"I am the first of my kind to see it": Observation and Authorship in Mina Hubbard's Performance as Labrador Explorer, 1905–1908

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Cet article porte sur l'expédition réalisée en 1905 par la Canadienne Mina Hubbard à travers le Labrador et la péninsule d'Ungava. Ce faisant, il examine la notion d'explorateur/voyageur nordique non autochtone en tant que témoin. Il considère deux pratiques qui furent essentielles à Hubbard dans la construction et la mise en scène de son identité en tant qu'exploratrice : l'observation empirique et la publication de ses travaux. Les efforts de Hubbard pour se présenter comme une personne digne de témoigner des régions nordiques, en compétition avec ses guides des régions sauvages, mettent aussi en relief les types d'identités de race, de classes sociales et de genre qui étaient exclus de l'entreprise d'exploration des régions nordiques au tournant du siècle.

This article focuses on Canadian Mina Hubbard's expedition through the Labrador-Ungava Peninsula in 1905. In so doing, it examines the notion of the northern non-Indigenous explorer/traveller as witness. It considers two practices that were essential to Hubbard in the construction and performance of her identity as an explorer: empirical observation and authorship. Hubbard's efforts to present herself as a reliable northern witness, in contest with her wilderness guides, also highlight the kinds of racialized, classed, and gendered identities that were excluded from the work of northern exploration around the turn of the century.

UNTIL WELL INTO THE 20TH CENTURY, those who lived outside of northern North America engaged with the region primarily as an imagined space.[1] While developments in technologies of communication and transportation converged in the 1930s and 1940s to bring the North into more

1 My sincere thanks to Jerry Bannister, Lisa Binkley, John Reid, and this journal's anonymous reviewers for their invaluable feedback on various drafts and incarnations of this article. I am also very appreciative of the generous time and assistance given by Linda White at Memorial University's Archives and Special Collections in facilitating my research. This work was supported in part by funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

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sustained contact with the rest of the continent, very few North Americans had access to direct, first-hand experience with northern peoples and environments.[2] American polar explorer Robert Peary therefore captured most Canadians' and Americans' views of the North as fundamentally detached from their realm of experience when he described the northern explorer as a modern-day "Herakles," bridging the geographical and imaginative gaps between "this world . . . and the interstellar space which we call the Arctic Regions."[3] During the 19th and early 20th centuries, knowledge about the North was greatly expanded, in scientific as well as popular circles, through the circulation of first-hand witness testimonies by individuals like Peary. Testimony was provided by those privileged few who visited the region and returned south to describe their experiences, many of whom were heralded as explorers.

Two practices therefore appear essential to defining northern exploration and the related process of geographical knowledge production in this period: the embodied act of bearing witness, through sensory observation, to the lands and peoples of this remote region, followed by the narrativization of witness experiences for consumption by a wider audience outside of the field of exploration. Witnessing and writing were also exclusionary practices, working to promote and legitimize the testimony of white outsiders over the perspectives of northern Indigenous communities and especially the Indigenous wilderness guides who were hired to accompany many explorers into the field.

Three closely related exploratory ventures undertaken in Labrador in 1903 and 1905 highlight the significance of writing and witnessing in the construction of northern exploratory identities. Known collectively as the Hubbard expeditions, the first was led by American journalist Leonidas Hubbard in the summer of 1903. After Hubbard's untimely death in Labrador, two subsequent, rival expeditions took place in 1905, led separately by Hubbard's wife, Mina, and Hubbard's close friend Dillon Wallace. Of particular interest for this study is the way Canadian nurse Mina Hubbard, leader of the Second Hubbard Expedition, relied on aspects of her fieldwork, particularly visual observation and the production of field notes, as essential proofs of her status an explorer, a role that she inhabited uneasily as a respectable middle-class woman. Mina Hubbard also deployed writing to

2 Barbara E. Kelcey, *Alone in the Silence: European Women in the Canadian North before 1940* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2001), 5.

3 Peary, quoted in Michael Bravo, *North Pole* (London: Reaktion Books, 2019), 178.

mark out her northern travels as a different order of activity from that of her guides, despite obvious overlaps in the kinds of work they performed and the northern experiences they shared.[4] These scripted practices of exploration, the northern imaginaries of privileged white outsiders like Mina Hubbard were elevated above other groups with northern experience and expertise, in this case Hubbard's guides as well as the Innu, Inuit, settlers, and people of mixed Indigenous and European ancestry[5] in Labrador.[6]

4 Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Nascaupee and George Rivers* (London: John Murray, 1908).

5 While the politics surrounding the status of communities of Inuit-European descent is an ongoing debate in Newfoundland and Labrador, community members and scholars have opted to use the term "Inuit-Métis" to refer to this group to acknowledge "both their mixed origins and Inuit ancestry"; see John C. Kennedy, "Introduction," *History and Renewal of Labrador's Inuit-Métis*, ed. John C. Kennedy (St. John's: ISER Books, 2014), 1. In southern Labrador, the NunatuKavut Community Council (formerly the Labrador Metis Nation) came to a formal agreement with the federal government in 2018 to begin discussions regarding the NunatuKavummiut's rights to self-determination. For more on the evolving landscape of ethnicity in Labrador, see John C. Kennedy, "Being and becoming Inuit in Labrador," *Études/Inuit/Studies* 39, no. 1 (November 2015): 225–42.

6 This is not to say that Labradorians did not record their own perspectives on their northern homes and their relationships to the land. The presence of Moravian missionaries meant that literacy was relatively widespread among Labrador Inuit from the early 19th century. Kristina Fagan argues that Moravian Inuit embraced writing as a tool for their own purposes, and there are recorded examples of Inuit keeping diaries. See, for example, Kristina Fagan, "'Well done old half breed woman': Lydia Campbell and the Labrador Literary Tradition," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2012): 55–6. For more on literacy among the Moravian Inuit, see Hans J. Rollmann, "Literacy and Awakening: The Awakening of 1804/5 in Hopedale, Labrador," *Journal of Moravian History* 20, no. 2 (Autumn 2020): 125–48. Labrador's mixed-descent community, known as "Settlers" in the north and "Inuit-Métis" or "Southern Inuit" in central and southern Labrador, also has a rich tradition of autobiographical writing, beginning with Lydia Campbell's *Sketches of a Labrador Life by a Labrador Woman*, published serially in the St. John's *Evening Herald* in 1894; see also Marianne P. Stopp, "'I, Old Lydia Campbell': A Labrador Woman of National Historic Significance," in *History and Renewal of Labrador's Inuit-Métis*, ed. John C. Kennedy (St. John's: ISER Books, 2014), 159. Due to issues of language and opportunity, however, it would not be until the 1970s and 1980s that Labrador's Indigenous voices were heard in any kind of sustained way by the outside world; see Peter Armitage, "Romancing Labrador: The Social Construction of Wilderness and the Labrador Frontier," in *Every Grain of Sand: Canadian Perspectives on Ecology and Environment*, ed. J.A. Wainwright (Waterloo, ON: Wilfred Laurier University Press, 2004), 162. This era saw Innu land activism receive international attention in response to low-level flying over Innu territory, as well as the establishment of *Them Days* magazine, with its mandate to record the stories of Labradorians. See, for example, Maura Hanrahan, review of *Nitinikiau Innusi: I Keep the Land Alive* by Elizabeth Penashue and ed. Elizabeth Yeoman, *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 35, no. 1/2 (October 2020): 167 as well as Vicki S. Hallett, "Reading (for) Decolonization: Engaging with Life Writing in Labrador's *Them Days* Magazine," *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies* 18, no. 5 (October 2018): 327 and Hallet, "Against Prevailing Currents: The History of *Them Days* Magazine in Labrador," *Acadiensis* 48, no. 2 (Autumn/automne 2019): 146–76.

Mina Hubbard's role as an early woman explorer of the Canadian North has been well studied. Scholars such as Wendy Roy, Tiffany Johnstone, and Jonathan Parsons have offered insightful deconstructions of the contributions Mina Hubbard's expedition, as well as those led by Dillon Wallace and her husband, made to the edifice of imperial knowledge about the North that continue to be felt in Labrador today through projects such as the Churchill Falls hydroelectric development.[7] Reflecting on Mina Hubbard's work in mapping her route through Labrador, overwriting Innu names for the geographical features of their territory with her own words, Roy observes: "If a place can be renamed without consulting the people who live there, it can also be flooded without consulting them."[8] The Second Hubbard Expedition, therefore, added materially to the body of knowledge used to superimpose settler geographies – and national boundaries – onto Indigenous lands.

Existing studies of Mina Hubbard, like much of the scholarship on women's northern travel and exploration, can be more readily situated within the fields of gender history and literary analysis than within the historiography of exploration.[9] Scholarship has tended to engage in close readings of Hubbard's field diary and published accounts of her travels in order to evaluate how Hubbard constructed herself as an authorial and gendered subject in the male-dominated fields of exploration and publishing.[10] The relatively recent

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7 Wendy Roy, "Visualizing Labrador: Maps, Photographs, and Geographical Naming in *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*," *Studies in Canadian Literature* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2004): 13-34; Wendy Roy, *Maps of Difference: Canada, Women, and Travel* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005); Tiffany Johnstone, "The Language of Faith and American Exceptionalism in *The Lure of the Labrador Wild*," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 21, no. 2 (Autumn 2006): 305; Jonathan Parsons, "The Naming Compulsion in Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* and Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*," *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies* 26, no. 1 (Spring 2011): 55-73.

