

**MORE THAN A GAME:  
THE INTERACTION OF SPORT AND COMMUNITY IN GUELPH.**

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by  
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**ABSTRACT.****MORE THAN A GAME:  
THE INTERACTION OF SPORT AND COMMUNITY IN  
GUELPH.**

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The popularity of sport amongst all sections of society is a result of a complex interaction with those that it touches. It is also revealing of a malleability which has always enabled people to mould sport as they saw fit and glean from it what they wanted. This thesis aims to articulate this interrelationship using late nineteenth and early twentieth century Guelph, Ontario, as its structural parameter. It also determines whether sport became strong enough to attain the status of autonomous institution in the process by undertaking a historiographical analysis of the broad overviews which seek to explain the the role of sport within society, as well as its development within urban areas. This provides the conceptual basis for a discussion of the formative clubs, institutions and facilities of Guelph. A separate chapter is reserved for the pioneering and professional Maple Leaf Baseball Club.

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## INTRODUCTION.

Sport's attainment of institutionalization emanated from its complex interaction with society. Ever since it acquired such autonomous status in North America, sport has been widely perceived as an excellent reflective prism. Many historians and sociologists acquiesce to the belief that an insight into the cultural attitudes, norms and values of society can be gained through a study of how sport is played and the functions it performs.<sup>1</sup> Yet sport's multi-faceted and subjective nature means that any single outline seeking to illustrate its interrelationship with society, is wholly inadequate. I therefore propose to present and define those ideologies, theses and sketches which seek to explain the evolution of sport within society, and show that its institutional status was attained by an amalgamation of them all.

"Sport" needs careful definition since it could be misconstrued as an all-embracing term covering a myriad of separate physical activities, some of which do not lend themselves to the type of historical study I intend to undertake. Sociologists tend to regard "play" as the basis of all sport. They define it generally as a voluntary and distinct activity conducted within arbitrary boundaries in time and space, distinct from ordinary roles, and not meant to be productive in any way other than a ludic sense. The essential elements

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<sup>1</sup>Alan Metcalfe. "Sport in Nineteenth Century England: An Interpretation." Paper presented at the Second World Symposium of Sport and Physical Education, Banff, Alberta, 1971. Taken from David L. Bernard, "The Guelph Maple Leafs: A Cultural Indicator of Southern Ontario." *Ontario History*, 84:3 (September 1992) p 211.

of play are fun and freedom. "Games" contain much of the play element, but are characterised by more rigid rules. Not only is there a greater emphasis on team as well as individual goals, but games are often related to ends beyond the context of the game situation itself. However, both are sufficiently unstructured and irregular to make historical, as opposed to sociological, analysis difficult.

This thesis will only be concerned with the areas of "organized sport" and "recreation." Organized sport is the form of play that has become thoroughly institutionalised. It involves strict and formal regulations, as well as a complex network of clubs, leagues, governing bodies, managers, coaches, owners and spectators. Because of its highly diverse, yet structured and recorded nature, it lends itself to historical analysis. The same may be said of recreation. Although closely related to play insofar as it involves the regeneration of mind and body, recreational activities are defined by voluntary participation in activities organized by institutions keen to promote the idea of self-improvement through exercise. Therefore, unlike play, recreation involves little fantasy or pretence.<sup>2</sup>

Organized sport has always been an urban phenomenon. The city was the place where it became specialized, rationalized, commercialized and professionalized. Cities were not merely passive geographic units with large residential populations, but organic societal

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<sup>2</sup>Keith A.P.Sandiford. "The Victorians at Play: Problems in Historiographical Methodology." *Journal of Social History*, 15:2 (Winter 1981) p 272.

compounds consisting of spacial dimensions, governments and laws, neighbourhoods, social classes, ethnic groups, prominent citizens, voluntary organizations, communication and transport networks, value systems and public behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Each of these elements, either on their own, or in a reaction with others, moulded sport and caused it to grow until it flourished into an element of the urban formula in its own right.

Whilst it is important to establish that the growth of organized sport and recreation was tied up with urban-industrial development, this only serves as yet another explanatory outline. It does not account for why it took off in a certain place, at a certain time, or indeed why it was so popular amongst all sections of society. Despite a certain consistency evident in its development, the strict specifics are unique to each town or city. I therefore intend to examine the evolution of organized sport and recreation within the town of Guelph. I am well aware of the limits of such a study. I do not claim that this Southern Ontario community embodies an "ideal type expression" of North American or Canadian society. I fully agree with the statement of anthropologist Clifford Geertz who said that "the notion that one can find the essence of national societies, civilizations, great religions, or whatever summed up and simplified in so-called *typical* towns and villages is palpable nonsense. What one finds in towns and villages is (alas) town and village life."<sup>4</sup> The most that can be expected from this study is that it provides a building block

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<sup>3</sup>Steven A. Riess. *City Games: The Evolution of American Urban Society and the Rise of Sports*. University of Illinois Press, (Urbana and Chicago) 1989 p 1.

<sup>4</sup>Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays*. New York 1973 p 22. Quoted in Roy Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours of What We Will: Workers and Leisure*

for more general theorizing about the growth of organized sport in North America. Yet to my mind, it is the uniqueness of the city that is the attraction of the study. Rather than dealing with vast, impersonal forces alone, the limited scope of the study allows one to document the goals, achievements, tastes and tendencies of individuals, and manageable groups.

There is plenty of evidence to suggest that Guelph was something of a pioneering centre of organized sports' promotion in Canada and even North America. The city was the brainchild of Scotsman, John Galt. He founded the town in 1827, on behalf of his employers, the Canada Company. Galt's intentions, were to use the large resources of his employers to create a town containing all the necessary goods and services demanded by an advanced agricultural community, and which would provide a ready market for the locally grown produce. By creating instantly a developed community, Galt hoped that land prices would rise and that the Canada Company would reap the benefits that usually came only after a long period of growth.<sup>5</sup> Although the town never lost sight of its agricultural roots, Guelph also became home to a broad base of manufacturing industries ranging from foundries, mills and breweries, to sewing machine and organ factories between 1850 and 1870.<sup>6</sup> This development was aided by the efforts of groups such as the Guelph Board of Trade as well as the willingness of the townspeople to tax themselves in order to

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*in an Industrial City*. Cambridge University Press, 1983 p 3.

<sup>5</sup>Leo A Johnson. *The History of Guelph, 1827-1927*. Guelph Historical Society, 1977 p 14.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, pp 203-217.

finance roads, railways and civic buildings. The success of their sacrifice can be judged, at least in part, by the steady growth in population experienced by the town. According to the *Census of Canada*, the number of residents grew from 1,860 in 1851, to 6,878 in 1871, 9,890 ten years later, and 11,496 in 1901.

One could infer from the developmental ethos that accompanied the founding and growth of the town, that Guelph was always going to embrace institutions that championed sport. However, it was its distinct and continuing Britishness that ensured its status as a North American sporting pioneer. Sport has been an integral part of British popular culture for a long time. Given Britain's position at the forefront of industrialization, it follows that it was the first nation in the world to develop bodies which rationalized, organized, commercialized and professionalized sport. Although the percentage of those of British ethnic origin began to decline with the accelerated growth of the town, the Canadian census of 1881 still showed that an overwhelming 92.1% of the population had British roots; a percentage that had scarcely fallen twenty years later.<sup>7</sup>

I intend to break my study into three chapters. My first will provide the conceptual basis for the rest of my thesis. It will consist of a historiographical analysis of the broad ideological overviews which seek to explain on their own, the interaction between sport and society. It will also contain an analysis of the works of those authors who deal with

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<sup>7</sup>Statistics compiled from *Census of Canada*. Quoted from tables 1 & 2 of Module 7 of Professor Gilbert Stelter's "Canadian Urban History" class web site. <http://www.uoguelph.ca/history/urban.html>

the ways in which the various urban elements reacted with each other to develop sports clubs, institutions and facilities. The second chapter will apply the findings of the first to the formative clubs, institutions and facilities of Guelph. Through a study of relevant newspaper reports, minutes, legislation and correspondence, it will reveal that the varying agendas of those disparate groups that promoted, participated in and followed sport, spawned a plethora of definitions as to its role. Because the bodies were not founded within a few years of each other, there is no strictly defined time frame to my work. Having said that, most of my research is focused on the last three decades of the nineteenth century, and the first two of the twentieth. My third chapter will chart the rise and fall of the most famous sports club that this town has ever produced: the Maple Leaf Baseball Club. It will show how their impressive record of success ensured their prominence as a symbol of boosterism for the town. The chapter will also detail their role in an attempt to bring rationalized, commercialized and professionalized baseball to Canada in the 1870s as well as revealing the conflicting attitudes and problems surrounding this wholesale advancement of the sport. Finally, it will show how the Maple Leafs' delusions of grandeur resulted in spiralling overheads and eventual implosion.

## CHAPTER ONE.

### A HISTORIOGRAPHICAL EVALUATION OF SPORT.

When linking sport to the city, one is originally confronted with a chicken and egg conundrum. Did the existing notion of organized sport take off in the city environment, or did the concept of physical activity react with urbanization to produce organized sport? Peter Bailey, in an article entitled *Sport and the Victorian City* states that urbanization alone is too loose a term to act as a defining determinant of sports form and behaviour.<sup>1</sup> However, he does concede that sport attained the status of an autonomous institution within the city, since it was the only place that allowed the variety of elements that created organized sport to exist simultaneously. The city is therefore more than a setting or arena, but a significant structural parameter which not only patterned those relationships, but affected their nature.

If "urbanization" is only a vague, catch-all descriptive term, what were the primary elements of the urban compound that created organized sport? The consensus that appears is that it was a combination of class, culture and capitalism.<sup>2</sup> Patrick Joyce, in his book *Work, Society and Politics: The Culture of the Factory in Later Victorian Britain*, believes class and capitalism to have been the main determinants of development. He

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<sup>1</sup>Peter Bailey. "Review Article: Sport and the Victorian City." *Urban History Review*, 12:2 (October 1983) p 75.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

concludes that the social regime of the factory preserved the unity of the single family longer than is generally acknowledged, and the patriarchal loyalties that it engendered converged into a larger allegiance to the employer and the company. Worker loyalties centred on the factory owner whose presence permeated not only the factory floor, but also the various clubs and societies that lay under the symbolic shadow of the factory chimneys.<sup>3</sup> For Joyce, the middle-class promotion of sport to engender a healthy mind within a healthy body, had its roots in the social regime of the factory, and its total saturation of everyday life for the workers.

H.E. Meller, in her book *Leisure and the Changing City, 1870-1914*, continues the idea of the middle-class recruiting their social inferiors in order that they might be exposed to certain ideals through participation in organized sport and recreation. Using the city of Bristol as her paradigm of the modern industrial city during the onset of mass urbanization, she detects insufficient amenities and the collapse of community as potential causes of social unrest, which the middle-class attempted to remedy by forming a wide range of social groups with varied programmes of music, literature, education and sport. She attributes the development of sport to the missionary zeal of middle-class converts to Muscular Christianity as well as to the technological advances in communications, transport and equipment ushered in by the urban-industrial era.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid, p 74.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid, p 72.

Unlike Joyce, Meller does not refer to the factory as an anachronistic bastion of traditional community. She even goes as far as to document the decline of voluntary associations as mediums for the spread of specific class and cultural values. She believes the continuing growth of the city hampered the efficiency with which the reform minded middle-class were able to come into direct personal contact with their flock in order to communicate their message/agenda. In any case, the bulk of the middle-class "were too jealous of their status to share their appreciation of liberal culture or the new athletics with their social inferiors."<sup>5</sup>

This brought about a new phase in the development of sport, which is examined by Stephen Yeo in his book *Religion and Voluntary Organizations in Crisis*. He concurs with Meller's detection of a decline in the paternalistic federation of localized voluntary organizations, but adds to her work by examining the more centralized, specialized and profit-oriented institutions that displaced them. He believes that the active "membership mode" gave way to the passive "pay at the gate" mode as the citizen was transformed into the customer.<sup>6</sup>

This notion that class, culture and capitalism were the primary forces behind the development of organized sport has led some to conclude that it was created as a controlling bourgeois tool. Unsurprisingly, this view is advanced by Marxist historians

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<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid, p 75.

who believe sports to be invariably related to the organization of the modes of production. Not only did the gross disparities in the distribution of wealth lead to increased differentiation in the kinds of sports enjoyed by the rich and poor, but they were also a means of sustaining that socio-economic divide. Employers had a vested interest in providing some kind of compensation for the cramped physical conditions of assembly-line production, lest illness reduce the worker's labour power to zero. Their increasing acceptance of the benefits of sport meant that the compensation they provided was invariably in the form of a team sport which inculcated subordination and acceptance of authority. Outside the field of participation, the increased commercialization of sport towards the end of the nineteenth century served as a mirror for everything undesirable about capitalism. Human behaviour was devalued into another impersonal marketplace transaction making sport a matter of profit and loss.<sup>7</sup>

This argument is compounded by the North American and British Neo-Marxists who spurn all the aspects of sport that differentiate it from play, and in so doing reject not only the abuses of the institution, but the institution itself. They argue that sport as described (or dictated) by coaches, physical educators or administrators, is a perversion of the human spirit. Modern sports, especially in the professional era, require specialization. With the advent of specialization, man becomes mechanical, metamorphosing the athlete into a cog in the machinery of sports. Athletic activity itself,

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<sup>7</sup>Allen Guttman. *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*. Columbia University Press, (New York) 1978 pp 59-60 & 62-64.

they argue, has become a form of industrial production. Rationalization in sports is equally oppressive because of its incompatibility with spontaneity and inventiveness. There is no modern sport which does not have codified rules and regulations, but this, they argue, "is the athletic equivalent of a paint-by-the-numbers kit."<sup>8</sup> The individual is compelled to follow the rules of the game over which he has no control, and through which the privileges of the ruling class are perpetuated. Sport's bureaucratization is yet another manifestation of class persecution since the individual athlete becomes a pawn in the power structure of government functionaries and wealthy businessmen seeking profit from their performances.

Quantification in the form of statistics is another aspect of modern, organized sport they despise. As Allen Guttman notes in his critique of the Neo-Marxist standpoint,

in a capitalist society, the human personality becomes a salary, a serial number, a batting average. Despite the elegant rhetoric about playing the game rather than thinking about the numbers, the spectator's attention becomes fixed in a relentless search for quantification. There is no time left for considerations of grace, no room for fair play, [or] no chance to respond to the kinesthetic sense of physical exuberance.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, sport is not an escape from the world of work, but an exact structural and functional parallel to the world of work. As Guttman concludes, "Capitalist society is

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<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p 67.

<sup>9</sup>Ibid.

essentially achievement-oriented and competitive and sports present to us the purest model of that society."<sup>10</sup>

The Marxist idea that sport is another method of social control determined by the means of production is not persuasive, since their analysis remains vague about the exact relationship between a given sport, and a given economic system. This allows them to overlook the fact that the achievement principles of sport, supposedly institutionalised by capitalism, were very much adhered to by Communist nations. More important however, is their complete failure to align the repression inherent in their interpretation of sport with its undeniable popularity.

