

Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Lillian Agnes Jones
Scholarship

A 'red tile in the Canadian mosaic'?
Indigenous Peoples and J. M. Gibbon's Cultural Pluralism,
1920s-1950s:

Project Report
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I. Introduction

This brief report, submitted upon the completion of my tenure at the Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, is intended to (I) summarize the research I completed, (II) discuss how it aligns with the proposed project plan, (III) provide an overview of the materials deposited in the archives, and (IV) detail future plans for the dissemination of the research conducted. Before going any further, I wish to offer my sincere thanks to all the Archives and Library staff for their assistance with this project, and a special thanks to Lindsay Stokalko, who went above and beyond and enabled me to maximize my research. I also wish to thank another member of the Whyte team, Dawn Saunders Dahl, who made it possible for me to attend the “Evening of Indigenous Food and Cultural Learning” event and to meet with Buddy Wesley.

II. Overview of Research

I arrived in Banff on January 7 and left for Calgary on February 11, where I spent an additional two days researching at the University of Calgary, before departing for home on February 14. My first few days were spent constructing a master list of files to review, in consultation with the Reference Archivist, before undertaking this research in earnest. In addition to the files listed in the proposal that I submitted, I also spent time reviewing a number of other files that were identified as being relevant to the project. This research was further guided by conversations with the Reference Archivist as well as Archives Assistant Dagny Dubois. (A complete list of materials accessed has been appended to this report.) I also conducted one off-site, semi-structured interview with Buddy Wesley, a Nakoda elder and tribal historian.

As I am still in the midst of organizing my notes and digital copies of the files consulted, I cannot provide a comprehensive account of how all the research completed will align with my project proposal. However, at this juncture I can definitively state that I was able to locate numerous pieces of correspondence between Gibbon and various individuals living in Banff, primarily regarding the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, the Sky Line Trail Hikers of the Canadian Rockies, Banff Indian Days, and the Highland Gatherings held at the Banff Springs Hotel. Regarding Gibbon's induction as an honorary Nakoda Chief in 1944, I found plenty of information including the office stance of the Nakoda chiefs and councils on the giving of honorary chieftainships, circa the 1930s, as well as additional insights provided by a Banff community member. I also found out that John Murray Gibbon's brother, Andrew Murray Gibbon, was inducted as an honorary chief during his visit to Canada (from London) in 1933. I located a number of photographs pertaining to the former in the Whyte collections, and am currently in touch with the family to see if there are photographs of the latter.

The connection between Gibbon and Indigenous peoples seems to have been provided most strongly by the Trail Riders, and specifically the Nakoda guides who worked on these outings. While there was limited textual material relating to these individuals, a read of the complete run of the Trail Rider's official publication, *The Bulletin*, yielded some insights, including several photographs and a list of guides who were active in the mid-1940s. Happily, I was also able to locate the negatives for several of these images. Additional insight into the relationship between Indigenous guides and non-Indigenous riders was found in some trail riders' scrapbooks and in various recorded interviews. I also explored the history of the Sky Line Hikers, to see if there were similar connections, although none were readily identifiable.

As an outsider who is unfamiliar with the history of Banff and surrounding area, I broadened the scope of my research to better understand the Indigenous presence and the relationship between settlers and Indigenous peoples in the region. This I did by examining the textual and visual records relating to events such as Banff Indian Days and Banff Winter Carnival. I also examined the personal records of local community leaders, specifically the personal correspondence of Norman Luxton, who was viewed by some contemporaries as a “manager” for the local Nakoda peoples.

III. Materials Deposited

In the summer of 2019, I was entrusted a number of Gibbon’s published and unpublished materials by his family for scholarly use and eventual donation to an archive. Given Gibbon’s deep love of and connections to the Banff region, the Whyte’s existing holdings, and their financial support of my project, I felt this institution a fitting home for these papers. The materials were turned over on February 11, and the paperwork is in the midst of being processed. As a part of their donation, one family member asked that I inquire as to the possibility of the Whyte Museum acquiring a bust of Gibbon completed by the sculptor Henri Hébert, currently held by the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. On a related note, I also inquired of the family as to the status of regalia originally given to the Gibbon brothers by the Nakoda Chiefs. Conversations between myself, Curator Anne Ewen, and the Gibbon family regarding these pieces are ongoing. However, in the perhaps unlikely event that these strands come together, the result could make for an interesting mixed-media exhibit at some point in the future.

