

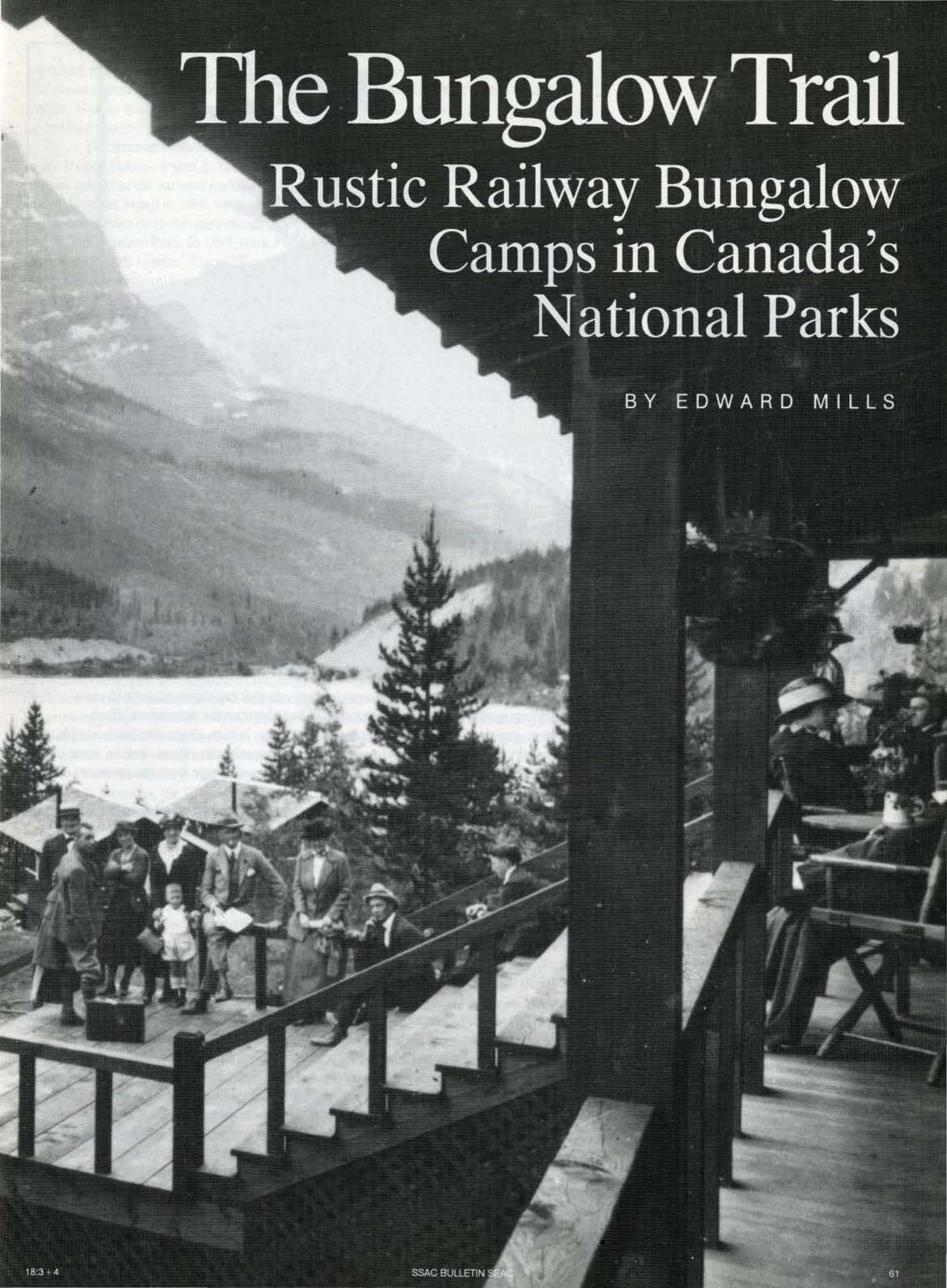
Figure 2. The guest cabins, lake, and mountains viewed from the main lodge at the CPH's Wapta Lake Bungalow Camp, ca. 1925. (Canadian Pacific Ltd., A-3490)



