



Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park: Studies in Two Centuries of Human History in the Upper Athabasca River Watershed (Mountain Cairns: A ... history and culture of the Canadian Rockies)

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Adults need playgrounds. In 1907, the Canadian government designated a vast section of the Rocky Mountains as Jasper Forest Park. Tourists now play where Native peoples once lived, fur traders toiled, and Métis families homesteaded. In *Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park*, I.S. MacLaren and eight other writers unearth the largely unrecorded past of the upper Athabasca River watershed, and bring to light two centuries' worth of human history, tracing the evolution of trading routes into the Rockies' largest park. Serious history enthusiasts and those with an interest in Canada's national parks will find a sense of connection in this long overdue study of Jasper.

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Editorial Review

Review

"[Culturing Wilderness] is a collection of provocative essays written by [MacLaren] and other individuals who persuasively argue that the wilderness we see in Jasper today is not the wilderness that was there 200 years ago, or even 100 years ago when Jasper became a national park....artists, fur traders, wardens, bureaucrats, mountaineers, researchers and others have also cultured this wilderness to reflect their own values and their particular points of view.... So, today, we have in the Athabasca Valley of Jasper wildlife that are unafraid of humans, thick spruce forests that have overtaken the open savannah, and a non-native culture that in no way reflects the one that was there 100 years ago." Ed Struzik, Edmonton Journal, February 10, 2008

"It is the scale that takes your breath away,' writes Ian MacLaren in his introduction to this academic but surprisingly accessible collection of studies on Jasper National Park and its history. The collective project of these academics, through nine chapters that run from the fur trade to the present, and through the human history of exploration, mapping, name-giving, boundary-setting, trail-riding, mountaineering, ecological restoration, and the eviction of squatters, is to document just how human history in Jasper has been at work transforming what once might have been 'wilderness' into a tourist zone, and into capital. And it's a fascinating story they tell. The wilderness presence in Jasper National Park has been ghostwritten by humans, this book argues, not authored by Nature. The real history here is of how the forces of recreational management have triumphed over the non-privileged, the non-white, and the non-human." Stephen Slemmon, Legacy Magazine, Summer 2008

"This is a book for those who love the Rocky Mountains. The labour of nine writers has gone into this history of the area. Highlights are the unique maps and photographs of the area." Ron MacIsaac, Lower Island News, April 2008

"Historian and U of A professor Ian MacLaren has pulled off an amazing feat. How many publishers would gamble on a collection of academic articles about just one national park? To their credit, the U of A press has. Anyone with an interest in Jasper National Park-or national parks in general or any of those exquisite corners of the world we term 'protected areas'-should be very glad about that....Aboriginal history in the Jasper area was little known back in the 1980s when I was a park naturalist; more is coming to light these days. Peter Murphy's interview with Edward Moberly is a significant contribution....Culturing Wilderness is a peer-reviewable fount of facts, and I'm delighted to have this book on my shelf." Ben Gadd, Alberta Views, July 2008.

"This handsome book supplements an already long list of published and manuscript studies. The contents divide under three heads: artistic and photographic representation of historical landscapes, historical land and resource use, and tourism and recreation history. Michael Payne's fur trade essay reviews the economic setting prior to the park's establishment in 1907. ... Editor Ian MacLaren examines the first important Euro-Canadian artistic records of the Jasper area. ... Peter Murphy's lucid essay on the institutional history of boundary changes of the park describes the role of forest reserve policy in those changes. ... PearlAnn Reichwein and Lisa McDermott's 'Opening the Secret Garden' follows American Quaker Mary Schaffer, one of the founders of the Canadian Alpine Club, in their 1908 quest to discover a mysterious lake known to the Stoney people as Chaba Imne. ... C.J. Taylor considers the importance for landscape change of the rise in

visitation occasioned by the steady shift from railway to automobile access. ... Gabrielle Zezulka-Mailloux considers tourism from the viewpoint of promotional literature. ... With his eye focused on 'ethics form and style,' Zac Robinson draws attention to a presumed alteration of goals and attitudes among alpinists during the 'Golden Years of Mountaineering in Canada,' particularly between 1906 and 1925. ... The final essay by Eric Higgs poses a Heraclitian question: can we ever step into the same landscape twice?" Graham A. MacDonald, *The Canadian Historical Review*, September 2008

