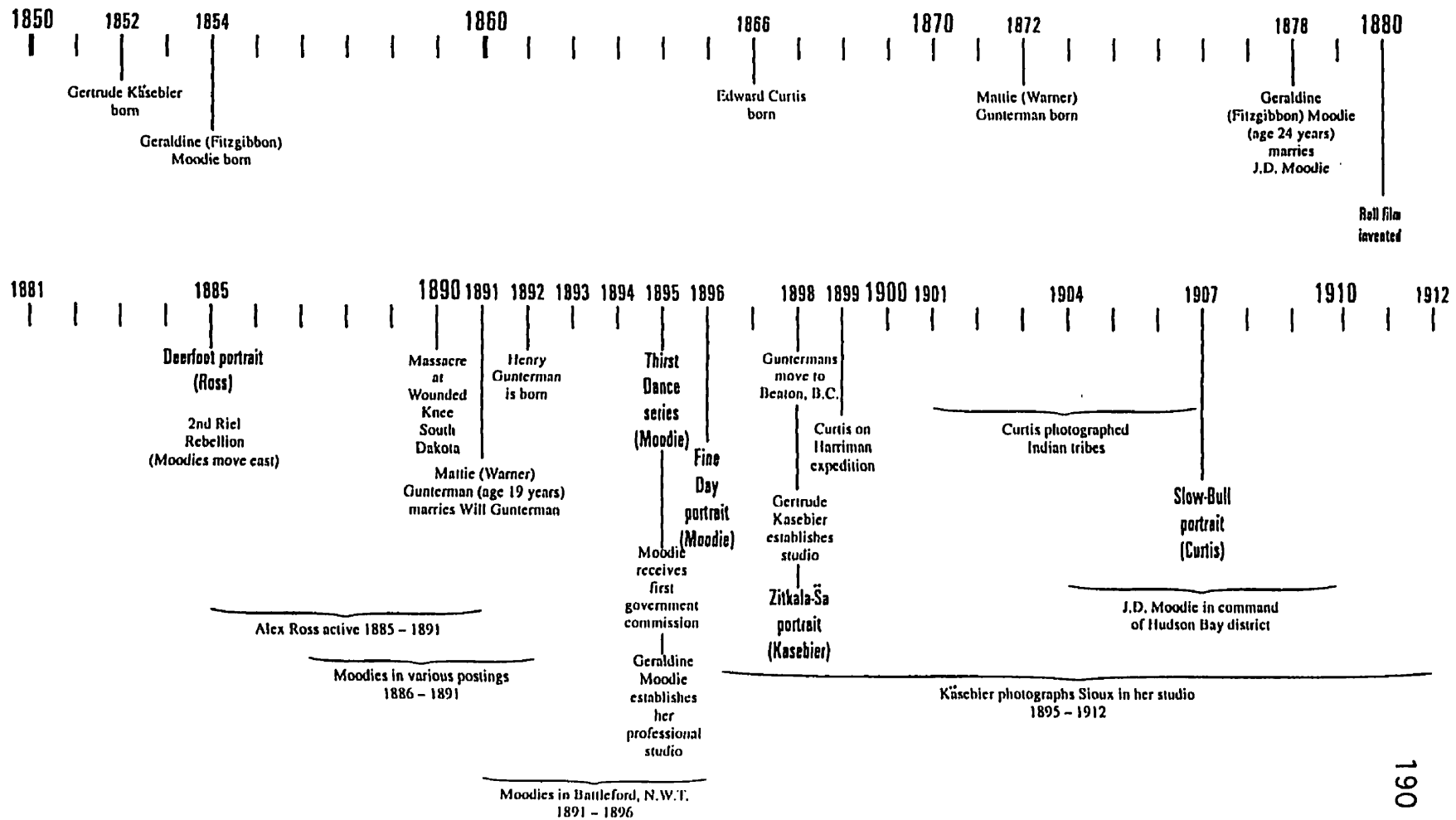
Geraldine accompanied her husband on a northern trip aboard the ship "Arctic". Geraldine remained with the mission for one year creating an impressive body

of photographs of Inuit people. Set up darkroom aboard ship and did all her own processing and printing while they were travelling.

- 1911 Superintendent Moodie who took a contingent of men from the NWMP to the coronation of George V in England. Geraldine photographs the men training at the Regina Depot.
- 1916-1917 Second trip north with her husband, Superintendent Moodie.
- 1917 Superintendent Moodie retired in September and the couple moved back to Maple Creek where they operated a ranch for several years. Geraldine Moodie was occupied with her family, gardening and occasionally photographing . John became the local police magistrate for a number of years.
- 1933 The Moodies moved to Duncan, B.C.
- 1945 Geraldine Moodie died at the home of her granddaughter, the Countess of Egmont, near Midnapore, Alberta at the age of 92.

