Circulations: the photograph and the postcard

The chapters in Part 1 will consider, in turn, how the camera captured the impact of the aeroplane, modernising city and expanding rail network in Canada. Before that, however, it is important to focus on the most notable way in which these images circulated: as postcards. The postcard was both born of and represented nineteenth-century technological modernity. For some, including the historian Asa Briggs, the picture postcard is an *objet par excellence* of the late Victorian era, illustrative of an increasingly intense, visually stimulating, networked and globalised world.\(^1\) Literature on the history of the postcard, such as Frank Staff’s *The Picture Postcard and its Origins*, often refers to the first two decades of the twentieth century as its ‘golden age’.\(^2\) Yet while this golden age represented a high point in the international consumption of the postcard, it was not a new invention even in the late nineteenth century. Rather, the postcard evolved through centuries of writing habits, paper printing developments and various postal reforms.

Transport and communication developments – including the railways of Chapter 3 – hastened the movement of people and things across the world, creating both the distributive mechanisms and the market for the postcard. At this time the postcard came in a huge variety of forms, ranging from the kinds of cards still familiar today to intricate, embroidered structures that could be shaped to stand on a dresser. Postcard imagery also contained a plethora of photographic, cartographic and hand-illustrated subjects, serving an international and voracious consumer market. In places such as Germany, where postal and printing developments advanced more quickly, postcards were established as fashionable and exciting by the late 1880s. This trend was enlivened by the publication in 1895 of the first German ‘Gruss Aus. . .’ (‘Greetings From. . .’) card. These proved unexpectedly popular, hugely influencing
the future form of the postcard industry and the legacy of what the postcard is today. Canada was not immune from this craze in communication; by the beginning of the twentieth century the postcard had become an established consumer taste across the nation.

The parallel development of ever more efficient printing and photographic technologies paved the way for the postcard to become an inexpensive and popular way of communicating over distance. The No.3 Folding Pocket Kodak, a small, portable camera on sale from 1900 to 1914, could print the developed image directly onto a specially designed card that had a back laid out for posting as a postcard. These sorts of technological developments, along with the public’s increasing enthusiasm for postcards that could be used as greetings cards, tourist mementoes or illustrations of places visited to friends and family back home, allowed the field of postcard production to be entered by the local, jobbing photographer – able to produce interesting and unique images to meet the public desire quickly, easily and in limited print runs.

This massive increase in the volume of postcards was accompanied by a shift in the circulation of photographic images. The photograph moved from being a relatively expensive material object, enjoying limited circulation among the higher social classes, to a mass media object which most members of society could afford to own and send. The images that circulated in this way were often more significant than framings of postcards as ephemeral might suggest. Researchers of visual imagery have shown how the postcard represented and reduced complex, multi-layered messages into stereotypical visual forms. For example, Geary and Webb (a curator and an archivist respectively) edited a collection on Delivering Views: Distant Cultures in Early Postcards, which uses examples from elsewhere in the empire to illustrate how essentialist ideas of ‘distant’ places were sent home by postcard. Canada was no different; here the postcard was a catalyst to the creation and circulation of new views and ideas, as well as expressing and communicating the modernity of Canada in the twentieth century.

**Canada in the post: the golden age of postcards**

Before 1902 most photographers in Canada sold their images to national or even international printers, publishers or commissioning companies (‘sponsors’) who provided a market to photographers able to produce unique and interesting local views or particularly good images of national and provincial civic events (as in the case of J. W. Jones in Chapter 2).
After 1902 the Colonial Copyright Collection experienced a significant increase in photographic deposits – evidence in part of the popularity and profitability of this market for photographers in Canada. With the improvements to printing technology and photographic equipment that had occurred by the beginning of the twentieth century, it soon became possible for localised amateur and semi-professional photographers to print their own images cheaply and efficiently and to sell them in limited runs. This consequently was much more profitable than selling the copyright of the image to a large national or international printer.