# The Bungalow Trail

## Rustic Railway Bungalow Camps in Canada's National Parks

BY EDWARD MILLS





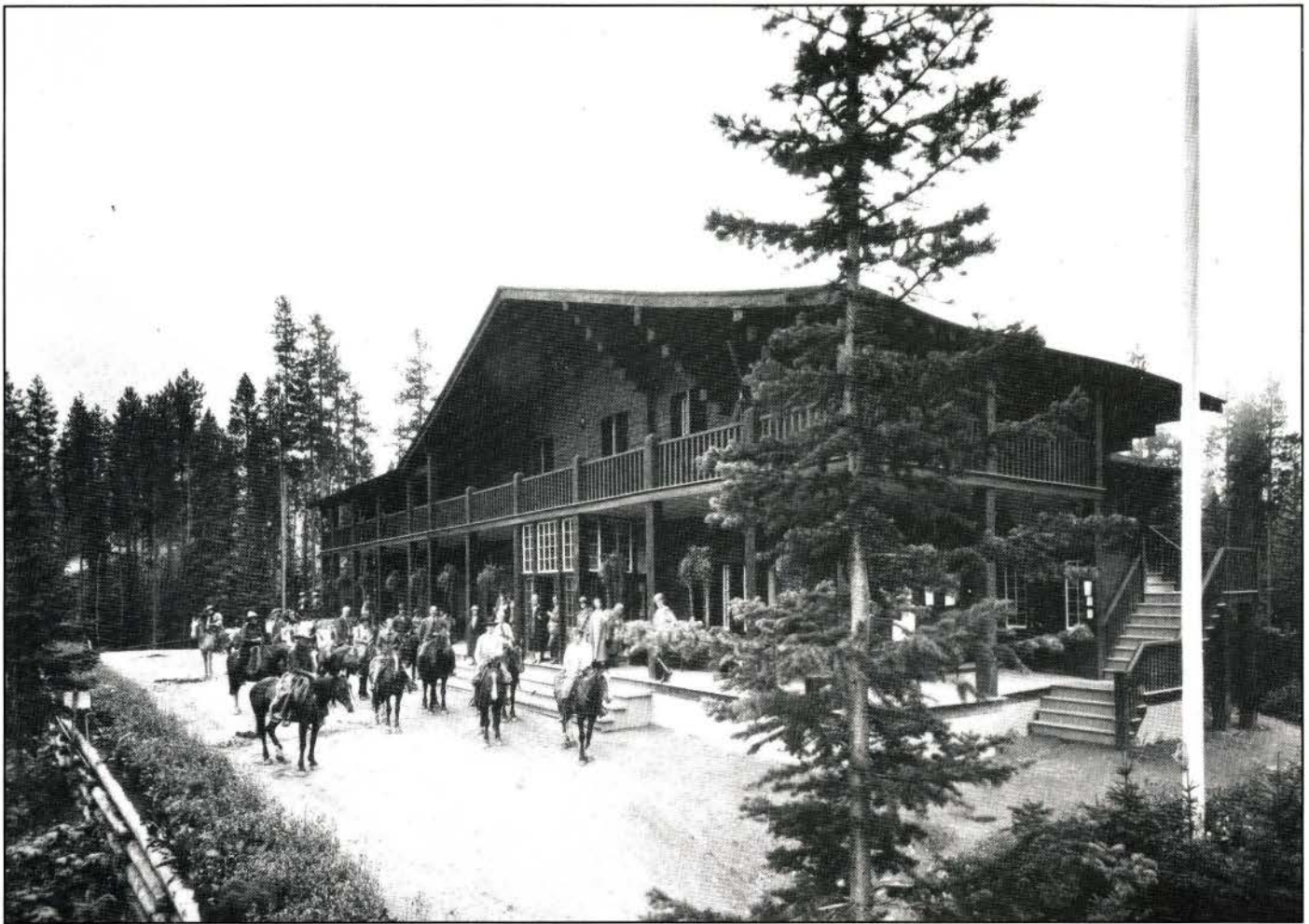


Figure 1. The Canadian Pacific Railway's Emerald Lake Lodge, built in 1903, shown here after an addition in 1925. (Canadian Pacific Ltd., 16368)

Resorts have been likened to elaborate stage sets that enable vacationers to enter fantasy worlds and act out mythical roles and identities for themselves.<sup>1</sup> Each generation creates its own set of mythologies, and these, in turn, shape the dream worlds to which vacationers aspire to escape. Aging resorts are repositories of past dreams, some tarnished and outdated, others still potent in their promises of escape from the pressures of every-day life.

Reminders of the changing trends in resort accommodation abound in the national parks of Canada and the United States. Among the most vivid is a distinctive group dating from the 1920s, when the CPR and CNR combined the rustic imagery of log and stone construction with a formula of decentralization to create a novel form of recreational accommodation known as the bungalow camp. The allure of vacationing in hand-hewn log cabins amidst spectacular mountain scenery had a powerful appeal to a generation of tourists savouring the newfound mobility of automobile travel and the increased accessibility of the Rocky Mountains.

#### THE ORIGINS OF THE BUNGALOW CAMP IDEA

During the late 19th century, North Americans married their attraction for wilderness scenery with their urge to reenact the frontier experience. These impulses found early architectural expression in the Adirondack region of upper New York State, where wealthy American industrialists began building elaborate rustic retreats for themselves during the late 1870s. These retreats were novel in several ways. Although a railway made the region easily accessible from New York City, the camps' isolated settings dictated boat rides or hikes for the final leg of the journey, thereby reinforcing the illusion of remoteness and inaccessibility. The camps utilized native log and stone construction to create a new rustic architectural vocabulary that masked modern living comforts in the guise of mock-primitive woodsmen's cabins. The image of rustic simplicity was reinforced by the use of a decentralized "camp" formula, whereby various functions were housed in a series of small structures laid out on an informal—and ostensibly random—plan reminiscent of temporary tent encampments.<sup>2</sup>

1 For example, Robert A.M. Stern, *Pride of Place: Building the American Dream* (New York and Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1986), 169.

2 The Adirondack camps are described by Harvey H. Kaiser in *Great Camps of the Adirondacks* (Boston: David R. Godine, 1982) and "The Adirondack Rustic Style," *The Old-House Journal* 11, no. 1 (January-February 1983): 1-33.



The Adirondack camps heralded the beginning of a cultural infatuation with rustic log cabins in wilderness settings. The aesthetic principles behind rustic design were articulated and disseminated by a succession of publications such as William S. Wick's 1889 book, *Log Cabins: How to Build and Furnish Them*.<sup>3</sup> Variations on the log cabin retreat began to spring up beside lakes and streams and on hilltops across the continent.

The frontier rustic vocabulary—or the Adirondack Style as it was occasionally called in the United States—found its fullest expression when railway companies adapted it to commercial resorts in the national parks of Canada and the United States. The first tentative step in this direction began in 1886, when the Canadian Pacific Railway built a series of small log stations to service its preliminary resort hotels at Banff, Field, and Glacier in the Rocky Mountains National Park. In 1891, the CPR applied the same imagery to a small chalet on the shore of Lake Louise.<sup>4</sup> The CPR quickly abandoned the rustic log motif in favour of European architectural forms for subsequent developments at this location, but returned to the style in 1903 when it built a large, squared-log chalet at Emerald Lake (figure 1). The obvious Swiss design references at this lodge were intended to complement the railway's promotional campaigns, which described the Canadian Rockies as "100 Switzerlands rolled into one" and offered mountaineering tours led by genuine Swiss guides.<sup>5</sup>

In the same year that the CPR was building the Emerald Lake Chalet, the Northern Pacific Railroad commissioned the design and construction of Old Faithful Inn in Yellowstone Park. This marked the first instance in which the rustic vocabulary of the Adirondack camps was successfully adapted to a major resort hotel. The Old Faithful Inn was, in fact, a fusion of design elements borrowed from both the frontier rustic style of these private camps and the European alpine chalet form. Most importantly, the building created a new archetype for resort design, one that was particularly well-suited for use in the national parks. But while its imagery was fresh and dramatic, Old Faithful Inn and the numerous progeny it inspired over the next 25 years adhered to the conventional resort practice of combining all its guest facilities within a single monolithic structure.<sup>6</sup>

The first major departures from the monolithic resort formula occurred in Canada's national parks, where the Canadian Pacific and the Canadian National railways began developing rival bungalow camp resort systems during the early 1920s. Several distinctive factors contributed to this phenomenon. Before the First World War, the CPR's resort system, and its methods of marketing it, had become the standard of the industry. Much of the system's success could be attributed to the broad infrastructure of subsidiary attractions developed to complement the major resort hotels. Rather than selling accommodation in exotic locales, the CPR marketed packaged vacation experiences that catered to the growing public obsession with the frontier experience. A network of trails leading from the various hotels offered patrons the opportunity to climb mountains in the company of Swiss guides, or take horseback excursions led by archetypal "cowboys." At night, the guests would be accommodated in tent camps established each spring by the tour operators. At a few of these locations, the CPR built log shelter cabins to serve as kitchens and emergency shelters during inclement weather. One of these tent camp sites, located in a meadow above Lake O'Hara in Yoho National Park, became a favoured hiking destination in its own right, and became the location for the annual meetings of the Alpine Club of Canada.

