

**WORKING LIFE IN CANADA, 1890–1930:
REHOUSING THE EDITH SARAH WATSON ALBUMS
AT THE ART GALLERY OF ONTARIO**

by

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**Bachelor of Fine Arts, Photography Studies
Ryerson University, Toronto, Ontario, Canada 2017**

**A thesis presented to Ryerson University and the Art Gallery of Ontario
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in the program of
Film and Photographic Preservation and Collections Management**

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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DECLARATION

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ABSTRACT

Working Life in Canada, 1890–1930: Rehousing the Edith Sarah Watson Albums at the Art Gallery of Ontario, Avery Steel, Master of Arts, 2019, Film and Photography Preservation and Collections Management, Ryerson University.

The Edith S. Watson albums, held in the photography collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO), are a collection of 16 scrapbook style photographic albums that contain 1,070 gelatin silver prints created by Edith Watson and dated from 1890 to 1930.

This thesis project explores a method of rehousing photographic albums with a focus on preserving the albums' structure, the photographs, and the tactile experience of viewing an album, as well as facilitating access to these albums within the AGO's collection through the creation of facsimile albums. My thesis will be divided into three sections: first, I assess the historical significance and the condition of the albums; second, I examine three case studies, each an album dated from the late 19th to early 20th century and held in different institutions; third, I summarize the method of preservation and outline the steps for the rehousing of the Edith Watson albums.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my thesis advisor, Sophie Hackett, for her invaluable advice and support in the development of this project. I would all also like to thank my second reader, Maia Sutnik. My gratitude goes to the Art Gallery of Ontario for providing me with the opportunity to work on this project. I am indebted to Frances Rooney for sharing her insights and research on the life and work of Edith Sarah Watson, as well as John Hartman for his hospitality and insight on the artistic value of her albums. I am also grateful to Thomas Galifot and Fabrice Golec at Musée d'Orsay and Zulay Chang at the New York Public Library, for their assistance and support in the research of my case studies. I want to thank Olga Zotova and Olivia Dudnik for sharing their cataloguing expertise, Katharine Whitman for her instrumental knowledge on the conservation of photographic material, Craig Boyko for producing the digitized documentation to complete the re-housing project, as well as Emily Miller for her continued advice and assistance. Finally, I wish to acknowledge my colleagues in the Film and Photography Preservation and Collections Management program for their guidance and inspiration, along with my family and partner for their continuing unconditional support.

Avery Steel

August 2019

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SECTION I. INTRODUCTION

The Edith S. Watson albums are a collection of 16 scrapbook style photographic albums that were purchased by the Art Gallery of Ontario (AGO) in 2018 from Canadian researcher, writer and editor Frances Rooney. The Frances Rooney Collection contains 1070 gelatin silver prints, all of which were taken by Edith Sarah Watson between 1890 and 1930. The albums range from 14 to 83 pages long. In general, the albums consist of double-sided spreads and each page can include one to six gelatin silver prints. Nearly all of the prints have accompanying handwritten captions that provide information regarding the place, event, or person pictured in the photograph.

Edith Watson's photographs are a testament to Canada at the turn of the 20th century, to the working lives of both Indigenous and settler communities, and to the role of women in Victorian society. The albums tell the story of Watson—a woman who was a photojournalist before the term even existed, illustrating her life, travels and passions.¹ Personal photographic albums such as these are valuable resources for research as they describe much more than just the creator's individual history, but the historical contexts in which they lived, and thus hold an important place in public institutions. Watson's albums demonstrate the various lifestyles at the turn of the century, women at work, the role of photographers, and the conventions of material and visual culture during this time. Researchers interested in social, feminist, or photographic history could find these albums an invaluable resource. Yet, handling the albums in their current condition is detrimental to their fragile structure. Therefore, it is necessary to assess the albums' condition and to create a plan that will preserve the albums, which includes housing methods that preserve the materiality of the object and documentation that will preserve the object's intellectual order.

The primary functions of a photographic album are to protect the material inside and to construct a narrative interpretation of the visual material. How do preservation

¹ Rooney, Frances. *Working the Rock: Newfoundland and Labrador in the photographs of Edith S. Watson, 1890–1930*. (Library and Archives Canada Cataloguing in Publication, 2017), 18.

measures—such as housing, digitization, and facsimile objects—affect the contemporary experience and understanding of a photographic album's intellectual and historical context? This thesis examines these preservation concerns through the research and documentation of an adjacent practical project in which I rehouse the Edith S. Watson collection (alternatively referred to as the Watson albums), as the albums' current structures no longer provide adequate housing for the photographs inside.

The Watson albums have experienced physical and chemical deterioration over time, thus compromising the photographs inside. Photographic albums can be at risk to several preservation issues: non-archival materials expose the photographs to chemical degradation; careless storage environments can accelerate damage; and frequent handling of an album deteriorates the object over time. All of these issues are demonstrated in the case of the sixteen Watson albums.

The fragility of the albums causes a hindrance to their accessibility since they are likely to incur further physical damage, specifically to the prints, when they are handled. The previous repetitive handling of the albums has cracked and torn the pages in many places, particularly along the binding which results in pages becoming completely loose. The acidic and brittle pages pose a chemical risk to the gelatin silver prints. In many instances, the adhesive holding the prints has deteriorated, causing the photographs to slide around the album. The loose pages and photographs present the risk of altering the original sequence. For these reasons, the Edith S. Watson collection must be assessed to determine the best preservation methods for the albums, the photographs, and the maintenance of their historical context.

In order to determine the method for re-housing the Watson albums it is first mandatory to analyze the present condition of each album and their desired use in the the AGO's photography collection. My investigation of three case studies, all rehoused photographic albums held in different institutions, will help inform my methodology for this project; in particular, how rehousing methods can affect the contemporary experience of viewing and using historical photographic albums. This research will also develop a preservation plan that considers the interpretation and accessibility of the objects, while also accommodating the AGO's needs for research and exhibition.



Figure 1: Fred Warner, *Edith at 30, about the time she started her travels to Canada, 1891.* Published in Frances Rooney, *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson.* (Vol. 8. Carleton University Press, 1996), 2.

SECTION II. LITERATURE SURVEY

In order to inform my approach to this project, I have identified three areas of necessary research. First, it is critical to analyze the historical context and biographical information of the maker, Edith Sarah Watson, and her photographic albums. This will include the research of Frances Rooney, a Canadian historian who has written extensively about the work and life of Edith Watson. Rooney's research was aligned with a new generation of historians who emerged in the 1980s and sought to discover and revisit historical material and examine it through a feminist lens. This has informed my second area of research, which includes resources pertaining to feminist views of art history, specifically in the reconsideration of early women photographers practicing in Canada. My final area of research addresses the best practices for the preservation of photographic albums, with a focus on conservation ethics and treatment methods that maintain the intellectual and historical significance of the objects and maker.

In her book *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson*, Frances Rooney compiles extensive background research on the life of Watson and provides an in-depth analysis of a selection of Watson's photographs, which illustrate the book. Rooney's research for the book spanned over twenty years of work in which she combed through libraries, archives, and museums in Canada and the United States of America. She also conducted personal visits with Watson's living relatives in search of biographical information. She used this to conduct her analysis of each album in which she demonstrates the historical significance of these photographs, both in terms of their materiality and their content.² Rooney elaborates on a particular area of Watson's body of work in her book titled *Working the Rock: Newfoundland and Labrador in the photographs of Edith S. Watson, 1890-1930*.³ These sources are important for my

² Rooney, Frances. *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson*. (Vol. 8. Carleton University Press, 1996.)

³ Rooney (2017).

research because they provide the only existing historical timeline of Watson's life as well as a detailed history of the movement and usage of Watson's photographs.

Susan Close's collection of essays, *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada (1880-1920)*, presents a feminist history of photography in Canada. In the essay "Ruby Gordon Peterkin and Etta Sparks: Photographs from Away," Close observes that photography is a significant tool in the commodification of travel and the construction of identity. She observes that photography can identify a traveller—someone who travels for work—or a tourist—someone who travels for recreation. Through her analysis of two Canadian army nurses, Ruby Gordon Peterkin (1887–1961) and Etta Sparks (1879–1917), she demonstrates how their use of photography has situated them as either a traveller or a tourist. This chapter assists in my argument that Watson used photography to assert herself as a professional woman in Victorian society.⁴

Close argues that there are differences between a traveller and a tourist, stating that a traveller is someone who has journeyed to another location for work, while a tourist is one who travels for recreation; in both cases, Close states that women tend to make and collect photographs during their travels and relates them to the making and collecting of photographs by women during travel. She concludes that photography is a significant tool in the commodification of travel and the construction of identity. She presents these arguments by analyzing how two Canadian army nurses, Ruby Gordon Peterkin (1887–1961) and Etta Sparks (1879–1917) used photographs to situate themselves as travellers and tourists. This chapter assists to theorize how Edith Watson used photography to assert herself as a professional, working woman in Victorian society.⁵

In another essay, "From Amateur to Professional," Close examines the role of women as amateur and professional photographers during the turn of the 20th century, the formative years of photography. This essay demonstrates the rise of professional female photographers toward the end of the century and outlines the obstacles and

⁴ Close, Susan. "Ruby Gordon Peterkin and Etta Sparks: Photographs from Away." *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada (1880–1920)*, (Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007), 126–61.

⁵ Ibid., 126–61.

misogyny that women had to overcome to establish their careers. Close divides the essay into three parts: first, “Contexts, Contacts and Codes of Production,” which provides a brief historical analysis of the role of women in Victorian society and its effect on their photographic practices; second, “Framing Change,” which addresses the social and economic factors that fostered a place for professional female photographers; and third, “Women as Professional Photographers,” which contextualizes the strides made by women as professionals in the field at this time.⁶ This essay strengthens my understanding of female photographers working during this period; I will apply this to my interpretation of Watson and the social and economic difficulties she may have faced during the creation of these albums.