8 Roy, *Maps of Difference*, 14-15.

9 For examples of scholarship on other northern women travellers with a literary focus, see Linda S. Bergman, "Woman against a Background of White: The Representation of Self and Nature in Women's Arctic Narratives," *American Studies* 34, no. 2 (Autumn 1993): 53-68; Heidi Hansson, "Feminine Poles: Josephine Diebitsch-Peary's and Jennie Darlington's Polar Narratives," in *Cold Matters: Cultural Perceptions of Snow, Ice and Cold*, ed. Heidi Hansson and Catherine Norberg (Umeå, SE: Umeå University and the Royal Skyttean Society, 2009), 105-23; Heidi Hansson, "Henrietta Kent and the Feminised North," *Nordlit*, no. 22 (April 2007): 71-96; Anka Ryall, "Europe's Northern Periphery and the Future of Women in the Travel Narratives of Ethel Tweedie," *NORA: Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 17, no. 4 (December 2009): 273-88; and Kathryn Walchester, "'My Petticoat Encumbrances': The 'Female Adventurer' and the North," *Nordlit*, no. 32 (August 2014): 161-76.

10 Sherrill Grace, "'Hidden Country': Discovering Mina Benson Hubbard," *Biography* 24, no. 1 (Winter 2001): 273-87; Sherrill Grace, "Inventing Mina Benson Hubbard: From Her

publication of Hubbard's field diary and Labrador travelogue by McGill-Queen's University Press, accompanied by valuable editorial commentaries, close readings, and scholarly contextualizations for these texts, has also encouraged this kind of literary analysis.[11] By approaching Mina Hubbard's writings as the by-products and evidence of her activities in the field, this article attempts to reconnect her writing to their points of origin in the material practices of northern exploration that were an important element of Hubbard's negotiations of power with her guides.

The Hubbard expeditions, 1903-1905

The First Hubbard Expedition took place in 1903. It was organized by American wilderness writer Leonidas Hubbard, who invited his friend, New York lawyer Dillon Wallace, and a hired guide, George Elson, a Hudson's Bay Company (HBC) employee of Scottish-Cree descent from the James Bay region of northern Ontario.[12] The three men undertook a river-based canoe journey through the interior of the Labrador-Ungava peninsula, the site of the contested boundary between Newfoundland and Quebec, as well as Innu territory (known today as Nitassinan) and Inuit territory in Labrador (divided today into Nunatsiavut and Nunavik).[13] As assistant editor for *Outing* magazine, a New York-based sporting and outdoorsman's journal, Leonidas Hubbard went to Labrador with the intention of using his experiences as fodder for publication. In order to secure expedition funding from *Outing*, he pitched the trip as an opportunity to produce a "bully story" for the magazine.[14] With the transatlantic emergence of New Journalism in the 1880s, expeditions were frequently sponsored by metropolitan periodicals as a means of manufacturing

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1905 Expedition Across Labrador to Her 2005 Centennial (And Beyond)," *Nordlit* no. 22 (August 2007): 49–69; Lisa LaFramboise, "'Just a Little Like an Explorer': Mina Hubbard and the Making of *A Woman's Way*," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 39, no. 1 (Spring 2001): 7–44.

11 Mina Benson Hubbard, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* (1908), ed. Sherrill Grace (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2004); Roberta Buchanan, Anne Hart, and Bryan Greene, eds., *The Woman Who Mapped Labrador: The Life and Expedition Diary of Mina Hubbard* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2005).

12 Roberta Buchanan and Bryan Greene, "Introduction," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 1; Roberta Buchanan, "The Men: 'Such a Jolly and Happy Crew'," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 12–13.

13 Roberta Buchanan, "'Our Wilderness Friends': The Innu," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 18–26.

14 Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr. Kept During his Expedition into Labrador," 16 September 1903, in Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 179.

the kind of sensational news stories that sold papers.[15] By the first decade of the 20th century publishing and northern exploration were mutually supporting and closely connected enterprises, with much of their cultural and commercial capital originating in New York.[16]

Labrador's appeal to would-be explorers such as Leonidas Hubbard lay in the peninsula's epistemological remoteness but relative geographical proximity. On the one hand, Labrador met the conditions of unknowability expected of venues for northern exploration. By virtue of the perceived hostility and barrenness of the environment, Labrador was notable for being "of all the regions of North America the last and least explored."[17] On the other hand, while still being unknown and alien, Labrador was relatively close to home for Hubbard. Dillon Wallace described the region as "'a sort of Arctic wilderness'" that offered the opportunity to explore "'a great unknown land . . . as wild as primitive today as it has always been'" that was still "'right near home'" in New York state.[18]

While Canadian nurse-turned-American homemaker Mina Hubbard sailed with the men to Labrador's southern coast in 1903, Leonidas felt that the canoeing portion of the trip would be "too hard for [her] to share" and the couple parted ways at Battle Harbour.[19] Exploration was, for Leonidas Hubbard, "a man's game," defined by its physical extremity and, therefore, its inaccessibility to white women.[20] On the second day of this First Hubbard Expedition, however, Leonidas mistook a small waterway known locally as the Susan Brook for a branch of the much larger Naskaupi River that he intended to follow north. As a result of this ultimately fatal error, Hubbard, Wallace, and Elson spent the better part of the next three months enduring

15 Beau Riffenburgh, *The Myth of the Explorer: The Press, Sensationalism, and Geographical Discovery* (London and New York: Belhaven Press for the Scott Polar Research Institute, 1993), 119–20.

16 J.T.H. Connor, "Putting the 'Grenfell Effect' in its Place: Medical Tales and Autobiographical Narratives in Twentieth-Century Newfoundland and Labrador," *Papers of the Bibliographical Society of Canada* 48, no. 1 (Spring 2010): 77–118.v48i1.21256.

17 Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 389 (September 1906): 530.

18 Dillon Wallace, *The Lure of the Labrador Wild: The Story of the Exploring Expedition Conducted by Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.* (New York, Chicago, and Toronto: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1905), 14.

19 Anne Hart, "The Life of Mina Benson Hubbard: Finding Her Way, 15 April 1870–16 June 1905," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 79; Hubbard, "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.," 18 September 1903, p. 179.

20 Hubbard, "Diary of Leonidas Hubbard Jr.," 20 September 1903, in Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 179–80.

grueling portages, navigating rapids, and eking out an inadequate sustenance by hunting and fishing. Hubbard finally succumbed to starvation in October while Wallace and Elson barely survived, returning to New York in March 1904 with Hubbard's body.[21] Far from having proven himself as a worthy explorer, Hubbard was criticized for his shortcomings. In an editorial published in *Forest and Stream*, a rival publication to *Outing*, it was declared that Hubbard's trip had been among "the thoughtless undertakings of inexperienced and unequipped explorers in a wilderness country."[22]

Likely in response to this criticism, it was one of Mina Hubbard's first impulses after her husband's death to produce a memorial volume based on Leonidas's photographs and writings from the field. The resulting text, written by Dillon Wallace with Mina Hubbard's financial support, was published by *Outing* in serial and monograph forms under the popular and well-received title *Lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905).[23] Rather than centring his fallen comrade in the narrative, however, Wallace used the book to publicize his own transition from mere expedition member to explorer in his own right.[24] The last lines of the book announced his intention to return to Labrador on his own expedition, ostensibly to continue the work begun by his friend.[25] Sources close to the Wallace family contend that, after reading a manuscript of Wallace's work, Hubbard demanded it be rewritten, a request that Wallace apparently ignored. Hubbard's biographer Anne Hart suggests that Mina's antipathy toward Wallace, which she harboured for the rest of her life, originated in this moment.[26]

In an effort to rehabilitate her husband's memory and to publicize her own vision of the First Hubbard Expedition, Mina Hubbard once again sought recourse to print. To refute Wallace's published version of events it was essential that she respond in kind, with print operating as the principal mechanism of the period for "constructing, communicating, and contesting claims to knowledge associated with travel and exploration."[27] In January 1905,

21 "Arrival of Hubbard's Body," *New York Sun*, 28 May 1904.

22 Charles Hallock, "Tough and Tender," *Forest and Stream* 62, no. 15 (9 April 1904): 292.

23 Hart, "Finding Her Way," 89–92.

24 Johnstone, "Language of Faith," 305.

25 Wallace, *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, 339.

26 Hart, "Finding Her Way," 92–3.

27 Louise C. Henderson, "David Livingstone's *Missionary Travels* in Britain and America: Exploring the Wider Circulation of a Victorian Travel Narrative," *Scottish Geographical Review* 129, nos. 3–4 (September 2013): 180.