IV. Dissemination of Research

I have submitted a proposal to give a paper based on this project at the 26th Canadian Ethnic Studies Association Biennial Conference, to be held on October 16th and 17th of this year at St. Mary's University in Halifax. I will be informed by March 31 if the paper has been accepted, and will communicate the results to the Whyte Museum at that time. Additionally, the research will be used to augment my book manuscript (based on my PhD dissertation), provisionally titled "The Racial Mosaic." It will specifically be used to flesh out existing material on Gibbon and the relationship between philosophies of cultural pluralism and settler colonialism in Canada more generally. However, as this particular research must be situated in the context of the broader history of the Banff region, I think that the project would be best served by the creation of a standalone research piece. It is therefore my intention to write an article, taking the title of the project proposal, and to submit it to the *Journal of Canadian Studies* prior to June, if possible. Additional research that I conducted, which is somewhat tangential to the current project, I hope can be used for the exhibit I have pitched, with the working title of "In Our Own Words." This exhibit would relate to the written history of Nakoda peoples and specifically their correspondence with Banff businesspeople such as Norman K. Luxton.

Appendix I: Research Conducted

Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, Library and Archives

List of archival materials accessed:

- Luxton family fonds (LUX)
 - LUX I/A (f 141 through 310, boxes 12-32)
 - LUX I/D4/1-10
 - LUX II/CI 28 to C4 15
 - LUX II/FI 19-21
 - LUX II/F3i no 1
- Catharine and Peter Whyte fonds (M36/S37)
 - F 299, 974, 1652, 1900-1904, and 1916
 - S37/20
- John Murray Gibbon fonds (M434/V226)
- F. O. (Pat) Brewster fonds (M2)
 - M2/92-93
 - M2/Oversize "A"
- Parks Canada fonds (S23)
 - 1-13
- Whyte Museum Oral History Programme collection (S1)
 - 70
 - 122
 - 137
 - 142
- CBC fonds (S7)
 - 7
 - 13
- Kreg O. Sky fonds (S29)
 - 1-17
 - 1-28
 - 1-30
 - 1-31
 - 1-39
 - 1-44
- Sylvia Brewster family fonds (M25)
 - M25/1
 - Oversize "F"
 - M1-M31, Oversize "H"
- Dan and Mary McCowan fonds (M55)
 - M55/2
- Banff Indian Days Committee fonds (M62)
- Jon Whyte fonds (M88)
 - M88/463

List of archival materials accessed (cont.):

- J. Monroe Thorington fonds (M106)
 - M106/108
- Margaret Gold Brine fonds (M147)
 - M147/1
- Jean A. Hembroff fonds (M573)
- Bunny Robinson fonds (V537)
- Lewis H. Thomas fonds (M209/V621)
- Charles Reid fonds (V487)
 - V487/I/ and V487/II
- Alice Fulmer fonds (M70)
 - F 89 – f 110
- Charles E. (Chuck) Millar fonds (M313)
 - 2, 6-8
- Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies fonds (M545/V635)
 - M545/4-6, 49, 55, 95-96, 98
 - V635/I
 - V635/I/PD1-3
 - V635/III/PA
 - V635/III/NA
- Charles Reid fonds (V487)
 - V487/II/A/PA-36-68
- Iva and Len Smith fonds (V590)
 - V590/PA70
- Allen E. Crawford fonds (V131/I/PD-1)
- Nicholas Morant fonds (M300)
 - M300/III/D/5/26
- Crosby family fonds (M486/V152/Box 1) *unprocessed*
- E.J. Hart fonds (M465) *unprocessed*
 - 2/19, 3/19, 4/19
- Jim Brewster family fonds (M436)
 - M436/I/1-18
 - M436/II/19 through /V/25
- Infofiles/Biofiles:
 - Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies
 - Sky Line Hikers
 - Bill Davie
 - John Murray Gibbon
 - Brewster Family