Close shifts her focus to the assembly of family albums, a popular Victorian activity undertaken by women and recognized as part of their domestic duties, in her essay “Framing the Narrative in Mattie Gunterman’s Albums.” She posits that through the construction of albums, women repositioned themselves in relation to photographic imagery—they were no longer simply the consumer or subject, but they took on the active role of producer. She supports her argument through an analysis of photographic albums by Mattie Gunterman, an amateur photographer assembling albums between 1899 and 1911.⁷ Close’s essay assists in my own analysis of Watson’s albums, in which I assert that, through her photography and construction of albums, Watson was able to author her own autobiographical record.

Colleen Skidmore is an author and historian who studies feminist histories of Canadian photography. Skidmore’s book, *Women in the Rocky Mountains of Canada*, is a selection of work compiled by Skidmore and organized into six sections. Each section includes an introduction that establishes the historical and social contexts selected for that section, such as photographs, diaries, poems, novels, and the travel books of female

⁶ Close, Susan. “From Amateur to Professional.” *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada (1880–1920)*, 162–183. Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007.

⁷ Close, Susan. “Framing the Narrative in Mattie Gunterman’s Albums.” *Framing Identity: Social Practices of Photography in Canada (1880–1920)*, 74–95. Winnipeg, MB: Arbeiter Ring Publishing, 2007.

explorers.⁸ The images and texts work together to illustrate the diversity of women engaged in artistic practices in the Rocky Mountains between 1887 and 1955. This resource gives important context to the historical significance of women travellers in Canada during this time period, of which Watson belongs, and also acknowledges the meaningful role visual material plays in a larger narrative regarding feminism.

In her book, *Searching for Mary Schaffer*, Skidmore utilizes her skills as a social historian of photography to contextualize the historical and intellectual significance of a collection of photographs made by Mary Schaffer (1861 – 1939). She she uses a collection of Shaffer's photographs to conduct a visual and social analysis, which offers biographical details surrounding Schaffer's life and her significance to the history of photography. Schaffer, like Watson, was from Connecticut and travelled throughout Western Canada between 1890 and 1930, using a camera to document her experiences. This book provides a template for investigating the historical and social evidence found within women's photography made during this time.⁹

The last three decades have seen a major shift in the conservation and preservation practices applied to photographic albums; new approaches are outlined in Gustavo Lozano's essay "History and Conservation of Albums and Photographically Illustrated Books." Previously, interventional methods of restoration treatments for albums were preferred because they served the exhibition needs of art institutions; recently, institutional standards have moved toward a preservation-based approach to maintain the value, function, and usage of the album.¹⁰

In "Philosophy of Conservation," *Issues in the Conservation of Photographs*, José Orraca takes issue with the curatorial motivation to dismantle an album for exhibition purposes. He argues that album pages, matted and arranged side by side in cases,

⁸ Skidmore, Colleen, ed. *Women in the Rocky Mountains of Canada*. Saskatoon, SK: University of Alberta Press, 2006.

⁹ Skidmore, Colleen. *Searching for Mary Schaffer*. Edmonton, AB: University of Alberta Press, 2017.

¹⁰ Gustavo Lozano, "History and Conservation of Albums and Photographically Illustrated Books," (Andrew W. Mellon Advanced Residency Program in Photograph Conservation Research, George Eastman House, May 2007)

detaches the material from their original objecthood; he asserts that the album is more valuable when it is maintained as a whole object. Even when the creator of the album is not also the photographer, the original creator's determination of position and sequence of photographs reveals the intention and history of the album. However, Orraca focuses on conserving the original intellectual essence and fails to address how the physical deterioration of albums can negatively impact the photographs' condition. Therefore, to maintain the essence of the whole album, material and intellectual, alternative preservation methods may need to be considered, including the conscientious dismantling albums.¹¹

Klaus B Hendrik's *Fundamentals of Photograph Conservation: A Study Guide*, supports the argument that conservation treatments for albums cannot be standardized; they must be determined on an individual basis and assessed according to a number of factors, including the album's value and condition, its intended usage within the institution, and the availability of expertise and resources to conduct the treatment. For example, in an art institution, the determination of treatment would require the approval of the curator, the photographic conservator, and the conservation bookbinder. Hendrik suggests that there are three treatment options for albums: repair the album as a whole, dismount and repair photographs to be stored separately, or remount them in a new album.¹²

¹¹ José Orraca, "Philosophy of Conservation," *Issues in the Conservation of Photographs*, ed. Debra Hess Norris and Jennifer Jae Gutierrez (Los Angeles: Getty Conservation Institute, 2010)

¹² Klaus B Hendrik, *Fundamentals of Photograph Conservation: A Study Guide* (Toronto: Lugus, 1991)

SECTION III: DESCRIPTION OF THE COLLECTION

The Edith S. Watson collection is made up of sixteen albums that chronicle Watson's many journeys through Canada from the 1890s to the 1930s and continued intermittently until the 1930s. Watson spent virtually her entire adult life travelling as a freelance photographer. Watson developed relationships with many communities during her travels and she used her camera to capture aspects of their culture and lifestyle. She sold thousands of these photographs to magazines, newspapers, books, manufacturers, provincial governments, hotels, and railroad and shipping lines.¹³ The primary focus of Watson's photography, however, was the working lives of rural rural settlers and Indigenous communities in Canada and their established communities. While Watson often photographed men and children, the AGO's collection of albums indicate that another recurring focus in her photographs is the depiction of women absorbed in work and craft.

Twelve of the albums are inexpensive hardcover scrapbooks, measured at 35.5 x 30 cm and available at many stationary stores during Watson's travels.¹⁴ These albums are bound by cord in a technique called loop stitching, where the loops are created along the outer spine to allow for the maker to insert and secure the pages. The remaining four albums are slightly smaller, with sizes ranging between 25 x 35 cm and 32.5 x 26 cm.

Watson titled each album, categorizing them by theme or location; the title is recorded on the interior of the album cover, however, Rooney created short-hands of some of these albums which were adopted by the AGO (see Fig. 2.) *Fish* (35.5 x 30 cm, 49 pages, containing 58 gelatin silver prints) features photographs of fishing excursions and the process of drying fish in the east coast of Newfoundland and Labrador and the west coast of British Columbia. *Wells and Pots* (35.5 x 30 cm, 50 pages, containing 57

¹³ Rooney (1996), 2.

¹⁴ Ibid., 24.

gelatin silver prints) includes photographs of gardens and the gathering of water and plants.

Seven of the albums provide a timeline of her travels across various regions of Canada. Three albums are dedicated to Watson's time in Quebec: *Quebec I* (35.5 x 30 cm, 59 pages, containing 73 gelatin silver prints), *Quebec II* (35.5 x 30 cm, 50 pages), and *Ste Anne de Beaupré* (32.5 x 26 cm, 29 pages), a town in Côte-de-Beaupré the Saint Lawrence River and north-east of Quebec City. Three albums document her travels through western Canada: *Banff, Lake Louise* (35.5 x 30 cm, 36 pages, containing 36 gelatin silver prints) in Alberta, *Victoria, BC*, (35.5 x 30 cm, 52 pages, containing 71 gelatin silver prints) and *Alert Bay* (35.5 x 30 cm, 29 pages, containing 34 gelatin silver prints), a small village on Cormorant Island in British Columbia. One of the largest albums in the collection is *Newfoundland* (35.5 x 30 cm, 77 pages, 92 gelatin silver prints), where Watson made repeated trips to Newfoundland and coastal Labrador throughout 1892 and 1930.¹⁵

Five Watson albums depict communities that she met and developed relationships with during her travels. Two albums in the collection are dedicated to a community known as the Doukhobors (*The Doukhobors I*, 25 x 35 cm, 57 pages, containing 79 gelatin silver prints; *The Doukhobors II*, 35.5 x 30 cm, 81 pages, containing 92 gelatin silver prints). Between 1899 and 1914, thousands of Doukhobors left their homeland of Russia to settle in Canada. The original settlement of Doukhobor colonies was located in a part of the Northwest Territories that would become the province of Saskatchewan in 1905. In 1899, they established four colonies: the North Colony (also known as Thunder Hill), the South Colony (also known as Yorkton or Whitesand), the Good Spirit Lake Annex, and the Saskatchewan Colony (also known as Prince Albert or Duck Lake). The Doukhobors were pacifists, who were opposed to military service and were well known for their extensive farming abilities.¹⁶

¹⁵ Rooney (2017).

¹⁶ Library and Archives Canada. "Doukhobors." Library and Archives Canada. March 25, 2019. Accessed July 15, 2019. <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/immigration/history-ethnic-cultural/Pages/doukhobor.aspx>.

Her album *New Canadians* (35.5 x 30 cm, 50 pages, containing 80 gelatin silver prints) emphasizes the grueling life and work of newly settled immigrant communities throughout Canada (see Fig. 3.) Watson also built relationships with Indigenous communities in Canada. The smallest album in this collection highlights Watson's time spent with the Abenaki Tribe (*The Abenaki*, 35.5 x 30 cm, 14 pages, containing 17 gelatin silver prints). The Abenaki are an Indigenous tribe that were spread throughout various regions across the north-eastern seaboard of Canada and the United States.¹⁷ In contrast, the largest album in the collection presents a selection of Watson's most treasured photographs that depict the children she interacted with throughout her years of travel (*Children*, 35.5 x 30 cm, 83 pages, containing 121 gelatin silver prints).

Two of the albums in the collection are devoted to photographs of Victoria Hayward, a Bermudian journalist who worked, travelled, and lived with Watson for over 30 years and until Watson's death in 1943.¹⁸ *Victoria Hayward by ESW* (28.1 x 23.4 cm, 28 pages, containing 27 gelatin silver prints) includes a selection of portraits of Hayward over the years, whereas *Happy Voyages with Queenie* (28.8 x 23.6 cm, 60 pages, containing 64 gelatin silver prints) includes many photographs of Hayward and Watson together on various trips.