Rather than mitigating its appeal, Steven Gelber, in an article entitled *Working at Playing: The Culture of the Workplace and the Rise of Rise Baseball*, argues that the similarities between work and organized sport and recreation are a positive boon, contributing to their popularity. Gelber distinguishes between what he terms the "compensatory" and "congruent" hypotheses. The former argument holds that leisure compensates people for some shortcoming in their work experience. The alternative theory, however, says that people tend to replicate their work situation in their leisure time. The author points out that

[b]oth hypotheses assume that the job will determine leisure behaviour- the question being

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<sup>10</sup>Ibid, p 69.

whether the determinant is negative (compensatory) or positive (congruent). Similarly, both arguments assume that people seek social and psychological balance and will either find it by matching negative factors in one facet of life with positive factors in another (compensatory), or by developing a consistent set of behaviour patterns and values in both work and leisure (congruent).<sup>11</sup>

Despite the weight of data supporting the congruent theory, it seems odd that people would want to act out work practices in a leisure environment. Surely sport is, and always has been a form of emotional and physical catharsis. It is on this point that Gelber develops the theory fully, stating that the similarities between work and play are seldom visible to the participants, leading them to believe that their pastimes are a compensatory safety valve.<sup>12</sup>

American historians have come to associate the term, "safety valve" with the frontier. Gelber quotes from Frederick Paxon's 1917 article on the rise of sports, in which the latter author wholeheartedly adopted Turner's frontier as safety valve theory, and applied it to sports. According to Paxon, the reason no explosion occurred after the closing of the frontier was due to the fact that sports provided an compensatory alternative.<sup>13</sup> Taking this view to its logical conclusion, one can see that Paxon believed sport to be a

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<sup>11</sup>Steven M. Gelber. "Working at Playing: The Culture of the Workplace and the Rise of Baseball." *Journal of Social History*, 16:4 (Summer 1983) p 4.

<sup>12</sup>Ibid, p 5.

<sup>13</sup>Frederick L. Paxon. "The Rise of Sport." *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 4 (September 1917). Quoted from Gelber, Ibid, p 6.

metaphorical version of the West itself. Theories such as this spawned a generation of writers who exalted the rural origins of organized sports even though they were neither rural in origin, nor in their centres of popularity. Even Allen Gutmann, whilst acknowledging the urban origins of baseball insists on attributing much of the game's popularity to its ability to evoke a rural idyll. In a wholly untestable thesis, he points out not only the natural aspects of the playing field, but also the game's inherent rejection of the constraints of time and space that are a feature of urban, industrial living. He observes that baseball

in a very real sense, is timeless. With sufficient inequality of sides, the game might go on forever as the weaker team tries vainly to retire the side...Spatially as well as temporally, there is a theoretical openness about baseball which not even cricket shares. If a ball is hit fair, it cannot be hit too far. The foul lines radiate outward from home plate to infinity.<sup>14</sup>

Perhaps the most extravagant of his conclusions stems from his observation that the batter in baseball runs in a circle, aiming to return to home plate, rather than oscillating between two points as with other sports. This, to Guttmann signifies the "eternally recurrent and the temporally unique." He goes on to read significance into the fact that the number of bases correspond with the number of seasons, and ultimately to deduce that pastoral traits are important to the game and that "man is not totally untouched by the revitalization of the earth."<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>14</sup>Guttmann. *From Ritual to Record*. p 107.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. p 108.

The frontier-rural school of thought reflects the desire to interpret leisure activities as compensatory. The slender amount of evidence to support this theory, however, requires its advocates to rely on romantic assumptions about man's instinctive desire to recapture an Arcadian past. Although it would be too harsh to claim that sport had no compensatory element, (its very appearance as outdoor play made it different from work) its attraction and popularity stemmed from its subliminal similarities with the everyday world.

The anthropologist, Clifford Geertz, recognized this dual function of sport, claiming, like Metcalfe, that it is a cultural artefact reflecting the experiences of those that play it. He says that

[the game] renders ordinary, everyday experience comprehensible by presenting it in terms of acts and objects which have their practical consequences removed and been reduced (or if you prefer, raised) to the level of sheer appearances, where their meaning can be more powerfully articulated and more exactly perceived.<sup>16</sup>

In his study of the culture of the workplace and the rise of baseball, Gelber accedes to this view entirely, arguing that the structure and values of the game were congruent with, and supportive of, the business-industrial environment from which the players made their living. Rather than appealing to a suppressed desire for a return to rural ways, baseball replicated an urban- industrial appreciation of quantification and rationality, as well as

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<sup>16</sup>Clifford Geertz. *The Interpretation of Cultures*. New York 1973 p 443. Quoted from Gelber, "Working at Playing" p 7.

competition between groups and cooperation amongst them. It could also be seen as a game that marked the transition from individual to corporate values. Gelber points out that baseball retained important elements of personal accountability, in that there was plenty of opportunity for the individual to shine or err, but because of the team nature of the game, the individual was subsumed into the collective. This created a two-tier performance assessment system which was very much part of the large corporate mentality. The individual could succeed individually but fail collectively, and vice versa. Thus, complete victory/satisfaction required both personal and corporate success.<sup>17</sup>

Given the large opportunity for failure, baseball could not possibly have been popular because it afforded exploited workers a compensatory opportunity to experience the joy of success. Gelber concludes that it was the process rather than the result that was the game's attraction. This belief is entirely consistent with the congruence line of reasoning if one accepts a Weberian rather than Marxist interpretation of capitalism, since the former defined the work ethic, or "spirit of capitalism" as labour "performed as if it were an end in itself, a calling."<sup>18</sup> Baseball, in particular, and organized sport in general flourished because it called for attitudes that had already been formed by the business environment.

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<sup>17</sup>Ibid, pp 10-11.

<sup>18</sup>Max Weber. *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*. New York 1958 p 52. Quoted from Gelber, Ibid, p 11.

Although the congruence theory goes a long way towards explaining the reasons behind sport's popularity, it is not as telling a rejection of the Marxist critique as I believe Gelber likes to think. Marxists could still claim that the work practices mirrored by sport and recreation were put in place by a controlling class. They could even point out that sport was still more of a manipulative tool than they originally thought, since the workers mistakenly believed that they were achieving some sort of compensation through their involvement. By unconsciously replicating repressive capitalist practices in their leisure time, they were being deceitfully shepherded into accepting a system that was exploiting them.

The theories and interpretations discussed up to this point, concerning the development of sport and its popularity, seem to have at least one important common factor. To a greater or lesser extent, all of them presuppose the top-down decreeing of sport, insofar as it was used as a means of promoting either a paternalistic or oppressive controlling-class agenda. If, however, sport was truly a cultural artefact, reflecting the cultural values and norms of a society, it follows that different sections of that society would mould it so as to make it fit in with their way of life. It would therefore be entirely one dimensional to look at sport solely from a middle-class perspective. One must therefore reach beyond the congruence theory, and trace other reasons as to why organized sport within the city was popular amongst all sections of society; reasons that were perhaps not sanctioned by its paternalistic advocates. One key to detecting its growth and popularity is the study of the different agendas held for organized sport by its various

proponents, whatever their social standing. That is not to say, however, that the pioneering middle-class institutions dedicated to the promotion of sport and recreation should be overlooked.

The increased reverence afforded sport did not rise out of a social vacuum. Towards the end of the nineteenth century, the explanatory and didactic power of religion was in decline. Sport and recreation became the perfect vehicles for heightening the perception of the human form. The body was suitably ennobled; elevated to the status of a ritual object rather than a predestined medium of sin. Physical culture became far more mainstream, and thus, the belief that the body was a process rather than an entity, grew.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, Donald Mrozek, in his influential book, *Sport and the American Mentality, 1880-1910*, went so far as to claim, that sport was the "religious ritual of the machine age":<sup>20</sup> sacrifice without purpose, performance without magic, and value without meaning.

Not only was the late nineteenth century an era of ardent secularization, but it was also one of industrialization, and therefore one of specialization and organization. Hence the "priesthood" of experts who quickly formed in the service of sport, intent on securing its institutional status. However, Mrozek's juxtaposition of sport and religion (albeit in the

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<sup>19</sup>Donald J Mrozek. *Sport and the American Mentality 1880-1910*. University of Tennessee Press 1983 p 194.

<sup>20</sup>Ibid, p 11.

secular age) is somewhat precarious, given the distinctly humanistic agenda it was used to promote by its "priests." For example, the distinguished American politician and social commentator, Henry Cabot Lodge, believed that sport had a practical role in shaping character, as opposed to the metaphorical role he believed religion to have. Sport did not merely imitate other experiences that yielded values which society favoured, it actually produced them. He believed training and competition created a pattern of conduct that shaped a habit of success. The conscious pursuit of sport had the effect of producing an unconscious but deep commitment to victory. Unlike religion, this process worked not through a ritualistic appeal to sentiment but by the practical governance of behaviour, introducing actual physical order and discipline into the lives of young men. By equating the spirit of victory with social efficiency, Lodge made clear that he expected sport to pattern conduct and mould action rather than merely affect mood or attitude.<sup>21</sup>

Middle class promotion of sport as a humanistic generator of moral force and social efficiency was but one aspect of its attraction. Indeed this view could well have been a veil masking a baser but altogether more understandable agenda. Many reformers were concerned with the decaying physical form that accompanied urban-industrial growth, caused by sedentary jobs and poor living conditions. Sports, especially those of the "manly" variety were thereby endorsed as a quasi eugenic tool, insofar as they were used as a means of arresting that physical decline. "Manliness" as defined by Morris Mott in his article on "manly" sport in Winnipeg, was the ultimate masculine quality, the attribute

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid, pp 32-33.

of the ideal male. Major components were not only physical vitality and courage, but also decisiveness, clear-headedness, loyalty, determination, discipline, a sense of charity, and especially the moral strength that ensured that courage would be used in the service of God.<sup>22</sup> Since it was believed the body and soul were indissolubly connected, it followed that the widespread urban physical decline was necessarily contributing to a moral one. Mott detects a belief that both these problems could also be remedied through increased physical activity, and therefore there was a increased effort on the part of those citizens of Winnipeg who were conscious of urban problems, to encourage sport. He says that "[t]hose greater efforts were marked by an especially aggressive endeavour to make sure that young men played organized sport forms, and by the encouragement of wider participation patterns than previously had been in evidence."<sup>23</sup>

I have already touched on the fact that various businesses sponsored works' teams, supposedly in an effort to develop the physical and mental faculties of their employees, in order that they could give a "better service and satisfaction to both the company and those whom it served."<sup>24</sup> However, an equally important pioneer of organized sport at the municipal level was the Church. Just like secular reformers, ministers showed increasing concern over young people's lack of physical fitness, brought on by a inert lifestyle. Despite the secular mood within society, the Church was able to remain a

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<sup>22</sup>Morris Mott. "One Solution to the Urban Crisis: Manly Sports and Winnipeggers." *Urban History Review*, 12:2 (October 1983) p 58.

<sup>23</sup>Ibid, p 60.

<sup>24</sup>*Winnipeg Saturday Post*, 18 July 1914 p 5. Quoted from Mott, Ibid, p 61.

prominent institution in the promotion of sport through its adherence to "Muscular Christianity." Within this doctrine of team spirit and character building, Christ was described as an "affable, bold and strong man whose life proved his enthusiasm for the joys of this world."<sup>25</sup> Although the chapter and verse verifying His prowess as a ball player remain obscure, His acts and qualities embodied the core of ideals to which young people must aspire. Sport and recreation were often organized through individual denominational institutions, but the Young Men's Christian Association provides the most cogent example of a (quasi) religious body using sport as a means to physical and spiritual improvement.

The YMCA experienced three distinct stages of development. The original chapters attempted to develop morally upright young men through programmes of prayers, Bible study recitations, readings, singings and temperance lectures. Right at the very end of the nineteenth century however, "Y" leaders had begun to concentrate on developing the "whole" man, which meant the adoption of sports. Exponents of Christian reform on both sides of the Atlantic urged wholesome exercise for boys so that they would gain in physical vigour whilst simultaneously removing themselves from temptation.<sup>26</sup> To this end, associations in major cities devoted themselves to building gymnasias and establishing physical training programmes.

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<sup>25</sup>Mrozek. *Sport and the American Mentality*. p 202.

<sup>26</sup>Ibid, p 203.

The YMCA's moral/physical agenda, (to be accomplished through Muscular Christianity) was harnessed to a biological theory of play, developed by Dr. Luther H. Gulick, which placed increased emphasis on organization and control. Gulick, a YMCA executive, concurred with the idea that team sports provided a valuable means of encouraging sound moral and religious reflexes in youth, especially inner-city adolescents who could easily be tempted by the forces of evil that seemed inherent in cities. However, he did not feel that it was enough merely for the YMCA to provide facilities and a philosophical outlook. Steven Reiss, in his book *City Games*, points out that "the remedy Gulick offered to reform urban youth was adult-supervised sports that...[enhanced] instinct for cooperation and required the highest moral principles. Inner-city children would learn teamwork, obedience, self-control, loyalty, and respect for authority."<sup>27</sup> This theory of play had two major implications for the use of sport as a socializing agency. Firstly, the theory justified the creation of special institutions for boys that would be closely supervised by adults. Spontaneous, unregulated, and unstructured boys' games, in which keeping the score or gaining victory was not crucial, would be supplanted by highly organized team sport. Secondly, the YMCA became increasingly secularized and available to non-members, partly because leaders recognized that few boys were heavily influenced by its evangelical programmes.<sup>28</sup>

The literature seems to imply that the increased secularization of the "Y" was also

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<sup>27</sup>Steven Reiss. *City Games* p 159.

<sup>28</sup>Ibid.

somewhat enforced, since the evangelism of the movement was actually retarding the enrollment of new members. As the twentieth century got under way, young people had more and more opportunities to partake in organized sport under the patronage of a growing number of institutions. Most obvious was the school. In Britain, the team games played (or invented) at the public (private) schools were accorded a great deal of attention because of the firm belief that they built character. Indeed, the Establishment looked to them to inculcate the qualities required for leadership at home and abroad.<sup>29</sup> This championing of sport by private schools was translated to the North American continent for the same reason. Mott remarks that "[i]n the latter decades of the nineteenth century, educators in Winnipeg, like educators throughout most of the English-speaking world, had become 'athleticists' and had encouraged male students to participate in manly games."<sup>30</sup> At Winnipeg's three Protestant denominational colleges, the authorities seemed to feel guilty that they had turned out too many effeminate individuals. In order to improve the ratio of virile graduates, the colleges built new or improved rinks, gymnasias and other facilities. They also accelerated their athletic programmes to include new sports, and gave new life to intra-mural sports organizations that provided tennis, rugby, curling, soccer, hockey and basketball to hundreds of students who were not good enough to represent their institution.<sup>31</sup> Mott also makes the point that an increased emphasis on sport was apparent in the public school system. After about 1905, the Manitoba's educational

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<sup>29</sup>Derek Birley. *Land of Sport and Glory: Sport and British Society 1887-1910*. Manchester University Press 1995 pp 1-3.

<sup>30</sup>Mott. *One Solution to the Urban Crisis*. p 62.

<sup>31</sup>Ibid.

authorities began to regret that they had not been sufficiently conscious of students' physical development and sense of discipline. "Suddenly, new importance was attached to nutrition, hygiene, and especially physical education."<sup>32</sup> Whilst he makes no mention of national co-ordinating organizations such as America's Public Schools Athletic League, he does detail the inauguration of inter-school and inter-class leagues in Winnipeg, as well as the founding of "Boys' Clubs" and playground movements by city philanthropists.

