The Banff Photographic Exchange: Albums, Youth, Skiing, and Memory Making in the 1920s

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Computers and the Internet have made exchanging photographs with peers as easy as clicking a mouse. Social networking sites such as Facebook and Flicker allow people to post photographs and comment on their friends’ images in a semi-private sphere. This creates a layering of personal narratives onto photographs and a sharing of images that is not confined by the materiality of photographic prints and bound albums, and highlights the ways photographs act as sites of both individual and collective memory making.

The exchange of photographs and creation of multiple narratives through them is not specific to the digital albums posted on sites such as Facebook. For as long as youth, in particular, have had access to cameras, they have been taking photographs, sharing the prints with friends, and creating albums to document memorable experiences. Occasionally the albums from an identifiable peer group share photographs as well as an emphasis on one activity. The archived albums made by Fulton Dunsmore (c.1905–43), Cyril Paris (1904–81), Peter Whyte (1905–66), and Fern Brewster (1902–67) illustrate the layering of individual and collective memory facilitated by album making and the democ-
ratization of the technology of photography in the early twentieth century. Their albums show a mixture of summer and winter activities, but the greatest crossover of images and themes is found in the photographs of skiing.

The youth of Banff, Alberta, were first exposed to skiing at the first Banff Winter Carnival in 1917. Adolescent boys watched ski jumpers from Revelstoke, British Columbia, fly through the air and wanted to imitate them. When the carnival ended, friends Peter Whyte and Cyril Paris ransacked the storage room of Peter’s father’s store. Using long planks from a shipment of toboggans, circular cheese boxes, and scrap bits of leather, the boys created crude versions of the skis they had seen. Poles were made from brooms pilfered from their mothers. In 1918 Dave White and Co., the same store Peter and Cyril had raided the previous year, began selling skis imported from Europe. Equipped with proper skis, the boys of Banff built temporary ski jumps on the natural slopes of Grizzly Street and Caribou Street. Under the watch of their fathers and with the guidance of Camrose, Alberta, ski jumper August “Gus” Johnson, the boys learned to fly through the air like the ski jumpers who had inspired them. By the winter of 1921–22, the Banff Ski Club, founded in 1918, boasted twenty-nine members, all but five of who were young men, and skiing was established as the choice form of winter recreation for the younger residents of Banff.

Gradually, skiing moved from the ski jump to mountain slopes outside Banff. Participants brought pocket cameras, such as the accessible and inexpensive Kodak Brownie, to capture the thrills of skiing, and the resulting photographs were regularly shared among friends, with many of these images finding their way into albums. These albums are both individual expressions of personal identity and part of a collective remembrance of life among youth in 1920s Banff. The images in albums by Peter Whyte are also found in those of his friends Cyril Paris, Fulton Dunsmore, and Fern Brewster. These are just the albums that are deposited in the local archive. The largest collections of 1920s albums are from Dunsmore and Whyte; Paris’ albums date from the 1930s, after he married. All the men were active members of the Banff Ski Club beginning in 1918, were involved in developing skiing infrastructure at Mount Norquay and Lake Louise/Skoki Valley in the late 1920s and early 1930s, and were avid amateur photographers. The shared photographs of skiing excursions in their albums illustrate how comparing individual albums can allow for an understanding of collective memory within a known peer group.

The earliest photographs of skiing in the albums examined here are picture postcards of professional ski-jumpers and posed snapshots of boys with long skis and awards near the family home. Later photographs depict extended backcountry trips with friends, teaching others to ski, and building runs and
huts on the slopes around the Banff townsite. This shift reflects the movement of skiing from the public ski jump to the more secluded backcountry, and back to the public through the creation of ski infrastructure. Consequently, the albums act as sites of memory that speak to each other and present a subject positioning and an imagining of self that was informed by youth, masculinity, and the experience of winter recreation in the mountains. Through these albums, it is possible to look past the album as a site of individual memory expression and use it to examine how the construction and documentation of individual memories are part of a broader collective remembrance of growing up and being active in the mountain environment.