### THE BIRTH OF THE RAILWAY BUNGALOW CAMPS

After the hiatus caused by the First World War, the CPR took steps to sustain the success of its resort operations in the face of changing conditions. The automobile now loomed as a serious challenge to rail transportation, a fact that was demonstrated by the Dominion Parks Branch's commitment to develop a network of roads through the southern mountain parks. A second challenge lay to the north, in Jasper National Park, where the newly-created Canadian National Railway announced its intention to develop a new resort system to rival that of the CPR.

One of the many implications of automobile tourism was an increased demand for a less-formal and less-costly type of accommodation accessible by road. By 1920, in response to this demand, small roadside auto-bungalow courts were beginning to spring up the United States. A demand for similar facilities would arise within the mountain parks in the early 1920s, as new highway circuits were completed. The CPR took steps to preserve its monopolistic status within the parks by moving into this market.

The challenge posed for the government-owned CNR was more troublesome, since it was directed toward the same railway tourist market already catered to by the CPR's existing resort system. Rejecting pre-war plans of its bankrupt predecessors to build a giant châteauxque hotel, the CNR embarked instead on a novel facility that would be readily

3 William S. Wicks, *Log Cabins: How to Build and Furnish Them* (New York: Forest and Stream Publishing Co., 1889).

4 E.J. Hart, *The Selling of Canada: The CPR and the Beginnings of Canadian Tourism* (Banff: Altitude Publishing, 1983), 62.

5 *Ibid.*, 92

6 Old Faithful Inn and other early railway resorts in the American national parks are described in William C. Tweed, Laura E. Soulliere, and Henry G. La, *National Park Service Rustic Architecture, 1916-1942* (U.S. National Park Service, Western Regional Office, Division of Cultural Resource Management, February 1977). See also Stern, 179-183.



Figure 3. A bus tour arriving at Yoho Valley Camp in the late 1920s. The CPR marketed the camps as low-cost alternatives to its larger resort hotels. (Canadian Pacific Ltd., 23417)



distinguishable from those of the CPR and American railroads. To this end, in 1921, it acquired a lakefront lease at Lac Beauvert, three miles outside the Jasper townsite, where a group of local entrepreneurs had established a temporary tent camp resort known as “Tent City” in 1915.<sup>7</sup> After closing for the duration of the war, the camp reopened in 1919 to capacity crowds. Its success prompted the owners to add several components, including a log dining and kitchen cabin and a canvas-roofed dance pavilion.

Tent City’s success illustrated the prevailing enthusiasm for informal accommodations that permitted a greater sense of intimacy with the surrounding environment. It no doubt influenced the CNR’s decision to opt for a decentralized bungalow camp format for its new resort at Lac Beauvert. When Jasper Park Lodge first opened for business in June 1922, it consisted of two surviving log structures from the Tent City operation, along with nine log sleeping cabins. The initial group of guests marvelled at the camp’s rustic atmosphere, embodied in the oversized stone fireplace, the profusion of “heads and horns of big game” in the dining lounge, and the apparent absence of manufactured building components. A reporter from the *Vancouver World* marvelled: “In the entire lodge there is not a steel or concrete object visible!”<sup>8</sup>

The 1922 version of Jasper Park Lodge was but a modest portent of things to come. Within several years the resort would be transformed into the largest assembly of log recreational buildings on the continent.

Meanwhile, to the south, the CPR was responding to the challenges posed by both the CNR and the growth of automobile tourism by creating a network of bungalow camps of its own. In fact, the CPR’s development of bungalow camps was a logical evolution from the tent camps it had been staging over the previous two decades. The guiding minds behind the CPR’s bungalow camp system belonged to John Murray Gibbon, the railway’s chief of publicity, and Basil Gardom, the superintendent of construction for the railway’s western hotels. Gibbon devised a succession of new tourist programs, and Gardom built the network of lodges and support facilities needed to accommodate them. This building program began in 1919-20, when Gardom arranged construction of a small log lodge and a cluster of individual canvas-roofed sleeping cabins at the tent camp site at Lake O’Hara. Within a year the tent cabins were replaced by a group of log sleeping cabins to create the CPR’s first bungalow camp.<sup>9</sup>

Lake O’Hara Camp was a modest prelude to the succession of new bungalow camps the CPR established in Banff, Yoho, and Kootenay national parks during the next five years. By 1925 the CPR had eight camps in operation or nearing completion. Some were located along the new Banff-Windermere Highway which opened in 1923; the others, with the exception of the Lake O’Hara example, were all accessible by car.

7 Cyndi Smith, *Jasper Park Lodge in the Heart of the Canadian Rockies* (Jasper: The Author, 1983), 6-10.

8 National Archives (hereafter cited as NA), RG 84, volume 1012, file J16.29, vol. 2.

9 NA, RG 84, vol. 2254, file Y.17-CP 11.



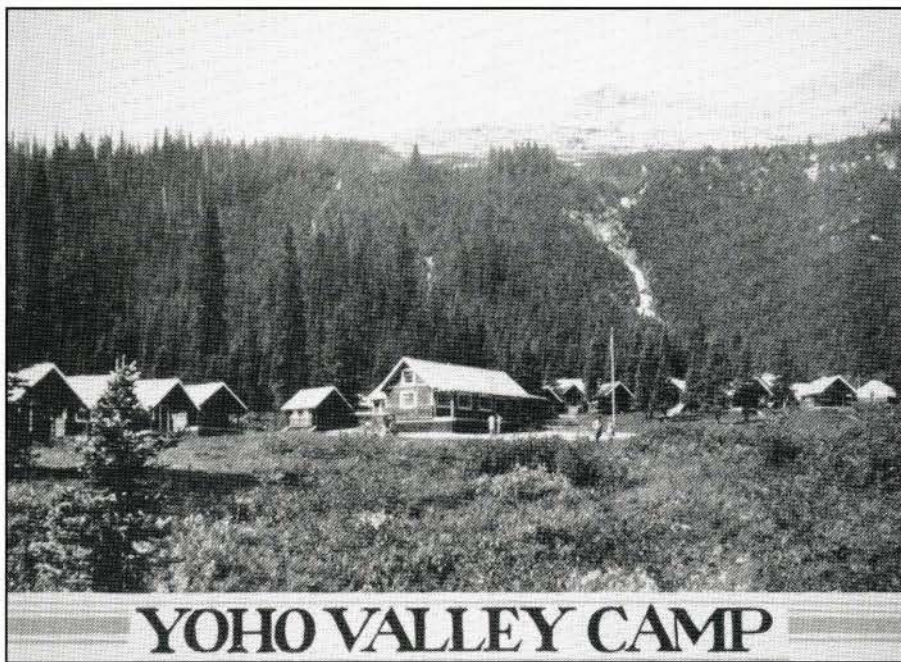


Figure 4. The main lodge and guest cabins at Yoho Valley Camp, ca. 1925. (Bungalow Camps in the Rockies, [CPR, 1928])

### THE CPR'S BUNGALOW CAMP TRAIL

The rustic bungalow camp formula catered at once to the spirit of adventure that accompanied car travel and to the public infatuation with rustic architecture that crested in the 1920s. The CPR utilized the formula to exploit both the new wave of automobile tourism and the growing popularity of its hiking and horseback tour packages.