The pressure placed on space by urban and industrial development aided the transition towards organized sport, since the vacant lots and empty streets where children had previously played became less and less common. This led to the establishment of specific space solely for sport, such as public parks. Alternatively, private space was created by voluntary organizations, particularly status and ethnic institutions, who wanted to establish a buffer between themselves and other urbanites. In the middle lay a variety of semi-public spaces used for both participatory and spectator sports. These catered to every taste, from male preserves such as pool halls and bowling allies, or racetracks and ballparks, to cycling schools for respectable women.

Alan Metcalfe, in an article on the urban response to the demand for sporting facilities in ten Ontario towns, argues that the degree of importance attached to the provision of recreational facilities provides insights into the priorities designated to different aspects of urban life, as well as illustrating agendas for sport other than those of a paternalistic

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<sup>32</sup>Ibid, p 63.

middle class. He asks what facilities were created, who created them and for whom.<sup>33</sup> These questions he answers by examining the involvement of various groups representing different interests: private, public and commercial.

Whilst all the city councils he examines funded facilities and services for organized sport directly, there was considerable variation in the quantity and quality of what was provided. In general, the larger cities supplied an impressive scope of amenities and more efficient services, paid for directly by the public purse through a yearly grant from their councils.<sup>34</sup> For the smaller towns, the acceptance of full responsibility was neither financially feasible, nor philosophically desirable. Metcalfe uses the example of St. Catherines to illustrate his point. Because the initial creation of facilities required capital expenditures over a certain amount, the bylaws to acquire land or build facilities always had to be submitted to the ratepayers. A degree of popular support was therefore essential to the success of the venture. This support was rarely gained without a campaign by interested groups, often the provincial or national controlling body of a certain sport, and/or various local boys' clubs and YMCAs who were entirely dependent on others to provide them with facilities.<sup>35</sup> The picture that emerged in St. Catherines was one of a delicate balance between philanthropy, private investment, public funding, community

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<sup>33</sup>Alan Metcalfe. "The Urban Response to the Demand for Sporting Facilities: A Study of Ten Ontario Towns/Cities, 1919-1939." *Urban History Review*, 12:2 (October 1983) p 32.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid, p 35.

<sup>35</sup>Ibid, p 35.

participation and responsibilities accepted by sports organizations. Metcalfe mentions one solution to the financial problem which was the generation of capital through gate receipts from the enclosed stadiums. This, one presumes, was the start of the active promotion of spectator sports. However, it was not a foolproof answer. Enclosed parks were used for all levels of sport, and often attracted insufficient spectators. Tecumseh Park in London, for example, was saved only when the Labatt family bought it and donated it to the city in 1936. It would appear that there was a distinct correlation between the size of a town's population and their ability to support an enclosed stadium since the greater market offset that part of the population indifferent to certain sports, or even sport in general.<sup>36</sup>

In a logical extension of the YMCA agenda, paternalistic theory in North America held that organized sport, along with the provision of space for that end would create an environment in which sport would weave its assimilating magic. This was an especially prevalent desire in cities with a large immigrant population since participation would inculcate Christian, Anglo-Saxon values in ethnic youth, thereby "[bringing] pure gold out of the melting pot."<sup>37</sup> However, public parks and playgrounds were not the unmitigated success that their creators hoped for, since they did not become sites for structural assimilation, but more often than not maintained a strong ethnic character. Dominant groups in the area succeeded in privatizing public space, reinforcing ethnic barriers as they did so. Although my area of study does not require me to dwell significantly on

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<sup>36</sup>Ibid.

<sup>37</sup>Roy Rosenzweig. *Eight Hours of What We Will* p 148.

intra-urban ethnic tension, I use this as a precursory example of social policy being destroyed by reality. Sport held a different role for different people, and was not a paternalistic diktat by any means.

It would also be a grave mistake to believe that everybody outside the working class submitted to the paternalistic vision of sport's societal role. For the elite few, it was simply a medium of fashion, consumption and display. This phenomenon was most evident in the late nineteenth century physical and social construction that was the country club. Its promotion of sport was secondary to its promotion of sociability and status. It brought together people of similar means and tastes and provided them with a place to escape the problems of running large corporations and the anxieties of urban life. In his study of private, status related clubs, Mrozek detects an important, far reaching "ideological" contribution to the development of sport that is often overlooked. Unlike middle-class Americans who justified sport by claiming that it instilled in participants the beneficial qualities of character necessary to do life's work, the rich favoured sport for its inutility. Thus, "country clubs became symbols of a different, pleasure-oriented ethic which was to make a major contribution to the American notion of leisure."<sup>38</sup> Ironically, the wealthy Americans' emphasis on the intertwined goals of self-gratification, identity, relief from the tedium of a stultifyingly structured life and expressive display, resembled the preferences of the labouring class more closely than those of the middle. In this way, the very rich helped to advance notions about sport and its role in purposeless leisure that

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<sup>38</sup>Mrozek. *Sport and the American Mentality*. p 118.

would compete with the middle class's concentration on the work ethic and service.<sup>39</sup>

Company sponsorship of sport developed into a form of promotion that was anathema to those of a paternal/moral bent. As the benefits of success became more apparent, teams became increasingly competitive and specialized. Victory, as opposed to striving for victory, became the primary concern. In certain instances, sport evolved into a showpiece, designed to provide a firm with a lucrative source of income through gate receipts, as well as a means of advertising its name. No longer was the factory an umbrella, under which organized recreation was available to all. Employers believed that high quality works teams heightened a sense of community within the workplace, and were therefore central to the concept of welfare capitalism, a series of management initiatives devised to promote company loyalty, retain skilled workers and forestall unionization. This does not seem to be quite within the spirit of Joyce's aforementioned evaluation of the factory's communal pull. One is left with the impression that the inculcation of company loyalty was merely a by-product in the quest for the commercial benefits of professionalism.

Many early professional football teams in the States were stocked by blue collar workers recruited to work for the company, but who received easy jobs, paid time off to practise and generous travel allowances. This camouflaged form of professionalism was evident in Canada as well. In an article entitled *Baseball, Class and Community in the Maritime*

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<sup>39</sup>Ibid, p 128.

*Provinces, 1870-1910*, Colin Howell observed that the proximity of the Maritimes to New England brought a number of interesting changes to the game in that area, most notably the importing of players and coaches from the US by companies and clubs in order to maintain competitiveness. In fact it was Guelph that pioneered this trend when in 1873, the town's Maple Leaf team became the first Canadian side to import American ballplayers; a lead that was quickly followed.<sup>40</sup>

Professionalism was condemned by the vociferous core of intellectuals, churchmen and educators who played a large part in sponsoring sport. Yet their revulsion appears to have been a visceral reaction rather than due to any considered reasoning. Within an emerging industrial society, the acquisition of wealth through work could not, in itself, be regarded as evil. The only argument that could stand up to any critical examination was the assumption that when sport became work, it inevitably led to cheating, violence and ungentlemanly conduct.<sup>41</sup> The heart of the issue became a workable definition of amateurism. Metcalfe ventures that this problem was accentuated in Canada since it looked to Britain for guidance. There, the concept was understood, rather than articulated since it was part of a way of life within an enclosed social system. The amateur sporting tradition brought to Canada from Britain was incomplete, the ideology without the social system. "On the one hand, the Canadians embraced with open arms the idea of building

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<sup>40</sup>Colin D. Howell. "Baseball, Class and Community in the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1910." *Social History*, 22:44 (November 1989) p 268.

<sup>41</sup>Alan Metcalfe. *Canada Learns to Play: The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914*. McClelland & Stewart (Toronto) 1987 p 119.

character and using the playing fields for the demonstration of desirable social characteristics. On the other, Canada lacked an essential ingredient- a landed aristocracy."<sup>42</sup> The "culminating" definition of amateurism arrived at by the Canadian Amateur Athletic Union (formerly the Amateur Athletic Association of Canada) in 1902 was characterized by a rigid adherence to the principle of pure amateurism which equated any contact with professionals or with money, no matter how small the sum, as being sufficient to professionalize the individual, his team, and his opponents. The definition was a maze of restrictive categories which merely met new evasions as they arose.<sup>43</sup> This approach did nothing to retard the march towards professionalism.

The unyielding stance of the amateur lobby was based upon an all too common self-delusion. Those dedicated to emphasizing the character building qualities of sport commented unfavourably on the deleterious effect of championship competition, the impact of increased rewards and the entrance of new groups into sport, laying the blame for such developments at the door of professionalism. Whilst much of what was anathema to staunch amateurs was indeed found in professional sport, professionalization itself was a symptom, not a cause. Defenders of the amateur faith failed to comprehend that it was not professionalism's corrosive influence that had warped the structure and attraction of modern sport, but changes within society at large. Amateur sport was gradually becoming "professionalized" through new competitive structures (the league system) increased

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<sup>42</sup>Ibid, p 121.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid, p 112.

prizes, and greater bureaucracy, all of which were direct products of the industrial age. Increasing numbers of amateur participants no longer accepted the ideology of self-improvement through participation which underpinned amateurism. Acquisition of the championship became all important, thereby making sport an end in itself.<sup>44</sup> The amateur/professional debate is a clear expression of the conflicting agendas inherent in the emergence of mass sport. Although sections of the middle class did not sanction the excessive concentration on sport indulged in by the ultra-rich, both groups maintained their commitment to amateurism through an ideology rooted in a pre-industrial society. However, it must be understood that this point of view was not backed by a monolithic union of everyone outside the working class.

- Spectator sport (along with facility provision to that end) and professionalism went hand in glove. Many members of the middle class involved in that provision never sanctioned the extreme stance advocated by the vociferous hard-liners, since they realized the lucrativeness of professional sport. They understood that communities viewed large sports arenas as civic monuments and identified with them as though they were public trusts, even though they were often built and operated privately. Likewise, city teams became a source of civic pride, and their success was vital to ensuring the financial viability of a franchise. As time went by, success required professional athletes. Carl Betke, in an article on sports promotion in early Edmonton comments on the way in which these professionals were regarded.

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid, p 127.

It mattered not that these specialists knew nothing of the community they were representing: what mattered was that they be successful and that the whole city be allowed to identify with that success. The bond was the medium of exchange: money for services provided, just as so many other collective transactions, had bound the citizens to one another.<sup>45</sup>

Success was not only vital to ensure the support of the community and therefore the ongoing profitability of the team and their arena, it could also have a significant impact on other local institutions and businesses. For example, local politicians, some of whom owned sports franchises, could gain a good deal of kudos from their involvement in professional sport, both through their direct association with a winning team, and by encouraging other investors to the community.<sup>46</sup>

The fact that between the 1870s and the end of the century, a range of competitive sports was adapted to provide an entertainment service for audiences on a commercial (renumerated and specialized) basis is unequivocal. However, the degree to which these forms were created to generate profit or to respond to an urban need is subject to debate. Indeed, Carl Betke ponders whether professional sport entertainment was purposefully devised as a conspiracy by prominent citizens as another means of re-establishing or maintaining control. Marxist thinkers would certainly sympathize with that line of thought, since they have tended to concentrate on sport's appropriation to the market

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<sup>45</sup>Carl Betke. "Sports Promotion in the Western Canadian City: The Example of Early Edmonton." *Urban History Review*, 12:2 (October 1983) p 54.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid, p 47.

place, and what they believe to be its basis in capitalist ideology, and thus its use by the elite as a means of social control. The overwhelming popularity of spectator sports, however, sits uneasily with the Marxist belief that the rank and file were merely the playthings of the controlling class. Their view patronizes the very people it seeks to protect, since it refuses to acknowledge the power of the spectator, or the complex urban network beyond the control of the promoters, which ensured sport's popularity. One has to remember that the market is a two-way process. Even though most professional clubs appealed to community spirit, as soon as franchises became unprofitable, they were moved to what were perceived to be more fertile grounds. Performance was a consumer commodity, and perceived quality of the entertainment product conditioned spectator loyalty.<sup>47</sup> Many spectators had no agenda other than watching high quality, entertaining sport. If that did not transpire, then they did not attend. Ultimately, the power of feet was the most important power-source in commercial/professional sport.

Whilst the popularity of an individual team could be attributed to success, a more profound explanation is needed for understanding the transition of sport from organized pastime to professionalized phenomenon. Gunther Barth, in his book *City People*, develops the notion of a correlation between the newly emerging leisure culture and the requirements of capitalist society and industrial production. Unlike their agrarian ancestors, who were relieved from incessant labour by climatic vicissitudes and rewarded for long toil by seasonal feast days, the residents of the modern city learned to be

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid, p 54.

satisfied with brief but more frequent opportunities to enjoy themselves- an inclination that also satisfied media demands. Relatively short but regularly occurring sporting events created a steady stream of excitement that fitted most people's schedules and directed the use of leisure time toward relaxation rather than recreation. In this way, the spectator sports, which rose as business enterprises with the modern city, conformed to the needs of its residents.<sup>48</sup> Men anxious to be distracted from their arduous daily routines provided a natural market for the product of this new industry, but work and time restraints meant that it was not possible for them to witness every event in the (inter) urban sporting serial. This paved the way for the press to become a vital cog in the mass dissemination of sports' information, creating, as it did so a fanatical sporting culture.

The compatibility of sport with workers' schedules is nonetheless an example of those in control of the product moulding it to fit the market, rather than the market shaping the product. The same must be said of sports' journalism. Working class manipulation of sport to fit their agenda/value system, was most obviously displayed in the popularity of gambling and the rise of Sunday sport.

Gambling on sports was widespread in the modern city, but it would be folly to believe that it was an urban creation. Barth points out that gambling in one form or another had always permeated American life, from lotteries in Britain that financed the colony of the

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<sup>48</sup>Gunther Barth. *City People: The Rise of Modern City Culture in Nineteenth Century America*. Oxford University Press, 1980 p 151.

Virginia company, to lotteries during the American Revolution that provided funds to pay soldiers fighting for independence. Gambling on sports appealed to some city people as a mark of gentility, or an exciting diversion from everyday problems. For others, it affirmed a deep-seated suspicion about the inclination of heterogeneous people to transgress the morality of the law-makers.<sup>49</sup> However, the fact that it was so widespread is a telling rejection of the values of the influential moral minority. Betting deepened almost everyone's fascination with sport, and with the spread and accessibility of bookmakers in the second half of the nineteenth century, it began to control certain sports. Good odds could make a betting coup more profitable than the modest purse given to the winner of a race, fight or game, and thus professional sport was forever under a cloud of suspicion.

The questioning of Sabbatarianism and the rise of Sunday sport show not only the value many people placed on watching sport in their free time, but also their ability to effect change in puritannical legislation that interfered with that time. In the US, Sabbatarianism was especially strong in the East, where rural-dominated state legislatures passed a variety of blue laws to maintain the Sabbath as a day of contemplation rather than recreation. Although not quite as restrictive as New England, there were strict limitations on Sunday activities in Canada, with violations of the Upper Canada Lord's Day Act still being

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<sup>49</sup>Ibid, p 156.

penalized as late as 1896.<sup>50</sup> However, an undercurrent of permissiveness was obviously detected by the Protestant churches who formed the Lord's Day Alliance in 1889. This organization was dedicated to the protection of the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship, demanding legislation enforcing Sunday observance. The movement attracted the support of the labour unions, since they were desirous of securing a guarantee for one day of the week being free from work. This unnatural alliance ended in acrimony once it became apparent that the motives behind the actions of each group were entirely at odds. Legislation protecting the right to one day free from work should not, in the minds of the both employers and workers, be laden with restrictions on what they could and could not do with that free time. These often localized stipulations were potential sources of tension, and their maintenance or roll-back is a definite indication of the value-system of an area.