For the youth of Banff, a camera was part of the necessary equipment for summer and winter recreation. Trains and, later, automobiles allowed Banff youth to take day trips to hike along the Great Divide and ski or snowshoe on frozen Lake Louise. The photographic archive of the early twentieth century shows youth taking cameras with them on these trips to create rough snapshots of their friends enjoying leisure activities. This is especially true of the skiing excursions undertaken by the peer group that included Fulton Dunsmore, Cyril Paris, and Peter Whyte. The camera was carried to capture images of ski-jumping competitions, breaking trails, taking spills, and relaxing on the trail between runs. These young men also grew up with strong male photographer role models in the professional and serious amateur photographers living and working in Banff. Mountain photographers, such as Byron Harmon, began engaging in the commercial production and technology of photography in the early 1890s. Boys such as Peter Whyte grew up watching professionals produce images of remote regions of Banff National Park for sale to tourists. Occasionally, Banff youth would accompany professional photographers on photographic excursions as Whyte, Paris, and others did in 1919 when Harmon led a snowshoe tramp of Sulphur Mountain to make a motion picture of winter in the Rockies. Photographs by professionals accented the public space in Banff, as they were displayed in the windows of photography studios on Banff Avenue, appeared in the pages of the local newspaper, and were available as postcards in stores such as Dave White and Co. Additionally, two of the active amateur photographers were Ted Dunsmore and George Paris, the fathers of Fulton and Cyril, respectively. Thus the men were acculturated to view photography, especially of areas away from the town, as a masculine activity. They had the opportunity to learn from the serious amateur and professional photographers around them as seen in the increased attention to composition of photographs in later albums by Dunsmore, Paris, and Whyte.

The albums that will be examined here were compiled between 1915 and 1930, which makes the creators between the ages of ten and twenty-five, and
unmarried, when the photographs were taken and the albums compiled. This focus captures the men in a state of transition from adolescent to adult, and the albums became expressions of life stories connected to adolescents’ assertion of independence from the domestic family unit. Yet, like family albums, the albums express a narrative similar to that noted by Deborah Chambers:

By creating photographic images of events, people and places, the visually selective nature of domestic photography traditionally serves the purpose of constructing the family as myth by capturing a preferred vision of family life. The structures set the parameters within which agents create their visual family ‘life stories.’

The young men’s albums allowed them to construct a myth about outdoor exploits throughout the national park based on recreation activities pursued away from the Banff townsite with friends. They constructed life stories through the albums to visually narrate a specific period in their lives—the transition from adolescence to adulthood. The preservation of albums from members of the same social group allows individual “life stories” to be compared and a collective story of identity formation and coming of age in Banff during the 1920s to emerge. These stories are also marked by the shared white, middle-class, Protestant, English-speaking background of the adolescents making the albums.

Photographs are objects. Though often presented as two-dimensional visual representations of three-dimensional encounters, photographs can be picked up and held, turned over and written on, or pasted into an album. Elizabeth Edwards and Janice Hart assert that “photographs are both images and physical objects that exist in time and space and thus in social and cultural experience.” The noting of names, dates, and places on the reverse of prints intensifies the importance of the photograph as an object, not simply a visual representation. The significance of what a photograph represents is enhanced by how it is treated as an object. The selection of one print over another for inclusion in a photographic album is a great signifier of the hierarchy of value placed on the photographs. The album allows a subjective visual narrative to be created from photographs from various events and experiences. It also provides space for a textual description of individual images and sets of images. Like the writing on the back of a photographic print, an album caption draws attention to specific features of the photograph and hints at its deeper meaning to an individual.

The photographic album takes the meaning of the photograph to a new level. Alison Nordstrom asserts that albums “are deeply individual, yet they survive as a material example of the broader context in which certain images were once used and understood, and they continue to shape our understand-
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13 They function as a means of imposing order and hierarchical structure upon images, which makes them part of a linear narrative. Though Nordstrom refers to travel scrapbooks, the same is true of the photographic albums made by young men from Banff. The placement of the photographs in an album, instead of as loose prints, frames how they are read. The album forces the viewer to read images in relation to those around them. Approaching the album as a unit instead of as a collection of independent photographs facilitates identifying the unifying theme of the album. The albums of the Banff youth present variations on interpreting outdoor leisure and recreation pursuits. This allows for a reading of the albums as part of a collective memory of life in Banff in the 1920s. The similar composition and subject matter of the men’s albums allow for an understanding of the albums as a group that centres on a collective memory of recreation in the mountains broadly and winter recreation specifically.

Looking at album photographs as a series connects the single images to a larger photographic narrative. The appearance of the same people through a series of prints functions as a cue to the social connection between the people photographed and the person holding the camera. Even if the exact nature of the relationship between the photographer and subject is unknown, the constant appearance of the same people is enough to signify their importance. The same is true of places and activities that reoccur in an individual’s photographic collection. As Susan Sontag observed, “to photograph is to confer importance…. [T]here is no way to suppress the tendency inherent in all photographs to accord value to their subjects.”

14 The same people, places, and activities in a photographic album elevate their importance because the album compilers consciously selected the photographs in the album to enact a specific photographic narrative.