List of library resources accessed:

- Lore, comp. *Historical Summary of the Skyline Hikers*, 02.9 Sk9 Pam
- *The Sky Line Trail*, complete run (periodical)
- *The Skyliner* for 1970 (periodical)
- *Ridin' High With the Sky Line Hikers* (periodical)
- *Fifty Years of Trails and Tales*, 02.7 Sk9
- *Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies Bulletin*, complete run (Periodical)

List of library resources accessed (cont.):

- *The Bulletin* (of the TRCR and the SLH) (Periodical)
- Lore and others, comps., *Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies, Historical Summary 1923-1973*, 02.7 T68 Pam
- F. O. "Pat" Brewster, *Banff, the Rockies, and the West: Tales of the Early Days*, 08.3 B22bb
- Pearla Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise*, 08.3 R27c
- E. J. Hart, *Diamond Hitch*, 02.7 H25
- Hugh A. Dempsey, ed., *The CPR West*, 08.5 C11d
- *Resorts in the Canadian Pacific Rockies*, 02.6/R31/Pam/1925
- *Resorts in the Canadian Pacific Rockies*, 02.6/R31/Pam/191-?
- *Banff National Park, 1792-1965: A History*, 13.117 B22g
- Hart, *The Brewster Family Story*, 02.7 H25b C.1

University of Calgary, Archives and Special Collections

List of archival materials accessed:

- Glenbow Collection, Stuart Kidd family (M-7303)
- Glenbow Collection, Tom Wilson fonds (F1492):
 - M-1322-1-19, 24, 25, 27, 30
- Glenbow Collection, Frederick Niven fonds (F1939):
 - M-907-5, 9-11, 13, 33-34, 53, 107, 163, 200
 - M-4456
- Glenbow Collection, Paul Wallace fonds (F1868):
- M-1277-(15-16) and -(17-18)

List of materials from special collections accessed:

- *Mt. Assiniboine 'Matterhorn' of the Canadian Rockies: objective of six day trail ride (1926-30)*
- *Work, Wages, & Conditions in Canada* (CPR, 1912).
- *Tous canadiens; condition essentielle de l'unite nationale au Canada* (Ottawa, 1941)

Interviews Conducted

Interview with Buddy Wesley, Nakoda elder and historian, 5 February 2020

Appendix II: Materials Still Sought

- Administrative materials relating to the Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies (TRCR) and the Sky Line Trail Hikers of the Canadian Rockies, specifically the period from their founding (early 1920s) through the 1950s. (The bulk of known material seems to date from the 1960s/70s onward). I understand that both these fonds are to be processed in the coming months, and would welcome an update once this has been completed.
- Materials relating to the Indigenous guides employed by the Brewsters to assist the annual TRCR trips. I was unable to find much in the way of textual records. I did dip into the various Brewster-related fonds, but the finding aid is not overly detailed so it would require a lot of further digging to see if there are financial records relating to the hiring and compensation of such guides for the official Trail Rides. According to the TRCR *Bulletin* 77 [February 1945], p. 14, Nakoda guides included (in the 1940s at least):
 - Johnny Bearspaw
 - Tom Simeon (sometimes spelled Simmion or a variant thereof)
 - Peter Wesley
 - Lazarus Wesley (his given name was at least once mistakenly given in a caption as "Lizra")
 - Nelson Rabbit
- Materials relating to the founding and administration of the Banff Winter Carnival, and particularly to the role and participation of Indigenous peoples.
- Materials relating to the founding and administration of Banff Indian Days, particularly from 1903 through the 1950s (the bulk of known materials seems to date from 1970s onward, with the exception of the publicity materials).
- Files that were unable to be located include:
 - M300/III/D/5/92 O.S.