¹⁷ Morrison, Kenneth M. 1984. *The Embattled Northeast: The Elusive Ideal of Alliance In Abenaki-Euramerican Relations*. Berkeley: University of California Press. 1–10.

¹⁸ Rooney (1996), 11..



Figure 2: First page from *New Canadians* album, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3596.

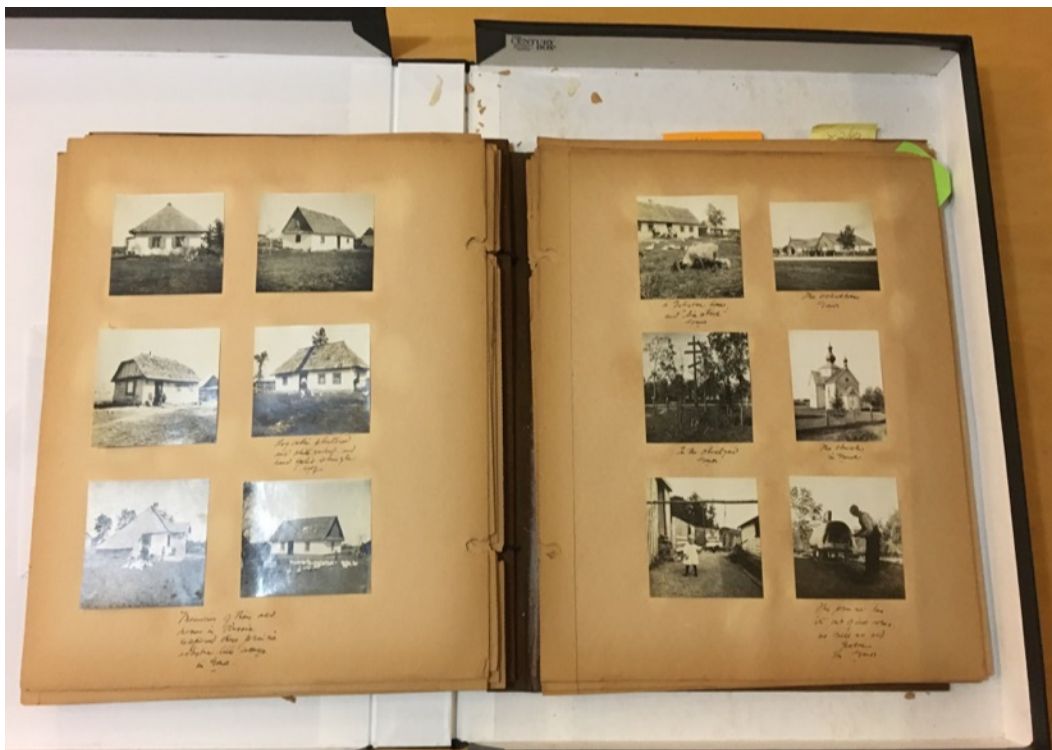


Figure 3: Two-page spread from *New Canadians*, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3596.

SECTION IV: EDITH WATSON'S LIFE AND CAREER

A critical factor in devising an approach to preserve the Edith S. Watson collection, is to understand the institutional function these albums are expected to perform. The collection was acquired by the AGO, an art gallery with a mandate to provide access, education, and exhibitions that feature work from their collection. To accomplish this, it is important to have a fulsome understanding of the objects' historical, social, and aesthetic significance. This historical analysis includes details of Watson's life and work, but also assesses the circulation of her photographs during her lifetime and their subsequent integration into the history of photography, made evident through the scholarship of historian Frances Rooney.

Edith Sarah Watson was born in 1861 on a 16-acre tobacco farm called Wild Acres located in her father's home village of East Windsor Hill on the Connecticut River in the United States. Watson was the youngest child of Sarah Bolles and Reed Watson; when she was born her eldest sister Rosella was eight, her brother Donny was six, and her sister Amelia was five.¹⁹ Rooney described Watson as, "brainy, independent, stubborn and impatient from the beginning, her kind of temperament proved disastrous for many Victorian girls."²⁰ She was the only sibling who has a record of receiving higher education, graduating from Hartford Female Seminary. The school had a rich curriculum that included subjects that went beyond a typical finishing school, such as history, Latin, Greek, mathematics, art, and music. According to Rooney, "For Edith, the school also built on the foundation she had gained at home of valuing friendship among women and relying on herself."²¹

¹⁹ Rooney (2017), 21-25.

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Ibid., 25.



Figure 4: Edith S. Watson, *Drying the great seines in Nippers Harbor, Nfld.*, c. 1900, gelatin silver print, 19 x 17 cm. Collection of John Hartman.

Watson's artistic practice originated with painting; she and her sister Amelia, both skilled painters, spent the 1880s exhibiting and selling their work. By the early 1890s, Watson transitioned photography as her primary creative medium. The 1890s marked the beginning of Watson's travels. Her journey through Canada began along the east coast and, year-by-year, she made her way across the country to British Columbia. Watson spent nearly all of her adult life travelling as a freelance

photographer; she went across the entire eastern seaboard of the United States, and to Nassau, the Bahamas, Mexico, Yucatan, Cuba, and Bermuda.²² Her photographs had commercial appeal and she was able to sell thousands of her images to magazines, newspapers, government agencies, and the tourism industry (like hotels and railroad lines). She also shared her photographs with friends in Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, and Bermuda.²³ From these photographs, it is clear that Watson predominantly photographed rural landscapes, communities, and women at work.

Watson would return to her home at Wild Acres for brief visits throughout her travels. When at home, she would organize her photographs and record various aspects of her travels through her construction of numerous scrapbooks. She would also include reviews and press notices of her work. The sixteen albums made by Watson that are in the AGO's collection hold a total of 1,070 photographs, demonstrating her preference of

²² Rooney (1996), 2.

²³ *Ibid.*, 2

assembling her own photographic prints rather than other ephemera, like drawings or newspaper clippings.²⁴

Watson explored both established communities and newly settled immigrant communities across Canada. Watson was particularly captivated by the rural landscapes and the lifestyle of the people who lived there, and, though she photographed a variety of subjects, women remained a cornerstone of her artistic practice. She captured many aspects of women's lives during this period, such as the rearing of children, making of soap, weaving and spinning, harvesting crops, and the mending of fishing nets (see Fig. 5.) Watson impressed by women's resourcefulness in their various jobs and crafts. This results in a rich collection of photographs that illuminate an important part of Canadian history—the role and work of women in Canadian communities at the turn of the 20th century. As Rooney demonstrates in her book, *Working the Rock: Newfoundland and Labrador in the photographs of Edith S. Watson*, these photographs fill an important historical gap because, “Honest depictions of ordinary women are almost invisible in the perspectives of male photographers. When females do appear in the late 19th or early 20th century photographs, they are often accessories to men or delicate creatures of decoration in a man's world.”²⁵

Rooney speculates that it is possible Watson mainly photographed women in Newfoundland because men would not have been accessible subjects due to their absence during fishing excursions that could last for months. However, Rooney also acknowledges that when evaluating Watson's photography and her subjects as a whole, it is evident that she frequently photographed women throughout all her travels. This

²⁴ Rooney (1996), 2.

²⁵ Rooney (2017), 14.



Figure 5: Edith S. Watson, *The homemade pieced bed quilt often comes in handy for bringing in the hay in the Nfld outports where horses are unknown. In Hermitage*, from the album *Newfoundland, 1890–1910*, gelatin silver print, 17.5 x 22.5 cm. 2018/3588.27.



Figure 6: Edith S. Watson, *A Madonna of the Kootenays, Between Trains on the CPR near Windermere (ESW)*, c. 1920. Inscribed on verso - a Kootenay Indian, taken on a platform of a train, near Windermere, B.C. Published in Frances Rooney, *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson*. (Vol. 8. Carleton University Press, 1996), 14.

highlights that Watson was actively making the decision to represent women in her work (see Fig. 6.)²⁶

Watson began her travels in the 1890s, and for the first two decades she travelled mainly alone. In the spring of 1911 this changed when she visited friends in Bermuda and met Victoria Hayward, a Bermudian writer and journalist. In the spring of 1911 this changed when she visited friends in Bermuda and met Victoria Hayward, a Bermudian writer and journalist. The two became quick friends. Their relationship developed into a significant lifelong friendship that was built from a strong professional and personal bond

²⁶ Rooney (2017), 17.

(see Fig. 7.)²⁷ Within a year of knowing each other, Watson and Hayward (who also went by the nickname Queenie) moved in together; they would work and travel together as partners for the next 34 years (see Fig. 8.) Hayward wrote articles to accompany Watson's photographs for publications. It was these financial efforts that allowed the women to be self-supporting and pursue their creative endeavors and extensive travel. The pair's most frequent client between 1915 and 1925 was the *Canadian Magazine of Politics, Science, Art and Literature*. During that period, it published several of Hayward's articles and almost 400 of Watson's photographs. The magazine was sold to the Maclean brothers in 1925, who then hired new staff and freelancers.²⁸

During World War I, both Watson and Hayward began to sell their work to national newspapers in Canada, the United States, and Bermuda, and local newspapers in Newfoundland and Nova Scotia. Religious and educational publishers—particularly Ginn & Co., the Manitoba Board of Education, and Catholic and Methodist churches in North America—bought many of Watson's photographs.²⁹ Between the late 1890s until the mid-1920s, hundreds of Watson's prints were sold to The National Geographic Society, the Government of Newfoundland, the Canadian Pacific Railway, Canadian National Railway, the Dominion Atlantic Railway, the Plymouth Cordage, Columbian Rope companies, the Cunard Line, and the Bermudiana Hotel.³⁰

²⁷ Rooney (1996), 11.

²⁸ Ibid., 14.

²⁹ Ibid., 14.

³⁰ Ibid., 14.