Gunterman Moodie Contextual Timeline – Appendix 3

1850 – 1910



Illustrations



Fig. 1.1

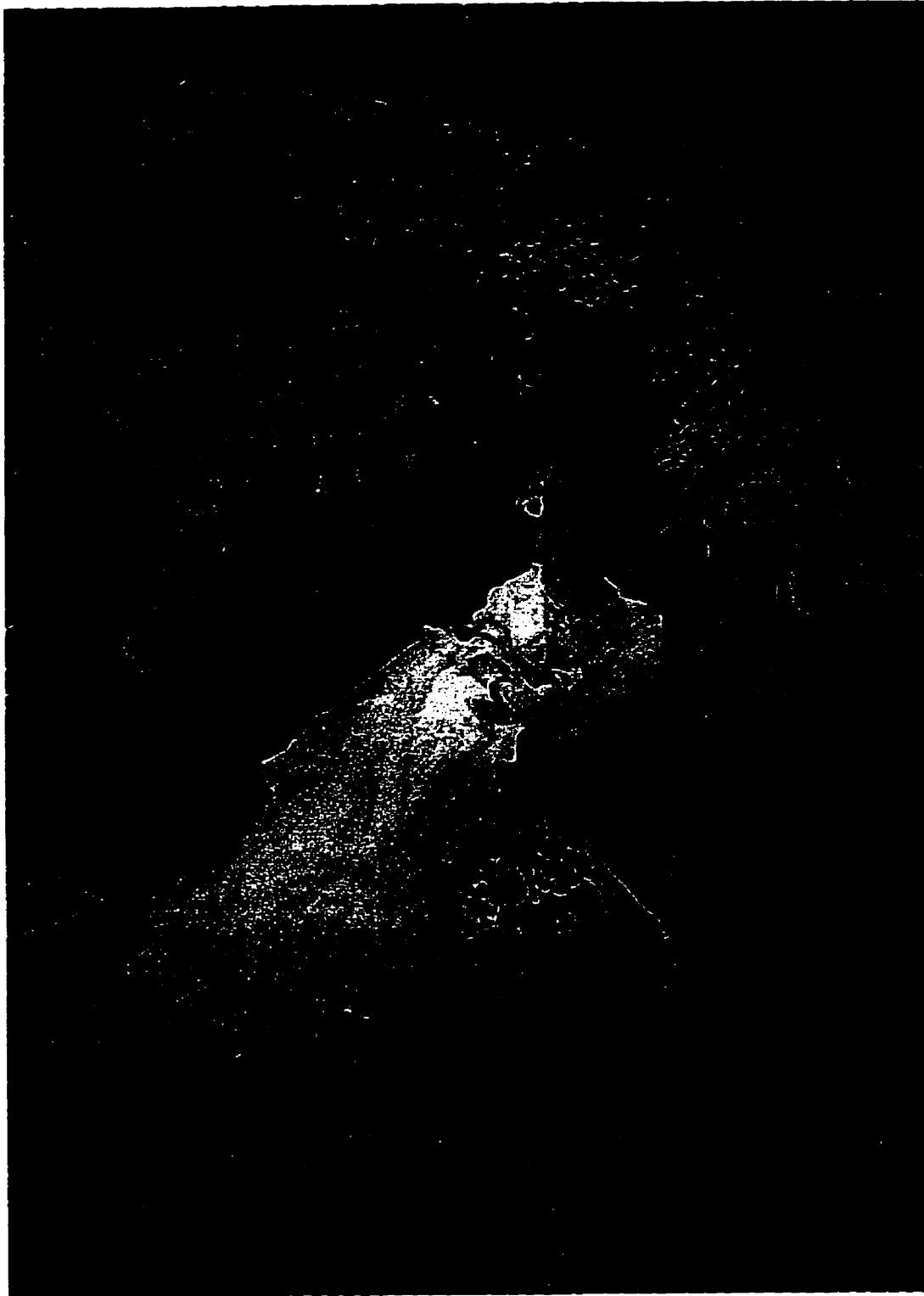


Fig. 1.2



Fig. 1.3



Fig. 1.4



Fig. 1.5

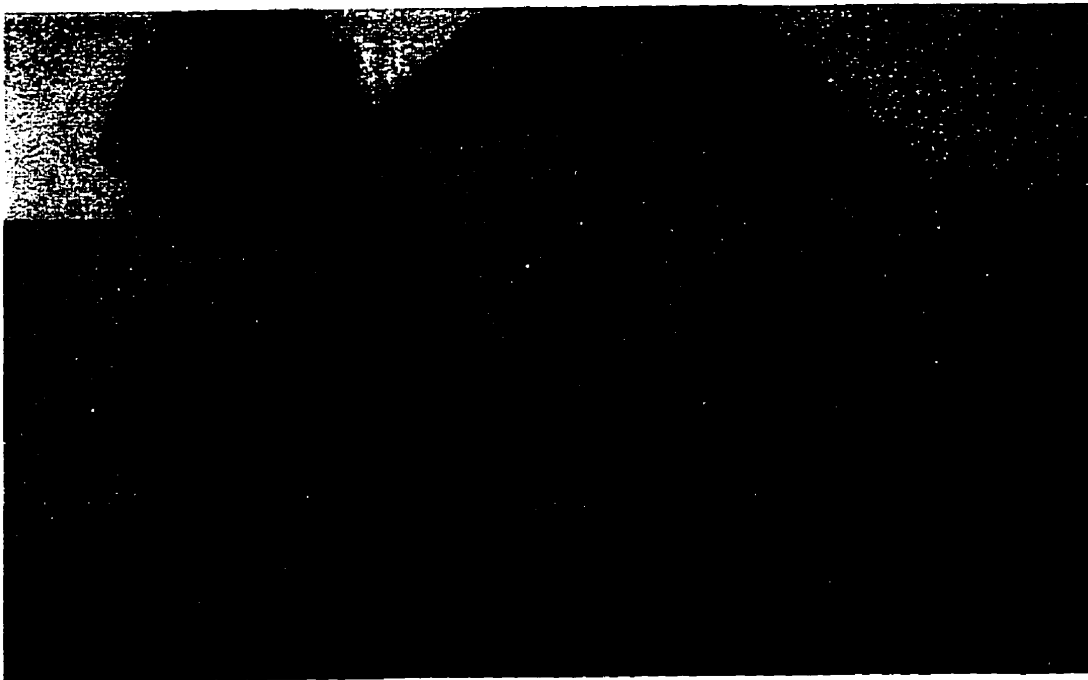


Fig. 1.6

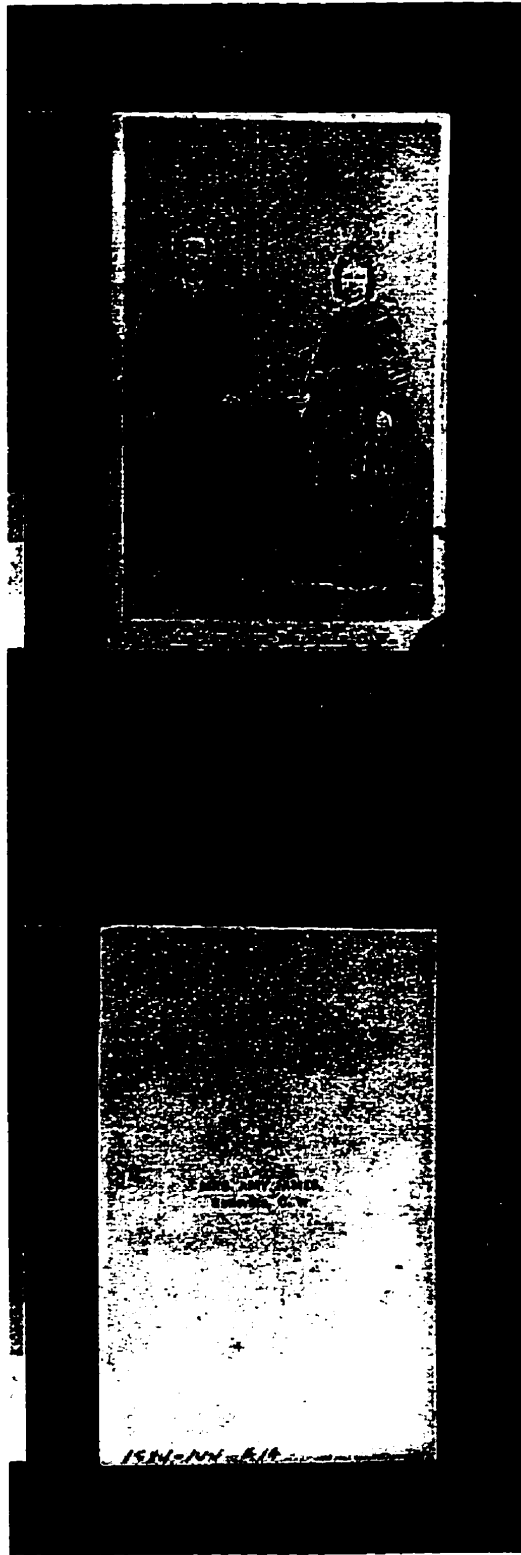


Fig. 1.7

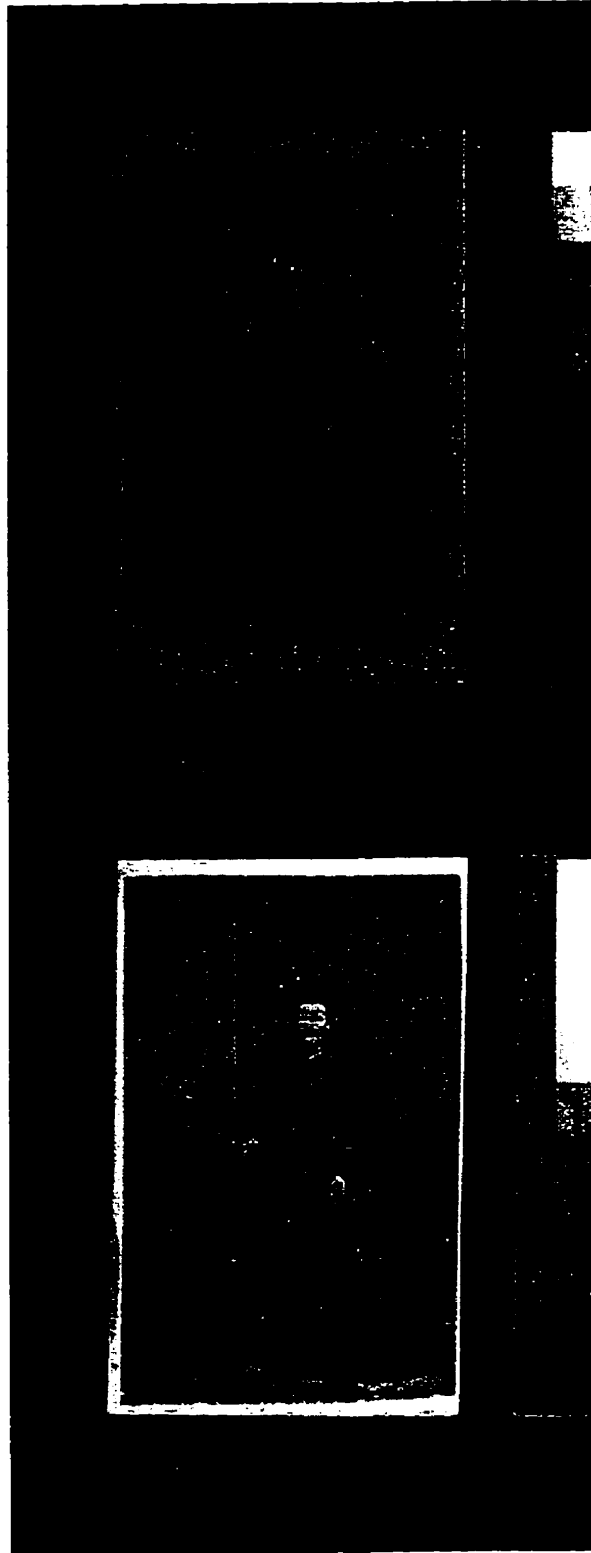


Fig. 1.8



Fig. 2.1