It is commonly assumed that the tough, ghetto youth, offered an outlet by professional sport, heightened the sympathetic identification spectators had with the individual or his team, thereby raising the experience of watching sport to an emotional communal purge. Whilst there is undoubtedly a modicum of truth in that, one must guard against the acceptance of conventional wisdom which holds that the majority of professionals, around the turn of the century, were reared in rural areas, poorly educated, and from the bottom of the social ladder. Reiss, in his book *Touching Base*, observes that the number of major

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<sup>50</sup>Barbara Schrodt. "Sabbatarianism and Sport in Canadian Society." *Journal of Sport History*, (Spring 1977) p 23.

league positions varied from time to time but never exceeded 400. Tenure was short compared to other occupations, and most players were upper lower-class and middle-class native born whites or of old immigrant stock. Opportunities were quite limited for lower-class youngsters because they had to compete with middle-class boys for the few openings in baseball, and the latter probably had better coaching, better equipment and more time for practice. Virtually none of the major leaguers at this time were the children of recent immigrants from Eastern or Southern Europe, who were at the bottom of society. Professional sport did not fit in as well with their particular life-styles and environment, they had few role models, and there was strong parental disapproval.<sup>51</sup>

By historiographically outlining the various interpretations, institutions and agendas in this chapter, my intention was to provide both a background and context to my thesis. My analysis of the development of organized sport in Guelph will hopefully be more understandable as a result.

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<sup>51</sup>Steven Riess. *Touching Base: Professional Baseball and American Culture in the Progressive Era*. Greenwood Press, 1980 p 208.

**CHAPTER TWO.****THE SPORTING LIFE OF GUELPH.**

In the previous chapter, I reviewed the broad ideological overviews which seek to explain how sport related to society, as well as outlining the ways in which it was shaped by the different elements of the urban compound, and used by disparate sections of society to further their own agendas. In this chapter, I intend to apply each of these opinions and models to actual sports clubs and institutions within Guelph in order to support my thesis. It will become apparent that every one of the areas previously discussed is necessary to explain fully sport's interaction with society, since a single, definitive paradigm does not exist. By viewing the town through this sporting lens, I hope to reveal the battleground that organized sport has been since its inception, and in so doing, establish the prevailing attitudes that existed in Guelph during this developmental period.

In this chapter, Guelph's sports clubs and events will be discussed in the approximate order in which they were founded. I shall start with a description of the cricket club and determine whether the basis of sociability on which it was founded was equally applicable to the curling clubs of Guelph. I shall then deal with the growing popularity of baseball and the different functions it served for its broad spectrum of participants. From there, I shall investigate the rise of spectator sports and the advent of professionalism, as well as detailing the opportunities this branch of sport provided for both sumptuous display and gambling. I shall also talk about the nineteenth century sports days organized either by

groups of prominent citizens, educational establishments, or ethnic groups, which often used cash as an incentive for victory.

Sport's drive towards institutional status within Guelph was aided significantly by its incorporation into the curricula of the town's High School and YMCA. I shall discuss the reasons for its adoption by both of these bodies. The YMCA also provides a very good example of the role of philanthropy in the provision of sports' facilities. However, one only has to look at the Cutten Club to reveal how an altruistic intention on the part of the founder did not prevent the club from following an exclusive, private path.

Guelph's first sports club was founded on the principle of conviviality ahead of talent. Whilst both 1832 and 1833 have been given as founding dates for the Guelph Cricket Club, it is the second that is generally accepted. It was established by Canada Company agent J.C.W. Daly, who requested and received a grant from the company's commissioners to finance the levelling of the ground on the market square, as well as to provide the club with bats and balls.<sup>1</sup> The following year, the club was reported to have taken part in a tournament in Hamilton, and from then on, abundant records exist of sporadic matches against local towns and villages. According to the historian, Alan Metcalfe, the irregularity of the games was typical of cricket in Canada. Indeed, he goes as far as to conclude that the stagnation of the game in North America was largely due

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<sup>1</sup>"Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition." Taken from Johnson, *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 321.

to the lack of competitive opportunities with no leagues established until the 1880s.<sup>2</sup> Johnson implies that the club did not indulge in championship play until 1907, when it joined the newly formed Western Ontario Cricket League.<sup>3</sup> However, the club played within a competitive format prior to that. The *Guelph Weekly Mercury* for May 12th 1881 revealed that the teams in Guelph's district for the "cricket championship" were Galt, Brantford and Mount Forest. These first round matches were to be played before August 1st with the winners of each of groups one and two, three and four and five and six to play within nine days of completing their preliminary matches in order that a three way final could take place to determine the champion.

Because irregularity was a defining constant of North American cricket, attempts such as these to impose a structured format on the game, were often short lived. However, Metcalfe makes the point that the enduring presence of teams from educational establishments and respected professions provided the game with a much needed stability, whilst simultaneously contributing to its socially elite nature.<sup>4</sup> The involvement of such institutions was amply demonstrated by the core of teams against which Guelph played. There are many reports of games between the town club and the students at the Ontario Agricultural College,<sup>5</sup> as well as accounts of matches with the pupils of the exclusive

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<sup>2</sup>Metcalfe. *Canada Learns to Play*. p 81

<sup>3</sup>Johnson. *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 323.

<sup>4</sup>Metcalfe. *Canada Learns to Play*. p 84.

<sup>5</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. July 17 1876, May 25 & June 2 1881.

Upper Canada College<sup>6</sup> and alumni associations.<sup>7</sup> Also, in July 1885, Guelph played against a team of touring doctors. The same month also witnessed an intra town match between the aldermen and the board of education.<sup>8</sup> The players' standing should not come as a surprise. Having the time to play such a protracted sport was a test of status in itself. This is before one takes into account the ability to afford the sport's comparatively formal attire as well as having the means to employ a ground staff to prepare the manicured playing surface. These same barriers could be said to have impeded the social spread of tennis, and it is interesting to note that there was a correlation in those that played the two sports in Guelph. In a 1886 tournament amongst members of the Guelph Lawn Tennis Club, four of the participants had represented the cricket club within the previous two seasons, two of whom were sons of the town's former Reform M.P., Donald Guthrie.<sup>9</sup>

The atmosphere of cricket matches appears to have been gregarious, with the number of ladies in the crowd often remarked upon by journalists. The social standing of the players would presumably have aided this cordiality, especially since availability rather than competence appears to have been the prerequisite for playing, thereby diluting the game

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid. May 14 1877.

<sup>7</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury*. July 23 1885. Guelph played against the Trinity Rovers of Trinity College, Port Hope.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid. July 2 & 23 1885.

<sup>9</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 15 1886. Players: H. Lockwood, W.E. Cutten, H. Guthrie, J. Guthrie.

as competitive contest. By the time of the 1927 Centennial Edition of the *Mercury* however, cricket was virtually dead in the town, having had its popularity usurped by baseball. It seems as if Canadians had come to the conclusion that cricket was an outdated bastion of British cultural and social dominance, a view of the sport that is still true to this day.

Despite the convivial atmosphere that has apparently surrounded curling since the sport's Canadian inception, its development within a formal competitive structure ensured that talent preceded status as the dominant criterion for participation. Notions of status within the game appear to have come from the physical surroundings within which it was played rather than the societal rank of the players. Any history of a town's curling club is therefore directly linked to the development of rink facilities.

Although a curling club in Guelph dates back to 1838, it was only at the behest of William Congalton twenty years later that it became an organized institution that played regular competitive matches with teams from neighbouring towns such as Fergus, London, Hamilton and St. Marys.<sup>10</sup> The formal standing of the club was confirmed when in 1869, it became a founding member of the Ontario branch of the sport's governing body, the Royal Caledonian Curling Club: an honour that was augmented by the unanimous election of the eminent Guelph manufacturer, Peter Gow, to the position of inaugural president of

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<sup>10</sup>John A. Stevenson. *Curling in Ontario 1846-1946*. The Ryerson Press (Toronto). 1950 pp 170, 180, 183, 201.

the provincial association.<sup>11</sup>

Prior to their affiliation with the Ontario branch of the R.C.C.C., the club had played its matches "on Allan's dam, Goldie's dam, down by the Dundas bridge, at Sleeman's-in fact wherever suitable ice could be secured."<sup>12</sup> 1869 however, saw the completion of Guelph's first indoor rink, a wooden building, used for both skating and curling, situated on the corner of Huskisson and Wellington Streets. By the early 1880s the club had outgrown this facility and moved to a large stone building on Woolwich Street adjacent to the Speed River.<sup>13</sup> Whilst home to the Guelph curling club or Union Curling Club as it was known, the latter building was a successful commercial venture, turning a profit by hosting a variety of civic events. Newspaper reports of early 1885 revealed that the town's winter sports day took place there, during which different age groups competed for medals in skating races.<sup>14</sup> Later that month it was also the setting for a most popular figure skating and fancy dress carnival, organized by rink secretary James Hewer, a man who was also closely involved with the town's Maple Leaf Baseball Club.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup>Ibid. p 213.

<sup>12</sup>"Guelph Daily Mercury" April 19 1902. Quoted from Johnson, *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 323.

<sup>13</sup>David Allan. *About Guelph: Its Early Days and Later*. Guelph Public Library, 1939 p 5.

<sup>14</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury*. February 5 1885.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid. February 26 1885.

The space and serenity offered by this site was compromised by the end of the decade with the building of the Guelph Junction Railway to link the town to the Canadian Pacific Railroad. The construction of this new line was deemed necessary because it was felt that the town was being held to ransom by the Grand Trunk Railway, which since amalgamating with the Great Western Railway in 1882, had monopolised Guelph's rail link to major, trans-continental lines.<sup>16</sup> In order to make the lease on Guelph Junction an attractive proposition to the C.P.R., the shareholders decided to extend the line to Goldie's Mill. Because the skating rink partially obstructed the intended path of the railway, it was bought by the shareholders, and converted into office and warehouse space prior to the opening of the line in 1888.<sup>17</sup> The success of the Speed Skating Rink had demonstrated that an indoor rink was a commercially viable venture, and thus the building of another one, especially in light of the enforced demise of its would-be competitor, was a most attractive possibility. In March 1891 an open letter from Robert Mitchell and W.M.W. McAlister was sent out, advertising a meeting at the Wellington Hotel later in the month to discuss the feasibility of building a new skating and curling facility.<sup>18</sup> The letter's two authors were convinced that it would be profitable, especially if the skaters and curlers themselves were the ones that held stock in the proposed building.

The idea obviously appealed to local brewer, entrepreneur, and all round promoter of

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<sup>16</sup>Johnson. *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 266.

<sup>17</sup>David Allan. *About Guelph: Its Early Days and Later*. p 5.

<sup>18</sup>Letter from R. Mitchell and W.M.W. McAlister. March 26 1891. Sleeman Collection.

Guelph, George Sleeman, who since forming the Royal City Curling Club in 1888, held a vested interest in the town's curling facilities. Originally an associate of his father at the Silver Creek brewery on Waterloo Avenue, Sleeman took charge of the company in 1867. As a businessman, he had a clear motive for boosting the town's profile, but the extent to which he involved himself in Guelph's social institutions reveals definite philanthropic tendencies. In an official capacity, he served ten years on the municipal council including four terms as mayor, three years as deputy reeve and six as chief magistrate. Yet it is because of his involvement in the town's sporting life that he is most fondly remembered. In addition to his role as president and founder of the Royal City Curling Club, he was also president of the Guelph Bicycle Club, Rifle Association and Turf Club. However, the most important post he held in this sphere was the presidency and managership of the prestigious Maple Leaf Baseball Club, a pioneering team whose history will be examined in great detail in the following chapter. As well as his business, municipal and sporting commitments, Sleeman's status as the town's greatest ever proponent is confirmed by his directorship of the Guelph Junction Railway, and his building of the town's first opera house and streetcar system.

The professions of other curlers in the town would suggest that unlike Sleeman, few would have had enough money or sufficient business experience to contemplate investment in a new rink. According to the *Guelph Directory* of 1885-6, most of those listed in the *Mercury* as active curlers that same year were skilled artisans such as weavers, cabinet makers, carpenters, builders and masons. Very few held white collar

positions.<sup>19</sup> Nonetheless, enough backers were found for the project to come to fruition, and the Victoria Rink was opened in 1892. According to the *Mercury's* annual recap of new buildings in the town, the \$8,000 facility situated on Baker Street had been financed by the Guelph Curling Rink Company, measured 100x206 feet, and had an ice bed of 176x95 feet, which in the summer doubled as an arena for roller skating.<sup>20</sup>

The town's curlers demonstrated their pride in the new building by starting an annual curling tournament which they opened to all clubs west of Toronto. Sleeman was a prime mover in setting up the event. According to the programme notes for the 1895-6 tournament, he had donated a trophy worth \$350 to be competed for in "one of the largest and best equipped rinks in the Dominion." His donation coincided with a collective decision by the curlers of Guelph to provide a trophy of their own. Consequently, the Sleeman Trophy and the Guelph Tankard were competed for separately at the same meeting. The first tournament was such a success that the directors of the rink decided to extend the playing surface by constructing a lean-to adjacent the building under which the game could be played. After two years, so many teams were entering each of the competitions, that it was decided to amalgamate the two in order to reduce the time it took to complete the tournament. The Guelph Tankard therefore became second prize to the Sleeman Trophy.<sup>21</sup> Although the Royal City Club managed to win the Sleeman

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<sup>19</sup>List of 17 curlers taken from the *Guelph Weekly Mercury* January 29 & February 5 1885, and cross referenced with the *Guelph City Directory 1885-6*.

<sup>20</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. November 3 1892.

<sup>21</sup>Guelph Curling Trophies. Programme 1897-98. Sleeman Collection.

Trophy from inaugural champions Seaforth in 1896,<sup>22</sup> it was not until 1918 that they had any success at the provincial level, when they won the Ontario Tankard.<sup>23</sup> Eventually it was recognised that Guelph was more likely to become a curling force if the two clubs united. In 1926 the Royal City and Union clubs did just that, becoming the Guelph Curling Club. This new coalition maintained its base at the Victoria Rink until 1968 when it moved to its present facility on Woolwich Street just north of Woodlawn Road. The Victoria Rink however, met with rather an inauspicious end, with the site being purchased by the city and converted into a parking lot.

The example of both the Speed and Victoria rinks reveals that the provision of facilities during this formative period was at the behest of private investors. Sport was not enough of an established institution that the investment of public money could be justified. However, its status appeared to be changing. One only has to look at the importance curlers attached to their various competitions to see that they deemed tournament play an end in itself.

A similar desire to participate in sport for sport's sake was simultaneously becoming apparent in the growing number of baseball teams in the town. Aside from the town's professional team, matches between competing factories or tradesmen were the most widely reported. The concept of legitimate worker recreation had grown within the town

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<sup>22</sup>Ibid.