Figure 7: Photographer unknown. *Edith and Victoria, at the CPR camp in Northern Ontario, c. 1920.* Edith (left) is holding a basic box camera. This is the only photograph that shows any of her equipment. Published in Frances Rooney, *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson*. (Vol. 8. Carleton University Press, 1996), 17.

The end of World War I in 1918 demonstrated an increase in printing photographs and articles as paper was no longer a sparse resource. After the war, Watson's work appeared regularly in Canadian publications such as *The Canadian Magazine*, *The Canadian Courier*, *The Family Herald*, *Canadian Home Journal*, *Maclean's* and *Chatelaine*; and American publications, such as *National Geographic*, *Travel*, *Delineator*, *The Cunarder*, *Touchstone*, *Town and Country* and *Vogue*. Watson photographed prolifically, and her submissions prove this; however, magazines would often only publish a few selected works. For example, Watson once submitted nearly a thousand photographs to *National Geographic*; the publication bought 300 prints from Watson but only ever published six of the photographs.³¹

While the magazine and newspaper industry had renewed success, this post-war period was not as favourable to Watson's success as a freelance photographer. Men were back from the war and back in the work force, taking jobs away from the women who had held them in their absence, including jobs as freelance photographers and staff writers. This propelled Hayward and Watson to publish their own book. In the spring of 1921, they gathered and organized material from their time in Canada. Through correspondence with Hugh Eayrs, president of Macmillan Canada, and his assistant, the poet Nora Holland, they formulated a concept for the book. It was titled *Romantic Canada* and it was anticipated to be the best seller of Macmillan's 1921 fall list, published just in time for the Christmas shopping season. However, due to an unforeseen printers' strike in Toronto, Montreal, and Winnipeg, *Romantic Canada* did not make its way onto shelves until December 22, 1921. While the book was a success for its aesthetic and content, sales were poor.³²

Without the revenue of *Canadian Magazine* and *Romantic Canada* failing as a source of income, the pair began to run out of money by the end of the 1920s. They began renting their cottage in Martha's Vineyard during the summertime for income. Watson and Hayward persevered and never fully retired, continuing to travel and selling their

³¹ Rooney (1996), 17.

³² Ibid., 17.

photographs and writings. Their income improved in the late 1930s, allowing them to travel and making their last years comfortable.³³

On December 14, 1943, Watson and Hayward took a bus trip from Wild Acres in Connecticut to St. Petersburg, Florida. Watson arrived in Florida suffering from stomach pain, which turned out to be ulcers that required surgery. After the operation, Watson woke up briefly and spoke to Hayward and she died soon afterwards. Hayward arrived back in Connecticut by train with Watson's coffin. She was buried alongside her parents and her sister, Amelia. They all share matching gravestones, with the exception of an additional inscription made on Edith Watson's: "They seek a country."³⁴

³³ Rooney (1996), 21.

³⁴ Rooney (2017), 57.



Figure 8: Photographer unknown. *Edith and Victoria on a trip to Labrador*. 1910–1930. Published in Frances Rooney, *Working Light: The Wandering Life of Photographer Edith S. Watson*. (Vol. 8. Carleton University Press, 1996), 21.

SECTION V: CONDITION ASSESSMENT OF THE EDITH WATSON ALBUMS

One of the main intentions of placing photographic material in an album is to protect the photographs from extended exposure to light and prevent oxidation; however, counter-effective deterioration can begin to manifest due to the inherent material components of the album itself. The current condition of Watson's albums as a housing system needs to be thoroughly assessed in order to evaluate the risks the albums pose to their photographic prints. It is important to identify the extent of damage to the albums' structure, its potential harm to the photographs inside, and the deterioration of the photographs themselves. I conducted an evaluation on a page-by-page basis for each album and I recorded my condition report in the form of a table in order to fully understand the amount of damage and what kind of deterioration had occurred (see Appendix B).

The albums' structures pose both a physical and chemical risk to the gelatin silver photographs. The major cause of concern for these albums is that the pages are extraordinarily brittle, which limits the albums' accessibility as physical objects. Improper handling of the albums could easily cause the pages to fall apart or break from the spine (see Fig. 9.) This issue is most apparent in the *Newfoundland* album, likely a result of the album being handled more frequently over a prolonged period of time compared to the other albums in the collection. The *Newfoundland* album was used as the primary source for Rooney's book, *Working the Rock: Newfoundland and Labrador in the photographs of Edith S. Watson, 1890-1930*; this provides an explanation for the album's accelerated deterioration.

All of the album pages display characteristics of paper decomposition. Heavy yellow staining due to oxidation is common and most severe along the pages' edges, which results in a large amount of cracking and flaking along the papers' edges (see Fig. 10.) As with most 19th century paper, oxidation is due to the poor quality wood-pulp fibers

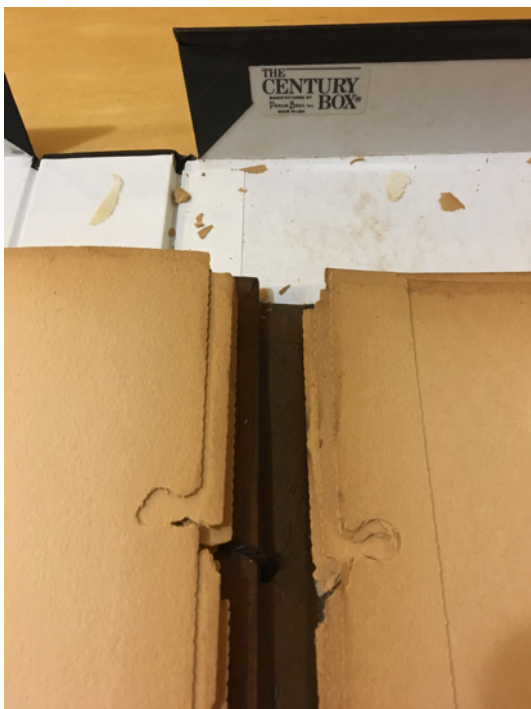


Figure 9: Detail of paper damage along spine of the album *Children*, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3594.

used at the time; it was made from high-ground wood content that contained non-cellulose impurities such as lignin.³⁵

Starting in the mid-19th century, wood pulp replaced rags as the raw material in paper manufacturing. The wood is processed into paper by either mechanical or chemical pulping, producing paper with shorter fibres than previous rag paper fibres. Mechanical pulping produces paper with the shortest fibre length and does not remove lignin from the wood, which promotes acid hydrolysis. In the presence of moisture, acids from the environment cut the glucose chains into shorter lengths. This acid hydrolysis reaction produces certain carboxylic acids,

resulting in continued degradation of the paper and the accelerated deterioration process of cellulose and other sensitive materials in close proximity.³⁶ While the album pages show signs of accelerated deterioration, the remaining gelatin silver prints adhered to the paper are in relatively good condition with the exception of some photographs that show signs of silver-mirroring.

Another concern are the photographs that have detached from the page and can move around in the album; this can cause damage to the print's surface and can threaten the original, intellectual order of the photographs (see Fig. 11.) There are two reasons why these prints may have detached over time: firstly, the adhesive may have deteriorated; secondly, some of the prints had been physically removed by the previous

³⁵ James M. Reilly, *Care and Identification of 19th–Century Photographic Prints* (Rochester, N.Y.: Eastman Kodak Co., 1986), 93.

³⁶ "The Deterioration and Preservation of Paper: Some Essential Facts." *Collections Care - Resources* (Preservation, Library of Congress). Accessed May 21, 2019. <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/deterioratebrochure.html>.

owner, Frances Rooney. The loose photographs are notably prevalent in the albums *Newfoundland, Children, Banff, Lake Louise*, and *Ste Anne de Beaupré*.

During my assessment of these albums, I identified 39 photographs that had been misplaced from their original placement within the albums. Included in the Edith S. Waston collection, there is a box of loose photographs. I created an inventory of the misplaced photographs along with the descriptive inscriptions by Watson left on the album page. Before the albums could be digitized at the AGO, it was crucial that the missing photographs were first identified, and if possible, returned to their original placement within the albums with the intention to create a digital record that emulates the original structure and intellectual integrity of the albums. Thus, once I had identified which pages had missing prints, I reviewed the box of loose prints to see which of them could have once belonged to these album pages, and which photographs were missing from the collection entirely. In conversation with Sophie Hackett, the curator of photography at the AGO, and Frances Rooney, we established that some of the missing photographs had been sold to a collector, John Hartman, who currently lives in Northern Ontario.

The current conditions of the albums expose the photographs to a risk of acidic off-gassing from degraded of the paper, physical damage from handling, and puts at risk the objects' original intellectual integrity.³⁷ The new housing structure must reduce the objects' exposure to air pollutants, which will curtail the deterioration of the paper and the photographic prints, and it must provide the loose prints with new and stable acid-free housing, which will prevent further damage from handling and surface abrasion. It is imperative to identify and document the issues described so that the AGO can move forward with safe re-housing initiatives and develop protective practices surrounding the access and exhibition for these fragile objects.

³⁷ Katharine Whitman, in interview with the photography conservator, Art Gallery of Ontario, March 19, 2019.