Mina Hubbard disclosed her literary ambitions to Cyrus Adams, president of New York's American Geographical Society: "I am trying in fear and trembling to prepare my work for publication and hope to incorporate in the book the true account of Mr. Hubbard's expedition of 1903."[28] Nevertheless, it would be difficult for any book that Mina Hubbard produced to carry the same truth status enjoyed by Wallace's *Lure of the Labrador Wild*. In addition to being the version of events authorized by *Outing*, Wallace's book met readers' expectations that authentic exploration narratives were those written by individuals who actually participated in expeditions; the writer's credibility was rooted in the science of empiricism, and specifically the presumption that the text was based on privileged first-hand experience and observation.[29] As Mary Louise Pratt has argued, travellers' credibility as explorers was derived from their ability to establish a "rhetoric of presence" and to "construct an image of themselves as witnesses" through their stories.[30] Mina had only her moral authority as Hubbard's widow to legitimize her writing.[31]

Indeed, an examination of Mina Hubbard's own expedition highlights the extent to which exploratory practices were performative acts conducted for an audience of her guides in the field and, subsequently, for an audience of southern readers. Her travel narrative, published in 1908 by the British firm John Murray as *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, was explicit in stating that her desire to write a credible commentary on her husband's Labrador venture prompted her to undertake her own expedition. The introduction to *A Woman's Way* was written by another Labrador explorer and family friend, William Brooks Cabot. Here, Cabot argued that Mina Hubbard's assessment of her husband's abilities as an explorer would only be taken seriously if she personally re-enacted his activities and became a northern witness in her own right: "It became evident to Mrs. Hubbard that only by *actual performance* of the original undertaking could

28 Mina Hubbard to Cyrus Adams, 7 January 1905, General Correspondence, 1889–1912, Cyrus C. Adams, American Geographical Society of New York Records Online with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee Libraries, https://collections.lib.uwm.edu/digital/collection/agsny/id/70624.

29 Daniel W. Clayton, *Islands of Truth: The Imperial Fashioning of Vancouver Island* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2000), 19.

30 Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London and New York: Routledge, 1992), 209.

31 For further discussion of discourses of wifehood and widowhood in northern exploratory culture, see Penny Russell, "Wife Stories: Narrating Marriage and Self in the Life of Jane Franklin," *Victorian Studies* 48, no. 1 (Autumn 2005): 35–57.

her husband's name be cleared from the reproach of having entered lightly upon an ill-advised and dangerous project. In the absence of information about the country she could not otherwise qualify herself to impart to others her conviction of the reasonably good conception and management of the venture."[32] As a performance piece, then, *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador* presented a narrative re-enactment of Mina Hubbard's own surrogate performance of her husband's ill-fated expedition.

Cabot's commentary speaks to the performative dimensions of northern knowledge production, wherein explorers were obligated to dramatize their experiences for audiences who, by definition, could never be present for the original moments of "discovery." The media through which individuals' northern experiences were presented to southern audiences were often explicitly theatrical. By the early 20th century, public perceptions of the North had been shaped by decades of popular entertainments in the form of panoramas, illustrated lectures, illustrated travel narratives (books as well as more accessible newspaper and periodical accounts), natural history displays, and even exhibitions of Inuit performers; all of these attempted to bring northern experiences to southern audiences in formats available for mass consumption. In addition to bolstering explorers' credentials as knowing witnesses, the circulation of "Arctic spectacles," to borrow Russell Potter's phrase,[33] served a number of different interest groups, including the fundraising efforts of northern missionaries,[34] the Canadian state's assertions of sovereignty in the Arctic archipelago,[35] and hunter-naturalists' advocacy for northern wildlife conservation.[36] Spectacle and theatre had therefore

32 William Brooks Cabot, "Labrador," in Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 28 (emphasis added by author).

33 Russell A. Potter, *Arctic Spectacles: The Frozen North in Visual Culture, 1818-1875* (Montreal and Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007).

34 Peter Geller, "Pictures of the Arctic Night: Archibald Lang Fleming and the Representation of Canadian Inuit," in *Imaging the Arctic*, ed. J.C.H. King and Henrietta Lidchi (Seattle: University of Washington Press and Vancouver: UBC Press, 1998), 60-8; Stephen Loring, "In Torngak's Realm: The Nineteenth-Century Photography of Moravian Missionaries in Labrador," in King and Lidchi, *Imaging the Arctic*, 207-20.

35 Jim Burant, "Using Photography to Assert Canadian Sovereignty in the Arctic: The A.P. Low Expedition of 1903-4 aboard the CGS *Neptune*," in King and Lidchi, *Imaging the Arctic*, 77-87; Pamela Stern, "The History of Canadian Arctic Photography: Issues of Territorial and Cultural Sovereignty," in King and Lidchi, *Imaging the Arctic*, 46-52; Peter Geller, *Northern Exposures: Photographing and Filming the Canadian North, 1920-45* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press 2004).

36 John Sandlos, "Landscaping Desire: Poetics, Politics in the Early Biological Surveys of the Canadian North," *Space & Culture* 6, no. 4 (November 2003): 394-414.

become highly influential mediums through which northern experience was dramatized for publics who would never personally witness life in the North.

The concept of performance clarifies not only the theatrical dimensions of northern knowledge production, but also the activities of explorers in the field. Referring to upper-class sport hunting in the 19th-century American West, Karen R. Jones has argued that "the hunt was a curated experience, consciously acted out" for "a series of audiences in order to extrapolate its full importance."[37] Other historians of the hunt have made similar arguments regarding the value of the "sportsman's code" to sport hunters in negotiating racial and class hierarchies with their (primarily Indigenous) guides. Sport hunters depended on their guides' superior knowledge of the local terrain and wildlife habits, despite the guides' lower-class status and putative racial inferiority. Hunters therefore sought not only to re-assert their social and economic superiority, but to distinguish their wilderness recreations as a higher-order activity compared to the labours of their guides. Enacting the precepts of the sportsman's code enabled them to distinguish sport hunting, a respectable upper-class form of recreation, from the "primitive" and violent activities of Indigenous and lower-class hunters.[38] By engaging in these carefully scripted practices, such as abstention from killing young or female wildlife, sport hunters aligned their activities with the principles of fair play and rational restraint.[39] Adherence to the sportsman's code was also re-presented to readers of hunting narratives.[40] Like their hunting peers – although hunting and exploration often went hand in hand – explorers relied on culturally scripted behaviours to distinguish their work from that of other expedition members. Engaging in acts that would be recognized by southern audiences as part of the explorer's repertoire of observational practice proved

37 Karen R. Jones, *Epiphany in the Wilderness: Hunting, Nature, and Performance in the Nineteenth-Century American West* (Boulder: University Press of Colorado, 2015), 12–13.

38 Greg Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire: Narratives of Sport in Rupert's Land, 1840–1870* (Vancouver and Toronto: UBC Press, 2007), 36–37, 59; Bill Parenteau, "'Care, Control and Supervision': Native People and the Atlantic Salmon Fishery, 1867–1900," *Canadian Historical Review* 79, no. 1 (Spring 1998): 12.

39 Heather Green, "'Game which the pampered pleasure seekers seek': Hunting Tourism, Conservation, and Colonialism in the Yukon Territory, Canada, 1910–1940," *Journal of Tourism History* 13, no. 2 (June 2021): 152–3; Andrea L. Smalley, "'Our Lady Sportsmen': Gender, Class, and Conservation in Sport Hunting Magazines, 1873–1920," *Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era* 4, no. 4 (Autumn 2005): 361–4.

40 Gillespie, *Hunting for Empire*, 26–7; Tina Loo, "Of Moose and Men: Hunting for Masculinities in British Columbia, 1880–1939," *Western Historical Quarterly* 32, no. 3 (Autumn 2001): 312; Karen Wonders, "Hunting Narratives of the Age of Empire: A Gender Reading of Their Iconography," *Environment and History* 11, no. 3 (Summer 2005): 269–91.

to be particularly essential for Mina Hubbard, who struggled to prove herself a reliable northern observer, while also separating and elevating her work in Labrador from that of her guides.

Defining the northern explorer as witness

The fate of the First Hubbard Expedition therefore prompted two subsequent expeditions, both taking place in the same area of Labrador during the summer of 1905. Dillon Wallace led a team of young men hired to assist him with his scientific observations, as well as an Anishinaabe woodsman as "camp servant" and guide.[41] A rival group, self-identified as the Second Hubbard Expedition, was organized by Mina Hubbard, who retained George Elson as her chief guide.[42] Elson hired three additional men to help with the paddling, portaging, wayfinding, and cooking. Job Chapies and Joseph Iserhoff were, like Elson, men of Indigenous or partly Indigenous descent (Chapies was Cree while Elson was of Scottish-Cree and Iserhoff was of Russian-Cree ancestry). Chapies and Iserhoff, like Elson, worked for the HBC in northern Ontario, and had considerable experience navigating the rivers flowing into James Bay; and once in Labrador, Elson hired Gilbert Blake, a trapper of Scottish and Inuit ancestry local to Labrador's North West River settlement.[43]

Taking on the exploratory roles of witness and narrator posed different challenges for Mina Hubbard, as a woman and as a widow, than they had posed for her husband. Becoming a published author was likely to be the easiest transformation for Hubbard to undergo. Having been married to an outdoors and sporting journalist, she was well acquainted with the tradition of travel and exploration literature within which she would be expected to write.[44] Perhaps even more significantly, her marriage had put her in contact with several important figures in the New York publishing world.[45] Beyond

41 Dillon Wallace, *The Long Labrador Trail* (New York: Outing Publishing Company, 1907), 4–5.

42 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 43.

