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### Cover Page Footnote

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# Socio-Spatial Distances at the Grenfell Mission: The Louise and Edith Hegan Photograph Collection, 1909

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**Abstract:** Using select photographs from a 1909 collection taken at a colonial mission in Labrador (Canada), I argue that settlers' use of the camera and photographs intentionally created socio-spatial distances from colonial subjects. I demonstrate how cameras and photographs re-enacted colonial regimes and pictured gendered and Indigenous bodies in socio-spatial fields to enact proximity as social and physical distance and closeness. The creation of socio-spatial distances is examined through photographs that establish distance between Indigeneity and settlers and emphasize ordered social relations, including visual displays of professional status, but that challenge the superficiality of differences in dress and appearance.

**Keywords:** colonialism, Labrador, photography, religious mission, socio-spatial relations

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## Introduction

A sassy inscription, two women and the boss of the house, is scrawled across the top of a 1909 photograph in which Edith Hegan and (Silla) Marguerite Carr-Harris appear dressed in nursing uniforms. Louise Hegan, who was tasked with hospital housekeeping, is identified as the boss of the house (picture 1, left to right).<sup>1</sup> In the photograph, the three women enjoy some leisure time away from their responsibilities as volunteer workers at the Grenfell mission's hospital on the Northern island community of Battle Harbour, Labrador, Canada.

The women likely travelled to Labrador for good and adventure (Wollons 2003, 55). Their labour during their four-month stay, from June until October, 1909, was unremunerated and they travelled from households where their fathers' income (McPherson 1996) was comfortable enough to support adult women's travel and unpaid labour.<sup>2</sup> Sisters from St. John, New Brunswick, Canada, Louise and Edith Hegan were daughters of dry goods merchant, George Hegan and Anna Louisa Betts. Marguerite Carr-Harris was from a wealthy family in Kingston, Ontario. A substantial inheritance from her mother's family, lost upon her mother's death, prompted Carr-Harris to take up nursing education (Toman 2015, 67). Marguerite Carr-Harris was Edith Hegan's nursing school classmate (Class of 1907) at the Presbyterian Hospital Training School for Nurses (now Columbia University), New York (Stuart 1989, 1992). There may have been a Canadian connection to their US-based nursing education: Canadian-born nurse, (Mary) Adelaine Nutting developed nursing education as the Director, Department of Nursing and Health, Columbia University, 1907- 1925 (Strong-Boag 1991, 235). The hospital at Battle Harbour, Labrador was built in 1893 to meet the medical needs of fishers. It was a busy location, and historian James Hiller (2019) estimates that the Labrador fishery involved approximately 14,000 men, women, and children by the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The hospital at Battle Harbour primarily served fishers who were

a fairly homogenous Anglo-descended settler population (Kennedy 1992, 4). It provided the two nurses an opportunity to practice outside of the model of private, home-based, duty care nursing which was characterized by long hours, notoriously sporadic work, and little contact with other professionally trained nurses. During their stay at Battle Harbour, the nurses attended to over 100 in- and out-patients (1909) and, as Canadians, they were a minority among the Grenfell mission's mostly American volunteer labor force (Side 2015).



Picture 1. Two nurses and the boss of the house. Louise and Edith Hegan Collection, Rooms Provincial Archives (RPA). VA 103 11.2. Used with permission.

This photograph is among sixty-seven in the Louise and Edith Hegan Collection, [VA 103]. The photographic collection is one of many maintained by volunteer workers at British physician [Sir] Wilfred T. Grenfell's medical and religious mission to deep-sea fishers in Northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador. This collection was selected for analysis because of its early visual depictions of the Battle Harbour Hospital, 1893-1930 and for its accessibility and identifiable photographer. Based on the fact there are no photographs in the collection of the women's homes, home communities, or other family members, it is likely an *aide-mémoire* of time spent at Battle Harbour. Photographed primarily by Louise Hegan, the collection was likely intended as a private record of the women's experiences and their social and physical surroundings. It was acquired by the International Grenfell Association (IGA) and then by The Rooms Provincial Archives, Newfoundland and Labrador. At that time, Louise Hegan's photographs were pasted into a single leather-bound album (with some photographs cropped to fit the album's pages) and images of mission staff and volunteers dominate. Individual photographs were removed by archivists at The Rooms Provincial Archives, but their original sequence and orientation on album pages were preserved digitally. In the album, photographs are placed contiguously by subject matter. For example, photographs of mission staff and volunteers are often pasted on pages adjacent to other photographs of staff and volunteers. Photographs of local, including Indigenous, people are also placed contiguously. No captions or written guide is provided or textual documentation included. This album and its photographs stand on their own, and at the same time, they are situated in the wider corpus of other photographic Grenfell mission collections housed in archives across Canada, the United States, and Great Britain. Through these historical photographs, sometimes used without attribution, Grenfell's mission continues to be exhibited materially and visually. I analyze Grenfell volunteers' photograph collections as a way to

explore feminist subjectivities, settler-Indigenous relations, and settler and Indigenous bodies in colonial contexts and to demonstrate methodologies of visual analysis to understand the place of photographs in historical and contemporary colonial image making (Side 2015).

