

MAPPER OF MOUNTAINS: M.P. BRIDGLAND IN THE CANADIAN ROCKIES 1902–1930. By I.S. MacLAREN, with ERIC HIGGS and GABRIELLE ZEZULKA-MAILLOUX. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press, 2005. ISBN 0-88864-456-6. xviii + 295 p., maps, b&w illus., appendices, bib., index. Softbound. Cdn\$39.95.

I wish I had known more about the remarkable life of Morrison Parsons Bridgland six years ago, when I was completing my history of mountain climbing in Canada. As I have discovered, Bridgland played a major role in the Canadian mountaineering community in the early years of the 20th century and, until now, has been overlooked. He was, as well, one of the most important surveyors of the mountains of western Canada for 30 years.

This book will be of interest to all those who have a passion for Canadian mountain history. With extensive footnotes, bibliography, and index, it is also an excellent resource for serious historians.

'Mapper of Mountains' grew out of the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project (RMRPP), in which J.M. Rhemtulla and Eric Higgs re-photographed central Jasper National Park from the same high-elevation stations that Bridgland had used when he surveyed and photographed the park in 1915. We now have an impressive record of change in the natural environment over a period of more than 80 years. It is a resource that is proving of tremendous value to researchers from many varied disciplines.

The book begins with an introduction to exploration, mapping, and surveying in western Canada prior to Bridgland's career. The heart of the book is the story of Bridgland himself, in particular his contribution to the formation of the Alpine Club of Canada (ACC), his role as chief guide at the early ACC mountaineering camps, and his 30-year career surveying in the Canadian Rockies and the Selkirk and Monashee mountains. The book concludes with the story of the RMRPP and Bridgland's legacy.

I enjoyed the story of this unsung Canadian hero, but as his life was largely one of hard work, modesty, and dedication to duty, it is not an exciting read. There were few moments of drama or excitement in Bridgland's life (or few that he chose to record). As a fellow historian, I found the authors' search for Bridgland's original materials, in particular the plate negatives, very interesting and satisfying: the negatives were ultimately discovered in uncatalogued cardboard boxes in a warehouse of the National Archives. The story of the development of the technique of phototopographic alpine surveying, which was perfected in the Canadian mountains in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, makes another fascinating story.

The book is at times a dense read, full of facts and details. And there are a few errors that surprised me—James Hector was a famous geologist (not botanist) and Conrad Kain did not "later write up his adventures in the Canadian Rockies" (these stories were collected and edited after Kain's death by J.M. Thorington). I would have liked very much to see a series of illustrations showing the technique Bridgland used to turn

his photographs into topographical maps. The explanation of this process given in the book is very hard to understand. The quality of the black-and-white photographic reproductions suffers from the quality of paper used in the book. Finally, a map of the mountains of western Canada showing the extent of the territory surveyed by Bridgland would have been of interest.

I noted that MacLaren and his fellow authors felt a touch of resentment that Bridgland has been overshadowed by the better-known Canadian mountain surveyors, J.J. McArthur and A.O. Wheeler. This book, however, will now place Morrison Parsons Bridgland in that illustrious group and make his remarkable story available to all of us.

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