43 Buchanan, "Men," 12–15.

44 Sherrill Grace, "A Woman's Way: From Expedition to Autobiography," in Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, xxxviii.

45 Herbert Bridgman was business manager of the *Brooklyn Standard Union* newspaper and secretary-treasurer of the Peary Arctic Club, an association of New York millionaires who formed in 1899 to finance and support Robert Peary's search for the North Pole. Bridgman not only helped Mina with the logistical preparations for her expedition, including the procurement of much of her expedition equipment; he also advised her on matters of publication, suggesting that she defer the release of her book until after her return from Labrador, so that an account of her own expedition could be included in the memorial Hubbard volume; see Lyle Dick, "'The Men of Prominence Are "Among

Hubbard's unique connections within New York's publishing community, the world of print in the late 19th and early 20th centuries presented new opportunities for British and Anglo-North American women wilderness travellers. Women who had the opportunity to travel through "exotic" colonial or natural environments could construct themselves as professional writers for an eager audience of consumers, many of whom were also women.[46]

Many female-authored travel narratives, however, were not seen as meeting the standards of accuracy required of the kind of testimony that led to the production of new geographical knowledge.[47] Public commentators, in this case, expressed their doubts regarding Hubbard's ability to act as an accurate observer of northern life. Between the departure of the Wallace and Hubbard expeditions from Halifax in June of 1905 and Mina Hubbard's return to the United States in early December, press coverage drew upon the tradition of sensation journalism to describe Hubbard's expedition in the language of spectacle, suspicion, and rivalry.[48] New York papers reported that Mina made "public utterances" against Wallace to local reporters in Halifax, "charging Mr. Wallace with practically causing the death of her husband" – an accusation that *Outing*'s August issue referred to as "outrageously cruel and false."[49] In addition to treating Hubbard's exploratory motives with the deepest suspicion,

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Those Present" for Him': How and Why America's Elites Made Robert Peary a National Icon," in *North by Degree: New Perspectives on Arctic Exploration*, ed. Susan A. Kaplan and Robert McCracken Peck (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 2013), 14 and Hart, "Finding Her Way," 96-7, 99.

46 Michael Robinson, "Manliness and Exploration: The Discovery of the North Pole," *Osiris* 30, no. 1 (Winter 2015): 102. Mina Hubbard's publication in the *Englishwoman's Review* and *Harper's Monthly Magazine* also testifies to the appetite for stories of northern exploration among female readers and in popular family periodicals; see Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., "Through Lonely Labrador," *Englishwoman's Review* n.s. 278 (15 April 1908): 82-8 and Mina B. Hubbard, "My Explorations in Unknown Labrador," *Harper's Monthly Magazine* 112, no. 672 (May 1906): 813-23.

47 Sara Mills, *Discourses of Difference: An Analysis of Women's Travel Writing and Colonialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1991), 30.

48 Hart, "Finding Her Way," 100-1.

49 Caspar Whitney, "The Sportsman's View-Point," *Outing* 4, no. 5 (August 1905): 619. See, for example, "Mrs. Hubbard Suspicious, Seeks Husband's Trail," *New York Tribune*, 13 June 1905 as well as "Explorer's Widow Follows His Trail," *New York World*, 13 June 1905, quoted in Hart, "Finding Her Way," 101-2. Mina Hubbard never publicly accused Wallace of having done anything untoward on the First Hubbard Expedition, but American papers' characterization of her views of her husband's comrade were roughly accurate. Her field diary reveals that she conducted several interviews with Labrador locals and HBC representatives, with a view to discovering anything suspect in Wallace's behaviour in 1903 – particularly whether he had abandoned Leonidas to die alone in his tent – but she was unable to make a conclusive determination; see Roberta Buchanan, "Dillon Wallace: The 'Repulsive Rival,' in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 16.

one editorial suggested that, as a widow, bereavement had clouded her objectivity.[50] While this adulation of a wife for her husband was admirable, the early press coverage of Mina Hubbard's expedition did not position her well to assume the role of reliable explorer.

The physical practices of exploration, which were inextricably linked to exploration as an epistemological project, were another difficulty. In a context where geographical and epistemological remoteness were viewed as inseparable, the value of the knowledge produced by explorers was directly correlated to its degree of physical inaccessibility to the general population.[51] Tina Adcock argues that the embodied experience of the observer was central to evaluating the credibility of knowledge from the North, with "heroic bodily challenge" acting as "a marker of observational veracity."[52] This correlation between embodied experience and knowledge was not unique to northern contexts. Speaking of travel writing relating to the Congo, Robert Burroughs has observed that "authentic" exploratory travel was defined against its superficial, effeminate, and commercial counterpart – tourism – as being "off the beaten track, independent of technological aid, and in close contact with 'the people'."[53] This threshold of physical difficulty for evaluating authenticity in travel helps to explain why few women were in the vanguard of exploration, conducting preliminary surveys of those regions that still existed outside of the boundaries of the known world.[54]

In the case of the Labrador interior, Mina Hubbard's route along the George and Naskaupi rivers was quite literally off the beaten track: when rapids made it impossible to travel over water, Hubbard and her crew had to portage their gear from one point on the river to another, a task that involved cutting trails through the bush with axes and walking long distances carrying heavy equipment. While Hubbard documented these aspects of the journey in detail in *A Woman's Way*, she was forced to acknowledge that it was the guides who performed most of the physical labour of exploration. As Lisa LaFramboise observes, "Mina Hubbard not only lacks wilderness skills herself,

50 "Mrs. Hubbard Suspicious, Seeks Husband's Trail," *New York Tribune* in Hart, "Finding Her Way," 101.

51 LaFramboise, "'Just a Little Like an Explorer'," 27.

52 Tina Adcock, "Toward an Early Twentieth-Century Culture of Northern Canadian Exploration," in Kaplan and Peck, *North by Degree*, 128.

53 Robert Burroughs, "The Travelling Apologist: May French Sheldon in The Congo Free State (1903-04)," *Studies in Travel Writing* 14, no. 2 (June 2010): 142.

54 LaFramboise, "'Just A Little Like an Explorer'," 9; Roy, *Maps of Difference*, 88.

but [she] must be *seen* to lack them" in order to meet her readers' expectations of feminine decorum and civility.[55] PearlAnn Reichwein argues that while the idea of respectable, physically active womanhood gained currency in the early 20th century, "competition, strenuous exertion, and perspiration were not considered ladylike."[56] Even physical hardships that Hubbard experienced herself had to be occluded through their projection onto the bodies of her "men." In an interview given shortly after her return from Labrador, Hubbard described the prevalence of mosquitoes – one of the frequent laments of northern travellers: "It is no exaggeration to say that [the flies] covered the backs and shoulders of the men so thick as to make them look brown. One of my half-breeds remarked of the mosquitoes that it felt like going out into a snowstorm. I wore a veil constantly, and my men had what we called 'fly-dope.' This was a preparation which they sometimes rubbed upon those parts of their bodies which were exposed."[57] The fact that Hubbard wore a veil indicates that she, too, suffered from the mosquitoes, but her embodied experience is almost completely submerged. Her use of racialized language and imagery in the interview – reference to the guides as "half-breeds," and their "brown" appearance – may register Hubbard's anxiety over her perceived status on the expedition relative to that of the guides.

Commentators largely agreed that Hubbard managed to maintain her respectable feminine persona even in Labrador, observing that "Mrs. Hubbard is not one of those semi-masculine ladies who astonish the reader by their courage in the face of difficulties and the strength and perseverance with which they carry out their plans."[58] Many reports featured physical descriptions of Hubbard, using adjectives such as "fragile," "frail," "slender and graceful," or "delicate," with one paper concluding that she "would seem to be the last to face the dangers and hardships of such a journey through the wilderness."[59] These news items give a sense of the conflicting physical paradigms of exploration

55 LaFramboise, "'Just A Little Like an Explorer'," 28.

56 PearlAnn Reichwein, *Climber's Paradise: Making Canada's Mountain Parks, 1906-1974* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2014), 39.

57 "Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard's Own Story of Her Trip Through the Wilderness of Labrador," *New York World*, 26 November 1905, in *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, Appendix, 230.

58 "Literary Notes," *Country Life* 22 May 1908, newspaper reviews, 1908, for *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, Mina Hubbard Fonds (MHF), coll. 241, 5.01, Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives (CNSA), Memorial University, St. John's.

