

Visualizing Labrador: Maps, Photographs, and Geographical Naming in Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*

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[See table of contents](#)

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Article abstract

Mina Hubbard's 1908 account of her travels along the Nascaupée and George Rivers made lasting contributions to the cartography, ethnography, and toponymy of northern Labrador. Although her motives for undertaking the expedition were relational — her husband had died two years earlier in attempting the trip — her wish to be viewed as an explorer necessitated the adoption of masculine models of legitimacy. The maps and photographs accompanying Hubbard's narrative, while remarkable in demonstrating her unique personalization and domestication of the landscape, still encompass the explorer's conventional obligation to portray himself (or herself) as the first to arrive at key points along his (or her) journey, and the first to convey geographical or ethnological information to outsiders.

Visualizing Labrador: Maps, Photographs, and Geographical Naming in Mina Hubbard's *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador*

WENDY ROY

IN 1908, MINA HUBBARD published a book about a two-month canoe journey she had made three years earlier through northern Labrador. Although well received by geographical authorities and general readers, *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Exploration of the Nascaupée and George Rivers* was overshadowed by more conventional books of adventurous travel, especially the narrative describing her husband's death on a previous expedition.¹ Contemporaneous reviews of her book often characterized Mina Hubbard as a "charming and plucky little woman" whose journey honoured her husband's memory (Millais 402-03; see also "Love's Labour"), and beginning in the 1960s, that characterization was taken up and elaborated upon in several popular histories (Cooke, 1960; Berton, 1978; Davidson and Ruge, 1988). Only recently have Hubbard's book, her journal articles, and the travel diary on which they were based begun to be recognized as valuable literary, as well as historical, artifacts. That revaluation includes several critical studies (Grace 2000, 2001; LaFramboise 2001), the republication of *A Woman's Way*, and, for the first time, the publication of Hubbard's travel diary, accompanied by a detailed biography.² As these books and articles demonstrate, Hubbard's journey and resulting narratives provide a radical revision of what travel theorist Karen Lawrence calls the "Western cultural truism that Penelope waits while Odysseus voyages" (ix). Hubbard's story is that of an early twentieth-century Penelope whose Odysseus did not return from his voyage, and whose death set the stage for her decision to voyage in his stead, to tell her own tale, and to map and thus make a claim to the physical space of the Ungava Peninsula.

This essay focuses on a relatively uninvestigated aspect of Hubbard's expedition and book: intersections between her photographs and her map

on the one hand, and textual depictions of Labrador landscape and topography on the other. *A Woman's Way* includes forty-nine black and white photographs and an eighteen- by twenty-inch two-colour map. In photos and map as well as text, Hubbard depicted and named the landscape in several distinctly different but often overlapping ways. As the full title of her book indicates, she viewed and represented herself as an explorer, albeit an unusual one because of her gender. Her mapping, naming, and illustrating of Labrador thus encompassed the explorer's conventional obligation to portray himself (or herself) as the first to arrive at key points along his or her journey and first to pass on geographical and ethnological information to outsiders. Even before her book was published, Hubbard's articles had demonstrated her partial adoption of masculine models: in an article published in the *American and Manchester Geographical Society* journals, she called Labrador a "virgin field for the explorer" (530; 170). But in *A Woman's Way*, Hubbard also personalized and domesticated the landscape, equating it with family (especially her dead husband) and creating toponyms that reflected those personal connections.

Maps and illustrations of landscape are intrinsic to travel narratives, since even a travel book that has no illustrations to accompany it records the implicit mapping of a route taken through a particular landscape. Yet charts and photos such as Hubbard's have received surprisingly little critical attention. One reason is a theoretical gap, only now being addressed, that results in visual accompaniments to travel narratives being treated as objective or self-evident representations of places visited at the same time as the narratives themselves are re-examined for their political underpinnings. Travel writing that was traditionally identified, in James Clifford's words, as "heroic, educational, scientific, adventurous, ennobling" (105) has recently been reread as stemming instead from economic or imperialist motives. A similar critical scrutiny is evident in studies that analyze cartography's complicity with imperialism, rather than simply celebrating what Alison Blunt and Jane Wills call "exploration, 'discovery', and heroic explorers and geographers" (193). Feminist geographers have also investigated the gendered nature of exploration and mapping, demonstrating that geographical knowledge has long been perceived as a masculine prerogative because of limits to both women's access to geographical knowledge and their ability to travel independently.