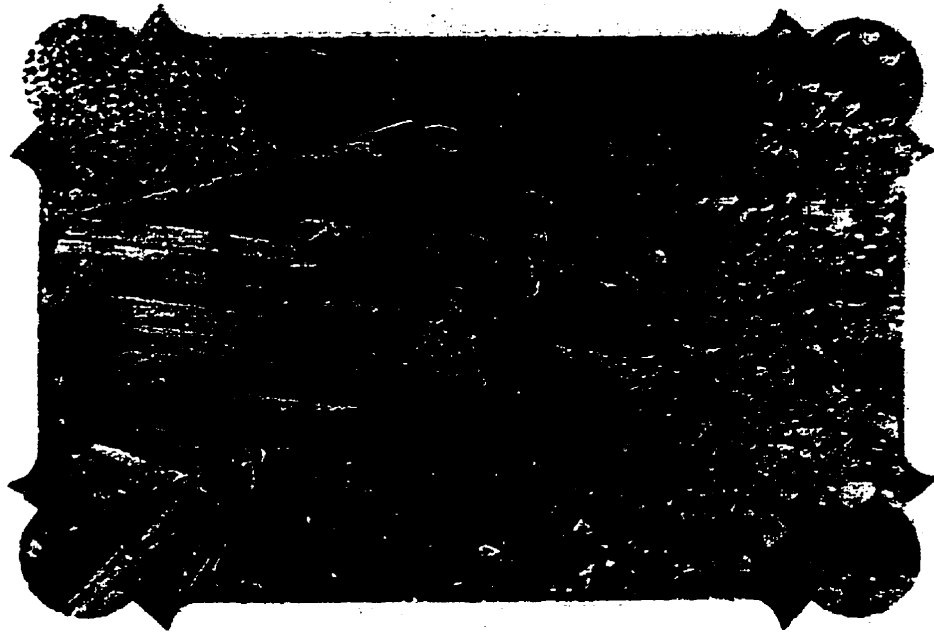


Fig 2.2

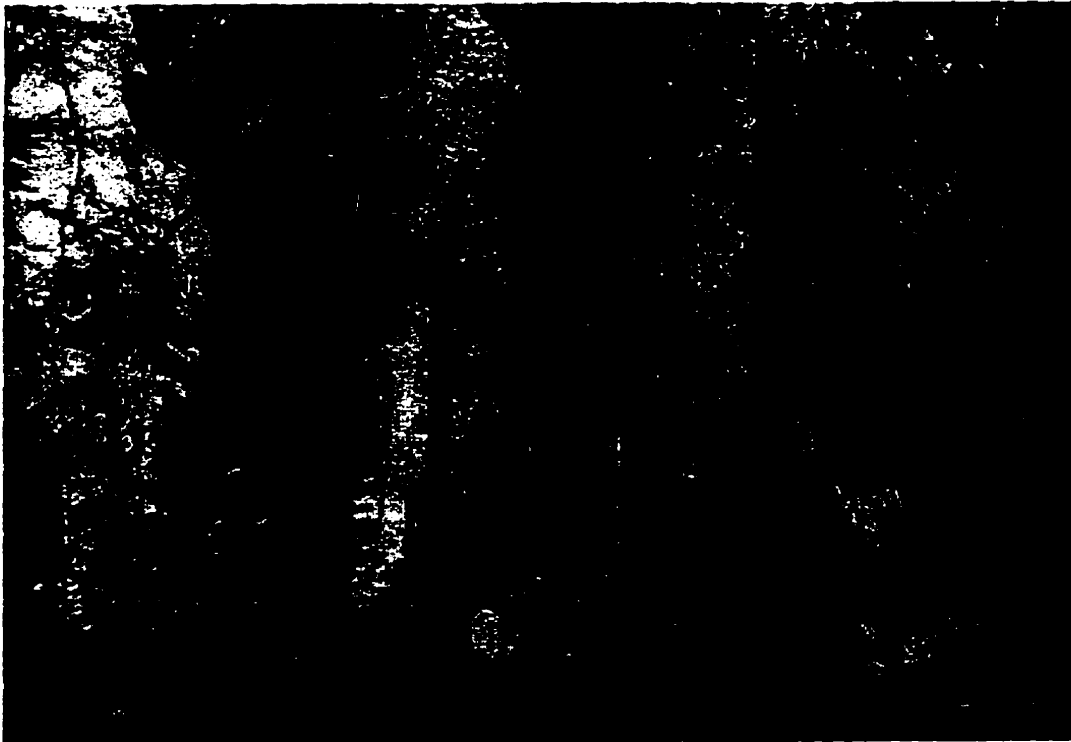


Fig. 2.3



Fig. 2.4

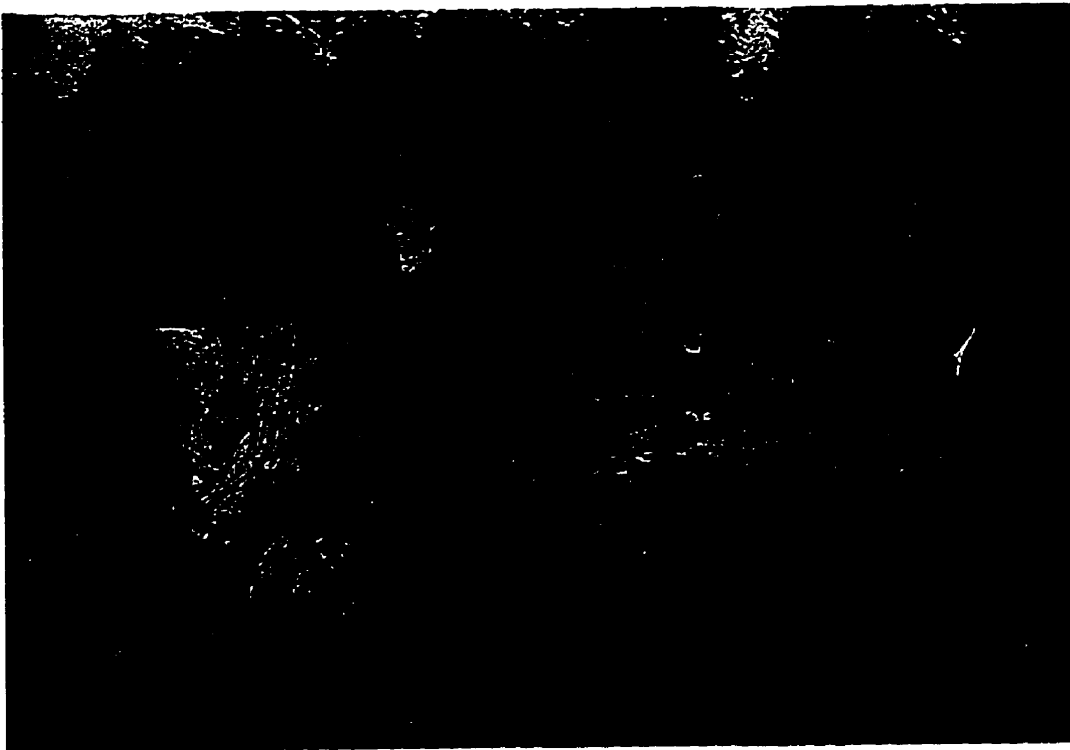


Fig. 2.5



Fig. 2.6



Fig. 2.7

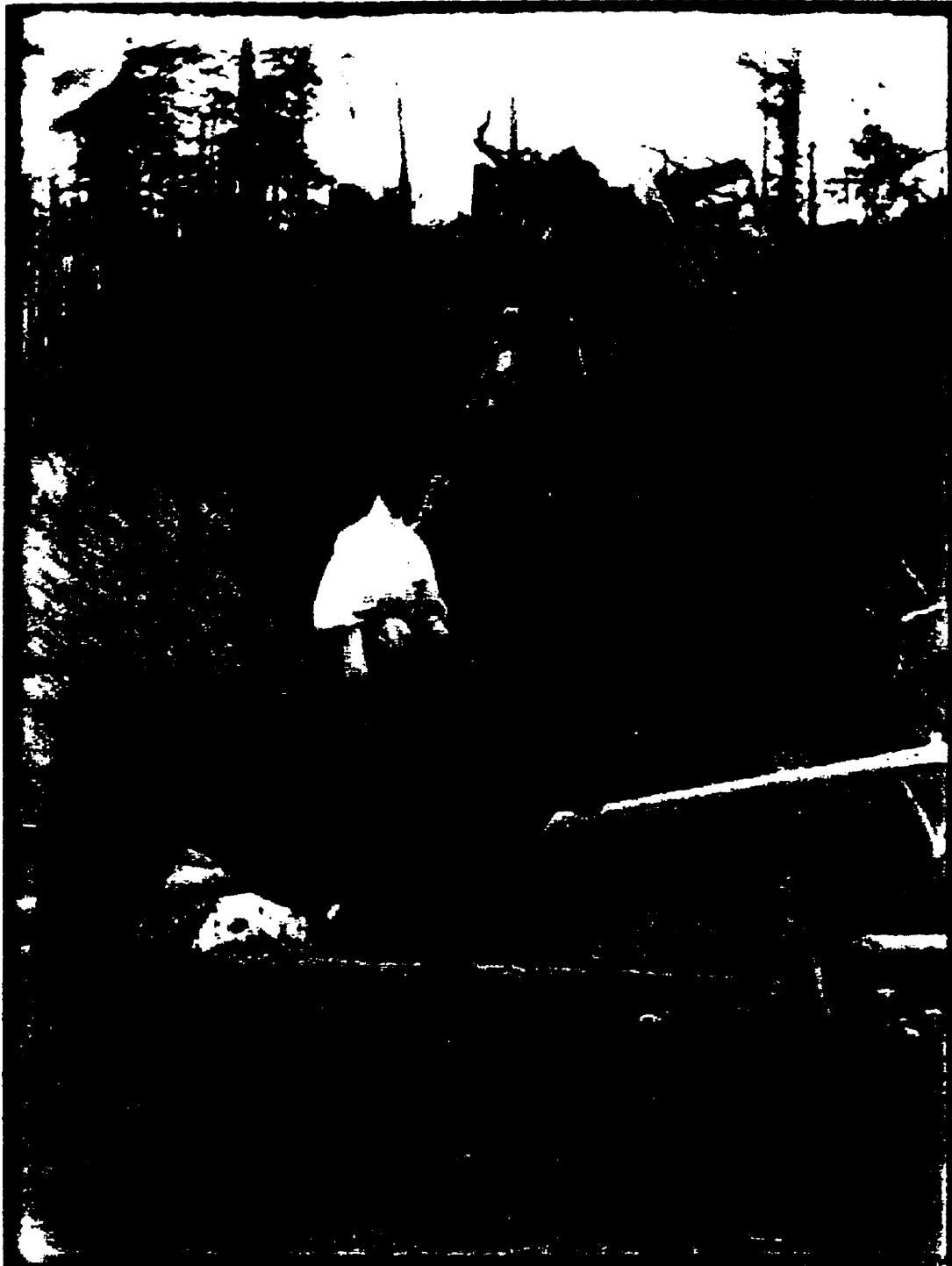


Fig. 2.8



Fig. 2.9



Fig. 2.10



Fig. 2.11



Fig. 2.12



Fig. 2.13



Fig. 2.14



Fig. 2.15

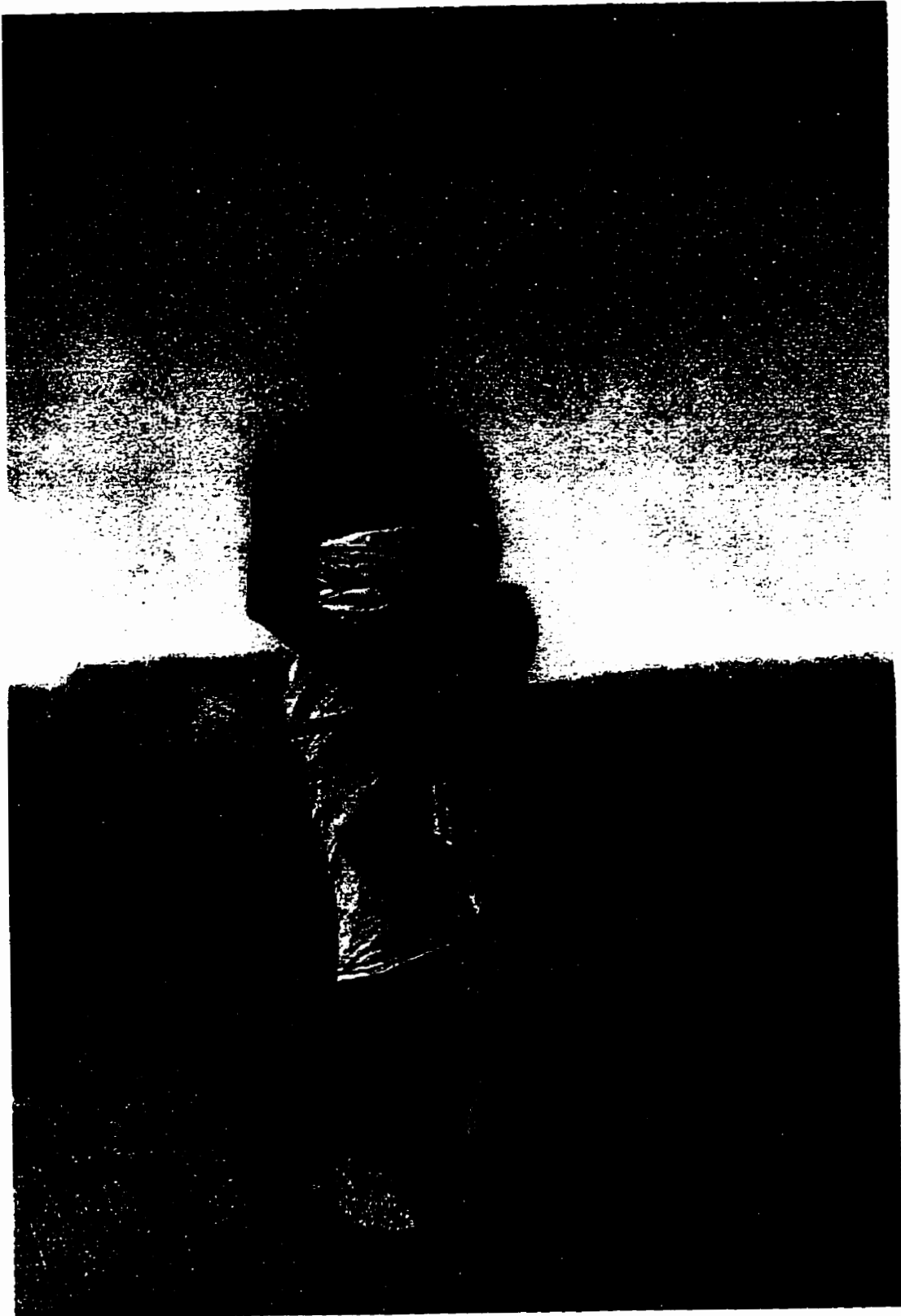