59 "Intrepid Lady Explorers," *Hampshire Advertiser County Newspaper* 13 July 1907, 5, British Newspaper Archive; "Explorer's Brave Wife Penetrated Labrador!" *Albuquerque Morning Journal*, 24 November 1905, 7, Chronicling America; "Lady Explorer," *Falkirk Herald*, 29 May

and respectable femininity that Hubbard struggled to navigate. One English reviewer of *A Woman's Way*, for example, lauded Hubbard for not appearing "to have become hardened as so many explorers, huntresses, and adventurers of her sex become hardened by these extraordinary toils" while simultaneously invalidating her work by describing her as "more woman than explorer."[60]

In order to retain her status as a credible northern observer, despite her need to deputize the bodily hardships of exploration to her guides, Hubbard framed their labour in print as an expression of their natural wilderness instincts, describing them as "'Children of the Bush'."[61] Martha MacDonald observes that, "unlike the Labrador landscape," the landscape of ethnicity in Labrador has changed a great deal since the time of the Hubbard expeditions.[62] While many Labradorians of both Indigenous and European descent proudly claim their Indigenous identities today, in the early 20th century local trapper Gilbert Blake would not likely have identified as wholly Indigenous. Indeed, Blake has been quoted as referring to himself as one of the "first white men" to trap in Innu territories in the Labrador interior.[63] This statement is remarkably similar to Mina Hubbard's claims to be "the first of the white race to trace the Nascaupee [River] it its source."[64] MacDonald contends it is also likely that George Elson and Joseph Iserhoff did not feel that "a great divide" existed between themselves and Hubbard, in terms of either race or social status.[65] Nonetheless, Hubbard described Gilbert Blake as "a half-breed Eskimo boy trapper" in her book.[66] While she admired and respected the other members of the expedition – Elson, Iserhoff, and Chapies – it seems likely that Hubbard was largely inattentive to these nuances of identity, and she certainly presented them as typical Indigenous guides to southern audiences.

1907, 7, British Newspaper Archive; "Woman Vanquishes Labrador's Perils," *Washington Times*, 22 November 1905.

60 "Love's Labour," *Evening Standard* and *St. James Gazette*, 5 June 1908, newspaper reviews, 1908, for *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, MHF, coll. 241, 5.01, CNSA.

61 LaFramboise, "'Just A Little Like an Explorer'," 25. This was typical of sportsmen's representations of Indigenous guides; see Parenteau, "'Care, Control and Supervision'," 31 as well as Loo, "Of Moose and Men," 296-319.

62 Martha MacDonald, review of *Great Heart: The History of a Labrador Adventure* by James West Davidson and John Rugge, *Newfoundland Studies* 22, no. 2 (Autumn 2007): 560.

63 Blake quoted in Tim Borlase, *The Labrador Settlers, Métis and Kablunângajuit*, ed. Patricia Way (Happy Valley-Goose Bay, NL: Labrador East Integrated School Board, 1994), 103.

64 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 117.

65 Macdonald, review of *Great Heart*, 560.

66 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Labrador*, 44.

On another occasion in *A Woman's Way*, she observed that Job Chapies "loved to pole up a rapid or hunt out a trail just as an artist loves to paint." When describing the guides' capacity to read subtle features of the landscape for signs of human or animal presence, Hubbard likened their woodcraft to the capacity of "any other 'children' [to] see the meaning of things."[67] Such depictions of Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff, and Blake as being one with the natural world cast them as part of the northern wilderness she had come to observe. Hubbard's masterful visual perspective is also dramatized for her readers in *A Woman's Way* in her photograph of two of the guides portaging along one of these trails (Figure 1). Subjected to the explorer's observational gaze as part of the northern wilderness, the guides' activities were represented in far lesser terms than Hubbard's work of exploration, despite engaging in many of the physical hardships associated with adventurous observation.

If any of "the men," as Hubbard called them in print, had the potential to undermine her authority over the expedition, both in the field and in the public eye, it was George Elson. After Leonidas Hubbard's death, Elson emerged in the American consciousness as a fully individuated figure of northern heroism. While Wallace may have minimized Elson's visibility on the 1903 trip in *Lure of the Labrador Wild*, many hailed him and his concerted efforts to save Hubbard by walking back toward North West River, despite his own state of physical deterioration, as singularly admirable. Indeed, his actions, rather than those of Leonidas Hubbard, seemed to embody the ideals of the northern explorer. As one observer put it, Elson's "superior physique and knowledge of wood-craft brought him out first" from the interior while Wallace and Leonidas Hubbard fell behind.[68]

Elson was also able to engage in the physically taxing labour demanded by exploratory travel *and* the writing practices associated with northern knowledge production. Elson's writing in the field was critical to the successful narrativization of Mina Hubbard's trip: like Hubbard, Elson kept a field diary, recording the distances they travelled each day as well as his observations of significant landmarks and other experiences.[69] As part of the process of writing up her expedition narrative for publication, Hubbard corroborated her own

67 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 44, 57, 141.

68 Stephen P.M. Tasker, *Steve Patrols More Territory* (Philadelphia: Franklin Printing Company, 1936), 46.

69 Diary of George Elson, 1905, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA.

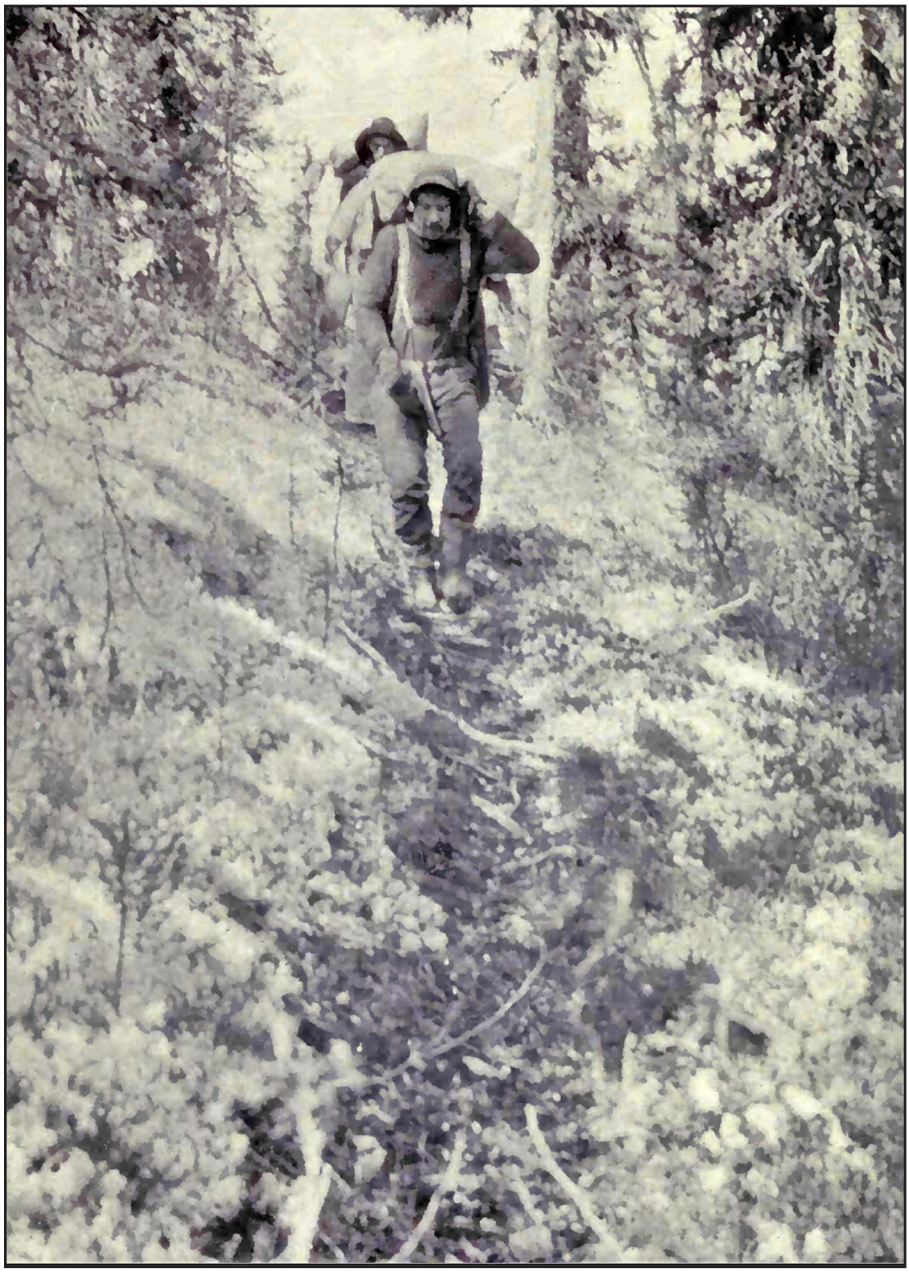

Figure 1 – "Coming down the trail with packs," photograph, Mina Hubbard, 1905.
Source: Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Nascaupee and George Rivers* (London: John Murray, 1908), opp. 84.

field notes by reading them against Elson's diary.[70] These acts of collaboration between Hubbard and Elson went unacknowledged in the public narrative of the expedition.

Mina Hubbard nonetheless effectively managed these myriad challenges to her authority as an explorer, including the competition with George Elson over physical and narrative mastery of the Second Hubbard Expedition. These challenges had to be responded to in two ways: through the performance of key practices in the field and through her subsequent representations of the expedition in writing. In terms of the former, she was able to assert her authority while on site in Labrador by negotiating the provisional and continually shifting relationships of power between herself, Elson, and the other guides.