The coming of the postcard allied to these developments also provided photographers with a distinct reason for copyrighting their work and made it financially sensible to do so. The technological, economic and circulatory changes that were the very drivers of the postcard industry also necessitated protection of images that were well received. Further, reduced photographic production and printing costs mediated the overhead expense of submitting for copyright. Photographers were thus encouraged to submit their work for copyright as it became both less expensive and more beneficial.

Local photographers were able to produce high quality postcards annotated with the card’s title and photographer’s name. This was achieved by scoring the details onto the original negative, resulting in etched white writing on the final reproduction of the card – a detail seen in many of the images of the Colonial Copyright Collection and indicative of their use as postcards. At the same time the lack of this evidence does not necessarily mean a copyrighted image was never reproduced as a postcard. Many postcards from this period survive only in private collections, and the photographers who deposited images in the Colonial Copyright Collection would have printed their own cards in small volumes for sale leaving little or no formal record. However, the material clues on the deposited images (their size, subject, layout, negative markings, etc.) often suggest that an image might have been reproduced as a postcard or view-card.

The view-card would have been produced in a similar shape and style to the postcard, but printed in higher quality; it was usually sold as a personal keepsake to tourists and other visitors. The distinction, therefore, is that while in many ways the view-card was similar to the postcard in form, style and content, it was not designed for posting. As noted in the Introduction with reference to Elizabeth Edwards’s work in particular, photographic objects carry considerable biographical traces in their material form. In the context of the Colonial Copyright Collection, the markings on images discussed earlier provide a clear insight into the potential use, economic and exchange values of many of the images.
The deposits known to be postcards (either registered as postcards or in a more raw photographic state) are an unusual blank canvas. Deposited by the copyrighter, they have not themselves been used for correspondence, so they provide none of the pithy or mundane insights into the sender and receiver common to many postcard collections. This allows the imagination to fill in some of the blanks, while the images and material form of the postcards still communicate messages about their place of origin. They also show the importance of the postcard in transforming the visual economy of the nation, as the prevalence of mass produced, affordable images was still a relatively new phenomenon.

Other sources also help reveal the use of images as postcards. *Greetings From Canada*, an enthusiast’s publication detailing the variety of postcards posted in Canada between 1900 and 1916, contains several postcards decorated by images deposited in the Colonial Copyright Collection. The Azilda train crash (Fig. 1.1, see also Chapter 3), the ruins of the 1904 fire in Toronto (Fig. 1.2) and the social views of the arrival of the Moose Jaw homesteaders in 1909 (see Fig. 1.3 and a discussion

![Image of Azilda Train Wreck, No.10](image-url)

**Fig. 1.1** ‘Azilda Train Wreck, No.10’. Copyright William G. Gillespie (copyright number 17688).
The contents of the postcard collectors’ website delcampe.net suggests that the postcards of copyright depositors such as Byron Harmon (Fig. 1.4) and Albert Rafton-Canning are still popular among enthusiasts for their beautiful views of the Rocky Mountains.

The absence of supplementary archival evidence for many of these photographs does not diminish the significance of the Colonial Copyright Collection as one of the most substantial and complete archives of potential, if not actual, postcard production across Canada during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is particularly important as many Canadian historians and postcard scholars regard the sphere of the local producer as the most dynamic part of the postcard production market. It has often been suggested that the work of local photographers gives a more authentic picture of the visual diversity of the place and the nation than the larger, less visually dynamic publishers, who often struggled to source material from more marginal locations due to problems in their supply chain.
Fig. 1.3 ‘Homesteaders Trekking From Moosejaw, Saskatchewan’. Copyright Lewis Rice, 1909 (copyright number 20797).