The CPR bungalow camps were based on a simple formula of modest sleeping cabins, lavatories, and operational structures clustered around a central building that functioned as a social and dining centre. The camps were intended to replicate their tent camp predecessors' simplicity of sleeping quarters ranged about the perimeter of a central hearth. In place of the hearth, or camp fire, was a the bungalow camp's central building (or community building, as the railway frequently called it), in which a massive stone fireplace functioned as a focal point for evening socializing. Alternatively, guests could relax and enjoy the views from the open verandahs that were also integral features (figures 2, 3, 4).

These characteristics were evident in the first two large camps established at Wapta Lake and in the Yoho Valley in 1921-22. In these examples, the visual effect was initially compromised by the railway's utilitarian approach to the question of design. The camps featured what the railway described as "rustic frame construction obtained by overlapping rough boards."<sup>10</sup> The sleeping cabins were austere, rectangular structures that offered no more amenity than the tents in which the guests would previously have stayed. For both camps, the railway rationalized the absence of architectural pretention by explaining that they offered a comparatively low-cost alternative to stays in the larger resort hotels. While both camps were accessible by roads, their attraction lay primarily in their roles as starting and ending points on the CPR's horseback and hiking trails. As a CPR tourist brochure explained:

Behind the Bungalow Camp idea is an impelling thought—that of taking men and women close to the real heart of nature and providing for them at moderate cost physical and mental recreation amid beautiful scenery, not otherwise so easily accessible ....<sup>11</sup>

Within a year, the CPR moved away from this utilitarian interpretation of rusticity toward a more studied one that projected a frontier image through the use native building materials. This shift may have been influenced by the favourable publicity and interest generated by the rustic log architecture rising at Jasper Park Lodge between 1922 and 1923. The railway was certainly prodded in this direction by the Dominion Parks Branch, which showed its increasing concern about the quality of lodge designs in back country locations by rejecting and revising initial proposals submitted by the CPR in 1923 and later years.<sup>12</sup> The change in the CPR's design approach was evident in the succession of bungalow camps and subsidiary teahouses and shelter cabins it built in the parks between 1923 and 1925.

The designs during this second phase of construction were characterized by a consistent rustic image expressed through the use of native building materials and traditional building methods. The log construction techniques used for most examples were of a high

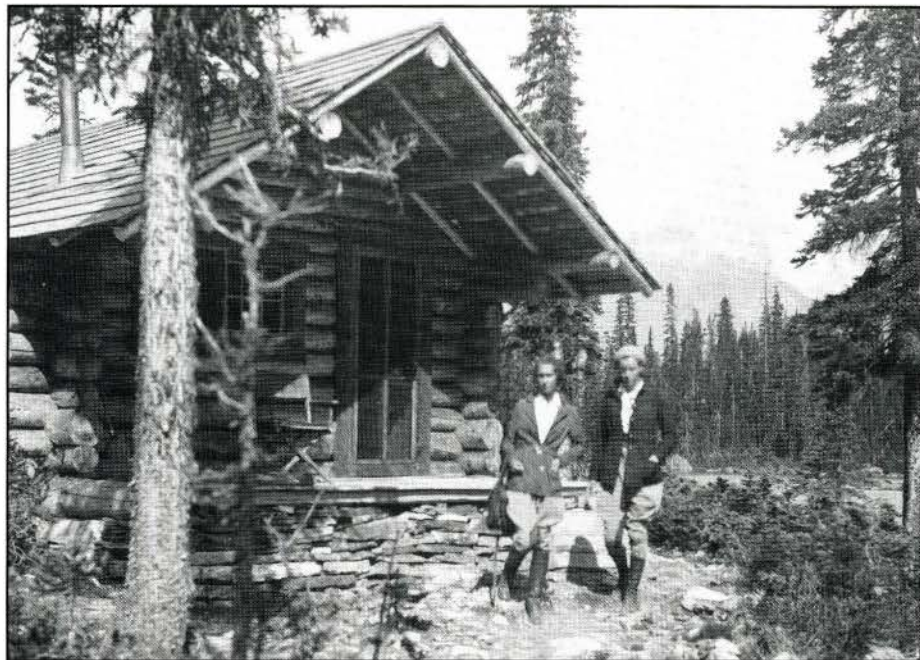
10 NA, RG 84, vol. 2244, file Y.16-17, vol. 1.

11 Betty Thornley, *Bungalow Camps in Canada* (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1923), frontispiece.

12 NA, RG 84, vol. 2248m, file Y.16-26.



Figure 5. A typical guest cabin at the CPR's Lake O'Hara Bungalow Camp, photographed in the 1920s. The cabins remain essentially unchanged today. (Canadian Pacific Ltd., 23383)



standard, and typically featured saddle-notched corners, cerfed joints which eliminated the need for chinking, and moderately-pitched gable roofs with broad overhangs to shelter perimeter verandahs. Inside, oversized stone fireplaces dominated the lounge areas of the main lodges, providing focal points for social gatherings.

The CPR also revamped its approach to the individual sleeping cabins. Though they remained small in size, the cabins now assumed the appearance of idealized woodsmen's huts (figure 5). Individual front verandahs offered guests the opportunity to relax and savour the novelty of their rustic surroundings, while stone fireplaces or wood stoves catered to that primal urge to chop wood and light fires. By 1923, the sleeping cabins at all the camps (including replacements at Wapta Lake and Yoho Valley) were being advertised as little individual mountain retreats:

The cabins are scattered, some among the spruce and pine, others on the shore of the lake. These cabins are most attractive, with all the comforts of a country home. Who has not dreamed of a mountain cabin, nestling among the pines, or one perhaps lost in infinite solitude? Fireplaces—or stoves in some—are part of the joy of mountain life—crackling logs with their pungent odor of pine!

These cabins have large verandahs, even though the one selected may have only one room.... No camping was ever like this—a spacious house all your own, hardwood floors, screened windows, a verandah, a clothes cupboard, an insomnia-proof bed ... and outside, Rocky Mountains rising all around you.<sup>13</sup>

Among the second group of bungalow camps developed were three located along the Banff-Windermere Highway, newly opened in 1923. These camps enticed motorists with the prospect of staying in charming log cabins that they could park alongside. The main lodges of these camps, which included Storm (Castle) Mountain, Vermilion River, and Radium Hot Springs, featured identical log construction. On the broad perimeter verandahs, patrons could socialize and enjoy the views of the mountains or the new highway, a 110-mile link in a route known as the "Grand Circle Tour" that began in Portland, Oregon, and wended its way through 16 national parks in the United States before reaching the Canadian border south of Cranbrook.<sup>14</sup> To motorists in the 1920s, new asphalt highways such as this rivalled the natural scenery as pleasures to the eye.