The albums studied here function as collections, portable mementoes of experiences specific to a single time and place. There is an impermanence to skiing that makes photography perfectly suited to commemorating it. Snow comes and goes, trails change from year to year, but the single experience can be captured on film despite the constantly changing conditions of the environment. Commemoration is achieved with the camera, and the visual memories are transformed into mementoes through the creation of an album. This conforms to Sontag’s claim that “after the event has ended, the picture will still exist, conferring on the event a kind of immortality (and importance).”

15 Approaching the albums and photographs taken by the young men from Banff in the 1920s in this way recognizes the materiality and immortality of the album and the photograph. It also forces us to view the album as a whole before taking it apart to examine specific photographs.
Sharing photographs is part of sharing experiences and the memories attached to those experiences. When the same photographs appear in albums by different people, it suggests a memory that is collectively important and warrants commemoration by multiple authors. When the layout of the photographs is similar from compiler to compiler, it indicates a common contextualization of the subject and further pushes the narrative structure of the album beyond the personal and into the collective. Shared photographs within albums from different compilers allow the albums to function both as personal mementoes and sites of collective memory making.

In their albums, Fulton Dunsmore, Cyril Paris, and Peter Whyte commemorated a 1920 ski trip to the Eau Claire Camp using four photographs taken by.

**Figure 1.** Ski Trip to Eau Claire Camp, Peter Whyte Album (3), V683/I.B.5.c-3 (PD), Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, WMCR, 16.
or at least obtained from, August Johnson (figures 1 and 2).17 The Eau Claire Camp visited by the group was located southwest of the Banff townsite in the Spray Lakes area. It was one of many logging operations in the eastern slopes of the Rocky Mountains operated by Calgary-based Eau Claire and Bow River Lumber Company in the early twentieth century. The location and photographer are identified by Fulton Dunsmore in captions and initials under each of the images (figures 3 and 4). Neither Whyte nor Paris noted the location or photographer, placing the accuracy of identification on Fulton alone. The four photographs are posed group shots: two in front of a log building at the camp, one in a forest opening that Dunsmore captioned “On the way to Camp Eau
The photographs from the Eau Claire Camp trip can be generalized as group shots with the skiers centred in the frame. This framing draws the eye directly to the participating group and clearly situates people in the natural environment outside the Banff townsite. The people in the photographs are identified courtesy of a piece of paper slid behind Cyril Paris’s copy of the “On the way to Camp Eau Clair” photograph naming the individuals in the group as Jack White, Ronald Quigley, Tom Dunsmore, Cyril Paris, Edwin Young, Fulton Dunsmore, Peter Whyte, and Owen Bryant. All the participants were residents of Banff, and—except for Quigley, Tom Dunsmore, and Bryant—were members of the Banff Ski Club in 1921–22. The participants are dressed for cold weather recreation in warm sweaters, toques or caps, mittens, and short pants with knee-high boots and long thick socks. Skis are visible in all the photographs, either on the people’s feet or leaning against buildings and sticking out of snowdrifts. The people are all smiling as they wait for the photograph to be taken. The two images from the Eau Claire Camp feature a sizable log building, which some participants have climbed on to be seen. These photographs are about the people and the event in the landscape, though it is impossible to completely separate skiing from the space where it was done.

In one image, taken from a distance, the landscape dwarfs the group of skiers. The focal point is the group of skiers standing on a suspension bridge spanning a snow-filled river valley (figure 2). The seven people are dwarfed by the valley below them, with the forest around them and the base of the mountain barely visible in the distance. Unlike the other three photographs, which leave little of the landscape visible around the skiers, this photograph suggests the grandeur of the environment in which they were skiing. It is also the only photograph where the uninhabited space between Banff and the Eau Claire Camp is exhibited in full. This one image poignantly illustrates that skiing happened in the backcountry, yet the photograph is not about the wilderness associated with the unpopulated areas of the mountains. Like the other three photographs, it is about the group of people on the suspension bridge, one of whom is waving at the photographer. When viewed outside an album, these four images suggest that what was important about skiing was that it was done in a group, not that it brought the skiers in closer contact with the wilderness around the Banff townsite. The photographs present early skiing in Banff National Park as a homosocial activity of the young men living in Banff; the gender-specific nature of skiing changed at the end of the 1920s as the boys in these photographs began to get married and introduced their girlfriends and spouses.
to skiing. The albums in which the Eau Claire Camp photographs appear show the place of the trip in a collective memory, and the albums also show the various ways that memory was integrated into a visual narrative.

