

Reflections of a Past Era: The Photography Collection
of
Ernest William Albert Crocker 1908-1946

by


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ABSTRACT

There are many archival photography collections that are forgotten or ignored because of their lack of accompanying written documentation. Despite this, these collections have tremendous value which can be discovered through alternate methods of research and analysis. This thesis provides an example of how to approach and research such collections by examining the work of Ernest William Albert Crocker, whose business, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, operated in Victoria from 1908-1946. It presents an introductory review of Crocker's life and work from what he left behind in the Trio Photograph Collection which consists of over 20,000 images. This thesis examines his photographs from both documentary and aesthetic perspectives and constructs a comparison between Crocker's work and that of a contemporary Vancouver photographer, Leonard Frank (1870-1944). It establishes an appreciation for the significance of the Trio Photograph Collection within the contexts of social and photo-history and lays the foundation from which any future research of Crocker's photographs can begin.

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“One picture is worth a thousand words.”
(Fred R. Barnard)

INTRODUCTION OUT OF THE SHADOWS: THE PROCESS OF ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

Many archival photographic collections are not given proper attention nor recognition. Such collections, although substantial in their image content, are devoid of any written documentation; this renders them difficult to research. Scholars tend to pass over these collections in favor of those that provide written source materials in addition to the photographs. Due to the present fiscal realities facing provincial and national archives there is a shortage of researchers, time and money. These deficiencies limit the number of collections that professional archivists are able to research. Consequently, efficiency tends to take precedence over substance.

Working with a collection that offers written documentation takes less time than working with one that does not. Moreover, it is often assumed that although collections without written source materials may contain a wealth of information in the photographs, such collections are not considered worthy of research due to the time and costs involved. The uncovering and deciphering of necessary information for these collections is considered too difficult without the aid of written texts. As a result, many collections are left undiscovered and unappreciated. However, just because a collection may not include written documentation, it does not mean that collection is worthless. On the contrary, many of these collections have tremendous value and should not be ignored for a lack of written information.

Regardless of what a collection is able to provide, if a collection lies dormant in an archive, never acknowledged nor appreciated, then it is worthless. A collection's value is

only realized and defined by its use in research. The Trio Collection is one of many that have remained dormant. Housed primarily in the photography division of the British Columbia Archives and Record Services, this collection contains the work of Victoria photographer Ernest William Albert Crocker.¹ Crocker maintained a photography studio, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, in Victoria, British Columbia from 1908 to 1946 and photographed a diverse range of subjects in Victoria, the province and abroad. Consisting of approximately 20,000 images, the Trio Collection is one of the largest photographic holdings in the Provincial Archives. Since the Provincial Archives acquired Crocker's photographs in 1946, the Trio Collection has received almost no attention. Except for the efforts involved in producing copy prints of the glass plate negatives, the collection was left untouched, uncatalogued and essentially unavailable to the general public. It was not until its discovery by a curatorial committee in 1993 that this collection began its journey from obscurity to recognition.

The Trio Collection was the subject of a photography exhibition curated by student and faculty members of the Faculty of Fine Arts at the University of Victoria. The exhibition in the Maltwood Gallery in April 1993 was the result of a semester long course on photography exhibitions.² Searching the Provincial Archives for an appropriate topic, the curatorial committee, of which I was a member, examined the Trio Collection for its exhibition potential. Crocker's work was chosen over the work of other, better known Victoria photographers because of the compelling documentary, historical and aesthetic aspects

¹ British Columbia Archives and Record Services [BCARS], Trio Collection, Accession No. 198011-11 [Trio].

² Dr. Nancy Micklewright. *HA 490: Photography Exhibitions*. Department of History in Art, Faculty of Fine Arts, University of Victoria, 1993.

found in his photographs. Immediately, each curatorial member was drawn to the Trio Collection by the aesthetics of the images themselves. The committee was also impressed by the immense variety of subjects that were represented in the collection. Moreover, Crocker's personal perspective of a formative period of Victoria's history, as expressed through his photographs, captured the attention of each curatorial member.

However, perhaps the most compelling reason for choosing this collection over other more well known collections was the fact that Crocker and his photographs were relatively unknown. There was a common interest among the twelve members of the curatorial committee to exhibit the work of an obscure photographer over that of one more recognized. The Trio Collection presented the committee members with an opportunity to conduct original research and introduce the work of a newly rediscovered photographer to the local public. In addition to its academic appeal, the Trio Collection offered a wealth of images depicting local Victoria history. Recognizing that this would capture the attention of Victoria residents, Crocker's work was determined to be a suitable subject for presentation.

This introduction to Crocker's photographic work inspired me to conduct further research on the Trio Collection and make it the subject of this thesis. My initial attraction to the images in the collection developed, ultimately, into a fascination with the collection's subject and artistic diversity. Without the influence of written documentation to cloud the visual impact of Crocker's photographs, his images offered a wealth of ideas, opinions and perspectives. The considerable size and scope of the collection made it that much more interesting as it provided a detailed view of Victoria and British Columbia during a specific period in history from the perspective of one photographer. The Trio Collection provided

me with an opportunity to conduct original research and work extensively with primary source materials. These challenges were particularly appealing. However, the prospect of being able to bring the work of a previously unknown photographer to the attention of scholars and the public was the most exciting aspect of choosing the Trio Collection for thesis research.

I am examining the Trio Collection in order to provide an example of how to approach an archival collection of historical photographs which has virtually no accompanying written documentation. Despite the difficulties involved in studying this collection these photographs have value and warrant research. Such photography collections can offer scholars and the public a wealth of information provided they are given proper attention and are researched appropriately. The introduction to Crocker's work that is presented in this thesis lays the foundation for future research on this collection.

My research involved using a wide variety of primary and secondary sources. I conducted extensive work at the Provincial Archives, sorting through the Trio Collection image by image and cataloguing the photographs and other materials at a basic level. Cataloguing the collection was necessary in order to make it more manageable for research. To a lesser but still significant extent, I searched the photography holdings at the Royal British Columbia Museum and the Municipal Archives where additional collections of Crocker's work are housed.³ In order to obtain some of the biographical and historical information, necessary to construct Crocker's biography and career as a photographer and businessman, I consulted a variety of text based archival records in the Provincial and Mu-

³ The Ethnography Division of the Royal British Columbia Museum [EDRBCM]; The City of Victoria Archives [CVA].

municipal Archives. I also made inquiries to local and national military archives for information pertaining specifically to Crocker's work for the military training camps established in Victoria during the First and Second World Wars. While archival research provided most of the primary and secondary resources for my research, I also employed other sources such as vital statistics records, probate records and personal interviews. Exhausting these resources, I consulted relevant scholarship. Reading the available historical and photo-historical literature provided me with a context in which Crocker's work could rest.

Choosing to provide a comprehensive review of Crocker's work means that this thesis covers an extensive range of subjects. In order for Crocker's work to be fully appreciated each of these subjects requires some contextual explanation. This makes the parameters of my research quite broad. Nonetheless, my examination of the Trio Collection convinces me that Crocker's photographs are valuable not only as aesthetic images but also as historical documents. They provide information about a formative period in Victoria's history. Given the vast scholarship on the constructed nature of the photograph, some may question the validity of this assumption. However, all that is written against the use of photographs as historical documents can also be applied to other forms of historical documentation including written texts and oral histories. Since all forms of historical documentation are constructed, manipulated and inaccurate, one cannot be considered any more or less accurate than another. To appreciate the historical value of photographs we must overcome our blind acceptance of, and trained dependence on, written texts. Using all forms of historical documentation in conjunction with each other can only enhance our understanding of the past. My examination of the Trio Collection illustrates the use of photographs in historical research and establishes their importance as historical docu-

ments.

The first chapter of this thesis, *Situating Crocker's Life and Work in a Social and Photographic Context*, summarizes the social and photographic history of British Columbia and Victoria during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The social history examines the significant events and relevant developments represented in the Trio Collection. This background information roots the various subjects of Crocker's work in an historical context and reveals their documentary value. The photographic history examines the development of specific photographic trends and themes that are reflected in the Trio Collection. This supplementary information places Crocker's photographs within a photo-historical context and exposes their artistic value.

The second chapter, *Ernest William Albert Crocker and the Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, constructs a biography of the Victoria photographer and an account of his business pursuits. Crocker's biography can only be constructed by piecing together fragments of information from a variety of sources. The information is presented chronologically and details Crocker's personal and business activities from his childhood in England through to his retirement in Victoria. Unfortunately, because only biographical fragments survive, it is possible to create little more than general impressions about Crocker as a photographer and a businessman.

The third chapter, *Reflections of A Past Era: The Trio Photograph Collection*, considers an overview of the Trio Collection by examining the numerous topics of Crocker's work. The chapter is divided into specific subject categories: *The Military, Photographic Souvenirs, The Community, The People, Aboriginal People and Culture* and *Travels Near and Far*. In addition a section entitled *Artistry and Composition* summarizes the aesthetic

elements of Crocker's photography. Dividing the photographs into distinct categories transforms the immense collection of unorganized pictures into manageable parts so that each image can be appreciated more fully. The categories discussed in this thesis were chosen to provide an introductory survey of the subjects represented in the collection; they are not meant to classify Crocker's work definitively. The photographs in the Trio Collection could be arranged and rearranged into a variety of different subject categories depending on the focus of one's research.

Each subject discussed in this chapter as a sub-category could easily become the basis of a complete thesis. Each demands more extensive research and attention than can be provided in the context of this thesis. Instead, I have provided a comprehensive representation of Crocker's photographic portfolio. Numerous photographs are presented and discussed in order to give proper attention to the various subjects that Crocker photographed. Although the number of photographs included in this review may seem extravagant, it represents a small percentage of the Trio Collection and of Crocker's photographic career. This thesis examines the images in this representative collection for their documentary and artistic contributions to the history of photography in British Columbia and Victoria during the early twentieth century.

The fourth and last chapter, *The Value of a Photograph: A Comparison with Leonard Frank*, compares Crocker's work and that of a contemporary Vancouver photographer, Leonard Frank.⁴ In addition to analyzing their respective photograph collections, this chapter also examines their individual business practices and marketing strategies. Deter-

⁴ Leonard Frank's photographs are housed in numerous locations but the pictures discussed in this thesis came from the two largest holdings: The Vancouver Public Library [VPL]; Jewish Historical Society of British Columbia [JHSBC], Otto F. Landauer - Leonard Frank Photograph Collection [OFL-LFPC].

mining the similarities and differences between the two photographers creates a new perspective through which Crocker's work can be appreciated. The comparison helps to distinguish the unique aspects of Crocker's work that define his personal style and separate his photographs from those of his contemporaries.

The research for this thesis began with the photographs themselves; they are the foundation of the research expressed in this thesis. The images dictated the structure and direction of the research and are used in the thesis to supplement the text. They were not selected as afterthoughts simply to complement the written text. As Joan Schwartz observes, too often photographs are chosen on the basis of their 'appropriateness' to accompany the words. They are included as a postscript to the more important written text; "such images are often little more than visual oases in a desert of text."⁵ Robert Davison explores the misuse of historical photographs in printed matter advocating that photographs must be 'read' and given proper attention:

A photograph, we are increasingly told by photo historians, is an historical document in its own right and, like every other historical document, it is meant to be read, all ten thousand words of it, with at least the same care and attention to detail as a letter, a diary, a manuscript or a book—line by line and word by word.⁶

Therefore, please take the time to examine the photographs before reading the written text. This will recreate, in a small way, the process from which this thesis was developed. It is important to view Crocker's images while they remain unencumbered with written information, giving them primacy. Study the photographs and form impressions of them

⁵ Joan M. Schwartz, "The Past in Focus: Photography and British Columbia, 1858-1914," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82): 8.

⁶ J. Robert Davison, "Turning a Blind Eye: The Historian's Use of Photographs," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82): 8.

before being influenced by the perceptions discussed in this thesis. Examine the images for what they are instead of what the text suggests them to be.

Since the photographs are the most important element of this thesis, they are presented one image per page in a 5x7 size. This is the largest image possible given the restrictions of the thesis format. The majority of the original glass plate negatives are 8x10 or 5x7 and it is important to reproduce the prints as close to the original size as possible in order to maintain the integrity of the image. I took great efforts to ensure that the images were reproduced as close to the original medium and format as possible. This proved to be more difficult than was expected as the use of advancing technology seems to be undercutting the quality of reproductions. In the context of this thesis, the issue of computer generated reproductions is significant because it directly affects the integrity of the image. Since this thesis gives primacy to Crocker's photographs it is imperative that the reproductions be as true to the original medium and format as possible; anything less undermines the purpose of this thesis.

The Provincial Archives no longer issues photographs; they only provide digitized images. There are obvious archival benefits from using computer technology. Scanning photographs into a data base limits the handling of the original images and makes them more accessible to a greater range of people. However, it is unfortunate that an archive which deals with a substantial collection of photographic material does not offer the public a choice between the new technology and the old. Given the high cost of the new technology, it follows that it should be used to warrant the expenditure. Nonetheless, employing the new technology, which is more beneficial for text based material, to the exclusion of old technology seems ill-considered. Digitized images more than provide the necessary

factual data but are inadequate for studying the aesthetic content of the photograph. A digitized picture, made up of so many dots per inch, is not the same as a silvered print (in the case of a black and white photograph). If there was a way to overcome the issues of cost, preservation and efficiency, then the benefits of both new and old technologies could be taken advantage of and appreciated.

Schwartz deals with this issue in her article on how the practice, politics and poetics of diplomatics can be applied to archival photographs.⁷

The application of diplomatics to visual materials highlights the fact that the age-old archival balancing act between preservation and access often leaves archival photographs stripped of their physicality. Providing safe and easy access by copying photographs onto sheet film, catalogue cards, microform, or CD ROM homogenizes the image, removes differences in size, material, colour, and presentation and perpetuates the notion that photographs are the fragment of reality represented, a neutral configuration of visual facts that can be transposed from format to format without losing the full meaning of the content.⁸

Schwartz explains the importance of a photograph's physical presentation. The format of a photographic document helps communicate the author's message to his or her proposed audience; it is an integral ingredient of the message. Schwartz warns that "in our enthusiasm to embrace copying technology, whether analogue or digital, we can easily obscure the aspect of the photographic message embedded in its original physical form."⁹

⁷ "Diplomatics is a seventeenth-century discipline that seeks to identify, evaluate, and communicate the 'true nature' of archival documents. It does so by studying their origins, forms, and transmission, as well as the relationships between documents and the facts represented, and between documents and their creators." Definition after Giorgio Cencetti by Luciana Duranti, "Diplomatics [part I]," 17. Quoted in Joan M. Schwartz, "'We make our tools and our tools make us': Lessons from Photographs for the Practice, Politics, and Poetics of Diplomatics," *Archivaria* 40 (Fall 1995): 43.

⁸ Schwartz, "Diplomatics," 57-58.

⁹ Schwartz, "Diplomatics," 58.

However, the fact remained that I faced spending a substantial amount of money on a set of digitized pictures that were inadequate for the purposes of this thesis. Fortunately, after explaining my reasons against using the computer generated process, I was given special permission to photograph the prints myself. Therefore, the images used in the research of this thesis were photographed directly from the archival copy prints.¹⁰

The overview presented in this thesis examines the historical and aesthetic value of Crocker's photographs. Since it has been determined that photographs are historical documents, the aesthetics of the image play an important part in how historical information is conveyed. Just as a writer incorporates personal commentary into the text, a photographer infuses personal interpretation into the image. Both provide historical information within the parameters of individual artistic style and historical perspective. Examining the formal elements of the photograph, including its composition, perspective and lighting, is necessary in order to understand the nature of the historical information revealed in the picture. Aesthetic analysis of Crocker's photographs clarifies the historical information provided in the collection and offers an understanding of the man behind the images.

The initial choice of the curatorial committee members to exhibit the then unknown Trio Collection, and my subsequent research of this collection, started a process that will permanently alter the status of Crocker's work. This thesis brings Crocker's previously unknown and unappreciated photography collection to the attention of scholars and the general public. It uncovers the documentary and aesthetic values of the photographs in the collection, gives Crocker's work a new audience and lays the foundation for further re-

¹⁰ Kodak TMAX professional film for black and white prints (35 mm, ISO 100) was used to photograph the copy prints.

search. Furthermore, providing an example of how to approach an archival collection of historical photographs which is devoid of written documentation illustrates the value of such collections despite the difficulties involved in researching them. Photography collections such as the Trio Collection warrant research.

CHAPTER ONE

SITUATING CROCKER'S LIFE AND WORK IN A SOCIAL AND PHOTOGRAPHIC CONTEXT

The photographs in the Trio Collection provide images of the past. They are, by nature, historical and must be examined as much as possible in an historical context. Although Crocker's pictures are now removed from their original context, their value as historical documents is not negated. Understanding the historical and artistic contexts out of which Crocker produced his work helps contemporary audiences examine his photographs with greater insight. Historical research elaborates the contents of many of Crocker's pictures and suggests lines of speculation about why Crocker chose to photograph certain subjects and why he depicted them in a particular way. Knowledge of the social and artistic developments of Crocker's day compensates somewhat for the lack of documentation in the Trio Collection.

The following social and photographic histories provide information that directly relates to Crocker and his work. The section dealing with social history briefly reviews the relevant events and developments in British Columbia and Victoria during the first half of the twentieth century. Since the photographic history of British Columbia during the early twentieth century has not yet been sufficiently researched, the section concerned with photo-history examines pertinent aspects of photography that developed during the last half of the nineteenth century. The historical information chronicled in this chapter establishes a foundation upon which Crocker's work can be examined. Each subject discussed in this chapter contains tremendous complexities that cannot be addressed in the context of this thesis. I have provided supplementary references to direct the reader to sources that

address these topics in greater detail. It must be understood that the aim of this chapter is to provide a brief review of the significant events and developments that relate to Crocker and his work, issues that one should consider when examining the Trio Collection.

This chapter provides an example of how to approach an archival collection of historical photographs which contains no written documentation. Researching historical and photographic contexts is one of many methods that can be used in order to extract the historical information that lies within Crocker's photographs. The contextual information that follows helps to uncover the historical value of the Trio Collection despite its lack of written documentation.

SOCIAL HISTORICAL CONTEXT

By the early years of the twentieth century, British Columbia had evolved from a British colony to a thriving part of Canada.¹ During the nineteenth century the people of British Columbia experienced the impact of European settlement, the economic booms of the fur trade and the gold rush, the rise and fall of the Hudson's Bay Company and the completion of the Canadian Pacific Railway (CPR). Through all of these formative stages, Victoria played an integral part in the province's development.² In addition, Victoria went through a transition from being the nucleus of the British colony of Vancouver Island to becoming the capital city of the Crown Colony of British Columbia and the province of

¹ For a comprehensive history of British Columbia I found the following sources informative: Jean Barman, *The West Beyond The West: A History of British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991). George Woodcock, *British Columbia: A History of the Province* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1990). Margaret A. Ormsby, *British Columbia: A History* (Vancouver: The Macmillan Company of Canada Limited, 1958).

² For a comprehensive history of Victoria I found the following source useful: Harry Gregson, *A History of Victoria 1842-1970* (Victoria: The Victoria Observer Publishing Co. Ltd., 1970).

British Columbia. Jean Barman's description of the social atmosphere in British Columbia at the turn of the century is fitting.

As the nineteenth century became the twentieth, British Columbians whose memories went back to the 1860s had reason to be amazed by the transition that had occurred in the three decades since entering Confederation. Yet the years preceding the First World War would bring even greater change. A new dynamism was unleashed. Self-confidence grew.³

With increased investments and an abundance of natural resources, the province's industries, including lumbering, fishing and mining, grew and prospered. Primary industries like logging and salmon canning progressed and changed significantly during the pre-war years. Agriculture, although not as big an industry, also grew during these years. The service industry, specifically sectors devoted to tourism, began in this period and flourished in urban centres like Vancouver and Victoria.⁴ This sense of British Columbia as a booming industrial frontier was interrupted by wars and the Depression. Nonetheless, the faith in economic progress permeating British Columbia throughout the first half of the twentieth century provided a backdrop for Crocker's work. Economic prosperity generated a clientele for personal portraits and photographic mementos; Crocker provided these services as well as others.

As important as British Columbia and Victoria's economic growth through the decades was to providing a financial context for Crocker's work, a much more significant factor shaping his photographic output was war. Victoria's importance as a strategic naval port and operational centre for incoming and outgoing troops and supplies was enhanced

³ Barman, 176.

⁴ British Columbia's economic and industrial growth during the first half of the twentieth century is discussed in Barman, 182-194, 236-247.

by the substantially British origins of the population of the province and of Victoria. Residents were motivated by a strong sense of imperial loyalty and national patriotism.⁵

When World War I was declared in 1914, most British Columbians were enthusiastic about serving overseas. There were still strongly held loyalties to Britain, as a large percentage of the province's population was British born or were of British descent. This enthusiasm meant that almost all able-bodied men left their jobs, families and other commitments to volunteer for military service at a rate of participation higher than in any part of Canada.⁶ In fact, most men volunteered for service and were recruited before conscription was imposed in 1917.⁷ Women were equally enthusiastic about the war and became intimately involved both in Victoria and overseas. Almost everyone did whatever was necessary, at home and abroad, to support the war effort.⁸

Victoria transformed itself, almost overnight, into a training ground for new military recruits.⁹ Many of the recruits who arrived to train in Victoria came from other cities in British Columbia and from other provinces. Training grounds were established at Central School, the Drill Hall on Menzies Street, Willows Fair Grounds and the Work Point Barracks in Esquimalt.¹⁰ Victorians served in a variety of different capacities in both world

⁵ Gregson, 82. Canadian Imperialism is discussed in Carl Berger, *The Sense of Power: Studies in the Ideas of Canadian Imperialism 1867-1914* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1970).

⁶ Barman, 198-199.

⁷ Woodcock, 191.

⁸ The enthusiastic involvement that British Columbians held for World War I is discussed in Woodcock, 191-199. Barman, 198-201.

⁹ Victoria's role during World War I and II is discussed in Gregson, 81-92.

¹⁰ Gregson, 81-83.

wars including the air force (some in the R.A.F.), the Imperial Forces, the Canadian Army, the Royal Navies and the Merchant Service.¹¹ Recruits to Victoria's own military units, including the Fifth British Columbian Field Battery Canadian Garrison Artillery, the 50th Regiment Gordon Highlanders, the 88th Regiment Victoria Fusiliers and the Canadian Scottish Regiment contributed to Canada's military strength.¹² As Victoria became a significant garrison city for the duration of the First World War, Crocker was well placed to establish military photography as the major component of his business activities. Young soldiers, often away from home for the first time, wanted pictures of themselves to send to their friends and families. Battalions wanted group pictures as a record of their participation in the 'war to end all wars.' Crocker provided all these images, as well as others, to the military market.

When World War II began in 1939, most British Columbians were eager again to participate in the war overseas. However, the Second World War did not hold the same romanticized excitement as the First. The horrific memories of the First World War made people see war in a sober new light which dampened their enthusiasm for the Second.¹³ Furthermore, for reasons of military security British Columbians were prevented from giving their soldiers grand send-offs like those given during the First World War. Instead, the troops left the coast in secret.¹⁴

¹¹ Gregson, 82.

¹² Gregson, 83-89.

¹³ Gregson, 86. British Columbians' response to World War II is discussed in Woodcock, 222-229. Barman, 261-269.

¹⁴ Gregson, 88.

Once more Victoria was in the military spotlight. Again the city transformed itself into a military training center and again it served as a strategic naval port. In addition to the military training camps established during World War I and re-instituted for World War II, a training centre was established at Gordon Head.¹⁵ This site was later converted into an Officer's Training Centre in 1941.¹⁶ Despite the changed climate and circumstances of war, Crocker once more found himself fielding requests for individual and group military photographs. Being located in Victoria during wartime was a definite business advantage for him.

In much the same way, Crocker benefited from the opening of British Columbia and Victoria to steadily growing numbers of tourists. Not long after the transcontinental line to Vancouver was completed, the CPR company inaugurated a major advertising campaign to lure emigrants and tourists to travel its route to the Pacific.¹⁷ As the segment of the Canadian population with disposable income and time for leisurely travel grew at the turn of the century, tourism to Canada's west coast province suddenly grew by leaps and bounds. People came to the province to enjoy its mountains, forests, lakes, rivers, coastlines and islands. In addition to the province's natural splendours, tourists were also attracted to the offerings of cities like Vancouver and Victoria.

Several new communities sprang up in the Pacific Northwest between Vancouver and San Francisco in the early years of the twentieth century while existing cities in this area

¹⁵ Gregson, 81-83. See also R. H. Roy, Honorary President, University of Victoria Alumni Association, speech given on the occasion of the unveiling ceremony of the Gordon Head Gates (Saturday, September 16, 1981).

¹⁶ R. H. Roy, 2.

¹⁷ The influential effects of the railway on British Columbia's settlements and industries are discussed in Barman, 108-114.

matured and provided tourists with more attractions. This municipal growth, coupled with gradually improving transportation routes which made travel less difficult, meant that tourism was expanding in the Pacific Northwest very rapidly. Vancouver and Victoria were two cities in this geographic region that were particularly attractive to both Canadian and American tourists.¹⁸

To lure tourists to Vancouver Island and secure a sufficient part of the tourist market, Victoria had to provide tourists with something unique. The city of Vancouver was quickly surpassing Victoria in importance both with respect to commerce and industry. This was leading to the declining significance of the capital city as a major urban centre and was such a cause for concern that Victoria's political and business elite determined that alternative sources of revenue were needed to ensure Victoria's financial survival.¹⁹ Eventually, this led to the CPR building the Empress Hotel. Once built, the hotel established the foundation for what was to become Victoria's most important industry, tourism. Victoria's inner harbour was completely transformed in order to provide the proper setting for the illustrious new hotel which was established at the centre of the new harbour.²⁰ The Empress Hotel was built on a grand and luxurious scale which, together with the impressive structure of the new Legislative Buildings,²¹ gave Victoria's inner harbour the sense

¹⁸ The rise of tourism in the Pacific Northwest during the early part of the twentieth century is discussed in Gregson, 177-188. See also Kenneth Lines, "A Bit of Old England: The Selling of Tourist Victoria" (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1972).

¹⁹ Gregson, 177.

²⁰ The slough was filled with silt that had been dredged from the harbour. This created a foundation between Government, Humboldt and Bellevue Streets on which the Empress Hotel was built. The James Bay wooden bridge was removed and the causeway was built to complete the new waterfront. Gregson, 177.

²¹ The new Legislative Buildings were opened by Premier J. H. Turner in 1898. Gregson, 74.

of permanence and magnificence it needed to set it apart from the other cities in the Pacific Northwest.²²

The Empress Hotel opened in 1908; its north and south wings were added in 1911 and 1928 respectively.²³ The CPR succeeded in making Victoria more attractive to tourists travelling along their rail lines. The Empress Hotel secured the city of Victoria as a tourist resort and transit stay-over.²⁴ The Canadian Pacific Steam Ship Company ran a regular service from Vancouver to Victoria and later incorporated Seattle into its service, making a popular triangle route linking the three cities.²⁵ The Empress liners helped bring Victoria to the attention of world travellers. The Empress Hotel was far superior to other hotels in Victoria, and in other cities of the province. It was designed to offer its guests majestic grandeur and it soon monopolized most of the elite tourist market. Many famous person-ages and royalty from different countries were accommodated by the Empress Hotel. It also provided local residents with large banquet rooms and other elegant amenities, making it the social centre of Victoria.²⁶ The rise in tourism and locally based social events stimulated a demand for souvenir and commemorative photographs. Crocker was so familiar with all the significant local landmarks that producing pictures for this new market became the second most important feature of his business activities.

²² A review of how the CPR's Empress Hotel came to be built and how it became the foundation of Victoria's tourist industry is discussed in Gregson, 177-180. See also Lines 41-43.

²³ Gregson, 178.

²⁴ Lines, 30-31.

²⁵ A study of how the CP Steam Ship Company helped to establish a tourist triangle between Victoria, Vancouver and Seattle is discussed in Gregson, 178. See also Lines, 83-85.

²⁶ Gregson, 179-180.

At the same time, Butchart Gardens was becoming popular with tourists and local residents.²⁷ Developed on the site of an old limestone quarry, the gardens provided Victorians and tourists with a beautiful destination, away from the city, to which they could make an excursion. The gardens were created in 1904 and were opened to the public later that same year.²⁸ Admission to the grounds was free for many years which made the site even more attractive to visitors. Just after the Second World War, the gardens were further enhanced. The garden area was expanded to its present size, garden illumination was installed and the central water fountain was built.²⁹ From its beginning Butchart Gardens provided tourists with visions of the abundant flora and fauna that has made Victoria famous. Crocker produced a series of Butchart Garden scenes that were popular with tourists and may have been used to illustrate travel brochures designed to direct tourists to Victoria.

Another hallmark of Victoria's tourist façade³⁰ developed during the early years of this century were the clustered street lights that replaced the lamp standards in the downtown core in 1913. Later that year, the addition of hanging flower baskets to the new lamp posts emphasized Victoria's styling as the city of gardens.³¹ Images of flower bedecked lamp posts, the grandiose new inner harbour crowned with the CPR's finest new hotel and the impressive new Legislative Buildings, stately private residences with beautifully main-

²⁷ The history of Butchart Gardens is discussed in Gregson, 182-183. Lines, 67-68.

²⁸ Butchart Gardens promotional pamphlet. Gregson, 182.

²⁹ Gregson, 182.

³⁰ The word façade is used here to refer to the public image which was created, and continues to be maintained, for Victoria's tourist industry.

³¹ Gregson, 183.

tained gardens and splendid public gardens and parks portrayed Victoria as a desirable tourist destination. Crocker provided many of these promotional pictures.

The first half of the twentieth century was characterized by continuous change as Victoria responded to local and world events. Undoubtedly, these changes fostered mixed feelings of apprehension and excitement among local citizens. Crocker lived and worked throughout this transformation. Despite the social upheavals created by two world wars, industrial progress, urban expansion and population growth, Victorians found solace within their city. The populace took advantage of the city's assets and resources in order to create a pleasurable environment for themselves.

Since many residents were British immigrants or descendants, Victoria inherited and cultivated a decidedly British atmosphere that, to some degree, continues to exist. This British flavour was not only for the benefit of the tourists, it was an integral part of Victoria's fabric as a community.³² Victorians had much closer ties to England during Crocker's lifetime than they have today. Social customs and ideas were firmly rooted in British convictions. Significant aspects of the British lifestyle were transported to Victoria including a high regard for social conventions and a healthy passion for leisure activities. Harry Gregson concludes that since the tourist industry gave Victoria the financial strength it needed to secure a stable economy and community, citizens concentrated more on obtaining "the amenities of living than [on] making a living."³³ Amidst the uncertainties in the rest of the world, Victorians endeavoured to establish solid foundations in the arts, in athletics and in

³² A comprehensive study of how Victoria cultivated and maintained a distinctively British image is discussed in Lines, *A Bit of Old England*. See also Terry Reksten, "More English than the English" *A Very Social History of Victoria* (Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1986).

³³ Gregson, 183.

education. The initial development and subsequent growth of these highly valued social institutions were testaments to the character of the local citizens and to the growing maturity of the city of Victoria during Crocker's lifetime.³⁴

With a substantial portion of Victoria's population being British, visits from England's royal family throughout the first half of the twentieth century were popular. Two royal tours were especially noteworthy. In September, 1919 Edward, Prince of Wales, opened a military hospital at Craigdarroch Castle for crippled veterans of the First World War. While in the capital city, Prince Edward also laid the foundation stone for Queen Victoria's statue on the grounds of the Legislative Buildings.³⁵ In May, 1939 King George VI and his wife, Queen Elizabeth, visited Victoria during their grand Canadian tour.³⁶ Crocker's ability to negotiate close access to the royal subjects during their public activities resulted in an on-going series of additions to the royal photographs in the Trio Collection.

