The Arctic Photographs of Geraldine and Douglas Moodie

Organized by Glenbow
**Exhibition Description**

From 1903 to 1909, while on expeditions to Hudson Bay, Geraldine and Douglas Moodie captured the landscapes and people of the region in sometimes dramatic and often touching photographs.

Drawn from an extraordinary collection of almost 500 vintage negatives as well as the Moodies’ diaries, reports and photo registers (donated to Glenbow in 2015), this exhibition celebrates the couple’s photographic legacy of their years spent in the Arctic.

Although over 100 years old, these rare photographs resonate today, speaking to ongoing concerns of Canadian sovereignty in the North, the changing northern climate and the impact of exploration and development on the Inuit.

**The Photographers**

Geraldine Moodie (1854-1945) was one of western Canada’s first professional female photographers. She came from a long line of creative women, including writers and artists, and made a name for herself by capturing relaxed and intimate moments with her photographic subjects. Her husband, Douglas Moodie (1849-1947), whom she married in 1878, was a career Mountie who joined the North-West Mounted Police in 1885 and retired in 1917.

While the Moodies were living in Battleford, Saskatchewan in 1890, Geraldine set up her first photo studio. Mounties, however, are regularly re-posted, and when Douglas took command of the Maple Creek, Saskatchewan detachment in 1896 she established a brand new studio and later opened a branch in Medicine Hat, Alberta.

After their time in Hudson Bay (1903-09), the Moodies were posted to the Yukon, their final northern destination together. In their retirement they lived in the Cypress Hills; Duncan, British Columbia; and Calgary, Alberta.

**The Moodies’ Arctic Expeditions**

In 1903 Douglas was part of the Canadian government’s Neptune expedition to the western shore of Hudson Bay. During this expedition, he became interested in photography as a means of documenting his police work. In 1904, when Douglas was put in charge of the follow-up Arctic expedition, also to Hudson Bay, Geraldine was determined to go along. Their six children were grown, and this was an adventure which surely could not be missed.

The Moodies thrived in the North, as evident in the astonishing array of images they produced. Each photographer had his/her own style, but they learned much from each other. Geraldine, the portraitist, ventured out more often to take “snapshots” with a hand-held camera, and Douglas, the documenter, took more care with his composition and, on occasion, even took formal portraits. They spent their evenings together developing photos, planning to shoot new subjects and creating lantern slide shows to publicly display their work. When posted to Churchill, Manitoba from 1906 to 1909, they took with them their camera equipment and their love of photography.

When the Moodies first arrived in the North, a broad range of foreigners were already profiting from its abundant natural resources and were enthralled by its possibilities and challenges. The lifestyle of the Inuit was being impacted as they served the needs of these strangers, and the Inuit sometimes suffered consequences such as exposure to deadly infectious diseases. In their images of the people and the landscape of Hudson Bay, the Moodies also captured something less tangible – the attempts of the Canadian government, whether for better or worse, to establish its sovereignty in the North, not unlike what it continues to do today.
Section 1: The Neptune Expedition, 1903-04

On August 22, 1903, Dominion Government Steamer *Neptune* departed Halifax on its way to Hudson Bay. The expedition, under the leadership of geologist and seasoned northern explorer A.P. Low, was largely scientific, but was also intended to confirm Canada’s sovereignty over Arctic regions.

Major Douglas Moodie of the North-West Mounted Police (NWMP) was specifically commissioned to establish a police presence in Hudson Bay. They arrived at Fullerton Harbour on the western shore of Hudson Bay on September 23, 1903, and found the American whaling schooner *Era*, under Captain George Comer, settling in for the winter. The *Neptune* began to prepare for a long winter as well. Moodie and his five police constables wasted no time in constructing a small NWMP post, and in informing Comer that the Canadian government would be collecting customs duties from foreign whalers and fur traders.