Fig. 1.4 ‘Approaching Wilcox Pass’. Copyright Byron Harmon (copyright number 24781).
Alongside new production capabilities, the desire of local enthusiasts, tourists and collectors provided an incentive for postcard producers constantly to produce new images. This resulted in a further explosion of views and subjects depicted through the lens of local photographers and on sale to the public. As a result, by the end of the 1920s few public gatherings, natural beauty spots or striking views of human settlements were left un-photographed; wherever there was a view to be captured, a photographer had journeyed to the spot and portrayed it through the camera’s lens. One example is the work of photographer Byron Harmon (also featured in Chapter 3), who depicted large parts of the national parks and the edge of the Rocky Mountains around Banff, Alberta, from exquisite viewpoints scouted on his walks around the area. Harmon printed the images himself for sale as postcards made available to locals, tourists and travellers – the most substantial market being those individuals passing through on the transcontinental railway. Harmon also experimented with novel photographic and reproduction techniques, depositing a number of stereoscopic photographs (with postcard backings) for copyright in the early twentieth century. Two of these can be seen in Figs 1.5 and 1.6.

The advent of the photographic postcard therefore represents a significant change in the means and meaning of communication at a distance in Canada. It also corresponds with the development of the Canadian postal service, one of a number of modes of communication established with a mandate to encourage national integration and identity formation. The Canadian postal service was therefore the main mechanism

![Fig. 1.5 ‘CPR Hotel, Banff’, 1908. Copyright Byron Harmon (copyright number hs85 10 19332).]
through which postcards circulated in this period, enmeshing the images they contained in the nation-building process. Within this context the many images deposited in the Colonial Copyright Collection which were subsequently used for postcards can be seen as actively taking advantage of a developing means of circulation and the resulting market this provided.

As will be shown throughout this book the photograph, in a range of object forms, was bound up in various projects of nation-building and identity formation. Some of these, such as the railway, pre-date and run through the period discussed in this book while others, such as the Canadian postal service and the use of the aeroplane, were contemporaneous to the collection’s creation. To illustrate the scale of the audience that the Canadian postal service allowed photographers to access through photographic postcards, in 1913 60 million postcards were sent in Canada. This is an impressive figure when one considers that the total population of the country at that point was only roughly 7.3 million.

The developing Canadian postcard industry therefore had important consequences as a result of its mobilisation of views of the nation, domestically and internationally. Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries these visual identities of Canada were continually under (re)construction. Within Canada, communicating new places of settlement between families and friends was important in the context of rapid mobility and change. Globally too, the postcard was integral to communication between individuals and conveying the changing status of this agrarian Dominion cum modern nation.
A new vision: Canada from the air

Communication technologies are a significant theme of this book. Chapter 3 is dedicated to the railway in Canada, while this chapter will now dwell on a large series of aerial photographs deposited by the Bishop-Barker Co. As noted in the Introduction, Harris’s idea that the Canadian landscape can be understood to comprise of various ‘drafts’ is important to this work: this landscape, however, is a palimpsest of interlocking communication technologies and potentials. No technology supersedes the other and cannot therefore be truly seen as a progression, due to this enmeshing of technologies and landscapes. With this in mind the technologies and their agencies discussed in this work do not ‘progress’ temporally; instead they follow the logic of the collection and its patterns of deposit.

Amidst the large number of postcards in the collection, some mundane and many innovative, there are a few hundred that stand out: the aerial photographs of the Bishop-Barker Co. Postcards of aerial views of Canada are both enabled by, and symbolic of, a nation undergoing change as a result of modern technology. They also illustrate particularly well the way in which consumers’ appetite for new postcard images drove photographers and postcard manufacturers to great lengths to find new views. As noted, the Colonial Copyright Collection includes a substantial deposit of aerial photograph postcards produced by the Bishop-Barker Co., a firm set up by Canadian pilots after the First World War. Produced, printed and copyrighted from 1919 to 1920, the postcards represent an attempt by ex-flying aces from the First World War to transfer their military skills into a postwar living. Notably the images are also some of the first examples of photographs of the Canadian landscape produced from the air and made available for popular consumption.