I argue that the Louise and Edith Hegan collection illustrates anthropologists Ruth Behar's and Marcy Brink-Danan's (2012) argument that cameras and photographers create distance and intimacy with subjects. Situated in a body of feminist scholarship that examines how colonialism is inscribed on gendered bodies (Krantz 2002; Pickles 2000; Pickles and Rutherford 2005), these socio-spatial colonial relations are re-enacted through bodily regimes in the visual field. Historians, Katie Pickles and Myra Rutherford argue there is still much to be learned about Indigenous-settler relations in Atlantic Canada (2005, 4). Drawing on close analyses of four, select photographs from the Hegan collection, I examine gendered bodies, physical staging, and photographer and/or subject choices in proximity, closeness and distance to analyze contact and sociability in a colonial context. I consider how the continued reproduction of these photographs shapes who and what is remembered and forgotten. Acknowledging the camera as a technological tool that establishes socio-spatial colonial relations (Wilson 2011, 316) I demonstrate how distances are "made *by* visual images" and are not simply verified *in* [added emphasis] them (Pinney, in Hayes 2005, 520). These relations also continue to be re-made through their reproduction and display. With relation to the Hegan collection, I examine how the camera re-works "racialized regimes of representation" to re-tell local histories through strategies of visual repetition and disruption (Mills 1996; Wilson 2011); and, I illustrate how choices about photographic subjects, composition, and settings produce visual vignettes that create colonial, socio-spatial, and racial hierarchies (Langford 2001, 50), including some that, despite their visibility, remain unquestioned.

In the first section, I detail the gendered landscape and operations of Grenfell's colonial medical mission at the turn of the twentieth century, headquartered in what was then, a former British colony, (now part of Canada). In the second section, I apply a visual analysis to examine select photographs and consider their indexical placement in the collection to demonstrate how colonialism's bodily regimes constitute scopic, socio-spatial relations. Informed by a corpus of scholarly feminist engagements with colonialism (Harris 1998; Mills 1996; Mohanty 1984), I examine photographs, their placement, and their display to expose their scopic regimes as forms of colonial practice and representation.

I demonstrate how intimacy and distance are created and how sociability and visibility are ordered through photographic placement and reproduction. Photographic illusions are possible through superficial readings of visual cues, and this visual analysis responds directly to Sara Mills' call (2006, 129) for more nuanced understandings of women in colonial contexts through material analyzes, including photographs. Recognizing that "every viewing entails multiple imaginings" (Krantz 2002, 4) and that the transparency of photographs is often illusionary (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012, 2), I analyze various visual registrars including: physical proximity, as the distance of bodies relative to one other and to the landscape; subject inclusions and exclusions; staging and composition; self-ascribed and archival textual captions; and photographic reproduction and its contexts. Socio-spatial differences continue to be created in multiple and complex ways and, in relation to this collection, they are evident in distances created from Indigeneity, presentations of ordered social relationships, and displays of professional status. In relation to this particular collection, I challenge the superficiality of dress as a register of social class, evident through social distance and physical proximity, arguing instead that these are visible registers of colonialism and colonial aspirations for making respectable subjects (Connor 2019; Krantz 2002, 149). This close visual examination is offered in opposition to the presumed perception and comprehension of colonial logics of display that persist until the present day.

## **Colonial Newfoundland and Labrador**

The island of Newfoundland has been a settler colony (1610-1854), a crown colony of Great Britain with its own internal government (1854-1907), a British dominion (1934-1949), and, along with Labrador (1949 until the present), a province in Canada (Hiller 2019). Labrador, on the mainland, was transferred from Lower Canada to Newfoundland in 1809. A 1927 border dispute, between the province of Québec in Canada and Labrador was settled by Great Britain's Judicial Committee of the Privy Council with a land border entrenched constitutionally in 1949. This extended colonial period provided Great Britain with ample opportunity to remedy a colony that it regarded as a degenerate space that was economically challenged and culturally laggard and as "a blank canvas for the projection of colonial ideas" (Connor 2019; Cullen 2017). From the second half of the nineteenth century onward, religious and social mission movements have had a significant impact in Newfoundland and Labrador (Connor 2019, 46). When Newfoundland joined Canada, Stephen Crocker (2000) argues, it was "hailed kicking and screaming into modernity," but only into a future of "colonial modernization" whereby the future relied upon what was known to have existed in the past (84). This colonial past and its legacy continue to be refracted in historical accounts and in photographs and their continued reproduction and display as extensions of colonial imagery into the present.

Historical accounts of Newfoundland and Labrador are shaped by the region's dependency on the fishery and considerations of men and masculinity dominate. Photographs of what existed in the past in Newfoundland and Labrador often depict the fishery and men who worked in it and actively construct memories of place and its gendered social relations (Bate 2010). Newfoundland-centred feminist scholarship has largely sought to recover women and counter gender biases; however, there are relatively few sustained analyzes of colonialism and its gendered legacies (Cullum, McGrath and Porter 2006; Cullum and Porter 2014; Kealey 1993). These text-rich feminist histories tend to use visual photographs sparingly and regard them as supplementary and illustrative sources. In this analysis I use photographs as primary documents (Adelman 2017; Antwi et al. 2013).

