

Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies,
Lillian Agnes Jones Fellowship

Defining *Wilderness*:
Mapping Boundaries in Banff National Park

Final Research Report Submitted
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Felix F. Mayer,
M.ARCH ; B.E.D.S.
Azrieli School of Architecture,
Carleton University

Table of Contents

01	Abstract	03
	<i>Summary of Research Project</i>	
02	Research Output	04
	<i>Research Findings, Theoretical Contexts, Final Output</i>	
03	Dissemination of Work	07
	<i>Overview of Relevant Publications & Awards</i>	
04	Expansion of Research	10
	<i>Future Continuation of Research Project</i>	
05	Appendix A: Research Materials	13
	<i>Appendix of Materials Accessed</i>	
06	Bibliography	19
	<i>Research Bibliography & Relevant Sources</i>	

01 | **Abstract**

Wilderness is a term that holds undeniable significance within Canadian culture and has become a celebrated aspect of its national identity. This research project, a year-long study of Banff National Park and the history of its boundaries, is an examination of how federal park boundaries have acted as legal and spatial tools to regulate and control territory, rather than solely preserve landscapes or ecologies. The history of the park boundary is investigated through its interactions with industrial interests, cultural landmarks, and historical narratives, dissecting the capacities of maps and boundaries to control intensely layered and complex territories. The research project suggests that this complex layering of histories and interests can be understood through the evolution of the boundary and the park as an entity—acting as a means to not only understand the National Park itself, but what the notion of *Wilderness* as a space has represented in Canadian culture. Through an analysis of historical imagery and maps, as well as the production of a new series of mapping explorations that document the complex landscapes that the boundary of the park navigates, the dynamics of power, exclusion, demarcation, and control inherent to the defining of landscapes and boundaries are investigated.

02 | Research Output

The majority of the research project, which was conducted primarily between January and August of 2021, was completed remotely due to provincial and regional restrictions over the course of the Covid-19 pandemic. A one-week long visit to the archive was completed from June 15th-18th, for which the consulted materials are outlined in appendix A. As the focus of this project was the demarcation and defining of territory, the materials accessed largely consisted of maps and cartographical imagery. The main objective of the project was to find connections between the park boundary and evolving notions of *Wilderness* within Canadian culture, and to understand how Banff National Park as a zone has interacted with its surrounding contexts.

To document these findings a series of “Atlas Entries” were created so that this information could be understood visually, overlaying modern GIS data with the historical, social and political landscapes that the research sought to explore, connecting these factors to the spaces and landscapes that they influenced. Completed mapping studies explored information from topographical and geological surveys, to the cataloging of hydro-industrial developments across the Rocky Mountains, to extractive industries and resource deposits still located within the park, to the projections of flooding, wildfire and drought events across Alberta based on established environmental trends. A central theme in the research became the park

boundary as a dichotomy of spaces, an invisible and evolving barrier between preservation and industrialization, wilderness and modernity. The project ultimately seeks to understand and explore how boundaries of territories such as Banff National Park can influence space, manifesting a drawn line into physical reality, cultural understanding and legal frameworks, which then in turn further influence our understanding of place. All completed mapping studies and explorations can be viewed at the following webpage, AltasofBanff.ca, which is a portfolio of studies completed for the research project and will continue to grow and expand as further studies are completed.

Some of the key explorations for the project involved the documentation of industrial developments within the Rocky Mountains, and the parallel development of industrialization and tourism and hospitality industries within Alberta during the course of the 20th century. Of particular interest to the project were the hydro-power developments established within the Watershed of Banff National Park throughout the early 1900's, such as the facilities located at Lake Minnewanka, the Spray Lakes Reservoir and Horseshoe Falls. The constant conflict between seeking to harness these waterways for the energy generation required for an expanding population across Southern Alberta, and the desire to keep the park devoid of visible industry created a clear conflict, with the park boundary acting as the key mediator between two opposing uses of the site. This conflict would at times force a re-definition of the park itself, such as the redrawing of the Banff

National Park boundary around the Spray Lakes flood plain to allow for its development and industrialization in the 1930s. In this case, mapping and a re-definition of territory was key to granting a new use of the landscape within the Spray Lakes Valley, simply redrawing a boundary in order to allow a new industry to occupy the valley. It is one example of the key findings that this research project has explored – the powerful role that mapping and boundaries play in our understanding and use of a site, and how invisible barriers echo into physical reality through the legal frameworks that they establish and the industries and occupancies that they enable.