Between the wars the aeroplane, and the view of the landscape that it allowed, inspired excitement among all sections of society, from politicians to artists, businessmen to the general public. It represented postwar hopes and ideals that a ‘great period [had] just begun’, as Le Corbusier wrote in Aircraft. This technology no longer had just a military purpose: it represented an ability to provide people with new agency and a ‘New Vision’ that many thought would define the rest of the century. Certainly this was the case for the architect Le Corbusier. His initial experiences of flight led him to extol how it would change the ability of people to perceive and act upon the world around them irrevocably.
The aerial photographs of the Bishop-Barker Co. were produced at a time when Canada was coming to terms with the effects and aftermath of the First World War. It was a time of global change, as power geometries shifted, technological modernity continued to reshape societies and a pandemic swept across the world in the wake of the conflict. In Canada, the aeroplane and the view from above were greeted with enthusiasm after the war as they represented new, previously unthought-of opportunities for crossing and developing the landscape. The alliance of the aerial photograph with the postcard served to communicate these ideas to a wider audience and increase the public scope of this excitement.

The aerial view in Canada was not reserved for visual pleasure and popular spectacle alone. In the interwar period persistent attempts were made to exploit the commercial potential of the aeroplane, with forestry programmes, the development of airmail services, aerial terrain mapping and various other schemes trialled in order to create a market for air services. In some cases these were alleged to have brought significant benefit to the Canadian economy (especially from terrain mapping) in terms of resource exploitation and transportation development. However, few produced sustained income for aviators. In the 1920s the few significantly profitable avenues of employment for Canadian aviators were those provided by aerial display and aerial photography, particularly popular after the idea of the ‘flying ace’ had taken hold in the public imagination during the First World War. In eastern Canada the niche of aerial display and aerial photograph production was inhabited by the company of Billy Bishop and William Barker, two of the war’s most celebrated heroes.

Bishop and Barker had gained renown in the war for their exploits as pilots in the British army. By the end of the war they finished as ‘most kills’ and ‘most decorated’ respectively, while tales of their daring and bravery had been communicated across the British Empire. The flying abilities of both men were well known and Billy Bishop’s fame has proved particularly enduring, as evidenced by the 1982 production of films such as The Kid Who Couldn’t Miss. It was William Barker’s work as a reconnaissance pilot flying over German lines, however, which provided the essential skills for aerial photography. During the three years that they remained in business, the only profitable ventures the duo undertook were the displays they put on for the Canadian National Exhibition and the aerial photographs they produced for private sponsors or reproduction as postcards, either by themselves or the Canadian Postcard Co.

One of Bishop-Barker Co.’s best-known images is of Queen’s University in Kingston, Ontario (Fig.1.7), one of the company’s first
profit-generating commissions after its formation. Evidence that this was a photograph taken for aesthetic rather than cartographic purposes – as was common in aerial photography – lies in its composition. Cameras fitted for landscape survey purposes have to be positioned, as near as
possible, in the undercarriage of the plane, facing straight down to the ground, in order to reduce the effect of the earth’s curvature on the image and prevent a skewing of perspective over increasing distances. In the images produced by the Bishop-Barker Co. the camera is side mounted to the plane, negating the usefulness of the images for the purpose of aerial mapping. Instead the side mounting gives a co-pilot control of the camera’s mechanical features, allowing the selection of shots, varied compositions and the production of photographs from different altitudes. This is distinct from under-mounted cameras: a pilot using these would have to fly at a fixed altitude so that the pre-arranged aperture and f-stop values of the camera (which could not be altered in flight) would produce viable images. As a result, the images are not suitable for measurement, but are instead intended to produce a pleasing aesthetic view of the central scene and surrounding landscape.