Hubbard's book is the account of a 576-mile canoe journey she made into the interior of Labrador and northern Quebec with four male Métis, Cree, and Inuit guides. She and George Elson, Job Chapies, Joseph

Iserhoff, and Gilbert Blake left Northwest River Post in Labrador (then, together with Newfoundland, an independent British colony) on 27 June 1905 in two canoes. They travelled upstream along the Naskaupi River, through Lake Michikamau and Lake Michikamats to the height of land, then downstream along the George River, arriving 27 August at George River Post in the Ungava District of Canada's Northwest Territories (now northern Quebec; see route, fig. 1).³ Hubbard's motives for organ-

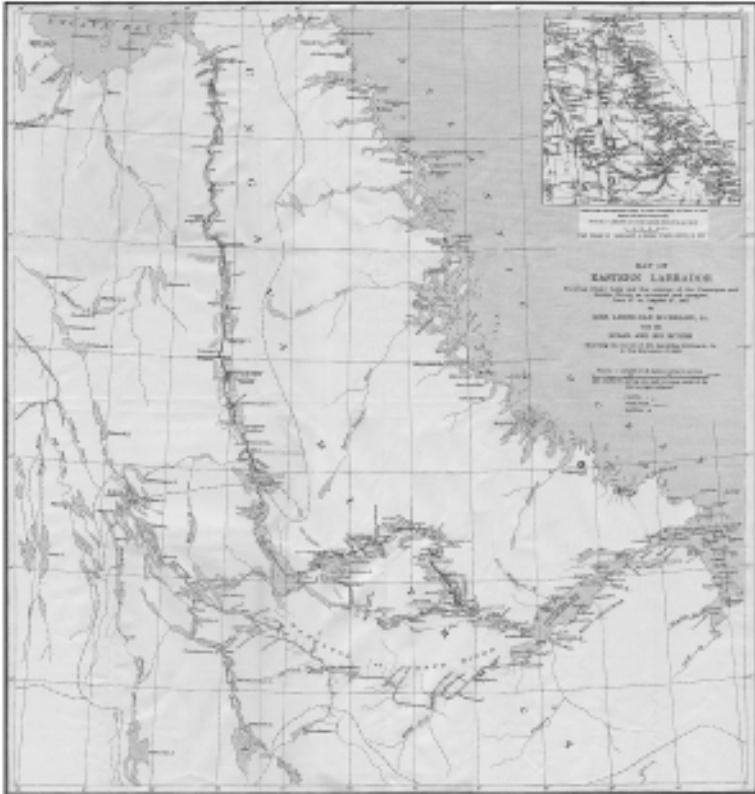


Fig. 1. Map of Labrador and Northern Quebec [from *WW*]

izing the trip were relational; she was completing a failed expedition begun two years earlier by her husband, American adventure writer Leonidas Hubbard Junior, that had resulted in his death by starvation after he followed inadequate maps and tried to navigate up the wrong river. Initially, Mina Hubbard had planned only to publish Leonidas's travel diary, along with an account of his death by George Elson, who had also been the guide on his tragic 1903 expedition.⁴ Instead, these mate-

rials became appendices to her own narrative and, together with her photos and map, helped to revise the cultural truism that women do not contribute to geographical knowledge.

The map that Hubbard produced with the aid of the American Geographical Society was recognized by several geographical authorities as the first detailed and accurate chart of that area of Labrador. Although the first review of Hubbard's book in the Royal Geographical Society's *Geographical Journal* notes that the map "makes no claim to be other than the result of pioneer work," mainly because Hubbard took observations for latitude but not for longitude ("Recent Crossing" 349), the second review points out that "an examination of the map . . . shows the value of her work, especially in the extraordinary divergence between her observations of the course of the Nascaupée and its course as previously conjectured" ("Labrador" 614). W.H.W. of the *Journal of the Manchester Geographical Society* calls the map "excellent" and the book a "splendid addition to the knowledge of Labrador" (133) and "of great geographical value" (134).⁵ He even gives her head guide, Elson, a sort of backhanded credit, as having a "name, which while it can never figure in the list of those who have directly added to the geographical knowledge of the country, must, so long as Mrs. Hubbard's work lasts, and longer, command the admiration of all" (133). (Presumably, Elson cannot be given direct credit because he is a hired guide and did not write the book or draw the map, although his work allowed Hubbard to do so.) Hubbard was invited to deliver two lectures about her travels to the Royal Geographical Society in England, and her article, map, and photographs were published in the journals of both the American and Manchester Geographical Societies.⁶ Later writers about Labrador, including William Duncan Strong (15) and William Cabot (Introduction 27-28; *In Northern Labrador* 10), considered her maps to be major accomplishments, since they showed "what geographers had supposed were two distinct rivers, the Northwest and the Nascaupée, to be one and the same" (*WW* 236).

Several contemporaneous reviewers also praised Hubbard's many photographs, taken using a folding pocket Kodak and a panoramic Kodak. The portable Kodak, invented by George Eastman just seventeen years before her journey, made it possible for travellers to carry cameras with them on arduous trips. *The Geographical Journal* called Hubbard's photos "excellent" ("Labrador" 614); *The Spectator* claimed that they "are as beautiful as they are rare" ("A Woman Explorer" 473); and the *Western Mail* noted that "the only keen regret that the book causes us [is] that amongst the many admirable photographs there is none of the caribou

migration" ("Through Unknown Labrador" n.p.). Hubbard was delighted with the photos: she wrote in her diary, "I have never seen such pictures anywhere as some of them are. I think there are none in existence can equal some of them" (*MH Diary* 25 Dec.). But she also regretted what the photos did not show, such as the caribou and the colours of the landscape (*MH Diary* 16 Aug., 19 Jul.). Although Hubbard's photos are of much higher quality than most travel illustrations of the era, since their publication almost one hundred years ago they have been studied only briefly in terms of their contribution to the "structural multiplicity" of her text (Grace, "Woman's" 196; see also Grace's introduction to *WW*).