The earliest incorporation of the Eau Claire Camp photographs is found in a Fulton Dunsmore album that is 153 pages long and stretches chronologically from 1917 to 1925. The first half is heavily captioned, with names, dates, and photographer noted for each image. The captioning becomes spotty in the middle, and only the occasional year is mentioned near the end. There is also a noticeable shift in where recreation occurs; gradually it moves from within the Banff townsite and around the family home to the wider national park. As Dunsmore’s photographs show him further from the town, he captions less and less, until only the odd date or location is noted. The Eau Claire Camp photographs come in the middle of both these transitions: they are near where Fulton stops captioning and where fewer photographs show recreation within the townsite. The only aspect of the photographs that remains consistent throughout the album is the people and the nature of their activities.

The Eau Claire Camp photograph collection is one example of Fulton including photographs of his friends skiing as a group (figures 3 and 4). The photographs are about people and the activity, and the captions suggest a distinct chronology to the trip. The first image is captioned ”On the way to Eau Clair”; the two by the log building, ”At Eau Claire Camp”; and the last, ”On a Sus-
pension Bridge near Eau Clair.” The captions create a flow of time from static images while still confirming Sontag’s observation that “photographs may be more memorable than moving images, because they are a neat slice of time.”

In this case, the “neat slices of time” allow Fulton to enforce his individual memory of the time and place of the trip through the photographs.

The second instance of the inclusion of the four Eau Claire Camp photographs in an album comes from Peter Whyte. A first-generation Banff resident, Whyte was the third child of general merchant Dave White. He showed an early interest in visually documenting the Rocky Mountains through sketching,
painting, and photography, eventually becoming a landscape artist. The album in which Whyte included the Eau Claire Camp photographs does not follow a chronological organization; instead it is separated into three thematic parts. The album is devoted entirely to photographs of winter, beginning with the Banff Winter Carnival, then moving on to skiing in various locations with various people before ending with photographs taken while hosting people filming movies in Banff in 1923–24. While Dunsmore’s visual narrative gives a sense of the evolution of skiing in Banff in the linear fashion, Whyte’s non-linear approach provides insight into his perception of the activity. The series of photographs depicting Eau Claire Camp are placed in the section of the album of general skiing images and are preceded and followed by photographs taken in the mid-1920s (figures 1 and 2). This suggests that the album was compiled a few years after the Eau Claire Camp trip occurred and that it was still an important enough event to be commemorated. The layout of the photographs in Whyte’s album is similar to Dunsmore’s; both place the photograph Dunsmore captioned “On the Way to Eau Clair” first and follow it with the group photographs at the camp and the group on the suspension bridge. The narration of the trip is similar, while the distinct organizational styles of Whyte and Dunsmore show how the collective experience was internalized and how presentation is dependent on the individual’s interpretation of the experience.

Dunsmore and Whyte approached commemorating the Eau Claire Camp trip in different ways. The life stories that the trip photographs are part of are specific to the person compiling the album and express distinct means of personal memory making. As asserted previously, the theme of Dunsmore’s album is the people around him, not the landscape. This is seen in the captioning of photographs in the first half of his earliest album. The captioning identifies specific people rather than places and activities, suggesting that Dunsmore identified with the larger community through his recreation activities. This can be read juxtaposed to Peter Whyte’s album, which shows Whyte as independent from his family and, to a lesser extent, his community. While photographs depict his friends and the things they did together, there is a sense that he used this album to express an identity separate from the people who surrounded him in Banff. These two men used albums to express different personal identities despite the inclusion of the same activities and many of the same people in the photographs. This illustrates a different way of understanding the visual narratives of albums, of looking at them as sites of collective memory.