A major part of Crocker's work captured the changing face of Victoria. Along with photographs of the city, the scenery and portraits of local residents, he devoted another segment of his work to capturing images of Victoria's Chinatown and its people.³⁷ Despite

³⁴ The social atmosphere of Victoria during the early decades of the twentieth century is discussed in Gregson, 157-176, 183-188. Reksten, *More English*, 137-155.

³⁵ *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 23 September 1919, 1. *Victoria Daily Times* (Victoria), 23 September 1919, 1.

³⁶ "Souvenir Edition," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 28 May 1939. *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 30 May 1939, 1. "Royal Visit Edition," *Victoria Daily Times* (Victoria), 29-31 May 1939.

³⁷ A history of Chinese in British Columbia is provided in Patricia E. Roy, *A White Man's Province: British Columbia Politicians and Chinese and Japanese Immigrants 1858-1914* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1989). Jin Tan and Patricia E. Roy, *The Chinese in Canada* (Ottawa: Canadian Historical Association, 1985).

a long history of anti-Chinese sentiment in Victoria,³⁸ the Chinese formed a strong ethnic community in the city; their presence was reflected in their distinctive architecture and community events.³⁹ Victoria's Chinatown was the first to appear in Canada. Established in 1858, the original site of Chinatown was on Cormorant Street but by the 1870s it started to expand to its present location on Fisgard Street.⁴⁰ Once settled in this location the physical appearance of Chinatown began to assume a more Asian flavour. Each business displayed vertical signboards written in Chinese characters and decorated its storefront with ornaments during certain festivals. Chinatown established itself as a distinct neighbourhood and cultural district within Victoria, reflecting the size and strength of the city's Chinese population.

The division between Chinatown and the rest of Victoria was distinct. Except for public cultural events, the Chinese kept to themselves within the security of their own community and Caucasians rarely entered Chinatown. There was only one exception. Out of curiosity many Victorians visited Chinatown to witness such fascinating ceremonial events as the celebration of the Chinese New Year, the Dragon Boat Festival, the Mid-Autumn Festival, the Chongyang Festival, wedding ceremonies and funeral processions.⁴¹ Crocker

³⁸ Racism against the Chinese in British Columbia is discussed in Kay Anderson, *Vancouver's Chinatown: Racial Discourse in Canada* (Montreal: Queen's University Press, 1991). See also John Boyko, *Last Steps to Freedom: The Evolution of Canadian Racism* (Winnipeg: Watson and Dwyer Publishing, 1995). Peter Ward, *White Canada Forever: Popular Attitudes and Public Policy Toward Orientals in British Columbia* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1978). Irene Zaffaroni, "The Great Chain of Being: Racism and Imperialism" (MA Thesis, University of Victoria, 1987).

³⁹ The history and development of Victoria's Chinatown is discussed in David Chuenyan Lai, *The Forbidden City within Victoria* (Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1991). See also David Chuenyan Lai, *Chinatowns: Towns Within Cities in Canada* (Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1988), 183-261.

⁴⁰ Lai, *Chinatowns*, 184.

⁴¹ Lai, *Chinatowns*, 194.

was among those who visited Chinatown on special occasions, leaving as an important part of his photographic collection pictures of Chinatown and its residents.

Like the Chinese, aboriginal peoples, primarily the Coast Salish, were often subjects of Crocker's photographs. During the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the impact of non-native settlers on native societies was substantial.⁴² The attitudes and activities of land based fur traders, missionaries, businessmen, government officials, ethnographers and tourists resulted in significant changes in the lives of the native peoples of British Columbia. Fur traders exploited their resources, missionaries sought to convert them to Christianity, government officials attempted to suppress their culture, ethnographers appropriated culturally significant objects from their communities and tourists studied them with ignorant curiosity.

The effects of disease and cultural oppression were devastating to native populations. Diseases, including the small pox epidemic in 1862, severely weakened native populations.⁴³ Seeking to assimilate native peoples into the dominant society, cultural oppression attacked the fabric of native societies. Attempts, by church and government, to eliminate elements of native culture, including the potlatch prohibition in 1884, impaired the social, political, economic, religious, ceremonial and artistic activities of native communities

⁴² For an history of aboriginal peoples and their relations with European settlers in British Columbia I found the following sources useful: Wilson Duff, *The Indian History of British Columbia, Volume 1: The Impact of the White Man*, Anthropology in British Columbia, Memoir 5 (Victoria: Provincial Museum, 1964). Margaret B. Blackman, *During My Time: Florence Edenshaw Davidson, A Haida Woman* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1982). Robin Fisher, *Contact and Conflict: Indian-European Relations in British Columbia, 1774-1890* (Vancouver, UBC Press, 1992). Forrest. E. LaViolette, *The Struggle for Survival: Indian Cultures and the Protestant Ethic in British Columbia* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1961).

⁴³ Fisher, 115-116.

throughout British Columbia.⁴⁴ In addition, issues concerning land claims and self government generated further conflicts between native and non-native societies.⁴⁵ While the reasons behind Crocker's association with native peoples are unknown, his photographs of them and their villages reflect surviving aspects of traditional culture as well as the outward effects of cultural assimilation.

Throughout Crocker's career the historical events of his locale helped shape his activities as a photographer and businessman. The social, industrial and economic milieu of Victoria and British Columbia influenced how Crocker managed his photography business and often dictated his subjects. Crocker was, first and foremost, a commercial photographer who conformed to market demands.

PHOTO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT

The relentless changes and challenges that shaped Victoria and British Columbia over the decades constantly reshaped the business aspects and physical context of Crocker's work. Yet, there remained a remarkable consistency in his choice of subjects and his style of photographing them. Equally important are the ways in which photographic technology evolved during the same period and the extent to which it affected Crocker, his photographic contemporaries and the specific photographic contexts in which he and they laboured.

While there is a relative wealth of information about the history of Canadian photography and photographers during the last half of the nineteenth century, the literature about

⁴⁴ Fisher, 206-209.

⁴⁵ Woodcock, 255-262. See also Paul Tennant, *Aboriginal Peoples and Politics: The Indian Land Question in British Columbia, 1849-1989* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 1990).

photographic activity during the first half of the twentieth century, especially in British Columbia, and specifically Victoria, is sparse. The lack of secondary sources might, at first, suggest that there was little to no photographic activity on the west coast of Canada during the first half of the twentieth century, but this was not the case. The provincial and municipal archives house a multitude of photographic collections from photographers living and working in cities throughout British Columbia. The numerous photographic collections housed at the Provincial Archives are each substantial and warrant serious attention. A comprehensive review of the photographers who were active in British Columbia during this period is desperately needed and would have been extremely helpful in establishing some sense of a photo-historical context for Crocker's work.

After Daguerre's process was available in 1839, Canadians enthusiastically took up photography and experimented with a range of photographic technologies and printing processes.⁴⁶ The daguerreotype was replaced with the collodion, or 'wet plate,' process which was later replaced with the gelatin, or 'dry plate,' process. Most photo-historians consider William Notman (1826-1891) to be the most famous Canadian photographer of the nineteenth century.⁴⁷ Based in Montreal, Notman was one of the few early Canadian photographers to achieve international recognition for his work, especially for his studio photographs and portraits and for his photographic publishing.⁴⁸ By the end of the century, a growing number of amateur photographers played an important role in the devel-

⁴⁶ A basic review of Canadian photography is provided in Ralph Greenhill and Andrew Birrell, *Canadian Photography: 1839-1920* (Toronto: The Coach House Press, 1979).

⁴⁷ Greenhill and Birrell, 48.

⁴⁸ Greenhill and Birrell, 48-51, 66-67.

opment of photography in Canada as photography clubs, societies and associations were established to satisfy their needs.⁴⁹ By the beginning of the twentieth century these organizations were flourishing. It was primarily through these groups that artistic movements developed in photography.⁵⁰

In Canada the most influential artistic movement in photography during the first two decades of the twentieth century was pictorialism, a style that imitates the aesthetics of painting.⁵¹ Pictorialism remained the most significant movement in Canadian photography even after it had faded from the international stage and given way to new artistic movements like straight photography.⁵² This artistic movement was not limited to amateur photographers. Professional portrait photographers incorporated elements of pictorialism into their work by using soft focus lenses.⁵³ However, other than portrait photography, pictorialism did not seem to influence Canadian professional photography. Pictorialism eventually lost its momentum in Canada by the end of the First World War but its greatest achievement lay in its followers demonstrating that photography could be used as a forum for personal and artistic expression.⁵⁴

⁴⁹ A fundamental review of amateur photography in Canada is provided in Lilly Koltun, *Private Realms of Light: Amateur Photography in Canada 1839-1940* (Markham, ON: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Ltd., 1984).

⁵⁰ Koltun, 18.

⁵¹ Lilly Koltun explains that pictorialism "sought to emulate traditional art media by using broad compositional design, suppression of detail, atmospheric effect, selective highlighting and diffused or "soft" focus to create photographs that could be judged as works of art." Koltun,³²

⁵² Greenhill and Birrell, 128.

⁵³ Greenhill and Birrell, 129.

⁵⁴ Greenhill and Birrell, 129. See also Harold Mortimer Lamb, "Photography as a Means of Artistic Expression," *The Canadian Magazine* (May 1912), 35-46.

In contrast to the artistry of pictorialism, straight photography led to documentary photography which graphically illustrated the formative events of Canada's maturity as a nation.⁵⁵ This photographic approach was used to conduct topographical surveys of the Rocky Mountains and the West. Photographs produced during these surveys were often used to encourage emigration from Europe to western Canada.⁵⁶ Documentary photography recorded the fabric of society. Documenting the human condition, as well as civic and industrial progress, for newspapers and other publications, photographs became an important source of illustration for books and periodicals.⁵⁷

During the last half of the nineteenth century, there was an increased interest in Canada's western regions. Numerous expeditions to the west were conducted in order to establish emigrant routes; many of these expeditions employed photographers.⁵⁸ A western expedition in 1858 was the first in Canada to make use of photography.⁵⁹ Most of the subsequent expeditions and geological surveys, including those conducted for the Boundary Commission in the 1870s, used photography to record the landscape and its inhabitants.⁶⁰ Perhaps the most prolific series of geological surveys took place under the direction of the CPR. After British Columbia entered Confederation in 1871 plans for the transcontinental

⁵⁵ This is not to suggest that documentary photographs are not 'artistic.' This issue is discussed in the Conclusion.

⁵⁶ Greenhill and Birrell, 145.

⁵⁷ Greenhill and Birrell, 167.

⁵⁸ An introductory review of early survey photography in British Columbia is provided in Andrew J. Birrell. "Survey Photography in British Columbia 1858-1900," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82).

⁵⁹ Birrell, "Survey Photography," 43.

⁶⁰ Birrell, "Survey Photography," 48.

railway began to take shape. Photographers travelled with several geological survey expeditions to the west, funded by the CPR in the 1870s.⁶¹

While western expansion brought photographers to British Columbia, the Fraser River gold rush in 1858 attracted a number of photographers to Victoria, then Fort Victoria.⁶² Photographers found their own fortunes in photographing the settlements and activities surrounding the gold rush. Charles Gentile (1835-1893) and Frederick Dally (1838-1914) are two of the most notable photographers who established photography studios in Victoria during this period.⁶³ Photographers continued to arrive in Victoria even after the initial flurry of the gold rush had subsided. Some established themselves in the city permanently. Richard (1832-1907) and Hannah (1834-1918) Maynard are considered by many photo-historians to be the best known nineteenth century photographers in British Columbia.⁶⁴ They opened their photography studio in Victoria in 1862 and their business continued until 1912 when Hannah retired.⁶⁵ These photographers, among others, laid the foundations for subsequent commercial photographers who settled themselves in Victoria in the twentieth century.

When Crocker arrived in Victoria, he found a well developed photographic market,

⁶¹ Birrell, "Survey Photography," 49. See also Andrew J. Birrell, "100 Years Ago: Horetzky, the First CPR Photographer," *Canadian Photography* (March 1974).

⁶² Joan M. Schwartz, "The Past in Focus: Photography and British Columbia, 1858-1914," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82), 5.

⁶³ Daniel Francis, *Copying People: Photographing British Columbia First Nations, 1860-1940* (Calgary: Fifth House Publishers, 1996), 11.

⁶⁴ A survey of the work of Hannah Maynard is presented in Claire Weissman Wilks, *The Magic Box: The Eccentric Genius of Hannah Maynard* (Toronto: Exile Editions Ltd., 1980).

⁶⁵ Wilks, 5,13.

due to the decades long presence of a number of successful commercial photographers. From the research I completed at the Provincial Archives, and from my discussions with the archivists there, I discovered that a staggering number of amateur and professional photographers lived and worked in Victoria and Vancouver during the first half of the twentieth century.⁶⁶ Each of them worked from the technical and artistic conventions established during the nineteenth century.

In the early decades of the twentieth century portrait photography was a prosperous business and some Victoria photographers made it their specialty. The medium of photography brought the art of portraiture to a wider range of clients, regardless of social or economic backgrounds. Catering to the demands of their clients, who were primarily wealthy British subjects, Victoria portrait photographers followed many of the portrait conventions established in the nineteenth century; they paralleled those of painted portraits. The studio portrait became the foundation for formal portraiture and it followed "a strict decorum of costume, occasion and pose."⁶⁷ These portraits incorporated a constructed interior setting, with props around which the subject would pose, or provided a plain backdrop against which the subject would be featured in a ¾ view. A contemporary of Crocker's, Jack Savannah (1868-1925), produced highly polished studio portraits for members of Victoria's high society. Savannah is quoted as having said "if you have beauty, I will take it; if you

⁶⁶ David Mattison, *Camera Workers: The British Columbia Photographers Directory, 1858-1900* (Victoria: Camera Workers Press, 1985). David Mattison, *Camera Workers: The British Columbia Photographers Directory, 1901-1929* (Victoria: Camera Workers Press, 1993).

⁶⁷ Alan Thomas, "Authenticity and Charm: The Revival of Victorian Photography," *Victoria Studies* 18, no. 1 (September 1974), 104. Quoted in Joan M. Schwartz, "The Photographic Record of Pre-Confederation British Columbia," *Archivaria* 5 (1977-78), 33.

have not, I will make it.”⁶⁸ His son, Edward Savannah, assumed control of the portrait studio after his father’s death and continued to produce portraits in the style to which the Savannah name had become associated.⁶⁹ They were perhaps the most popular portrait photographers of their time.

For this specific market, it was rare for photographers to produce portraits outside, without the controlled lighting of the studio. Seldom did photographers produce the *in situ* portrait that appeared in the nineteenth century.⁷⁰ While studio portraits use fictitious interior settings and props to symbolize the subject’s place in society, *in situ* portraits place the subject within relevant outdoor surroundings. While studio portraits were primarily produced by professional photographers, the majority of the *in situ* portraits of the nineteenth century were taken by amateur photographers. In her discussion of nineteenth century *in situ* portraits Schwartz explains that families are situated before their homes and loggers amongst their trees in order to demonstrate the relationship between the subjects and their environments.⁷¹ Crocker did not produce portraits that could be clearly defined by either of these portrait styles. Instead, he combined elements from both styles and experimented with their established conventions in order to develop his own personal style.

Unlike portrait photography, which was a well developed subject by the beginning of the twentieth century, explicit landscape photography was just coming into its own in Canada by the turn of the century. Although landscape photography was already an estab-

⁶⁸ Geoffrey Castle, “Savannah - Victoria’s Pioneer Photographic Family,” *The Scribe* 20 (November 1984), 3.

⁶⁹ Castle, 3.

⁷⁰ Schwartz, “Pre-Confederation,” 33.

⁷¹ Schwartz, “Pre-Confederation,” 33.

lished and important genre in the United States in the late nineteenth century, connected to various artistic and political movements, it was only just becoming an independent genre in Canada. Early twentieth century photographers, like Crocker, had only a short history of western Canadian landscape photographs from which to develop their work. Schwartz writes that in British Columbia, "pioneer photographers generally paid less attention to the intricacies and diversity of the natural environment than to man's imprint."⁷² Photographers included the western landscape only as a backdrop to the subjects that were of primary importance to British immigrants: frontier communities, industry and monuments of civil engineering. These images depict the wilderness as something to be transformed, exploited and conquered for the benefit of civilization. They reflect the "Victorian ethic of progress,"⁷³ celebrating human achievement and perseverance over the natural environment.

By the end of the nineteenth century, attitudes towards British Columbia's natural landscape began to change. Since dense forests, overwhelming mountains and rugged coastlines did not conform to the nineteenth century British idea of the picturesque, these geological elements of the west were considered to be exotic, as it was defined by Victorian tastes.⁷⁴ Canadians gained an appreciation for this spectacular terrain and began to view the western landscape as a tourist attraction. With the completion of the CPR line to the west in 1885 British Columbia was opened to increased settlement and tourism.⁷⁵

⁷² Schwartz, "Pre-Confederation," 30. See also Joan M. Schwartz, *Images of Early British Columbia: Landscape Photography, 1858-1888* (MA Thesis, University of British Columbia, 1977).

⁷³ Schwartz, "Pre-Confederation," 39.

⁷⁴ Schwartz, "Pre-Confederation," 43.

⁷⁵ Barman, 107.

Recognizing the economic potential in promoting the province's rugged landscape as a tourist destination, the CPR commissioned photographers to produce promotional images that capitalized on the nation's new fascination with the western landscape.⁷⁶ Thus, photographers began to focus on the landscape as the primary subject, not as a secondary background. In some of his photographs Crocker used elements of the landscape as a backdrop for other subjects. However, his explicit landscape studies continued the achievements of the first CPR photographers.

Unlike landscape photography which, in the early twentieth century, was still developing into a distinct genre in British Columbia, the photography of native peoples at this time stemmed from a long history of photographers working in this genre.⁷⁷ Daniel Francis writes that "early photographers, whether professionals or amateurs, scientists or tourists, went looking for Indian subjects like hunters looking for big game."⁷⁸ In addition to commercial photographers, the majority of these images were produced by amateur photographers including anthropologists, civil servants, surveyors and tourists who worked from different motivations. The growing commercial value of native images impelled several pioneer photographers working in British Columbia "to exploit the Indian as subject mat-

⁷⁶ Margery Hadley McDougall, "R. H. Trueman, Artist and Documentarian," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82), 129.

⁷⁷ For a history of photography of the native peoples' of British Columbia I found the following sources informative: Francis, *Copying People*. Alan Thomas, "Photography of the Indian: Concept and Practice on the Northwest Coast," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82). Elizabeth Edwards, *Anthropology and Photography 1860-1920* (London: Yale University Press, 1992). Margaret B. Blackman, "'Copying People': Northwest Coast Native Response to Early Photography," *BC Studies* 52 (Winter 1981-82), 87-104. See also Victoria Wyatt, *Images from the Inside Passage: A Northern Portrait by Winter and Pond* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1989).

⁷⁸ Francis, *Copying People*, 1.

ter.”⁷⁹ Many photographers who documented British Columbia’s native peoples during this period constructed and manipulated their images in order to satisfy artistic or commercial demands.⁸⁰ Some used the medium of photography to create pictures that conformed to, or perpetuated, specific socially constructed ideas about native peoples. Edward S. Curtis (1868-1952) is perhaps the best known photographer in this genre from the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.⁸¹ His work on North American native groups is famous for his manipulations of subjects and their settings.⁸²

Depicting subjects in ‘traditional’ regalia, in order to eliminate evidence of European influence, perpetuated the image of the ‘Romantic Indian’ and the ‘Noble Savage.’ Others used photography to demonstrate successful attempts at assimilating native peoples into non-native society. Portraying native peoples in European garments, in order to symbolize their newly ‘civilized’ existence, promoted the belief that native peoples could and should be assimilated into the dominant society. Furthermore, with many believing in the notion of the “Vanishing Indian,”⁸³ photographers set out to record their presence for posterity.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Thomas, “Concept and Practice,” 62.

⁸⁰ Francis, *Copying People*, 3.

⁸¹ Curtis published a series of twenty books, collectively entitled the *The North American Indian*, in which he compiled a comprehensive record of North American native peoples between 1900-1930. Edward S. Curtis, *The North American Indian* (New York: Johnson Reprint, 1970). See also Bill Holm and George Irving Quimby, *Edward S. Curtis in the Land of the War Canoes: A Pioneer Cinematographer in the Pacific Northwest* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1980).

⁸² The constructed nature of Curtis’ photographs has sparked endless debate. Some photo-historians condemn him for his deliberate manipulations while others appreciate his intentions.

⁸³ Daniel Francis, *The Imaginary Indian: The Image of the Indian in Canadian Culture* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 1992), 38.

⁸⁴ Many assumed that native populations in British Columbia were becoming extinct, due to the effects of disease, alcohol and social displacement. Barman, 156.

Francis observes that “it was all these things—their exoticism, their tragic fate, their nobility, their Otherness—that made Indians so interesting and created the demand for their photographs.”⁸⁵

The response native peoples had towards the photographic activity surrounding their culture was varied.⁸⁶ Some feared the camera, many were curious and others resented the invasion of photography into their lives and opposed having their culture exposed to outsiders. Francis explains that sometimes photographers hired native intermediaries or interpreters to facilitate cooperation in order to help them perform their photographic activities.⁸⁷ There is also evidence to suggest that many of the native subjects who were photographed were compensated with money for their participation. Money was used as an incentive to encourage native peoples to pose for photographers.⁸⁸ At a time when native peoples were struggling to find ways to survive economically, as well as culturally, it is not unreasonable to assume that they searched for new ways to earn money. Just as they recognized that furs, fish and cultural artifacts could be traded and sold, they also realized that photographs depicting their life and culture were popular commodities that could provide them with some income.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Francis, *Copying People*, 3.

⁸⁶ Native peoples' responses to early photography is discussed in Blackman, “Copying People.” Native peoples' responses to other cultural invasions by non-natives is discussed in Douglas Cole, *Captured Heritage: The Scramble for Northwest Coast Artifacts* (Toronto: Douglas and McIntyre, 1985).

⁸⁷ Francis, *Copying People*, 7.

⁸⁸ Francis, *Copying People*, 8. See also Margaret B. Blackman, “Studio Indians: *Cartes de visite* of Native People in British Columbia, 1862-1872,” *Archivaria* 21 (Winter 1985-86). Blackman, “Copying People.”

⁸⁹ Francis, *Copying People*, 8.

Photographers working with native peoples in the early twentieth century encountered many of the same issues and worked within many of the same conventions as those who photographed aboriginal peoples during the late nineteenth century. Crocker was no exception. Many of his native images show the influence of native photography from the previous century.

Nineteenth century photographers working in British Columbia used the medium of photography to record historical events and developments. Their purpose was not to create fine art but to describe the growth of a new society within a new environment. This is not to suggest that these photographers were indifferent to the artistry and aesthetics of photography. Photography in British Columbia did not develop in isolation from the technological and artistic advancements occurring elsewhere. Rather, photographers working in British Columbia maintained associations with photographic centres throughout North America and Europe. These connections ensured that they remained informed about current trends and equipment.⁹⁰ However, while photographers considered artistic issues relating to composition and style, their choice of subjects was dictated primarily by the demands of the market. Schwartz writes that these photographs were “record images, not aesthetic abstractions” and these photographers “described, but did not interpret.”⁹¹

The work of early twentieth century photographers grew out of the traditions established in the nineteenth century. Crocker’s work must be situated in the changing patterns and preoccupations of photography and photographers as he began his photographic career in Victoria in the first decade of the twentieth century. His work reflects late nine-

⁹⁰ Schwartz, “Past in Focus,” 6-7.

⁹¹ Schwartz, “Pre-Confederation,” 44.

teenth century photographic traditions and early twentieth century developments. Knowing the photographic traditions from which Crocker's photography developed, reveals the liberties Crocker took in 'breaking the rules' as he developed his own style.

The absence of supporting documentation for the Trio Collection means that Crocker's work must be interpreted on many levels. This can be achieved by considering what is known about the man and by examining his photographs with a specific historical and technical context in mind. The supplementary information provided in this chapter helps to reveal the social and photo-historical value of Crocker's photographs.

CHAPTER TWO

ERNEST WILLIAM ALBERT CROCKER

AND THE TRIO PHOTOGRAPH AND SUPPLY COMPANY

Ernest William Albert Crocker produced a plethora of images during his sixty-five years in Victoria, British Columbia (1904-1968). His photographs reflect the changing face of the capital city, its people and the surrounding landscape of the province during the first four decades of the twentieth century (plate 2-1). Fortunately, a large quantity of Crocker's photographs have survived and are available through the British Columbia Archives and Record Services for the public to discover and research. Although Crocker's photographic collection includes numerous examples of his diverse subjects, it does not provide much information about the photographer or his background. Unfortunately, very little is known about Crocker's life, family, education, photographic training, or motivations as a photographer or as a businessman. This obviously makes it extremely difficult to construct an extensive biography which could be used to assess Crocker's photographic work. However, a great deal can be ascertained from a careful examination of Crocker's photographs. Some of the gaps in the available written biographical material can be filled with data obtained from the photographs that Crocker took a lifetime to amass.

Constructing Crocker's biography is necessary in order to gain an understanding of the person, businessman and photographer behind the pictures. This information arms the researcher with one of many ways to view Crocker's work. Some of this biographical information may explain how or why Crocker worked in a specific way. Furthermore, since Crocker is currently unknown, this biography serves as a starting point for future research. This chapter assembles together the surviving fragments of information concerning

Crocker's life and career.

This biographical information comes primarily from the Provincial Archives' collection of Crocker's photographic work. The Trio collection includes a file on the photographer which provides an assortment of papers revealing small fragments of Crocker's life and activities. The most substantial item in this file is a three page biographical sketch of Crocker written by Humphrey Toms in 1982 for the Provincial Archives to accompany the photography collection.¹ Toms was a close friend of Crocker's who shared his fascination with, and love of, local history and his respect and admiration for the outdoors. Crocker appointed Toms to be the executor of his estate in 1965 when Crocker was no longer able to manage his own affairs due to his failing mental and physical health in old age.² Much of what Toms wrote about Crocker, his life and his photographic career is anecdotal and fragmentary. Moreover, subsequent research revealed some of the information provided by Toms to be inaccurate.³ Nevertheless, Toms' anecdotal summary provides a valuable insight into Crocker's personality and character. As a close friend, Toms often accompa-

¹ BCARS, Trio, Humphrey Toms. *Untitled Biography 1982*. Photographer's File. Toms grew up in Victoria and developed a strong interest in matters of genealogy and in Victoria's history. It was through his involvement with researching local history that Toms met Crocker and their long standing friendship commenced. Toms trained to be a plant pathologist and he worked as such in Vancouver for the University of British Columbia for many years. He also spent several years overseas serving in the Canadian military until the end of the Second World War. When Toms left Victoria for Vancouver, and then for Europe during the war, he never returned to Victoria to live. However, Toms always kept in contact with Crocker and occasionally came back to Victoria to visit him. Interview with Jane Toms, Humphrey Toms' Sister-In-Law, (Victoria: Tuesday March 21, 1995 at 9:30 am).

² Last Will and Testament of Ernest William Albert Crocker (Victoria, 1965), 1.

³ For example, Toms states that Crocker was appointed official photographer to the military in Victoria. Upon further investigation I discovered that although there exist detailed records for other official military photographers working in Victoria, there exist no such records for Crocker. Moreover, the type of military pass Crocker received from the Department of National Defence indicates that Crocker worked as an independent photographer, contracting his services out to each of the military training camps. These passes did not give Crocker official status but they did give him access to the training camps.

nied Crocker on photographic excursions around Victoria and the surrounding area. On such outings, Toms usually carried much of Crocker's photographic equipment.⁴ Some of Toms' recollections about their time together suggest specific aspects of Crocker's disposition which are revealed by Crocker's photographs and confirmed by individuals who knew Crocker or knew of him.

Explorations of other sources turned up very little useful material. Searching for personal and financial information that could be provided by the standing of Crocker's estate at the time of his death, I investigated vital statistics and probate records. Aside from Crocker's Last Will and Testament these records did not reveal much about his financial situation. I searched provincial and municipal archival records, including province and city directories, in order to uncover information relating to Crocker's photography studio and housing. These sources offered some information about Crocker's business and residence locations but little else. I made inquiries to regional and national military archives for records or information pertaining to Crocker's involvement with the military training camps based in Victoria. Surprisingly, none of these branches of the military had any record of Crocker or his work for the training camps.

I submitted an informational advertisement to the *Times-Colonist* newspaper to discover if anyone in Victoria knew Crocker, his photography studio, or any information that would be relevant to my research. After several requests to have the advertisement published as a "Letter to the Editor," it was finally printed.⁵ Interestingly, the advertisement

⁴ Jane Toms, Interview.

⁵ I submitted a letter requesting information about Crocker and his photographic business, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company* to: "Letter to the Editor," *Times-Colonist* (Victoria), 2 March 1995. Several Victorians responded to the letter but only two individuals had any substantial recollections about Crocker

attracted numerous responses from the general public but only two people had any useful information that was worth pursuing. I interviewed these two individuals who knew Crocker, or knew of him, with the hope that they could shed some light on the man and photographer. Although each interview generated interesting memories and conversation about the relevant time period, neither revealed much pertinent information about Crocker or his photography business. Finally, Jane Toms gave me a small collection of letters which were written to Crocker, in German, from personal and business acquaintances. I arranged for these letters to be translated in order to determine whether they would provide any useful pieces of information regarding the time Crocker lived in Germany or about the people he came to know there. Unfortunately, the hand writing of most of the letters was extremely difficult to decipher, and the dialect was antiquated, so the translations are sketchy and do not offer many details about Crocker's activities or acquaintances.

Pursuing all of these information sources failed to provide sufficient information with which to construct a more complete biography. However, the Trio Collection still has tremendous value despite the absence of significant written documentation. Its value lies in the photographs.

The following biography was compiled using Toms' biographical sketch as the foundation on which to structure the known facts.⁶ Additional material, gathered from all of the previously mentioned sources, was used to supplement the base and produce the most

and his photography studio. Personal interviews were arranged with both Jane Toms and Donald Stewart March 21, 1995.

⁶ Unless otherwise indicated, all biographical references in this chapter are to Toms' *Untitled Biography*.

comprehensive biography possible given the lack of available data. Regretfully, there are several gaps in Crocker's biography which provide a less than complete picture of the photographer commonly referred to as Trio. Although knowledge of Crocker's life and background is minimal, this lack of information indicates Crocker's fiercely private disposition. Several individuals who knew Crocker remarked on how reserved and independent Crocker was in his life and work. Given Crocker's tendency for seclusion, the fact that there exists very little biographical material is important information in and of itself. Nonetheless, drawn from Toms' biography, this chapter provides the limited and fragmentary material in chronological order.

Ernest William Albert Crocker was born on August 4, 1877 in Halifax, Yorkshire, England. Crocker was one of four children and was the younger son of John Charles Crocker, who managed hotels in Halifax and in Clifton, Gloucester, near Bristol. Following his father's death, Crocker's family moved to Norwood, Surrey, south-east of London where they could be closer to his maternal relatives. Growing up in Norwood, Crocker developed relations with many individuals from his mother's family, some of whom became theatrical agents. Through these family members Crocker obtained free tickets to several opening night performances at London theatres. This seemed to be something that Crocker enjoyed greatly. He was introduced to the arts community of London and developed a strong life-long interest in arts communities and their activities, as can be detected in his later photographic pursuits. Although it appears that his family was far from affluent, Crocker seems to have become a camera fiend early in life. According to Toms, Crocker acquired his first batch of camera equipment in England while he was still relatively young.