Sara Mills suggests that women travellers, like men, often included photographs in their travel narratives in order to prove that they did indeed travel where they claimed to have gone (113). Hubbard intended her photos to serve as a record of her journey and as concrete evidence of the topography of the countryside through which she travelled and the ethnography of the peoples she encountered.⁷ Her photographic images evince the motives of the early twentieth-century ethnographer and explorer as they provide "proof" regarding the features of the Labrador landscape, the First Nations people she met, her four guides, and herself.

A number of Hubbard's photos illustrate the waterways her expedition navigated. "Up the Fierce Nascaupée" and "Shooting the Rapids" demonstrate the challenges provided by the Naskaupi and George Rivers for both navigation and mapping (28, 220), while "Solitude (Seal Lake)" and "Great Michi-kamau" picture the wide expanses of water that sometimes had to be crossed (106, 266). Other photos show the changing geographical features of the surrounding countryside, as the expedition travelled through bush into barrenlands. Thus while "On into the Wilderness" shows a trail leading into a thick stand of pines (38), "Deep Ancient Valleys" presents a wide watercourse strewn with enormous boulders and surrounded by barren hills (4).

Another category of photos illustrates ethnographic details of the two Innu groups her party met, whom she called the Nascaupée and the Montagnais in accordance with ethnographic practice of the day. An especially striking photo, captioned "A Montagnais Type" (fig. 2), shows what is probably a girl wearing what Hubbard describes as a traditional headscarf, with a large crucifix around her neck. In contrast to many ethnographic photos of "types," this person is pictured looking directly at the camera, as are several others in the background. Thus, although the viewer is invited to gaze, the subjects of the photograph are allowed to gaze back, a reciprocal effect uncommon in ethnographic photography (Maxwell 13;

see also Kaplan 9-10). Hubbard writes, in fact, that “the types were various as those to be found in other communities ranging from the sweet and even beautiful face to the grossly animal like” (191). She describes the Innu men as having “markedly Indian faces,” and writes about them alternately as noble savages — “tall, lithe, and active looking, with a certain air of self-possession and dignity which almost all Indians seem to have” (203) — and as a collective and stereotyped “mind” that is focused mostly on gifts of tobacco from Hubbard’s party — “I could not know how far the Indian mind had been influenced, in gauging



Fig. 2. “A Montagnais Type.”

the distance [to George River Post], by a desire to reduce to the smallest possible limit the amount of tobacco the men would need to retain for their own use” (212-13). Photography theorist Anne Maxwell contends that “most of the photographs of colonized peoples produced in the late colonial period ... empowered Europeans by upholding the binary opposition of civility versus savagery” (14). Hubbard’s photos are less rigid in that they show a traditional way of life — caribou skin clothing and tents — existing simultaneously with encroaching civilization in the form of trade and religion — cloth kerchiefs and crucifixes.

Not all of Hubbard’s photographs of people are ethnographic records; some are designed to illustrate the travelling companions she describes so eloquently in her narrative and to provide a record of the work necessary for the success of such an expedition. Thus she includes photos of her four guides canoeing, traversing rapids, skinning caribou, smoking meat, cooking bannock, and portaging canoes and supplies. One portage photo, ironically labelled “The White Man’s Burden”



Fig. 3. George Elson.

(18), is placed in the introduction to illustrate a claim its author, William Cabot, makes that large amounts of provisions are necessary when white men, but not First Nations men, travel. Hubbard's photographic portraits of the men who accompany her give them individual faces as well as names (although the caption under Elson's portrait is the only one that includes his family name; see fig. 3). Sherrill Grace comments that the portraits "are remarkable because they grant visual presence and individual importance" to Native men ("Woman's" 196).

Elson and Job Chapies in particular are pictured looking directly at the camera, again conferring them some power in the encounter with the viewer. Even the portraits, though, show the men in relation to their work: Elson sitting among a pile of portaged supplies; Chapies paddling the canoe, his pipe clenched tightly in his mouth (60); Iserhoff holding a pair of freshly killed ducks (94); and Blake laughing as he throws a piece of wood on the fire (172).

Although Hubbard appears in some of the images and although Elson notes in his diary that he took her photo several times (6, 9 Aug.), the title page notation, "By Mrs. Leonidas Hubbard, Junior / With Portraits and Illustrations," implies that she is the author of all the book's photographs. Indeed, her contribution even to photographs in which she appears was likely substantial, since she probably set up most of the scenes and thus retained control over the way in which she was portrayed. Images of Hubbard illustrate two conflicting characterizations with which her text also grapples: that her behaviour on the journey was properly feminine, and that she was at the same time the expedition leader and chief explorer.⁸ Thus Hubbard is portrayed in three photos engaged in typical womanly activity — washing clothing in a basin (fig. 4); sitting in the centre of a

loaded but stationary canoe, her face covered by mosquito netting (100); and cooking before a fire, even though she seldom cooked (142). In contrast, two other photographs stress her active part in the expedition — striding along the trail carrying what appears to be a rifle (fig. 5) and standing in a windblown camp while the men recline at her feet (152). Hubbard's book also includes two photographs that emphasize attainment of "firsts" as explorer: her contact with the Innu and her arrival at her planned destination.