Grenfell's medical mission existed in Northern Newfoundland and coastal Labrador from the late 1890s until the 1950s. Historian James Hiller (2019) suggested that it still "retained much of its original character" well into the 1950s (43). An evangelical mission, Grenfell's enterprise was unaffiliated denominationally. It was based largely in the personality and activities of a single individual: British-born physician, Wilfred Thomason Grenfell (Rompkey 2011). Grenfell first travelled to Newfoundland and Labrador in 1892 with the National Mission to Deep Sea Fishermen, a British evangelical organization. However, the decision to establish a permanent presence was entirely Grenfell's own, and eventually, Grenfell parted ways with the National Mission to Deep Sea Fishers over this decision and the necessity of financial support. By 1914, Grenfell incorporated, as the International Grenfell Association (IGA), which encompassed an expanding enterprise including: hospitals and a hospital ship; nursing stations; a system of industrial (handicraft) work; agricultural and animal husbandry programmes and gardens; a children's home; day, boarding and summer schools (to accommodate the fishing season); lending libraries; a new and second-hand clothing exchange; cooperative stores; and, in the colony's capital city, St John's, a seaman's institute (Coombs-Thorne 2019) that provided accommodation and recreation on a model of temperance.

With weakened ties to the British mission organization, and following his 1909 marriage to American, Anne MacClanahan, Coombs-Thorne argues (2019) that Grenfell cultivated a shift towards an American model of philanthropy to support his model of colonial, gendered, middle-class, moral reform. Biographer, Ronald Rompkey (2011), characterized Grenfell's approach as an "attitude of social guardianship." Grenfell used lecture tours, magic lantern slide shows, photographs, and illustrated print

publications to promote the work of the mission and to recruit volunteer labourers from America. He recruited volunteers from New England colleges and hospitals. For many decades, students from Harvard, Yale, Vassar, Princeton, Smith, Columbia, and other US colleges (Connor 2019, 57) supported Grenfell's enterprise through their voluntary labour. Additionally, American philanthropic organizations provided regular sources of funding, and administrative and in-kind support, including New York-based office space (Connor and Side 2019, 272), educational scholarships (Woodrow 2019), architectural skill (Rafico 2019), and donations of material goods, from books (Connor 2017), to second-hand clothing (Lang and Side 2019), to breakfast cereal (Numbers 2019).

In magic lantern slide shows and photographs, Grenfell depicted local people in Newfoundland and Labrador as Anglo-American populations and highlighted their colonial location and connections to Great Britain. To mission workers, he portrayed local populations as similar to themselves in "English extraction" (Connor 2019, 51) and language. Grenfell naturalized rhetoric about the mission's work among Anglo-descended settlers and documented connections through photographs and their repeated display. In this way, Grenfell's photographic display depicted those who were seen and overlooked those who were made absent and forgotten, a gap that theorist Susan Sontag (1973 cited in Warley 2009, 201) cautions about not accepting as it appears in photographs.

Grenfell did not entirely overlook the presence of Indigenous peoples. About the mission, he wrote,

There are no Esquimaux served, as many people think. There may be a few Indians prevailing of the privileges of the Industrial [handicraft workshop], but these will be found in the [further north] Cartwright areas of Labrador. (IGA 1915)

However, Grenfell's enterprise was one of many exogenous institutions (Kennedy 1997) that was in regular contact with Indigenous peoples in Labrador. Others included merchants (Sweeny 2015) and a Moravian mission established in Labrador in 1771 (Hiller 2001; Rollman 2002, 2013) and whose members were also prolific photographers. Anthropologist John Kennedy (1997) argues that missions and merchants shifted Indigenous spatial settlement patterns over time, gradually producing more centralized residency with detrimental implications for communities and community life (8).

Grenfell encouraged volunteer mission workers to bring cameras to Labrador and fostered the mission practice of photography highlighted in mission scholarship (Geary 1990; Gullestad 2007; Rollman 2002, 2002a). After 1912, a camera and film were included on the list of necessary items that Grenfell staff member, Jessie Luther (1912) provided to women working at the mission. Grenfell was an avid photographer and he used photographs opportunistically to display the mission's alleged civilizing effects on local populations and to explicitly aid the project of nation building (Strathman 2015). Grenfell used photographs, often reprinted in IGA publications, to display the prevailing colonial logic. For example, photographs of mission children were sometimes furnished as a commodity to individual donors in exchange for their continuous financial support (*ADSF* 1909b, 8).

Grenfell's interactions with Indigenous populations, Innu, Inuit, and Inuit-Métis, also Labrador Métis, (Kennedy 1985, 13; 2015) were largely opportunistic (Connor 2019). Photographs of Innu, Inuit, and Inuit-Métis peoples were displayed in IGA publications and located the mission and its activities in the 'exotic' North. They also positioned the Other as unfamiliar and unusual, and used these images to create impressions, incur empathy (Anapuna and Pierce 2001, 159; Bate 2010) and garner financial support for the mission's work. The display of select photographs and their collection marked differences

in bodies, their histories, and legacies in relation to colonialism. Photographs comprise, David Bate argues (2010), a materialization of power.

