



Spirits of the Rockies: Reasserting an Indigenous Presence in Banff National Park

Courtney Wade Mason

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The Banff–Bow Valley in western Alberta is the heart of spiritual and economic life for the Nakoda peoples. While they were displaced from the region by the reserve system and the creation of Canada’s first national park, in the twentieth century the Nakoda reasserted their presence in the valley through involvement in regional tourism economies and the Banff Indian Days sporting festivals.

Drawing on extensive oral testimony from the Nakoda, supplemented by detailed analysis of archival and visual records, *Spirits of the Rockies* is a sophisticated account of the situation that these Indigenous communities encountered when they were denied access to the Banff National Park. Courtney W. Mason examines the power relations and racial discourses that dominated the eastern slopes of the Canadian Rocky Mountains and shows how the Nakoda strategically used the Banff Indian Days festivals to gain access to sacred lands and respond to colonial policies designed to repress their cultures.

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