Crocker endured brief employment sojourns with several London manufacturing firms, none of which left him very contented. Eventually, one firm sent Crocker to Germany at the turn of the century to learn the rudimentary workings and operations of factory business. While living in Germany Crocker certainly seemed to make the most of his spare time. He kept himself busy pursuing interests outside the realm of factory business. Crocker studied the German language in order to correspond better with the London firm's German business connections upon his return to England. He acquired fluency in German and French and also learned to read Italian. From his work related activities, and through his own private pursuits, Crocker developed several lasting contacts with a variety of individuals. Toms explains that it was from one of these German acquaintances that Crocker learned the mechanics of photography. He learned the wet plate photographic process and began pursuing photography as a hobby. This is all that is known about Crocker's formal introduction to photography which is unfortunate considering that this led, ultimately, to his decision to pursue photography as a career.

After gaining the experience he needed for the London manufacturing firm, Crocker returned to England. Although his newly acquired fluency in German aided him in his business pursuits in London, Crocker still seemed relatively unfulfilled in the manufacturing business. Seeking a change, Crocker took employment as an accounting clerk for a large wholesale dry goods operation in London and this appeared to be a more enjoyable occupation for him. However, this did not satisfy him for long and in 1902 Crocker left England for good and travelled to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, to visit family friends and to pursue new employment. After a short stay there, Crocker moved north to Canada where he spent approximately one year in Winnipeg, Manitoba, before moving further west to

British Columbia. Crocker tried selling life insurance in Winnipeg and recommenced his photographic hobby, taking pictures of topical events around the city in his spare time.

In 1903, together with two other young Englishmen with whom he had made friends, Crocker travelled west to Vancouver, British Columbia.⁷ Crocker and his two friends lived there for only a few months before moving to Victoria. Crocker finally relinquished the prospect of being a manufacturer or an accountant and decided to make his hobby of photography his life's work. While in Vancouver, Crocker established his first photographic business incorporating his two friends as casual photographic and business partners. This was the beginning of Crocker's formal photographic career and the three young men from England formed the "Trio" in their new photographic business *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*.

It is unclear how long Crocker and his friends lived and worked in Vancouver but by 1904 Crocker and his friends had moved to Victoria and were boarding with Miss Emma McCandless, a dressmaker. Her house, at 63 Superior Street, was located behind the Provincial Legislative Buildings. Today this site now supports the Victoria Centennial Fountain, on the south legislative grounds behind the Provincial Library.⁸ Crocker transferred his photographic business, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, from Vancouver to Victoria. Crocker's business endeavours with his friends are unknown during the first several months of their time in Victoria but soon after their arrival in the capital city the "Trio" dissolved and Crocker was left to run his business on his own. One friend returned

⁷ The names of Crocker's two English friends are unknown.

⁸ The Victoria Centennial Fountain celebrates the incorporation of the city of Victoria in 1862 and commemorates the union of the colonies and territories that formed British Columbia in 1866.

to England; the other moved to San Francisco, California.

After losing both of his business partners, Crocker's actions for the next couple of years are unclear. Toms states that there was some evidence that Crocker set up a photographic studio in a room that he rented in a building located at the Five Sisters Block at Government and Fort Streets.⁹ However, Crocker did not stay in this location long because a fire destroyed this building, forcing him to relocate his studio.

By 1908 Crocker had rented Suite 8 in the Imperial Bank Chambers at 604 Yates Street on the corner of Government Street. In this top floor suite Crocker established and maintained his photographic business, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, for the next 38 years. A few years later Crocker rented the entire top floor of the Imperial Bank Chambers to accommodate his photography studio and to serve as his permanent residence. He installed a small glass encasement adjacent to the street corner entranceway to mark his location and to display examples of his work. The encasement usually contained samples of his current work: perhaps a formal portrait, a scenic landscape view, a military picture, or postcard sized photographs of recent topical events such as city parades, sports events, theatrical productions or visiting royalty. Crocker continued to live and work in this location until the late spring of 1946 when the bank renovated its building and removed the entire top floor. Crocker was given notice to vacate his suite and once again he was faced with having to relocate his photography studio and find somewhere new to call home. However, approaching 70 years of age, Crocker decided not to re-institute his photography studio and the *Trio Photograph and Supply Company* never re-opened.

⁹ BCARS, Trio, Miscellaneous Notes, Photographer's File. This is the same building which housed Savannah's portrait studio.

In 1910 Crocker accompanied a group of Victoria financiers who travelled to the west coast of Mexico to inspect several potential mining properties.¹⁰ It is most probable that Crocker accompanied the businessmen to produce a photographic record of the Mexican mining properties. While the reasons for his participation in this journey are uncertain, Crocker photographed numerous scenic views in California and Mexico. These photographs are some of the most interesting in the Trio Collection.

About this time Crocker hired G. E. Welsh Lee, another Englishman, to be a casual partner in his photographic business. However, this partnership did not last long. Lee abandoned *Trio Photograph and Supply Company* and Crocker early in the First World War and moved to Chicago, Illinois where he became a union organizer. After the war, Lee eventually returned to Victoria but he never renewed his business connection with Crocker. Although their time together in the photographic business was short lived, Crocker, Lee and Crocker's terrier dog frequently were seen travelling throughout the city taking photographs of various scenes and topical events. Indeed, many people believed that the "Trio" of Crocker's business name consisted of Crocker, Lee and Crocker's terrier. It is very apparent, from studying the large number of photographs that include the dog's image, that Crocker had a deep affection for his canine companion. When his dog died Crocker buried him at night on the site of the colony's pest-house on Dallas Road.

Together, Crocker and Lee photographed numerous scenic views of the capital city and the province, many of which were made into postcards for the tourist market. When

¹⁰ Toms believes that at least one of the men from this group backed Richard McBride when, in 1914, McBride purchased two submarines from Seattle, Washington that were originally built for Chile. McBride purchased these submarines to defend Vancouver and Victoria during World War I. Ormsby, 378-383.

the CPR's Empress Hotel opened in 1908 its cigar-stand provided Crocker with a profitable outlet for many of his scenic postcards including those made from the photographs taken with Lee's assistance. This location gave Crocker's work valuable exposure and supplied him with a reasonable supplementary income.

Through his association with the Empress Hotel, Crocker met Gordon Hardy, one of the hotel electricians. During the 1920's and 1930's Hardy and Crocker developed a lasting friendship. Hardy owned a car and often drove Crocker up and down Vancouver Island to various scenic points, including Elk Falls, Campbell River, Sproat Lake, Port Alberni and Cameron Lake, so Crocker could photograph the landscape and vegetation of the island (plate 2-2). Hardy's generosity and willingness to drive Crocker to the sites he wished to visit, enabled him to photograph spectacular scenic landscape views in remote areas throughout many different regions of the island. Some of the photographs that were taken on these photographic expeditions were used to illustrate James R. Anderson's *Trees and Shrubs: Food, Medicinal, and Poisonous Plants of British Columbia*, published by the British Columbia Department of Education in 1925.¹¹ Crocker also must have known someone who had access to a boat for he made photographic excursions to various water sites along the Strait of Georgia including Bute Inlet, Desolation Sound, Jervis Inlet and Princess Louisa Inlet.

When a military camp was established on the Exhibition Grounds at Willows during

¹¹ *Trees and Shrubs: Food, Medicinal, and Poisonous Plants of British Columbia* was prepared as a reference text for use in the public schools of British Columbia. The book was published by the Department of Education with contributions from the Forest Branch of the Department of Lands. The text describes and identifies the native forest trees and shrubs, food, medicinal and poisonous plants of the province and provides information about poisonous and wild plants traditionally used by the native peoples along the coast. Crocker had four photographs printed in this publication which were identified by his studio name *Trio*. James R. Anderson, *Trees and Shrubs: Food, Medicinal, and Poisonous Plants of British Columbia* (Victoria: Department of Education, 1925), 11,14, 16, 31.

World War I, Crocker became an unofficial independent photographer for this camp. With this new position Crocker's photographic business began to flourish but the departure of his assistant, Welsh Lee, forced him to run his business on his own until the end of the war. This certainly must have kept Crocker busy as he attempted to photograph all of the camp's recruits as well as organize and sell these photographs to the soldiers and their family members.

After the war Crocker received part time help from Orlebar (Charlie) Walls. Walls returned to Victoria after his military service and joined forces with Crocker, assisting him occasionally with his photographic pursuits. They seemed to work well together and *Trio Photograph and Supply Company* began to make a name for itself with Victoria residents.

Over the next several years, Crocker expanded his photographic business into a variety of subject areas and secured numerous photographic assignments. Crocker acted as school photographer for several local public and private schools, including St. Michael's School, photographing students and their activities. He began working with theatre groups and the *Vancouver Island Arts and Crafts Society* photographing theatrical and artistic scenes. With the help of official press passes, Crocker also photographed the royal visits to Victoria including those of the Prince of Wales in 1919 and King George VI in 1939. Furthermore, his growing reputation as an accomplished local photographer led to increased requests to photograph private events.

While Crocker extended his interests to include new photographic ventures, he maintained his association with the military and continued to serve as photographer to several of the local military camps. His affiliation with the military allowed Crocker access to the Work Point Barracks in Esquimalt where he photographed distinguished military officials

and visiting military dignitaries. With the onset of World War II, an Officers' Training Camp was built at Gordon Head and Crocker once again became an independent photographer for the camp. Unlike his experience during World War I, when he lost his assistant Lee, during World War II Crocker had the benefit of occasional assistance from Walls. This allowed him to manage the substantial amount of work offered by the military during the war while maintaining his involvement with his many other projects.

When he was forced to vacate his Government Street studio and residence in 1946, Crocker finally retired from his photographic business. Approaching 70 years of age, and having no capital with which to open a new photography studio, Crocker closed *Trio Photograph and Supply Company* permanently. On March 19, 1946 Crocker sold most of his glass plate negatives, flexible negatives and numerous prints to the Provincial Archives in Victoria for a moderate sum.¹² Although Crocker received a nominal old age pension by this time, and had some savings in the bank, his finances were poor. By selling his extensive photography collection, Crocker attempted to raise some money to help improve his financial situation.

According to Toms, Crocker became quite ornery after he retired and began to sponge off others. From his Government Street photography studio and residence he moved from friend's house to friend's house, residing with them in their spare rooms. Although he occasionally offered meagre monetary contributions to his hosts, Crocker lived primarily from the kindness and generosity of his friends. In particular, two women, Nina Walls and Lilian C. Allen, provided Crocker with free room and board and took care of him as he

¹² The purchase price is unknown because the Provincial Archives has no record of the transaction and Toms' recollection of this matter is unclear. In his *Untitled Biography* Toms states the amount to be \$250.00 but in a separate collection of notes he claims the amount to be \$700.00 (Miscellaneous Notes).

grew older and more cantankerous.

In 1963, Allen was forced to give up her rented suite at 788 Hillside Avenue. Crocker moved to a large rented room at 210 Government Street where he lived for the next two years with his cat Timmie, essentially keeping to himself. In January 1965 Crocker appointed his friend Humphrey Toms to be the trustee, and later the executor, of his estate. Toms took control of all of Crocker's subsequent personal and financial affairs. By late 1965 it became evident that Crocker could no longer manage on his own or live independently due to his failing mental and physical health. Toms arranged with the Ministry of Social Services for Crocker to be moved to Glengarry Private Hospital at 1780 Fairfield Road. Crocker remained under the care of their staff until June 8, 1968 when, at the age of 91, he died.

Upon Crocker's death Toms scattered Crocker's ashes in an aspen grove beside the Harrison Yacht Pond close to the old pest-house site on Dallas Road. Here Crocker was near to where he had buried his terrier several years earlier. This seemed to be an appropriate site given Crocker's fondness for his companion and his love for the outdoors. Obituary entries and brief articles mentioning Crocker's long photographic career in Victoria appeared in both the *Daily Colonist* and the *Victoria Daily Times* newspapers.¹³ In addition, both papers included brief articles about Crocker stating that he was survived by his sister, Rhoda Gertrude Talbot Crocker, and his niece, Alice Ivy Coope. At the time of Crocker's death, Rhoda Crocker lived in a nursing home in Harrogate Yorkshire, England

¹³ "City Photographer: Rites Wednesday For Trio Crocker," *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 9 June 1968, 28. *Daily Colonist* (Victoria), 11 June 1968, 7. "Noted City Photographer Dies at 91," *Victoria Daily Times* (Victoria), 10 June 1968, 21. *Victoria Daily Times* (Victoria), 11 June 1968, 25. Copies of these newspaper entries are included in the Trio Collection. Miscellaneous Notes.

and Alice Coope lived at Nova Scotia Farm in York, Yorkshire.

Crocker's sister and niece were his only surviving relatives. Crocker never married, he never had any children and he did not seem to keep in contact with many of his relatives from England. Crocker was a very private individual who lived a solitary life with ties to very few close friends. Humphrey Toms, one of the few who knew Crocker well, was the only person able to help Crocker with his affairs when he was unable. When Toms took control of Crocker's monetary affairs, Toms discovered what little time Crocker spent on his financial records. Apparently Crocker never paid his taxes: municipal, provincial or federal. Therefore, it is not surprising that upon Crocker's death, the City of Victoria laid claim to the proceeds of his estate which amounted to approximately \$4500.¹⁴ It is significant that in addition to his photography collection and equipment, the only other personal property of any value listed in Crocker's probate records is a small collection of aboriginal artwork, listed as "Indian Curios."¹⁵ Crocker bequeathed this collection to Toms which gives some indication of their close friendship. Despite the collection's nominal estimated worth, Crocker valued this collection enough to list it specifically in his will and request that it be given to his friend.¹⁶

It was at this time that the remainder of Crocker's photographic collection was gathered, sorted and distributed to interested institutions. Toms sorted through Crocker's effects in the Government Street suite. He set aside some of Crocker's photographic prints

¹⁴ Supreme Court of British Columbia, "Affidavit of Value and Relationship: Inventory X," Probate Records for Ernest William Albert Crocker (Vancouver: 1968), 6. It is a commonly held practice for the city to lay claim to the proceeds of an individual's estate when that individual has failed to pay the necessary taxes over several consecutive years.

¹⁵ Inventory X, 5-6. How Crocker came to acquire this collection of aboriginal artwork is not known.

¹⁶ Last Will and Testament, 1.

and newspaper articles from the *Daily Colonist* containing photographs of local armed forces groups from World War I, in which all soldiers were identified, for Pounal Walls to deliver to the Provincial Archives. Toms also sorted through a great many prints and postcards at Gordon Hardy's house in North Saanich. Gordon Hardy, Crocker's friend from the Empress Hotel, stored some of Crocker's photographic work in his house for 17 years after Crocker was forced to move out of his Government Street studio and residence. Walls delivered these prints and postcards to the Provincial Archives and added all of this material to the Trio Collection which had been established when Crocker sold a large portion of his photographs to the Provincial Archives in 1946. Finally, Toms presented the Museum of Anthropology, at the University of British Columbia, with some of Crocker's larger prints portraying images of native peoples and scenes of native villages situated along the west coast of British Columbia.¹⁷

Studying each and every image from the Trio Collection helps to formulate an impression of who Ernest William Albert Crocker was as a photographer and as a person. The numerous photographs created by Crocker help to develop a portrait of their maker by offering insights into his character and personality. This will be made evident in Chapter 3 with a detailed examination of Crocker's photographs. The Trio Collection reveals aspects of Crocker's business practices, individual talents, personal shortcomings and particular interests. Crocker was a restless English immigrant who, struggling to find a personally fulfilling career, finally settled in Victoria to pursue his lifelong hobby. He made photography his formal career and happily went about making pictures for almost forty years.

¹⁷ The Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia has no record of Crocker's work there or of when the photographs were donated to the Museum by Humphrey Toms.

Crocker seemed to be an extremely private individual who kept mostly to himself. Since he never married, never had children and lost touch with his English relatives, Crocker lived alone with his photographs and his faithful terrier. Other than his dog, who was perhaps his closest companion, Crocker had few close friends. However, the friendships he held with friends like Humphrey Toms were strong and long standing.

Living a solitary life, Crocker quietly immersed himself in his picture making. His talents lay in capturing people, places and events with his camera and he spent a lifetime exploring and perfecting his photographic abilities. Crocker's primary shortcoming was his deficient business practices. With no apparent record keeping methods, ordering procedures, or cataloguing systems, and his inability to manage his finances, Crocker was far from being an astute businessman.¹⁸ Although Crocker was an accounting clerk for a time, he did not apply these skills to his personal or business life. However, he managed to earn enough money for food, rent and photographic supplies in order to sustain himself and his photography business. Presumably this was all that Crocker needed in order to be professionally fulfilled and personally contented. In many ways his life, as it can be reconstructed, was defined by his photographs and his photography business. Perhaps that was why, when he was forced to vacate his photography studio in 1946, Crocker ceased producing pictures and lived out his remaining twenty-two years in relative obscurity.

Knowing some of the elements that made up Crocker's life allows us to examine his photographs with a more specific perspective. Since this thesis serves as an introduction to the Trio Collection, this chapter provides the foundation from which future research can

¹⁸ The absence of cataloguing information, and Crocker's cryptic notes and abbreviations, made it extremely difficult to determine when many of the photographs were produced, what they depicted, or why they were made.

stem. Although the information is incomplete, this biography assembles together, in one source, all of the known facts to serve as a reference to those researching Crocker's work in the future.

CHAPTER THREE

REFLECTIONS OF A PAST ERA: THE TRIO PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTION

Ernest William Albert Crocker left behind a large portion of his life's work for subsequent generations to discover, study and enjoy. The surviving collection offers the perspective of one photographer's experience during the first few decades of the twentieth century in Victoria and the surrounding region. The Trio Collection, appropriately named after Crocker's photography studio and business *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, is housed primarily in the photography division of the British Columbia Archives and Record Services.¹ The City of Victoria Archives has a select few original paper prints and they are catalogued with reference to Crocker's association with his part time assistant Orlebar (Charlie) Walls.² The Ethnography Division of the Royal British Columbia Museum also holds a small collection of his glass plate negatives of north-west coast native village scenes and portraits of native peoples.³

The Trio Collection is one of the largest photographic holdings in the Provincial Archives comprising approximately 20,000 images.⁴ It contains gelatin dry glass plate nega-

¹ BCARS, Trio.

² CVA.

³ EDRBCM. Catalogued by culture group and location (*West Coast*: Alberni, Sproat Lake, Opitsant, Nootka Cannery, Kyuquot, Friendly Cove; *Coast Salish*: Cowichan, Clemclemaluts, Unknown Misc., New Songhees, Nanaimo, Victoria, Tsartlip, Saanich, Quamichan; *Kwakiutl*: Alert Bay, Cape Mudge, Campbell River, Yuculta Rapids; *Thunderbird Park*) under Crocker or Trio.

⁴ Negative boxes 1-817 contain glass plate negatives (print envelopes 1-817 contain corresponding copy prints); negative boxes 818-872 contain large format glass plate negatives; negative boxes 873-1000 (in file boxes 120-128) contain flexible negatives (print envelopes 873-1000 contain corresponding copy prints). File boxes 1-32 contain miscellaneous materials including original paper prints, small glass plate negatives, small flexible negatives, photographic albums, postcards, business and personal letters, ledger books, business paper work and official press passes.

tives,⁵ safety acetate based flexible negatives,⁶ original paper prints, photo albums, post-cards, business and personal letters, ledger books, business records and official press passes. This extensive collection has remained essentially untouched since the Provincial Archives purchased the materials from Crocker in 1946. Therefore, despite the collection's age and awkward storing size the photographic materials survived the passage of time in reasonably good condition.

The majority of the glass plate negatives have maintained their original sharp images. Only a few glass plate negatives are broken and of the remaining glass plates an even smaller number are faded or suffer from other deteriorations. Similarly, almost all of the flexible negatives are still in good condition. Relatively few of them are indecipherable due to fading or other impairments. In 1991 the photo-archivists at the Provincial Archives made copy prints from most of the glass plate negatives in order to better preserve the original negatives and prints. Having the copy prints available to study and examine spares the original collection of negatives and prints from unnecessary handling and overuse. The only glass plate negatives that do not have corresponding copy prints are the oversized 9x21 inch plates. Their awkward size makes these plates extremely fragile and difficult to handle. Therefore, it was considered to be too much of a risk to manipulate the plates in order to make copy prints from them. Overall, the Trio Collection is in good condition, making it even more valuable for research purposes.

Crocker involved himself in a wide variety of commercial pursuits as a photographer.

⁵ The range of glass plate negative dimensions include 3x4; 3½x4½; 4x5; 4x5½; 5x7; 6½x8½; 8x10; and 9x21 inches.

⁶ The range of flexible negative dimensions include 5x7 and 6½x8½ inches.

Over an extended period of time Crocker used his camera to capture many aspects of life around the city of Victoria and of the surrounding area.⁷ He used his camera to record how war affected the capital of British Columbia, taking pictures of troops, naval ships, base activities, training exercises, official ceremonies and military parades during World Wars I and II. He also photographed a large range of civic events including annual city parades, local sports events, community theatricals, society functions, visiting royalty and civic and industrial progress. While carrying his camera around Victoria, Crocker also captured many of the city's important landmarks, tourist sites and scenic views for the tourist market. Becoming familiar to local residents with his public portfolio, Crocker received a variety of portrait commissions including public and private school students, local families and local individuals. Crocker's portrait lens also extended to native peoples as he occasionally travelled to some of the surrounding native communities on Vancouver Island and the southern mainland. Not only did Crocker produce group and individual portraits of native citizens and elders, but he also photographed some of the native villages and community events. Occasionally, Crocker ventured to remote areas of British Columbia, California and Mexico. It is in these areas that he photographed seascapes, landscapes, mountain views and forest scenes.

Little is definitively known about why Crocker photographed many of the subjects that are represented in the Trio Collection. The extent to which photographs were commissioned from Crocker or were made by him through his own initiative is unknown. Given the scarcity of records and documentation for Crocker's work with most of the people and

⁷ Crocker was most active in his photographic business, *Trio Photograph and Supply Company*, from 1908 - 1946.

institutions he photographed, it is probable that Crocker functioned primarily from self-motivation. Moreover, there remains in the Trio Collection clues to some of his established marketing procedures which also indicate that, in most cases, Crocker photographed his subjects first and marketed his work afterwards. However, one can only speculate on the reasons behind his subject choices based on a knowledge of the social, commercial and artistic climate of his time. Within each subject category, a careful examination of the content and aesthetics of each photograph places Crocker's work in an historical and artistic context. This then provides a good indication of Crocker's reasons for photographing certain subjects.

It is important to remember that the conclusions formed in this thesis are based on the images that remain from Crocker's life and work. Despite its immense size and extensive scope, it is impossible to know what, if anything, is missing from the Trio Collection. Although the collection that exists in the Provincial Archives spans the length of Crocker's career, it is impossible to know whether or not Crocker kept all of his work. Since Crocker's first studio was destroyed by fire, it is reasonable to assume that a portion of his early work was lost at that time. Additionally, Crocker may have periodically discarded prints and negatives that he no longer needed or did not intend to circulate commercially. When Crocker closed his business in 1946 he may have discarded what he considered to be undesirable images before selling his photographs to the Provincial Archives. With part of his collection being given to Gordon Hardy to store for several years, before being added to the Provincial Archives' collection, it is possible that photographs went missing in the transfer. With no method of cataloguing in place it is difficult to determine whether or not a large group of images or a time period is missing from his portfolio.

Providing dates for the images that are discussed in this thesis is difficult because Crocker did not catalogue or date his work. Deciphering his cryptic notations from the negative boxes and analyzing the contents of some photographs provided some information that could be used to determine possible dates. As much as possible, dates have been provided for the images included in this thesis. If known, they are included in the *List of Plates*. However, some remain undated as there was insufficient information from which to speculate even an approximate date.

The photographs from the Trio Collection discussed in this chapter were chosen to provide an overview of Crocker's entire career. Although there are many images included in the following discussion, they represent only a small percentage of the extensive collection. Furthermore, these photographs were specifically chosen to exemplify the arguments proposed in this thesis. It must be understood that the perspective suggested in the context of this thesis is only one of many ways to view Crocker's photography. The following subject categories establish a basic structure in which to discuss the photographs. They clearly indicate the primary subjects that are represented in the Trio Collection. These categories should not be viewed as definitive classifications but as an example of only one way for Crocker's photographs to be categorized. The Trio Collection can be sorted into a variety of different subject categories depending on the focus of one's research.

Since the object of this thesis is to bring Crocker's work to the attention of scholars and the public, this chapter provides an introduction to, and a preliminary review of, Crocker's photographs. The following historical and aesthetic analysis is the foundation from which future research on the Trio Collection can begin.

THE MILITARY

Without question the presence of the military in Victoria was the predominant subject occupying Crocker's photographic attention. Pictures depicting the presence of various battalions training in Victoria during World War I and II comprised the largest portion of his commercial work and the most substantial portion of his revenue. Approximately seventy-five percent of the images in the Trio Collection portray soldiers training in Victoria, parading through the city, heading overseas, or arriving home again. During the most active years of Crocker's career, the military was an integral part of the city's daily life and it provided him with plenty of marketable material to photograph. During the periods when the military was a fixture in Victoria, Crocker captured its presence with his camera and used its predominance to sustain his business.

The federal government hired official military photographers to photograph soldiers training in Victoria, in all aspects of military life. Perhaps the best known military photographer in Victoria during Crocker's career time was John W. Jones who worked out of Esquimalt from 1901-1927.⁸ However, this did not prevent photographers like Crocker from contracting their services out to individual military camps. Once given official permission by the federal government, independent photographers were allowed to photograph the military in Victoria and sell their work at the training camps and military bases. This is exactly what Crocker did. He received official military passes from the Department of National Defense which gave him access to the various training camps in Victoria.⁹ This

⁸ Mattison, *Camera Workers: 1901-1929*, I, J-2. The Canadian Forces Base Esquimalt Naval and Military Museum has a substantial collection of Jones' photographs.

⁹ BCARS, Trio, box 29.

allowed him to record the life of a soldier training in Victoria in great detail. Crocker photographed many aspects of military life including views of the barracks, tents, mess halls, military drills, formations and training exercises as well as portraits of the soldiers themselves. His images illustrate the degree to which Victoria transformed itself periodically into an important military training centre.

Crocker recognized the commercial potential of the military market and catered to it in order to provide a steady source of income for his business. Many of the soldiers training in Victoria were from other areas of the province, or from other provinces, so images such as military portraits, ceremonial gatherings and parade scenes, became extremely popular to send home to family and friends. Crocker responded perceptively to this demand. As well as providing formal photographs, he also produced postcards of these views from his negatives. Postcards were especially popular with this specific clientele because they were less expensive and more easily mailed home. Several examples of his military postcards remain in the Trio Collection.

In addition to selling his postcards, Crocker actively promoted his military work in other ways. He displayed his military pictures in his Victoria studio and produced photo albums of military scenes to display at the bases and training camps. Some albums contained an assorted collection of photographs, others consisted of pictures organized by battalion. He also made banners on which he attached numerous samples of the kinds of military scenes he had to offer.¹⁰ Again, some of the banners displayed an assortment of

¹⁰ The Trio Collection contains 23 photograph banners which are made of black or burgundy felt. They range in size with the widest horizontal banner measuring 69 inches wide by 9 inches long and the longest vertical banner measuring 10 inches wide by 43 inches long. Prints are affixed to the felt in evenly spaced rows or columns. Each picture is numbered.

military scenes while other banners exhibited photographs of one specific battalion. These banners were suspended above his photography station at the camps for all to examine and each and every print was numbered to facilitate ordering. The Trio Collection contains numerous letters addressed to Trio from soldiers who had trained in Victoria, and from their family members, ordering specific photographs or inquiring about lost or incorrect orders.

His overview of the Officers' Training Centre at Gordon Head (plate 3-1) emphasizes the sense of permanence and significance that the military was attempting to establish in Victoria. The overview reflects the imposing size of the camp, the solidity of its buildings and the impressive presence of the uniformed soldiers standing at attention. This picture exemplifies the level of determination and pride the military took in developing and maintaining these training grounds. Crocker's view of soldiers performing grenade throwing drills at the training camp at the Willows Exhibition Grounds (plate 3-2) also reflects the resolve and dedication of the military contingent training in Victoria. This action photograph of troops practicing trench strategies illustrates their intense concentration practicing their maneuvers and the tremendous responsibility of the commanding officers in preparing them for war. This mid-action image epitomizes the great efforts taken to prepare for battle. Furthermore, the formal portraits Crocker produced of soldiers and officers training throughout British Columbia (plate 3-3) attest to the convictions these men had in their commitment to their duties. Although most of Crocker's military portraits are standardized and formulaic, the facial expressions of the recruits and officers reflect their enthusiasm and confidence at the prospect of serving Canada in the war. Whether they depict a group or an individual, these portraits capture the subtle expressions of individuality

in each soldier and officer despite the obvious homogeneity of their uniformed appearance.

Pictures depicting noble determination and dedication are also evident in the images that Crocker produced of the activities surrounding the naval ships in Victoria's inner harbour during World War I and II.¹¹ Military transport vessels carried troops and supplies overseas and at each departure and arrival there was a flurry of activity amongst the soldiers and their supporters. Taking advantage of his official military passes Crocker secured strategic vantage points from which he was able to photograph properly all of the pomp and circumstance surrounding each event. Crocker took numerous pictures of the troops marching through the streets of Victoria. Many of these images offer a glimpse of the events leading to their departure for the war overseas. He captured the heroic confidence of the soldiers heading off to war and the enthusiastic support of the crowds of families and friends lining the streets to the companionway. His camera recorded the aspirations and expectations Victorians held for victory, as well as the trust and faith they instilled in the men as they embarked on their journey to serve their country in the war.

For example, Crocker's view of the soldiers boarding the Princess Charlotte, a military transport vessel (plate 3-4), reveals the hopeful anticipation surrounding their departure. The image of the impressive naval ship, with great numbers of soldiers filling its decks, reflects the strength of the military contingent that had trained in Victoria. Crocker portrayed the pride, confidence and resoluteness of the soldiers as the crowds of Victorians bid them farewell, sending them off with their hopes for a peaceful future. Similarly, the

¹¹ Most of the photographs depicting the activity surrounding the departure of a transport vessel were taken during World War I. During World War II such departures were organised in secret in order to maintain military security. However, an arrival of a troop ship attracted tremendous public support and activity during both world wars.

ceremonial honours bestowed on soldiers after their arrival home from the war are reflected in the formal group portrait of a military unit on the steps of the Legislative Buildings (plate 3-5). Taken after these distinguished soldiers had paraded through the streets of Victoria, receiving accolades from the public for their efforts and for their safe return, and after they received commendations for their service overseas, this photograph immortalizes some of the men who fought for our country. The impressive backdrop of the Legislative Buildings firmly establishes the formality of the portrait which compliments the precise arrangement of the uniformed men and elevates their prominence within the community.