Photographic reproductions of Indigenous populations reflected Grenfell's deep romanticization of the North. Some individual sitters and their photographs may also have represented a means to defy the prevailing colonial logic and challenge historical and contemporary relations, distances, and representations (Malmsheimer 1985; Margolis and Rowe 1988; Warley 2009). However, to the best of my knowledge, there are no photographs taken and/or maintained by Indigenous populations at the mission, as they exist (Katakis 1998; Warley 2009) in some other institutional contexts. The camera was a powerful tool and Indigenous access to cameras and photographic processing was likely limited. Local Indigenous people were constructed as photographic subjects and had limited ability to actively shape their own visual representations. Contemporary displays of historical photographs taken at the IGA, particularly of Indigenous peoples remain visual demonstrations of settler representation; and, at the same time, they are also important traces in the assertion of collective Indigenous histories and identities (Bate 2010).

Select photographs from the Hegan Collection were used to promote the mission. Some photographs were reprinted, without attribution, on the pages of the mission's quarterly magazine, *Among the Deep Sea Fishers*, which was available by subscription. These photographs were used to create familiarity and intimacy among the mission's supporters with the place, its volunteers, and their work. Behar and Brink-Danan's anthropological and photographic research (2012) distinguishes various types of representational strategies. Their term, "visual embrace," whereby photographer and subject "embrace, or make an intimate reciprocal interaction," (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012, 1) is apparent in the mission's visual strategy. The Hegan Collection, and its photographic corpus also reflect a strategy of "visual theatre" (Behar and Brink-Danan 2012, 1) whereby photographers and subjects engage in ritualistic performances and appearances that capture the creation and maintenance of photographic and social distances. The ritualistic performance of creating distance and proximity with the camera visually creates and re-creates the Other. It constitutes a means by which to "colonize[s] the constitutive complexities of subjects" (Mohanty 2003, 19) and to control representations that carry on well past the moment when the photograph is captured, but that also alleges a return to it (Debord 1983). This visual strategy values closeness and, simultaneously, it encourages and reinforces distance.

### **Intimacy at a Distance**

Behar and Brink-Danan (2012) argue that photographs can display the textures of social relationships. They can also expose people and their surroundings, locate them in physical environments and socio-spatial relations, and create categories of the observed, unobserved, the observant, and the unobservant (Rizzo 2005, 684). Photographs can intentionally create social and physical distances between settler and Indigenous people and reinforce hierarchical relations by naturalizing differences in class, race, histories, and opportunities. In the Hegan collection, representations of Indigeneity simultaneously create and naturalize the presence of social distances. Indigeneity is pictured and used instrumentally to narrate colonialism (Hayes 2005), 521) and to create an inventory of 'exotic' peoples and places to be viewed by others from afar (Bate 2010, 249).

Grenfell was not above cultivating the stories about indigent Indigenous children of the North to generate curiosity, secure mission donations, and bolster the mission's reputation for good work. In the mission's early years, Grenfell promoted an intimacy through storytelling about Indigenous children, including about [Gabriel] Pomiuk (whose life preceded the Hegan collection) and Kirkina (later Kirkina Mucko, whose photograph is included in the Hegan collection) to enact the mission's belief in innate

racial differences, to assert British superiority over colonial spaces and Indigenous subjects, and to justify the mission's presence. The stories of some Indigenous children were serialized in mission publications (*ADSF* 1904, 22) and were illustrated with their photographs. Pomiuk, son of Kajuatsiak and Aniortama, was one of nearly sixty nomadic Labrador Innu who were exhibited as part of the Esquimaux Village at the *World's Fair: Columbian Exposition* in Chicago in 1893, and which was staged, disturbingly, to celebrate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Christopher Columbus' arrival. Public historian, Ray Johnson (2015) notes the Esquimaux Village occupied an urban location on Stony Island Avenue, in the ethnological village between 56<sup>th</sup> and 57<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago. Those who were exhibited were spectacles and were expected to demonstrate Innu customs and to fashion small souvenirs for visitors to the World's Fair (Fobush 1903). After Pomiuk was returned to Labrador from Chicago at age eleven with a serious leg injury, he was allegedly found by Grenfell in poor health at Nachvak, Labrador. Grenfell took him to the hospital at Indian Harbour in 1895, then to Battle Harbour Hospital where, in 1897, Pomiuk died of meningitis (*ADSF* 1904). John Kennedy (1992) alleges that Grenfell's book, *Northern Neighbours* (1923) exploited Pomiuk's account in text and photographs, thereby "winning every tear-drenched dollar of the tragedy" (36).

For a short time, Inuk, Kirkina, from Hamilton Inlet, Labrador, occupied Pomiuk's sponsored hospital cot at the hospital at Battle Harbour. Grenfell recounted Kirkina's story in public fund-raising lectures and mission publications and serialized her story, with photographs (*ADSF* 1909a, 22), among mission supporters. A photograph of Kirkina, who was re-named Elizabeth Jeffries by the mission, is included in the Hegan collection.



Picture 2. Ben on crutches and Kirkina. Hegan Collection, RPA. VA 103 12.1.  
Used with permission.