The treatment of the Eau Claire Camp photographs in an album by Cyril Paris adds a layer of personal meaning that fleshes out the significance of the trip to the collective memory of the participants beyond what is gleaned from the albums created by Fulton Dunsmore and Peter Whyte. Paris, like Whyte,
was a first-generation Banff resident; his father operated a number of businesses, including the Paris Tea House on Banff Avenue. Cyril Paris was at the forefront of growing the ski industry in Banff National Park, and of the three men discussed here, he is the only one who turned his adolescent love of skiing into a career. Paris’ archived albums begin after he married and focus on men and women skiing together in the backcountry. At the end of an album about skiing at Skoki Lodge in 1935, Paris included two of the four photographs taken on the Eau Claire Camp trip (figure 5). The two images are included on the same page as photographs of a ski jumper and three skiers standing in front of a teepee on Banff Avenue during the winter carnival. The Eau Claire Camp photographs are placed in reverse of the arrangement used by Whyte and Dunsmore, the group at the camp being above the “On the Way to Eau Clair” photograph.
For Paris, the photographs were part of looking back on adolescent skiing experiences and indicate an acknowledgement of the importance of early skiing experiences with friends to his identity as an adult. Situating the Eau Claire Camp trip photographs at the end of an album of skiing in the Skoki Valley is telling because of the lead role Paris played in the development of skiing at Skoki and throughout Banff National Park. Like Peter Whyte and Fulton Dunsmore, Cyril Paris was a founding member of the Banff Ski Club in 1918 and participated in clearing the first runs on Mount Norquay. Unlike the other two, Paris turned his love of skiing into a career and was involved in the development of four major ski areas in Banff National Park: Mount Norquay, Lake
Louise, Sunshine Village, and Skoki Lodge. Given the path his later life took, it is significant that Paris commemorated the trip as an adult instead of as an adolescent because it shows a connection between how he imagined himself and his place in these two stages of life, whereas the trip’s treatment by Dunsmore
and Whyte only applies to their adolescent identities. The intertextual reading of these albums illustrates a new level of understanding of the visual narratives of albums, an understanding that comes from examining them as sites of collective memory instead of as personal memory.24

The variation in layout found in the three treatments of the photographs from the Eau Claire Camp trip is typical of other shared photographs in the albums. Each compiler interpreted and remembered the experience differently, and these decisions are reflected in the layout choices. The nature of group photographs, as posed images, allows the photographic ordering to be adjusted to fit the personal narrative of an album. One instance where shared photographs are treated identically is from a day of skiing at Lake Louise, a series that both Whyte and Dunsmore included in albums (figure 6).25 The first photograph is of a man who has fallen into deep snow. All that is visible are his skis, poles, and head; the rest of his body is submerged. He is dwarfed by the snow around him and the forest backdrop, and the absence of other people in the photograph gives the impression that he has little chance of extracting himself from the snow alone. The second photograph shows two other men coming to the rescue of their stuck friend, pulling him up with the help of his poles. The captions provided by Dunsmore identify him as the photographer, the unfortunate skier stuck in the snow as Peter Whyte, and the rescuers as Cyril Paris and Alex Douglas (figure 7).

The photographs have an inherent ordering because of the nature of the event represented, yet Dunsmore and Whyte do not use them to express the
same chronology of events. Both situate the photographic image of the immersed Whyte on the left side of the page and the image of his rescue on the right. The albums are both bound on the left side of the page in question along the short side of the page, and the pages are the same size though Dunsmore’s album has many more pages. Despite the similarities of these two albums, the layouts of the images create two distinct narratives of the event depicted in the photographs. Dunsmore’s narrative is clear, even without captions, because he places the bottom of the images parallel to the bottom of the album page to show that first Whyte got stuck and then he was helped back up: the narrative moves from left to right. Whyte’s placement creates a confused narrative.
because he rotated the images ninety degrees to align the bottom of the images with the inside edge of the page. This requires the viewer to rotate the album to view the photographs and in so doing places the image of Whyte being helped out of the snow before the image where he is stuck. The reversing of events in Whyte’s album catches the viewer’s attention but because it is an obvious mistake in ordering, it does not undermine the narrative of getting stuck and helped up. Despite the confusion caused in Whyte’s album, the photographs’ inclusion by both Whyte and Dunsmore indicate that the event was amusing to both and constituted one of many collective memories made while skiing and sharing photographs.

Dunsmore’s last album is dominated by a series of photographs from an extended ski trip to Mount Assiniboine undertaken in 1929 by eleven men from
The photographs are arranged chronologically, a trademark of Dunsmore’s albums, and show activities typical of a backcountry ski trip: breaking through fresh powder, sawing wood, posing by the warden cabin, and getting stuck in deep snow. With the exception of a simple black-ink notation of “1929” in the top corner of the first photograph from the trip, there are no captions to identify when or where the ski trip took place. The absence of captions is consistent with the movement away from noting names, dates, and places in the later section of the album, which contains the previously mentioned Eau Claire Camp photographs. Yet there is a distinct chronology to the photographs that comes from Dunsmore’s consistent layout of four photographs per page. The album concludes with a set of head shots of Dunsmore, Whyte, and Bernie Hansen, all exhibiting significantly more facial hair than in the earlier photographs. This produces a logical documentation of the trip, creating a distinct visual travel journal within an album documenting various events from the late 1920s.

