Between 1902 and 1930, Dominion Land Surveyor Morrison Parsons Bridgland spent nearly every summer mapping the mountains of Alberta and British Columbia, climbing many of Canada’s Rocky Mountains for the first time. This unheralded alpinist perfected phototopographical techniques to compile a series of mountaintop photographs to create accurate topographical maps. Early tourists used his maps to explore the natural wonders of the eastern Rockies, and his book, Description of & Guide to Jasper Park (1917), told them what to go and see.

In 1915, just over a century after David Thompson and his brigade made their way up to Athabasca Pass and over to the Pacific Slope, Bridgland brought his unmatched skills as a surveyor to this area—Jasper Park. How he made his photographs from the tops of mountains and even developed them while camped out in the wilderness are detailed in this biography, as are some of the trials and tribulations involved in that summer’s survey. Mapper of Mountains also relates his involvement in the establishment and early years of the Alpine Club of Canada.

Bridgland left an enduring legacy to future generations researching the ecological history of Jasper National Park, Waterton Lakes National Park, and other regions of the Rockies with his photographs and maps. In 1997, the Rocky Mountain Repeat Photography Project began systematically rephotographing Jasper National Park from all ninety-two of the mountain peak stations that Bridgland chose for his photographs so long ago, and then studying the ecological changes and constants. Today, work continues in Waterton Lakes National Park.

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