The camera work and picturesque composition of the Bishop-Barker Co. images are highly accomplished, especially for a field in its infancy. Neither the clarity of the images nor the altitude from which they were taken were usual for the time, with both the high quality of the work and skill levels of the pilots stemming from wartime experience. Photograph 1.7 is just one example of a technically demanding image: it involved two planes, a rapid exposure and a good eye to get the other aircraft in just the right point of the frame. The combination of these skills, honed in the theatre of war, allowed and informed the production of the new landscape perspectives produced by the Bishop-Barker Co. Thanks to the postcards of this firm, these images were no longer confined to the military or more affluent audiences, but could circulate across Canada and the world.

In all of the images taken by the Bishop-Barker Co., the elevation of the camera’s lens and the aeroplane’s mobility reveals the larger geometries of Canada’s landscapes. Take the image of the downtown area of Toronto, for example, with Yonge Street running south to north through the middle (see Fig.1.8). At ground level the hustle and bustle of the commercial district created a claustrophobic clutter that masked the structure and underlying order of North American urban development. Yet from the air the impregnable density of Yonge Street and the rest of Toronto’s downtown opened to reveal the straight lines and organisation of a regimented grid system.

In other ways, however, the city becomes no less confusing as its gigantic sprawl covers every inch of the frame; the aerial view levels the ground’s relief and the scale of the scene provides few prominent landmarks to the untrained eye. To counteract this, the photograph of Queen’s University, as with others taken by Bishop-Barker Co., has
a highly recognisable landmark at its centre. This not only provides a striking centrepiece, but also allows viewers to orientate themselves around a relatively unfamiliar view of the Canadian landscape. Such a focus is important, given the ability of the view from above to flatten

Fig. 1.9 ‘London, Ont., Taken From an Aeroplane’. Copyright Bishop-Barker Co. Ltd. (copyright number 36075).

Fig. 1.10 ‘Woodstock, Ont., Taken From an Aeroplane’. Copyright Bishop-Barker Co. Ltd. (copyright number 36519).
topographies and mask features well-known from the ground, overlaying them in turn with previously imperceptible landmarks. Artists, including members of the avant-garde, relished the view from above precisely because of its dizzying perspective and the challenge it offered to the familiar perspective of landscape (see below).

Bishop-Barker Co. also used the aerial view to provide new perspectives on some of Canada’s wider urban and rural geographies. The shot of London, Ontario, for example, shows the interlocking relationship between Canada’s towns, industry and landscape as the view focuses on the meeting of the two forks of the River Thames (see Fig. 1.9). The view illustrates London’s industrial complexes set against the riverbank as well as, on the opposite bank, the residential and leisure opportunities provided by the slow, unnavigable river, with houses and green spaces running down to the water’s edge. This illustrates the importance of Canada’s landscape features to its urban geographies and the intertwined, sometimes contradictory, ways in which they have been appropriated for human use. While this relationship between geography and settlement was understood, the depiction of this in such an all-encompassing and grand scale of vision was new. Geographer Denis Cosgrove described such aerial views of North America as ‘Apollonian’ because of the god-like view provided. This term also underscores the significance of power, reflecting attempts by Canada and the United States to constrain and control the landscape in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Like the cityscapes, suburban images also bring modern planning to the fore. In an image of Woodstock’s suburban borders, the rigid geometries carved into the landscape by rational agricultural practices become apparent from the air as the division and management of Canada’s large and diverse landscapes is shown from a new perspective (see Fig. 1.10). For Cosgrove, ‘[t]he American landscape makes sense from the air’ as such views give an overview of the patterns and logics at work in the management of the landscape on a grand scale. As with American photographers and the American landscape, Canadian photographers have always sought, since the advent of photography, to raise the camera higher, in order to depict more of the area around them and afford a better perception of their similarly vast landscapes. Aerial photography offered the first versatile realisation of this desire – not just because of the views on offer, but also through the mobility afforded by the aeroplane. While aerial views had been produced before, they had generally been taken from balloons or kites that were tethered and costly to move, limiting what they could capture. Now aeroplanes could capture whole areas to convey more fully the vastness not only of Canada’s largest cities, but also of its formidable natural landscape.
Larger landscapes were captured by Bishop-Barker Co. by using series. An example is the nine images taken over and around the Ontario town of Brantford, produced by a roughly north to south fly-through (see for example Figs 1.11–1.13). This angle created a cross-section

Fig. 1.11  ‘Brantford, Ont., Taken From an Aeroplane’ [1]. Copyright Bishop-Barker Co. Ltd. (copyright number 36575).