The photograph of Hubbard with the Innu pictures her standing on a rock, her hand raised and her index and middle fingers pointed, apparently lecturing to



Fig. 4. "Washing-Day."



Fig. 5. "On the Trail."

(or at least talking to) the women (fig. 6). She is represented not only as the first white woman to speak to the Innu of this area but, in this photograph, as dominant in terms of her physical position. She stands above them; her raised hand and pointed fingers indicate that she is saying something of import. Contact and communication with First Nations is an essential part of the explorer's work and, the photo implies, such contact and communication was successful. Her narrative, in

contrast, indicates that communication was difficult and incomplete, since she could not understand or speak Innu-aimun. She writes, "I could make almost nothing of what they said, and when I called George to interpret for me they seemed not to want to talk" (211).⁹

Hubbard's photograph of her group's arrival at George River Post at the end of their journey emphasizes that her race and gender allow her to



Fig. 6. "With the Nascaupee Women."

make another claim to be "first" (fig. 7). She writes that Mrs. Ford, the blue-eyed factor's wife, greeted her with the words, "You are very welcome, Mrs Hubbard. Your's is the first white woman's face I have seen for two years" (233-34). Hubbard is pictured, as the narrative describes, wearing her



Fig. 7. "The Arrival at Ungava."

waterproof sealskin boots, using a paddle as support against the treacherous mud, and being helped out of the canoe by factor John Ford. As her text also indicates, all four of her travelling companions are still in the two canoes. But unlike the spontaneity implied by the narrative and by the photo caption "The Arrival at Ungava," this seemingly spontaneous scene has been carefully orchestrated. As Elson notes in his diary entry of 7 September, their arrival on 27 August was restaged eleven days later in order that a photograph could be taken.¹⁰ During that restaging, the men waited in the canoes while Hubbard was the first to set foot on land at their destination. As expedition leader and chief explorer, Hubbard had to be portrayed as the first of her expedition to step on the ground. Although she was short of film, she had earlier made a point of saving one exposure so that she could document this occasion (*MH Diary* 26 Aug.).

Hubbard's map provides perhaps the strongest statement of her claims to have arrived "first" as a Labrador explorer (fig. 1). As her article for the two geographical journals emphatically states, "The map which this article is intended to accompany sets forth the work I was able to accomplish" (531; 171). Hubbard's book and travel diary record the fact that as well as taking photos, she made frequent measurements for her map with compass, sextant, and artificial horizon, and kept detailed notes on topography. Hubbard not only measured, located, and described topographical features such as rivers, lakes, waterfalls, and mountains; she also

named them. *A Woman's Way* is sprinkled with statements such as “away ahead were the blue ridges of hills with one high and barren, standing out above the rest, which I named Bald Mountain” (84), and “George pointed out the ridge of mountains away to the south-west ... and I named them Lion Heart Mountains” (102-03). At times she emphasizes her act of naming, but at other times she simply includes her own names for geographical features, such as on the page in which she describes Bridgman Mountains and Helen Falls (226) but does not indicate that she has chosen those toponyms in honour of publisher Herbert L. Bridgman and his wife, Helen. Her diary entry of the day she passed by those geographical features indicates that she was thinking of her friends; she writes, “The Bridgmans will be delighted with my success” (25 Aug.).

Hubbard labelled some geographical features according to their appearances, filtered through her own cultural knowledge. In Labrador, she named not only Bald Mountain but also Santa Claus Mountain (“the outline of its rugged top looked as if the tired old fellow had there lain down to rest” [105]); Mount Pisa (“distinctly leaning towards the east” [106]); and Lookout Mountain (“The view from the mountain top was magnificent in all directions” [121]). In Quebec, she named Slanting Lake (which “appeared to dip ... from one side to the other” [221]); the Hades Hills (which looked to her like the entrance to the Greek mythological underworld [220-21]); and Pyramid Mountain (“It reminds me of an Egyptian pyramid” [223]).

The photographs that she took of these geographical features provide even more documentary evidence that she had been where she claimed to have been and that many of the place names on her map were of her choosing. Her book includes photos of Bridgman Mountains (fig. 8) and of Maid Marion Falls (124), named after her niece. As these examples indicate, Hubbard inscribed the landscape in travel diary, book, photos, and map in a distinctly personal and often relational way. In particular, she conflated her sorrow about her husband's death, and a related belief that he accompanied her in spirit on this journey, with her feelings about the landscape. She wrote, “I do not feel far from home but in reality more at home than I have done since I knew my Laddie [her name for Leonidas] was never coming back to me” (23 Jul.; see also *WW* 113-14). After Elson pointed out the mountains he had crossed with her husband (102-03), she commented in her diary that “the grander and more beautiful it grows the more I hunger for the one who made all things beautiful so much more beautiful by the spirit which he breathed into them” (16 Jul.).