These highway bungalow camps were not the primary focus of the CPR's tourism strategy for the 1920s. In retrospect, they appear to have been developed to ward off potential threats to the railway's near monopoly over tourist accommodation in the southern mountain parks. In contrast, the CPR placed an increasing emphasis on the camps established at points close to the network of back country trails it had been instrumental in developing. By 1925, the railway had a network of five camps along this system, which it termed its "Bungalow Camp Trail."<sup>15</sup> These included the camps at Wapta Lake and Yoho Valley, along with new ones at Emerald Lake, Lake O'Hara, and Moraine Lake.

In 1923, John Murray Gibbon was instrumental in creating a new organization known as the "Trail Riders of the Canadian Rockies," which used these camps as staging

13 *Bungalow Camps in the Canadian Pacific Rockies* (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1928), 13.

14 Thornley, 18. "But perhaps you want an exotic change of scene, something to do that doesn't in the least concern itself with horses or climbing. If so, you'll take a trip down the Banff-Lake Windermere motor road, that 110-mile dream-come-true that lets the traveller into land so new that many of the mountains aren't named yet."

15 Frederick Niven, *Trail Riding in the Canadian Rockies* (Canadian Pacific Railway, ca. 1925), 8.



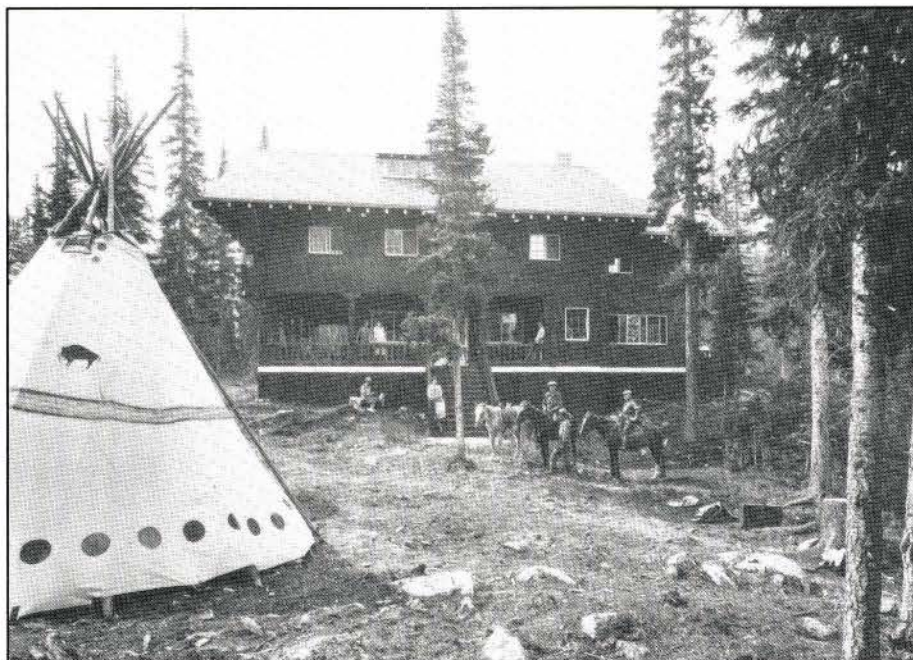


Figure 6. A horseback tour assembled beside the main lodge at Lake O'Hara. (Canadian Pacific Ltd., 19537)

points for riding excursions. The CPR benefitted through the increased volume of business the Trail Riders brought to its hotels and lodges. A new series of CPR brochures appeared, extolling the unique experience of riding and hiking holidays in the parks, and the charms of the CPR accommodations associated with them:

While the hardened trail rider may prefer to sleep in the open or under a tent with a bed of spruce boughs and a couple of blankets for cover, and thus can travel over the less beaten trails, there are many who like to have a roof overhead and a bed with soft mattresses, particularly if they have not taken much of this kind of exercise. For these nothing could be recommended more than a trip round the Bungalow Camps in the Yoho National Park ....<sup>16</sup>

The two camps at Emerald Lake and Lake O'Hara were the largest and most elaborate in the system. At Emerald Lake, the CPR created a bungalow camp by adding a group of sleeping cabins around the existing chalet it had built in 1903. The chalet was doubled in size by a major addition in 1925 and a separate clubhouse was built, creating what the railway termed its "camp de luxe" (figure 1). Emerald Lake boasted amenities not found at other camps, including sleeping cabins with private baths, tennis courts, boat rentals, and a dance floor "as good as any hotel in the mountains."<sup>17</sup>

At Lake O'Hara, the railway decided in 1925 to replace its initial camp in the upper meadows with a much larger lakefront facility. The main lodge, designed in the form of a large two-storey chalet, featured the same massive squared-log construction used on the earlier Emerald Lake Chalet. Like Emerald Lake, this facility offered its guests the option of rooms within the chalet or individual sleeping cabins spread along the lakeshore (figure 6). While Emerald Lake catered to motorists in search of upscale facilities with a rustic ambience, Lake O'Hara was aimed at the more adventurous, who were prepared to leave their vehicles for a horse ride or hiking excursion into the back country. As the CPR's promotional brochure put it:

O'Hara's appeal is rather to those who prefer to take their scenery straight. To these, the fact that the only way to reach O'Hara is on foot or by pony, and that the accommodation at the lake is confined to a log chalet and a group of bungalows, so modest and so happily conceived that they seem to melt into their background, are counted as not the least of its many advantages ....<sup>18</sup>

To further enhance the attractions of its Bungalow Camp Trail and augment its highway camps, the CPR built a network of smaller teahouses and rest houses at strategic points along the routes. Teahouses offered prepared meals, and in some cases overnight accommodation as well; the smaller rest houses provided rudimentary shelter and cooking facilities, often in spectacular locations.

The designs for these secondary facilities varied. Teahouses typically assumed a two-storey chalet form, but varied in construction and detailing. The example at Twin Falls, located at the head of a trail from the Yoho Valley Camp, was fashioned from large-dimension logs cut in the immediate vicinity. The Plain of Six Glaciers Teahouse, located

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup> Thornley, 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Bungalow Camps in the Canadian Pacific Rockies* (Canadian Pacific Railway, 1928), 21.