03 Dissemination of Work

The research conducted with the Whyte Museum has been submitted to several publications and has been nominated for a selection of academic awards through the Azrieli School of Architecture at Carleton University. The research conducted over the winter of 2021 using the online archive contributed to the final architecture thesis submitted to the Azrieli School of Architecture at Carleton University, Ottawa, which was successfully defended and approved by the Carleton University Senate Committee on July 18th, 2021. Several of the mapping explorations, site studies and historical catalogues which were completed through the Lillian Agnes Jones Fellowship contributed to sections of this thesis work.

The final thesis project has been nominated for a Student Award of Excellence to Canadian Architect Magazine. One of only a few annual nominations put forward by a faculty jury each year, the submission for the student award of excellence would include publication in the next edition of Canadian Architect Magazine. Materials submitted for the award included a selection of the atlas entries conducted over the course of the research project, as well as a final theoretical design project based within Banff National Park. Mapping explorations and imagery from the final thesis project have also been nominated for a faculty choice award at the Azrieli School of Architecture. Pending the decision of a faculty jury which is to convene in

October 2021, this work may be featured in the next edition of the school's annual architecture publication, *Building 22 Magazine*. The Whyte Museum will be contacted with any relevant information or publications regarding the results of these nominations after the respective juries have convened in the Fall of 2021.

An additional study conducted over the course of the research project was the creation of a series of small-scale 3D models of river valleys located within Banff National Park, which were commissioned by a faculty member at the Azrieli School of Architecture to display in building 22 on the Carleton University Campus, Ottawa. The goal of these models was to produce sections of landscapes from across Canada, which emphasized unique waterways, climates and topographies from different regions across the country. These models were milled using the CNC machinery on the campus and as of the winter semester 2021, are on display in the foyer of building 22 at Carleton University, Ottawa.

The research conducted with the museum has also contributed to a research paper that further examines the theme of the reciprocal relationship between definitions of *Wilderness* as an idea, and the physical boundaries of territory. An abstract for this research paper was submitted to the *Cultures, Communities and Design Conference* being held in Calgary by the international research organization and publication *Architecture_MPS* in the summer of 2022 and after peer-reviewal has been accepted for

presentation at the conference. The conference is based around examining notions of the rural and the countryside, and is an exploration of how we might explore “the city and its architecture on its own terms, but also address the ‘rural’ in its particular context and, importantly, explore the parallels and mutual influences at play.” A selection of authors will be encouraged after the conference to develop longer versions of their papers for inclusion in the journal *Architecture_MPS*, or a specially produced book documenting the entries to the conference. Potential publishers include Routledge, Taylor & Francis, UCL Press, Intellect Books, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, Vernon Press and Libri Publishing.

04 | **Expansion of Research**

Throughout the research conducted during the fellowship, the goal of the project has been to understand the history and development of Banff National Park through the evolution of its boundaries, and to draw and map out the events, narratives and policies that have shaped it over time. The goal of understanding such a complex space is inevitably bound to capture only a fragment of this history, and the complexity of a single line on a map proves to be an endless source of dispute, re-evaluation and re-interpretation. This complexity has also created multiple avenues for continuing the research and the explorations conducted so far. The completed studies and possible continuations of this research make it suitable for a number of additional publications and architectural forums that will be applied to over the course of the next year. The following is a shortlist of publications and calls for submissions for which the research would be well-suited and applications / manuscripts are currently being developed for submission.

Journal of Architectural Education // JAE 76:2 “Pedagogies for a Broken World”, Manuscript in Development for February 2022 Deadline

“Pedagogies for a Broken World aims to provide a platform for examining architectural education in the context of a broken world. What is architecture in that context and where and how do we teach it? How must the social and legal contracts change to adjust and fix

architectural pedagogy for the broken world? What might constitute a broken-world pedagogy, both now and historically? How can architecture be engaged in the pedagogies of resistance, care and repair?”

“...Contributions in the category of Scholarship of Design might reveal different historical attitudes toward myriad forms of brokenness through the examination of pedagogical projects, schools, architectural and space-making practices.”

Environmental History, Oxford Academic Journals

Research Article Manuscript in Development

“This interdisciplinary journal addresses issues relating to human interactions with the natural world over time, and includes insights from history, geography, anthropology, the natural sciences, and many other disciplines.”

“Environmental History is devoted to the history of human interaction with the non-human world. We define our field broadly, and we welcome submissions from scholars in all disciplines that provide insight into important issues in environmental history. We are happy to consider manuscripts covering any time period or time frame and any part of the world.”

TAD Journal – Technology, Architecture and Design

Research Article Abstract in Development

“Technology | Architecture + Design (TAD) is a bi-annual, peer-reviewed academic journal published by Taylor Francis/ Routledge on behalf of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA)...”