The photograph requires stillness, exercised as a form of control by the photographer (Camp 2010, 26). In the photograph, Kirkina stands next to Benjamin Butt, who has a visible leg injury; however, it was Kirkina's leg injuries (not visible here) that led to her position as a public spectacle, through displays and storytelling. Afflicted by frostbite and then gangrene in her feet and lower legs, Kirkina's father amputated her legs below the knees in the family home. Later, having allegedly discovered Kirkina in her Labrador home in 1900 (*ADSF* 1909c, 22), Grenfell took her into the mission's care. Mission worker, Jessie Luther's diary entry (July 22, 1910) affirms Grenfell's re-telling of the story of Kirkina's

injuries and of the anticipated audience response: “In the other hut, I met the girl Kirkina, whose father had cut off her feet with a frozen axe to save her from gangrene, noted by Luther as one of Dr. Grenfell’s stories, that “always made his audience shudder” (Rompkey 2001). The colonial positioning in this story and its retelling (by Grenfell, but also by Luther) were intended to highlight the lack of parental care that allegedly necessitated Kirkina’s removal and displacement to the mission.

Photographs and stories about indigent Indigenous children, including Kirkina, visualized colonial subjects and emphasized stories about the mission’s good work. Visual scholar, Martha Langford (2001) argues that photographs reference suspended conversations. In this instance, the inclusion and display of the photograph of Kirkina in the Hegan Collection invites the viewers’ gaze and conversation. It invites the story’s retelling and the photograph offers tangible material evidence and visual authenticity of its veracity (Campt 2010, 20). The photograph highlights individual circumstances, but also blurs personal identification by re-making Kirkina into the category of those Indigenous children whose situations warranted the mission’s intervention. Both photograph and story make a visual spectacle of Kirkina’s Indigeneity (Campt 2010). The spectacularization of Kirkina attempts to invert understandings of violence; it portrays it as inflicted by her own family and culture and alleviated by the mission, rather than the reverse.

Together, text and image are presented as the civilizing discourse and intentionally extend the socio-spatial distance between the photographer-settler and local Indigenous communities. In this instance, the spectacle is both Kirkina’s injuries and social relations, including the social distances that the story and its re-telling continuously re-establish (Debord 1983, 2).

Kirkina’s story was one of many stories about children (Side 2015) that was serialized in the mission’s publications to demonstrate their ongoing care. Through her image and its circulation, Kirkina’s status as a ward of the mission is naturalized and her separation from her parents, (trapper, Emo [Adam] Jeffery and her mother’s unrecorded name), remains unquestioned and is presented as unquestionable (Cho 2013). Grenfell arranged for Kirkina’s transfer from Rigolet in Hamilton Inlet, Labrador to the mission at St. Anthony, Newfoundland. At St. Anthony, her name was changed and she was taught to speak English. From there, she travelled to Boston for numerous surgeries and for fitted wooden prostheses, which were paid for by the mission’s Boston-based supporters. Kirkina accompanied the family of the Scottish surgeon, John McPherson, who performed many of her operations on religious missions to New York and Mexico, after which time and without explanation, she was returned to the mission at St. Anthony in June, 1908 (Forster 2004).

This photograph of Benjamin Butt and Kirkina was taken the following year after Kirkina returned to St. Anthony. It captures the subjects’ full bodies and invites the viewer’s intimate gaze. This full body view is dialectic: it necessitates that the photographer be positioned at a physical distance, and at the same time, it captures a frontal view that conveys familiarity, intimacy, and closeness that is echoed by storytelling. The visibility of her image makes her situation visible and familiar to those who cannot know her. Kirkina’s injuries, perhaps only some of them visible, are made into the object of the gaze. Viewers can note Kirkina’s unaided stance to verify the mission’s accomplishments and her corporeal body becomes a visible object of the mission’s good work.

Technologies of material and digital photographic reproduction ensure that Kirkina’s image and story can be transferred, posthumously, from one person to another. Repeating the story about the violence enacted against her by her father acts to denigrate Indigenous communities and uphold settler-colonial interventions. It purposively widens the social distance between Indigenous people and settlers and between the care provided by Kirkina’s family and that provided by the mission’s staff. Its continued reproduction and circulation acts to widen the distance between Kirkina as subject and viewers’ perceptions. In this instance, Indigeneity, gender, and ability are used together to magnify the mission’s

assumptions (and those also held by its supporters) about inadequate parental care, poverty, and lack of opportunity that justified the mission's presence and actions as imperialist practices (Hayes 2005, 522).

This single photograph encapsulates some of the mission's colonial contradictions (Warley 2009). It exposes tensions between the mission's claims about shared customs and humanity and the realities of racialized hierarchies that infuse the colonial practices of language loss, cultural attrition, renaming, physical displacement, and dislocation that enhance distances. These tensions remained apparent in Kirkina's situation; the mission initially paid for her medical treatment, travel, prostheses and rehabilitation, but none of these was provided over the long term. Later in her life, Kirkina (then Kirkina Mucko) endured a twenty-seven year period without properly fitting prostheses. In the 1950s, they were provided to her, again, charitably (Forster 2004).