The photographs from this 1929 trip are found as loose prints in Peter Whyte’s photographic collection. This trip was undertaken shortly before Whyte departed on a year-long trip around the world, so it is likely he did not have time to put the prints into an album. It is interesting that Whyte’s loose prints, not Dunsmore’s album, are where specific details about the trip are found. The handwriting on the back of the photographs is not Whyte’s; it belongs to his wife, Catharine Robb Whyte, whom he married in 1930. This suggests that even though the photographs were not preserved in an album, the memories associated with them were later shared with Catharine in enough detail that she was able to make notes about Whyte, Paris, and Hansen returning ahead of the rest of the group. It is possible that the memories associated with these photographs were written down as part of early archiving efforts undertaken by the Whytes beginning in the late 1950s. The circumstances under which the stories behind the photographs were recounted do not take away from how the images function as mnemonic devices. The writing on the back of these prints functions much like Cyril Paris’ inclusion of 1920 photographs in a 1935 album because it signifies a continued commemoration of skiing adventures by Peter Whyte. It also points to a sense of nostalgia around early skiing for these men and the continued importance of youthful skiing exploits to this peer group.

The albums of Whyte, Paris, and Dunsmore present skiing as a homosocial activity, initially, that expanded to include women as the built infrastructure of cleared runs and lodges developed. Photographs in the albums dating from the late 1920s depict women joining men on the slopes of Mount Norquay and on the frozen, snow-covered surface of Lake Louise. One of the women who became interested in skiing in the late 1920s was Fern Brewster. The only child
of James (Jim) Brewster, a leading businessman in Banff, her albums share a number of photographs with the albums of Peter Whyte and Oliver Kaldahl, a ski jumper from Minnesota who frequently competed at the Banff Winter Carnival. In an album from 1925, Brewster recorded her reign as queen of the Banff Winter Carnival. The photographs depict meeting a variety of Hollywood people filming movies in Banff in the 1920s, trips to Hawaii with her father for the Hawaiian branch of the Brewster Tours and Transportation Company, daily happenings with friends and family in Western Canada, and learning to ski with Whyte and Kaldahl. The album focuses on human subjects through actively naming the people in almost all the photographs and cutting just the faces out of duplicate prints to draw attention to specific personalities in larger group shots.

Most of the photographs in Brewster’s album were taken in summer, except for two pages devoted to the 1924 Banff Winter Carnival, when Brewster was carnival queen, and a number of pages showing her being taught to ski by Peter Whyte and Oliver Kaldahl. Though Brewster was five years older than Whyte, they would have known each other since childhood through a long friendship between the Whyte and Brewster families in Banff. Kaldahl, on the other hand, was from Minnesota and spent part of the winter teaching skiing in Quebec City and part of it competing in ski-jumping competitions in western North America. It was through ski jumping that he came to Banff and became friends with Whyte and Brewster.

Brewster, Whyte, and Kaldahl shared skiing experiences and the photographs taken of them. Brewster took ski lessons from Whyte and Kaldahl at Lake Louise in the mid-1920s, and one of her instructors brought along a camera. The resulting photographs appear in albums by Brewster and Kaldahl, as well as in Whyte’s loose photographic prints. Photographs from a day of skiing, with the cast and crew from the film *The Love Master*, are in albums by Whyte and Kaldahl, while albums made by Whyte and Brewster also share images of relaxing at the Cave and Basin with the film crew. These sets of common photographs illustrate a different side of skiing at Banff: the side that includes women. This is reflected in later albums by Dunsmore that show more women skiing beginning around 1924 when the first lodge on Mount Norquay was constructed. It also places the men in a different position—instead of exploring the backcountry, they are teaching others to ski. Women taking ski lessons suggests the changing demographic of the skiers at the end of the 1920s and the more inclusive nature of the sport once it left the ski jumps.

The shared images of Fern Brewster learning to ski identify a difference between what she and her male friends commemorated. Like the male skiers from Banff, Brewster participated in exchanging photographs of skiing experi-
ences. Unlike the male skiers, the photographs in her albums are of skiing near peopled areas and often include the buildings of the Chateau Lake Louise in the background. In other images, it is clear the skiing is happening on frozen Lake Louise. All the photographs are posed to show Brewster on skis but not actively skiing. The page of images from Lake Louise is followed by a page with four
photographs of a ski jumper arranged around a posed photograph of “Tuddy” (Kaldahl’s nickname; figure 9). This suggests that Brewster, through her visual narrative, was more interested in commemorating individuals than activities though she did continue to ski and frequently skied out to Skoki Lodge when it was under construction in the early 1930s.
The trend in Brewster’s album of focusing on friends is seen in a series of photographs from a ski trip up Sulphur Mountain. Whyte and Kaldahl are present in the photographs, but Brewster is absent and likely did not participate in the excursion (figure 10). It is possible that Brewster used these photographs to experience something in which she was not involved. Sontag has described photographs as “devices for experiencing something, for giving an appearance of participation,” and Brewster’s inclusion of images from this event speaks to the photographs standing in for something she was not able to experience personally. A letter written by Whyte suggests the photographs were taken on Kaldahl’s camera, as Whyte asks to borrow “the negatives of the five that were taken at the top, to have a couple of enlargements made of the best ones.” The complete set of images from this trip shows only men, casting doubt on Brewster’s participation in the trip. This suggests that while the men’s albums are about activities and the people with whom they were done, Brewster’s are more about the people than the activities.