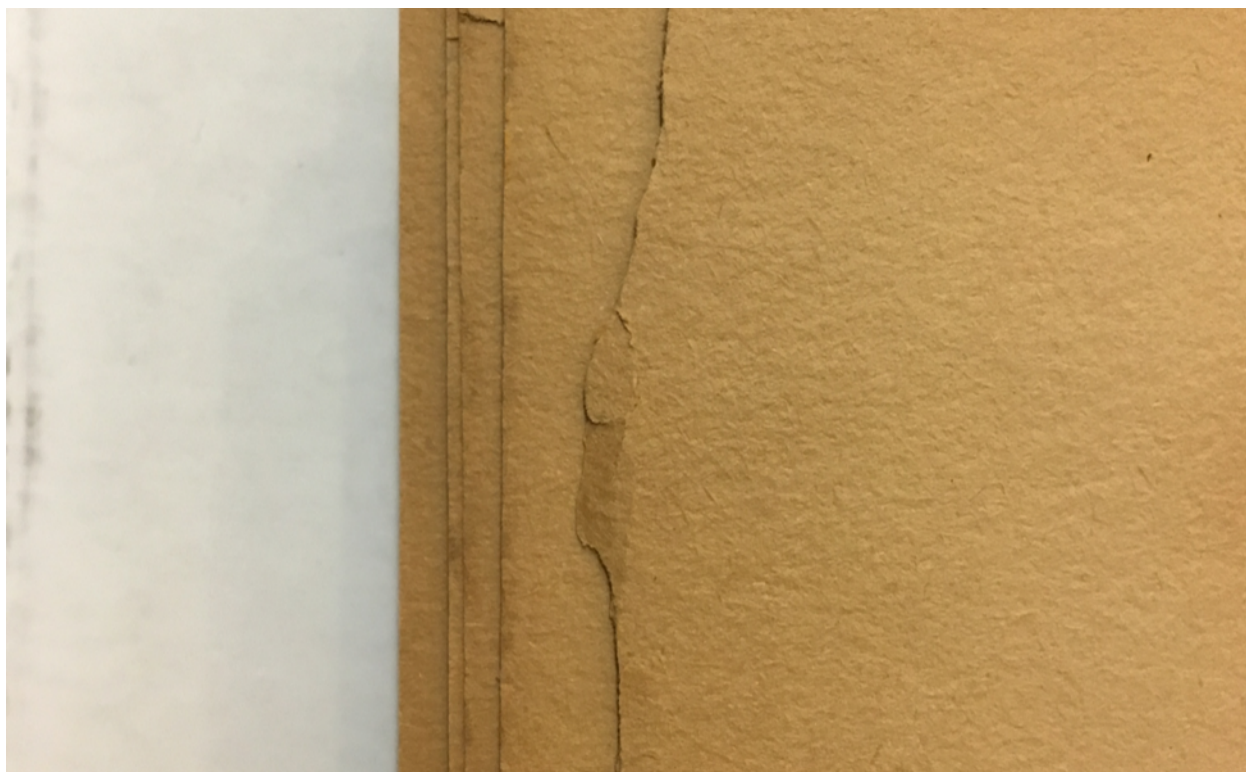


Figure 10: Detail of damaged page from the album *Children*, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3594.

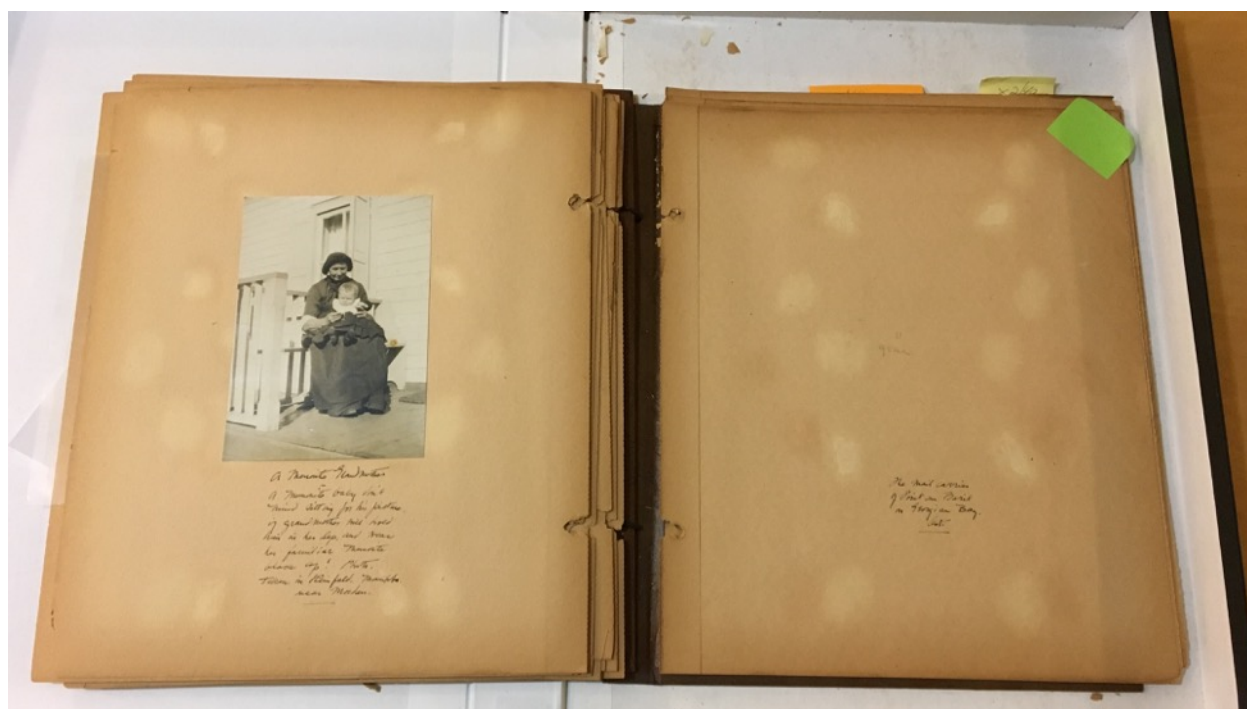


Figure 11: Two-page spread from the album *Children*, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3594.

SECTION VI: CASE STUDIES OF METHODS OF PRESERVING A PHOTOGRAPHIC ALBUM

Methodology

Part of my research in developing a methodology for preserving the Edith S. Watson collection was to examine three case studies. I examined three photographic albums that had been restored and rehoused at different institutions. Visiting these institutions not only contributed to my understanding of alternative preservation methods, but also helped me understand how albums had historically been preserved in institutions and how those practices have evolved over time.

A significant consideration of mine during this process was to analyze how housing methods served to protect photographic objects and how housing can affect the interaction with an object. While the primary role of housing is protection, it can facilitate accessibility and be adapted to serve the specific needs of an institution. I contacted a variety of institutions to inquire about their preservation practices regarding photographic albums, with a specific interest in albums constructed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, to identify cases which presented similar issues of deterioration to those of the Watson albums. Therefore, I refined my search for case studies in which the photographic album presented similar issues of deterioration to those of the Watson albums.

Once I selected my case studies, I visited the various institutions to observe the photographic albums and to evaluate their housing treatments. On February 28, 2019, I visited the New York Public Library (NYPL) in New York City and met with Zulay Chang, a Photography Specialist in their Photography Collection. On April 25, 2019, I visited the Cabinet d'Arts Graphiques et de Photographies at Musée d'Orsay in Paris, France where I met with Thomas Galifot, the Curator in Chief of Photographs and Fabrice Golec. The third album I used as a case study I found in the photography collection of the AGO.

Case Study I - Album Pages Disassembled and Rehoused Individually in Mat Board

Mission scientifique de Mr. Ernest Chantre dans la haute Mésopotamie, le Kurdistan et le Caucase (1881) at the New York Public Library is a case study that demonstrates a preservation method where the album pages have been carefully removed and stored separately from the original album casing. The album presented similar preservation and mechanical



Figure 12: *Mission scientifique de Mr. Ernest Chantre dans la haute Mésopotamie, le Kurdistan et le Caucase* (1881) at the New York Public Library.

concerns as the Watson albums: the albums' pages all have lignin, which causes them to become extremely brittle and difficult to handle. Because each photograph had an accompanying description, NYPL opted to remove the entire page and create a window mat where the photograph and the text are visible. They selected a 2 ply archival mat and they used interleaving paper to protect the surface of the page. To ensure that the pages could be removed from the mat if necessary, paper corners hinged with archival tape were used. Pages from the album that had no photographs or inscriptions were kept alongside the album, enclosed in a polyester sleeve. The matted pages retained their original order in a custom archival box: each box can hold 22 matted pages; however, there are two spacers that give the stack of prints extra support, one is placed at the bottom of the box and one is placed to divide the stack of prints in half (in this case, 11 prints above and below the spacer). This method of stacking provides relief and ensures that there is not too much pressure on the pages. In instances where pages had cracks and tears, NYPL mended them by adhering Japanese tissue to broken sections. The NYPL's approach of using mat board as reinforcement for the brittle album pages would not be an ideal solution in the case Watson's albums. Firstly, her album pages are double-sided and therefore not conducive to matting. In addition, matted pages prevent the

original tactile experience of flipping through an album; this disrupts the intellectual intention and experience of viewing these photographs within their historical and social context (see Fig. 12.)

Each album has a parent record in the NYPL database; however, it is not made publicly accessible if an album has been unbound. Digital surrogates were not created for the album before it was disassembled. It is important to note that this album was acquired by the collection sometime in the late 1990s to early 2000s, at which point digitization practices had not been implemented in many institutions. It was also the common practice at the time that if the album case itself had no inscriptions or embossing, it was discarded. This is true of my case study—the original album was discarded once the rehousing was complete. To discard the original album cover, without photographic documentation, disregards an important part of the intellectual integrity of this album. If this album was acquired by the NYPL today, these factors would be taken into account when creating a preservation plan.³⁸

Case Study II - Loosened Photographs Removed from the Pages of Album and Rehoused Individually

The *Jeandel album* is an album of cyanotypes by Charles-Francois Jeandel held in Musée d'Orsay's permanent photography collection in Paris, France. This rehousing treatment applied to this album is an important case study in the consideration of removing prints that have detached from their original pages and must be separated and rehoused individually. Marie Robert, the Chief Curator of Photography at the Musée d'Orsay, was responsible for the methodology of this particular rehousing project.³⁹

When I arrived, I was presented with three boxes: one contained the original album, one box was labeled as “restoration,” or preservation in English, and the last box was labeled as exhibition. While the original album remained intact and bound, certain

³⁸ Katharine Whitman, in interview with the photography conservator, Art Gallery of Ontario, March 19, 2019.