The importance of observation to Mina Hubbard's exploratory identity

Reading Hubbard's field notes, it becomes apparent that she regarded two practices as central to consolidating her status as an explorer while in the field: 1) acts of observation – and, particularly, visual witnessing from elevated vantage points and 2) authorship – a term which I use broadly to capture all of her acts of inscription, including her notes on observations of longitude, latitude, and altitude as well as her mapping work. Both of these types of actions are depicted in Figure 2, which is a photograph of Hubbard, presumably taken by George Elson, sitting in one of the expedition canoes with a notebook in her lap. While Hubbard's positioning as a passenger might be suggestive of a degree of passivity that was not typical of the male explorer, her exemption from much of the physical labour of the expedition, including paddling, enabled her to make notes and sketches of the topography as they moved through the landscape in real time. While unable to meet the conditions of physical toil demanded for most explorers to be deemed credible knowledge producers, Hubbard's persona as a northern observer emphasized her commitment to visual and cartographic accuracy. Taken together with her photograph of the portaging guides (Figure 1), both images dramatize Hubbard's primary role as a northern observer. In Figure 1, the viewer is invited to observe the

70 Elson and Hubbard's field diaries refer to several occasions toward the end of the trip when Hubbard conferred with him about the accuracy of her map and particular dates and landmarks. See Diary of George Elson, 1905, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA – n.d., p. 3; 5 July 1905, p. 10; 17 July 1905, p. 22; 2 August 1905, p. 61 – as well as Mina Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary 16 June-27 December 1905," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 16 September 1905, pp. 289-90; 20 September 1905, p. 294; 7 October 1905, pp. 303-4.

northern wilderness – and the guides that inhabit it – from the perspective of the explorer. In Figure 2, this exploratory perspective is given embodied form by showing Hubbard in the act of observation.

While in Labrador, though, Hubbard's practices of observation and inscription became the most significant sources of friction between her guides and herself. These moments of heightened tension also laid bare the power struggle taking place among the members of the crew about who had ultimate authority over the expedition. Most of the time, these tensions were not apparent on the trip. The relationship between Hubbard, Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff, and Blake was often amicable and collaborative. Throughout the trip, the guides provided small courtly acts of service for Hubbard, such as cooking bannock just the way she liked it. On 10 July, Hubbard wrote that she liked the men "better all the time. They are gentle, considerate and polite always not only of me either but of each other as well and have such good times together."[71] The feeling appears to have been mutual. In his own expedition diary, Joseph Iserhoff described Hubbard as being "in all ways bright and chearfull."[72] One finds even greater admiration for Hubbard in Elson's diary. At the end of their canoe trip, he wrote: "I must say she has done very well in her travelling and was very good to me. She has done what no other lady could do I am sure."[73]

Elson, Chapies, Iserhoff, and Blake facilitated Hubbard's work of observation by carrying her scientific equipment over lengthy portages and stopping along their route for Hubbard to take measurements.[74] Points of friction emerged, however, when Hubbard's desire to observe and take in various views of the landscape, essential activities for the explorer and cartographer, conflicted with the guides' assessment of her physical capabilities. Specifically, these conflicts concerned Hubbard's ambitions to scale nearby hills to get a more expansive perspective of the terrain. As a result of their choice to travel by canoe, the group spent much of their time in river valleys surrounded by hills of significant elevation, making their vision of the landscape limited. In order to get their bearings, and to make determinations

71 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*: 6 August 1905, pp. 222–3; 10 July 1905, p. 151.

72 Joseph Iserhoff Diary, June to August 1905, Labrador, 24 July, p. 11b, Joseph Iserhoff Diaries, coll. 498, 1.01.003, CNSA.

73 Diary of George Elson, 27 August 1905, p. 96, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA.

74 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*: 29 June 1905, p. 130; 10 July 1905, p. 150; 12 July 1905, p. 156; 1 August 1905, 208. See also Diary of George Elson, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA: 5 July 1905, p. 10; 24 July 1905, p. 34; 24 August 1905, p. 89; 26 August 1905, p. 91.

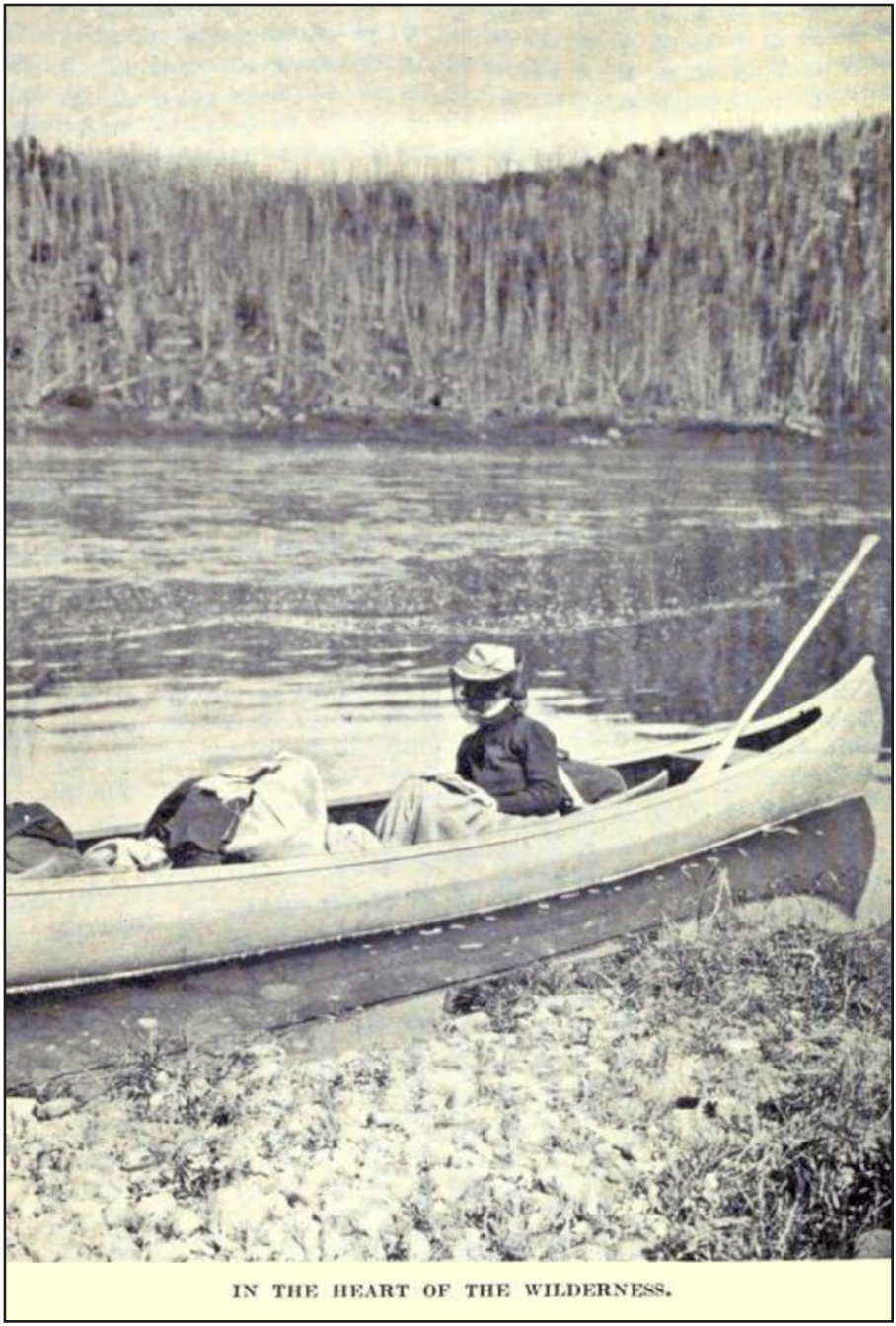

Figure 2 – "In the Heart of the Wilderness," photograph, George Elson[?], 1905.
Source: Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, opp. 100.

about their route, it was often necessary to climb out of the valley and onto the summit of one of the hills to get access to a view of the landscape from a distance.

These moments of elevated observation were essential to the formation of Mina Hubbard's private exploratory identity. Entries from her field diary suggest that it was primarily in these contexts of heightened vision that she grappled with what it meant to be an explorer. Frequently, while looking out upon some vista, she compared herself to the model of the explorer set by her husband. Early on in the trip, for example, Hubbard expressed private doubts while looking out from the edge of a riverbank at dusk: "Along the edge of the bank I watched [the scenery] for some time thinking, thinking. So very, very beautiful yet lacking that which completes and perfects. I have not his spirit, not that of the true explorer. I have to keep reminding myself all the time that I am the first of my kind to see it and I don't get any thrill out of it at all except only as I can make it honor him."[75] This revealing diary entry highlights the extent to which Mina Hubbard's view of her capability as an explorer was linked to her capacity to properly bear witness to the landscape. While the above quotation suggests that Hubbard may have felt she lacked the particular sensibilities of the explorer in comparison to her husband, subsequent diary entries indicate that she was capable of entering into this elevated state of consciousness while on the top of a hill or mountain. Later in July, she wrote that she felt "what I think must be an approach to the right thrill as we came up to the hilltops" near one of their early objective points at Seal Lake. She concluded that she was beginning to "feel just a little like an explorer."[76]

Hubbard's access to such prospects was hindered, however, by her perceived physical limitations. For much of the trip, Elson insisted that she only go climbing with an escort for fear that she would fall or encounter a bear while on her own. In her diary she recorded her frustration on those occasions when she wished to go climbing but was unable to do so because her guides were resting or otherwise occupied. They also prohibited her from climbing hills that they deemed to be too dangerous or taxing for her. When Job Chapies told her that she could not accompany him on a scouting trip because the hill was too steep, she vented in her diary: "Such an ignominious sort of feeling to be

75 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 10 July 1905, p. 152.