The majority of Crocker's military photographs reflect the serious concentration, dedication and devotion of soldiers in training. However, Crocker also produced several photographs that illustrate the camaraderie present among the men living at the training camps. Men from different cities and varied backgrounds, thrown together in an unfamiliar place, had only one thing in common; they were all diligently training together to serve their country in the war. The recruits did not have much to provide them amusement or comfort. However, they did have the jovial companionship of furry, four legged pets. Dogs were an integral and important part of the soldiers' daily lives. They provided the men with an enjoyable escape from their intense training schedules and daily routines. Crocker produced numerous photographs that include or feature camp canines. These pictures reflect the strong emotional bonds established between the dogs and the soldiers. Crocker may have photographed these furry friends as a testament to their tremendous importance or simply because he loved dogs or because he knew such images would be popular. Regardless of Crocker's motivations, his close relationship with his own dog

made him especially perceptive to the affections held by the recruits towards the camp dogs and allowed him to record the camaraderie between them with astute sensitivity.

Frequently Crocker's group portraits, like the military group in Vernon (plate 3-3), give camp dogs equal prominence with the soldiers. In this group portrait Crocker made this dog's presence just as important as that of each of the soldiers. The portrait attests to the dog's significance in the soldiers' lives. Similarly, the individual portrait of "Rags," a camp mascot (plate 3-6), attests to their importance in providing the soldiers with a pleasurable diversion. With this photograph Crocker recorded the amusing result of the work of off duty recruits who needed a break from their regimented schedules. The amusing little dog featured in this photograph was the focus of their attention and he seems content to endure their antics and tolerate his newly acquired costume.

Crocker chose to illustrate a romanticized view of how World War I and II affected the city and citizens of Victoria. His images depict dedicated soldiers armed with pride, determination and enthusiasm, and loyal Victorians ardently supporting the war, their country and the soldiers who trained in their city. He recorded the confidence of the recruits training for battle, the pageantry of the troops departing for war and the joy of the soldiers arriving home from overseas. Crocker focused on the vibrancy and excitement of war which encouraged feelings of patriotism, nationalism and civic pride. He chose not to illustrate the tragedies of war that affected Victoria and its residents. For example, the effects of the changing economy on local and provincial industries, the labour unrest and the personal adjustments and hardships that were endured by Victorians and other British Columbians due to the wars were not subjects that Crocker photographed. His pictures do not show the soldiers who were injured in battle or who were disillusioned by their war-

time experiences. Although many other local photographers photographed Craigdarroch Castle while it operated as a military hospital after the First World War it appears that Crocker chose not to photograph the activities at the castle during this time.¹² Moreover, the Trio Collection does not contain images of Victorians who did not support the war or Canada's participation in it. Crocker did not concentrate on the horrors and calamities of war that resulted in tragic losses, destitution and devastation. Instead, he chose to focus on the survivors of war who triumphed over its wrath.

Although Victoria did not suffer physical destruction, it bore the physical injuries and emotional wounds of its people. These scars of the community and of the human spirit, which are inevitable accompaniments to war, are absent from Crocker's views of Victoria during World War I and II. Crocker apparently made a conscious decision to produce romanticized military views and this could have been for a variety of reasons. Since most people enthusiastically endorsed Canada's participation in the war and, within their specific capacities, did whatever was necessary to support it, one could assume that Crocker was no exception. He could have been equally swept up by the war's furore and used his talents as a photographer to declare his support and make it public. His military views helped to instill public pride in the military contingents leaving Victoria, confidence in their abilities and hope for the future. In return these sentiments encouraged and promoted further public support for the war and for Canada's involvement in it.

However, Crocker's choice also could have been related to his sense of business.

¹² In 1919 Craigdarroch Castle was acquired by the Bank of Montreal which briefly leased the building to the Department of Soldiers' Re-establishment. This organisation used the castle as a military hospital for veterans of the Great War. Terry Reksten, *The Dunsmuir Saga* (Vancouver: Douglas and McIntyre, 1991), 200. See also Terry Reksten *Craigdarroch: The Story of Dunsmuir Castle* (Victoria: Orca Book Publishers, 1987), 62-69.

Since military pictures provided his primary source of revenue, he had to ensure the marketability of his work. Crocker instinctively understood that uplifting, heroic and patriotic views of wartime military life were more appealing to this specific clientele than images of wartime tragedy, struggle and affliction. If Crocker's priorities and society's views of war had been at odds, his pictures of the military's presence in Victoria during the First and Second World Wars might have been very different. If Crocker had been less concerned with earning money, if he had no financial limitations, and had been more concerned with making critical social commentary he might have decided to photograph the military's influence on the capital city from a different perspective.

PHOTOGRAPHIC SOUVENIRS

Next to selling pictures to the military personnel training in Victoria, providing images for the tourists who visited the capital city became Crocker's largest and most stable commercial market. Roughly ten percent of the images in the Trio Collection portray Victoria's premiere landmarks and scenic attractions. Keepsake views depicting the constructed treasures and natural beauties of the capital city as well as the unspoiled wildness and impressive landscape of British Columbia helped to sustain Crocker's photographic business which was growing in Victoria at the same time that Victoria's tourist industry was expanding. He took advantage of the rapid influx of tourists to the capital city and provided them with appropriate photographic souvenirs.

Taking advantage of Victoria's rapidly expanding market for photographic souvenirs, Crocker took great efforts to promote his photographs for tourists. The cigar-stand in the Empress Hotel sold Crocker's scenic views and landmark images which, although an exact

monetary figure is not known, provided Crocker with valuable exposure and considerable income.¹³ Crocker secured commissions to produce appropriate scenes for Victoria's tourist brochures and he also sold several of his photographs to postcard companies. Sometimes these companies hand tinted Crocker's photographs or printed his pictures on coloured paper to enhance their marketability. The Trio Collection contains a few brochures that incorporated Crocker's work and several postcards developed from his negatives. Crocker supplied tourists with the souvenir views that they demanded and circulated them in a variety of different ways.

Crocker captured the changing face of Victoria as it began catering to the tourist market and emphasized its unique attractions. He produced numerous photographs of the Legislative Buildings, the Empress Hotel, Craigdarroch Castle, the inner harbour and Butchart Gardens. Many of the cityscapes depicted in the Trio Collection continue to be photographed for the contemporary tourist market. Crocker's souvenir photographs attest to the lasting appeal of these commonly recognizable views in the city's souvenir industry.

For example, Crocker's view of the Empress Hotel, taken from the inner harbour (plate 3-7), is a commonly photographed view but it is one that gives a sense of the tremendous charm of Victoria's central harbour. It portrays the grand presence of the new CPR hotel and it features the newly constructed harbour and waterfront. This picture epitomized the cornerstone of Victoria's tourist industry. Similarly, Crocker's view of the Legislative Buildings, taken from Government Street (plate 3-8), shows another commonly photographed image for the tourist market. The impressive scene of British Columbia's house of government, naturally framed by two trees, was the perfect souvenir for

¹³ Toms, 3.

tourists. Not only would this image remind them of Victoria's urban magnificence, it also would reflect Victoria's civic strength and confidence.

In addition to pictures of Victoria's landmark buildings, Crocker's photographs of scenic attractions, such as his depiction of the Central Fountain on the north legislative grounds (plate 3-9), provided picturesque images for the tourist market. Crocker captured the translucent lighting effects of the cascading water in order to create a tranquil garden scene. Postcard images of this historic fountain can still be found in souvenir shops but cannot compare with Crocker's version as his documents the original structure.¹⁴ The views Crocker produced of Butchart Gardens, such as the scene featuring the sculptured sun dial (plate 3-10) artistically framed by the laden flower arbour, were also popular with the tourists.¹⁵ This photograph reflects the spectacular beauty and tranquillity of the gardens and represents the same qualities that were characteristic of the entire capital city. It was the perfect reminder for tourists to think of Victoria as the city of gardens.

Crocker periodically travelled throughout British Columbia to photograph a variety of scenic landscape views and used many of these pictures for the tourist market. Crocker ventured inland to British Columbia's interior mountains as well as out to the province's coastal inlets. Most of these locations were in remote areas of the province and were isolated from the activities of the cities. Only determined and adventurous tourists ventured to these secluded sites to encounter the pristine wilderness and unspoiled coastlines.

¹⁴ The Central Fountain, erected in 1905, was designed to adorn the gardens in front of the Legislative Buildings. The top section of the fountain shown in Crocker's picture has since been removed.

¹⁵ There are numerous copies of several Butchart Garden scenes throughout the Trio Collection. This indicates that these images were reproduced in large numbers which suggests in turn that they were popular images for the tourists.

Crocker photographed these indigenous locations before they were altered by the encroachment of civic progress and expansion. Some of the coastal sites that Crocker visited have now been altered by the presence of resort hotels and vacation homes. Similarly, some of the inland locations have been changed by the exploitative activities of the forest and mining industries. Interestingly, while some of the sites have become unrecognizable due to urban and industrial development, others have maintained their pristine condition, looking the same today as they did when Crocker visited them over half a century ago.

One forest scene, displaying the rambling Beaver Creek winding through the trees (plate 3-11), is somewhat magical and is an example of the numerous images Crocker produced for those who were impressed by the timberlands of this province. Crocker captured the magnitude of the forest by contrasting the gentle movement of the stream with the dense vegetation of the woods. Given the number of copies of this image that exist in the Trio Collection, it appears to have been a popular picture with tourists, reflecting the forest's grandeur and promoting its importance as British Columbia's primary natural resource.¹⁶ Comparably, the picture depicting the Fraser Canyon (plate 3-12) is one of several views Crocker produced that celebrates the natural wonders of Canada's western most province. Crocker captured the relationship between the mountains of British Columbia's inland regions and the rivers that cut through them as they travel towards the ocean. By including a person in the landscape, Crocker provided a scale of reference which heightens the majesty of the view and illustrates one of the original attractions that drew tourists to the province, the natural landscape.

¹⁶ Although some photographers were commissioned by government officials or forestry companies to photograph forest views and logging sites there is no evidence that the forest views in the Trio Collection were taken for such purposes.

Crocker's tourist souvenirs portrayed Victoria as a beautiful city firmly rooted in its heritage and confident in its future. His pictures celebrate the urban attractions of the capital city's landmark buildings, the splendours of Victoria's manicured gardens, the unspoiled beauties of British Columbia's pristine wilderness and the spectacular wonders of the province's rugged landscape. His scenic photographs reflected Victoria's local charm and British Columbia's natural magnificence which helped promote Victoria as a preferred tourist destination. Crocker understood Victoria's tourist market and astutely photographed the appropriate subjects for it.

THE COMMUNITY

Although Crocker spent the majority of his time producing images for the military or for the tourists, he also wandered throughout Victoria in search of local community events and images to photograph. In comparison with the vast number of military views and the substantial collection of souvenir photographs that exist in the Trio Collection, the number of pictures depicting public subjects is significantly smaller. Just over five percent of the images in the Trio Collection portray community related subjects. However, throughout his career, Crocker recorded many of Victoria's formal and informal public gatherings, documented some of the city's characteristic districts, captured a few unusual occurrences and immortalized several school and community groups. Crocker provided Victorians with photographs of significant historic occasions as well as pictures of themselves involved in momentous local events or well established leisure activities.

Just as Crocker catered to the commercial demands of Victoria's military personnel and tourists, he produced community scenes that were popular with local residents.

Driven, at least to some degree, by financial motives Crocker accepted commissions from school groups and theatrical companies and photographed events and scenes of public interest. Recognizing that candid views of the city and its events could be marketable to the general public, it is probable that Crocker produced such images in order to generate some revenue. However, the relatively small number of community views that exist in the Trio Collection suggests that the revenue generated by the sale of these pictures was negligible.

Although it would be reasonable to assume that Crocker produced many of these photographs for publication in the local newspapers, there is no evidence in the Trio Collection to substantiate this assumption. Apparently, Crocker photographed most of these pictures with the expectation that he would subsequently sell them independently to Victoria residents. The only exceptions were the pictures that he produced for particular community groups such as public and private schools and theatrical companies. For the purposes of this thesis it is assumed that these subjects were commissioned specifically. Despite the absence of documentation regarding Crocker's involvement with these institutions, the contents of these photographs suggest that he was hired by these community groups to photograph their activities. For his other, more candid, views of the community Crocker used the exterior display case at his Government Street studio to promote and advertise his most recent work. He was able to feature the prints that depicted topical events, local activities, sports events and neighbourhood districts. Given the limited commercial value of his community photographs, perhaps Crocker produced these scenes more for personal interest than for commercial profit. Regardless of his personal or commercial motives, Crocker recorded significant moments in Victoria's local history to serve as specific visual reminders of past events and as general historical documents of a past

era.

Crocker was frequently seen wandering throughout the streets of Victoria with his dog and his camera equipment.¹⁷ The relative scarcity of studio images in the Trio Collection indicates that Crocker preferred bringing his camera to people over having them come to his studio. From his consistent presence in the community Crocker witnessed and recorded many community events including annual municipal parades, local sports competitions, royal visits to the capital city, impressive effects of weather and displaced wildlife in the city. Although the specific objects in many of his Victoria scenes are dated, the general subject appeal of these pictures is timeless. Crocker's community scenes reflect the city's significant milestones as well as the momentous achievements of Victoria's citizens.

For example, the scene depicting the procession of the "Spirit of Victoria" float making its way down Douglas Street for Victoria's annual Victoria Day Parade (plate 3-13) illustrates the long standing tradition of this parade in the capital city. In a city where the origins of this parade have special significance because of its name,¹⁸ the depiction of floral decorated floats, the May Queen and her attendants, local businesses promoting their achievements, marching bands entertaining the crowds and spectators enjoying the entire demonstration all illustrate the celebrations that have surrounded this national holiday from its inception. This photograph provides a timeless image when compared to views of contemporary Victoria Day Parades and festivities. Similarly, Crocker's group portrait of swimmers assembled on a floating dock in Victoria's inner harbour (plate 3-14) is another

¹⁷ Toms, 2.

¹⁸ The city of Victoria was named after Her Majesty Queen Victoria (1819-1901) whose birthday, May 24, is celebrated by all Canadians on Victoria Day, the Monday preceding May 24. Gregson, 4.

familiar view to local residents because it harkens back to Victoria's long standing tradition of athletic excellence. Although the modest outdoor setting and distinctive swimming attire date this specific meet, the determined faces shown in this portrait reflect people's general strength of character during physical competition. In addition to flaunting their athletic prowess the swimmers also reveal the desire of all athletes to push themselves to the limits of their abilities in order to achieve victory and personal excellence before their peers.

When Edward, Prince of Wales, came to Victoria in September of 1919 to open a new hospital at Craigdarroch Castle for the injured and crippled veterans of the First World War, Crocker received permission from The Interdepartmental Committee on the Royal Visit in Ottawa to photograph the Prince's visit. The official arm band and identification card provided by the committee gave Crocker close access to the Prince which he used to his advantage when he photographed the Prince attending to his public engagements throughout the city.¹⁹ Aware of society's fervent preoccupation with the British Royal Family, Crocker produced several postcard and poster images of Prince Edward to sell to the public. Consequently, there remain numerous reproductions of this particular image throughout the Trio Collection, a testament to its tremendous popularity.

The prestigious full length portrait of Edward, Prince of Wales, taken during his visit to Victoria in 1919 (plate 3-15) also indicates timeless qualities as it reflects the enduring sentiments surrounding royal visitors to the capital city. This picture portrays Prince Edward in a somewhat relaxed yet regal stance which exemplifies the majestic attributes that Victorians have always respected and honoured. This stately portrait not only reinforced

¹⁹ BCARS, Trio, box 29.

the Prince's popularity among loyal Victorians but it also reflected the endless and unparalleled fascination local residents had for British royalty.

Images like the photograph of the great snowfall of February 1916 (plate 3-16) document specific unusual occurrences and reflect common reactions to such events. This view of the walkway in front of the Legislative Buildings, buried under a tremendous amount of snow, obviously warranted a picture as this sight was extremely unusual for the city of Victoria. The feelings of shock and amazement that prompted Crocker to take this picture in 1916 are no different from those felt for contemporary snow storms. Similarly, Crocker's photograph of the wild cougar displayed in front of the Imperial Bank, and his studio entrance (plate 3-17), illustrates the age old problem of wandering cougars in the streets of Victoria. Obviously, this event was not a daily occurrence and warranted recording; it documents that this problem goes back a long time. A particularly eye-catching aspect of this scene is the way the cougar is so prominently displayed, hanging in front of the bank like a prize fish.

While many of Crocker's photographs reflect timeless images of the events that interest Victorians, some of his pictures depict specific points in Victoria's community development. Crocker photographed some of the city's distinctive districts, such as Chinatown, with an observant eye. Without knowing what motivated Crocker to photograph these neighbourhoods, it is difficult to determine how these views functioned at the time Crocker produced them. However, for contemporary audiences their function seems to lie in their depiction of the past. They provide a window to how things were before changing into what they are recognized to be today.

In contrast to the timeless qualities reflected by the views just discussed, photographs such as the general view of Chinatown, looking down Fisgard street (plate 3-18), serve primarily as historical documents. This view displays an area of Victoria during a specific period in time and at a specific point in its development. Comparing this image with a view of Chinatown as it exists today would reveal the changes that have occurred over the passage of time and would place Crocker's picture in proper historical perspective.²⁰

The work that Crocker produced for some of the city's public organizations, including cultural and educational institutions, chronicle Victoria's development as a community by recording a specific period in the growth of its fundamental public institutions. The portraits that he produced for these groups preserve specific moments in Victoria's past and characterize the Victoria residents who formed the substance of many of these institutions. Based on the nature of the work that Crocker produced for these community groups, he was probably commissioned by the institutions themselves. Most likely the class pictures were produced for the students and their families and the theatrical scenes may have been used to promote the activities of an arts society or theatre group. However, this is only speculation. Two schools that have been identified in the school class portraits are St. Michael's School and Oak Bay High School. A number of images depict individuals from a theatrical company or arts association. In most of these pictures the subjects are posing in an artistic arrangement that mimics a painted composition or a dramatic stage scene. It is impossible to know with any certainty whether the compositions of such scenes were controlled by Crocker or by the people depicted in the photograph. Based on the subjects

²⁰ It is interesting to note that this picture appears in Lai, *Forbidden City*, 148. However, Crocker is not given credit for his photograph as the image is not identified.

of many of these pictures, it is possible that Crocker was involved with the Victoria Arts and Crafts Society, an active organization during Crocker's lifetime. His professional association with Victoria's arts associations and theatrical companies stemmed from a lifelong interest in theater that began in his childhood in London.²¹

The group portrait of students from Oak Bay High School (plate 3-19) is an example of the kind of portrait work Crocker produced for some of Victoria's public institutions. This group portrait of impressionable youths is a traditional class picture that serves as a vivid reminder of the formative years of childhood. Reminiscent of the group portraits Crocker produced for the military training in Victoria, this portrait is formally constructed with a formulaic composition and a standard perspective. However, the tableaux vivant of Rembrandt Van Rijn's *Syndics of the Cloth Guild* that Crocker photographed for a local theatrical group (plate 3-20) is visibly different in its conception. Although Crocker approached students with a conservative formality in order to achieve a suitably classic portrait, he worked with members of the arts community with a more relaxed creativity in order to achieve an artistically inventive image. Exploring the creative aspects of photography and picture making, Crocker concentrated more on the scene's composition and perspective than on its subject and function.

In Crocker's generation photographs depicting important public gatherings, extraordinary occurrences, notable ethnic communities and important community groups provided the public with visual reminders of their past experiences. For subsequent generations these images provide visual clues to Victoria's status and development during the first

²¹ Toms, 1.

decades of the twentieth century. Crocker's community views chronicle the public milestones that contributed to Victoria's growth into a mature city. His pictures not only document past events but they also reflect the sensibilities that surrounded these occasions. Although each photograph represents a specific time and place from Victoria's past, the responses solicited by these views are often timeless. They allude to the collective aspirations and concerns that have endured the passage of time and continue to exist for many Victorians. Many of these pictures, which depict Victoria's British appearance and atmosphere, would also have been successful as tourism marketing imagery of its own.

THE PEOPLE

Crocker established a professional reputation with his public portfolio and it was from public recognition that Crocker received private portrait commissions.²² Throughout his career Crocker was commissioned to produce a wide range of portraits for a large variety of Victoria patrons. As with his community views, Crocker's privately commissioned portraits comprise only five percent of the images in the Trio Collection. However, the strong characteristics of Crocker's portrait style revealed by these views contributes greatly to the value of the collection as a whole.

Based on the substantial number of family portraits that include soldiers or military officers, it appears that many of Crocker's private patrons were associated with the military

²² There is no direct evidence to determine whether or not these portraits were privately commissioned. I made the assumption, based on the nature of the subjects portrayed in these images, that Crocker was specifically commissioned by private individuals to produce these pictures. Furthermore, since there exists no information regarding whether any of the aboriginal peoples represented in the Trio Collection commissioned Crocker to produce their portraits, their pictures are not included in this category. I have chosen to discuss Crocker's native portraits within the more specific context of *Aboriginal People and Culture*.

based in Victoria. It is not unreasonable to assume that Crocker acquired private commissions from some of the military personnel he met while working at the training camps. In a significant number of family portraits, only the mother and children are depicted. These portraits were probably commissioned by the mothers who wanted to send a family picture to their husbands serving overseas. Although few of these portraits are dated, it reasonable to assume that they were taken during the First and Second World Wars. The majority of the other privately commissioned portraits depict middle and upper class families and commemorate weddings as well as other momentous occasions.

Assuming that these portraits were commissioned, and that the small number of portraits in the Trio Collection is representative of the number that Crocker produced during his career, it follows that he did not earn much income from this aspect of his business. As a supplement to his other more lucrative business pursuits, portrait commissions seemed to be somewhat sporadic and they were often quite informal. For example, Crocker received a request from his friend, a lunch-time waiter, for some reprints of some old family photographs. The order was written on the back of a luncheon menu from a restaurant that Crocker frequented.²³ To promote his portrait work Crocker displayed a selection of portraits inside his studio in order to provide his clients with examples of the kinds of portraits he was able to produce. Crocker's portraits may have only generated a meagre supplementary income for him but they offer a wealth of information about his creative photographic perspective.

Despite the sporadic and eclectic nature of his portrait commissions, Crocker developed a distinctive portrait style. Unlike his contemporaries, such as Jack Savannah,

²³ BCARS, Trio, box 31.

Crocker seemed to prefer working with the natural light of an outdoor environment over the artificial light of his indoor studio. It is evident, from examining all of the portraits in the Trio Collection, that Crocker rarely used the controlled environment of his studio as a setting for these pictures. Even in situations when a client requested a studio scene for a portrait, Crocker frequently brought his studio paraphernalia outside in order to satisfy his client's preference and still take advantage of the natural lighting. Some portraits feature one or two selected props, such as an animal skin rug, a chair, or a table, placed in a garden setting. Other portraits depict complete studio views, including portable backdrops, so that the outside environment is completely hidden. The portraits that include such fictional studio scenes were photographed to include the outdoors around the perimeter of the constructed studio background. When Crocker developed and printed these portraits he cropped out the peripheral garden setting, leaving only the mock studio environment.

One of the most intriguing portraits in the Trio Collection is the outdoor wedding portrait in which Crocker included a studio prop of an animal skin rug for the bride and groom to stand on (plate 3-21). Although this portrait does not portray a complete studio setting, the juxtaposition of the refined couple with the once living wild animal lying beneath their feet raises questions regarding the portrait's underlying meaning. Using the residential gardens as a setting to support such a curious juxtaposition only heightens the peculiarity of the portrait. In contrast to the perplexities of the wedding portrait, the family portrait of a mother and father with their son (plate 3-22) is refreshingly simple. Typically, this kind of family portrait would have been photographed inside a studio giving the portrait more formal qualities, but by placing the family outside in the natural environment the portrait achieves a more relaxed effect. Without the artificial trappings of a studio setting,

and with a more informal composition, the gestures and expressions of the family members can be more fully appreciated because they become the dominant focal points of the portrait.

In most of his portraits the background setting is crucial to the function of the image. For some pictures Crocker purposely made the background insignificant so that the subjects in the foreground received greater attention. In other portraits the Crocker made the background more prominent. He used these backgrounds to compliment, parallel, or contrast the subjects of the picture. Crocker manipulated the background setting of the portrait using it to his advantage to accentuate specific aspects of the subject's character, personality, or demeanour.

The natural environment serves only as a insignificant background for the subjects of the first two portraits, but, in the portrait of the Chinese woman and child (plate 3-23), the natural environment is an equal and integral part of the portrait. Certain elements from the portrait's garden setting seem to refer to characteristic components portrayed in traditional Chinese landscape paintings and, therefore, directly relate to the subjects' cultural heritage.²⁴ Unlike the subjects photographed in the previous two portraits, who exist apart from, and have primacy over, their natural surroundings, the woman and child featured in this portrait exist in a harmonious union with their natural environment. In contrast to this image is the group portrait of Chinese children, perhaps students, surrounding their Caucasian teacher on the steps of the Chinese Public School (plate 3-24). The children appear uncomfortable in their surroundings which seems to reflect the tension between the Chi-

²⁴ The sap dripping down the right tree trunk resembles depictions of distant waterfalls in traditional Chinese landscape paintings.

nese minority and the White majority during this period in Victoria's history. Whether or not their uneasy facial expressions stem from their association with the teacher is not known, but it is clear that the children stand apart from their environment. Similarly, in the portrait of the two young children (plate 3-25), Crocker used the outdoor setting to create a visual tension between the subjects of the portrait and their surroundings. Instead of using the background to compliment the personal character of the subjects, as he did for the Chinese woman and child in the previous portrait, Crocker contrasted the youthful innocence and purity of the two children with the harshly aged and dilapidated front porch of a house. By placing the children, beautifully groomed and dressed in delicate white clothing, against such an incompatible background, featuring a broken fence and a neglected yard, the physical presence and individual character of each child is heightened.

Crocker composed relatively few portraits inside his studio, or in other interior locations, but his self portrait at a roll-top desk in his photography studio (plate 3-26) is one example of his use of an interior setting. Although it is not known whether Crocker or someone else photographed this portrait, the aging photographer is shown in profile, concentrating on something other than on the camera, in a room that displays tangible symbols of his life, career and personality. Surrounded by framed examples of his military photographs and a notable collection of north-west coast native artwork, the correlation established between Crocker and his possessions provides greater insight into his character and disposition. Capturing a person's essence is precisely what Crocker did when he photographed the anonymous elderly man seated outside at what appears to be a mining site (plate 3-27). While the background in this fascinating portrait suggests that this man may be a miner, it also compliments his rugged and unassuming appearance. The visible effects

of a lifetime of arduous physical activity in the outside environment, evident in the man's weathered face, calloused hands and fatigued demeanour, make it clear that he is intrinsically a part of his rustic surroundings.

Crocker's artistic creativity is more pronounced in his private portrait views than in his military images, souvenir photographs, or community scenes. He used the realm of portraiture to explore and experiment with the more artistic aspects of photography including composition, light and visual narration. As the work examined here indicates, Crocker preferred natural light over artificial light and a natural landscape background over an artificial studio setting. Although it is impossible to determine the motivations behind such preferences with absolute certainty, it is conceivable that he preferred these elements because of his familiarity in working with them in all of his other pursuits. Crocker's love and admiration for the natural environment permeated every subject he photographed, including his portrait views. However, regardless of whether he used exterior or interior scenes, whether he used the background surroundings to compliment or contradict (highlight) the subjects of a portrait, or whether he included indoor studio props in outdoor garden settings, Crocker manipulated every aspect of the portrait's image in order to draw attention to the subject's personality and character. In contrast to most of his military portraits, which merely record a soldier's physical appearance, the portraits he produced for independent clients portray more than the subject's material presence; they expose the essence of the individual. The depth of this characterization sets these portraits apart from the other portraits in the Trio Collection and gives them artistic significance.

Throughout his long career, Crocker produced portraits for several generations of Victorians. His portraits offer images of people who represented a small cross section of

Victoria's society. His subjects range from weddings and family gatherings to children and mature citizens, and include both formal and informal sittings for large groups and for individuals. Moreover, he photographed people from a range of different cultural groups within Victoria, including Chinese and native communities. Regardless of who Crocker photographed, or for what purpose, his portraits offer reflections of the people of Victoria's past just as his civic views offer reflections of Victoria's past community life. Presented in Crocker's unconventional portrait style, these combined impressions provide an interesting collection of pictures for research.

ABORIGINAL PEOPLE AND CULTURE

Only about one percent of the images in the Trio Collection depict native peoples or native village scenes but these photographs are perhaps the most powerful of all of Crocker's work. A few of these pictures can be found in the collection housed in the Provincial Archives but the majority of them are held by the Ethnology Division of the Royal British Columbia Museum.²⁵ Crocker visited local Coast Salish village sites to photograph native elders, village scenes, community events and sports teams. Although such subjects appear in Crocker's commercial portfolio, these pictures stand alone on their compositional merits.

Unfortunately, it is not known what motivated Crocker to accumulate these photographs, whether or not they were commissioned and if they were, who commissioned them or why. It is possible that ethnologists commissioned Crocker to record photo-

²⁵ It is not known how or why the Ethnology Division of the Provincial Museum came to acquire this small collection of Crocker's native photographs. There exists no record of the transfer of these images between the Provincial Archives and the Provincial Museum.

graphically local native groups in order to foster cultural research or that the Provincial Government commissioned him to photograph native groups residing near the city of Victoria for political purposes such as the long standing controversy over the native land issue. It is also conceivable that Crocker was commissioned by the native people themselves to record significant community events and to produce portraits of their own people.²⁶ A fourth possibility is that, with permission from the native peoples featured in his pictures, Crocker photographed these images to satisfy his own personal interests. It is possible then that Crocker paid his subjects to pose for him.²⁷ With Crocker's affinity for languages, it seems that he learned how to communicate with aboriginal peoples using some form of their own language.²⁸ This is significant because his ability to communicate with them, beyond using only English, may have allowed him greater access to their peoples and villages.

Just as nothing is known about Crocker's motivations for photographing native peoples, nothing is known about their motivations for allowing Crocker to photograph them. They may have been motivated by financial rewards, they may have commissioned the photographs, or they may have been impartial. Since none of Crocker's photographs of aboriginal life are dated, it is impossible to determine whether he produced these images throughout his career or during one particular period. However, despite the absence of information regarding these pictures' original purpose, they provide valuable information

²⁶ During the early twentieth century native peoples often commissioned professional photographers to produce portraits of themselves, for themselves.

²⁷ Daniel Francis states that sometimes photographers used money as an incentive to entice native peoples to pose for their portraits. Francis, *Copying People*, 8.

²⁸ Toms notes that Crocker spoke Chinook which was strictly a functional trading language used throughout the north-west coast. *Miscellaneous Notes*.

about local native life during the first decades of the twentieth century.

Many of Crocker's photographs depict native elders dressed in ceremonial regalia, old totems, grave sites and deserted village scenes. Moreover, his native portraits tend to be intense depictions of cultural identity and native heritage. By focusing on traditional²⁹ aspects of native culture these images tend to foster a romantic stereotype. Although it is not known what motivated Crocker to photograph these images, it is clear that in most of these pictures his goal was not to portray native peoples within a contemporary European context. Rather, his objective seemed to be to focus on, and isolate aspects of, their past existence.

The portrait of Chief David La Tasse, clothed in his traditional goats' wool blanket and head-dress (plate 3-28), is one of several portraits that Crocker produced of this Coast Salish elder.³⁰ Photographing the Chief in his ceremonial regalia with his spear in hand, emphasizes the strength of his cultural identity and heritage and demonstrates his commanding presence. Moreover, focusing on the Chief's aged face and intense gaze reveals his quiet wisdom, that only comes from a lifetime of experience, and his inner character. Similarly, the portrait of the anonymous native elder (plate 3-29) is equally powerful in its portrayal of the subject. Again, the resulting effects of decades of work and experience are evident in his large, rough hands, his wrinkled, leathered face and his tattered clothes. Furthermore, the close juxtaposition of the elder and the roughly hewn wooden house post illustrates the intimate relationship that exists between this man and his natural

²⁹ 'Traditional' is used here to refer to the time period before European contact.