Where Brewster’s album complements those of her male peers is in its depiction of the emerging participation of women in skiing. Skiing photographs in Brewster’s album were taken around the same time that women begin to appear on skis in the men’s albums. Like the photographs in the men’s albums, Brewster’s show women skiing in spaces designated specifically for skiing near the peopled areas of the national park. The photographs of Brewster on skis were taken in areas close to built infrastructure: the Chateau Lake Louise or the Banff townsite. These are spaces that are more controlled than the backcountry where the men often went skiing without women. Cutting a run into the forest tamed a small part of the landscape and, along with the lodge, created a controlled space where women could spend the day skiing alongside experienced men. Women are still not in the backcountry in Brewster’s album, yet their appearance on the ski hill signifies that the sport had started to become heterosocial instead of homosocial.

The biggest difference between Brewster’s album and those of her male peers is the focus on people, which reflects a gendered approach to album making in Banff. The men’s albums are about activities that were gendered male specific within their peer group. These men also grew up with strong male photographer role models among the many professional photographers and serious amateurs living in Banff. Mountain photographers, such as Byron Harmon, were engaging in the technology of photography, and men such as Peter Whyte would have grown up watching the professionals produce images of remote regions of Banff National Park for sale to tourists. Photographs by professionals dominated the public space in Banff, as they were displayed in the studios of Harmon and others, such as George Noble and Elliott Barnes. Thus, the men were acculturated to view taking photographs, especially of ar-
Eas away from the town, as a masculine activity and the creation of albums would have been a natural extension of this. There is also a noticeable increase of attention to the composition of photographs in later albums by both Peter Whyte and Fulton Dunsmore, which suggests that they were integrating the technical side of photography into the act of capturing recreation on film.

The albums of Peter Whyte, Cyril Paris, and Fulton Dunsmore are visual markers of what was important to these men when they were adolescents. Each album is a site of individual memory expression of growing up in Banff and indicates a construction of identity through specific forms of winter recreation. The presence of shared images in these albums allows a comparison of album making styles that suggests albums can be sites of collective memory making as well as individual self-reflection and commemoration. The albums of Whyte, Paris, and Dunsmore highlight the group aspect of skiing and indicate its importance in their memories of winter leisure as young men. They visually told this portion of their life stories through skiing photographs and identified as a group and as individuals through this and other recreation activities that took them away from the Banff townsite. Fern Brewster’s album illustrates the turn toward skiing as a heterosocial activity in the late 1920s. These albums also raise questions regarding how skiing and other winter recreation activities were visually commemorated by this group of peers after they married and settled into careers and family life. This sampling of albums illustrates the role winter recreation played in the process of individual and collective perceptions of self among the younger generation in Banff. Comparing the individual treatment of the same photographs in albums and the broader narratives constructed allows albums to become sites through which the collective memory of a known peer group can be examined.

Notes

1 The author would like to thank James Opp, John Walsh, Bruce Elliott, Jodi MacAuley, and two anonymous reviewers for their comments and suggestions.

2 This paper is concerned with the residents of the permanent settlement of Banff, Alberta, located within Banff National Park. When referring to activities that took place away from the townsite, I will use the term backcountry. When referring to the national park, I will use the post-1930 name, Banff National Park, instead of the original name, Rocky Mountains National Park.

3 The Banff Winter Carnival was created by Banff booster Norman Luxton and magistrate B.W. Collison. It was intended to entice middle-class visitors from Alberta and British Columbia to come to Banff in the winter. The carnival incorporated ongoing hockey games, the annual curling bonspiel, and weekly snowshoeing tramps, along with flashier events like ski-jumping, skijoring, masquerade dances, ice-carving competitions, and a carnival queen pageant.

5 Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies Archives and Library (hereafter cited as WMCR), M36/25, Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, Oral History Notes, Peter Whyte to Catharine Robb Whyte, 16 June 1965; and WMCR, M36/1913, Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, Sketch of Improved Skis by Peter Whyte.