Fig. 1.12  ‘Brantford, Ont., Taken From an Aeroplane’ [2]. Copyright Bishop-Barker Co. Ltd. (copyright number 36578).
taking in most of the town’s significant features: downtown, the Grand River with its slightly abraded southern stretch and upper islands, residential areas, bridges straddling the river and the town’s industry. The perspective presented across the images is one of development, progress and a technical capacity to tame Canada’s landscape for the benefit of its citizens. Brantford is not a unique case, nor was it singled out for a particular photographic purpose. Instead it was photographed as part of a series of private commissions along the Quebec City–Windsor Corridor undertaken following the enthusiastic reception of the Bishop-Barker Co.’s Kingston and Toronto images. Brantford is one of the many urban and rural areas in Ontario photographed extensively (with many of urban areas depicted in their entirety) in these sponsored runs, intended for commission sale or distribution as postcard images.21 The result was a portfolio of images from which consumers could select particular views of specific places of interest to them, including homes, leisure sites, notable landmarks and public buildings. Seen in series, the aerial view opened up new geographical perceptions of place to the consumer, unbound from routine and habit at street level and offering up the whole local area from a dizzying and exhilarating height.

The distributional reach of the postcard greatly reinforced the significance of these new aerial visions, which became highly valued and widely circulated. The postcards of the Bishop-Barker Co. presented a

Fig. 1.13 ‘Brantford, Ont., Taken From an Aeroplane’ [3]. Copyright Bishop-Barker Co. Ltd. (copyright number 36574).
new vision of the geography of Canada at a time when Canada’s perception of itself was changing in a world of shifting political power geometries. Further, the postcard provided a format that could disseminate this view and its perspective on the landscape of Canada to an ever increasing population, not just in Canada, but globally. Such images are therefore credited with helping to secure the geographical cohesiveness of the Canadian nation state.  

As a result what we see is, to borrow from the analysis of Cole Harris, another layer of perspective and mobility being applied to the Canadian landscape. Aerial technology would bind even more diverse spheres of Canada’s landscape to the urbanised east, especially in the Canadian Arctic, through its power to survey, transport and communicate. The significance of this scope and modernity is considered further in the following section, which explores the relationship of the aerial view and the Canadian National Exhibition.

**Canada imagined from the air**

A key national event during the time of the Colonial Copyright Collection was the Canadian National Exhibition. Formerly the Toronto Industrial Exhibition, the event became known as the Canadian National Exhibition in 1912 in order to compete with other national and international fairs. The structure and architecture of the exhibition had always changed incrementally and continued to do so after the renaming. However, the change of name marked an acknowledgement that the exhibition, and Canada itself, had become more internationally significant since the days of the first Toronto Industrial Exhibition in 1878. The idea of the exhibition as a space for the articulation of national identity in modern cities is well established during this time period. The Canadian National Exhibition was no different in articulating and disseminating an understanding of Canadian urban and modern identities, which circulated particularly through the aerial display and the postcard.

Much attention has been paid to the role of exhibitions and world fairs in the development of nineteenth- and twentieth-century modernity and its articulation to the public. Tony Bennett’s exploration of what he calls ‘The Exhibitionary Complex’, for example, shows how such fairs ordered the world for the understanding of the public, while also ordering the public to fit with the social, technological and political ideology represented by the exhibition itself. In his view,
the exhibition and the world’s fair were therefore akin to the museum in providing an ordered, visualised understanding of the operation of the world – not just in respect to the nation, but the relationship of other nations to the host nation as well. The exhibition, as with the museum, provided visual templates for the comprehension of the order of things in the world, extensively contrasting Western modernity with the orientalism of the ‘other’ in order to assert the achievements of the host state.