³⁰ This particular photograph was used in an article which recounted the story of the last great fight of Chief La Tasse's tribe. N. DeBertrand Lugin, "Indian Saga: Heroic Tales from the Golden Age of the Indian's Supremacy on the West Coast," *Maclean's Magazine* (December 15, 1932), 22.

environment.

The portrait of the anonymous native man in ceremonial dress (plate 3-30) is similar to several of Crocker's native photographs as it provides information about a selected aspect of traditional native life and culture; it is a good example of a Coast Salish ceremonial dance costume. The intricate details of the floral patterns appliquéd to the tunic and pants and the decorative fringes of dentalium shells and deer hooves attached to the tunic and leggings illustrate the tremendous artistic skill involved in creating such an ensemble. Unfortunately, the purpose of this portrait is not known, but given that the man appears to be posed as somewhat of a mannequin, it is possible that Crocker's motivation for taking this picture was to document traditional native ceremonial regalia.³¹

Crocker also photographed Coast Salish village scenes such as the tranquil view of an unknown settlement located along the water's edge (plate 3-31). In this picture the compositional effects are strong; the land is balanced by an equal expanse of open sky, the row of buildings is paralleled by the river, and the bridge, foot path and river serve as lines of perspective to draw the viewer's eye into the depth of the deserted village. While the formal elements make this photograph aesthetically absorbing, the noticeable absence of any human presence makes it an object for contemplation. A monument reflecting native identity and spiritual ancestry is portrayed in Crocker's photograph of an anonymous Coast Salish burial site (plate 3-32). This modest grave monument is adorned with carvings of spiritually significant beings and stands in respectful memory of the deceased as it is overtaken by its natural surroundings. As traditional northwest coast native belief systems dic-

³¹ I am assuming that Crocker is at least partially responsible for choosing how the man in the portrait appears.

tate, the wooden structure is shown to be returning to the earth with its carved figures fading away and the wooden posts and beams decaying back into the earth's soil.

Not all of Crocker's photographs depict traditional aspects of native life. A number of pictures document contemporary achievements and events. The majority of these contemporary images portray native sports teams and their athletic accomplishments. Instead of depicting a constructed, romanticized image of traditional native existence, these photographs portray another aspect of contemporary native life. They confirm the enduring presence of native peoples and attest to the survival of their people and culture.

As the portraits of the native elders symbolize the Coast Salish people's strength of character and cultural identity, the team portrait of young Saanich rowers (plate 3-33) reflects the power of their human spirit and native heritage. Not unlike the individual displays of pride and athletic prowess that are evident in the earlier portrait of the Victoria swimmers, these rowers exhibit similar sentiments in relation to the successful teamwork that won them the trophies featured in the canoe amidst the rowers. In this portrait Crocker captured the relaxed camaraderie that existed among the young and old members of the crew as well as their satisfaction in being able to honour their native band with their victories.

Crocker's native photographs exist in a realm that is all their own. The majority of photographs in Crocker's commercial portfolio, depicting the military personnel training in Victoria, scenic souvenir views, community events and local citizens, are active and sometimes restless. However, most of Crocker's native portraits are quiet and still. Crocker focused his attention on the wise faces of the elders, the determined faces of the youths and the spiritual silence of the village scenes. By giving prominence to such elements,

sometimes to the exclusion of others, he created images that were more intimate and intense. Subsequently, these views demand greater contemplation of the subjects. As greater artistic creativity sets Crocker's private portraits apart from the other portraits in the collection, greater visual intensity sets his native views apart from the entire collection. Except for the portrait of Chief La Tasse, which was published in a magazine, there is no evidence to indicate that these photographs were circulated commercially. Unlike the remnants of paper work that exist for his military work, there exist no ethnographic or government records nor any business correspondence to indicate that these images were used for anything other than personal applications. If Crocker's aboriginal work was produced for the native peoples themselves, it is possible that his collection of native art objects served as a record of their commissions; he may have received these items as payment for his work.

More than his other photographs the viewer of this selection of images is captivated by the aesthetics of the picture and involved in the content of the scene. Perhaps the difference in culture forces non-native audiences to view these photographs differently than images depicting the viewer's own culture. Still influenced by the writings of Curtis and others who promoted the idea of the 'vanishing race' and the 'romantic Indian' non-native audiences might study Crocker's native photographs with misplaced curiosity. It is also possible that, if Crocker subscribed to the idea that native peoples were disappearing, he used his camera to preserve a romantic notion of traditional native culture, as he imagined it to be. In some ways Crocker's native views perpetuate the native stereotype. Nonetheless, he creates greater visual intensity in these images by concentrating on the strength of native identity and the power of the human spirit. Each picture offers an intense portrayal

of native life which is more intimate and personal than in Crocker's other work. The viewer is left to contemplate issues of existence, humanity and racial relations.

TRAVELS NEAR AND FAR

Travel photographs comprise another small group of distinctive work in the Trio Collection. This group of pictures is larger than the group of native images, but still only amounts to two percent of Crocker's work which is small when compared to some of his other subjects. However, like Crocker's native work, his collection of travel views include some of the most magnificent photographs in the entire collection. These scenes were photographed in remote areas of British Columbia, California and Mexico and appear throughout the collection in small groupings. These groupings seem to suggest that Crocker's travels may have been occasional excursions that served as photographic interludes to his regular pursuits and commissions.

Based on the range of locations that Crocker visited, he used many methods of transportation to reach his destinations. He travelled by automobile, boat, train and, for some of the more remote areas, foot. This is significant because since Crocker used heavy, old style camera and plate equipment, it would have been cumbersome for him to carry all of his equipment to these remote locations. This attests to Crocker's preference for and loyalty to his old style equipment over newer and less cumbersome equipment. However, Crocker occasionally received assistance with his equipment from his business partners and from his friends who provided transportation.³²

Throughout Crocker's travels he photographed a wide range of subjects including

³² Toms, page 2.

landscapes, seascapes, architectural scenes and local citizens from the foreign villages and cities he visited. Unfortunately, little is known about Crocker's motives for taking many of these travel photographs. Some of the landscapes that Crocker produced in British Columbia may have been used for Victoria's souvenir market. Crocker photographed scenes from along the CPR lines, including Banff Springs. These images may have been commissioned by the CPR in order to promote its railway service and to encourage people to visit or move to the western most province but there is no evidence in the Trio Collection to support this conjecture. Crocker also photographed landscapes and seascapes in California and Mexico. While Crocker was hired to accompany a group of Victoria financiers to Mexico in order to produce a photographic record of potential mining properties, the scenic views that Crocker photographed may have been for his personal use and interest. Although he did not seem to have a specific market for many of these travel pictures, it is probable that he sold them independently. Of all of Crocker's work from abroad, his landscapes are the most prevalent and, perhaps, the most breathtaking in the collection. Crocker seemed to come alive when capturing the landscape with his camera; the energy and magnificence of these images is more pronounced than in any of his other work.

The picture of the Fraser River discussed earlier (plate 3-12) is an example of the landscape views that Crocker produced of British Columbia's inland regions. Not only did Crocker capture the natural wonder of the mountains, forests and rivers, but he also captured a sense of the energy inherent in the river as it forges its way through the mountains and forests to the ocean. This scene reflects the awesome grandeur of British Columbia's wilderness. Similarly, the photograph of two native men, transporting Crocker's travelling companions down the Cowichan River (plate 3-34), reflects the tranquil beauty of this

province.³³ Crocker captured the lighting effects of the energy infused trees, as they absorb the light of the fading sun, and the mirror-like still water, as it reflects the illuminated landscape, and took advantage of them to exploit his manipulation of light and shadow. Consequently, these dramatic effects enforce the grandeur of the landscape which dwarfs the canoe and its passengers.³⁴

The stunning view of the Cariboo Trail (plate 3-35) illustrates Crocker's creativity and artistry. He achieved another dramatic effect by framing the mountain view not only within the field of his camera, but also by the opening of the tunnel. By including his travelling companion in the scene, Crocker provides a scale of reference for the overwhelming magnitude of the surrounding landscape. As well as touring through the interior of the province, Crocker also travelled along British Columbia's coastline to photograph scenery such as the image of Princess Louisa Inlet (plate 3-36). This impressive location in the Inside Passage depicts the overpowering beauty of the mountains as they rise from the ocean. Consistent with his style, Crocker includes a single fisherman in a boat to accentuate the immensity of the environment.

Crocker seemed to be interested in grand and sometimes overpowering landscapes and the monumental cliff scene from California (plate 3-37) is an example which gives tribute to the grandeur of that state's mountainous geography. Once again he experimented with the compositional elements of light and shadow as he offset the intense sunlight on the

³³ Prior to the First World War, aboriginal residents would canoe travellers down the Cowichan River for a fee of ten dollars. This particular image was photographed when Crocker, his assistant Welsh Lee and two female companions took such a trip. Miscellaneous Notes.

³⁴ While the subject of this picture makes it suitable for discussion within the category of *Aboriginal People and Culture*, I chose to include it with other travel scenes because my analysis of this image focuses on the landscape. This overlap between the categories exemplifies how Crocker's photographs can be arranged and rearranged into different subject categories, according to the focus of one's research.

rock face of the distant monolith with the heavy darkness of the pine trees lining the road in the foreground. He also manipulated his position and perspective to create an image in which the viewer's eye is naturally led down the vertical edge of the cliff, through the opening in the trees, to a human figure positioned in the centre of the road; the human presence is included to illustrate the magnitude of the natural landscape. The slightly more humble seascape depicting the rocky outcropping of California's rugged coastline (plate 3-38) concentrates more on the beauty of the smaller elements of nature. This image highlights the life of a lone pine tree that is growing from a rocky foundation at the ocean's edge. The effects of fierce winds and heavy surf are visible in the development of the tree but they have not prevented the tree from existing; in this image the tree symbolizes strength and perseverance. Another picture from California portrays a peaceful mission scene (plate 3-39) which further exemplifies Crocker's artistic creativity. The depth of this image is accentuated by the sharp lines of perspective created by the exterior corridor and the play between light and shadow is emphasized in the repetitive patterns made by the sun shining through the arched colonnade. This architectural study is also an appropriate setting for the anonymous monk who appears to be standing in silent spiritual contemplation.

In British Columbia and California Crocker tended to focus on grand landscapes and seascapes but in Mexico he seemed to be interested in photographing more intimate local scenes like the picture of three men on horseback in the middle of a banana plantation (plate 3-40).³⁵ This almost humorous portrait places the men under a fruitful banana tree which towers over them. In this picture Crocker shows humans dwarfed by a plant in

³⁵ It is likely that the two men flanking the Mexican are two of the Victoria financiers who travelled to Mexico with Crocker and it is probable that the Mexican was hired to take the group of Victorians on a tour through the banana plantation.

much the same way that he shows humans dwarfed by a landscape. Another treasured view from Mexico depicts a more subdued scene of a long and gradual series of steps (plate 3-41). While this image should be appreciated for its formal composition, including the depth of its perspective, the repetitive patterns established by the stone stairs and the adjacent barriers, and the balance between the constructed staircase and the open sky, it should also be celebrated for its air of mystery. The steps that appear to ascend into oblivion, the two sparse trees in the distance paralleled by the vertical protrusion in the foreground that seem out of place and the two individuals huddled against the wall to shade themselves from the intensity of the sun, all contribute to the curious nature of this photograph.

Although Crocker's travel photographs comprise a small group of images, these pictures are some of the strongest and most captivating in the Trio Collection. It is most probable that Crocker photographed these scenes for his own interest as there is no evidence that he used them for other purposes or submitted any of these images to travel journals or other publications. The landscapes, seascapes, architectural studies and candid pictures of people whom he met during his travels are all intimate portraits of the places he visited. Many of these images portray places of tranquillity, whether natural or constructed, which seem to welcome independent contemplation and meditation. This invitation is extended not only to visitors to such locations but also to those viewing Crocker's photograph. He often included people or dogs in his landscape views in order to accentuate the immense grandeur of the natural environment. Whether he placed his friends at the base of a waterfall, his assistant at the edge of a cliff, or his dog at the base of an old growth tree, Crocker purposely made their presence appear insignificant in order to

stimulate contemplation of humanity's position in the natural world.

Crocker seemed to be a fiercely independent individual who frequently enjoyed time to himself. Perhaps many of the places he photographed were places in which he found adventure, solace, inspiration, silence and escape. Crocker did not merely record the physical likeness of a distant location. He attempted to capture the essence of a place and in many of his pictures he was successful. His photographs are all that remain from his numerous excursions but many of the sentiments that existed for Crocker continue to exist for those who view his images.

ARTISTRY AND COMPOSITION

Although Crocker may not be considered an art photographer by some photo-historians, he did not simply record his subjects objectively. Many of his photographs express more than historical information. They reveal emotion and suggest mood. These subjective elements in Crocker's work often provide his personal interpretations of the subjects he photographed. In his personal work Crocker experimented with perspective, composition and lighting in order to achieve more artistic images.³⁶ His creativity can be seen most clearly in his portraits and landscapes but some of his military, souvenir and community views reveal his personal artistic style.

For example, the photograph of two rows of tents at a military training camp (plate 3-42) does much to establish a sombre mood. The sky appears turbulent and stormy and the large puddles on the ground reveal that this image was taken soon after a heavy rainfall. The foreboding weather and the absence of human activity creates a quiet and still picture

³⁶ Recognising that the aesthetic analysis of a photograph, or any work of art, requires subjective judgements, the images included in this category illustrate my personal aesthetic criteria.

that seems somewhat melancholic. In contrast to the sombre mood of this photograph is Crocker's jovial group portrait of the Canadian Scottish Regiment Band (plate 3-43). In this picture Crocker concentrated on the physical composition of the image by emphasizing the distinctive contrast between the black and white patterns of the soldiers' uniforms and their percussion equipment. Crocker used the medium of black and white photography to its full potential when he composed this visual pattern for the eye. Moreover, the charming picture of a young military cadet huddled together with an aloof bull dog (plate 3-44) is another example of how Crocker artistically manipulated the medium of photography in order to obtain a desired sentiment. Crocker chose to focus only on the boy and dog by filling his frame with their presence and by maintaining a shallow depth of field. The blurred background is irrelevant and leaves the viewer to concentrate on the affection the young boy has for the companion he embraces.

Crocker also cast his artistic eye on local scenes throughout Victoria as can be seen in his photograph of a small shipyard (plate 3-45). Just as Crocker concentrated on the distinct visual patterns of the Canadian Scottish Regiment Band, for this picture he focused his attention on the continuous and repetitive lines of the dory. Naturally, the viewer's eye is drawn towards the visual patterns of the boat's planking and the boat's place in relation to its surroundings. An excellent example of Crocker's unconventional sense of artistry can be seen in his photograph of the mirrored sphere in the rose garden at Butchart Gardens (plate 3-46). This picture within a picture illustrates Crocker's playful use of perspective as he captures his reflection and those of his two friends in the reflective ball. The soft focus of the background surrounding the globe and the distorted image produced by the polished metal sphere make it appear as though Crocker and his companions are inside

a crystal ball.

As many of the travel photographs reveal Crocker's artistic approach to photography, the picture of the unidentified train station (plate 3-47) further illustrates Crocker's creative viewpoint. Once again, the emphasis in this photograph is on the depth of the image. The receding lines of perspective produced by the planked walkway and the parallel railway tracks draw the viewer's eye into the scene and towards the train and the station house. In contrast to the centred composition of the picture of the train station, the formal elements in the photograph of the old stone church (plate 3-48) are asymmetrical. Positioning the abandoned church off to the left side of the image, and using the majority of the field of view to show the great expanse of the landscape and the sky, gives prominence to the surrounding countryside. Rather than appear as a separate structure that dominates the land upon which it rests, the modest church is shown to be a harmonious part of its natural environment.

Whether he emphasized distinct visible designs in order to give the eye an interesting visual pattern to study or manipulated the perspective and composition of the image in order to establish a specific mood or evoke an emotional response from the viewer, Crocker did much more than simply record his subjects. From the numerous examples that illustrate Crocker's aesthetic vision, it is obvious that he was not an impartial photographer. Crocker was not detached from his subjects. The personal impressions revealed in many of Crocker's photographs are due only to the connections that he made with his subjects. For example, Crocker's ability to create endearing images, like that of the young cadet with his dog, was in part because of a personal connection Crocker made with his subjects. With the example of the young cadet, Crocker's understanding of the boy's affection for the

bull dog came from personal experience through his own close affinity for his terrier. However, Crocker's talent lay in his ability to draw from his personal experiences and to transfer his particular connection with the situation to his photograph, thereby sharing his sentiments with the viewer.

Crocker photographed a large range of subjects from many different perspectives and for a variety of patrons. Although much information regarding his commissions and motivations is not known, it is clear that Crocker was an artist as well as a resourceful businessman. On the one hand, he turned to two fairly lucrative markets, the military and tourists, in order to sustain his business. On the other hand he expressed his artistic talents primarily in portraiture and landscapes. However, elements of his artistry and unusual sense of composition are evident in all of the subject categories discussed in this chapter. While the immense collection of military views gives the Trio Collection tremendous historical value, his smaller collections, including portraits, native views and travel views, give the collection the wealth of their artistic creativity.

His military views provided Crocker with a stable source of income which supported his other pursuits. Most of these images are patriotic, repetitive and formulaic but there are a few pictures that break this mould and demand greater attention. Crocker's souvenir photographs also provided him with a good income but it was secondary to what he earned from his military photographs. His souvenir pictures were dictated by the expectations of the tourist market. Most of these images simply promoted the natural and constructed beauties of the city of Victoria but a few pictures go beyond this requirement and reflect more than just the popular virtues of the capital city.

The community views in the Trio Collection offer a portrait of Victoria over an extended number of years. Although Crocker still catered to the public, these images were governed less by regimented limitations or expectations and more by his personal interest and curiosity. Crocker's artistic creativity was most active in his manipulation of compositional elements for his private portrait commissions. His private portraits stand apart from the other portraits in the Trio Collection because they offer more intimate characterizations of the subjects.

Finally, it is perhaps the two smallest categories, native and travel photographs, that provide Crocker's most interesting work. His images of the Coast Salish reflect the strength of native identity and the power of the human spirit. These photographs are intense portrayals of native life and of the human condition. Crocker's travel pictures also offer powerful scenes reflecting the power and tranquillity of nature, the wonders of distant places and the universal connection between individuals. They recreate places that welcome contemplation whether in person or through the medium of Crocker's photographs.

While all of the photographs offer historical information, their aesthetic elements distinguish how Crocker interpreted such information. Some images conform to formulaic stylistic conventions which tend to limit their aesthetic value and enhance their documentary value. Conversely, some images break free from the standard conventions; these images tend to be valued less for their documentary criteria and more their aesthetic achievements. This is a significant difference which can only be determined by examining each image from both perspectives.

As an example of how to approach an archival collection of historical photographs which stands alone with its images, the review offered in this chapter confirms that such collections have historical and artistic value despite the absence of accompanying written documentation. Examining the contents and analyzing the aesthetics of each photograph provides impressions about Crocker as a photographer. These impressions can then be interpreted in order to more clearly define the value of the Trio Collection.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE VALUE OF A PHOTOGRAPH: A COMPARISON WITH LEONARD FRANK

Examining the Trio Collection in its entirety provides a solid understanding of, and a genuine appreciation for, Crocker's photography. However, comparing Crocker's work with that of another contemporary photographer broadens the scope of what can be ascertained from the Trio Collection. This chapter illustrates how comparisons can be used to further reveal and define the value of photograph collections which are devoid of written documentation. Considering the Trio Collection against one that has a substantial amount of written documentation facilitates the reconstruction of certain aspects of Crocker's life and career. A comparison offers a point of reference against which Crocker's work can be examined and prompts questions that place his work within an historical and artistic context. It helps to clarify what exists in the collection, what is missing, what is unique about Crocker's photography and what is common.

Similarities and differences revealed during a comparison often provide information about the content of the images or suggest possible motivations of the photographer. Comparisons are particularly useful when examining photographs from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries because different photographers working in a specific area frequently took pictures of the same subject. This provides a large overlap from which important comparisons can be constructed. Furthermore, even if specific historical and factual data cannot be extracted from the photographs in a collection, the images can be studied for their stylistic merits. Just as comparisons can be used to provide clues to the historical content of a photograph, they can also be used to illustrate the distinctive ele-

ments of style and artistry of a photographer.

Although numerous photographers worked in British Columbia and in Victoria during Crocker's lifetime, little is known about any of them. Leonard Frank (1870-1944), an acclaimed Vancouver photographer from this period, is an exception. He is the only contemporary photographer of Crocker's, working in British Columbia, whose work has been formally researched and published. Unlike most of the other photographers from this period, the information compiled about Frank's life and work is relatively complete and is readily available to the public.¹ His commercial status and the similar size and scope of his collection to Crocker's makes Frank a fitting subject for a comparison with Crocker. Given Frank's relative notoriety among photo-historians working on this region and time period, a comparison of Crocker's work with Frank's adds new layers of appreciation to the Trio Collection.

There are many parallels evident in the work of these two men. They both immigrated to British Columbia and worked simultaneously in the province for a substantial number of years. Although they lived in different cities, they visited many of the same locales and photographed many of the same subjects, providing a good basis for comparison. Comparing their careers and their photographs offers two distinct perspectives of the same period in British Columbia's history. It is instructive to compare a collection that is organized, catalogued and well-documented with written information, such as Frank's, with a

¹ An introductory study of Frank's life and work is provided in Cyril E. Leonoff, *An Enterprising Life: Leonard Frank Photographs 1895-1944* (Vancouver: Talonbooks, 1990). Leonoff consulted a variety of primary sources including archival photography collections, provincial and city directories, government reports and papers, daily business ledgers, personal and business correspondence and conservation reports. He also consulted a variety of secondary sources including city and community newspapers, journal articles and books. The following biographical information about Frank derives from Leonoff's study.

collection like Crocker's that is not organized, catalogued, or well-documented. Comparing the two collections vividly illustrates the differences involved in researching each kind of collection.

Like Crocker, Frank came to British Columbia from Europe.² He was born into a Jewish family on July 3, 1870 in Berne, Oldenburg, a small town in the north-west corner of Germany. In 1892, at the age of twenty-two, Frank left his home and family in Germany to travel to San Francisco, California. He lived there for two years before moving to British Columbia in 1894 to pursue mining prospects. Frank lived in Victoria for two years and then moved to Wellington, a coal-mining town near Nanaimo, in 1896. Two years later, in 1898, Frank moved further up Vancouver Island to Alberni in order to be nearer to the mining activity. Frank made Alberni his home for 18 years until he finally relocated to Vancouver in 1917 where he remained for the rest of his life. Frank died in his sleep February 23, 1944.

Frank did not show any particular interest in photography until well after his arrival in British Columbia. His primary interest seemed to be earning money from mining. Cyril Leonoff states that although "the art and business of photography were not new to the Frank family,"³ the beginning of Frank's photographic career is commonly attributed to chance. Apparently he obtained his first camera by winning it as a raffle prize at an Alberni mining camp. Captivated by the rugged beauty of Alberni's wilderness Frank began taking photographs of the surrounding landscape. As well as stunning scenic views, Frank also

² Unless otherwise indicated, all biographical references in this chapter are to Leonoff's *An Enterprising Life*.

³ Leonoff, 6. Leonard Frank's father was a professional photographer in Germany and owned a photographic studio in Berne, Oldenburg for many years.

photographed local people and events and soon began to receive orders for prints. This commercial interest in his photographs, and the financial security he maintained with his other business pursuits, led Frank to turn his hobby of photography into a career.

Establishing himself as a professional photographer, Frank continued his work in prospecting and guiding exploration, hunting and tourist guiding in order to supplement his income. However, Frank carried his camera equipment with him wherever he travelled, photographing numerous sites throughout Vancouver Island. Frank turned many of these pictures into postcards, some of which were used to promote Alberni as a tourist destination and as a place for settlement, business and industry. Although Frank acquired a large collection of scenic photographs during his time in Alberni, he also turned his camera to the town's industries: forestry, fishing, farming and mining. These photographs of industry formed the foundation of Frank's photography business. Early in his career, Frank also photographed Vancouver Island's aboriginal peoples. Many of his images of native life and culture "are considered of great historical significance to researchers."⁴

In 1907 the *Alberni Pioneer News* began publication and through it Frank's photography business secured a significant reputation in the community. Frank occupied a studio in the building that housed the newspaper and from the beginning of its publication the paper regularly documented Frank's activities and published his photographs. Frank used the *Alberni Pioneer News* to advertise his photography business. His photographs not only obtained local recognition and respect but by the end of the first decade of the twentieth century they also had gained national and international repute. Frank began to be recognized for his logging photographs which are, to this day, highly valued. With his increased

⁴ Leonoff, 17.

reputation, Frank received major contracts with timber and mining companies which launched "his career as British Columbia's premier industrial photographer."⁵

In 1916 Frank moved to Vancouver where he pursued a greater range of industrial and commercial projects. The new challenges Frank faced when he relocated to Vancouver were significant. In Alberni his photographic career grew in conjunction with the growth of his surrounding community. His increasing success made Frank a bit of a local celebrity. However, at age 47, Frank had to adjust from being a well known photographer in a small town to being a relatively unknown photographer in a big city. He was confronted with the task of re-establishing his photographic practice in a new and "highly competitive market."⁶ Once again his association with the news media allowed Frank to advertise and promote his work. High quality commercial and industrial photography became Frank's 'niche' in the Vancouver market and was, ultimately, what brought him his greatest commercial success.

By 1917 Frank had settled in Vancouver and was working on numerous industrial photographic assignments. In 1918 Frank formed a partnership with an established Vancouver photographer, Orville J. Rognon and together they formed *The Commercial Photo Company*. In addition to their various general clients, both men sought commercial contracts and both worked as freelance photographers, providing photographs for principal newspapers in Vancouver, Victoria and Seattle. Moreover, Frank consistently received work from The City of Vancouver Publicity Department. Just as Frank became the "the

⁵ Leonoff, 18.

⁶ Leonoff, 29.

town booster”⁷ for Alberni, so did he for Vancouver.

Frank was so enterprising that by 1919 his Vancouver business was well established. He moved his studio to a prominent building on Granville Street, in the heart of Vancouver’s downtown business district, where he remained for the next 35 years of his career (1919-1953). Not long after moving to this new location Frank’s partnership with Rognon ended and he changed the name of his business to *Leonard Frank Photos*. Frank hired his brother Bernard Frank as his bookkeeper and Albert W. Urquhart as his darkroom operator and office manager. Having these two men manage the business end of his company allowed Frank to devote his energy and expertise to his numerous photographic assignments.

In addition to his industrial commissions, Frank documented Vancouver’s significant architectural, engineering and construction projects. Many of his these photographs were used to illustrate special business, development and industrial issues of the local newspapers. Frank also recorded historically significant events, including everything from natural disasters to visits from the British Royal Family. Along with royal subjects, Frank produced portraits of many other famous visitors to Vancouver. However, Frank did not restrict himself to urban subjects. Many of his commercial projects took him into British Columbia’s wilderness. The CPR appointed Frank as its official photographer on the western lines. Frank made several “photographic pilgrimages to the Rockies”⁸ to produce publicity pictures which were used in the CPR commercial pamphlets to promote the Rocky Mountains as a recreation site.

⁷ Leonoff, 30.

⁸ Leonoff, 34.

Throughout his career, Frank continued to produce and sell photographic postcards of local scenes and events and scenic views. Like several of Crocker's postcards, many of his postcards were enhanced with colour. However, unlike Crocker, who sent his images to postcard companies to be coloured and tinted, Frank himself coloured his images by hand. As well as his labour intensive colour-tinted postcards, he also experimented with larger hand-tinted photographs. Frank considered himself to be an art photographer and he took serious efforts to maintain and protect this reputation, starting to copyright his work as early as 1908. Many of Frank's photographs were used to illustrate numerous newspapers, journals, books and promotional literature locally, nationally and internationally. Frank provided invaluable publicity for British Columbia while promoting his work and strengthening his reputation.

Throughout his career, Frank received a variety of honours and commendations for his work. For example, he was given membership in the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain in 1937. In 1938 Frank submitted a portfolio of his photography to this society which led to his promotion to 'Associateship.' Leonoff suggests that "Frank was likely the first in Vancouver to have received this distinction."⁹ The same year, Frank's 1934 photograph of the entrance to Vancouver's harbour from West Bay was used to make the Canadian fifty-cent stamp.

After Frank's death Bernard Frank and Albert Urquhart continued to operate *Leonard Frank Photos*. They sought a new owner to carry on the business and in 1946 Otto Ferdinand Landauer, a Jewish refugee from Nazi Germany, purchased *Leonard Frank Photos*. As well as sharing similar national and ethnic origins, Landauer shared Frank's love of the

⁹ Leonoff, 41.

outdoors and photographic preferences. Landauer ran the business, under a similar mandate as Frank, until his death in 1980.

As well as successfully running Frank's business, Landauer did much to preserve the collection. He recognized the tremendous historic value of Frank's work and recopied deteriorated negatives, glass plates and prints. He retained and continued Frank's cataloging system in which every image was chronologically numbered and all of the photographic material was "arranged, described, and contained in photographic boxes, albums, and file folders according to subject matter, as devised by Frank and Landauer, at what archivists would describe as 'the file level.' Rudimentary card index finding aids and day journals of commercial transactions were retained."¹⁰

The principal question arising from the comparison between Frank and Crocker is: why is Frank's work deemed more valuable than Crocker's? Why was Frank's photography collection researched and written about and the Trio Collection ignored? Since many of their photographs depict similar subjects, and a number of their images illustrate comparable aesthetics, one can only conclude that the reasons for giving one collection more attention than the other must lie outside the realm of the photographic image. They must be dependent on other factors. They must be contingent on the physical condition and organizational state of the collection, the presence of written documentation and the business and marketing practices of the photographer.

The comparison between Crocker and Frank revealed strong similarities in the pictures they produced and significant differences in how they approached the business of photography. Within their individual careers they photographed many of the same subjects and

¹⁰ Leonoff, 172.

they developed similar styles of photographic imagery. Some of these parallels are remarkably close. However, their contrasting business practices and personal objectives set them apart from each other.

Both men came to British Columbia as immigrants which meant that both had to adjust to their new surroundings in a new country. They arrived on Vancouver Island within a few years of each other, having both come from the United States where they settled first after leaving Europe and before coming to Canada. However, having English origins, Crocker became a member of the dominant British population in Victoria while Frank, with his German Jewish origins, became a minority citizen in Alberni. Their specific societal positions may have resulted in differing perspectives on life in British Columbia which could have affected their approach to photography. It may have, at least in part, dictated who their patrons were, what subjects they photographed, how they depicted certain subjects and how aggressive they needed to be in order to market and sell their work. For example, it is possible that Crocker was able to secure substantial photography projects, such as his work for the military, because of his British heritage. Conversely, when Frank lived and worked as a photographer in Alberni, and before Frank's reputation was fully established, he may have had to work harder than Crocker for similar projects because of racial prejudices. However, since Frank lived in a relatively small town, he may not have had to compete with many other photographers. In contrast, Crocker lived in a larger city in which there were numerous photographers with whom he competed for business.

While the motivations that lay behind their photography may differ, their introduction to photography is similar. Neither actively sought photography as a profession until long

after the pursuit of other occupations. For both men photography was a hobby first before becoming a career. Although Frank continued to pursue additional work for a period of time after he had established himself as a professional photographer, both Crocker and Frank became enthralled with photography once they decided to make it their life's work. Neither man married; photography dominated both of their lives.