<sup>23</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition*. July 20 1927.

following a rally staged by the Nine Hour Movement in May 1872. By demanding a hour's decrease in their day, workers were, in the same breath, protesting against the tendency of employers to shepherd them in all aspects of their life. It was felt that "the hour could be put to more advantage by the working man for himself than for his master." Speakers championing the cause declared that it was patronising to believe that the extra free time would be frittered away in the tavern. Rather workers would use it to "fulfill their duties as parents and citizens...[as well as] cultivat[ing] their gardens, their intellects and their social qualities."<sup>24</sup>

Although the Nine Hours Movement in Guelph appeared to be based upon the idea of workers being allowed a life independent of the factory, Patrick Joyce argues that the development of organized sport was a direct descendant of the patriarchal loyalties engendered by the factory in its workers, which permeated all areas of their life including their leisure time.<sup>25</sup> During the Nine Hours rally, activists in the town had praised the decision of the Guelph Sewing Machine Company which had taken the initiative by reducing the week of their workers by an hour.<sup>26</sup> Rather than "developing their gardens, their intellects and their social qualities" independently however, their employees seem to have been quite prepared to verify Joyce's argument by spending their free time playing for the factory's baseball side. In September 1872, a report appeared in the

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<sup>24</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. May 29 1872.

<sup>25</sup>See opening chapter.

<sup>26</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. May 29 1872.

*Mercury* of a Saturday afternoon match between the married and single members of their workforce. Five years later, such matches were still being played.<sup>27</sup> Indeed the intra-mural sporting lead of the Sewing Machine Company appears to have been followed across the town. The moulders played the finishers at Cossit's Agricultural Works.<sup>28</sup> The tuners played the finishers at Bell's Organ Factory.<sup>29</sup> These sort of games took place in addition to matches between factories or trade groups, and although there does not appear to have been any sort of industrial baseball league in the town, that should not detract from the regulated nature of each of the games and the stability of the works' sides. For example, a match between the town's printers and railwaymen played two weeks after an initial encounter, revealed that well over half the players were the same.<sup>30</sup> One can infer from the permanence of some industrial teams, and the frequency with which they played, that company, or at least departmental pride was on the line at each of their matches. In much the same way as curlers wished to win a tournament for the honour of their club, the kudos that accompanied company/factory victory caused the game to become all-enveloping end in itself. Such a motive would certainly reinforce Joyce's argument, since it reveals that some matches were a manifestation of the patriarchal loyalties instilled by the factory.

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<sup>27</sup>Ibid. September 7 1872. See also June 7 and 14 1877.

<sup>28</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. June 18 1877.

<sup>29</sup>Ibid. August 3 1885.

<sup>30</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury*. August 13 & 27 1885.

If participation in works baseball was due to an unconscious obligation to the factory, this surely negates its function as recreative leisure, since factory sport was widely condoned by employers who generally perceived it to be beneficial to their interests. Surely it is but one small step from Joyce's belief to that of the Marxists, who view sport as an oppressive means of social control. What Marxists continually choose to ignore is the fact that both the work and sport indulged in by those very workers contained an element of choice on their part. This choice of occupation also helps to give a greater understanding of Gelber's theory of congruence, since it is not as ridiculous as it originally appears for people to participate in a sport similar to their work, whilst still experiencing the benefits of physical and mental purification associated with inutile leisure.

The involvement of teams comprised solely of white-collar professionals who would have had little empathy with the rhythms or unity of factory life, such as lawyers and bankers, would suggest that some participants never even wished to sample the cathartic experience that the game could potentially offer. They played it solely because it was a superficial and purposeless form of recreation rather than an all-encompassing end in itself.<sup>31</sup> Indeed, it would be foolish to dismiss the purely recreational attraction of baseball to people outside the professional classes. A *Mercury* preview of an 1872 match between the employees of Stewart's Planing Mill and the town's carpenters, revealed that the losers would have to pay "for the half barrel of beer that is to be kept in a shady

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<sup>31</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. June 7 1877 & July 2 1878.

corner, if possible until the end of the game."<sup>32</sup> Such a frivolous tone presumably mirrored a relaxed rather than competitive approach to the game. A similar flippancy was apparent in the epic timbre adopted in the reports of games between the *Mercury* and its newspaper rival, the *Herald*.

Friday was certainly a red letter day in the history of Guelph-it witnessed the most exciting and interesting baseball contest that it has been our pleasure to record, viz: the struggle between the rival papers for the supremacy in baseball...The eighteen devoted men played their parts with the spirit of martyrs and fought with the courage of desperation, willingly sacrificing life and limb for the purpose of amusing the spectators...[However, although] invitations had been transmitted to a number of personages throughout the Province all regretfully asked to be excused owing to the press of election business, and consequently the attendance was not as large as anticipated.<sup>33</sup>

Perhaps the most convincing evidence that baseball could be participated in as a pastime, as opposed to a sport, came with the formation in 1878 of a team that stipulated weight ahead of ability as the main criterion for membership. According to the *Mercury* the new baseball club "weigh[ed] over a ton and [was] called the Invincibles. Mr. Walter Cook, the 340 pound infant [was] the father of it, and he [was] about taking the team on a starring trip to play men of their own girth."<sup>34</sup> In their first match against the Hamilton

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<sup>32</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. August 9 1872.

<sup>33</sup>*Ibid.* July 20 & September 20 1872.

<sup>34</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. July 11 1878.

Dread-nawthings, the players, only four of whom weighed less than 230 pounds, "came rolling into the ground covered with fat and foolishness [but] staggered out with glory and perspiration." For the record, the Invincibles won 33-17, thanks in part to Mr. Cameron who despite being very warm "was willing to run, tearing along till his buttons exploded like small torpedoes leaving him a panting wreck by the time he reached home plate."<sup>35</sup>

The all-encompassing cathartic attraction of baseball did exist outside the factory. Organized championship play was readily apparent throughout the late nineteenth century baseball craze. As early as 1872, the Unions, one of the four Guelph clubs competing for the Canadian junior baseball title, defeated the defending Eckfords of London, contributing, in the process, to a swelling baseball rivalry between Guelph and London which boiled over in a number of unsavoury ways in later matches between the towns' senior sides: the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs respectively.<sup>36</sup> Indeed, some of the players who appeared for the Maple Leafs in those intense matches of 1876 and 1877 had cut their teeth playing for these junior clubs, providing some evidence that they acted as something of a feeder system to the professional leagues.<sup>37</sup>

A league structure for works' based intra-town matches did not exist in Guelph prior to

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<sup>35</sup>Ibid. July 25 1878.

<sup>36</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. August 29 1872.

<sup>37</sup>Of the players that represented the Maple Leafs in the 1877 season, Emery and Hewer had played for the Silver Creeks (*Guelph Daily Mercury*, May 12 & September 6 1876) Fenwick for the Green Stockings (*Guelph Daily Mercury*, June 15 1876) and Goldie for the Guelph Baseball Club (*Guelph Daily Mercury*, June 26 1876).

the rise of softball. According to the Centennial Issue of the *Mercury*, the YMCA executive organized the Guelph Softball Association in 1923. By 1926 the Industrial Section of the Association consisted of 5 teams and 65 players, whereas the City League (formerly the Church Section) consisted of 12 teams and 166 registered players. The two divisions amalgamated in a series of play offs at the end of the season in order to determine the town champion. Whilst a league structure meant that each game was not a self-contained end in itself, the diminished skill required to play softball as opposed to baseball, ensured that the popularity of this league stemmed from its recreative nature.

The different levels of intensity with which baseball could be played allowed disparate groups to take from the game whatever they wished. This tendency was indicative of the way individuals were willing to use sport to suit their various ends. With the onset of spectator sport, it was manipulated still further. Indeed, "use" became the operative word, since sport was no longer only a participatory recreative or cathartic outlet, but a conduit for satisfying narrow, self-interested agendas.

As early as 1868, newspapers in Guelph carried advertisements publicising that haven of male subculture, the pool hall. The opportunity to gamble at a semi-public (ie pay at the gate) sporting facility had existed prior even to that date, given the long history of horse racing in the town. The social history of this sport is fascinating because of the extensive base of appeal that it has always enjoyed. Its connections with the elite have earned it the nickname "the sport of kings". Also, the fact that the horse was central to nineteenth

century Canadian life, both as a beast of burden and a method of transportation, engendered a universal respect for the animal. What worried the moralists was the inextricable link between racing and money.

One of the first records in the town relating to the sport is a letter sent by the Reverend Arthur Palmer of St. George's Anglican Church, outlining his intention to revoke the lease which he had granted to John Comb Wilson for the parsonage grounds upon learning that it was the latter's intention to convert the area into a race course.

I consider then, that any pleasure that may be derived from the trial of the speed of a few horses, or any supposed advantage in regard to the improvement of their breed, is dearly purchased by the demoralising effects produced by horse racing in the gambling, swearing and drunkenness that it generates, in the number of thoughtless and unprincipled persons it attracts to a place, and in the general spirit and habits which it diffuses: a spirit the very opposite of a sober or religious one, and habits specially ill suited to Canadian life.<sup>38</sup>

Horse racing in Guelph and indeed the whole of Canada prior to the 1870s was defined by its randomness.<sup>39</sup> It was placed on a more formal and regular footing once George Sleeman assumed the presidency of the Guelph Turf Club in 1871. Under his guidance, the organization was able to host an impressive annual race meeting. According to

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<sup>38</sup>"Guelph Herald" July 29 1847. Quoted from Johnson, *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*, p 326

<sup>39</sup>Metcalf. *Canada Learns to Play*, p 147

remaining programmes, the prize money offered each year approached the staggering sum of \$2000.<sup>40</sup> Some races on the card were more prestigious than others and drew thoroughbred entries from all over Western Ontario, including Toronto. The smaller money was competed for in trotting races open only to horses within a ten mile radius of Guelph.<sup>41</sup>

The newspaper report of the 1872 meeting went out of its way to detail the flair and respectability brought to the event by the strong female contingent in the crowd. The programme also apprised prospective racegoers that the cost of entry was 50 cents- twice as much as the gate fee to a Maple Leaf baseball game in the town four years later.<sup>42</sup> This, coupled with the fact that the two day meetings never took place on a weekend, implies that the Guelph Fall Races were very much an event attended by the area's social elite. This presumption is compounded by the way in which the reports were quite open about the gambling that occurred, omitting to take even the slightest moral offence. This was indicative of a subservient willingness to allow the upper classes to do whatever they wished with their abundance of money. Such permissiveness became so ingrained in Canadian consciousness, that it was formalized on the nation's statute book with the

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<sup>40</sup>1872 programme for Guelph Fall Races stated that the total premiums for the two day meeting were \$1,800. Sleeman Collection, University of Guelph Library.

<sup>41</sup>Ibid. 1872, 1890, 1891.

<sup>42</sup>William Bryce. *Bryce's Base Ball Guide for 1876, Containing Constitution and By-laws, Playing Rules and Championship Code for the Canadian Association of Base Ball Players, Adopted at the Toronto Convention, April 7 1876*. London (Ontario) 1876 Sections 2 & 11, pp 57-58.

introduction of a 1910 private member's Bill "[t]o amend the criminal code so as to prohibit betting on race tracks." Metcalfe comments that

[t]he debates and the ensuing compromise revealed the true motivations behind the Bill—on the one hand, an absolute condemnation of public gambling, and on the other, the protection of the business interests of a small group of horse owners and jockey clubs and of the rights of the upper levels of society to gamble and wager.<sup>43</sup>

The compromise solution did not ban betting at the track but limited the number of thoroughbred race meetings at officially sanctioned Canadian Jockey Club tracks, to two per year.

The effective barring of those lower down the social scale from the Fall Races, did not prevent their satisfying a seemingly insatiable desire to gamble. Impromptu races which took place on public roads with minimal approbation were sometimes reported by the press. Such an event took place on 8th July 1881 between "Ingram's mare 'Gipsy Queen' and Clarke's horse, 'Spotted Jack' ...on the Brock road near Morrision [over a distance of] one mile."<sup>44</sup> As well as detailing that "Spotted Jack" took the \$20 prize money, the report also referred to the large crowd that had turned out to see the race and the fact that "[t]he hotels did a large business (sic) and quite a bustle was observed around them for

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<sup>43</sup>Metcalfe. *Canada Learns to Play*. p 151.

<sup>44</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury*. July 14 1881.

some time after the race."<sup>45</sup> A reflection of the type of person in attendance?

Horses were not necessarily needed for unofficial races of this kind. Indeed, athletic challenges, which went under the title of "pedestrianism", were reported and often publicised ahead of time to ensure that the location and date were well known. Challenges between local runners were for relatively small purses of between \$25 and \$100,<sup>46</sup> but other reports indicated just how lucrative the profession could be. The *Guelph Weekly Mercury* on July 21st 1881 gave a detailed report of a race in Woodstock over 150 yards that had taken place the previous day, between Charles McIvor and "an unknown said by some to be from California and others to be from the east" for the massive prize of \$8,000. The race appeared to follow a challenge format which involved the backer of the unknown staking his own money, in this case \$4,000, on the outcome of a race between his man and Woodstock resident, McIvor. In order for the race to go ahead, the amount he staked had to be covered by backers of the local athlete, with the winner to take the full amount. With so much money involved, the procedure was a lot more formal than for races of a lower key. In this instance the mayor of Woodstock, Mr. James Sutherland M.P., made sure that the backer of the unknown was able to pay up should he lose, by telegraphing the man's bank and enquiring after his credit status. Upon receiving verification of his funds, the mayor himself backed McIvor to the tune of \$1,000, with plenty of others willing to combine in order to post the \$3,000 difference. This was not

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<sup>45</sup>Ibid.

<sup>46</sup>Ibid. June 9 & July 7 1881.

the only money staked, with the paper estimating that \$12-13,000 was bet on the outcome of the race by spectators. Upon the first race being declared a dead heat by the judges, a second one was run after the two athletes had had an hour's rest. When the second race did get underway "both of them ran for all they were worth, McIvor beating his opponent by eight inches in, we understand, the unprecedented time of 14 seconds."<sup>47</sup>

The sanctioning and ratification of horse racing and pedestrianism by members of the middle class destroys the idea that they were universally desirous of attaching a paternal agenda to sport. The way in which the social cream of Guelph used the Fall Races as medium of consumption and display, confirms Donald Mrozek's argument that the upper echelons of society, in common with the lower classes, used sport as a means of self-gratification and relaxation rather than a way of obtaining social and spiritual improvement. This was taken a step further in Woodstock with one of the most respected figures in the town actively endorsing the mixture of gambling, professionalism and sport that was supposedly anathema to all but social undesirables.

Middle class endorsement of a juxtaposition of sport and money was even apparent in Guelph, albeit on a smaller scale. Unlike the proceedings in Woodstock however, money was not the reason for the event taking place. It was merely a welcome by-product of victory in a track and field programme designed to promote the communal and recreational benefits of sport. These sports days took place on civic holidays during the

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<sup>47</sup>Ibid. July 21 1881.

summer and were often co-ordinated by a committee of prominent citizens. For example in August 1877 Sleeman, along with Messrs. Mitchell and Deady arranged an athletic programme which took place on the market square, with the winners of each event being awarded the prize of \$4.<sup>48</sup> The annual "Harvest Home" at the Ontario Agricultural College gave the town an opportunity to visit the campus and also watch the student sports. Rather than anything so base as cash being awarded to the victors, accessories befitting young gentlemen, such as pipes, wallets, napkin rings, inkstands, watch chains and cuff links were distributed as prizes.<sup>49</sup>

The sports day which really captured the attention and imagination of the public was organized by the Guelph Caledonian Society. Although founded in 1875<sup>50</sup> the idea of their organizing and promoting a bill of athletic events does not appear to have hatched until the following year, when a letter to the editor of the *Mercury* asked that the society arrange an excursion to one of the highland games taking place in Detroit, Hamilton, Lucknow or Kincardine since "there [would] doubtless be a large number from Guelph desirous of competing and attending at these places."<sup>51</sup> Although only about 22% of the town's population were of Scottish origin,<sup>52</sup> the Caledonian Society decided that there

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<sup>48</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 30 1877.