### **Ordering Visibility and Sociability**

Photographs are vehicles for expressions of gender, class, and social visibility (Hayes 2005, 522). Despite Grenfell's claims about similarities as bases for social interaction, the photographs in the Hegan collection (and likely other Grenfell mission collections) expose the construction of hierarchies as everyday social practices. Mission photographs demonstrate rigidly ordered hierarchies and patterns of sociability and markers of professionalism as attitudes that Jill Samfya Perry (1997) says are "tinged with Social Darwinism" (135).

Sociability was unexpected at the mission's Battle Harbour site and Louise Hegan (1910) remarked, "We thought we were going to the real wilds when we started, but we found Battle Harbour quite a social centre" (23). A discernable visual pattern, although not one that is without exception, is evident in the physical placement of photographs as mnemonic devices (Küchler and Melion 1991) on the album's pages and in how their placement reinforces socio-spatial distances and construct meanings. There is no scholarly agreement over explanations for the presentation of photographs in albums, a form that Elizabeth Edwards (2014) argues highlights their interconnectedness. Marilyn Motz (1989) suggests individuals order photographs chronologically and thematically to accompany oral narratives, whereas Martha Langford (2001) suggests that their physical arrangement often mimics curatorial practices. In this collection, their arrangement illustrates settler and Indigenous distinctions and reinforces class differences based on professional status and its importance for the mission's hierarchical order. Two select photographs, both of hospital staff, are compared here to illustrate the creation of social and visual distances. The archival caption on one photograph (Picture 3) reads "presumably housekeeping staff and hospital maids." It includes six unnamed girls and women posed on the hospital's side porch. Hospital maids, also called ward maids, and housekeeping staff who were regarded as apprentices in the system of hospital hierarchy (Enloe 2019). They learned their skills on the job and sometimes received wages in cash and slips that could be exchanged for new and second-hand clothing and sewing provisions (Lang and Side 2019). Although a small number of locally born women were selected by Ann (MacClanahan) Grenfell to receive a nursing education in the United States (Woodrow 2019), the acquisition of a professional nursing designation was constrained.



Picture 3. “Six women [likely ward maids] wearing aprons in front of Battle Harbour Hospital.” Hegan Collection, RPA. VA 103 5.4. Used with permission.

The photograph of the ward maids naturalizes the practices of gendered labour, social stratification, and occupational segregation (Clark Hine 1989). The subjects’ posed stance, fixed gaze, and aprons display their industriousness as evidence of the mission’s ethos. A Battle Harbour Hospital report, filed separately from the photograph, notes the inclusion of “two half breed Esquimaux women have been trained to become excellent ward maids and will be invaluable during the coming summer” (*ADSF* 1909c). Ward maids and housekeeping staff were subordinate to the authority of the hospital’s summer physician and the two formally educated nurses, Edith Hegan and Marguerite Carr-Harris. The photograph distinguishes local women who were taught to help themselves from those who claimed to have taught them (Hirsch 1997).

In contrast to the women and girls in Picture 3, there are four, adjacently arranged variations of a photograph titled *Hospital Staff* in the Hegan collection (Picture 4). Contrasts between these two photographs illustrate the distribution and operation of power relations at the mission. Posed on the hospital’s front porch, instead of at its side entrance, and reproduced in the mission’s quarterly magazine (*ADSF* 1910, 16), the photograph of named staff excludes hospital ward maids and all but one hospital housekeeper, Louise Hegan.



Picture 4. “Staff of the Battle Harbour Hospital.” Hegan Collection, RPA. VA 103 12.3. Used with permission.

The accompanying text identifies the two nurses, Edith Hegan and S. Marguerite Carr-Harris. Edith Hegan's younger sister, Louise Hegan is the only housekeeper who is identified and named. The text also identifies staff physicians Dr. Wilfred Grenfell and Dr. John Grieve, and Dr. Emma Musson, and her assistant, Dr. Clark, visiting from Philadelphia. All of them worked at the Battle Harbour Hospital alongside the ward maids and housekeepers in Picture 3, but who remain unnamed. Despite their identification as staff, four people included in the photograph had no medical responsibilities: Mr. W. H. Webster, an American accountant travelled to the mission to address the mission's bookkeeping practices, Mrs. Webster accompanied Mr. Webster (Coombs-Thorne 2019), Reverend Mr. Jesse Halsey travelled from New York, as did a worker from Williams College in Massachusetts and both of whom volunteered in non-medical capacities.

Comparison between the two photographs of hospital workers demonstrates that class and race-based affinity were stronger predictors of professional inclusion (Mifflin 2007) than were actual responsibilities. The camera was turned on subjects to make the mission's work visible and to enhance the reputations of medical professionals as mission staff. It rendered the labour of working-class and non-white bodies invisible and contributed to structural inequalities in nursing practice and care. The invisibility of the system of local, underpaid apprentices bolstered access to nursing for white, middle-class, Canadian-born women who were "expected to bring their superior sense of sexual [moral] and social behaviour to the bedside," (McPherson 1996) and "upheld hierarchal relations constructed through race (17). Despite their close occupational relationship, wards maids were photographically distanced in the frame and in their placement on the album pages from formally educated nurses.