Both devoted to their profession, many of the subjects that Crocker and Frank photographed are the same. Some of these subjects include military photographs, tourist souvenir views, community activities, candid and formal portraits, landscape views from Vancouver Island and the Cariboo Interior, and native peoples and village scenes. Several of the momentous events that occurred during their lifetimes appear in both collections. For example, the royal visits to British Columbia were covered by both photographers. Crocker recorded the Victoria visit while Frank photographed the Vancouver visit. Furthermore, Crocker and Frank travelled to many of the same locations throughout British Columbia. Between common scenic locations and more remote coastal and mountain regions it is surprising that there exists no record indicating that the two of them ever met each other while photographing the province. It is also interesting to note that both men used large format cameras and glass plates for the majority of their careers. They maintained the same loyalty and dedication to the older photographic methods. Transporting their equipment to remote areas of the province would not have been easy but neither Crocker nor Frank replaced their cumbersome equipment with newer, smaller, more portable cameras.

Although Frank did not photograph the military's presence in Vancouver to the same extent as Crocker did for Victoria, he documented numerous public military parades and

ceremonial events. Frank's pictures of soldiers marching through the streets of Vancouver (plate 4-1) are reminiscent of those Crocker photographed of troops parading through Victoria. As in Crocker's photographs, Frank's capture the public support of the soldiers' departure for the war. The sentiments expressed in these images are similar to those expressed in Crocker's view of Victoria's military contingent boarding the Princess Charlotte with the surrounding crowd of supporters (plate 3-4). Both men chose to depict romanticized images of the war which fostered national patriotism.

Many of their souvenir photographs are mirror images of each other, especially those taken of the scenic landmarks of Victoria. The view of the Legislative Buildings that Frank photographed (plate 4-2) is almost identical to Crocker's (plate 3-8). Taken from almost the same vantage point, both images frame the impressive Rattenbury structure with the gentle foliage of the trees. The similarity between these two views attests to the popularity of this image in the tourist market. Another similarity between the two men is the fact that both men produced postcards of their work for sale in the tourist market.

Frank photographed several community scenes that are equivalent to those in the Trio Collection; both document social change over time. Frank's picture of a hunter after a cougar kill (plate 4-3) shows the prevailing attitudes towards the natural world and its creatures. The reaction that such an image evokes from contemporary viewers is similar to that stimulated by Crocker's view of the slain cougar in downtown Victoria (plate 3-17). These images illustrate how hunting for sport was as a popular hobby during Crocker's and Frank's lifetime even though it is widely unacceptable today. Each image illustrates the human attempt to control or dominate the natural environment.

Like Crocker, Frank took his camera to many of the native communities on Vancouver Island and photographed aspects of traditional native culture as well as contemporary native life. Frank's portrait of a group of native children (plate 4-4) is especially interesting as it offers a glimpse of how native peoples were acculturating themselves into the non-native society. The girls, who perhaps are sisters, are clothed in European-style dresses and the baby appears to be wearing a christening gown reflecting the influence of Christianity on many native communities. Comparable to Crocker's portraits of Coast Salish elders, Frank's picture is dominated by its human subjects with emphasis on the girls' young, pensive faces. Like Crocker's aboriginal photographs, many of Frank's native images stimulate greater contemplation about the subjects of these pictures.

Whether out of personal interest, or for business reasons, Crocker and Frank photographed many of the same subjects during the course of their independent careers. Many of these subjects were photographed from similar contextual and aesthetic perspectives. Correspondingly, when photographing landscape views, Crocker and Frank seemed to approach their environment with similar visions and attitudes.

Like Crocker, some of Frank's most thought-provoking work depicts native village scenes. Crocker's view of a Coast Salish village (plate 3-31) and Frank's picture of an Indian mission (plate 4-5) both express a stillness that urges the viewer to stop and study the subtle details of their images. Although Frank's image includes the presence of a priest in the foreground, which again reflects the encroachment of Christianity on native communities, the notable absence of human activity is captured in both photographs. Furthermore, while these images were taken from opposite directions, Crocker and Frank chose to use the distant perspective in order to better illustrate the surrounding environment. Both men

use creative compositional effects to communicate a message through their images.

Both Crocker and Frank travelled to remote mountainous regions and photographed commanding landscape views that express the grandeur of the surrounding environment. For example, comparing Crocker's image of Princess Louisa Inlet in British Columbia (plate 3-36) with Frank's view of Mount Assiniboine in Alberta (plate 4-6) illustrates the analogous way that they approached the mountainous landscape of western Canada. Like Crocker's landscape images many of Frank's landscape vistas include a human figure to give the scene a scale of reference. Although this particular image of Frank's does not include a human presence, the overwhelming immensity of the landscape is clearly understood. In both of these pictures the viewer is silenced by the majestic beauty of the landscape that is presented within the photograph.

Within each of their impressive photographic collections, a select few images stand apart from the majority because they exhibit greater visual poetry. For example, Crocker's rocky beach view from California (plate 3-38) and Frank's image of Siwash Rock off Stanley Park in Vancouver (plate 4-7) have a similar focal point. Both photographs highlight the independence and perseverance of a tree growing from a foundation of rock. Although the two images represent different locations, the similar composition and subject matter produce almost identical results; they provide the viewer with an individual narrative of the natural world. It seems clear that both men were most creative when photographing elements of the outside environment.

It is here that the similarities between Crocker and Frank end. A few significant differences set them apart. While they each covered a wide variety of photographic subjects, of which many can be found in both collections, the subjects that formed the foundations of

their photography businesses and earned them the most recognition were very different. Crocker is best known for his military photographs of Victoria while Frank is renowned for his industrial views of British Columbia. Crocker focused his attention on the human involvement during the war from the perspective of those training in Victoria. Frank concentrated his attention on the development and subsequent encroachment of industry on humanity. While both subjects deal with the human condition, at least to some degree, they examine it from opposite ends. On the one hand, Crocker's military photographs express human sentiments about the prospect and conclusion of war. These images examine the indispensable human element of war. On the other hand, Frank's industrial views reflect the relationship that exists between the technological progress of industry and the human spirit. These images examine the diminished human element of industry.

Another profound difference between the two photographers lies in how they operated their photography business. Crocker made no effort to organize his affairs or his photographs. He only did what was absolutely necessary to access and sell copies of his work. In contrast, Frank was extremely organized and conscientious about cataloguing every photograph. This is a significant difference because researching large collections, such as these, is extremely difficult if there is no established order. Realizing the difficulty in working with a disorganized collection, such as Crocker's, it is not surprising that photo-historians would pass over his collection for one such as Frank's which has a cataloguing system already in place. The effort needed to organize and catalogue a collection like Crocker's is too great given the limited time and resources that researchers presently have to contend with. Currently, priority is given to collections that have an existing cataloguing system and written documentation over those that do not contain either. Consequently,

the public receives an inaccurate view of what photographers did and how they operated in the past. They are given access only to collections of photographers who used a cataloguing system or who wrote about their work. People are generally prevented from studying collections that do not contain these elements because they have not been researched, catalogued, or made available to the public.

One of the most revealing differences between Crocker and Frank is their public image. Crocker was a quiet man who did not seem interested in achieving national or international recognition for his work. There is little or no evidence of Crocker having entered photographic competitions, joined photographic societies or associations, exhibited his work in galleries, or published his work in books or periodicals. However, Frank sought and gained national and international recognition for his work by successfully marketing himself. Frank actively sought to publish his work in books and periodicals and eagerly exhibited his work. The one known book to include Crocker's work, James R. *Anderson's Trees and Shrubs, Food, Medicinal, and Poisonous Plants of British Columbia*, also contains some of Frank's forestry pictures. Associations with local, national and international newspapers helped Frank to become a well known and respected name in the photography industry. He advertised his work in the newspapers regularly and he was frequently written up in several publications.

Frank's aggressive efforts made his work highly recognized by the general public and by photo-historians. Crocker's lack of marketing activity resulted in his relative obscurity. Making his work highly visible must have helped Frank gain recognition and honour for his photographic abilities. Perhaps these accolades were important to Frank so he purposefully set out to achieve this kind of success. It is possible that Frank's ethnic minority

status motivated him to prove his abilities to himself, his community and the world. However, Crocker did not seem to be interested in making a name for himself or his work beyond what was necessary to run his photography business. He was content to work only within the parameters of his local community. Perhaps his association with the ethnic majority allowed him to be more relaxed in his photographic pursuits.

A comparison of the two collections situates Crocker's work more clearly in the photographic context of his time. Examining the similarities and differences between their photographs and their careers raises significant questions about which collection should be considered more valuable. Frank actively promoted himself and his work which brought him public recognition. He methodically catalogued and documented his work which alleviates many of the difficulties involved in researching such a collection. Does it then necessarily follow that his work should be considered more valuable than the work of other photographers such as Crocker? If the primary focus of photo-historians is the photograph, then it is clear from the comparison discussed in this thesis that Crocker's work is equal in value to Frank's. Although Crocker did not actively promote himself or his work and did not catalogue or document his pictures the value of his photographs remains intact because the *business* of photography is separate from the *art* of photography.

The comparison discussed in this chapter raises questions about the relative value of Crocker's photographs. Creating a juxtaposition between the Trio Collection, which until now has had an undefined value, and the Frank collection, which is considered to have great value, assigns value to Crocker's work.

CONCLUSION THE PRIMACY OF THE VISUAL IMAGE

Photography is a powerful medium which has pervaded most aspects of society. Photography is used to record, document and survey the surrounding world, to capture moments in time and to create works of art. Each of these motivations for taking a photograph is distinct but after a photograph has been taken, they become confused. A photograph is not simply the result of an individual motivation. It takes on a life of its own. Photographs that were taken for documentary purposes can also be appreciated for their aesthetics and photographs that were created for artistic purposes can also provide historical information. This is especially relevant when looking at historical or archival photographs. For example, the Trio Collection contains documentary photographs, like those of the military, that are appreciated by contemporary audiences as artistic images. Similarly, seemingly artistic pictures, like the landscape scenes of the Cariboo trail, can provide historical information about, in this case, the state of the Cariboo highway.

All photographs are historical documents at some level because they all reflect a moment that occurred in the past. A photograph that is produced in the present instantly becomes historical and it is impossible to photograph something in the future. However, many photo-historians believe that the farther away in time a photograph becomes from the point of its original creation the more it becomes a work of art. In her book *On Photography*, Susan Sontag observes that:

The particular qualities and intentions of photographs tend to be swallowed up in the generalized pathos of time past. Aesthetic distance seems built into the very experience of looking at photographs, if not right away, then certainly with the passage of time. Time eventually positions most photo-

graphs, even the most amateurish, at the level of art.¹

Photographs are not objective facsimiles of reality. They are two dimensional abstractions that have been constructed through choices of perspective and mechanical manipulations of exposure, development and printing. Each of these factors works to remove a photograph from its original context which hinders the validity of a photograph as an historical document. This is illustrated in Crocker's work. Many of his military views, which were initially created to document the people and activities of a specific period in Victoria's history are today appreciated more for their artistry. The absence of information provided by Crocker relating to the subjects and events depicted in the photographs diminishes the documentary role of these images. Furthermore, forgotten attitudes and lost sensibilities remove these pictures from their intended audience, a wartime generation. They now exist for a new audience, a generation with new attitudes and different sensibilities. As a result the aesthetic elements of these images capture the attention of the viewer before their historical content can be appreciated. An investigation into the content of these pictures is then secondary; that is not to suggest that the documentary content is less important. This is the approach that was taken with the Trio Collection. The aesthetics of Crocker's photographs captured my attention before I could appreciate their historical value. With subsequent research, I examined the aesthetics of his images with their documentary content in order to reveal and define the value of Crocker's work.

With minimal written documentation, Crocker's photographs are left to stand for themselves. His images must be given primacy over written text. Researching his collection without the false security of written information to depend on, forced a reliance on

¹ Susan Sontag, *On Photography* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1978), 21.

the images. For example, the availability of a book devoted to Leonard Frank's photography collection invites the researcher to accept the findings of the author and rely on them. The presence of this secondary information inhibits the ability of the researcher to see the photographs as they are instead of what the author explains them to be. Furthermore, an assumption is made that the author's findings are valid. Without studying the images independently, the validity of the author's findings is suspect. Therefore, relying only on this secondary source creates a false sense of security.

Working with the Trio Collection reinforced the problem of our society's dependence on the written word. Not being able to rely on secondary source material to learn about Crocker or his work forced the realization of the extent to which society revolves around the written record for an explanation of the world. The ingrained belief that written information is accurate, complete and objective makes other sources of documentation and communication unacceptable and invalid. Society's blind acceptance of the written text leaves little room for the support of other forms of communication including photographs and oral histories. The common phrase 'get it in writing' implies that the spoken word is not sufficient or trusted.

However, a written text is just as manipulated as a photograph. The information provided in the text is from a chosen perspective of an individual author who manipulates what the audience reads by the selection of information to include and the choice of words used to express the selected information. Interpretations of the text can also vary, depending on individual backgrounds and levels of comprehension, which results in an inac-

curate understanding of the text.²

Photographs will hold different meanings depending on how they are presented. If a photograph is presented with accompanying text, the image derives its meaning from the text. If the same photograph is presented independent from text, the image can provide a variety of different meanings. For example, if you examined the photographs in this thesis before reading the text, there was probably at least one picture that generated a different response and reflected different information for you than what is expressed in this text. This illustrates the importance of giving the image primacy. Photographs do not need written text to exist or to have purpose or meaning. John Berger deals with this issue in his book *Ways of Seeing*.

Seeing comes before words. The child looks and recognizes before it can speak. But there is also another sense in which seeing comes before words. It is seeing which establishes our place in the surrounding world; we explain that world with words, but words can never undo the fact that we are surrounded by it. The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.³

Berger goes so far as to construct pictorial essays in which he conveys information without words. Society's reliance on written text drives people to feel that they need to read about the photographer, the subjects of the photographs, the context in which they were taken and the photographer's motivations in order to understand, enjoy and appreciate a collection of photographs. For the Trio Collection providing this information offers

² For a discussion of the subjectivity and role of the author in the construction of a text I found the following sources informative: Seán Burke, *Death and Return of the Author: Criticism and Subjectivity in Barthes, Foucault, and Derrida* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1992). Roland Barthes, "La mort de l'auteur" (The Death of the Author), *Manteia*, 5 (1968), Translated by Stephen Heath in *Image/Text/Music* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1977). Maurice Biriotti and Nicola Miller, eds., *What is an Author?* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1993).

³ John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: British Broadcasting Corporation, 1972), 7.

one way to understand Crocker's work. Using text to explain an image prevents it from being appreciated on more than one level. Viewing the image becomes an act of making the picture 'fit' the text. An individual's perception of the photograph is influenced by the text. Remember the initial impressions that you generated when viewing Crocker's photographs free of text. Do they differ from the impressions that you have of the same images after reading the text?

A photograph exists on several levels; it has many realities. Its existence depends on when and how the photograph is viewed and who is viewing the image. A photograph does not cease to exist after the context of its creation disappears. It begins to take on new realities with the viewing of it by subsequent generations. For example, Crocker's work was produced for specific audiences, including the military, tourists and Victoria residents. These audiences appreciated his work for reasons unique to their position in history. Today, Crocker's work assumes new audiences, including archivists and historians and is appreciated for reasons that correspond to their contemporary place in history.

By allowing a photograph to be presented without the burden of text, a viewer is able to approach the image free from external influence. The viewer is then able to form opinions, ideas and conclusions about the photograph based on how the photograph relates to the viewer's personal experience. However, the current reality held by an historical photograph which has no explanatory text does not eliminate that photograph's original purpose. The realities that Crocker's work assumes for contemporary audiences do not eliminate the realities that existed for his original audiences; they are additions. The reality of a photograph as it exists for one individual does not invalidate other realities. These multiple interpretations add to the value of the image and provide a better understanding of the

photograph's content and purpose. However, just as the historical realities must be situated in the proper context, contemporary realities must be understood within a present context. Robert Davison discusses this idea and cautions us to be aware of the different contexts that exist in the present.

There are naturally dangers. The language of the visual image is a highly personal form of communication, depending for its meaning to a far greater extent than the uttered word on the subjective and cultural viewpoint of the person reading it. Interpretation of the same image by different people in different cultures in different times will tell us as much about the observer as the observed.⁴

Crocker's work exists on several levels. This thesis has explored two realities that exist for one researcher. His collection provides historical documents of a past era as well as aesthetic images of that time. Studying the photographs first, before being influenced by extraneous information, the images, to my eye, divided themselves into two categories: documentary and aesthetic scenes. Some photographs stimulated more documentary analysis while other images inspired more stylistic analysis. Documentary and aesthetic analysis exists in relation to both the intentions of the photographer and the perceptions of the viewer. In each case they exist together in every photograph and work together to create the final image. However, often one is given or receives more emphasis than the other. For example, Crocker's military scenes prompted me to consider a more documentary analysis because of their obvious historical content. This does not negate their aesthetic content; it merely indicates that, for the majority of these images, it is secondary. Similarly, Crocker's native images prompted me to consider a more aesthetic analysis because of their obvious stylistic elements. Again, this does not negate their documentary content; it

⁴ Davison, 34.

only suggests that, for the majority of these images, it is secondary. Since the entire collection was examined from both a documentary and an aesthetic perspective it must be understood that these judgments are based on personal criteria.

From the photographs in the Trio Collection it can be determined that while Crocker was a fairly successful commercial photographer, who conformed to market demands in order to sustain his business, he also had artistic tendencies which were revealed in many aspects of his work. As a commercial photographer, Crocker turned to the military and tourism and took advantage of their growth in Victoria to secure his business. To a lesser, but still significant extent, portrait commissions provided him with supplementary income. The photographs in the Trio Collection demonstrate Crocker's practicality and his astute responses to client demands. Military and souvenir photographs comprise the largest portion of the Trio Collection and they provided Crocker with the most revenue. Their importance within the collection as a whole is defined, in part, by the significance of these factors. Although portrait compositions, aboriginal pictures, travel scenes and landscape views constitute the fewest number of images in the Trio Collection and they provided Crocker with the least amount of income, these smaller categories carry just as much importance. Their significance within the collection as a whole is defined, in part, by the strength of their artistic content. While Crocker's unique aesthetic perspective is certainly evident in his commercial work, it is more clearly defined in many of his other photographs.

Working with a photography collection that is devoid of any written documentation certainly presents specific difficulties in constructing a comprehensive review of the work in the collection. However, as demonstrated with the Trio Collection, the process is not

impossible. In order to gain as much as possible from the photographs it is necessary to not only 'look' at the pictures, but to really 'see' them. The images must be allowed to dictate the direction of the research; this gives them primacy over written text. Conducting comparisons is useful because it highlights what the photographs show and do not show. This process can provide valuable information about the photographer and his or her work. A reassessment of current criteria for the selection of photography collections worthy of research is needed. Current methods of archival research also need to be examined for their ability to research both documented and undocumented collections. Collections that do not include written documentation should not be deemed worthless. A wealth of information can be uncovered from these collections if they are researched properly.

This thesis provides the foundation from which Crocker's work can be examined in the future. The Trio Collection has tremendous research potential. There are a variety of different aspects that could be explored. Any one of the categories discussed in this thesis could be examined more fully and the numerous themes reflected in the images, relating to the social milieu of Victoria during Crocker's lifetime, warrant further investigation. This review of the Trio Collection brings the work of a previously unknown and unappreciated early twentieth century photographer to the attention of scholars and the general public. It contributes to the limited scholarship dealing with the photographic activities during this period.

This thesis has examined the Trio Collection in order to provide an example of how to approach an archival collection of historical photographs which has virtually no accompanying written documentation. Despite the difficulties involved in studying this collection, which have been discussed here, Crocker's work has value and warrants further research.

The documentary and aesthetic value of his work has been illustrated by a detailed examination of Crocker's photographs and by comparing his work to a contemporary. Now that the Trio Collection has been rediscovered, and now that this thesis can serve as a foundation for future research, Crocker's work can be appreciated by new audiences.

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Plate 2-1

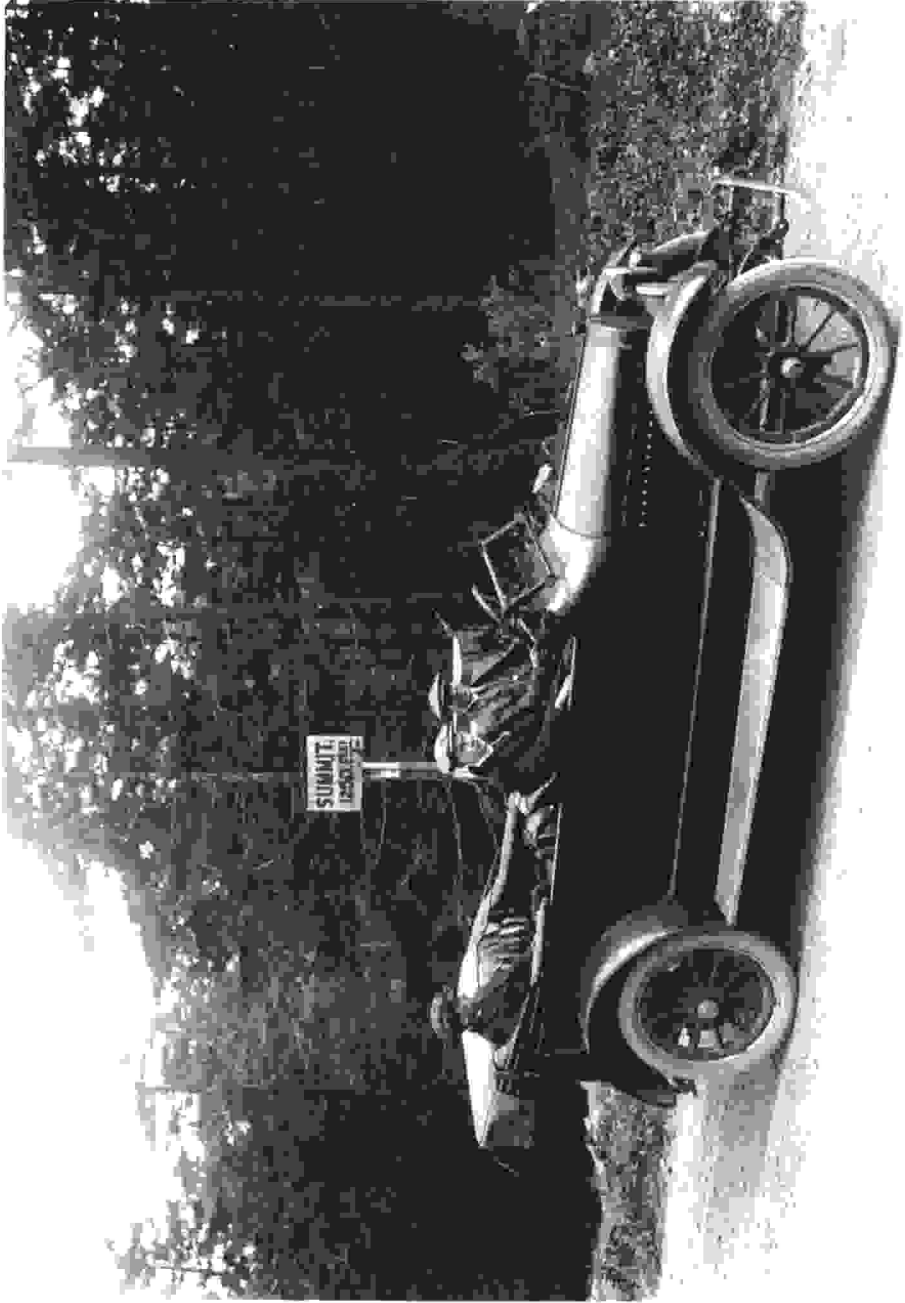


Plate 2-2

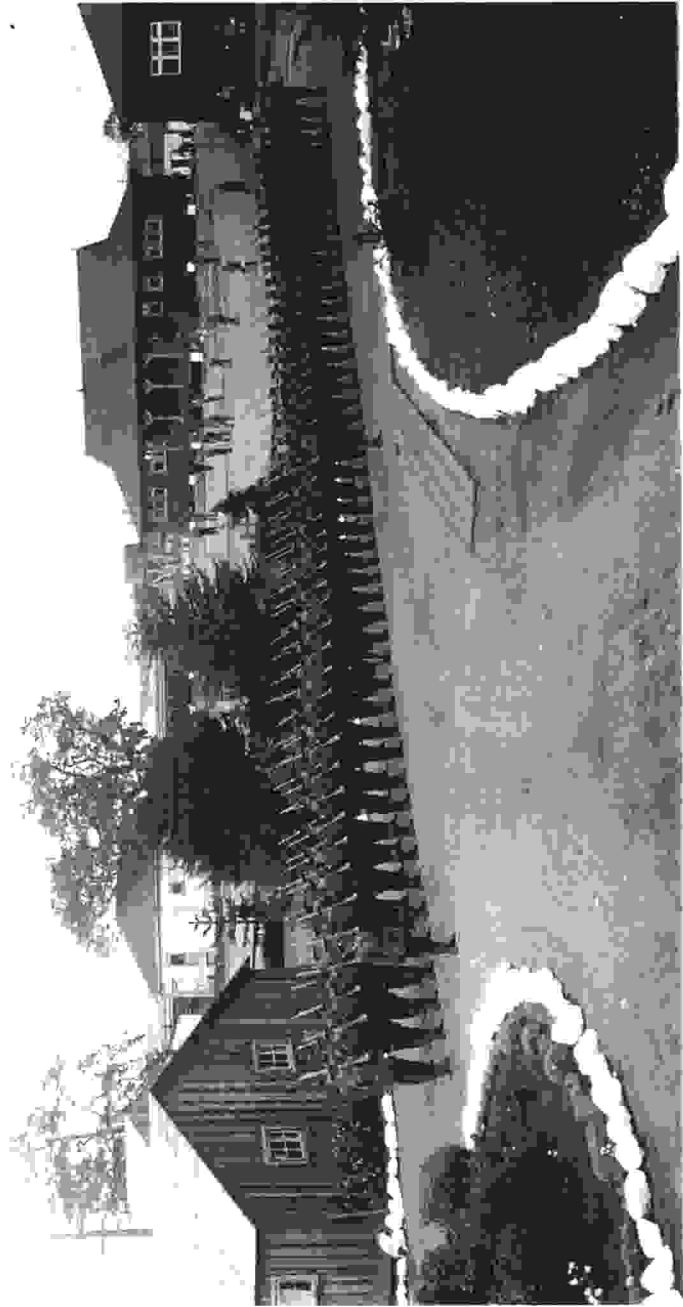


Plate 3-1



Plate 3-2



Plate 3-3



Plate 3-4

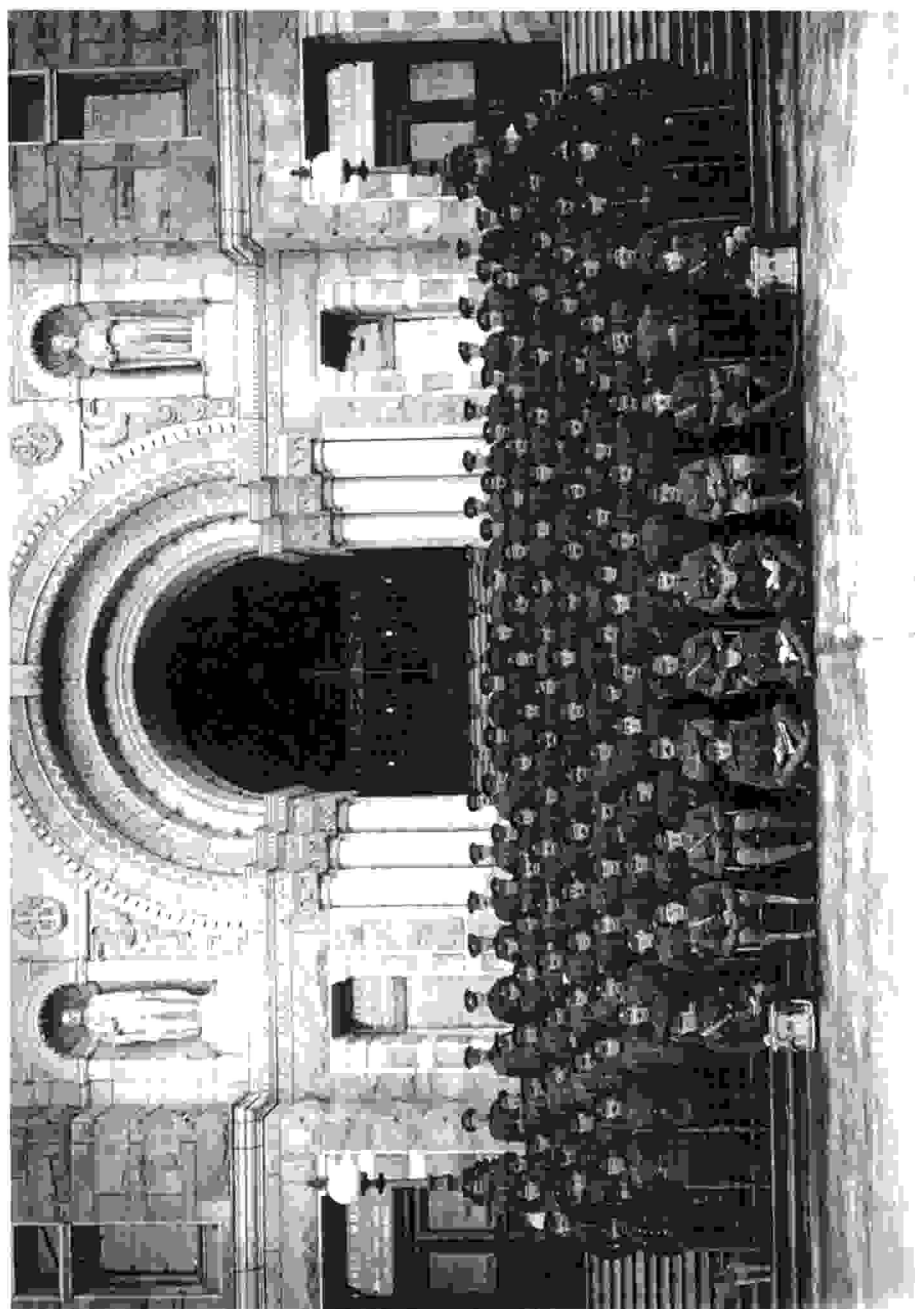


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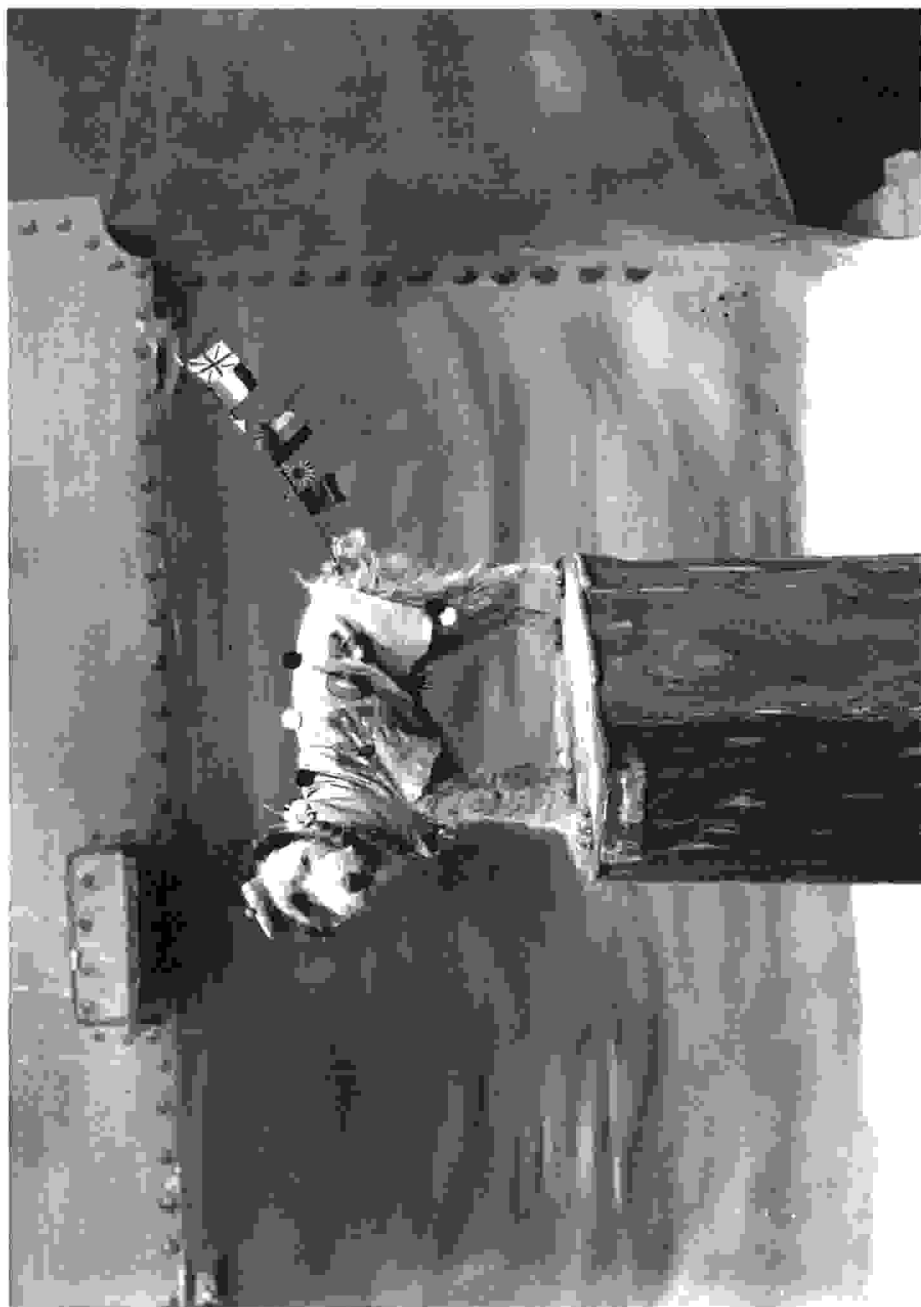