Fig. 8. "Bridgman Mountains."

Often passages in her book are more metaphoric than those in her diary in order to be less directly personal, and thus make more use of the landscape as a means of expression. She writes, for example,

the sun came out again, throwing a golden glow over all. Clouds lay like delicate veils along the hill-sides, sometimes dipping almost to their feet. . . . It was very wild and beautiful, but as an exquisite, loved form from which the spirit has fled. The sense of life, of mystery, and magic seemed gone, and I wondered if the time could come when beauty would cease to give me pain. (95)

Her diary entry for the same day, 10 July, deals more explicitly with her feelings about her husband, his death, and her subsequent assumption of his mantle:

It is all so wild and grand and mysterious and how his heart would beat hard with pride and joy in it all if he could be here. Along the edge of the bank I watched it for some time thinking, thinking. So very, very beautiful yet lacking that which completes and perfects. I have not his spirit, not that of the true explorer. (10 Jul.)

Hubbard's feelings of inadequacy as an explorer, in comparison with her husband, and of sorrow at his loss thus are essential components of her descriptions of landscape. At the same time, because she feels her husband to be present in the land in which he died, the barren landscape becomes less threatening and more the home that Hubbard implies can be found in the metaphorical presence of her husband.

The toponyms on Hubbard's map contribute to her personalization and domestication of the landscape as they evoke her husband and other relatives and friends. In what is now Quebec, Mina named Hubbard Lake to honour her husband. In Labrador, she repeated the memorialization

of Leonidas begun by his travelling companion, Dillon Wallace, by including on her map the labels Disappointment Lake, Windbound Lake, and Mount Hubbard, first published in Wallace's 1905 book *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* (see detail of Hubbard's map, fig. 9). She changed the name of Wallace's Kipling Mountains to Lion Heart Mountains to honour her husband's courage. She named Cabot Lake for the man who defended her husband's expedition and then wrote the introduction to her book, Ford River and Ford Island for the George River Post factor, and Elson Lake for her head guide. Her inscription of the name of a

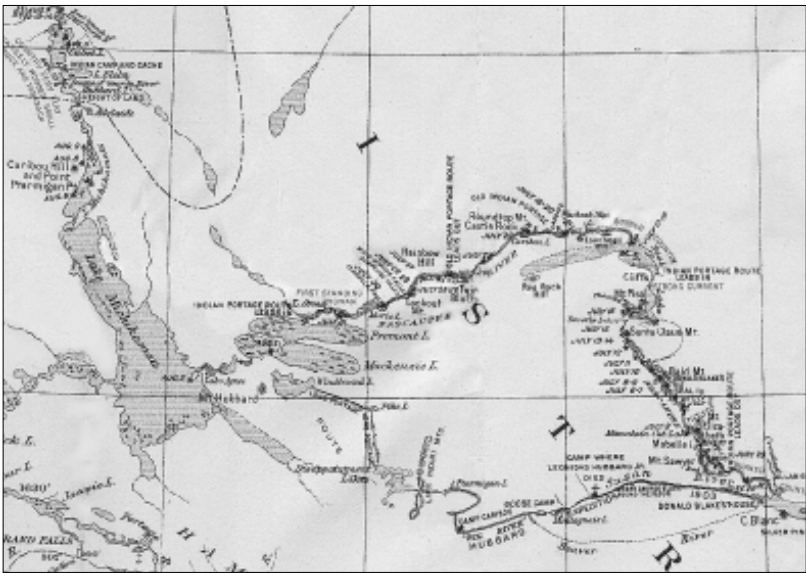


Fig. 9. Detail of map of Labrador [from *WW*]

Métis man on the landscape of Labrador is indicative of the esteem in which she held Elson and the egalitarian nature of her personal politics.

Hubbard also recorded the first names of women friends and family members by writing them onto the land. Two geographical features that she almost certainly named for friends are Helen Falls and Point Lucie. Helen Bridgman asserts in her book *Within My Horizon* that the falls were named after her (81), and I speculate that Point Lucie was named for the wife of Hubbard's friend and minister, James Sawyer. The naming of Point Lucie follows Hubbard's practice of labelling large geographical features for male friends (Bridgman Mountains and Mount Sawyer) and giving nearby smaller geographical features the first names

of their wives (Helen Falls and Point Lucie). On the day Hubbard's group travelled past a high sandy point of land and a nearby mountain, Hubbard wrote in her diary, "Named it Pt. Lucie and [the mountain] Mt. Sawyer"¹¹ (29 Jun.). Hubbard acknowledged James Sawyer in her preface and wrote near the end of her trip that she would be very glad to see "the Sawyers" (25 Aug.).