“...Tad is dedicated to the advancement of scholarship in the field of building technology and its translation, integration, and impact on architecture and design. Intended for researchers, educators, and practitioners, TAD advances and transforms the current discourse on building-based technologies with the goal of expanding, reimagining, and challenging technology’s role for architecture and design.”

The Whyte Museum will be contacted with any relevant information or publications regarding the results of these applications and submissions.

06 | **Appendix A: Research Materials**

List of Archival Materials Accessed:

Library Maps & Blueprints

C5-6.18a

C6-4.4-6.5

C6-4.4

C6-4.4

C6-4.4-A

C6-4.4-A

C6-4.6(c)

Library - Book

02.4 C16cpe 1888 Pam - The Canadian Pacific: the new
Highway to the east, across the mountains, prairies
and rivers of Canada

Luxton Family Fonds (Lux / II / C5 / 24 & 25)

Lux / II / 25 - Mapping Folder

Luxton Family Fonds (Lux II / F1 / 38)

Lux / II / F1 / 33

Lux / II / F1 / 34

Lux / II / F1 / 35

Lux / II / F1 / 36

Lux / II / F1 / 37

Lux / II / F1 / 38

Murray Hay Fonds (M570 / W795)

M750 / I / 1 - Newspaper Clippings

M570 / II / 1 - Alaska [Reference Material]

M570 / III / A / I / 1 - Silver Star

M570 III / A / ii / 1 - Blackcomb Whistler

M570 / III / A / iii / 1 - Panorama Ski Resort

M570 / III / A / vii / 1 - Cariboo Monashee

M570 / iii / B / ii / 1 - Lake Louise

M570 / III / B / iii / 1 - Jasper Marmot Basin

M570 / III / B / IV / - Kananaskis + Spray

M570 / III / B / I / 1 - Sunshine Village

M570 / III / D / I / 2 - Canadian Rockies

M570 / III / D / I / 1 - The Fairways

M570 / III / D / I / 2 - Canadian Rockies

Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies Fonds

M545 / V / 53

The Canadian Pacific, The New Highway to the East

Aileen Harmond Fonds

M287 / I / II - Tales From My Mountain Life

M287 / I / II - Magazine Articles

List of Archival Materials Accessed (cont.):

M287 / I / II - Magazine Articles

Materials Accessed via Online Archive:

Bruno Engler Fonds

V190 / IV. A.iv. - 5 / NA - 02

V190 / I.V.A.ii. - 11 / NA - 21

V190 / I.V.A.ii. - 11 / NA - 21

V190 / I.V.A.ii. - 11 / NA - 05

Elliot Barnes Fonds

V48 / NA / 268

V48 / NA / 280

V48 / NA / 33

V48 / NA / 391

Edward Whymper Fonds

V728 / Ic / accn / 3447 / NA66 - 2254

Underwood & Underwood Publishers Fonds

V465 / PD 2 / 284

V465 / PD 3 / 335

V465 / PD 3 / 338

George Noble Fonds

V469 / 1706

V469 / 1712

Materials Accessed via Online Archive (cont.):

V469 / 1715

V469 / 1716

V469 / 1717

V469 / 1792

Peter and Catharine Whyte Fonds (M36 / V683 / S37)

V683 / III / A / 3 / PA - 281

Landscape Paintings

BeC.04.28

CaJ.18.01

CoJ.03.233

DaK.02.02

LaC.03.01

LaC.03.01

KgA.18.01

MoN.18.06

WYC.01.083

WYC.01.101

WyC.01.102

WyC.01.116

WyC.01.168.

WyC.01.414

Materials Accessed via Online Archive (cont.):

WyP.01.115

WyP.01.117

WyP.01.079

WyP.01.562

Library - Postcard

V771 / PG-1

V70 / PG-1

V58 / PG-7

V160 / PG-58

Additional Sources

Lectures Attended (Virtual):

Professor Donald Smith - March 4th, 2021

Opening Eyes- Three Extraordinary 20th Century

Calgarians and the First Nations: Buffalo Child Long

Lance, John Laurie and Hugh Dempsey

Interviews (Conducted Remotely):

Bill Snow - November 25th, 2020

Professor Donald Smith - February 27th, 2021

Glenbow Archives:

Glenbow Library Map 21

NA-407-4

Additional Sources (cont.):

PA-4013-2363

NA-441-9

NA-471-10

NA-705-16

NA-1644-162

NA-4416-7

NA-4477-6

NA-4477-7

NA-4477-8

NA-4477-9

NA-4594-1

PA-2514-11

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Schama, Simon. *Landscape and Memory*. New York: Vantage, 1996.

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