"For every armchair mountain climber and back packer this intricate examination of the fur trading, homesteading, and exploring of Canadian mountains is outstanding." - BookMan/BookWoman, Morning Line, WTVF, Dec. 18, 2008

Despite the iconic status of the mountain parks in Canada there is a surprising lack of solid, accessible literature about park history, particularly in the postwar period. *Culturing Wilderness* is a welcome arrival, and a timely one, drawing our attention both to the centennial of Jasper itself (1907) and the upcoming centennial of the world's first National Park Branch (1911). ... However, *Culturing Wilderness* offers not only a richer understanding of the Jasper region but also a model for collaboration between academic and public historians; for the use of diverse archival, material, and visual sources; and for writing about parks (or any presumed "wilderness") as sites of human agendas and effort. As Jean Chretien notes in his foreword, "Just as it is tough work making parks, it is tough making parks work!"" Clair Campbell, Dalhousie University, *The British Columbian Quarterly*, Autumn 2008, No. 159

"For those looking for the best available information about how Jasper National Park came to be, *Culturing Wilderness* in Jasper National Park is the most thorough book available on the subject. Planning to visit Jasper National Park this year? This book might be of interest. The book provides the historical perspective that general travel guide books are unable to fully explore. *Culturing Wilderness* looks in detail at what makes Jasper tick, readying the traveler for a more enjoyable and rewarding experience. A word of warning: this book is the real deal. It is thick, content rich and will take a while to get through. But reading is worth the reward. The reward is the gaining of a deep appreciation of how Jasper National Park came to be." DH Wall, January 28, 2009 [Full comment online at:

<http://jasperjournal.com/history/book-review-culturing-wilderness-in-jasper-national-park>]

"In spite of Jasper's long history as a national park and forest reserve and its contemporary popularity with tourists (over two million people visit the park each year), few published materials have, until now, examined the human history of the upper Athabasca River watershed commonly known as Jasper National Park. The nine essays that comprise *Culturing Wilderness* focus on different aspects of the human culture and history embedded in Jasper nature, demonstrating that humans have profoundly shaped the ecological and cultural character of the region. Collectively, the essays that make up *Culturing Wilderness* challenge the commonsense understanding of Jasper as a natural area devoid of, or at least not dramatically shaped by, human activity. In so doing, the collection's contributors offer concrete examples in support of William Cronon's seminal argument that wilderness, rather than existing outside of humanity, is the creation of particular humans at specific points in time. In his introduction, MacLaren observes that no single book could do justice to the immense subject of human history in Jasper. *Culturing Wilderness*, however, provides an excellent start. The essays, which range in topic from park-boundary changes to tourism and from the politics of naming mountains to the ethics of climbing them, are thoroughly researched and thought provoking. The main point of *Culturing Wilderness*-that humans have played a large role in the making of Jasper wilderness-comes across clearly and convincingly in a book that is also beautifully designed, containing as it does many illustrative photographs and paintings as well as helpful maps. A romp through *Culturing Wilderness* will certainly change, and also make more interesting, a reader's next journey in the thoroughly cultured Jasper National Park." Jocelyn Thorpe, *Canadian Literature: A Quarterly of Criticism*

and Review, March 30, 2009

"The essays, arranged in chronological order, speak not as a single cohesive history but as an exploration of interrelated subjects that contributed culture to wilderness in one way or another, often subtly. As a cover-to-cover read, it will enthrall only the most serious Jasper enthusiasts, but if you've ever pondered the specifics of how the park's campgrounds came to look as they do or how the park was promoted to early tourists as a travel destination, the book will hold your interest." Tyrone Burke, Canadian Geographic, April 2011

