Notice of the Final Oral Examination
for the Degree of Master of Arts

of

KATE VAN GENDEREN

BA (Montana State University, 2014)

“Evelyn Cameron: A Study in Three Parts of Her Photography, Diary, and Life in Montana”

Department of History

Friday, August 25, 2017
10:00 A.M.
Clearihue Building
Room B215

Supervisory Committee:
Dr. Rachel Cleves, Department of History, University of Victoria (Supervisor)
Dr. Jason Colby, Department of History, UVic (Member)

External Examiner:
Dr. Cedric Bomford, Department of Fine Arts, UVic

Chair of Oral Examination:
Dr. Dan Smith, Department of Geography, UVic

Dr. David Capson, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies
Abstract

Evelyn Jephson Cameron (1868-1928) was born to a wealthy merchant family outside London. At the age of twenty-five, she moved to Terry, Montana to raise horses and homestead with her husband, Ewen Cameron. Evelyn Cameron recorded their time in eastern Montana in her daily diary entries, which span over thirty-five years from 1893 to 1928. She also became a self-taught professional photographer, and made thousands of photographs with large-format cameras of the people in the towns of Terry, Fallon, and Marsh. She also photographed the landscape, birds, and other animals she kept as pets or encountered in the wild. She wrote in her private diary nearly every day, offering a first-person point of view of life for women in the late nineteenth-century in the American West. This paper focuses on three particular aspects of Cameron’s life. The first chapter focuses on spaces or mediums that Cameron had access to that offered her autonomy and privacy, things which were often difficult for women to find at this time. These spaces and mediums include her photography, her diary, and her darkroom, all of which gave her different sorts of calm or control. The second chapter delves into Cameron’s photographic portraits of herself and other women, looking into how women portrayed themselves and others in the American West. Cameron depicted herself as a part of the natural world, and she also did so when capturing other women. The final chapter analyzes Cameron’s identity as a Montanan, from her conscious choice to move there to her refusal to return to Britain permanently. She gained American citizenship in 1918 and took living in Montana seriously. Her diary reveals a deep awareness of the natural world and records accomplishments and events that help to build and strengthen her relationship with her chosen home.