³⁹ Thomas Galifot, in discussion with the Chief Curator of Photography, Musée d'Orsay, May 9, 2019.



Figure 13: The Jeandel album is an album of cyanotypes by Charles-Francois Jeandel from the Musee d'Orsay's permanent photographic collection in Paris, France.

photographs had been removed from the album for either exhibition or preservation purposes. The adhesive used to attach the photographs to the album pages had deteriorated, allowing the photograph to detach from the page. This is a similar mechanical issue faced in Watson's albums. The detached prints can be damaged when handling the album, as there is a risk of surface abrasion.

Each photograph was assessed individually; the prints that had detached or had almost detached removed and transferred to new housing structures. The

original album was kept intact and the photographs that were still secure in the album were kept in place and in their original order.⁴⁰ Photographs removed from the album for preservation purposes were numbered to convey the original sequence of the album. These numbers correspond to page numbers recorded in the album and to the TMS records (TMS is The Museum System and is collection database software). In some cases, visual elements of the photographs were sketched onto the album pages in soft pencil along with a border outlining the true dimensions of the photograph in lieu of the original photograph.

The restoration box is the new housing provided for detached prints. The prints are mounted to 1 ply archival boards and attached by mylar corners. The archival boards were then placed in polyester L-sleeves. An inventory list was provided inside the box; it was listed in chronological order instead of in the album's original sequence.

Prints in the exhibition box had been matted in 2 ply window mats. A sheet of mylar is used to protect the surface of the print. Each mat has a sticker on the inside that

⁴⁰ Galifot (2019).

provides important information concerning the print and its place within the original order of the album. The prints were adhered to the mats by hinges made from Japanese tissue. The hinges allow the print's recto and verso to remain accessible (see Fig. 13.)⁴¹

The preservation technique applied to this album helps to protect the objects from further mechanical damage and permits the photographs to be viewed. However, the original objecthood and intellectual order of the album is jeopardized by having the prints dispersed into three separate boxes, and having only one box arranged chronologically disrupts their intended sequence. The original order has been documented and can be understood with the assistance of digital documentation, but still the contemporary experience of viewing and handling this album does align with the creator's intention. This issue runs parallel to Watson's albums, in which the preservation methods must take into account photographs that have detached from their pages.

Case Study III - Photographs Disassembled and Rehoused in Facsimile Archival Album

The Peterkin Family album is a carte-de-visite and cabinet card album that is held in the AGO's photography collection. This is a case study in which the album and its photographs have been disassembled and rehoused in a facsimile archival album. The methodology for this rehousing project was conceived in 2012 by a previous student of the Film + Photography Preservation and Collections Management Masters program, Melodie Hueber.

The album's structure posed a mechanical and chemical risk to its contents as the leather-bound cover had "red rot," a harmful form of decomposition. This disease manifests when an item is exposed to sulphur dioxide from the atmosphere or other environmental circumstances that create a strong oxidizing agent of sulphuric acid. This then forms hydrogen peroxide, which attacks the leather fibre and causes it to crumble into a reddish powder.⁴² This irreversible decomposition had weakened the structure of

⁴¹ Galifot (2019).

⁴² H.A.B. van Soest, T. Stambolov and P.B. Hallebeek, "Conservation of Leather," *Studies in Conservation* 29, no.1 (February, 1984): 22.

the album, causing the cover to detach from the spine. Similar to the Watson albums, the pages of the Peterkin album displayed yellow staining on the paper due to oxidation; this is most noticeable on the pages' edges and in cases where the cartes-de-visites' cardboard window frames had transferred acid to the opposite page.⁴³



Figure 14: The Peterkin Family (Theresa Bywater Peterkin) album at the Art Gallery of Ontario. 2009/180.

The preservation treatment applied to the album required that the photographs be removed and transferred to acid-free window mats that imitate the original layout of each album page. The mat board is cut to the same dimension of the album page and each window is cut to the same dimension of the photograph's original cardboard frame, cropping and presenting the image as it was in the album. This allows the viewers to understand the original, visual effect of

the album's layout. The back of the mat also has windows cut to show the versos of the objects. The prints are secured to the matboard with archival photo corners and a sheet of mylar protects their surface from abrasion. This method permits the examination of both sides of the photographic object. Allowing visibility to the verso of the object reveals the various markings and inscriptions that are significant to the historical context of the prints. A reverse binding technique was chosen for the cutting of the back mats' windows, and sheets of interleaving tissue were added between the mats. This approach was chosen because it occupies less storage space compared to the alternative addition of

⁴³ Hueber, Melodie. "Housing the Family: Re-Housing the Peterkin Family (Theresa Bywater Peterkin) Carte-De-Visite and Cabinet Portrait Album at the Art Gallery of Ontario." (2012).

mat covers. The board provides a strong support that reduces mechanical damage from handling.⁴⁴

Each album page was digitized, then cropped, and scaled in Photoshop in order to create a surrogate; they were then printed as ink-jet pigment prints on Epson fine art paper. These printed album pages correspond to the window mats and these digital images are adhered to the mat to give the impression of the original album page, with its floral motif and marks of age and use.

The original album is housed in its own archival box with ethafoam sheets to keep it stable. A polyester wrapper was added to protect the leather cover from abrasion and flecking (see Fig. 14).⁴⁵ It is stored beside the two archival boxes that contain the 35 mat housings.

Hueber's housing method ensures the preservation of the album, the photographs, and their sequence. In conjunction with the robust cataloguing and digital documentation, the album is extremely accessible for research and exhibition. This housing is also reversible, so the photographs can be replaced in the album. The contemporary experience of viewing and handling the Peterkin album demonstrates a successful rehousing strategy, where the material and intellectual integrity of the original object remains intact. The clever double-sided window mats also elevate our understanding of the material nature of carte-de-visite and cabinet cards by revealing significant information on the versos of the prints. This case study proves that the creation of a facsimile object to preserve the intellectual integrity of an album is possible. This will be taken into consideration into my proposed facsimile albums for the Watson albums.

⁴⁴ Hueber (2012).

⁴⁵ Hueber (2012).

SECTION VII: THE PRESERVATION OF THE EDITH WATSON ALBUMS

The purpose of archival housing is first and foremost to protect the physical objects held in a collection. Housing can affect the presentation of an object; ideally, a housed object can maintain its original objecthood and retain its historical and intellectual integrity. Thus, an object's condition and intended purpose must be thoroughly assessed in order to inform a housing method.

It became clear early on that it would not be possible to keep the Watson albums entirely intact given their condition. Conservation treatment would be extensive and expensive, and would involve replacing the binding of the spines, physically stabilizing each page, reattaching loose and detached photographs, and mending countless tears and brittle edges of the pages. Digital documentation is an important preservation practice; however, the AGO requires access to the physical albums of the collection, both for research and exhibition purposes. This continued access and handling will expose the brittle and acidic pages to further deterioration if not properly rehoused. It is preferable to rehouse the loose photographs separate from the album, in a new acid-free environment. The digital documentation created to record the original condition of the albums will be used to construct facsimile albums. The facsimile albums will not only reduce the handling of the original album, but they will enable access to an object that imitates the object's intellectual integrity.

My research and the three case studies I investigated have presented several methods for rehousing the albums. I discussed with Sophie Hackett and Katharine Whitman, conservator of photographs at the Art Gallery of Ontario, the best way to proceed with my practical project, rehousing the Edith Watson collection. It was agreed that the new housing must preserve the narrative layout and arrangement of the album, and must also preserve the pages and photographs. Three options were explored:

A. Double-Sided Window Mats for the Album Pages

In this method, the pages are removed from the album and reinforced with double-sided archival mats that have windows cut out on each side to expose the photographs and inscriptions on the pages' recto and verso. This method is appealing, considering that Watson almost always made use of each side of the page in her albums. The surface of the album page would be covered by interleaving tissue to protect the photographs from any further abrasions.

It was determined that this method would not be suitable for these albums due to the size and brittleness of the pages. This housing scenario would be too rigid on the corners of the album page due to the brittle centre of the page; the tension of the mat would cause further tears and cracks in the paper.⁴⁶ I also considered my experience viewing my case study, *Mission scientifique de Mr. Ernest Chantre dans la haute Mésopotamie, le Kurdistan et le Caucase* (1881) at the New York Public Library, where I found that the materiality and handling of mats did not properly convey the tactile experience of flipping through an album, an important part of the album's objecthood and history.

B. Placing Pages and Photographs in Polyester Sleeves in Binders

Another potential rehousing method is to transfer the album pages with photographic material to polyester sleeves designed to fit the pages' dimensions. This method would prevent the mechanical risks posed by the brittle pages and loose photographs. The albums would be unbound, placed in the polyester sleeves, and then rebound in binders and arranged in sequential order. However, in my discussion with Sophie Hackett and Katharine Whitman, we decided against this method as the pages are currently off-gassing due to the lignin in the paper. By keeping the photographs and

⁴⁶ Katharine Whitman, in discussion with the photography conservator, Art Gallery of Ontario, March 19, 2019.

the pages together in a sleeve, the deterioration of the paper and the prints would escalate due to the carboxylic acids being trapped inside the enclosure.⁴⁷

C. Pages Removed from Album and Placed in Custom Archival Storage Boxes with Interleaving Tissue

In this method, the albums would be disassembled from their original binding and the pages would be placed in archival storage boxes that fit the album pages' dimensions and arranged in sequential order. Interleaving tissue would be cut to the same dimensions of the album pages and would be placed between each album page to protect from further abrasions. For prints that have almost detached from the page, due to deteriorated adhesive, each instance would be individually assessed to determine which photographs would require removal. The detached prints would be housed in polyester sleeves and remain in the same archival box as its corresponding album.