<sup>49</sup>Ibid. August 31 1877 & August 28 1878.

<sup>50</sup>Johnson. *The History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 236.

<sup>51</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 31 1876.

<sup>52</sup>1881 *Census of Canada* figures quoted from Professor Gilbert Stelter's "Canadian Urban History" web site.

was enough interest within the town to merit taking the author's suggestion a step further by organizing their own event. The inaugural gathering in September 1876 was a hastily arranged, piper-led procession from the Town Hall to the Exhibition Grounds,<sup>53</sup> but the town witnessed a far bigger occasion the following year, with the *Mercury* estimating a turn out of 4,000 people to watch the parade and games.<sup>54</sup> In addition to regular track and field events, a distinctly Scottish flavour was added with the introduction of caber tossing, hammer throwing and stone putting with the winners of each event receiving a cash prize donated by a number of local businesses, a process that must have required a great deal of organization on the part of the society's committee. By 1881 the event had reached such a level of popularity, that the *Mercury* was able to boast that "some of the best talent in the province" had been engaged to take part in the parades and games organized for that year.<sup>55</sup>

Despite widespread community interest in sport by the end of the nineteenth century, its value as a potential method of social and spiritual instruction was by no means apparent to all. Indeed, the most internationally renowned body associated with sport, the YMCA, was very slow on the uptake, refusing to believe that sport could possibly be used to promote its agenda. Funded by charitable donations since its foundation in the town in 1869, the YMCA's original curriculum was based on a desire to save fallen souls by

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<sup>53</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 12 1876.

<sup>54</sup>*Ibid.* September 14 1877.

<sup>55</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury*. June 23 1881.

providing an area for spiritual contemplation and temperance. Whilst advocates of the Association were keen to point out its benefits as a haven for "mechanics, labourers and strangers" who would otherwise have misused their time "in the bar room of a tavern"<sup>56</sup> a heated newspaper debate in April 1876 revealed that others believed its paternal benevolence to be both obsolete and ineffective.

One detractor took a particularly provocative line when he argued that those who defended the YMCA merely enunciated the curriculum of a model organization. Wishing to steer clear of "a metaphysical discussion as to the *change* experienced by the young men"<sup>57</sup> he demanded to see tangible evidence of the Association's actions, whilst simultaneously arguing that it could not possibly be as effective an organization as its advocates would have the town believe. Its poor record of attendance alone meant that its audience was limited. Also, he pointed out that the very people whom the Association wished to "save" were not the type who would forgo an evening in the tavern in order to attend its meetings and lectures. In his experience, the only people present were "a few well behaved and moral young men," precisely the sort who "[did] not need its good offices."<sup>58</sup> As a result he failed to "find that the work done in its legitimate sphere could justify the expenditure of money and labour which [the Association's advocates wished] the people of Guelph to furnish [especially since] nearly every Church in town ha[d] its

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<sup>56</sup>Letter to the Editor. *Guelph Daily Mercury*. April 18 1876.

<sup>57</sup>Ibid. April 22 1876.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid. April 20 1876.

own Young People's Association."<sup>59</sup>

Such an opinion was indicative of an increasing wave of secularism that had swept nineteenth century North America, leaving in its wake a society that was prepared to question rather than merely accept (quasi) religious organizations. Yet there is evidence to suggest that the agenda of abstemiousness forwarded by the YMCA was not just questioned, but rejected outright by the people of Guelph. Despite the Association's willingness to go to great lengths to advance its message,<sup>60</sup> its pleas fell on deaf ears when it counted. In November 1877 the town voted on whether to implement legislation that formalized sobriety. If the *Dunkin Act* had been adopted,

no person, unless it be for exclusively medicinal or sacramental purposes or for bona fide use in some art, trade or manufacture...[would be allowed to]expose or keep for sale any intoxicating liquor or any mixed liquor capable of being used as a beverage."<sup>61</sup>

By prohibiting the sale of alcohol in this way, it was felt that temptation would be removed and the community would benefit as a result. In order for the act to become law, a majority of eligible voters was required to vote in its favour, but since twenty of the

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<sup>59</sup>Ibid.

<sup>60</sup>For example, the YMCA organized a lecture visit from the renowned temperance activists Ezra Haskell and William Hurd. Ibid. June 30 1877.

<sup>61</sup>"An Act to amend the laws in forcerepealing the sale of intoxicating liquors and the issue of licenses therefore and otherwise for the repression of abuses resulting from such sale." a.k.a. "The Dunkin Act." *Statutes of British North America 1864*. Chapter 12.

twenty-four towns, villages and parishes in Wellington County posted healthy majorities against it, prohibition was not enforced.<sup>62</sup>

Despite the criticism incurred by the YMCA, as well as such a telling rejection of its programme, it still refused to change. Indeed it appears to have gone back to basics, reaffirming its goal of improving the mental, social and spiritual health of young men through religious teaching alone. In an article outlining the Association's renewed sense of focus, the people of Guelph were informed that "never before [have] so many prayer meetings [been] held and general religious efforts made."<sup>63</sup> According to the *Guelph Directory* for 1885, the Association offered a turgid programme of "[g]ospel meetings on Saturday evenings" as well as "a free course of lectures and practical talk" during the winter months. What little recreation tendered was in the form of "social games" rather than sport. Yet one could argue that this refocused YMCA was more successful in advancing its message. Through a renewed campaign of temperance education it helped to create an environment in which the *Scott Act*, a tighter version of the *Dunkin Act*, was passed in early 1885 by a majority of 168, making Guelph the first "dry" city in Ontario.<sup>64</sup> The act was nonetheless repealed four years later. According to the Centennial Edition of the *Guelph Evening Mercury*, "[i]t was almost a foregone conclusion that the

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<sup>62</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. 30 November 1877. Town of Guelph, majority of 217 against. Guelph township, majority of 145 against.

<sup>63</sup>Ibid. May 5 1877.

<sup>64</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser*. Jan 29 1885.

act would be defeated as it had failed to accomplish the object for which it was designed. It was not expected, however, that the majority in Guelph against it would reach the figure it did: 446." It is interesting that the ineffectiveness of the act caused it to be rejected rather than revised, implying a resurgence of popular unwillingness to be directed by such paternal institutions and the pious legislation they advanced.

The original cynicism that existed in the Christian Church towards sport was unsurprisingly replicated in Canadian schools since it was they who were the right arm of the churches in the moral and ethical training of the young. Children were regarded by both institutions as evil and depraved creatures whose salvation depended on their being disciplined severely rather than being allowed to indulge in frivolous pastimes.<sup>65</sup> This began to change with the trans-Atlantic exportation of a cult of athleticism that was developed in British private schools which held the doctrine of "Muscular Christianity" at its core: a doctrine which encouraged an increasingly positive appreciation of the body, reflecting the bold, affable actions of Christ. This cult was embraced by certain educationalists in Canada, most notably Dr. Egerton Ryerson, the man who is generally acknowledged as the founder of both the national and provincial educational systems.<sup>66</sup> Upon his appointment as Ontario's first superintendent of education in 1844, he advocated the introduction of physical training into the school curriculum, but given the lack of

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<sup>65</sup>Don Morrow. *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*. Oxford University Press 1989 pp 69-70.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. p 71.

facilities and interest, few teachers or pupils were actually affected by his plea. This led Ryerson to make provisions for teachers to receive instruction in physical education, but since by as late as 1877 only 17% of Ontario's teachers had any formal training, his arrangements had very little impact once again.<sup>67</sup>

With such limited promotion of sport in schools, it is difficult to understand how it could possibly have gained any popularity, let alone have any impact as a means of implanting a discipline in children which would induce them to lead more Godly, righteous and sober lives. However, if one includes military drill within a definition of school-promoted sport, it becomes readily apparent. The historian, Don Morrow, notes that military drill was a most convenient form of physical education during this developmental period of school sport because of an abundance of "instructors [who were] often discharged military personnel. Equipment was inexpensive and minimal and it could be conducted outside. [Also] it fostered, or exemplified, prompt obedience by 'minature adults' who were of course males."<sup>68</sup> Military drill, which Ryerson called military gymnastics, was taught throughout the 1860s in many elementary and secondary schools, especially in the cities and larger towns of Ontario. Guelph was no exception, and the methods and commitment of Captain Walter Clark ensured that the town's High School (later the Collegiate Institute) followed the above model.

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<sup>67</sup>Ibid. p 74.

<sup>68</sup>Ibid. p 75.

Clark had come to Canada as a British regular, and had seen action during the Fenian raids. Upon his retirement from the regular forces in 1880, he settled in Guelph where he became a drill sergeant in the militia. He also founded the first cadet corps in the country, the Highland Cadets, through which he taught marching, calisthenics and club swinging to High School pupils. In a move that was way ahead of its time, Clark also taught his brand of sport to girls, founding a corresponding corps which he named the "Daughters of the Regiment."<sup>69</sup>

According to the Public Schools' Inspectors report of 1887, Clark was not registered as a full time member of staff, and his classes were not considered to be part of the High School's curriculum.<sup>70</sup> This lack of formal sanctioning did not appear to affect the popularity of Clark's instruction, with the man himself attaining the status of local celebrity and his exhibitions holding a special place in the hearts of the townspeople. A *Mercury* report in September 1886, referred to a cadet exhibition given at the Speed Skating Rink, which caused the arena to be "filled as only Captain Clark could fill it." The report went on to praise the display given by both the boys' and girls' corps.

The boys, in their familiar and neat white shirts and black pants...were loudly applauded in their marching and sword drills, the cross and open square coming in for appreciative comment. The girls, in their tasty white dresses with blue trimmings, so well known to

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<sup>69</sup>G.M. Shutt. *The High Schools of Guelph*. University of Toronto Press, 1961 pp 60-62.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid. pp 76-77.

Guelph audiences [took part in] a calisthenic class.<sup>71</sup>

Needless to say, this popularity and widespread appreciation sits uneasily with any Marxist notion of exploitation, despite the regimented nature of the activity.

Although dubbed extra-curricular activities, Clark's displays were of direct benefit to the High School in that the money collected from the spectators at such events financed the construction of a new gymnasium. In a newspaper report detailing its formal opening in September 1886, it was announced that the building itself had cost \$777, "which had nearly all been paid for through Captain Clark's efforts." It was hoped that the displays of the Highland Cadets at the opening ceremony and also at two shows scheduled for later in the month would incite the good people of Guelph to part with another \$300 in order to bankroll the equipping of the gymnasium.<sup>72</sup> To qualify as a collegiate institute, Ontario high schools were required to have "suitable buildings, outbuildings, grounds and appliances for physical training."<sup>73</sup> Rather than signalling the curricular acceptance of school sport however, these new buildings often served merely as assembly and classroom space, a situation that was true of the Guelph Collegiate Institute.<sup>74</sup> Sports and games

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<sup>71</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 24 1886.

<sup>72</sup>*Ibid.* September 16 1886.

<sup>73</sup>W.N. Bell. "The Development of the Ontario High School." University of Toronto Press 1918, p 146 & 159. Quoted from Morrow, *A Concise History of Sport in Canada* p 76.

<sup>74</sup>Shutt. *The High Schools of Guelph*. p 36 & 66.

within established societal institutions continued to be perceived merely as rational amusements, with drill, gymnastics and calisthenics only being tolerated as adjuncts to more academic pursuits, even though it was those very activities that had made such an immense contribution towards aiding the school's change of status.<sup>75</sup>

In a pragmatic move that was to revive its appeal, the YMCA of the early twentieth century adopted a far more temporal stance, using organized and supervised physical regeneration as a way promoting an agenda of morality. In so doing, the Association mirrored the changing attitude of the Christian Church towards sport. Both institutions had come to realize that their original assessment of sport as a frivolous waste of time was misguided, and that it could be used as a means of inculcating characteristics that were both spiritually and socially desirable, without having to be as dogmatically regimented as the military gymnastics taught in schools.

The acceptance of "Muscular Christianity" was most evident in the establishment of a new Guelph branch of the YMCA in 1914. It was founded by Walter E. Buckingham, whose intention it was to set up an Association capable of providing religious teaching in harmony with physical and social recreation. He began the project in 1910 along with J.W. Hopkins. They foresaw an institution equipped with showers, baths, a swimming pool, auditorium, classrooms for night schools, as well as sleeping quarters for forty men, estimating that that the land, building and equipment for such a facility would total

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<sup>75</sup>Morrow. *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*. p 77.

\$70,000. They felt that \$20-25,000 should be pledged in advance by four or five individuals in order to gauge the viability of the project. Buckingham himself donated \$5,000 as did the industrialist J.W. Lyon, Mrs. Caroline Harcourt and Arthur Cutten. D.D. Christie donated \$3,000, bringing the total to \$23,000 before a public campaign was launched to raise the difference. Buckingham went ahead with the purchase of a suitable site choosing a downtown building on the corner of Quebec and Yarmouth Streets, which at the time was partially used by the Kloefer Coal Company. According to Buckingham, the owner, Mr. Charles Yeates, was generous enough to sell the property at the price he had paid for it. Consequently, Buckingham signed the deeds in May 1911, and handed them over to the Young Man's Christian Association of Guelph two years later. Despite such widespread public spiritedness and the successful raising of the intended amount, Buckingham and Christie had underestimated the cost of such an ambitious project and were left \$20,000 short. This money was raised by mortgaging the property. Once again, the Association was indebted to a further act of generosity from Chicago businessman and former resident of Guelph, Arthur Cutten, who paid off the loan.<sup>76</sup> If nothing else, the history of the founding of the YMCA reveals the continuing necessity of philanthropy in the provision of sports facilities, since the town council was still unprepared to invest any public money in the venture.

Thirteen years after the opening of the Quebec Street YMCA, the Guelph Young

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<sup>76</sup>Walter E. Buckingham. *A Story of the Beginning of the YMCA in Guelph, Ontario*. 1944.

Women's Christian Association widened their curriculum to incorporate physical education. Two years later they concluded that this expanded programme required extra space. After a fundraising campaign of their own, they leased and equipped the City Hotel on Macdonnell Street which was opened in 1929 by Her Excellency Viscountess Willington.<sup>77</sup> In June 1959 the YWCA was forced to leave, following a decision by the building's owners, the Co-Operators Assurance Association of Toronto, to re-use it for their own purposes. The YWCA put in a bid for the "Ker Cowan" property on Stuart Street but their offer was rejected on account of a petition from neighbouring home owners who objected to their purchase.<sup>78</sup> The fact that both Christian Associations were committed to the same goals and practices, coupled with the YWCA's nomadic status at the time, undoubtedly hastened a March 1961 decision to amalgamate.<sup>79</sup>

The continued appeal of the Y movement in an expanding town, as well as the fusing of the two associations, eventually rendered the Quebec Street facility too small. It was only designed to cater for 500 members but by the mid 1960s 3,000 people belonged to the Guelph branch.<sup>80</sup> After successfully raising \$900,000, the Y was relocated to a state of the art building on Speedvale Avenue which was opened in June 1967 and provided

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<sup>77</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. September 15 1961.

