

Faculti Summary

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The speaker discusses their research on the intersection of film and tourism in Canada during the early to mid-20th century, which was driven by their work on their first book, "Borderland Films, American Cinema, Mexico, and Canada." Their research focused on how films produced between 1908 and 1919 depicted borderlands as complex spaces that shaped societal views on race, gender, and nationhood.

Notably, they found that the Canadian Pacific Railway sponsored films in 1910 to promote tourism, leading to the involvement of both federal and provincial agencies in film production to attract American tourists. Their new project, "Northern Getaway," aims to trace the evolution of tourism films in Canada and their enduring impact on the country's tourism branding.

The speaker emphasizes their historian background and reliance on primary sources, having conducted extensive archival research in Canada and the U.S. They noted how Canada was innovative in using film for tourism promotion and that various strategies emerged, such as post-World War II collaboration with Hollywood to stimulate tourism.

Additionally, they highlight the role of government film agencies in producing tourism films that were often overlooked in film history. However, these films shaped national narratives, frequently erasing Indigenous communities while commodifying aspects of their culture for tourism. The speaker illustrates this with the example of the fictionalized character Gray Owl, designed to attract visitors to national parks.

The speaker concludes that while tourism films were highly effective in increasing visitor numbers—especially from the U.S.—the trend diminished by the late 1950s, shifting focus toward television production for promoting tourism.