Fig. 3.1



Fig. 3.2



Fig. 3.3



Fig. 3.4



Fig. 3.5



Fig. 3.6



Fig. 3.7



Fig. 3.8



Fig. 3.9



Fig. 3.10



Fig. 3.11



Fig. 3.12 a and b



Fig. 3.12 c and d



Fig. 3.13



Fig. 3.14

List of Illustrations

- Figure 1.1 William Notman Miss Annie Bell 1872
Source: Roger Hall et al. The World of William Notman: The Nineteenth Century through a Master Lens. (Toronto 1993), 67.
- Figure 1.2 William Notman Mrs. William Mackenzie 1871
Source: Edward Cavell. Sometimes a Great Nation: A Photo of Canada, 1850-1925. (Banff 1984), 53.
- Figure 1.3 William Notman Mrs. Sang Kee and Children Montreal 1897
Source: Hall et al. The World of William Notman, 17.
- Figure 1.4 Richard Maynard Untitled 1899
Source: Wilks, Clara Wiessman. The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard. (Toronto 1980), 59.
- Figure 1.5 Mrs. Wentworth Martin Untitled c.1912
National Archives of Canada.
C 46940
- Figure 1.6 Ruby Gordon Peterkin Untitled c.1905
National Archives of Canada.
PA 122444
- Figure 1.7 Mrs. Amy James Untitled c.1860
National Archives of Canada
PA 187550 (upper)
PA 187548 (lower)
- Figure 1.8 Mrs. Amy James Untitled c.1860
National Archives of Canada
PA 187552 (upper)
Pa 187551 (lower)

Illustrations 2.1-2.12 and 2.15 are all photographs by Mattie Gunterman in the collection of the Photographers Gallery, Saskatoon and the titles are taken from their accession records.