"Professor MacLaren has done a superb job of pulling together the latest thinking on the history of areas designated as wilderness by their geography and public policy, in this case Jasper National Park. If I were to recommend one book on Jasper -- this would be it." Frits Pannekoek, Canadian Book Review Annual Online, 2007

From the Back Cover

FRONT FLAP: "Towns in parks are a tricky proposition and I had no blueprint for the negotiations that had to occur. But as this welcome edition of essays shows again and again, it is a complex relationship that exists between the interests of people, whether fur traders, railway builders, or tourism operators, and the national interest in protecting wilderness unique to the world. Maintaining a suitable balance requires imagination and commitment, and I heartily welcome a book that brings some of that complexity to light. I trust that when future Canadians come to mark the centenaries of the parks I established, they will continue to show interest in learning about those of us who were involved, and why we strove to safeguard and enhance Canada's distinguished record of wilderness protection in the form of national parks." - The Rt. Hon. Jean Chrétien, Foreword

BACK FLAP: I.S. MacLaren teaches at the University of Alberta in the Department of History and Classics and the Department of English and Film Studies. *Mapper of Mountains: M.P. Bridgland in the Canadian Rockies, 1902-1930* (2005) is his biography of the Dominion Land Surveyor whose phototopographic work in Jasper in 1915 created the first reliable maps of the area and made possible, eight decades later, the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project. Cover images: Front Cover: Morrison Parsons Bridgland (1878-1948). View of the Ramparts, Tonquin Valley, Jasper Park, stn. 15, no. 121, direction southeast, 1915. Back Cover: Paul Kane (1810-1871), Athabasca River and Roche Miette, from Mouth of Fiddle River, watercolour over graphite on paper, 12.7 x 17.8 cm, November 1846; also known as Athabasca River and Rocky Mountains. Front Flap/Left Flap: Henry Newton "Harry" Rowed (1907-1987), "Mt Edith Cavell [no.] 284" postcard, c.1935. [Courtesy, Bruce Peel Special Collections Library, University of Alberta; Scott Rowed; and Jasper-Yellowhead Museum and Archives.] Rear Flap/Right Flap: Gilbert Morris Taylor (1894-1967). "No. 101, Room Service Jasper Park Lodge," postcard, c.1940. BACK COVER: Adults need playgrounds. In 1907, the Canadian government designated a vast section of the Rocky Mountains as Jasper Forest Park. Tourists now play where Native people once lived, fur traders toiled, and Métis families homesteaded. In Culturing Wilderness in Jasper National Park, nine writers unearth the largely unrecorded past of the upper Athabasca watershed, bringing to light two centuries' worth of human history in the area. History enthusiasts and those with an interest in Canada's national parks will find a sense of connection in this long-overdue study of Jasper. "The acreage of Rocky Mountains Park in 1915 was 1,800 square miles, or 1,152,000 acres, and the value of the foreign tourist traffic it attracted was roughly speaking \$16,000,000. This works out to a per acreage value of \$13.88.. The value of our wheat exported that year was equivalent to \$4.91 per acre. That is, our export of scenery per acre in Rocky Mountains Park was equal to almost three times the acreage value of our exportable wheat surplus." -Dominion Parks Branch Commission James Bernard Harkin, aggressively promotes tourism to the mountain parks in 1919. Mountain Cairns, A series on the history and culture of the Canadian Rocky Mountains

About the Author

I.S. MacLaren teaches at the University of Alberta in the Department of History and Classics and the Department of English and Film Studies. *Mapper of Mountains: M.P. Bridgland in the Canadian Rockies,*

1902-1930 (2005) is his biography of the Dominion Land Surveyor whose phototopographic work in Jasper in 1915 created the first reliable maps of the area and made possible, eight decades later, the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project. Michael Payne is the City of Edmonton Archivist and an historian. Gabrielle Zezulka-Mailoux is Senior Researcher at UTSB Research. She lives in Banff, Alberta. Eric Higgs directs the School of Environmental Studies at the University of Victoria.

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