Anne Hart, former director of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, has identified a number of lakes and falls that Hubbard labelled with the first names of her nieces: Dorothy, Marie, Orma, and Agnes Lakes, and Gertrude and Maid Marion Falls.¹² Hubbard probably also named one lake after herself — Adelaide Lake, just south of Hubbard Lake, commemorating what on her birth certificate is listed as her second name.¹³ Other geographical features on her route that she may have named for unidentified women friends and family members include Mabelle Island, Mount Elizabeth, and Isabella Falls. The only one of these geographical features that Hubbard mentions naming, in her diary, is a "beautiful evergreen covered island ... which we named Mabelle I." (1 Jul.). She does not identify the source of the name and, indeed, her use of the first-person plural pronoun indicates that "Mabelle" may have been a friend or relative of one of her travelling companions. Such wording also suggests that, contrary to the impression given by her use of "I" in her book, the choice of toponyms was not always hers alone, but at times was a joint project with her companions. Indeed, in his diary, George Elson uses the first-person plural pronoun to describe naming several geographical features; he writes, "crossed a little brook (Ka-co-shepish) we called it" (8 Jul.) and "had Lunch at point ^{Lucie}Lucy — we called" (29 Jun.).¹⁴

By labelling features of the landscape with women's given names, Hubbard and her companions were tackling what Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar call the problem of "woman's patronymically defined identity" (237). Women often disappeared from historical records because they were known only by their husband's or father's names. Hubbard lists herself on the title page of her book as "Mrs Leonidas Hubbard, Junior"; she never provides Mrs. Ford's first name, although she stayed with her for almost two months; and even in her diary she refers to friends as Mrs. Krafft, Mrs. Bartlett, and Mrs. Bridgman. On her map, though, she inscribes matrilineage by using given names to distinguish the women and girls she is honouring — including herself — from their husbands or fathers. James Duncan and Derek Gregory point out that "travel writing is often inherently domesticating": it takes what is unknown and locates it both as familiar and as suitable for reading at home (5). By giving pub-

lic geographic features names that, at least initially, had only private meaning, Hubbard's map takes the public and the outside, and turns it into the private and the inside.

To this day, most of Hubbard's toponyms can be found on topographical maps produced by the government of Canada. Exceptions are Lion Heart Mountains, the largest of which is now called by Wallace's original name, Kipling Mountain; Point Lucie and Mabelle Island, which are no longer marked; Gertrude Falls, now identified simply as "Falls"; and Lake Agnes, subsumed in the Smallwood Reservoir (see *Labrador* and *Quebec* maps).¹⁵ In honour of International Women's Day in 1999, the Quebec toponymy commission published an internet article lauding Hubbard for being one of the few women to have had such a lasting influence on the mapping and toponyms of the province. In Marc Richard's posting, Hubbard's geographical contribution is recognized as akin to (although even more unusual than) those of male geographical explorers — in other words, as a heroic activity by an individual participating in a "first." Indeed, this positioning as "first" was necessary in order for Hubbard to be seen as a legitimate explorer.

Australian geographical theorist Paul Carter claims that the naming of places is a form of "spatial punctuation, transforming space into an object of knowledge, something that could be explored and read" (67). In making her maps, Hubbard participated in this compression of a three-dimensional world into two dimensions, thereby making it appear both knowable and manageable for herself, her readers, subsequent geographical researchers, and Canadian politicians. Hubbard's map and text have cultural and political implications, especially for First Nations who lived in the area. Sometimes those implications are positive ones: when Hubbard knew the Innu names of geographical features, usually very large ones such as Lake Michikamau and Lake Michikamats, she used them. She also included English translations of some Innu names, such as Barren Ground Water (which she translated in her book as *Mush-au-wau-ni-pi* [201]), for Indian House Lake. If she had no established names of geographical features to go by, she occasionally chose aboriginal names; when she learned from her one local guide, Blake, that the region they were traversing was "great marten country," she writes, "I named the tributary stream we followed, Wapustan River" (96; *wapustan* is the Cree word for marten). Most often, though, the established names that she reiterated honoured English-speaking historical figures or explorers, such as George River instead of the Innu *Mushuau-shipu* (or river of the barrens [Byrne and Fouillard 13]) and Lake Melville rather than the Innu

Akamiupishk^u (Andrew 232). And, like most male explorers before her, Hubbard assumed that if she did not know the names of geographical features, they were unnamed and thus she had the right to name them.