For the next 10 months, until July 18, 1904 when the receding ice finally allowed the *Neptune* to depart, Fullerton became a sometimes uneasy – but more often collegial – community of scientists, police, sailors, whalers, sea captains and, of course, the Inuit in whose home they wintered. Douglas Moodie, encouraged to take up photography by his wife, Geraldine, put his portable cameras and developing kit to good use in documenting the expedition’s activities.

Section 2: The Arctic Expedition, 1904-05

Just two months after leaving Fullerton Harbour aboard the *Neptune*, Douglas Moodie was put in command of the Dominion Government Steamer *Arctic* and sent back to Hudson Bay for another winter. The *Arctic* left Quebec City on September 16, 1904, and arrived at Fullerton exactly a month later. This time Douglas was accompanied by his wife, Geraldine, and son, Alex, as well as several more members of the Royal North-West Mounted Police.

Geraldine brought her professional studio cameras, lights and boxes of photographic glass plates in all sizes, intent on continuing the work she loved. By this time, a barracks had been built for the now larger police force, and the original small post building became both the Moodies’ home and Geraldine’s photo studio. Here, she took intimate and carefully composed portraits of her Inuit neighbours at Fullerton, especially the women and children, while Douglas continued to photograph the activities of the men under his command.

The *Arctic* remained at Fullerton until July 5, 1905, when a channel in the ice allowed the ship to depart.
Section 3: Churchill, Manitoba, 1906-09

In 1906 Douglas Moodie was sent to Churchill, Manitoba to establish a Royal North-West Mounted Police detachment; he served as its commanding officer until early 1910. This new posting, on the western shore of Hudson Bay, was 650 km south of Fullerton Harbour and not as remote – it already had a Hudson’s Bay Company post and an Anglican mission. Douglas and Geraldine arrived at their new home on September 2, 1906 after a month-long voyage from Halifax on the S.S. Adventure.

Both of the Moodies continued to take photographs, but Geraldine did not set up a formal studio at Churchill as she had at Fullerton. Instead, she and her camera moved outdoors where she shot dramatic icescapes at the mouth of the Churchill River, explored the nearby ruins of old Fort Prince of Wales and visited the local Inuit at their summer camps. During these visits she often shared photographs that she had recently taken and printed.

Geraldine departed Churchill in October 1909 and never again visited Hudson Bay. Douglas followed her a few months later.
Curator

Before retiring in 2017 (and after 30 years working as an archivist), Susan Kooyman worked in Glenbow’s Archives, specializing in personal papers including diaries, letters and photographs, and cataloguing the archives of many mounted police families. In 2015, Susan had the pleasure of cataloguing and documenting the expansive collection of Moodie photographs and personal papers donated to Glenbow. The Arctic Photographs of Geraldine and Douglas Moodie draws on the many hours of research into these incredible fonds and showcases Susan’s abilities as an archivist, researcher, historian and, above all, a great storyteller.

A Remarkable Collection Results in a Remarkable Exhibition

In 2015 the photographs and personal papers of Geraldine and Douglas Moodie were generously donated to Glenbow by the Moodies’ great-grandchildren. Once unpacked and tallied, Glenbow found itself the proud owner of 1000 amazing photographs in all sizes, shapes and formats, including glass plate negatives, nitrate negatives, vintage prints and lantern slides. The donation proved to be even more astonishing when it was realized that the personal diaries and photo registers kept by Geraldine and Douglas contained candid and insightful descriptions of the circumstances and subjects of their photography.

Because of these priceless archival records, and their excellent condition, Glenbow was able to produce exceptionally high quality, large-format prints of the photographs, from the original (and subsequently digitized) negatives. We’ve chosen to present these photographs as works of fine art so the viewer can appreciate the beauty of the images, the skills of the photographers and the incredible documentary nature of the images. As well, most of the exhibition’s labels include excerpts from Geraldine and Douglas’ original photo records and journals – many of these excerpts describe specific people and circumstances relating to the photographs in the exhibition, providing historical insights into the life and times of the people in these northern communities over 100 years ago.