76 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 158.

an explorer and have one of your party tell you you can't do something that he has done and is just going to do again for the mere pleasure of it."[77]

In order to counter the guides' preoccupation with her physical limitations, Hubbard emphasized the important nature of her work and her responsibility to at least "*see* the part[s] of the river we are missing" when they left the water to portage. On 28 July, tensions came to a head. In the afternoon, Hubbard secured permission from Elson to climb a hill on her own so that she could take some "characteristic pictures" of the landscape while the guides portaged the gear. Enthused by the experience of "spending an hour or two on top of that mountain alone with a glorious sky above and beautiful hills lakes and streams in all directions," Hubbard took longer than the two hours she had been allotted.[78] Hubbard's diary emphasizes the opportunities for visual observation that this small act of rebellion afforded her. Meanwhile, Chapies, Elson, Iserhoff, and Blake frantically searched for Hubbard – worried to the point of tears that they had lost her. While the guides all needed a nip of brandy to "steady their nerves" after their fright, Mina wrote that she "needed no bracer, for I was very very hungry and I had had 'one good time'."[79] Despite the confrontation with Elson that ensued upon their reunion, Hubbard came away energized from the experience of adventurous observation.

This episode of "Scaring the Guides," as Mina Hubbard titles this chapter in her book, highlights how race and gender figured into calculations of authoritative witnessing. As a woman, Mina was expected to abide by the interests and agendas of the men in her expedition at the cost of her ability to accumulate observational experience. According to her field diary, the guides had been shocked that Hubbard had not deferred to their authority and mandate to ensure her safety while travelling. Describing the guides' sentiments, Elson told Hubbard that "they never were on a trip before where the women didn't do as they were told." Hubbard was able to counter the guides' assumption of authority on the basis of gender by using the language of observation. As a resolution to the episode, Hubbard made a bargain with Elson: "If I could have some one go with me when I wanted to climb a

77 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 21 July 1905, p. 175.

78 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*: 13 July 1905, p. 157; 15 July 1905, p. 159; 22 July 1905, p. 136; 21 July 1905, p. 175; 27 July 1905, pp. 190, 193–4.

79 She described herself as going "on and on" along the top of the ridge, all in an effort to "see what [she] could"; see Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 28 July 1905, p. 195.

mountain or do anything else that I think is necessary for my work and no kick about it I would not go away alone again."[80] While Hubbard concedes to the guides' insistence that she have a male escort for her wilderness activities, she reiterates her status as expedition leader whose orders should be followed without objection as well as her role as an explorer with important "work" to do.

Hubbard was not the only one, however, who felt that her identity undermined her capacity to perform as an authoritative witness in the field. Hubbard's diary records Elson's remonstrations with her, disclosing that much of the guides' distress over losing her had to do with concern for their reputations: "'And what would we do if you got lost and fell in the rapid. Just think what could we do. Why I could never go back again. How could any of us go back without you'."[81] Here Elson reveals an acute awareness that his testimony would not be believed, as an Indigenous guide, should some accidental harm befall his white employer. He experienced similar concerns around the death of Leonidas Hubbard in 1903, fearing that his word would not be enough to prevent others from blaming him for Hubbard's death. Leonidas must have shared Elson's concerns, as one of his last acts was to write a letter to Elson's employer at the HBC "telling him how hard [Elson] had tried to help him." When Elson discovered this letter with Leonidas's body in the spring of 1904, he was much relieved with the knowledge that "his letter would help if people would not believe me in what I said."[82] As a racialized man and as a paid employee of the First Hubbard Expedition, Elson would likely not have been counted as a trustworthy witness of the events of 1903 without Leonidas Hubbard's letter to authenticate his testimony.

The story of Leonidas Hubbard's death in Labrador was invoked by the *New York Times* as a cautionary tale of the dangers for white men travelling through exotic locales with Indigenous retinues. The "cruel and totally unfounded gossip to which Dillon Wallace was subjected," the article argued, was a typical experience for those who travelled beyond the boundaries of the known world without a sufficient number of white witnesses to attest to their character and activities. The *Times* declared that one of the most significant dangers

80 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 28 July 1905, p. 197.

81 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 28 July 1905, pp. 197, 200.

82 George Elson, "Last Days Together," in *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 208, 209.

connected with exploration was the explorer's vulnerability to public "slander" by their Indigenous employees. The difference between the *Times*'s perception of "European witnesses," who are automatically viewed as trustworthy, and the "mendacity" of racialized guides, is stark.[83] By evading her guides' supervision on the afternoon of 28 July, Hubbard's actions highlighted the differences between her capacity to act as an authoritative witness and that of her guides.

Translating field observations into print

Mina Hubbard's diary shows the importance of visual observation in her self-conceptualisation as an explorer. Writing, as a material practice in the field, as well as a primary medium for representations of the expedition, was also central for Hubbard in developing her private sense of herself in the explorer role and in shoring up the credibility of her northern testimony in the public sphere. Once again, Hubbard's field diary provides us with insights into the significance of the writing process as part of the work of exploration. Arriving at the HBC post on the George River in the northernmost part of the Labrador peninsula on Ungava Bay on 27 August, Hubbard's crew spent the next two months living at the post waiting for the company ship that would carry them south. During this waiting period, Mina once again took up work on her manuscript. The narrative of her expedition would appear alongside Leonidas's field diary in the memorial volume that would become *A Woman's Way*. Hubbard's anxieties over her competency as a writer while staying at George River register the importance of storytelling as part of the work of exploration.

Hubbard's time at George River working up the first draft of her narrative represented a prolonged confrontation with her feelings of inadequacy as a writer and, by extension, as an explorer. Hubbard's primary concerns were whether or not her narrative would be interesting and accurate. She expressed her frustration that she did not take more detailed notes of her experiences in the field, a failing that she attributed to her lack of experience as a writer: "Find I can't describe things accurately. Did not take as many notes as I should. Comes of not having ideas as to how to write stories. Don't know before hand what I am going to need. Don't recognize as I go along the things that would fit well into a story."[84] Hubbard was right to worry; comprehensive field notes

83 "Unsolved Mysteries: Tragedies in the Wake of the World Explorers," *New York Times* 2 May 1909.

84 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 18 September 1905, pp. 291–2.

were an essential tool for the explorer in translating their observations into print in ways that would be read as truthful and authentic.[85]

Hubbard's diary also reveals her concerns about the threat posed by George Elson to her status as author – in both literal and metaphorical senses – of the expedition. Like Hubbard, Elson also had ambitions to write about his northern experiences. Both Elson's and Hubbard's field diaries refer to discussions they had about his writing. As a child growing up at the HBC post at Rupert's House, Elson kept personal diaries. On 20 July Hubbard recorded that Elson "had never seen anyone [keep a diary] and did not even know the name of such a daily record of events but wanted to learn to write."[86] She advised him to collect his diaries from Rupert's House upon the completion of their trip so that "he could write a capital boy's story from them and if he could bring it out soon after our return it would be a great thing for him." Hubbard also agreed to help him with preparing the manuscript for his prospective "boy's story."[87] Encouraging Elson to focus on a work of children's fiction may have been intended to distract him from writing anything about the expedition that might compete with Hubbard's own book.

By September, however, far from wanting to facilitate Elson's writing career, Hubbard was privately entertaining the idea of asking him to sign an agreement "not to write anything about the trip without [her] written consent and approval." The idea was prompted by a conversation she had with Gilbert Blake, who informed her that he had, at Elson's request, drawn up a map detailing portions of their canoe journey.[88] One imagines that Hubbard feared that the men were planning to usurp the primacy of *her* map and story by publishing narratives of their own.

While Blake and Elson's map was never published, a map of the Second Hubbard Expedition's journey through the Labrador interior appeared under Mina Hubbard's name in the American Geographical Society (AGS) *Bulletin* of 1906. Produced by AGS technicians, Hubbard's map has been credited with single-handedly consolidating her status among the ranks of Canada's

85 Burroughs, "Travelling Apologist," 147.

86 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 20 July 1905, p. 174; Diary of George Elson, 20 July 1905, p. 28, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA.

87 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 20 July 1905, p. 174.

88 Hubbard, "Labrador Expedition Diary," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*: 20 July 1905, pp. 174-5; 21 September 1905, p. 295.

northern explorers.[89] Reviewers of *A Woman's Way*, which included a fold-out version of her map, frequently praised it as her most significant contribution to northern geographical knowledge.[90] While critics received the book, like other women's writing, primarily as a "woman's story," rather than a piece of exploratory research, her map was unassailable.[91] The *Bulletin* described it as "an excellent piece of pioneer research, which has been recognized as worthy by the geographical authorities of America and Europe."[92] The London *Times* concurred, reporting that Hubbard, having "brought back the first account of the sources of two rivers speaks for itself of the place which will be hers in the geographical history of Labrador."[93]

Beyond the actual contents of Hubbard's map or article, the affiliation of both documents with the AGS bolstered her credibility.[94] The credibility of Hubbard's northern observations was further validated when her map was taken up by the Canadian government to form the basis for official maps of the region until the introduction of aerial mapping during the 1930s.[95] While much has been written about the function of maps as tools and products of geographical exploration, the status of maps as "tangible proxies of observations made 'out there,'" as Innes Keighren, Charles Withers, and Bill Bell have put it, is also important – especially in terms of shoring up any potential uncertainties surrounding the personal testimonies of explorers.[96] With this in mind, Hubbard's map can be read as part of her successful efforts to construct herself as a northern witness.