In an oral account recorded in the mid-1990s and published in 2000, Mary Adele Andrew, also known by the Innu name Mani-Aten, spoke of the Innu toponymy of what is now called Labrador and northern Quebec:

There are thousands of Innu names for the lakes, rivers, mountains, peninsulas and other geographical features of our land. These names have been here and are still used by us, the Innu, after thousands of years. Today, the maps drawn by the Europeans carry the names of these geographical features in English, for example: Churchill Falls for Mista-paustuk, Churchill River for Mista-shipu and Mealy Mountains for Akamiupishk^u. These are only a few, and the names I give you in Innu are the proper ones. (231-32)

Examples of geographical features that had established Innu names before Hubbard and Wallace renamed them are Nisukaka and Keshikashkau Lakes (Orma and Disappointment Lakes).¹⁶ Blunt and Wills suggest that “the most tangible relationship between imperial power and geographical knowledge was through exploration and so-called discovery, charting territory that was often thought to be unknown and mapping and naming apparently ‘new’ places” (194). By mapping and renaming the area along the Naskaupi and George Rivers, Hubbard was restating claims to Labrador made earlier by Canada and Britain, and undermining claims the residents of that territory, the Innu, might have made.¹⁷

The practice of renaming places was and is a precursor to and accompaniment of physical possession. The land around Lake Michikamau which Hubbard mapped and where Andrew speaks of living with her family (232) was possessed in a particularly irreversible way in the 1970s with the completion of the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project and the creation of the Smallwood Reservoir. Maps literally changed overnight. Geographical features such as the Grand (or Hamilton) River, Grand Rapids, and Lake Michikamau and Lake Michikamats were renamed after British and Canadian politicians Winston Churchill and Joseph Smallwood. Others disappeared entirely, including two dozen lakes subsumed in the reservoir (*Labrador* topographical maps 13E [1952 and 1989], 13L [1968 and 1990], 23H [1964 and 1990], and 23I [1953 and 1983]).¹⁸ Elizabeth Penashue, an Innu woman also known as Tshuaukuish, commented on the results of this destruction of landforms and landmarks:

My late father, Stakeaskushimun (Simon Gregoire), was always very emotional when he talked about how his belongings, including his canoes and traps, were flooded over when the Mista-shipu (Churchill River) was dammed. He was not the only one to lose all his belongings. Many others also lost all the basic things they used to survive in *nutshimit* [the country]. My father lost everything, even his hunting land. He mentioned this many times, over and over again. He was so troubled about what had happened. Mista-paustuk [the great rapids or Grand Rapids, now known as Churchill Falls] no longer exhaled the mist, which was a landmark that helped us find our way from afar. (158)

In *Colonialism and Landscape*, Andrew Sluyter discusses the “pristine myth” which “erroneously characterizes precolonial landscapes as having lacked dense populations and productive land uses” (6). Hubbard’s map promoted this myth of an unused landscape, a myth that later paved the way for flooding without consultation. I am by no means arguing that Hubbard was responsible for the Churchill Falls hydroelectric project. But the exclusion of the Innu from official mapping and naming of the territory in which they lived, hunted, and trapped was part of the same political process that excluded them sixty years later from decisions about the destruction of that territory through flooding.

Hubbard understood the political importance of names for geographical features. In her book and on her map, she called the small waterway on which her husband had lost his way the Susan River, even though it was known locally as Susan Brook. (For similar reasons, Wallace also called it Susan River, and it is still listed as such on topographical maps.) Giving the waterway its common designation would have meant admitting that her husband’s judgement was poor, because he had mistaken a brook (the Susan) for a river (the Naskaupi), and continued to portage and struggle up it long after he should have recognized his error and turned back. Local sources had identified the Naskaupi River as the only one coming out of Grand Lake because it was indeed the only navigable river.

Mina Hubbard’s official mapping enterprises also elided some of the contributions of First Nations men to her expedition. In her diary, Hubbard repeatedly refers to the “Indian maps” Elson acquired for her at Northwest River and that helped guide them through the southern part of their route (2, 25 Jun.; 18, 23, 24, 26 Jul.; 1 Aug.). In her book, though, she mentions only one map of a portage, which she calls “crude” (62). Not only did her four Métis, Cree, and Inuit companions take her

through the territory she subsequently mapped, but also Elson estimated the distances they travelled each day and drew the initial route map of her husband's 1903 expedition (a drawing she credits in her preface [x]). In her diary, Hubbard notes that she consulted him in making the first draft of her map of the 1905 journey (20 Sept.) and that at Elson's request, Blake mapped Grand Lake.¹⁹ She recognized at least part of Elson's geographical contribution to her journey, though, by naming a lake after him.

Hubbard's personalization and domestication of the landscape through her acts of recording, photographing, and mapping are noteworthy when one considers the gender implications of her narrative of exploration. In terms of race and colonialism, her mapping and illustrating must be examined with a more critical eye, since her work not only posits her as "first" but also excludes much Innu toponymy and elides some of the contributions of Cree, Métis, and Inuit men. When one re-examines the title of her book, *A Woman's Way through Unknown Labrador: An Account of the Exploration of the Nascaupee and George Rivers*, its implied inaccuracies become apparent. Hubbard was neither alone, nor did she travel through "unknown" territory, but she needed to give the illusion of both in order to be seen as a legitimate explorer.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I acknowledge and thank Betty Ellis and other members of Mina Hubbard's family for permission to reprint photographs from *A Woman's Way*. Parts of this essay will be published in revised form in my forthcoming book *Maps of Difference: Canada, Women, and Travel*, McGill-Queen's UP, 2005.