Sunday, April 30th, 1905. This week I have succeeded in getting a picture satisfactorily that I have been trying all winter to get, one of the Arctic lying in her winter quarters, from the shore. There has always been such a glare of snow with nothing to relieve that it gave no definition when photographed, and made a poor negative. I tried it under every condition of light, and finally found by stopping my lens very low and taking the photo when the afternoon sun was very bright, throwing strong shadows, that I succeeded in getting a fine negative.

- Geraldine Moodie

Sunday, May, 14th, 1905. The little bits I get running here and there with my hand camera are often the best pictures, and can be enlarged to any size within reason. I do not repent having bought it, as it is the nicest little instrument that I have ever come across, and one can trot about with it easily. I keep it loaded and whenever I think the conditions favorable I run out with it and get a couple of negatives; in this way I learn a good deal. The days are almost endless now, it never really gets dark.

- Geraldine Moodie
Select Images from Section 1: The Neptune Expedition, 1903-04

Whaling station, Cape Haven, Cumberland Sound, Baffin Island, September 8, 1903
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Neptune-8

Cape Haven was one of several Cumberland Sound whaling stations visited by the Neptune during the voyage, the others being at Blacklead and Kikastan. At each stop, Douglas Moodie announced the government’s intention to monitor whaling and collect customs duties on whales caught in Canadian waters.

Collecting water for Dominion Government Steamer Neptune, Hudson Strait, July 22, 1904
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Neptune-67

After nearly 10 months at Fullerton Harbour, the Neptune broke through the ice and commenced its trip home. For several days, however, the ship found itself trapped in the ice of Hudson Strait, during which time the crew were sent out to collect fresh water to produce steam to fuel the ship as well as for drinking and washing.

Inuit building igloos, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, ca. October 1903
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Neptune-6

By mid-October both the Inuit and their southern visitors were preparing for a long winter by building shelters, stockpiling food and water and making warm clothing.

Christmas Eve celebrations on Dominion Government Steamer Neptune, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, December 24, 1903 (detail)
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Neptune-70b

Douglas Moodie successfully used an explosive flash powder to take this photograph in the dark interior of the ship. Inuit, Americans from the schooner Era and the Canadians all joined together for the festivities, and two of the ship’s crew dressed up as the ship’s namesakes, Mr. and Mrs. Neptune.

Dancing on the rocks, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, July 15, 1904
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 3.5” x 12” negative
Glenbow Archives, NE-11-25

After a long winter together, and just days before Dominion Government Steamer Neptune departed Fullerton, a group of Mounted Police, sailors and Inuit danced on the rocky shore of Fullerton Harbour, accompanied by the concertina of Harry Ford, the expedition’s interpreter.
Select Images from Section 2: The Arctic Expedition, 1904-05

Dominion Government Steamer Arctic frozen in the ice, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, April 1905
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NC-81-39
The Arctic began life as the German ship Gauss, and had proven her worth on a scientific expedition to Antarctic before being acquired and renamed by the Canadian government. She was upgraded for the Hudson Bay expedition with the addition of copper sheathing to her hardwood bow and stern to better protect her against the ice.

Inuit camp and ships, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, June 21, 1905
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” glass negative and 3.25” x 11” vintage print
Glenbow Archives, NC-81-90 a
On the longest day of the year, just days before the Dominion Government Steamer Arctic departed Fullerton Harbour after being frozen in the ice for months, the Moodies took a walk with their cameras and took these two photos. The Inuit summer camp on the rocky shore, with the ships Arctic and Era in the background, truly captured the transitory nature of the little community on Hudson Bay.

Atangala visiting Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, March 1905 (detail)
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 8” x 10” glass negative
Glenbow Archives, ND-44-11
Atangala arrived at Fullerton Harbour with a packet of letters from Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen who was wintering with his small ship Gjoa and crew of six at King William Island. Amundsen was partway through what would become the first successful navigation of the legendary Northwest Passage.