<sup>78</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>79</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>80</sup>*Ibid.* July 14 1966.

tennis, running, martial art, swimming, weight lifting, gymnastic and sauna facilities.<sup>81</sup> This curriculum was far wider than anything Buckingham had envisaged and entirely unrecognizable from the YMCA of the nineteenth century. Yet behind the facility facade remained the paternal dedication to "health: physical, mental and spiritual [in order to] develop sound, creative citizenship and prevent the many ills inherent in present society."<sup>82</sup> As had been the case for many years, this was to be achieved through adult supervised sport and recreation which was still credited with fostering the socially desirable instincts for co-operation, self-control, loyalty, obedience, teamwork, and respect for authority.<sup>83</sup>

As has already been seen, the most important feature of the North American Y movement was its ability to adapt to shifts in societal trends and attitudes, thereby avoiding obsolescence. By embracing sport as a teaching method, the Y ensured both its relevance and popularity in the twentieth century. Yet the enduring centrality of sport within the Association's paternal agenda could well be cited by Marxist historians as a prime example of the bourgeoisie's use of sport as a method of social control. Whilst such a claim contains elements of truth in the case of the YMCA, Marxist indignation should be neutralized by the fact that it had to change in order to include sport within its curriculum, responding, one presumes, to a societal desire to participate. The increasingly civic nature of the Y movement also ensured that the way in which sport was used within

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<sup>81</sup>Ibid. June 17 1967.

<sup>82</sup>Ibid. August 1 1968.

<sup>83</sup>Riess. *City Games*. p 159.

the Association was not always left solely in the hands of its executive. As it gained an institutional foothold within the community it served, a more recreational and varied curriculum was offered. For example, by 1971, the Guelph Y was offering courses in poker playing and gourmet cooking in addition to its established programme of sport.<sup>84</sup>

By 1975 the budget for the Guelph branch of the Y totalled \$350,000, of which the United Way contributed \$48,000 and the City of Guelph \$17,300. The difference had to be made up through membership fees and fund raising drives.<sup>85</sup> Despite targeting a family rather than single male market, the Y maintained a policy of never turning anyone away because they could not afford the membership fee, resolving to increase their efforts to raise capital. Such an attitude contradicts Stephen Yeo's thesis. The Y, for all its impressive facilities, never lost sight of its original aims. As such, it did not become a passive "pay at the gate" institution as with so many modern sports clubs, but a civic trust, umbilically linked to the community it served.

It was that trait that made the YMCA unique amongst semi-public facilities, the remainder of which required their users to part with their money. However, those who owned, operated or attended ballparks, pool halls, curling rinks and race tracks seldom considered these places as sanctuaries dedicated to the development of humanity. They were quite willing to allow their patrons the freedom to take whatever they wanted from the

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<sup>84</sup>Ibid. December 29 1971.

<sup>85</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. 24 February 1975.

experience of attendance or participation. This unquestioning allowance of a recreational or competitive agenda was equally apparent amongst members of private sporting clubs. These were often provided by status and ethnic organizations, keen to post a buffer between themselves and the rest of the town's population. The Guelph institution that came closest to replicating this twentieth century propensity for establishing such exclusive space, was the Cutten Club.

It had been the original intention of Arthur Cutten to develop a complex which included golf, football, tennis, baseball and cricket facilities along with a 200 room hotel, and in December 1927 he had commissioned Dr. G.I. Christie, the president of the Ontario Agricultural College, to conduct a feasibility study into the project. With the purchase of a 230 acre site from the McDonald family of farmers, Cutten's vision came a step closer, but he had to abandon the idea of a hotel because of the inflated prices owners of suitable properties were asking once it became known that he was backing the venture.<sup>86</sup> He therefore refined his ideas, focusing on the development of a 6,400 yard, par 70 golf course to be served by a plush clubhouse. On June 10 1931, the Cutten Fields Golf Club was opened having cost its founder \$750,000.<sup>87</sup>

Arthur Cutten's development of a facility solely for use by an exclusive clientele sits

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<sup>86</sup>Frank Brett. *The Cutten Club of Guelph, Ontario, Canada 1931-81*. Guelph Public Library, p 14

<sup>87</sup>Ibid. p 20.

uneasily against his proven track record of philanthropy. It was he who had contributed so generously to the YMCA development fund set up by Walter Buckingham in 1910, and who had eradicated the \$20,000 debt on their Quebec Street building in December 1918. It must be understood that it had never been Cutten's intention to develop a cliquish, private country club. During the legislative planning process, he had agreed with the recommendation of Ontario Premier G. Howard Ferguson, to grant students of the Ontario Agricultural College free use of the facilities. He had also revealed at the outset his willingness to involve local expertise in the project, declaring that all grasses for the fairways and greens be grown at the OAC. Indeed Cutten had originally planned to present both the golf course and the clubhouse to the town upon his death, but this offer was declined by Mayor Rolson who felt that the maintenance costs should not be borne by the taxpayer. Rolson's decision is yet further illustration of the unwillingness of smaller urban centres to accept full responsibility for such a large facility. Even with the acceptance of sport into the societal mainstream, the varying demand and altered financial resources and priorities in the face of changing council membership, meant that public ownership of Cutten's development would have been too great a burden.

Despite the egalitarian sentiments behind Cutten's gesture it would be naive to believe that all sections of the town's population would have made full use of the facilities even if they had become public property. The very cost of the course and clubhouse suggests a rather extravagant environment in which not all would have felt comfortable. Also, the price of golfing equipment ensured that the game as a whole was only accessible to those

who had substantial financial means. However, it was the mayor's refusal of Cutten's offer that set the club itself on an exclusive recruitment drive, since prospective buyers only found it an attractive proposition as a profit-oriented business that could elicit private membership. As per Cutten's revised instructions, the club was put up for sale on the occasion of his death which occurred in 1936. The depressed economic environment at the time meant that a buyer was not found until 1939, when Stanley Thompson, a member of the original course and clubhouse design team, along with Toronto stockbroker and owner of the Toronto Maple Leafs Baseball Club, Donald Ross, bought and renamed the club the Guelph Golf and Recreation Club Limited, a name which reflected its new corporate and social direction.<sup>88</sup>

The development of organized sport in Guelph appears to have been a two way street. On the one side was the widespread use of sport as a means of satisfying anything from a desire for all-encompassing competition to carefree recreation. On the other, it was due to a promotion by paternalistic organizations run by a section of the middle class that subscribed to the dictum of *mens sana in corpore sanis*. What is undeniable is that opportunity for sporting participation was often the gift of prominent citizens and private businesses, since it was they who provided many of the facilities. It was not until 1924 that public money financed a large scale sports amenity with the erection of a \$25,000 grandstand at Exhibition Park.<sup>89</sup> The prominence of private money in the field of facility

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<sup>88</sup>Ibid. p 22.

<sup>89</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition*. July 20 1927.

provision made Guelph typical of other small Ontario towns, yet immensely fortunate given the amount of money invested, and the diverse number of sports provided for.

The combined theses of H.E. Meller and Stephen Yeo conclude that the paternalistic federation of localized voluntary organizations gave way to institutions that catered for a client that was willing to pay as urban areas expanded. Guelph does not conform to that model. Clubs and semi-private sports facilities which catered for those who both wished to participate and observe were developed ahead of voluntary organizations. The same is even true of an organization which supplied sport exclusively for a spectator market. During the 1870s, Guelph was home to one of the most successful Canadian baseball clubs of the nineteenth century, and their growing need for revenue to finance their burgeoning overheads caused them to solicit the support of the townspeople.

## CHAPTER THREE.

### THE RISE AND FALL OF THE MAPLE LEAFS.

The most prominent sport by far in Guelph during the second half of the nineteenth century, was baseball. The brand of the game played in Southwestern Ontario during the 1850s was more akin to cricket inasmuch as each side consisted of eleven players each of whom had to be retired before the other team could go into bat. The dynamic variant simultaneously being pioneered by New York clubs resulted in the modern form of the game being widely played in the area by the early 1860s.<sup>1</sup> Arthur Feast's introduction of The New York rules into Guelph in 1861<sup>2</sup> breathed new life into an already vibrant pastime. Numerous teams were formed enabling intra city competition, and the advances in Ontario railway construction in the 1850s and 1860s even made inter city challenges a possibility for the first time. The most distinguished club in the town during this period was the Guelph Maple Leafs. Their impressive record of success alone makes them an obvious topic of discussion, but I intend to examine the people and processes behind their development into a highly organized professional/commercial outfit. I also wish to look at whether the club was able to sustain its playing excellence and financial soundness.

Organized club sport, especially in its highly evolved commercial form, was an entirely

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<sup>1</sup>William Humber. *Diamonds of the North: A Concise History of Baseball in Canada*. Oxford University Press, 1995 pp 24-25.

<sup>2</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition*. July 20 1927.

urban phenomenon. Indeed, early sports promoters often used their teams as a medium for boosting the profile of their city. In an era of open competition and commercial dislocation, urban championing took on an important bearing. But although some promoters were more civic minded than others, the notion that any were entirely altruistic, providing baseball solely as a service to enhance public morale and elevate the reputation of the town, is fallacious. All were interested, to a greater or lesser extent in the commercial and personal opportunities that could be achieved through baseball. Yet irrespective of whether promoters desired to use baseball as part of their agenda for urban boosterism, or for their own economic advancement, the success of their venture was dependent on customer (spectator) satisfaction with the product. In an increasingly competitive environment, a high quality product necessitated the hiring of a capable playing staff, which in turn, meant further investment on the part of the promoter, and a greater need for high gate receipts. In essence, commercialism created an ever increasing spiral of interests which augmented the potential for conflict. The Maple Leaf's experienced such conflicts, calling the viability of the club into question. Through a chronological mapping of the club's fortunes, between the late 1860s and the late 1880s, I intend to discuss the competing agendas of promoters, players, supporters and press with regard to the Maple Leaf club. By understanding how they were viewed within the community they represented, I hope to provide an insight into the moral, social and financial battleground that was professional sport.

Although founded in 1861 by Arthur Feast,<sup>3</sup> the club did not become a dominant force until the end of the decade, playing second fiddle to both the Hamilton Maple Leafs and Woodstock Young Canadians for much of the early part of their existence. Nonetheless baseball appears to have become a prominent part of the popular culture within Guelph. For the Maple Leafs' match against Woodstock on August 4th 1868, Mayor Higinbotham declared a Civic Holiday in order to accommodate the large number of people who wished to travel to Woodstock to see the game.<sup>4</sup> The match went down in the annals of the club's history for two reasons. Although the Maple Leafs lost 28-36, the exclusivity of the club within their home town was furthered by the result inasmuch as the runner's-up prize (a silver tea service) was subsequently sold to subsidize the erection of a fence around the perimeter of their ground, ensuring that future crowds could be controlled, counted, and most importantly, forced to pay.<sup>5</sup> The game was more notable, however, because of the crowd violence that took place. In exonerating the Young Canadians of any blame, the *Mercury* commented on the "certain class [in attendance] whose height of ambition appears to be how base and degraded they can make themselves."<sup>6</sup> Whilst one could interpret these inflamed passions as evidence of the excitement that baseball generated, its main consequence appears to have been the encouragement given to the club's new president, William Bookless, by the angry citizens

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<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. August 5 1868.

<sup>5</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition*. July 20 1927.

<sup>6</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. August 5 1868

Of Guelph, to mount a serious challenge for the championship of the dominion.<sup>7</sup> The encouragement appears to have been taken to heart, for in the corresponding match the following year, the Maple Leafs secured the Canadian title with a broadly similar team.<sup>8</sup> Lest there be any confusion, it should be pointed out that the title was a huge misnomer since it was only contested by teams from Southwestern Ontario.

By the early 1870s, the game had become the most obvious symbol of urban competition with Guelph's businessmen using the game as a means of advertising the health of their town's economy in the face of competition from their Ontario rivals.<sup>9</sup> The Maple Leafs' lineup, which consisted of a locally born butcher, miller, tinsmith, jeweller, and even methodist clergyman, heightened the pride the team generated within the town. Their predominantly local composition, coupled with their continued success began to justify the comments of certain US journalists who had begun to warn Americans to beware of these upstarts from the North. Although professional American sides first visited Guelph in 1871, it was the Maple Leafs' victory over Baltimore (who were at the time third in the National Association) in July 1872 which gave the town the biggest opportunity to bask in the reflected glory of its most distinguished ambassadors.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup>William Humber, *Cheering for the Home Team: The Story of Baseball in Canada*. Boston Mills Press, 1983 p 28.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid, p 29.

<sup>9</sup>Humber, *Diamonds of the North*. p 28.

<sup>10</sup>Humber, *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 29. The Forest City club of Cleveland and the Rockford club of Illinois played Guelph in the Summer of 1871. Although the Leafs only lost to Cleveland 13-12, they were beaten badly by Rockford on both

Although no other club in the Dominion could have dreamt of achieving such a feat, this victory is often taken out of context by historians of Canadian sport, thereby creating a false impression of the Maple Leafs' standard of play. Although the club did defeat Baltimore 10-9 on Dominion Day, the American club exacted revenge in a most convincing way on their home ground, defeating the Maple Leafs 25-5 on August 12th.<sup>11</sup> This defeat at the hands of top quality opposition was replicated later on in the Leafs' tour of the United States as they were beaten by both the Athletics of Philadelphia 35-8<sup>12</sup> and the Mutuals of New York City 9-4.<sup>13</sup> Both of these teams were also members of the original professional league founded in 1871: the National Association of Professional Base Ball Players. For the Mutuals' game against the Maple Leafs, the *New York World* reported that "there was not a large attendance, the prestige attached to them as champions of Canada having been discounted considerably in consequence of their defeat by the Baltimores and the Athletics."<sup>14</sup>

The realization that the cream of the Canadian game was inferior to the very best that the National Association had to offer was not lost on the Guelph press. Reporting on the match with the title-holding Boston Red Stockings, the *Mercury* stated that "[w]e would

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occasions that they met. However, these setbacks did not prevent their retaining the Canadian title.

<sup>11</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. August 13 1872.

<sup>12</sup>*Ibid.* August 15 1872.

<sup>13</sup>*Ibid.* August 16 1872.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.* August 17 1872.

think to look at our own champions play with other clubs they had little to learn, but from our short experience with the [National Association] champions we immediately change our tale." <sup>15</sup> However, the fact that the Leafs were able to attract a team the stature of the Red Stockings to Guelph reflected well on their reputation within the baseball fraternity. It is also worth noting that the game took place on a public holiday. Throughout this halcyon period of baseball popularity in Southwestern Ontario, high profile games were often the centrepiece of summer civic occasions, thereby ensuring maximum attendance and revenue. The August 24th edition of the *Mercury* reported that the crowd at this game numbered 2500. It is impossible to challenge this estimate since no record of the takings was made in the club's financial records. Suffice to say that on future occasions, when a record was made, the *Mercury's* estimates were consistently high. It is also noted in a separate article that appeared in the same issue of the paper, that all reporters had to pay the entry price in the same way as supporters. This, the paper claimed, was most discourteous. They pointed out that there is "no society in Guelph that receives more of our attention than this Club, and it is only a matter of simple justice for its members to aid the press by every means in their power in the discharge of their duty." Even in this formative period of commercially focused sport, the press realized that it was a vital cog in the urban machine that powered the whole game as well as the individual club.