Ultimately, we decided that the best practice for the Edith S. Watson collection is option C: Pages Removed from Album and Placed in Custom Archival Storage Boxes with Interleaving Tissue. This method preserves the physical objects as well as their intellectual integrity. The unbound, individual pages can be arranged side-by-side to recreate the double spread of an album. The detached prints in polyester sleeves will be protected from physical damage. This method also allows access to the verso of the pages and loose photographs, which contain significant historical information. The rehousing plan will give the collection more flexibility and versatility for exhibition and research purposes.

⁴⁷ Whitman.(2019).

Cataloguing the Individual Album Pages and Photographs

A critical part in the documentation and preservation of an object is the creation of robust collection database records. In order to catalogue the Watson albums, the AGO created “parent” records for each album, that identify each album as a single object and accounts for the number of pages and photographs this record includes the entirety of the album, including pages and photographs; then sequential “child” records were created for each page of the album. These records were created in The Museum System (TMS), which is the collection management software that the AGO uses. The digital records in TMS ensure that the order of pages is preserved and facilitates access to the object’s contents. Inscriptions are catalogued in TMS, and when appropriate, they are entered as the title of the album page. In the absence of inscriptions, descriptive titles were created for the photographs. Appendix B shows the methodology of cataloguing and the records in TMS.

The primary purpose of cataloguing Watson’s albums prior to rehousing is so that there is a record of the albums’ condition from when they first entered the AGO. Cataloguing assists in the accessibility of an object within the collection. The “child” records created for album pages are derived from the “parent” records; the parent records have the accession numbers 2018/3588 to 2018/3603. A “child” record is the parent’s accession number and then an additional number that indicates its sequence (for example, 2018/3588.2 is page 2 of the album) , Each photograph is also catalogued as a sub-child record; when there is one photograph adhered to the page, the page only receives a child record, when there are multiple photographs on a page they receive a letter that indicates their order, left to right, top to bottom, on the album page (for example, the top left photograph would be labeled 2018/3588.2a). TMS also includes condition reports.

In the record for each photograph, the following fields have entered: Creator, Title, Date, Mark, Inscription, Medium/process, and Dimensions. TMS also displays image files of the album covers, pages, and individual photographs. In the case that photographs were loose from the page, they were photographed separately and linked to the page record. Both the recto and verso of the loose prints were photographed.

Condition Reporting of the Edith Watson Photographs and Albums

After my assessment of the albums' conditions, I logged my condition reports onto the TMS spreadsheet. Observations include silver mirroring, skinning, tears, and creases. There was extensive damage to the pages' edges and binding. In many cases, the paper had completely torn from the binding, resulting in a large number of loose pages. Skinning was common among prints that had detached from their adhesive.

Overall, the photographs appeared to be in good condition with the exception of some silver-mirroring. Some prints also show signs of physical damage, like creases. This was most common with photographs that had become loose or detached from the page.

Identifying and Relocating Missing Photographs

An important step in rehousing these objects is to remove the loose or detached photographs and house them separately in sleeves. This allows access to the versos of these photographs, which often can shed light on a photographer's working habits or preferred materials. The versos provided crucial information that allowed me to identify their original placement in the album.

Nearly all of the loose photographs had handwritten inscriptions on the verso along with the stamp, "Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." The inscriptions provided by Watson would often state the place in which the photograph was taken along with a description of the event, place or person depicted (see Fig. 15 and 16) I was able to identify 19 of the missing photographs from the albums by matching the inscriptions on the verso to those on the album page. To confirm that the prints had been correctly identified, I compared the measurements of the print to the skinning marks left behind on the album page.

While I was able to identify and return many photographs to their original placement within the album, there were still some missing photographs. Since some of these photographs had been removed by the previous owner, Frances Rooney, we

arranged to meet on April 8, 2019, at the Art Gallery of Ontario to assess my identifications and to discuss the whereabouts of the missing prints.

Rooney and I assessed each album and the photographs. We separated the detached photographs by geographic locations. From this exercise, we were able to identify several more of the missing prints. Rooney observed that when she had acquired the albums there were some missing photographs and that the remaining prints were likely sold to artist and collector John Hartman. Rooney provided a list of the prints she sold and their titles; the titles corresponded to some of the inscriptions left on pages with missing photographs.



Figure 15: Edith S. Watson, "A Kootenay Indian, taken on the platform of a train, near Windermere, BC, Canada," 1890s–1930s, recto of gelatin silver print, 23 x 17.5 cm. Collection of John Hartman.

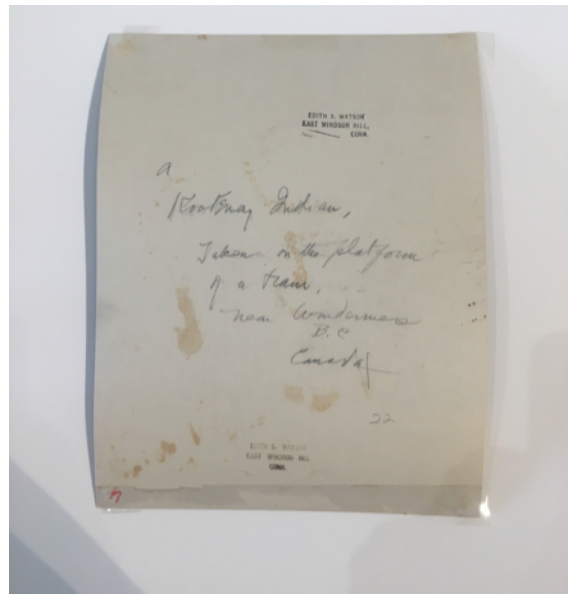


Figure 16: Edith S. Watson, "A Kootenay Indian, taken on the platform of a train, near Windermere, BC, Canada," 1890s–1930s, verso of gelatin silver print, 23 x 17.5 cm. Collection of John Hartman.

With the assistance of Sophie Hackett and Frances Rooney, I was able to arrange a meeting with John Hartman on April 11, 2019. We went to his home and painting studio in Tiny, Ontario. John Hartman's collection of photographs by Watson totaled 16 gelatin silver prints that had been removed from the albums. The prints were rehoused in archival window mats and hinged with polyester corners. Hartman kept his own records of his collection, including the title, date, size, medium, inscriptions, markings, and high-

resolution digital documentation of each photograph. During my visit, we digitally documented each print and its housing. Hartman kindly allowed me to remove each print from its individual housing in order to measure and document both the recto and verso of each photograph to compare with the AGO's records.

Documentation Process

Before the rehousing could take place, it was essential to digitize the albums, their pages, and their photographs. This assists in the maintenance of the albums' original order and helps to depict the original object. Prior to digitization, detached prints that had been displaced from their original order were identified and documented in their correct sequence.

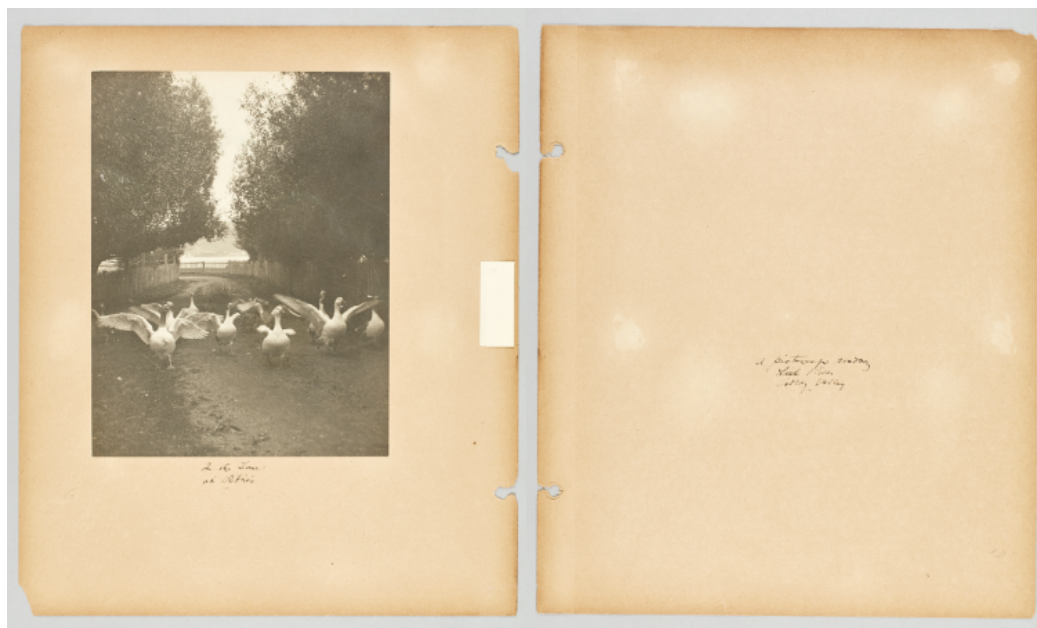


Figure 17: Digitized pages from the album *Newfoundland*, 1890s–1930s. 2018/3588.15-16.

Craig Boyko, a photographer at the AGO, used a Canon 5D Mark III and studio strobe lights with a softbox to photograph the albums. The images were transferred to Capture One Software and saved as RAW files. The detached photographs were

documented separately and had their recto and verso photographed. It was important for the images to achieve a consistent, evenly lit, and flat documentation. These files will create the surrogate pages for the eventual facsimile albums (see Fig. 17).

Rehousing of the Edith Watson Photographs and Albums

In order to create custom boxes for each album, I measured and recorded its length, width, and depth. Custom archival boxes were crucial in preventing the contents of the albums from sliding around box when handled. The boxes were ordered through a company called Custom Manufacturing Inc. (CMI). CMI manufactures acid-free boxes that are specific to the client's supplied measurements. The boxes are made from quality archival materials, they are acid-free, high in alpha cellulose, free of lignin, free of sulphur, and with an alkaline reserve of approximately 3%.⁴⁸ Refer to Appendix D for contact information.