Both photographs include still, posed subjects in proximity to the material hospital building as an important context. The presence of the local hospital establishes mission property and propriety. It establishes the power of one group of subjects over others, dividing them on the bases on race, social class, education, and opportunities and illustrates their respective roles in colonial relations.

### **Photographic Illusions**

In photographs, dress may register as a visual indicator of difference and distance. In addition to distinctions created by profession attire (i.e. laboratory coats and nursing aprons and pins), dress may be presumed to mark social class. However, photographer Santu Mofokeng (1996) cautions against reading well-dressed, photographic subjects in colonial contexts solely as coercive subjects and argues that subjects should be read as representing their own chosen self-image. The mission's system of new and second-hand clothing exchange likely blurred visual distinctions in dress (Lang and Side 2019). In this system of exchange, local residents provided labour and local goods in exchange for new and second-hand clothing donations solicited from the mission's American, British, and Canadian supporters.

This exchange was embedded in colonial views about teaching industriousness, self-sufficiency, and thrift to local residents. Recognizing warm clothing as a necessity and as a scarce and expensive commodity, its exchange discouraged expectations of charitable provision (Richmond 2013) and encouraged local industry. Outside of this exchange, clothing was available through a barter system (Ruiz 2016; Sweeny 2015) whereby merchants exchanged goods for cod catches sold on international markets. This system of exchange supplied the mission's staff and volunteers with local resources that they lacked the skills to acquire in a wholly unfamiliar environment. Exchange provided mission staff with fish, game birds, and local clothing specialized for the climate. This system of exchange endured through most of the mission's existence. It re-made local people into respectable and well-dressed colonial subjects and re-made their colonizers into agents of influence.

In this instance, photography served as a scopic regime for the public presentation of gendered clothing reform. Its projection onto bodies must be read closely and critically (Krantz 2002; Rutherford 2004). On their own, photographic registers of dress and/or comportment are not necessarily indicative of the complexities of Indigenous-settler material and social relationships. For example, photographs may have been regarded as a special occasion for which appropriate attire was expected or required. In some photographs, dress is a visual indicator of the mission's reach. It is used to illustrate alleged civilizing effects on gendered and Indigenous bodies and widens social distances. For example, hospital ward maids' aprons mark their apprenticeship and femininity, but are also required to distinguish them from nurses' professional attire. Their difference is further marked by the absence of caps and graduate nursing pins that were "celebrated by many students and graduates as valued symbols of hard-earned skills" (McPherson 1996, 43). Local subjects, despite being displayed photographically, were often contrasted, photographically and by arrangement in the photographic album, with volunteer workers whose attire, such as Mr. Alexander's school letter sweater (see Picture 4, back row, middle), from Williams College, Williamstown, Massachusetts, marked their distinction.

In other photographs, however, the wide application of gendered expectations in dress narrowed social distances and exhibited the pressures of coercive assimilation. Kirkina (see Picture 2) is photographed wearing a high-collared, long-sleeve dress that conforms to mission expectations about femininity and modesty and that is similar to those worn by the mission's female volunteer workers. After 1912, women volunteers were provided with lengthy packing lists that included multiple pairs of shoes and boots, (that were particularly scarce locally), and warm clothing, including that suitable for church attendance and special occasions, including travel. In the case of the Hegan Collection, the three women travelled in coats, hats and leather gloves (see Picture 5) in October 1909, away from a place to which they never returned.



Picture 5. "Nurses Edith Hegan, S-M Carr-Harris, and Louise Hegan with ship's captain and colleague." Hegan Collection, RPA. VA 103 19. Used with permission.

Photographs can also expose tensions and contradictions in dress. The mission's system of clothing exchange met local clothing needs; it also created them. Mission activities, including church attendance, baby christenings, children's piano recitals, and Christmas parties created clothing needs and expectations beyond those required for everyday labour. These needs conveyed the respectability of donors and likely enhanced desires among local people for fashionable attire and self-chosen

representations. However, the mission ensured that differences in access to desirable clothing and self-representations were maintained. Its rules prohibited the sharing of clothing and codified this in the 1920s.

We ask that staff members do not take with them food or clothing beyond what they need for themselves; that they pay cash for food or clothing they purchase; that when they leave their stations, they turn in any food or clothing they do not wish to take back with them to the Association authorities. (Fuller 1926-1927)

However, isolated mission locations meant rules about gifts and expectations about gendered conformity could be contravened. In 1926, the matter of a volunteer who distributed clothing outside of the mission's requirement for exchange was discussed at an IGA Board of Management meeting in New York (Lang and Side 2019, 43). Those volunteers who took advantage of isolated locations to enjoy less restrictive dress codes, such as the mission's ban on then-fashionable knickerbockers for women (Fuller 1926-1927) were less closely scrutinized and dress codes were defied by at least two women volunteers (Perry 1997, 110).

The mission's clothing practices exploited local knowledge and expertise. Grenfell adopted Indigenous knowledge about winter attire as if it were his own and without credit. In his article, "Notes on Clothing against Cold" in the *British Medical Journal* (1916), he claimed long-standing Indigenous clothing traditions, including the adoption of the fur-lined *amauti* (Inuit parka), a preference for seal skin, and the habit of drying wet wool with dry grasses. He attributed this knowledge to his twenty-five years of experience in the North Grenfell (1916), despite the fact that he never spent an entire winter in Labrador (Hiller 2019).