Royal North-West Mounted Police dog team pulling sleigh, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, March 1905
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Arctic-74
These dogs were hauling coal across the cove to the Mounted Police barracks. Dogs were an essential part of the Hudson Bay expeditions because sleds were the only means of travelling; without them, hauling supplies, hunting for food and undertaking police patrols would not be possible. The dogs were highly valued and well fed.

Kootucktuck in her beaded attigi, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, February 1905 (detail)
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 8” x 10” glass negative
Glenbow Archives, ND-44-18
Kootucktuck, of the Kinepetoo tribe, was deaf. She was pregnant in this photo, and her baby boy was born just a few weeks later. This photo was featured on a Canadian postage stamp in 2013, as part of a series celebrating early Canadian photographers.
Unloading coal at Port Burwell, Hudson Strait, August 11, 1906
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-Churchill-11

Inuit women and children at summer camp, Fullerton Harbour, Hudson Bay, August 1906
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” glass negative
Glenbow Archives, NC-81-84

On the trip to the Moodies’ new posting at Churchill in 1906, the S.S. Adventure stopped for several days at Fullerton Harbour to land supplies for the Royal North-West Mounted Police detachment. Geraldine took photographs of the Inuit summer camp.

Hudson’s Bay Company store covered in furs, Churchill, Manitoba, ca. 1906-09
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NB-60-GM-7

The Hudson’s Bay Company, founded in 1670 to trade out of Hudson Bay, had a presence at Churchill since the early 1700s. The successful fur trade store in this photograph was managed by George Boucher who considered the Moodies and the Royal North-West Mounted Police detachment as sometimes bothersome, but generally welcome additions to the small settlement.

Inuit women coming in from seal hunt, one with a seal and one with a baby, Churchill, Manitoba, 1906
Photographer: Geraldine Moodie
reproduced from 5” x 7” glass negative
Glenbow Archives, NC-81-82

Sled dogs waiting to be fed at the Royal North-West Mounted Police barracks, Churchill, Manitoba, October 1909
Photographer: Douglas Moodie
reproduced from 3.75” x 12” nitrate negative
Glenbow Archives, NE-11-53

The dogs, a naturally scrappy lot, were tied up to prevent fights over food, and to ensure that all received a fair share. The work of the Royal North-West Mounted Police at Churchill was dependent on dogsleds during the winters, as they were the primary means of transportation for police patrols, for travelling inland to cut wood and for hunting. The dogs were well-fed and cared for, as their loss was a serious matter.
**Exhibition Details**

**Number of Works**
- 63 framed, high-quality archival photo reproductions (various sizes)
- 4 panoramic murals printed on Dibond and framed
- 2 framed portraits of Geraldine and Douglas Moodie (photo reproductions)
- 5 large Dibond murals available for an additional charge (see “Exhibition Fee” below)
- 1 slideshow video file of 47 of the Moodies’ magic lantern slides with narration (optional)
- The title wall graphic and label copy will be provided in a digital format
- The six text panels for the exhibition will be provided on Dibond

**Space Required**
- Approximately 250 running feet plus an additional 10 running feet to present the title graphic
- Additional murals are available for venues with an additional 30 to 40 running feet

**Dates of Exhibition Tour**
- January 2018 to January 2021

**Venue Presentation Period**
- 12 weeks

**Exhibition Fee**
- The exhibition fee is $8500 CAD plus shipping and insurance
- The five large Dibond murals can be included for an additional $1500 CAD plus shipping (one additional crate) and insurance coverage

**Environmental Restrictions**
- There are no environmental restrictions for this exhibition, however our recommendation are RH=45% +/- 5% over 24 hours; T=21 degrees +/- 2 degrees. Light levels can be up to 100 lux for this exhibition as the photographs are high quality prints/reproductions

**For Further Information and to Book the Exhibition**
- Contact Allison Musial, Exhibition Coordinator, 403-268-4192 aamusial@glenbow.org