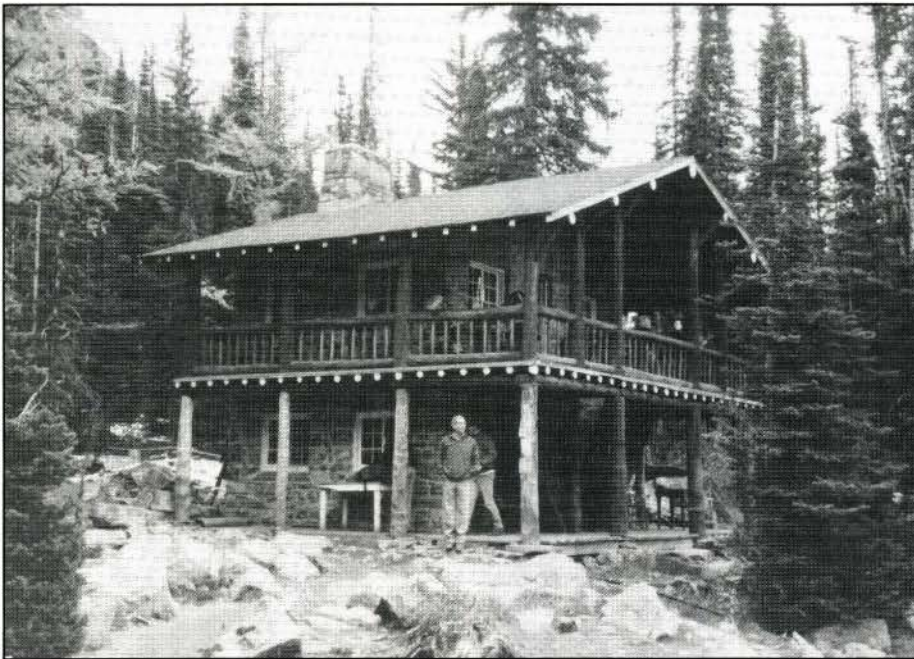


Figure 7 (above). The teahouse at the Plain of Six Glaciers, one of a series built during the 1920s by the CPR at scenic locations along horseback trails through the parks. (E. Mills, 1992)

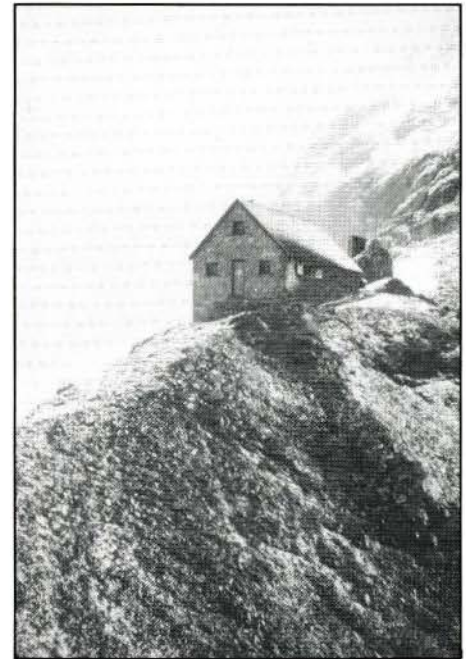


Figure 8 (right). The stone rest house at the crest of Abbott Pass in Yoho National Park, built by the CPR in 1922. (Ron Ellis, n.d.)

several kilometres above the head of Lake Louise, featured massive stone walls with a two-storey verandah fashioned from local logs (figure 7). Its Swiss imagery can be directly attributed to the influence of the Swiss guides stationed at Lake Louise who participated in its construction.

The same guides played a direct role in the construction of the stone rest house the railway built at Abbott Pass, the 2,926-metre-high summit of a trail between Lake Louise and Lake O'Hara (figure 8).<sup>19</sup> Other rest houses were one-storey cabins located at lower elevations. Most featured log construction, although a few were built from milled lumber. The cabins had broad gabled roofs that extended forward to cover front verandahs, where guests could sit or store their gear.

All the CPR bungalow camps and teahouses and most of the rest houses were built and in operation by 1926. During the remainder of the decade the CPR made modifications and adjustments, adding more guest cabins at camps where the demand was greatest. In 1929, the railway closed the camp at Vermilion River in Kootenay National Park due to the lack of an adequate water supply, and relocated its sleeping cabins to the more viable camp at Storm Mountain.<sup>20</sup> Expansion continued at many of the camps throughout the 1930s. At Lake O'Hara, for example, the number of sleeping cabins grew from the original cluster of 12 to 30 by 1938.<sup>21</sup> Emerald Lake experienced a similar growth during the same period. The increasing scale of the Lake O'Hara and Emerald Lake camps reflected the continuing popularity of the log bungalow camp concept during the interwar years.

#### JASPER PARK LODGE: THE "COMPLEAT" BUNGALOW CAMP

When it opened in June 1922, Jasper Park Lodge's modest collection of nine sleeping cabins and a kitchen-dining hall was not a serious challenge to the resort empire of the CPR. But under the direction of the flamboyant Sir Henry Thornton, who was hired as the first president of the CNR in mid-1922, Jasper Park Lodge evolved by 1925 into a luxury resort containing more than 50 log structures (figure 9).<sup>22</sup> The centrepiece of this giant bungalow camp resort was the main lodge, which opened in 1923. Over the next four years the lodge evolved into a sprawling complex of five wings linked together by a central rotunda. Although it contained a small number of guest rooms, the main lodge functioned primarily as a dining, social, and administrative centre. There, guests could relax on wicker or bentwood furniture in a carefully contrived atmosphere, either on the verandahs or beside oversized stone fireplaces in the log-walled lounges (figure 10). The rotunda functioned as a social and visual focal point for the resort. Its interior was highlighted by a vaulted ceiling supported by an exposed log truss system, replete with hammer-beams, burlled columns, and bent-stick brackets (figure 11).

The main lodge was a tour de force of rustic design. CNR tourist brochures proudly described it as "the largest single-storey log building in the world."<sup>23</sup> All other buildings on the site were designed to complement its design. Guest bungalows, recreation buildings, staff

19 Major F.V. Longstaff, "The Story of the Swiss Guides in Canada," *The Canadian Alpine Journal* 27, no. 1 (1941): 193. See also Herb and Pat Kariel, *Alpine Huts in the Rockies, Selkirk and Purcells* (Banff: Alpine Club of Canada, 1986), 9.

20 NA, RG 84, vol. 684, file B.16-112-9.

21 NA, RG 84, vol. 690, file Y.16-26.

22 NA, RG 84, vol. 1012, file J.16-29, 1925 site plan.

23 *Jasper Park Lodge in the Heart of the Canadian Rockies* (Canadian National Railways, 1926), 11.





Figure 9. Jasper Park Lodge, viewed from the opposite shore of Lac Beauvert in the late 1920s. (Jasper Park Lodge)

dormitories, and service facilities, including a combined laundry and power plant, all featured horizontal log construction with fieldstone foundations, chimneys, and trim.