Plate 3-6



Plate 3-7

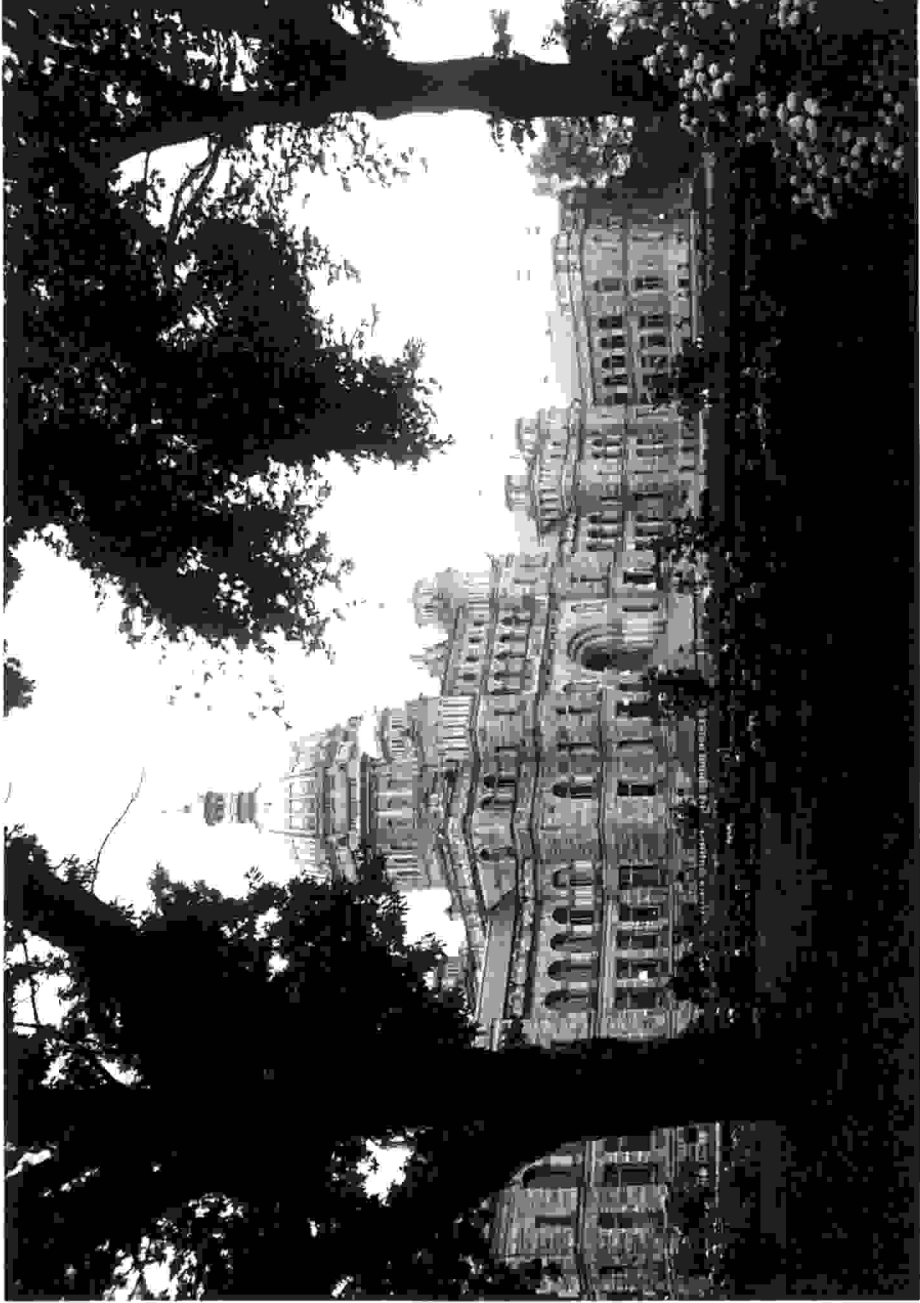


Plate 3-8



Plate 3-9

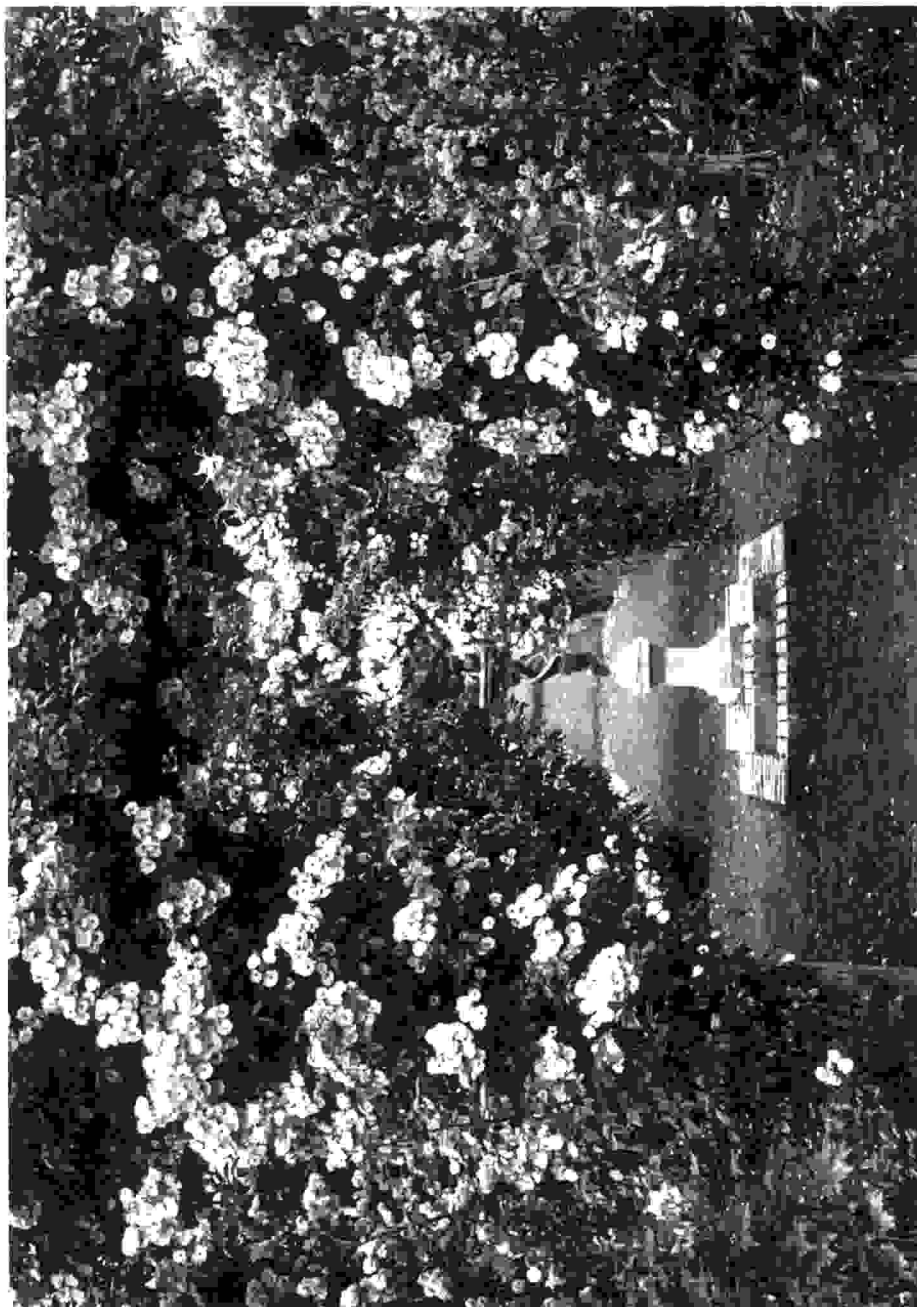


Plate 3-10



Plate 3-11

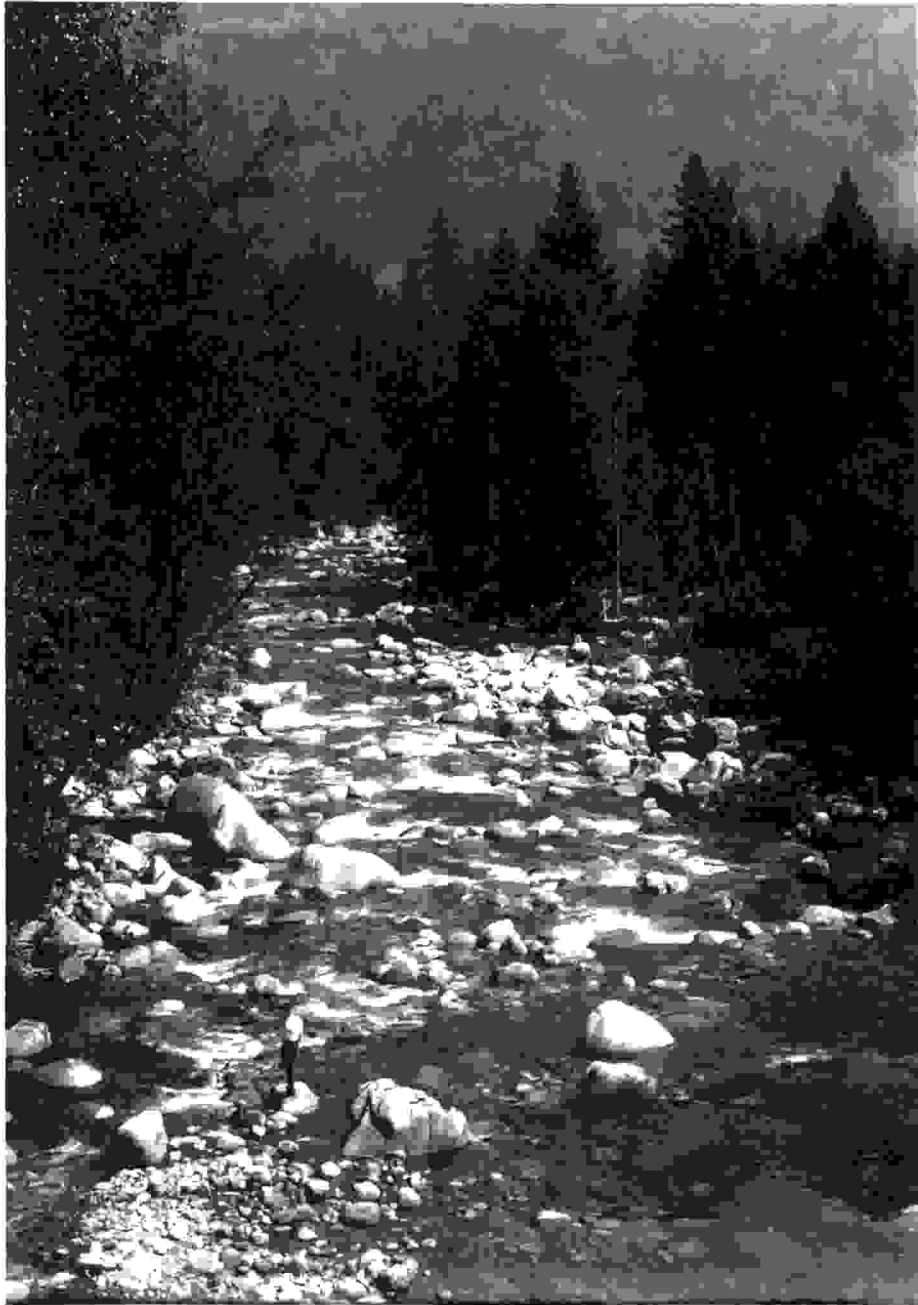


Plate 3-12



Plate 3-13



Plate 3-14



Plate 3-15

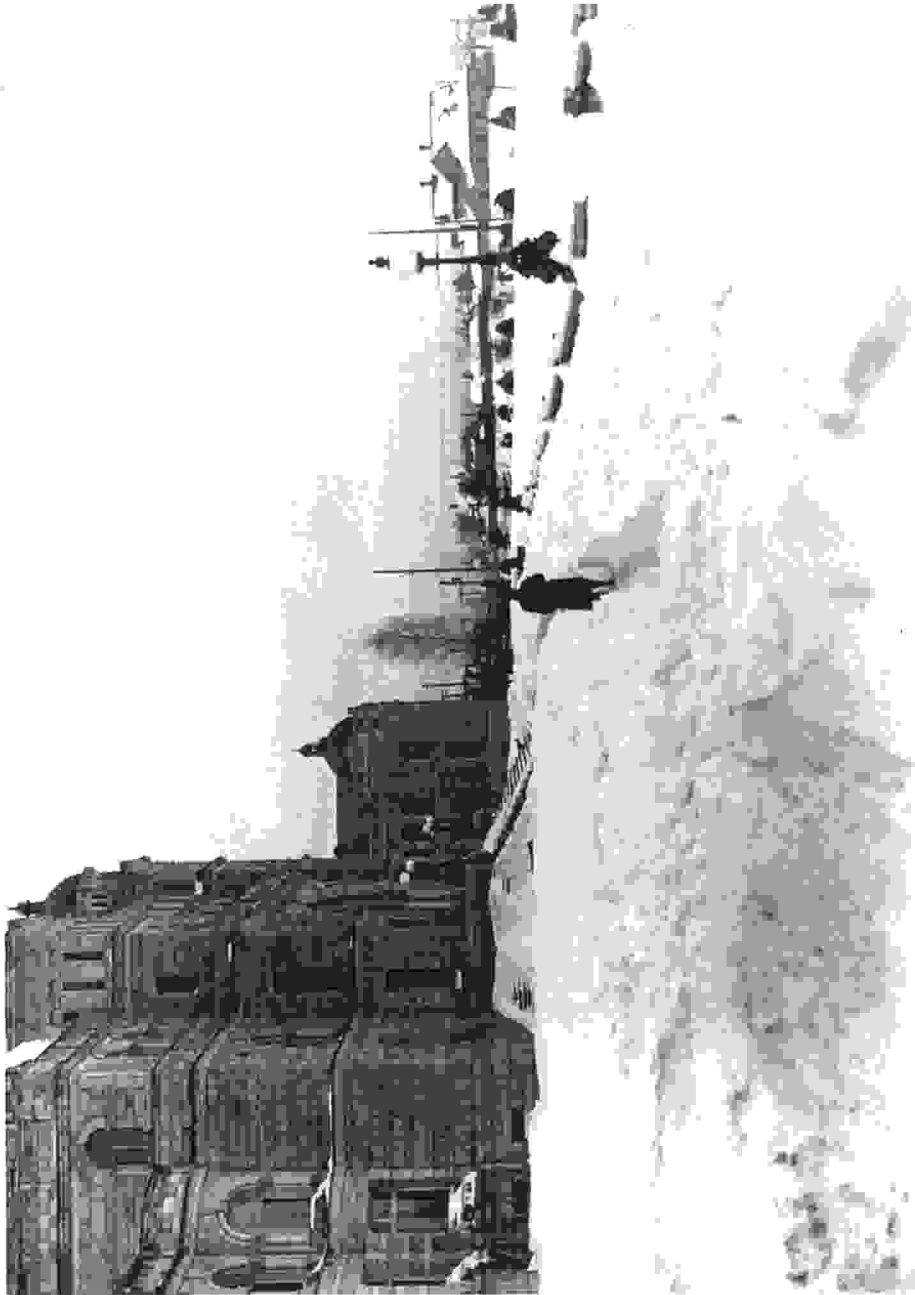


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Plate 3-17

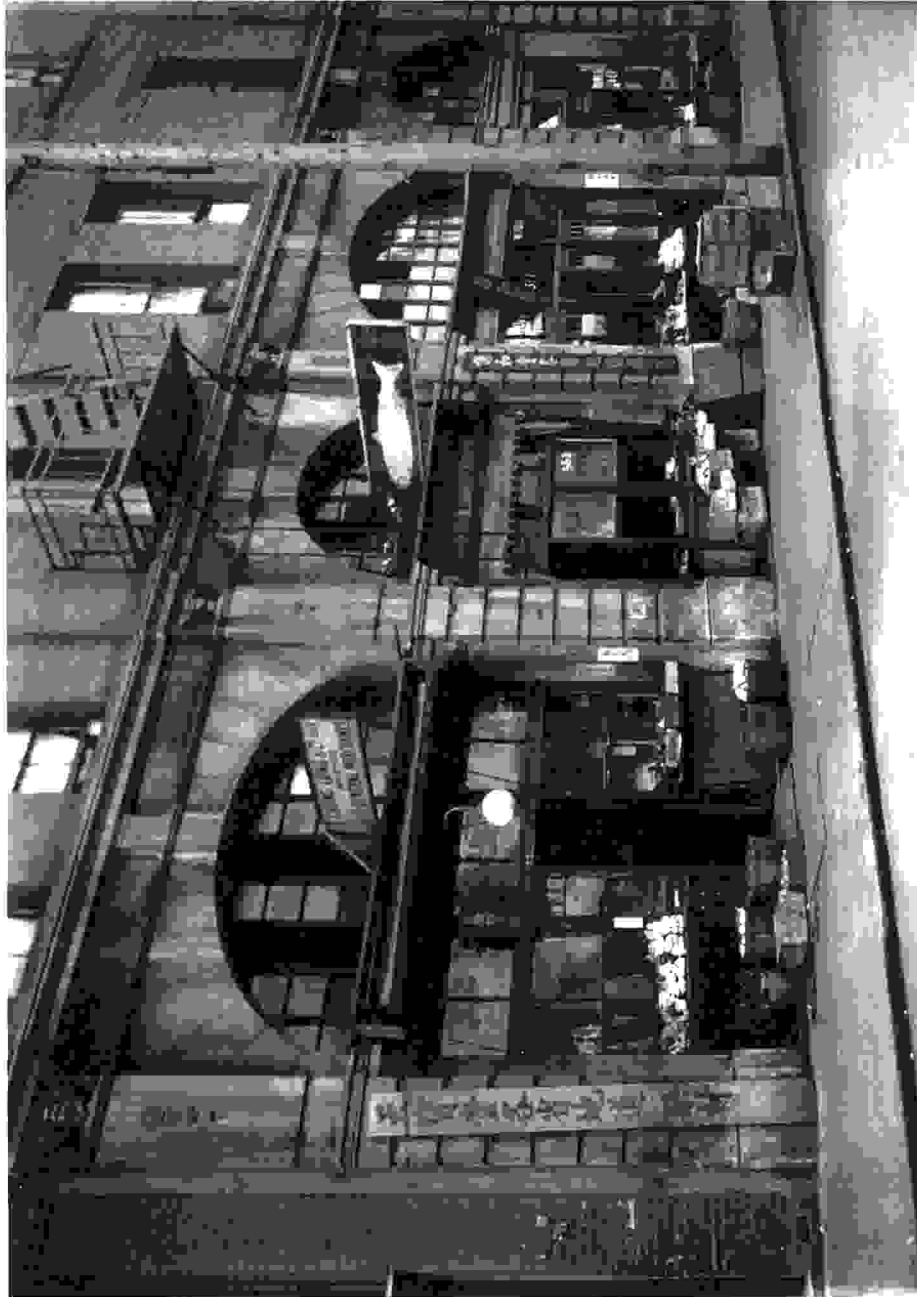


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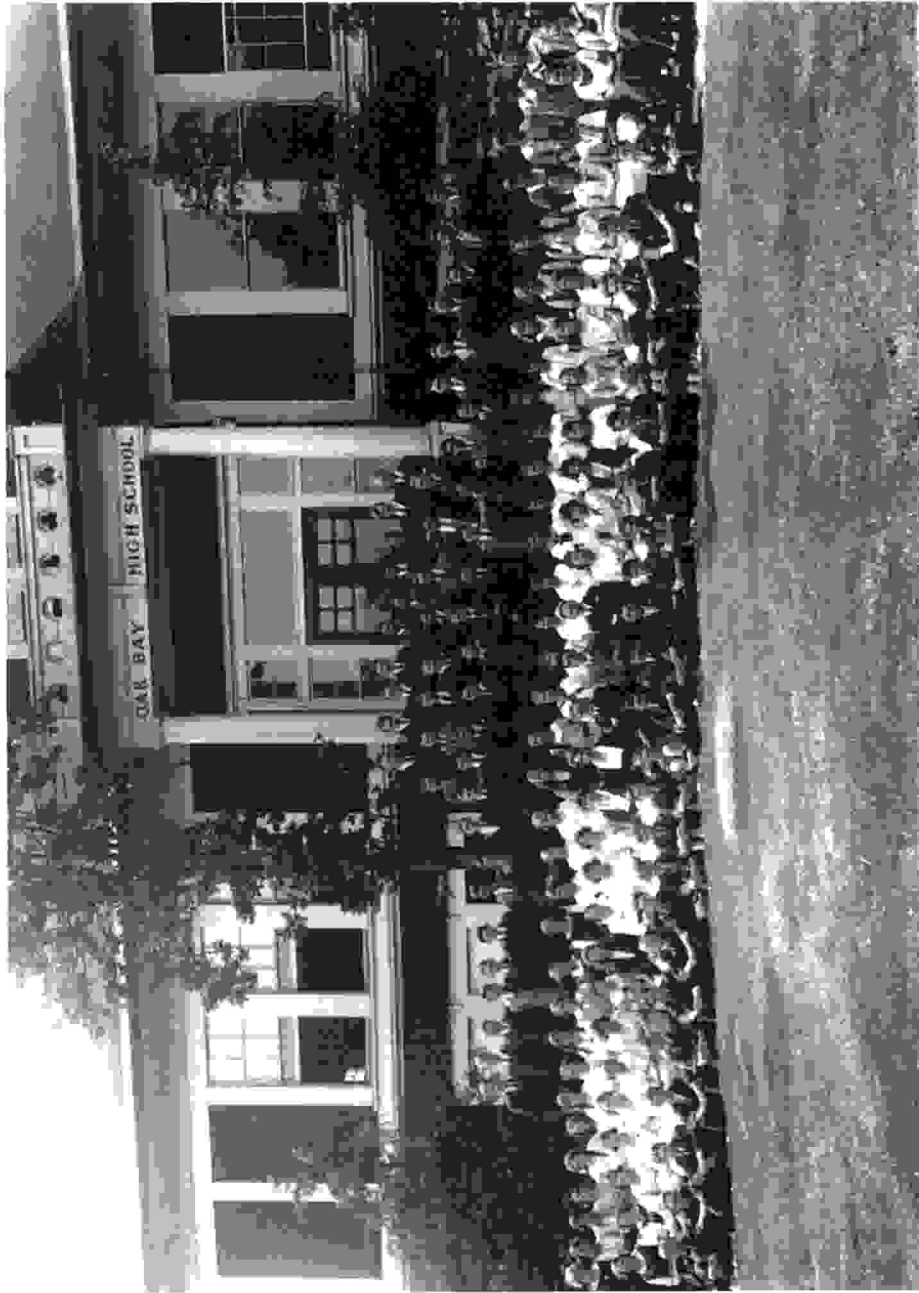