The relevant accession numbers were recorded in soft pencil on the bottom left or right corners of the album pages. For the detached photographs, their accession numbers were written in pencil on the verso of the photographs, and a barcode label was placed on their polyester sleeve. All boxes were labelled with their parent accession number and kept together in the Prints & Drawings vault.

This new housing ensures that the album, the photographs, and their intellectual integrity is preserved.

Creating the Facsimile Albums

The new housing provides necessary protection to the original objects that remain in incredibly fragile condition. However, the housing disrupts the experience and interaction intended for a photographic album. Therefore, I proposed to create a facsimile

⁴⁸ "MicroClimates, Archival Acid Free Boxes" Custom Manufacturing Inc., Accessed July 4, 2019. <http://www.archivalboxes.com/>.

album for each album that would replicate the original sequence, size, and tactile functions of the original object.

Following the digitization process, the high-resolution photographs were utilized in the creation of the facsimile albums. The files were brought into InDesign and arranged to follow the original sequence of the albums. Detached photographs were included in the facsimile albums and placed at the end of the album. This ties the loose photographs to the history of the album, but also acknowledges the condition of the albums when received by the AGO.

The design of the facsimile albums was carried out with the help of Malene Hjørngaard, Manager of Design, and Evelyn Quinn, Production Assistant, from the Marketing and Design department at the AGO.

SECTION VIII: CONCLUSION

The rehousing project and facsimile albums created for the Edith S. Watson collection provide an alternative method of preservation that addresses the challenges in retaining the structure and narrative of an album, the photographs inside, and the tactile experience of viewing a photographic album. The assessment of Watson's albums included the physical condition and deterioration risks of each object in order to determine suitable preservation and rehousing methods. Given the context of the AGO, an important element of this collection is that it can remain intact for research and exhibitions. By evaluating relevant case studies and rehousing scenarios, various approaches were identified and analyzed for their effectiveness in preserving the physical components of an album as well as their suitability for the AGO's institutional needs. The new rehousing scenario preserves the album and the photographs in a safe, acid-free environment, and the facsimiles visually represent the album's original structure and narrative.

This solution accommodates the Art Gallery of Ontario's preservation and accessibility objectives within their permanent collections. The new housing and facsimile designs enable the AGO to utilize the albums in a broader context: the album pages can be displayed and studied individually, and the albums can be accessed without causing degradation to the original objects. Furthermore, the assistance of the digital documentation and cataloguing records ensure that the order of the albums' sequence and descriptive information is preserved. All together, these rigorous preservation and documentation practices ensure that Edith Watson's incredible life, her photographs, her writing, her social and historical contexts, remain intact and accessible for generations to come.

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE CONDITION REPORT

Page #	Silver Mirroring	Skinning	Tears	Creases	Notes
1		x	Album page: top left edge, top right edge, bottom of left edge; right edge, along binding	Album page: top right corner	Print has 2 points of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
2			Album page: top right edge, top left edge, bottom of right edge; left edge, along binding		Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
3	x	x	Album page: along right edge, bottom right edge, bottom left, along binding		Print has no point of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
4	x		Album page: along left edge, bottom left edge, bottom right, along binding		Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
5			Album page: right edge, bottom edge, along binding	Album page: top edge	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
6	x		Album page: left edge, bottom edge, along binding	Album page: top edge	Image A: Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact; Image B: Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact

7			Album page; right edge, along binding	Album page: top right corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
8		x	Album page; left edge, along binding	Album page: top left corner	Print has 3 points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
9			Album page: right edge, along binding		Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
10		x	Album page: left edge, along binding		Print has no point of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
11			Album page: bottom edge, along binding	Album page: top left corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
12	x	x	Album page: top right corner, right centre edge, bottom right corner, along binding	Album page: bottom right corner and top right corner	Print has 2 points of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
13		x	Album page: top left corner, left centre edge, bottom left corner, along binding	Album page: bottom left corner and left right corner	Print has 1 point of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
14		x	Album page: bottom right corner, along binding	Album page: top right corner	Print has 2 points of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and

					placed in polyester sleeve
15	x	x	Album page: bottom left corner, along binding	Album page: top left corner	Print has no point of contact on album page; print must be removed from album page and placed in polyester sleeve
16			Album page: top right corner, along entire right edge, along binding	Album page: top right corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
17			Album page: top left corner, along entire left edge, along binding	Album page: top left corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
18			Album page: top right corner, bottom right corner, along binding	Album page: top right corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact
19	x		Album page: top left corner, bottom left corner, along binding	Album page: top left corner	Print has four points of contact to album page; print and page will remain intact

APPENDIX B: CATALOGUING NOTES

Creator: The full name of the photographer, Edith Sarah Watson, is indicated in this section.

Title: Many of the photographs within the albums have titles, inscribed below the print in Watson's hand. According to Frances Rooney, the exception are those written by Victoria Hayward. In the case that a photograph was not titled, a descriptive title was given. In cases of untitled photographs, a descriptive title was given by myself, noted within square [] brackets

Dates: All albums in this collection are dated between 1890 and 1930. Watson's date inscriptions and other markings were applied to dating undated photographs.

Marks: The photographer's name and address as recorded on the verso of prints; identified with 'stamp' = ink wet-stamp mark, and 'imprint' = mechanical press mark. The photographer's name and address were recorded on the verso of the photographs.

Inscription: Handwritten notations inscribed in pencil or pen on the recto or verso of the print or an album page, identify a location, or name of a person, or an event, or signature(s), in variant combinations.

Medium/process: All the photographs in the albums are gelatin silver prints.

Dimensions: Measured to closest millimeter; Albums - height precedes width and depth
; Prints - height precedes width of object.

Object Number	Department	Constituent1	Constituent2	Constituent3	Title1	Object Name	Date	Medium	Dimensions	Mark(s)	Inscription(s)
2018/3591.1	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 1 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver print	35.5 x 30 cm		"Many a habitant... In Gatineau, Que." on recto
2018/3591.1a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	In Gatineau, Que. A hayride		1890s-1930s		22.8 x 19 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	"In Gatineau, Que. A hayride" on verso
2018/3591.2	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 2 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Print Page	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"Habitant Home, Ile d'Orleans, Que." on recto
2018/3591.2a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Habitant Home, Ile d'Orleans	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	12.1 x 17.1 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	"At St. Pierre, Ile d'Orleans, E.S. Watson" on verso
2018/3591.2b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	The old Giffard Home, Giffard, Que.	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	11.9 x 11.8 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	"Old Giffard Home, Brampton, Que. Edith S. Watson" on verso
2018/3591.3	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 3 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"Ancient type of house at St. Anne de Beaupre"; "Very Early type of a Quebec house, at Neuville Que."
2018/3591.3a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Ancient type of house at St. Anne de Beaupre	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	12.3 x 17.5 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	
2018/3591.3b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Very Early type of a Quebec house, at Neuville Que	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	15.1 x 12.4 cm		
2018/3591.4	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 4 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"A quaint home in Baie St. Paul, Que.;" "This old habitant farm in Beaupre, Que."
2018/3591.4a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	A quaint home in Baie St. Paul, Que	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	12.2 x 17.2 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	"Edith S. Watson" on verso
2018/3591.4b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	This old habitant farm in Beaupre, Que.	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	14.3 x 12.3 cm	"Edith S. Watson, East Windsor Hill Conn." stamped on verso	
2018/3591.5	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 5 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"On the old road at St. Francois, Que.;" "Where the Baldue Family has continued to live for 200 years"
2018/3591.5a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	On the old road at St. Francois, Que.	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	11.4 x 16.4 cm		
2018/3591.5b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Where the Baldue Family has continued to live for 200 years	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	13.3 x 11.8 cm		
2018/3591.6	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 6 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"The historic church and village street at St. Francois, Isle d'Orleans, Que."
2018/3591.6a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	[The façade of a white church on a dirt path]	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	16.3 x 11.9 cm		
2018/3591.6b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	The historic church and village street at St. Francois, Isle d'Orleans, Que.	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	11.9 x 16.8 cm		
2018/3591.7	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 7 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver prints	35.5 x 30 cm		"In the courtyard of the Que. Seminary"; "Students in the courtyard of the Quebec seminary, the old elm tree planted by King Edward VII. when Prince of Wales"
2018/3591.7a	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	In the courtyard of the Que. Seminary	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	11.5 x 16.1 cm		
2018/3591.7b	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Students in the courtyard of the Quebec seminary, the old elm tree planted by King Edward VII. when Prince of Wales	Print	1890s-1930s	gelatin silver print	12.3 x 16.8 cm		
2018/3591.8	Photography	Artist: Edith Sara Watson	Vendor: Frances Rooney	Owner: Art Gallery of Ontario	Page 8 of Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	Page	1890s-1930s	album page with gelatin silver print	35.5 x 30 cm		"An old trading post in Baie St. Paul, now in Labrador. Was destroyed in Baie."

APPENDIX D: HOUSING MATERIALS

Box Order:

Item #	Title	Height (Spine)	Width (Page)	Depth (Spine)
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2018/3588	Newfoundland; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3589	Fish; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3590	The Abenaki; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3591	Quebec I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3592	Quebec II; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3593	Ste Anne de Beaupre; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	32.5 cm	26 cm	3 cm
2018/3594	Children; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5cm	30cm	3cm
2018/3595	Wells and Pots; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3596	New Canadians; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s-1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm

2018/3597	The Doukhobors I; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	25 cm	35 cm	1.5 cm
2018/3598	The Doukhobors II; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3599	Banff, Lake Louise; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3600	Victoria, BC; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3601	Alert Bay; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	35.5 cm	30 cm	3 cm
2018/3602	Victoria Hayward by ESW; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	28.1 cm	23.4 cm	2.6 cm
2018/3603	Happy Voyages with Queenie; from collection of Canadian albums compiled by Edith S. Watson, 1890s–1930s	28.8 cm	23.6 cm	2.6 cm

CONTACT INFORMATION:

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Custom Manufacturing Inc. Canada**

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