In marked contrast to the CPR camps, where buildings were arranged within the existing landscape with minimal modification to the natural terrain, the buildings and terrain at Jasper Park Lodge were carefully manipulated to create a precise image. Guest cabins were arranged in rows along flower-bordered lanes overlooking the lake (figure 12). In fact, the layout of Jasper Park Lodge was approached as a town planning exercise. Various functions were separated into discrete zones, ranging from a compound of staff dormitories to an 18-hole golf course.<sup>24</sup> To create the latter, the railway blasted stone outcroppings and hauled in 40 freight-car loads of topsoil to develop fairways, bunkers, and greens. Many of the holes were aligned with surrounding mountain peaks, giving golfers distinctive landmarks at which to “aim.”<sup>25</sup> This approach was consistent with the overall objective at Jasper Park Lodge, wherein the natural landscape was reduced to a scenic backdrop for activities in and around the resort. A 1925 tourist brochure articulated this intent:

[Jasper Park Lodge] actually constitutes a miniature village of rustic bungalows, artistically arranged about the shores of the most captivating lake you ever saw. The same architecture prevails throughout, and the materials used are the gift of the valley, logs from the forest and boulders from the glacial-swept basin. Of course the large building in the center is the main attraction. There your meals are served in the commodious dining room which affords accommodation for 575 guests, and you can find all the conveniences and comforts of a modern city hotel; card rooms, barbershop, ladies’ retiring lounge .... The spacious verandah grips you with an obsession to spend the day in its genial atmosphere and revel in the Alpine grandeur upon which it fronts ....<sup>26</sup>

24 Jasper Park Lodge’s zonal characteristics are described in G.E. Mills and C.J. Taylor, “Jasper Park Lodge: Built Heritage Resource Description and Analysis” (Environment Canada, Canadian Parks Service—Western Region, April 1992), 24-42.

25 Smith, 41-43.

26 *Jasper Park Lodge in the Heart of the Canadian Rockies* (Canadian National Railways, 1926), 10-11.



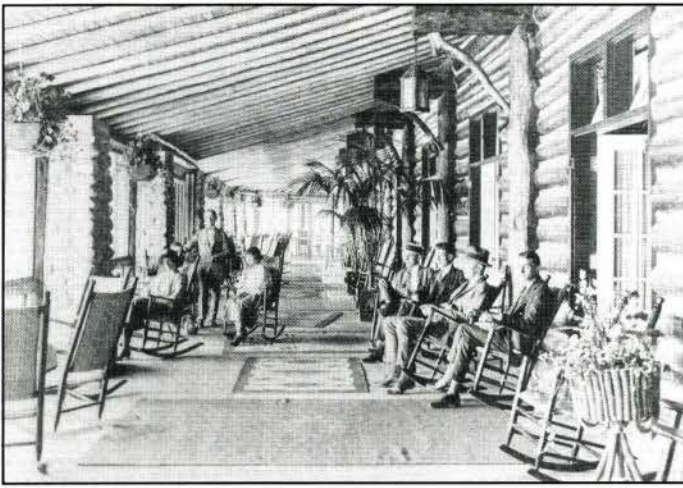


Figure 10 (left). Guests relaxing on the verandah at Jasper Park Lodge, ca. 1925-28. (Jasper Park Lodge)



Figure 11 (right). The lobby of the main lodge at Jasper Park Lodge, ca. 1925-28. (Jasper Park Lodge)

Whereas the CPR's emphasis on a communal tent-camp atmosphere was expressed through modest, even austere, sleeping cabins, the CNR placed an emphasis on the privacy and self-containment offered by its guest bungalows:

A bell-boy escorts you down a long garden walk between rows of rustic bungalows to the one which is yours, at least while you remain. Inside the bungalow you are thrilled, for it contains four bedrooms, just enough for your party. There you are, all together under one roof, and no strangers to molest you—just like home. There is a spacious waiting room, writing table or desk, bath with hot and cold water, electric lights, a verandah outside, in fact everything you desire ....<sup>27</sup>

Credit for the architectural design of Jasper Park Lodge is ascribed to the CNR's first chief architect, J.S. Schofield, and members of his staff. Schofield's office produced designs for most buildings on the site from November 1922 until 1931.<sup>28</sup> This continuity, coupled with Thornton's generous financial allocations, ensured a high degree of consistency in terms of aesthetic intent, materials, and construction methods. Nevertheless, Schofield's approach evolved during the nine years he presided over the design of Jasper Park Lodge. The first group of buildings, dating from 1922 to 1926, was characterized by horizontal log construction with saddle-notched corners, built upon fieldstone foundations. A simple mortised joint system utilizing vertical log or half-log connectors made it possible to adapt log construction to buildings more than 150 feet in length. Refinements were made during a major expansion phase that occurred between 1927 and 1930: saddle notches were replaced by corner posts, and an improved mortise system permitted an increase in scale. The rustic imagery was also refined during this phase. Burled posts and stick bracketing gave way to more self-conscious designs incorporating Swiss chalet motifs, rock-faced concrete foundations, and flaring rooflines.

By 1930, Jasper Park Lodge had grown to contain more than 70 log buildings, including 150-foot-long staff dormitories, a golf clubhouse, and 56 guest cabins ranging from two-room bungalows and dormitory-type accommodations up to elaborate Swiss Chalet-style residences.<sup>29</sup> Whereas the CPR's camps exploited the growth of highways and secondary roads in the southern mountain parks, Jasper Park Lodge was situated in a park which, until the late 1930s, lacked highway links. All visitors arrived by train, then were whisked the three miles to the resort in limousines. Sir Harry Thornton capitalized on this aura of exotic isolation by aiming much of the resort's publicity at the same upscale market as the CPR's large resort hotels. Thornton courted the patronage of royalty, Hollywood celebrities, and politicians to enhance Jasper Park's stature as an exclusive tourist destination.

Jasper Park Lodge secured a special niche for itself by holding out the promise of a fantasy world in which guests could cloak themselves in the trappings of rustic simplicity—without eschewing the trappings normally associated with large resort hotels. The CNR went to great lengths to nurture this promise by portraying the resort as a rustic retreat that blended harmoniously into its spectacular setting:

It is far less pretentious in its conception than rival resorts. The simple log cabins, with every comfort laid on, grouped around the lake and the main lodge, are far more in keeping with the magnificent wild country than the elaborate European type hotels. Every effort has been made to protect the natural features; the bears teaching the cubs to swim in the lake, the deer wandering fearlessly among the cottages, beavers busily building their dams, the proximity of other wildlife in the park, add enormously to the pleasure of the guests.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 8-9.

<sup>28</sup> NA, RG 84, vol. 1012, file J.16-29.

<sup>29</sup> Jasper National Park, Plan Collection, Jasper Park Lodge file, plans A1-4 to A1-44. See also Central Registry, File 16-29, General Layout Plan for Jasper Park Lodge, revised to 13 January 1930.

<sup>30</sup> Lady Thornton, quoted in G.R. Stevens, *History of the Canadian National Railways* (New York: Macmillan, 1973), 344.