One significant difference between the exhibition and the museum, however, was the versatility of the space utilised for the exhibition. Whereas the museum provided a fixed space (and its social messages were underpinned by this fixedness), the exhibition offered a space made of prefabricated facades, underpinned by mass communication and mass production. As a result, the exhibit and its message could be changed and adapted in the face of continued developments of technology and the workings of the world.

While most of this academic discussion has focused on European and, to a lesser extent, American exhibitions, relatively little work has been done on the role of exhibitions in Canada. However, as Keith Walden suggests in Becoming Modern in Toronto, the Toronto Industrial Exhibition and Canadian National Exhibition spanned a period of significant change. They played an important role in shifting perceptions of Canada as a rural and agrarian state to a metropolitan one, including developing an urban and modern mindset within elements of the population.

Walden has written about how the exhibition promoted the appropriation of modern technology within Canadian cities while also working to articulate a vision of metropolitan modernity to the Canadian upper and middle classes. As a result of this, and the canny use of the exhibition by many Canadian entrepreneurs, the exhibition played an important role in the development of metropolitan capitalism in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Canada, as testified by the later discussion of T. Eaton and Co (see Chapter 2).

Given its predominance and routine nature, it was also important for the exhibition to always have something new and ‘cutting edge’ on show. The Canadian National Exhibition was one of the first national fairs to reopen after the First World War, in the summer of 1919. It busily set about promoting Canada’s role in the war and the positive effects of the conflict on the country. In particular, its organisers were enthusiastic about the new technology of flight developed in the early part of the twentieth century and exploited during the First World War. Most importantly, the exhibition was keen to showcase
the role of Canada's most celebrated airmen in the conflict, and also to impress upon visitors the wonder of the aircraft and its view from above. Further, it was keen to highlight Canada's involvement in the new technology as a means of asserting the nation's own modernity. Central to this was the by now well-established device of the postcard, used to disseminate the message of the fair in an accessible and mobile form.\textsuperscript{31}

The Canadian National Exhibition of 1919 hosted the first display of formation flying in Canada, performed by the fledgling Bishop-Barker Co. and their associates, in ex-German air force Fokker D-VII's.\textsuperscript{32} The company was loaned the planes by Arthur Doughty, the Dominion Archivist, who was placed in the role of Director of War Trophies in Canada after the war. This new position, along with the captured German and surplus British materials given to Canada as 'Imperial Gifts', were influential in promoting use of the aircraft in Canada.\textsuperscript{33} The display was well received by a large, enthusiastic crowd, leading the Toronto Globe to headline the resulting article, ““Stunt” Flying Thrills the Crowd – Spectators at Exhibition Gasp at Feats of Daring Airmen”.\textsuperscript{34}

Subsequent to this first show, stunt and formation flying became regular parts of the show calendar, exciting crowds keen to see the pilots'

![Fig. 1.14 ‘Col Barker V. C. in One of the Captured German Aeroplanes Against Which He Fought His Last Battle’. Copyright Canadian Postcard Co. (copyright number 36752).](image-url)
daring and thrilling manoeuvres. Enhanced by sensational media reports of iconic figures such as William Barker and Billy Bishop (both known for their alcohol-fuelled, celebrity lifestyles), as well as the availability of souvenir materials produced for the display, the technology of flight was

Fig. 1.15 ‘Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1919. Taken From an Aeroplane’ [1]. Copyright Canadian Postcard Co. (copyright number 36086).

Fig. 1.16 ‘Canadian National Exhibition, Toronto, 1919. Taken From an Aeroplane’ [2]. Copyright: Canadian Postcard Co. (copyright number 36083).
associated with daring and innovation (see for example Fig.1.14). In short, flight represented the cutting edge of modernity.