- Figure 2.1 Mattie by tree, somewhere along the Columbia River, 1899
PG 77.1.17
- Figure 2.2 Somewhere on the trail from Seattle to Beaton, 1899
PG 77.1.16

- Figure 2.3 Along the trail from Beaton to Camborne, Mattie and Will, c.1901
PG 77.1.30
- Figure 2.4 Mattie, Will and Henry, Allison Pass, BC, 1902
PG 77.1.2.4
- Figure 2.5 Mattie, Henry and Will Gunterman, San Francisco, 1905
PG 77.1.14
- Figure 2.6 Near Beaton/Mattie, c.1905
PG 77.1.27
- Figure 2.7 Dressed for Masquerade Ball, Beaton/Mattie and Henry, c.1908
PG 77.1.11.3
- Figure 2.8 Beaton/Mattie on her horse, Nellie, 1910
PG 77.1.17
- Figure 2.9 Entrance to Tunnel #4, 1902
PG 77.1.9.4
- Figure 2.10 Rose and Ann Williams, c.1902
PG 77.1.9.2
- Figure 2.11 Nettie L. Mine/Rose Williams and Mattie (on the stove) and Ann Williams, c.1902
PG 77.1.9.8
- Figure 2.12 Beaton/People dressed for the Masquerade Ball, 1903
PG 77.1.11.1
- Figure 2.13 Dante Gabriel Rossetti. Lady Lilith, 1868, oil on canvas
Source: Griselda Pollock. Vision and Difference: Femininity, Feminism and the Histories of Art, (London 1988), 143.
- Figure 2.14 Ralph Eugene Meatyard. Lucybelle Crater and Close Friend Lucybelle Crater in the Grape Arbour, 1971
Source: Marianne Hirsch. "Masking the subject: practicing theory" the point of theory: practices of cultural analysis, edited by Mieke Ball and Inge E. Boer (Amsterdam 1994), 173.
- Figure 2.15 Lux Ranch, Upper Arrow Lake, 1905
PG 77.1.21
- Figure 3.1 Edward Curtis. The Medicine Man - Slow Bull. 1907
Source: Joseph Brown, ed. The North American Indians: A Selection of Photographs by Edward S. Curtis. (New York 1972), 56.

- Figure 3.2 Geraldine Moodie. Indian in Full War Dress. 1895
Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum, Regina.
- Figure 3.3 Alex J. Ross. Deerfoot (aka Bad Dried Meat). 1885
Source: Brock Silversides. The Face Pullers: Photographing Native Canadians, 1871-1939. (Saskatoon 1993), 67.
- Figure 3.4 Geraldine Moodie. Indian Chief "Fine Day" and his son. 1896
Source: RCMP Museum, Regina.
P-164/11
- Figure 3.5 Geraldine Moodie. "Cree Indian Woman and Child". no date
Source: Royal Canadian Mounted Police Archives, Ottawa.
- Figure 3.6 Gertrude Käsebier. Chief Iron Tail. 1898.
Source: Barbara Michaels. Gertrude Käsebier: The Photographer and her Photographs. (New York 1992), 32.
- Figure 3.7 Gertrude Käsebier. Zitkala-Ša. 1898.
Source: Michaels. Gertrude Käsebier, 41.
- Figure 3.8 Gertrude Käsebier. Zitkala-Ša. 1898.
Source: Michaels. Gertrude Käsebier, 43.

Illustrations 3.9-3.12 a-d are all photographs by Geraldine Moodie from The Thirst Dance Series, Battleford, 1895. Illustrations 3.12 a-d are The Thirst Dance Panorama.

National Archives of Canada.

Figure 3.9 PA28836

Figure 3.10 PA28832

Figure 3.11 PA28833

Figure 3.12a RCMP Museum, Regina
P-164/7

Figure 3.12b PA28829

Figure 3.12c PA28834

Figure 3.12d PA28830

- Figure 3.13 William Hanson Boorne. Blood Indian Sundance, July 1887.
Source: Cavell. Sometimes a Great Nation. 80.
- Figure 3.14 photographer unknown. Battleford Industrial School Football Team,
Saskatchewan, 1897.
Source: Gerald McMaster, "Colonial Alchemy: Reading the Boarding
School Experience" Partial Recall: Photographs of Native North
Americans. Edited by Lucy R. Lippard (New York 1992), 76.

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| Lloyd Rochester | 1990-024 |
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| | 1976-245 |
| | 1982-172 |
| | 1985-125 |
- B) Royal Canadian Mounted Police Archives, Ottawa
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 Hannah Maynard
- D) Royal Canadian Mounted Police Museum, Regina
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