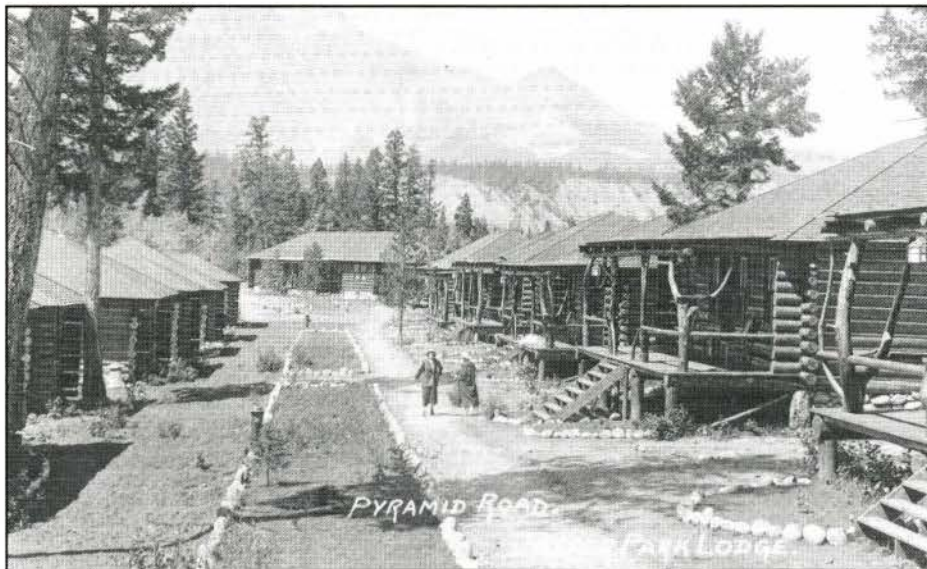


Figure 12. Guest bungalows at Jasper Park Lodge, ca. 1928. (Jasper Park Lodge)

### THE BUNGALOW CAMPS AFTER 1930

The CPR and CNR had no sooner established their respective rustic bungalow resorts than the tourist industry was hit by the onset of the Great Depression. Harry Thornton's lavish expenditure of public funds on Jasper Park Lodge became a convenient target for accusations of mismanagement, and contributed to his dismissal as president of the CNR in 1931. Construction came to an abrupt halt at Jasper Park Lodge. But by that time, the resort had attained a scale sufficient to meet market demands for the next two decades. The rustic character of its log buildings was scrupulously maintained during those years, reflecting the fact that it continued to have an evocative appeal to affluent vacationers.

The original pre-1930 complex remained completely intact until 1952, when the main lodge was destroyed by fire. The fire publicized the flammability of large log structures, and prompted the CNR to opt for concrete and steel construction for the replacement structure.<sup>31</sup> The new main lodge created a new image for Jasper Park Lodge and precipitated a gradual replacement of the early log guest cabins with updated chalets of milled frame construction. The crisp, manufactured image of these new buildings reflected the change in tastes that occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. By then, hand-hewn log cabins, and the rustic aesthetic from which they had sprung, were distinctly out of fashion.

Nevertheless, approximately 30 pre-1930 log buildings were spared and continue to evoke evidence of the lodge's original rustic charm. Log guest bungalows, a 1925 dance hall, staff dormitories, a power house, and a variety of other log structures demonstrate the remarkable range and virtuosity of log construction that made Jasper Park a unique architectural assemblage.<sup>32</sup>

The Depression's impact on the CPR camps was different, partly because they were privately-owned and partly because of the diversified nature of the chain. During the 1930s, automobile vacationers turned increasingly to campgrounds as inexpensive holiday destinations. This trend reduced the profitability of the smaller roadside bungalow camps, prompting the CPR to sell them off. Similarly, the railway gradually divested itself of most of its teahouses and shelter cabins by sale or abandonment. In turn, the railway continued to expand the guest accommodations at its profitable camps at Emerald Lake, Lake O'Hara, Yoho Valley, and Wapta Lake. The addition of new guest cabins at these camps frequently came at the expense of the uncrowded, informal atmosphere that had been a fundamental part of their original appeal.

The CPR's response to the changing tastes and interests of tourists in the 1950s was to divest itself of virtually all its back country facilities. Some were acquired by tour operators, who continue to realize profits from their rustic character.<sup>33</sup> The Emerald Lake camp has recently undergone yet another transformation: all the original guest cabins have been replaced by modern units, while the log chalet has been renovated with much of its rustic character intact. The camps at Wapta Lake and Yoho Valley have disappeared, as have many of the teahouses and shelter cabins. Others have survived with few changes. The bungalow camps at Storm Mountain and Lake O'Hara remain intact, as do the teahouses at the Plain of Six Glaciers and Twin Falls.

31 Jasper National Park, Central Registry, File 16-29, correspondence, and plan A1-27 dated 1952.

32 Mills and Taylor, 43-69.

33 The CPR began disposing of its least-profitable camps and teahouses during the 1930s. Vermilion Crossing and Storm (Castle) Mountain were among the first to be sold. The camps and teahouses in Yoho National Park (Yoho Valley, Lake O'Hara, Wapta Lake, and Twin Falls) were sold in 1954. The last to be disposed was Emerald Lake Lodge, in 1959. The camps at Wapta Lake, Yoho Valley, and Moraine Lake were later dismantled. Those at Lake O'Hara, Emerald Lake, Storm Mountain, and Vermilion Crossing remain in operation. Two teahouses, at Plain of Six Glaciers and at Twin Falls, continue to operate in much the same way as they did during the 1920s. The shelter cabins at Abbott Pass and Shadow Lake also remain in use.



## CONCLUSION

The bungalow camps built by the CPR and CNR in the 1920s marked a departure from resort developments of the preceding decades. They embodied a novel approach distinctly North American in origin and character. Their fusion of frontier-style rustic designs and decentralized tent-camp layout offered stage sets that were perfectly tailored to the wilderness experiences sought by a new generation of tourists.

The ways in which the two railway companies interpreted this image were remarkably different. For the most part, the CPR camps functioned as encampments on the fringes of the primal wilderness. Their layouts were purposefully casual and their amenities simple, in an effort to evoke the intimate flavour of the earlier tent camps.

In contrast, Jasper Park Lodge was an elaborately-contrived stage set, in which the aesthetic trappings of rustic log construction and a bungalow camp layout were used to package the amenities of a high-style resort. In concept and design it embodied the ultimate commercial exploitation of the rustic style first formulated in the Adirondack camps of the 1870s and 1880s. Like them, Jasper Park Lodge created a mythological wilderness experience where bears, elk, and deer might wander among buildings of hand-hewn log and stone, creating the perfect ambience in which to dance and dine amidst the mountains.

The resort rivalry between the CPR and CNR, in which the bungalow camps figured so conspicuously during the 1920s, is not without a touch of irony. Having disposed of all the camps it built in the 1920s, the CPR has recently acquired Jasper Park Lodge from its old rival, and is currently investing millions to expand and update that resort to offer a new version of the bungalow camp vacation experience.