Plate 3-19



Plate 3-20



Plate 3-21

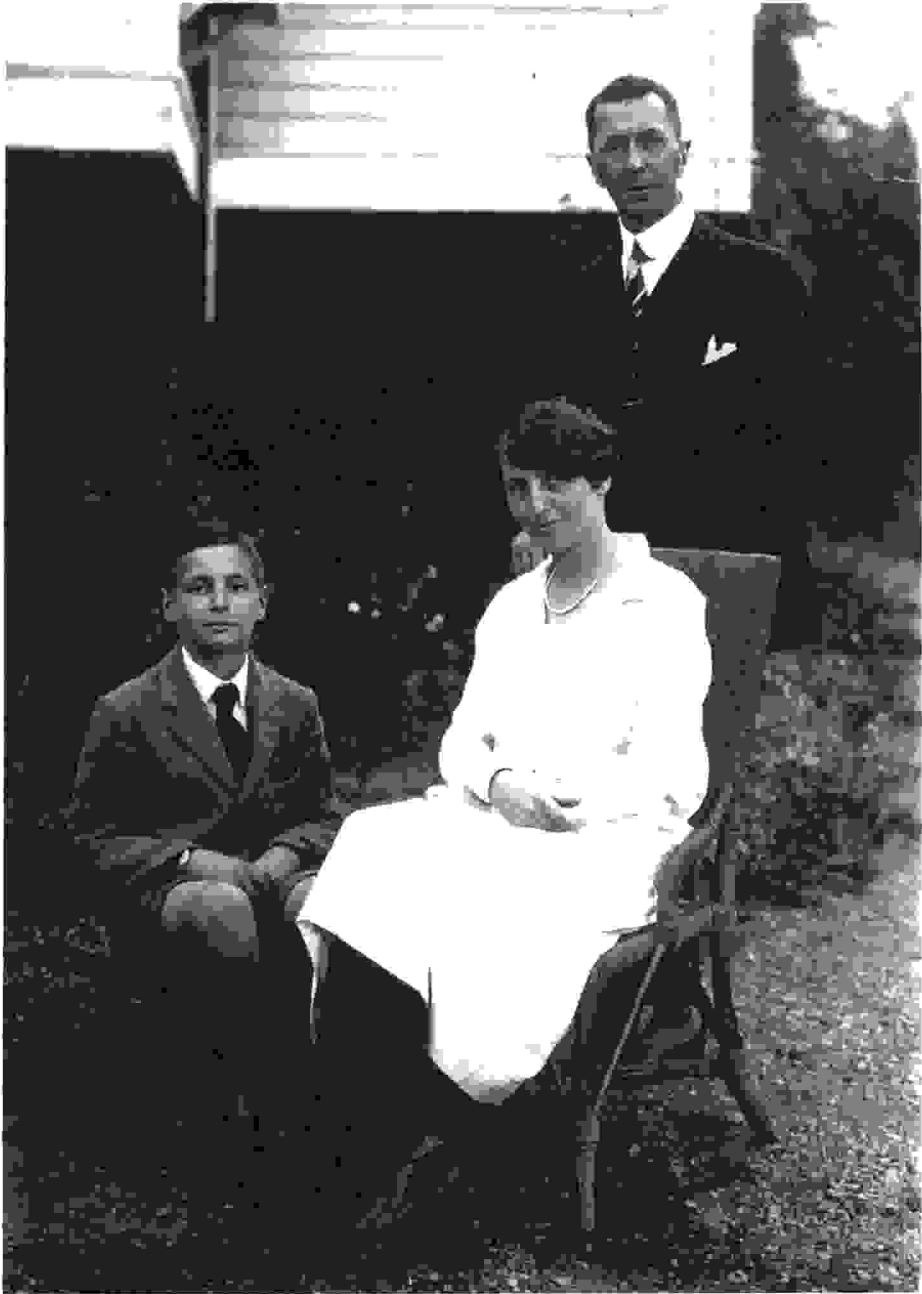


Plate 3-22



Plate 3-23



Plate 3-24



Plate 3-25



Plate 3-26

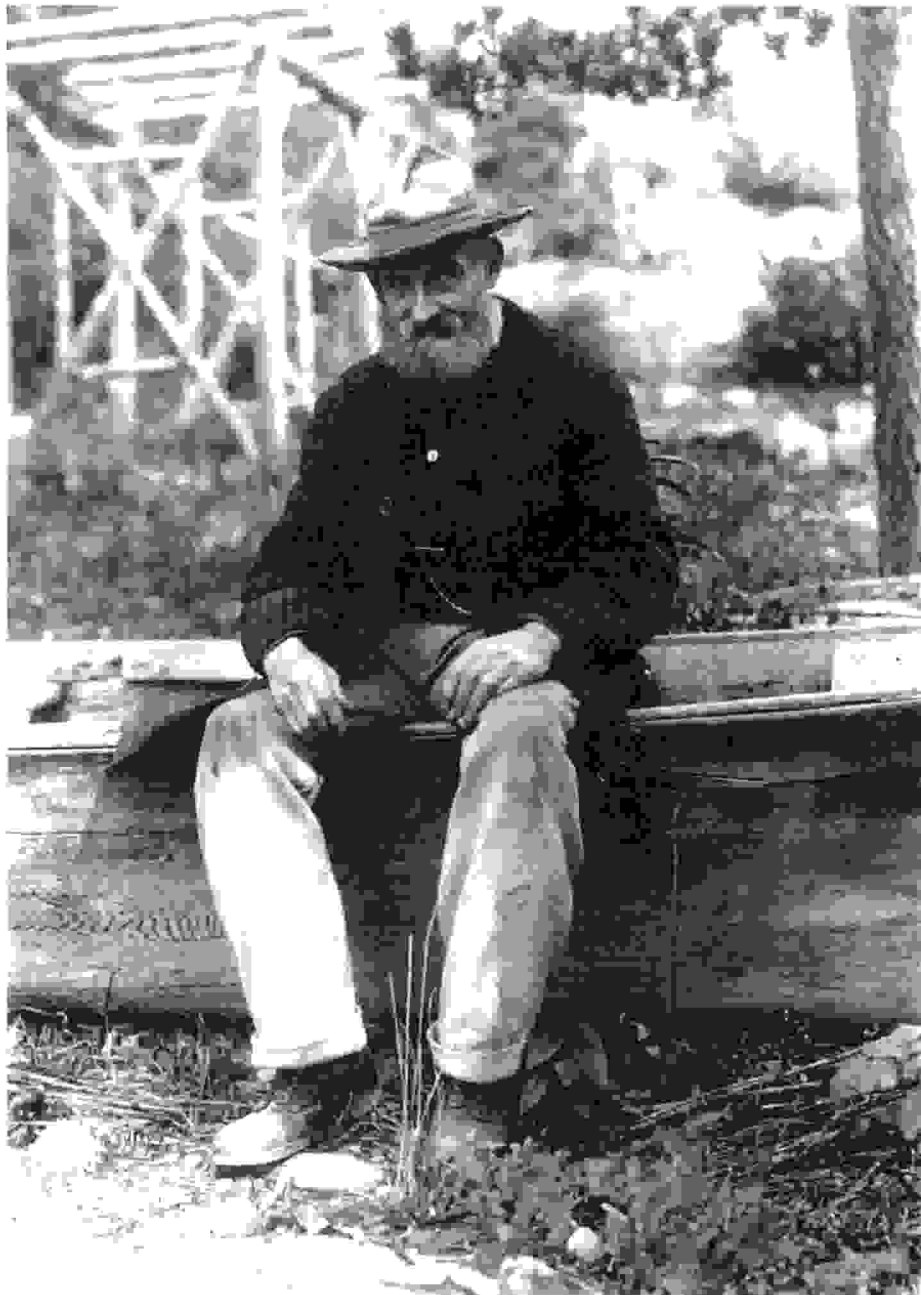


Plate 3-27



Plate 3-28

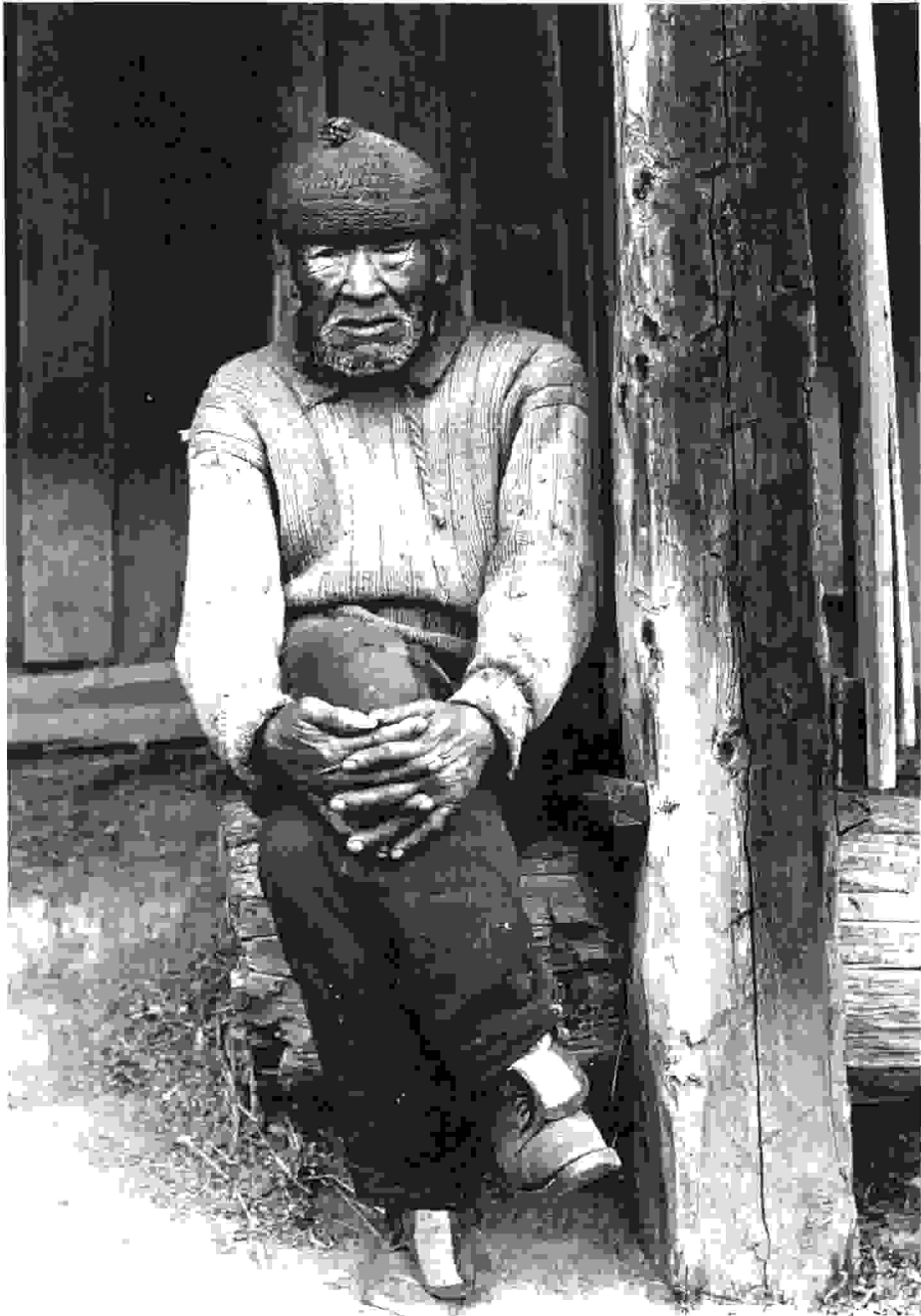


Plate 3-29



Plate 3-30



Plate 3-31



Plate 3-32



Plate 3-33



Plate 3-34



Plate 3-35

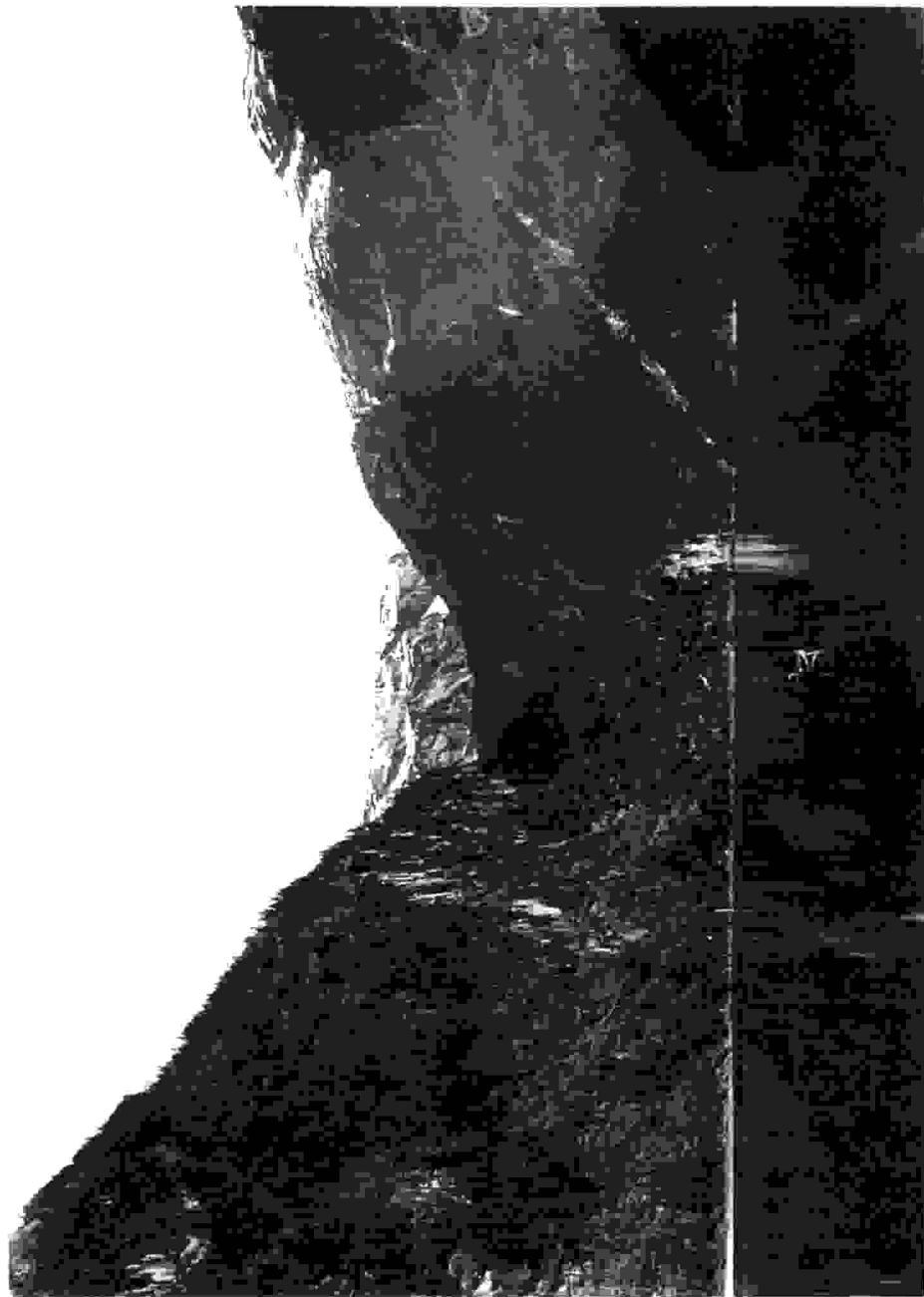


Plate 3-36

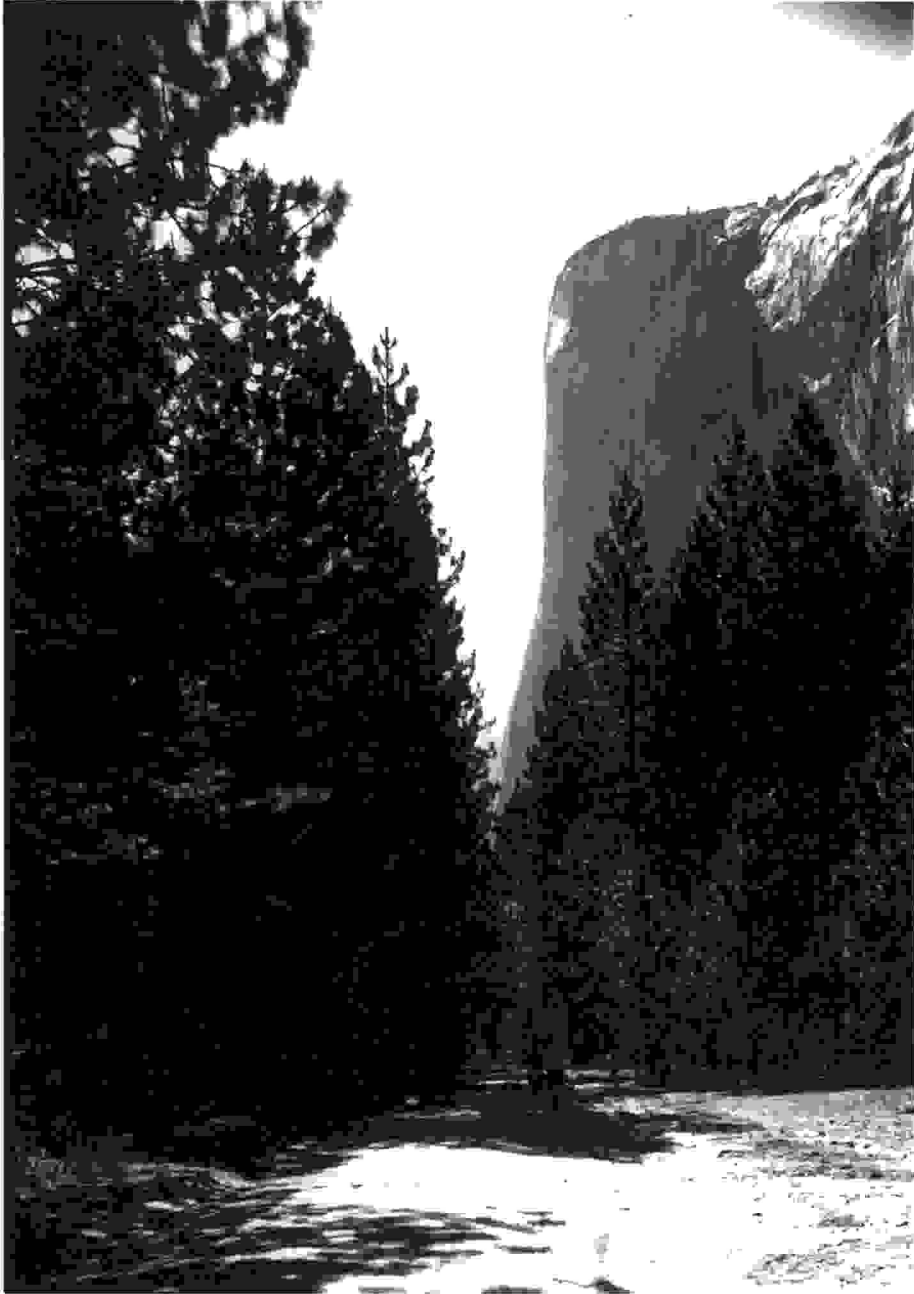


Plate 3-37



Plate 3-38



Plate 3-39



Plate 3-40



Plate 3-41



Plate 3-42



Plate 3-43



Plate 3-44

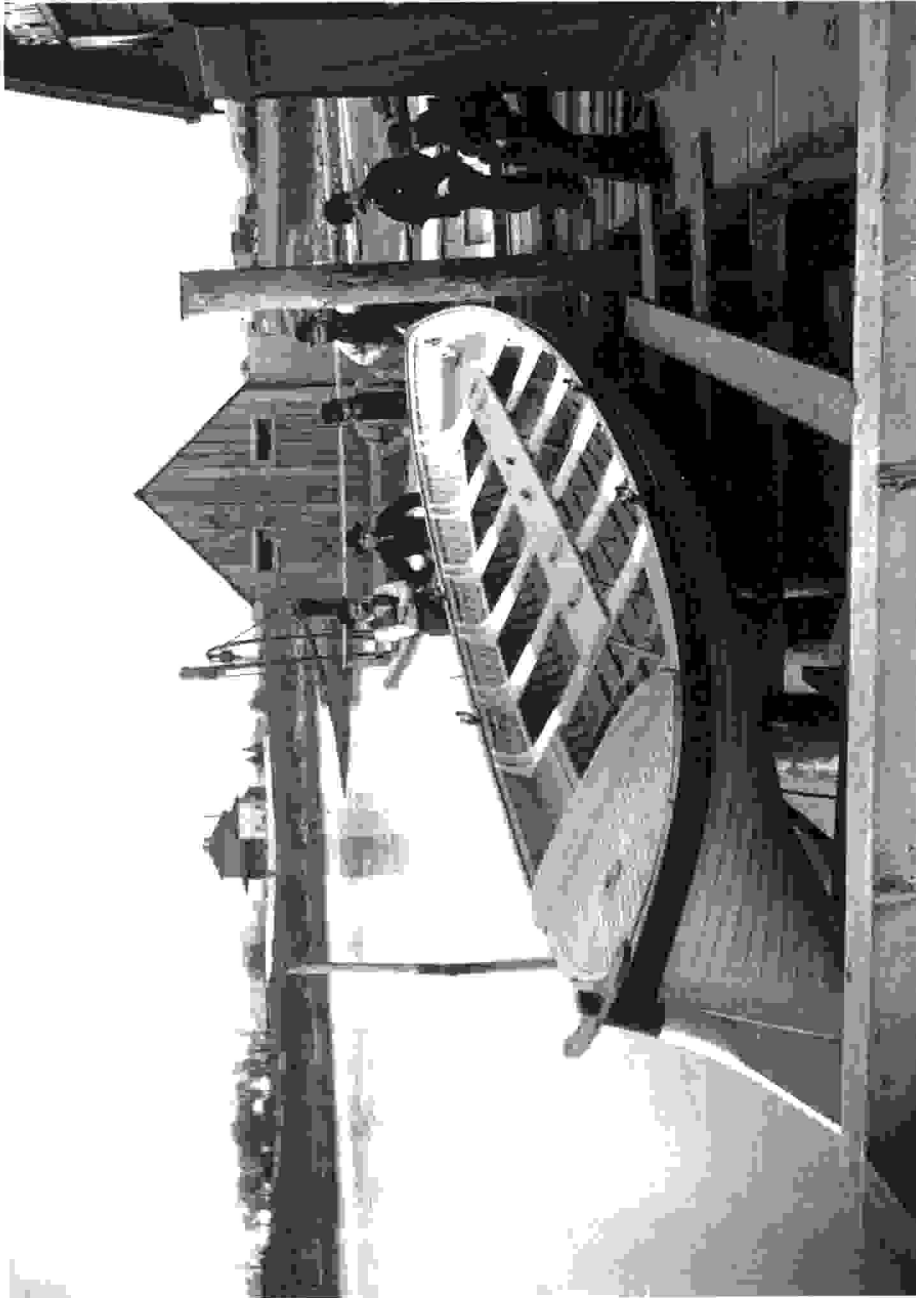


Plate 3-45



Plate 3-46

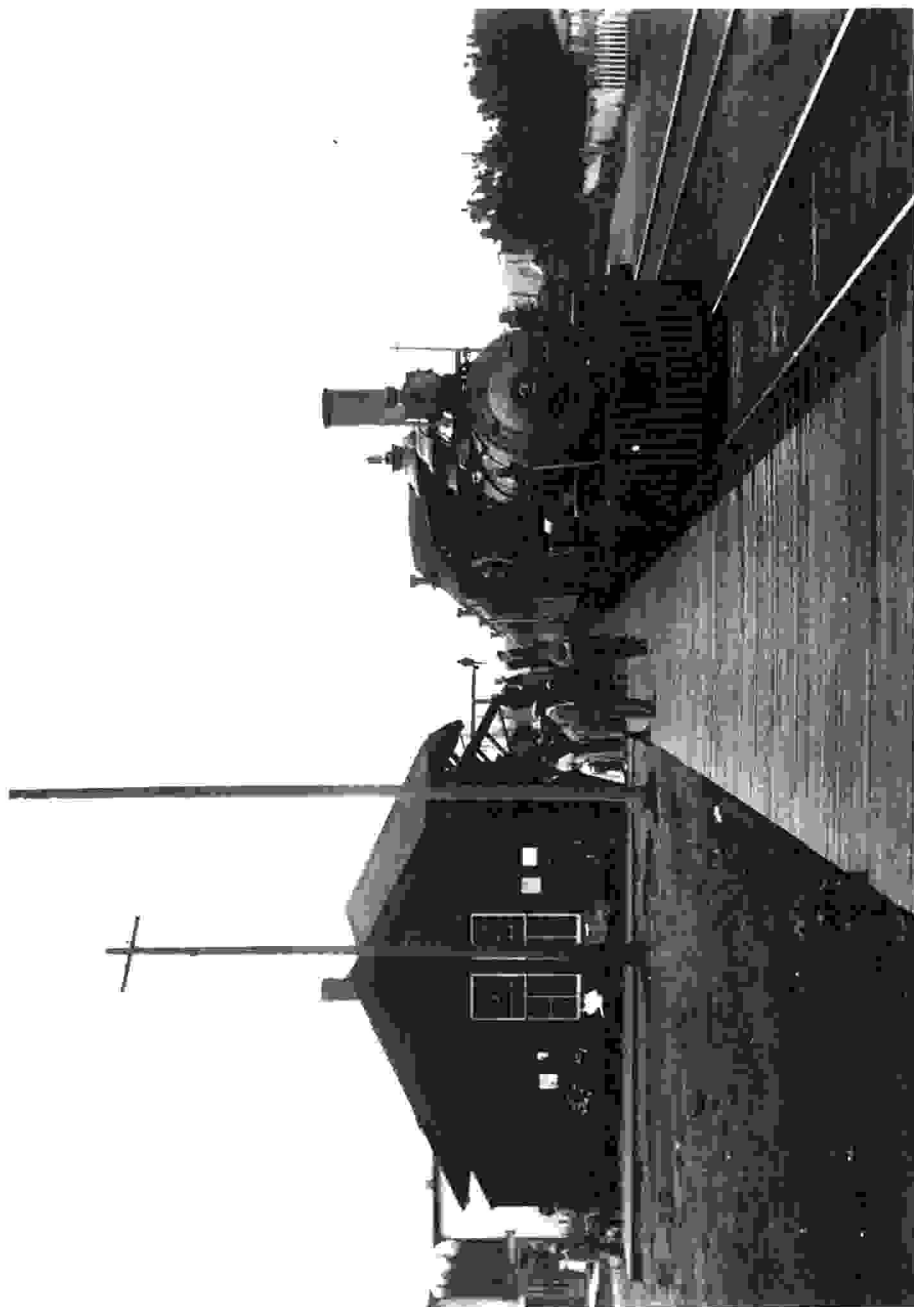


Plate 3-47

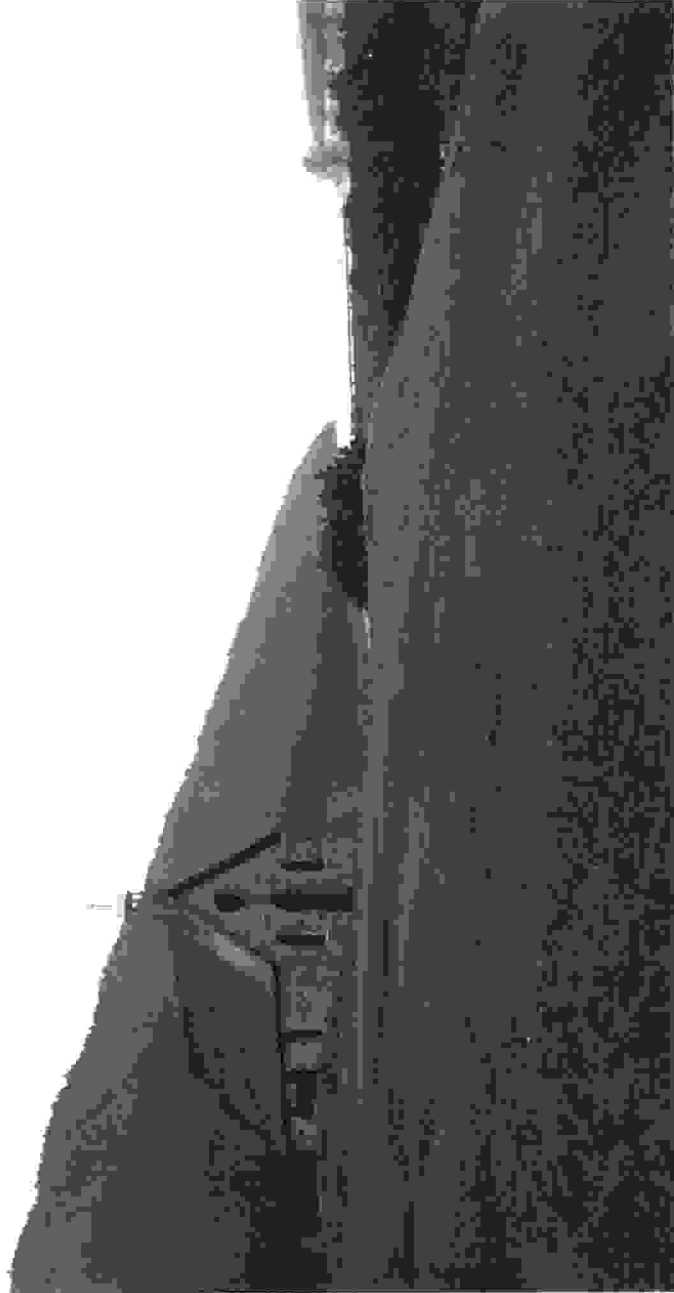


Plate 3-48

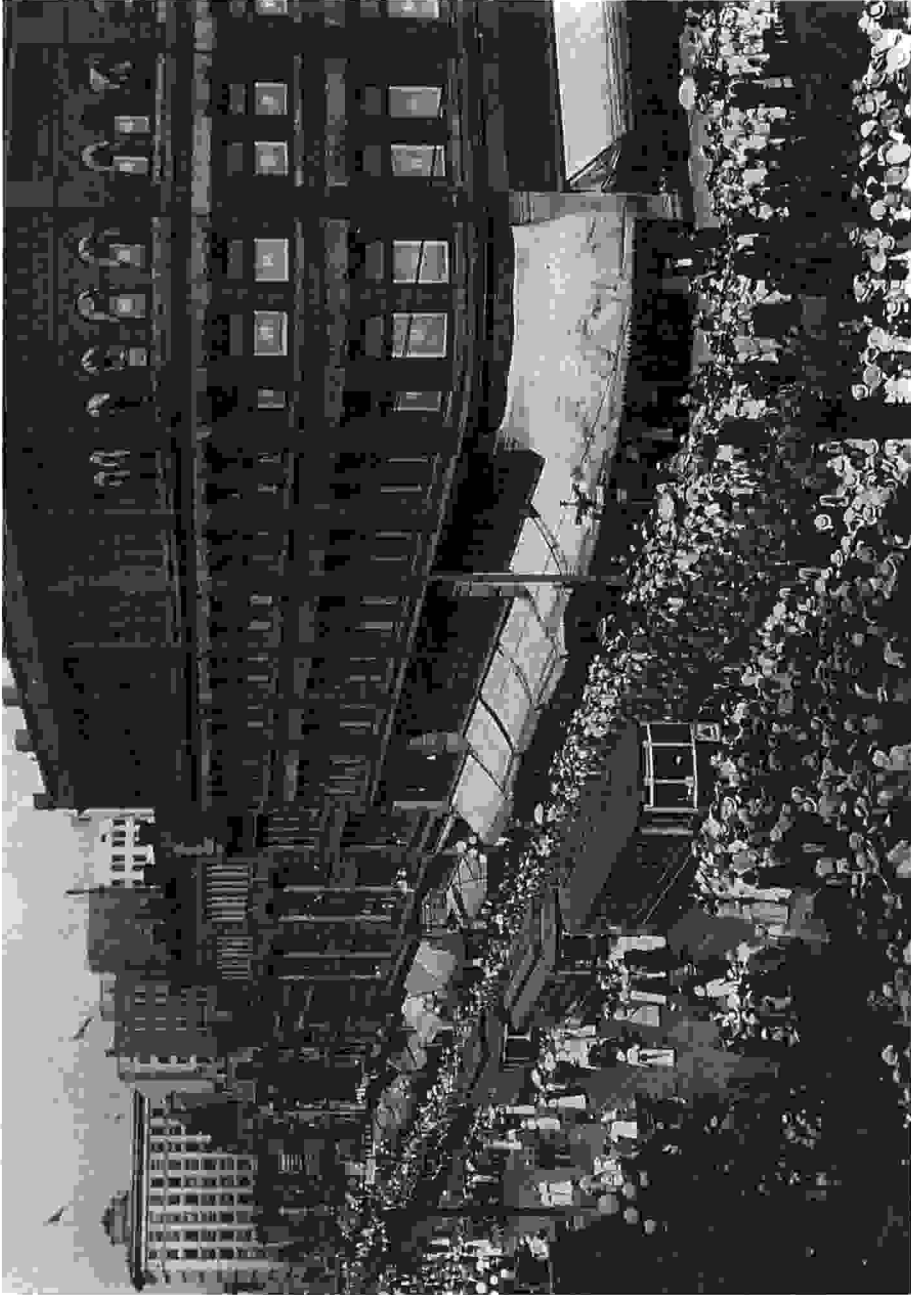


Plate 4-1

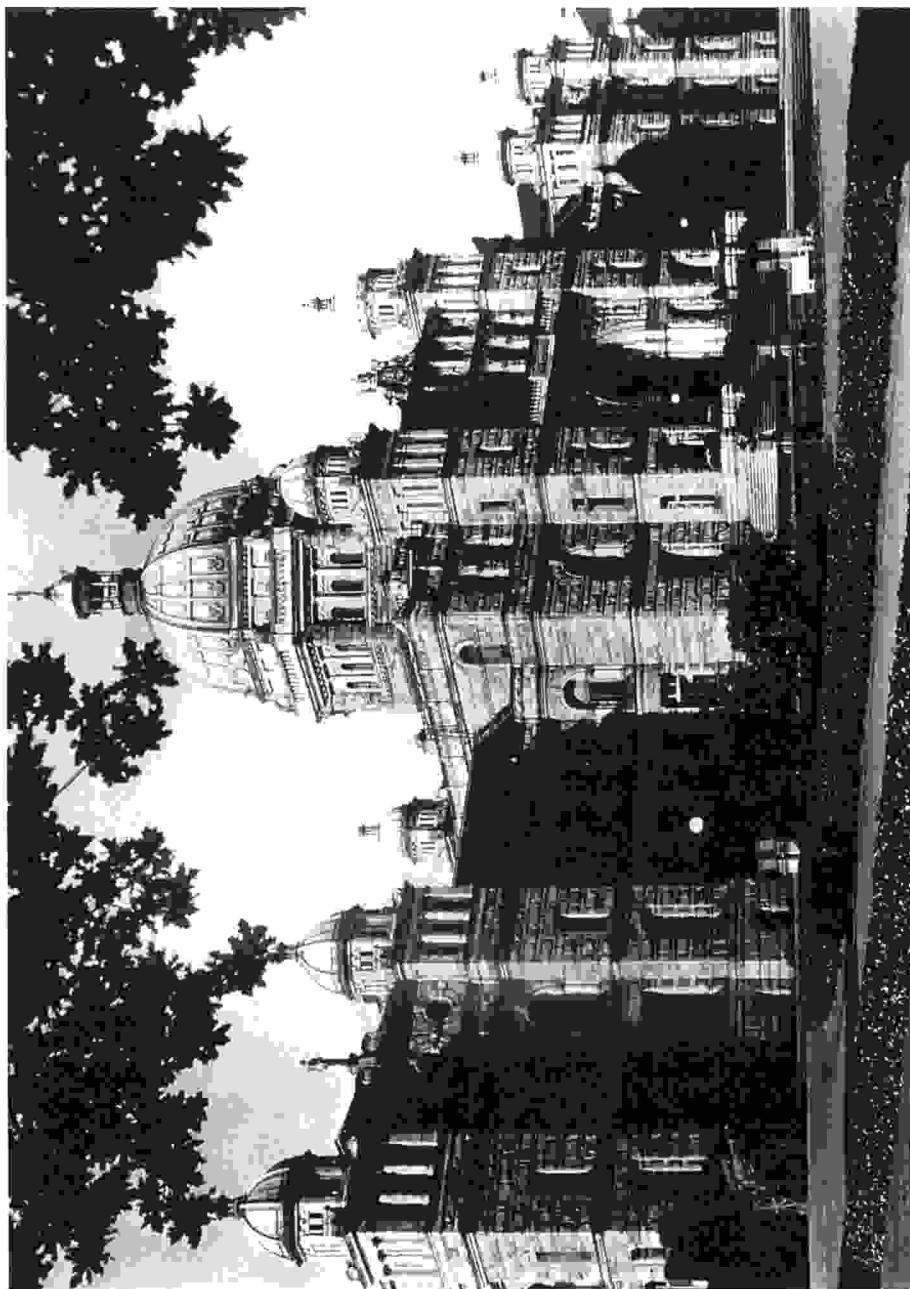


Plate 4-2



Plate 4-3



Plate 4-4



Plate 4-5



Plate 4-6



Plate 4-7

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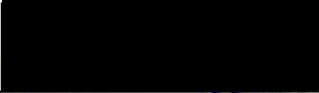
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