NOTES

¹ Hubbard's book was eclipsed in part by Dillon Wallace's *The Lure of the Labrador Wild* (1905) and *The Long Labrador Trail* (1907). Wallace's first book told the story of the death of Mina's husband, American adventure writer Leonidas Hubbard Junior, during a 1903 attempt made by Hubbard, Wallace, and George Elson to travel the route Mina later completed. Wallace's second book outlined the much more danger-filled expedition he embarked on during the same summer as Mina Hubbard, through much the same territory but (for the latter half of the route) without a guide and with the added peril of a return overland by dogsled. Wallace's compelling description of Leonidas Hubbard's death and focus on adventure through risk ensured the continuing popularity of his books throughout the twentieth century.

² The book was edited by Sherrill Grace and published in 2004 by McGill-Queen's University Press, and the diary has been edited by Roberta Buchanan and Bryan Greene and

will be published by the same press in 2005. The biographical essay is by Anne Hart of the Centre for Newfoundland Studies, who as director of the Centre was responsible for amassing an impressive collection of Hubbard material, including original diaries.

³ In quotations, I retain Hubbard's spelling of the river as "Nascauppee."

⁴ See the 1905 newspaper article "Why I Go to Labrador" for references to Hubbard's editing of her husband's journal and decision to make the journey herself.

⁵ Almost the only dissenting opinion is in the general audience journal *The Nation*, whose reviewer maintained that Hubbard's "topographical results were of slight value" (114).

⁶ "Geography at the British Association" describes a talk Hubbard gave 6 August 1907, titled "Traversal of Two Unexplored Rivers of Labrador," and "Meetings of the Royal Geographical Society, Session 1907-1908" lists her speech of 6 January 1908, titled "Journeys through Lonely Labrador." Hubbard could not become a member of the Royal Geographical Society because, although women had been elected as fellows for a brief period in 1892-93, the society then voted to stop admitting women. Female members were not accepted again until 1913 (Blunt and Wills 117).

⁷ Although hers were not the first photos of Innu, they were the first from that part of Labrador.

⁸ See LaFramboise for a discussion of this textual negotiation.

⁹ Nevertheless, Hubbard's narrative is written as though she can understand what the Innu are saying. She bases her account on subsequent conversations with Elson and the other men of her party and, in places where she quotes the Innu directly, on the account of the trip found in Elson's diary. Elson, Chapies, and Iserhoff all spoke Cree, part of the same language group as Innu-aimun.

¹⁰ He writes, "fine day got our picture taken as when we arrived." Again, the photographer of this scene is not credited, but must have been someone from Ford's household or contingent.

¹¹ Mrs. Sawyer's first name is spelled "Lucy" in the *National Cyclopaedia of American Biography*; thanks to Roberta Buchanan for pointing out this source.

¹² In an email to the author, Hart identified those nieces as Dorothy McCall, Marie Underhill, Orma Benson, Agnes Underhill, Gertrude Cruikshank, and Marion McCall. See fig. 9 for the locations of the lakes and falls.

¹³ Again, these toponyms are examples of Hubbard's practice of naming adjacent geographical features for a husband and wife. For Hubbard's middle name, see the copy of the birth certificate for "Benson, Nina [sic] Adelaide" in the Centre for Newfoundland Studies Archives.

¹⁴ The brook name did not make its way onto Mina Hubbard's map. Similarly, on 22 July Elson wrote vertically in the margin of his diary, "Mount Elson"; although Hubbard's map includes Lake Elson, the name Mount Elson does not appear.

¹⁵ Marc Richard's web posting identifies almost all of the topographical features in Quebec named by Hubbard and still in existence today. I traced the history of Labrador toponyms chosen by Hubbard by comparing her textual references and toponyms on her map with names on current topographical maps of the area. I am also indebted to biographical research on names of Hubbard's family members conducted by Anne Hart.

¹⁶ See the websites "Innu lakes damaged" <<http://www.innu.ca/lostlake.html>> and "Selected Innu Placenames" <<http://www.innu.ca/Topo1.htm>>.

¹⁷ Hubbard mapped parts of both a Canadian territory and a British colony. Although she was a Canadian, her connections to the United States and Great Britain were deep-seated. She had been married to an American and was living in the United States when she started her expedition. The home port of the Hudson's Bay Company trading ship that was to pick her up at George River Post was London, England. Her book was published in England, Canada,

and the United States. And her book tour roused much interest in England, where she met Harold Ellis, the man who would become her second husband and the father of her three children.

¹⁸ Since the popularization and romanticization of Hubbard's trip by historians such as Pierre Berton, several people have tried to canoe all or part of the route her party took. An attempt in 2000 by British adventurer Alexandra Pratt and Innu guide Jean Pierre Ashini (Napes) failed in part, Pratt argued, because the creation of the reservoir reduced the flow of the Naskaupi River to make it, too, unnavigable. A 1982 group of women canoeists avoided the difficulties posed by the reservoir by arranging to be flown to a point north of it, on the George River (Ford; Niemi).

¹⁹ Far from pleasing her, this request caused her to suspect that Elson was planning to write his own version of their journey (*MH Diary* 22 Sept.).

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