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89 Bryan Greene, "The Historical Context: Travel on the Naskaupi and George Rivers Prior to 1905," in Buchanan, Hart, and Greene, *Woman Who Mapped Labrador*, 44.

90 Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *Map of Eastern Labrador: Showing Grand Lake and the Courses of the Nascaupee and George Rivers as Surveyed and Mapped, June 27 to August 27, 1905*, scale 1:11,584,000, in Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, n.p.

91 Grace, "Woman's Way," lx.

92 Review of *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Exploration of the Nascaupee and George Rivers*, by Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society* 41, no. 1 (1909): 57.

93 "Through Unknown Labrador," *Times* (London), 21 May 1908, newspaper reviews, 1908, for *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, MHF, coll. 241, 5.01.001, CNSA (emphasis added by author).

94 Established in 1851, the AGS had a long-standing reputation for insisting that any expeditions sponsored by the society produce "tangible scientific results"; see Frederick E. Nelson, "'The Advancement of Exploration Along Scientific Lines': The American Geographical Society and the Arctic, 1851–1950," in Kaplan and Peck, *North by Degree*, 64.

95 Greene, "Historical Context," 44.

96 Innes M. Keighren, Charles W.J. Withers, and Bill Bell, *Travels into Print: Exploration, Writing, and Publishing with John Murray, 1773–1859* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 73.

Figure 3 – Title section from Hubbard, *Map of Eastern Labrador* (1906).
Source: Hubbard, "Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," opp 529.

The map itself functions as powerful, tangible testimony of Mina Hubbard's physical presence in the field as well as her on-site observations. Beneath the map's title, a legend denotes those sites along the George and Naskaupi Rivers "as surveyed and mapped . . . by Mrs Leonidas Hubbard, Jr.," where she encountered rapids, where she camped, and where she portaged (Figure 3). This legend effectively effaces the guides' physical labour and woodcraft

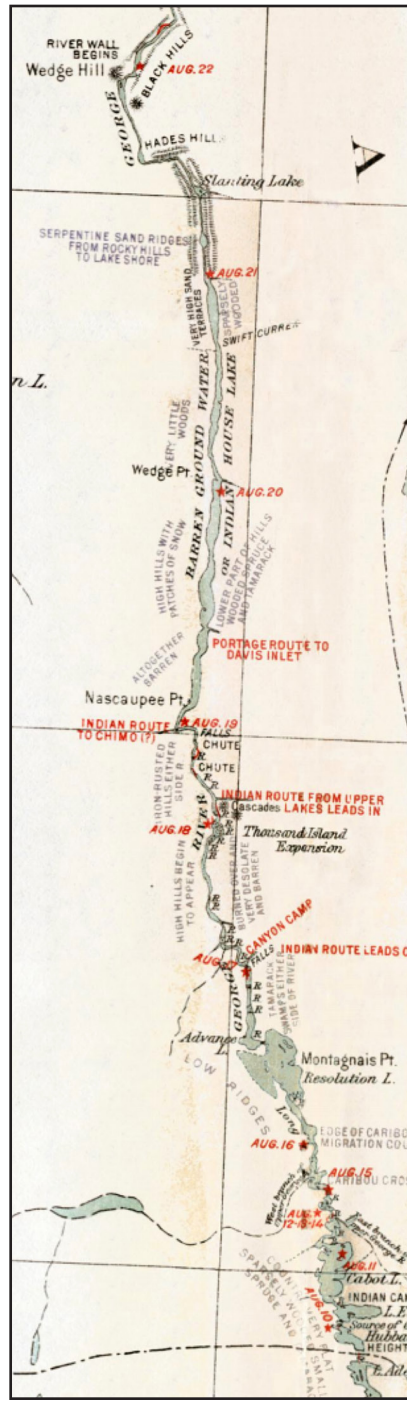

Figure 4 – Section from Hubbard, *Map of Eastern Labrador* (1906).
Source: Hubbard, "Labrador from Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," opp. 529.

in poling through these rapids, setting up their camp sites, and cutting these newly plotted portage trails (Figure 4). Blue text was also inscribed episodically along Hubbard's expedition route, indicating her observations of the topography and landscape of different areas of terrain as observed by her "as they appeared from the canoe or from the top of a hill."[97] Through these strategies, Hubbard makes it clear that the map was produced on the strength of her embodied observations. This cartographic representation of observational omnipotence mirrored the kind of hilltop prospects that were so important to the development of Hubbard's self-conceptualization as an explorer while in Labrador.

Historical geographer Mona Domosh argues that Victorian women's exploratory activities, almost always lacking institutional backing, were treated as distinct from the fieldwork of "professional" geographers and explorers, which was "codified and regulated in order to advance scientific learning."[98] Mina Hubbard's AGS map did, however, manage to pass this threshold for contributing to the advancement of scientifically legitimate knowledge about the North. Within the pages of the *Bulletin* itself, Hubbard's map and accompanying article were cited twice by other Labrador scientists and explorers.[99] Hubbard's *Bulletin* article was also cited by the British Privy Council in 1927 in the documents of arbitration surrounding the Labrador Boundary Dispute.[100] Hubbard's testimony ultimately contributed to the body of imperial knowledge used to superimpose the boundaries of Canada onto Indigenous lands.

Conclusion

Despite the fraught months of writing Hubbard spent in northernmost Labrador, the expedition narrative in *A Woman's Way* concludes with the crew's arrival at the George River post. Hubbard's meeting with the post's

97 Hubbard, "Labrador, From Lake Melville to Ungava Bay," 531.

98 Mona Domosh, "Toward a Feminist Historiography of Geography," *Transactions of the Institute of Geographers* 16, no. 1 (1991): 96–7.

99 E.M. Kindle, "Notes on the Forests of Southeastern Labrador," *Geographical Review* [previously *Bulletin of the American Geographical Society*] 12, no. 1 (January 1922): 64; E.P. Wheeler, "Topographical Notes on a Journey Across Labrador," *Geographical Review* 28, no. 3 (July 1938): 475.

100 E.M. Kindle, "Extracts from Report on 'Geography and Geology of Lake Melville District, Labrador Peninsula'," in n.a., "Reports and Documents Relating to the Location of the Seacoast Line with Relation to the Estuary of the Hamilton River System," in n.a., *Report of the Privy Council on the Labrador Boundary Dispute Vol. 5* (n.p.: Robinson & Co. Ltd., 1927), 2384.

chief trader signifies the completion of her journey through her re-entry into civilization. After months of proximity, the racial distance between Hubbard and the rest of the crew is also reinstated at the conclusion of the narrative. Upon stepping out of the canoe at the post, Hubbard writes that their "positions had reversed" and that her crew "were my charges now."[101] Significantly, George Elson's diary reveals that the photograph appearing in *A Woman's Way* documenting the moment of arrival at the George River post (Figure 5) was itself a piece of theatre, a re-enactment of an event that had actually taken place ten days earlier.[102] The relative positioning of Hubbard and her guides, with Hubbard being the first to stand and place her foot on land, appears carefully choreographed to mark her out as the central and agentive figure. Hubbard invokes a longstanding trope in sportsmen's and explorers' depictions of Indigenous guides as becoming helpless and childlike in civilized contexts (i.e., "my charges now"). Regardless of their skill and expertise in the bush, guides' undeniable authority over their employers was mitigated and contained by being confined solely to wilderness contexts.[103] At the conclusion of her narrative, Hubbard describes the work of her guides in terms of facilitating her movement, as the privileged northern observer, "safely, triumphantly" on her "long journey."[104]

The Hubbard expeditions began and ended in the world of print. The centrality of both writing and observation to public and private definitions of northern exploration prompts us to reconceptualize exploration as a two-part process, one that is not completed at the end of an expedition, but, rather, once its narrative incarnation has been consumed by the public. At the core of exploratory practices is the idea of the authoritative witness. The challenges encountered by Mina Hubbard in establishing her credentials as a northern authority highlight the physical, moral, and gendered dimensions of exploratory witnessing that typically converged to exclude women from exploration. Hubbard's successful negotiation of these challenges over her Indigenous guides, despite their wilderness skills, and, in Elson's case, writing ambitions, also helps demonstrate the racial barriers to exploration that

101 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 153.

102 Diary of George Elson, 1905, 7 September, p. 106, MHF, coll. 241, 3.03.001, CNSA. Sherrill Grace addresses this point in "Woman's Way," lvii.

103 Parenteau, "'Care, Control and Supervision'," 31–2.

104 Hubbard, *Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador*, 153.

Figure 5 – "The Arrival at Ungava," photograph, 1905.
Source: Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard Jr., *A Woman's Way Through Unknown Labrador,* opp. 232.

marginalized Indigenous and lower-class perspectives about the North during the 20th century.

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