Capitalising on the excitement for aerial shows, the exhibition organisers soon began to sell aerial postcards of the exhibition grounds, its pavilions and crowds. These were produced by the Canadian Postcard Co. and taken by the Bishop-Barker Co. As in the discussion of the images of Brantford, London and downtown Toronto, the aerial photographs were unlike any previous view of the Canadian National Exhibition grounds (see Figs 1.15–1.16). Bird’s-eye views had been produced in the last 20 years, but these had only served to highlight the height and grandeur of the buildings; the logic of the overall exhibition site could not be portrayed. In these images, however, the topography of the landscape is flattened and the people visiting the fair resemble nondescript ants moving around the grounds.

In combination, these three elements – the war hero, aerial performance and photographic view – gave the visitor to the fair a sense of the wonders of a new technology and its potential for modern Canada. In the previous century Canada had tamed the landscape and achieved confederation through the use of the railway. Now the twentieth century promised a new era with the mastery of the sky. Further, all of this was depicted on the affordable, portable format of the postcard, to be taken home or sent across the world. The interlinking of the exhibition

Fig. 1.17 ‘A Friendly Call Over St. Clair and Avenue Rd. District, Toronto, Ont.’. Copyright Canadian Postcard Co. (copyright number 35828).
message with the visual image on the postcard was a common feature of the exhibition throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Across Europe the postcard and other souvenirs were used to commemorate the understandings and messages of the world’s fair, and the same is true of the Canadian National Exhibition.

The Canadian National Exhibition is just one of many worldwide examples of the mass circulation of images instigated by the postcard, an object central to the development of a globalised image world. Technological innovation created a market for the photographer to exploit, and the Colonial Copyright Collection contains myriad examples of photographs produced to satiate the appetite of the tourist, collector and correspondent. The work of the photographer then circulated through various networks to become part of complex understandings of place. For Canada, the development of technology and new networks of communication also provided an opportunity to promote the nation’s own modern development. Aerial photographs in particular provided a new and valuable perspective on its landscape. With the help of institutions such as the Canadian National Exhibition, which placed the modernity of the aircraft and the spectacle of its view at the forefront of the public imagination, the postcard distributed a new perspective of the Canadian landscape.

* * *

By considering postcards and the aerial photography of the Bishop-Barker Co. in the same chapter, this analysis has done two things. It has illustrated one of the most significant ways in which the photographs of the Colonial Copyright Collection circulated in a national and global visual economy, and also highlighted the evolving frameworks of technological modernity in Canada between 1895 and 1924. The significance of the postcard and view-card lies in the ease of production and volume of circulation that these formats provided to Canadian photographers who deposited their work for copyright. These two factors gave depth to the visual economy within which these photographers were agents and allow us to perceive the potential for circulation that each of these images had.

Allied to this, this chapter shows how photographers, and the markets to which they catered, were stimulated by new technologies and visual imaginations during the early twentieth century. This chapter also marks a point where we can begin to perceive how significantly interconnected the Canadian visual economy within which these images circulated was. The format of the postcard provides a linking material thread along which many of the photographic subjects
discussed in *Canada in the Frame* will flow. Furthermore, the recurrence of the Canadian National Exhibition links to the discussions that follow in Chapter 2, while the book’s first considerations of the technological impact of the First World War on Canada opens the door to the more substantive discussion presented in Chapter 6. In short, while the photographers who deposited material to this collection often operated in different circles, were separated by large distances and usually did not know each other, their interconnections extend beyond their utilisation of Colonial Copyright Law.

As well as this, when viewed in parallel with the images discussed elsewhere in this book, the images of the Bishop-Barker Co. remind us of the pace of change across Canada at this time. There were myriad different Canadas available for postage, collection and communication, all linked together by this photographic visual economy. This book will focus on a number of them, including Canada’s First Peoples, migrants settling in the nation and soldiers fighting in Europe, not to mention the development of Canada’s railways. The form of Canada most extensively photographed and deposited in the collection, however, was the developing city, to which the next chapter turns its attention.