

Extra Activities, Essay and Discussion Topics

1. Collecting postcards has been popular since the late nineteenth century, and especially so between 1900 and 1914 before cameras were readily available to the general public. Byron Harmon made many of his photographs into postcards.

Imagine you are a postcard collector in the early 1900s and the photographs in Image set H are postcards. Which ones would you buy? Why?

2. Look at the photograph *Alpine Club of Canada members at Consolation Valley, 1910* (WMCR-V263/NA-83).
 - a) Where are these men? Why are they sleeping side by side? What might they be dreaming of? If you were sleeping in a tent on the hard ground, what might you be dreaming of?
 - b) Write a diary entry from the point of view of one of these men
 - c) In an artwork, depict the dreams the man might be having
3. Look at the photograph titled *Helen Breese Walcott at Mount Assiniboine, ca.1925* (WMCR-V263/NA-561).
 - a) Why is this an unusual image for its time? (Hint: What was the expected role of women in the 1920s?)
 - b) Imagine you are living in the 1920s seeing this image for the first time. Explain how it makes you feel. If you are a woman? If you are a man?
4. The description of the Rockies as "that part of Canada which stands on end" has been attributed to Byron Harmon. (*Great Days in the Rockies*)
 - a) What did he mean?
 - b) Draw a cartoon to illustrate Harmon's phrase
 - c) Come up with your own phrase to describe the Canadian Rockies and illustrate it
5. Photography can record events objectively, but each photographer has his/her own style. Can you tell that the photographs in the Byron Harmon fonds were taken mainly by one person? Why? Why not?
6. Find a photograph you like a great deal. Explain why. Find one you really don't like. Why not?
7. Are these photographs works of art or historical documents? Write a review of the Byron Harmon fonds explaining your position.
8. Harmon took photographs in black and white. If Harmon was alive today, do you think he would be shooting in colour? Why or why not?
9. Photographers have to compose their images, cutting out extraneous information outside the frame, sometimes intentionally, sometimes not. What's outside the frame may be just as interesting as what is inside.
 - a) Pick an image and imagine what might have been outside the frame. Discuss your ideas
 - b) Create a work of art using that image as a starting point