6 Peter Whyte changed the spelling of his last name from “White” to “Whyte” c. 1925. He was not the only member of the family to use this spelling, but it is not clear why there is inconsistency in spelling the name. One version of why the last name is spelled in various ways within the same family is given by Jon Whyte in *Mountain Glory: Art of Peter and Catharine Whyte* (Banff: Whyte Museum of the Canadian Rockies, 1988), 10.

7 The Kodak Brownie was introduced in 1900, sold for one dollar, and intended for use by the general public.

8 The 1919 snowshoe tramp up Sulphur Mountain is documented in photographs taken by George Paris, which appear in multiple archived family collections, promotional literature for the Banff Winter Carnival, and the *Banff Crag and Canyon* newspaper.

9 Dunsmore’s last album contains many photographs of men making turns while coming down hills on skis. While these photographs are blurred, they signify experimentation with action shots of skiing. Similarly, the photographs taken by Whyte after he attended art school are indistinguishable from those of established professionals in Banff in terms of clarity, composition, and overall polish.

10 This set of albums functions as a marker of coming of age in a similar way to what Marilyn F. Motz observed regarding the albums of midwestern women from the nineteenth century in the article “Visual Autobiography: Photograph Albums of Turn-of-the-Century Midwestern Women,” *American Quarterly* 41, no. 1 (March 1989), 63–92: 76, 87.


17 August “Gus” Johnson taught Banff youth such as Fulton Dunsmore and Peter Whyte how to ski in the later 1910s. See Scott, *Powder Pioneers*. 
Three of the participants were adults—Tom Dunsmore, Owen Bryant, and August Johnson—which is to be expected, as the youth participants were between twelve and sixteen years old. Tom Dunsmore was Fulton’s father and Jack White was Peter Whyte’s younger brother.

WMCR, Fulton Dunsmore Fonds, V184 PD-1. This collection consists of three albums created by Fulton before 1935. This is the oldest and largest of the albums and includes photographs spanning nearly a decade.

This trend continues into the two later albums from Fulton Dunsmore, which are also arranged chronologically.

Sontag, On Photography, 17.

Whyte worked as a driver for the Brewster Transportation Co., and through this work, met many of the producers, actors, and other Hollywood people who came to film in the Canadian Rockies. He maintained correspondence with some of them for many years after filming. See WMCR, Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, M36.

Paris was thirty-one years old and married when the album was created and sixteen when the trip to Eau Claire Camp occurred.

Two of the Eau Claire Camp photographs discussed are included in an album compiled by Cyril Paris in 1935. This treatment is not discussed here because the album was created when Paris was an adult, not when he was a youth, as is the case with Dunsmore and Whyte. Paris was a contemporary and lifelong friend of Dunsmore and Whyte.

These two photographs appear in the same albums as the Eau Claire Camp photographs.

The Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds include many letters that Peter and Catharine Whyte exchanged. Their handwriting styles are distinct, making it easy to differentiate Peter’s writing from Catharine’s.

Langford, Suspended Conversations, 38. In Suspended Conversations, Langford illustrates her argument for the centrality of the oral transmission of albums through discussing them as subjects of reminiscence. However, she feels the orality is completely lost once an album is archived.

Jim and his older brother William (Bill) Brewster were the founders of the Brewster Tour and Transportation Company.

A postcard from Brewster sent to Whyte in 1923 opens with “sending a card to my skiing teacher to show that I have not forgotten him.” This card provides additional context to the photographs they shared. WMCR, M36/1893, Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, Fern Brewster to Peter Whyte, 20 April 1923.

Silent film actor Lillian Rich is identified in a number of the photographs, and as she was the female lead in The Love Master, it is possible to identify the specific film crew in the photographs, including Hollywood producer Lew Borzage.

Ann Gilbert Coleman traces the introduction and growth of alpine-style skiing in the Colorado Rocky Mountains. She points to the idealized masculinity of ski instructors as symbolic of the gender roles fostered in this style of skiing. Ann

32 The increased presence of women on skis is supported by Fulton Dunsmore’s last album, which clearly shows that women were beginning to ski in the controlled space of the cleared Mount Norquay runs in the late 1920s.


34 WMCR, M36/1894, Peter and Catharine Whyte fonds, Peter Whyte to Oliver Kaldahl, 1925. This letter is illustrated by Peter with a full-page cartoon ski jumper and the caption “The honourable Mr. Kaldahl (Tuddy) enjoying a little exercise amid the mountains of Banff, Canada.”