## Conclusion

Contrary to their archival presence, Grenfell mission photographs are often overlooked for their ability to reflect the mission and its activities in ways that are less evident in text. Photographs offer spatial and temporal insight. They display bodies, landscapes, and bodies on landscapes in ways that expose colonial endeavours and provide information about how cameras and photographs were used and continue to be used to re-animate social relationships (Pickles and Rutherford 2005) and in the context of the mission as a "colony within a colony" (Hiller 2019, 44). Socio-spatial distances are traced and exposed through these photographs, although, in the context of complex colonial relations and as analyses of dress demonstrate, not every visual cue can be read definitively as evidence of proximity in distance and/or time.

Although they have evaded scholarly scrutiny, photographs from the Hegan Collection are reproduced and displayed publicly as historical records. For example, the photograph captioned "two nurses and the boss of the house" (Picture 1) is included in the digital exhibition, *Coastal Women* as a photographic account of women's lives in pre-Confederation Newfoundland and Labrador. Under the exhibition sub-heading, Outside Worlds, the caption identifies the contributions of travellers "in providing a window into [Newfoundland and Labrador] culture and society." This alleged window into another culture is identified by Patrick Joyce (1999) as a fascination with the "peculiarities of the local" (40) whereby local behaviours, customs, and habits are presented as curiosities from which their colonial context and influences are erased. In the same exhibition, a cropped reproduction of the photograph of Benjamin Butt and Kirkina (Picture 2) appears under the exhibition sub-heading Women on the Margins. Accompanied by a textual explanation, the visual focus is on Kirkina's injuries, her care by the mission, and bravery in the face of her physical challenges. The same photograph is also reproduced in Merna

Forster's text, *100 More Canadian Heroines: Famous and Forgotten Facts* (2004). Its reproduction, display, and explanation minimize Kirkina's socially marginal position vis-à-vis the mission as well as the coercive socio-spatial regimes to which she was subjected, including through familial separation, relocation, medical experimentation, and their effects. In these select representations and histories, scant attention is paid to Kirkina's contributions and achievements, including more than three decades of service as a Inuit community midwife in Rigolet, Labrador, thereby unsettling the settler-Indigenous paradigm that shaped and disrupted her early years.

The reproduction and display of photographs, Tina Campt argues (2010) appear to freeze them in time and create a visual "ethnographic museum" (51). Their display distinguishes individuals and histories while classifying and categorizing them: past/present, Indigenous/settler, and local resident/mission staff and workers. They serve as a basis for the continued construction and categorization into the future (Bate 2010) and the possibility of the continued creation of socio-spatial distances. The youthfulness of children whose images and stories were serialized through photographs and text, preserve the past and reference futurity. Their photographic representations embody what Campt (2010) identifies as "psychic and physical responses" (56) that resist the colonial gaze and signify resilience and intergenerational continuity. Photographs of the two nurses (Picture 1) also reference their future contributions to World War I, as members of the Canadian Army Medical Corps (Elliot, Ruddy and Villeneuve 2013), where the attainment of the professional status required for service remained restricted by a racialized hierarchy (Toman 2015; Enloe 2019) of wartime nursing and that defined nationalist ideals.

Presenting photographs independently from considerations of their historical and social contexts overlooks the location of subjects and relations of power and subjection (Mohanty 1984). It glosses over class- and race-based ideologies and minimalizes colonial relationships in the contexts of historical (and contemporary) Newfoundland and Labrador. In moments of gazing, contemporary viewers are invited to imagine Newfoundland and Labrador in the context of Crocker's idea of colonial modernization (2000, 84) and in ways that do not require them to recognize how easily women's philanthropic and voluntary efforts meshed with colonial enterprises and gendered moral reform efforts for social betterment (Siegel 2010). The continued display of photographs as history ignores how colonial relationships are made visible by women's own hands, including those that held the camera, moving it closer to some people and their stories and moving it further away from other people and their stories. It also includes those hands that arranged and pasted photographs closer or further away from one another, and that were rendered still by photographs. Acknowledging that all historical records are rooted in and reflect social inequalities in the past (Sweeny 2015), the Louise and Edith Hegan Collection is embedded in the class- and race-based inequalities that justified the Grenfell mission's physical presence on Newfoundland's Northern peninsula and along the Labrador coast. The close examination of photographs in this context extends knowledge about the mission's historical operations and necessitates rethinking and re-visualizing dominant colonial scripts in texts and images.

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## Notes

1. The three women are (Alberta) Louise Hegan, 1887-1947, Edith Tilley Hegan, 1881-1974, and (Silla) Marguerite Carr Harris, 1879-1960. At the time of travel, in 1909, the women were ages 22, 28, and 30 respectively, and unmarried. This photograph is reproduced from the digital exhibition *Coastal Women* (2009).

2. Nursing historian, Kathryn McPherson criticizes father's profession as a determinant of social class and argues it is an incomplete and fragmentary strategy.

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