The increasingly corporate direction in which baseball was headed required the realization

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<sup>15</sup>Ibid. August 24 1872.

that the primary reason behind any club's existence was to win games. This notion seems to have been accepted by the Maple Leaf management who understood that this results-driven environment created a need for specialists. In 1873, they recruited Americans Harry Spence and Bill Jones.<sup>16</sup> One could interpret their hiring as entirely unnecessary, since the Maple Leafs had already cemented their unrivalled position of prominence by retaining the championship of Canada for three consecutive years, thereby entitling them to keep the Silver Ball trophy.<sup>17</sup> Local newspaper reports of games between Guelph and other Canadian sides often went so far as to take on a condescending tone. For a game played on August 7th 1872 between the Maple Leafs and the Dauntless club of Toronto, the *Mercury* stated that the Guelph club

played with their average ability, but finding that they had run up such a large score, were a little careless towards the close or they might have made a larger number. As it is, they are immensely ahead of their competitors as may be seen by the following score: Guelph 46. Toronto 7.

The Maple Leafs' hiring of professionals could well be explained by the fact that the club found itself at a loss. They were by far the best Canadian side, but were neither metaphorically nor literally in the same league as their American counterparts- a state of affairs that was confirmed by their defeat by Boston, 27-8 in the summer of 1873. This unsatisfactory position was recognized by prominent local brewer and entrepreneur,

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<sup>16</sup>Humber. *Diamonds of the North*. p 31.

<sup>17</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. September 20 1872.

George Sleeman who sought to raise the profile and the playing standard of the Maple Leafs by placing them at the heart of his agenda to enhance the name of Guelph.

The apparent altruism displayed by Sleeman in his promotion of baseball as a means of entertainment and civic boosterism is a little hard to swallow. Baseball historian Steven Riess believes that the eulogistic accounts of his public-spirited agenda by contemporary journalists and more disturbingly by sports historians such as Humber and Morrow,<sup>18</sup> not to mention a plethora of local writers, are typical of the unquestioning acceptance afforded to owners of this period. As a result, there is little to discourage today's residents, let alone the contemporary public from accepting his image as a magnate and philanthropist. However, the owning of a baseball franchise was an immense source of power for a sagacious owner, especially one with designs on public office, since it could be manipulated into a source of patronage for loyal supporters as well as a public relations device to improve their standing within the constituency. Owners with additional interests in intra and inter urban transit and the hotel industry could certainly be in a position to profit more than once from the people paying to see their team.

To appraise Sleeman as such a cold-blooded manipulator, would be overly cynical. It disregards his chairmanship of non-profit, recreational sports clubs such as the Guelph Bicycle Club and the Guelph Rifle Association, his unselfish financial backing of the

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<sup>18</sup>Humber. *Diamonds of the North*. p 31. *Cheering for the Home Team*. pp 30-31 & 41-47. Don Morrow. *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*. Oxford University Press 1989 p 114.

construction of the Guelph Opera House, as well as his underwriting the town's bid for the Provincial Fair.<sup>19</sup> It also must be pointed out that sixteen miles of track connecting Guelph and the Canadian Pacific Railroad, in which Sleeman (amongst others) bought shares, was not completed until September 1888, by which time, he was no longer involved with the Maple Leafs.<sup>20</sup> The same is true of his development of the town's street railway system, which was not formally opened until September 17th 1895.<sup>21</sup>

His altruism could perhaps be displayed with his initial involvement in baseball. In the mid 1860s he formed his own factory team, the Silver Creeks, and paid all of the team's equipment and travel expenses.<sup>22</sup> However, it is at this point that the selfless veil of civic-mindedness slips. William Humber points out that on "[f]inding his own employees inadequate, he provided jobs in the [Silver Creek] brewery for some of the better local amateurs."<sup>23</sup> If Sleeman was merely providing a forum for employee replenishment, surely it would not have mattered how the team performed. The fact that he was prepared to indulge in this early form of covert-professionalism shows that he understood the all-round promotional properties of the game.

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<sup>19</sup>Vern McIlwraith. "Sleeman Brought City World baseball Title." *Guelph Tribune*, June 12 1991.

<sup>20</sup>Leo A. Johnson. *The History of Guelph, 1827-1927*. p 269 & 271.

<sup>21</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. September 18 1895.

<sup>22</sup>Morrow. *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*. p 114.

<sup>23</sup>Humber. *Diamonds of the North*. p 31.

This understanding was revealed ever more clearly once Sleeman had accepted the presidency of the Guelph Maple Leafs in 1874, and had continued the club's fledgling policy of hiring professionals, adding George Keerl and Hank Myers to the roster.<sup>24</sup> In an era in which such heavy investment was anathema to the concept of "true" sport. Sleeman's irregular actions cannot fail but alert us to the fact that he had ulterior motives. The kudos he gained from his involvement with the team could not have harmed his ambitions for public office, (he was returned as Mayor in 1880; an office he was to hold five more times) and the rebuilding of the Wellington Hotel in 1877 at his expense, coincided with the Maple Leafs' involvement with International Association- a league that required teams to stay in town in order to play matches on consecutive days. Most importantly, was the potential effect of baseball on his primary business interest: brewing. Urban spectator sport, especially throughout this period was very much a male preserve. Beer and tavern life was also part of male (sub)culture. Sleeman's involvement with the Maple Leafs could well have enabled him to generate local goodwill for his product, both through positive product association with a winning team, and popular recognition of Sleeman's generosity in bankrolling the club. The fact that the game itself provided Sleeman with a place to sell and advertise his product should also not be overlooked. Ultimately, one has no option but to infer from the time and effort that Sleeman put into the club, both in his capacity as President and Manager, that he understood the personal and commercial spin-offs of the game, and that he regarded it as a means to a more lucrative end. The club itself did not have to be a profit-making organization to be a

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<sup>24</sup>Ibid.

commercial venture, but it did have to be successful because the results had more than the reputation of the club riding on them.

By hiring professionals to represent a club, which itself was a symbol of urban competition, Sleeman had raised the stakes. But, given that the Maple Leafs were the first team in the area to embrace the practice, he was not immediately subjected to the consequences of his actions. This was because the rules and regulations governing the baseball championship of the Dominion at the time were actually designed so as to maintain Guelph's position of dominance. In the absence of a league structure, the championship was decided by a single game. The holders of the championship, signified by the Silver Ball trophy, were not regarded as the challenging party under any circumstances, although they were duty bound to accept all challenges in due rotation provided they had two weeks rest in between. The rules also declared that all matches for the championship were to be played on the grounds of the champions. Moreover, any club competing for the championship would receive only twenty five per cent of the net gate receipts.<sup>25</sup> This seems designed to keep clubs other than the champion Maple Leafs in a state of perpetual poverty, since the Maple Leafs could legitimately collect 75% of the revenue without having to incur any of the costs of travel.

Guelph's healthy financial status was also due to their continued ability to draw top flight

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<sup>25</sup>*Rules and Regulations Governing the the Base Ball Championship of the Dominion.* 1 May 1874, Guelph. Special Collections, University of Guelph Library.

American teams to the town, partly, one presumes, because of their status as Canadian champions. For example, the Dominion Day match against the Boston Red Stockings in 1874, attracted an estimated 8000 spectators,<sup>26</sup> and swelled the Maple Leafs coffers by \$562.<sup>27</sup> Although thoroughly outclassed yet again by the National Association champions (the Maple Leafs lost 20-4) the substantial windfall helped to finance their trip to the "World" Amateur Championships in Watertown, New York. In a seven club tournament which drew entries from Pennsylvania, New York City and New York State, the Maple Leafs defeated the Ku Klux Klan club of Oneida Castle, New York 13-4, the Nassaus of Brooklyn 13-8, and finally the Eastons of Easton, Pennsylvania 13-10 in the championship game to claim the \$450 first prize.<sup>28</sup>

The Guelph press did its best to imply that the Maple Leafs overcame astonishing odds to win. For example, in their preview of the tournament, the *Mercury* pointed out that "[t]he Eastons and Flyaways [of New York City] are mostly composed of professionals, and it will be hard work fighting either of them." The amateur status afforded to the competition was entirely misleading. It was a tournament for semi-professional clubs, and the Maple Leafs were as semi-professional as any of the teams there. One only has to look at the club's financial records to see that that was the case. On August 6th, each of the players who represented the club in the final received a \$40 payment. This was

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<sup>26</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. July 2 1874.

<sup>27</sup>Maple Leaf Cashbook 1874-1876. Sleeman Collection, University of Guelph.

<sup>28</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury*. July 6, 8, 9 1874 respectively.

followed by a further payment of \$25 in mid October.<sup>29</sup>

The semi-professional status of the club was maintained throughout the following season. However, there appears to have been a shift away from an egalitarian system of payment, towards a management recognition of star players. Between May 15th and September 24th, Lapham received seventeen separate "dividends" totalling \$146. Foley was the second highest paid player, receiving \$107.80, including his fares to and from Guelph. Only T. Smith and Spence who received \$12 and \$32 respectively were the other players listed as receiving payment. Such substantial remuneration was well within the club's capacity as it continued its policy of mixing championship games with games against high profile American sides. The game against the Hartfords of Hartford Conn., on Dominion Day brought in \$557.42, \$259 of which went to the visiting club. The \$350 prize money gleaned from second place at the 1875 Watertown tournament easily covered the expenses of the trip and contributed substantially to the club's end of season profit of \$123.29. The possible tensions caused within the team by certain players receiving more than others did not translate to the diamond where once again the Maple Leafs were able to retain the Silver Ball. There was one minor slip up, with their defeat at the hands of the St. Lawrence Club of Kingston on July 10th. They were able to recover, however, regaining their title on September 11th, in an emphatic 9-0 victory.<sup>30</sup> 1875 also revealed the commercial potential of what was to become the most lucrative rivalry in nineteenth

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<sup>29</sup>Maple Leaf Cashbook.

<sup>30</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 63.

century Canadian sport. On the August 16th the Maple Leafs defeated the Tecumsehs of London 14-9, in a match that grossed \$118.10.<sup>31</sup> The fact that the Maple Leaf management was prepared to offer the profitable Civic Holiday match to a fellow Canadian side reveals their obvious optimism as to the fruitfulness of this fixture. In previous years, public holidays had been reserved for American sides.

Payments to players in the 1876 season were still more substantial, both in terms of the total paid, and the amount of recipients. No fewer than three received more than \$100 in "dividends" with nine others receiving payments which ranged between \$95 and \$15. According to the cash book, the club paid out a total of \$751 in player dividends, a total that does not include the board of the five that resided at the Mitchell's Boarding House. All this shows categorically the nature of the Maple Leaf team, but did not preclude the Guelph press from using the word "professional" as a disparaging smear.

Although the Maple Leafs had regained their hold on the Silver Ball by the end of the 1875 season, it was obvious that their position of prominence was being seriously challenged by both London and Kingston. In this environment of increased competition, it was felt that a league rather than challenge system would be a fairer, not to mention a more lucrative means of deciding the Championship of Canada. However, in order for the league to have any chance of getting off the ground, it had to have the support of the country's premier side. In a letter to Sleeman, Harry Gorman, the General Manager of the

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<sup>31</sup>Ibid & Maple Leaf Cashbook.

## London Tecumsehs, implored

[t]he Maple Leafs, as the leading club in Canada [to] issue a call to all the clubs in Ontario, at least, to meet whenever you deem convenient, and at as early a date as possible to settle the championship and any other questions that may be introduced affecting the interests of the game. The Tecumsehs will cheerfully second your efforts in this direction.<sup>32</sup>

Accordingly, a convention was arranged for the 7th April 1876, at the Walker House Hotel in Toronto, at which the Canadian Base Ball Association (CBBA) was formed. George Sleeman was elected President of the Association, with Gorman as Secretary and W.F. Mountain as Treasurer. Although ten clubs were represented at the this original meeting,<sup>33</sup> only the London Tecumsehs, the Guelph Maple Leafs, Toronto Clippers, Hamilton Standards and Kingston St. Lawrence clubs paid the \$10 entry fee required of playing members of the Association.

The formation of a league, along with its own playing rules, judiciary committee and constitution, illustrates perfectly the criteria Allen Guttman uses for defining modern sport. The Canadian game had now become entirely standardized, quantified and bureaucratized. Industrial age systematization was not only replicated in the playing structure of the Canadian game, but also in the management of the clubs themselves.

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<sup>32</sup>Letter from Harry Gorman to Geoge Sleeman, March 15 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence. Sleeman Collection, University of Guelph.

<sup>33</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 31.

Indeed it could be argued that it was this tendency that hastened the formation of a competitive league. The 1875 constitution of the Maple Leafs clearly stipulated that all "contracts, agreements, actions or proceedings should be made by "a Board of Directors of five to seven members, who must live within a three mile radius of the town, and stand for re-election at the club's Annual General Meeting.<sup>34</sup> As the healthy financial state of the club was mainly due to Sleeman's generosity, and also because in his capacity as manager, he dealt with the day to day business of the club, he was obviously the administrative focal point of the Maple Leafs. He was nonetheless held in check by both his fellow directors and the constitution. The Guelph model was obviously attractive in the light of the success of the team and the profitability of the club, and hence, it was mimicked, most notably by the London Tecumsehs.

The management of the Tecumsehs had always attached the same associations of urban boosterism to their team. However, it was only after securing the financial backing of petroleum mogul, Jacob Englehart, that the club was able to compete on a level playing field with Guelph and hire professional players, beginning with George Latham in 1875.<sup>35</sup> This was the origin of an ever increasing spiral of commercialism in London: a spiral within which the Maple Leafs were already caught. With the reputation of the town connected to the fortunes of the baseball club, the Tecumseh management felt obliged to pay an escalating number of specialists to maintain their competitiveness. This

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<sup>34</sup>Sleeman Collection, University of Guelph.

<sup>35</sup>Humber, *Cheering for the Home Team*, p 35.

necessitated more and more spectators to keep the club solvent. By the same yardstick, large gates were only likely if spectators felt that there was a good chance of their witnessing some quality play; quality play that would more likely be provided by specialists, playing clubs of a similar stature on a regular basis. The CBBA appeared to offer and indeed sanction such a system, implicitly condoning the hiring of professionals. The section of the constitution concerned with the eligibility of players, did not even refer to "professionals" as a distinct group, let alone expressly bar them from playing.<sup>36</sup> The Championship Code also recognized, and indeed legislated for the commercial spoils of the game, insofar as it stipulated that each team play a total of four games with every other club, at a time and place to be mutually agreed upon by the contesting parties. This afforded each side the opportunity to play two home games and two away games with every other club thereby spreading both the costs of travel and the benefits of home field. A standard charge of 25 cents was decided upon as the gate fee for championship games, and after expenses, 40% of the receipts would be given to the visitors.<sup>37</sup>

Organized baseball developed independently of those who adhered to strict notions of amateurism. Rather than reflecting the idyllic images of an arcadian past, the game has always been more closely aligned with the American willingness to be caught up in a commercial vortex. Although that part of the game's nature made it so repulsive to those Canadians conditioned by staunch British notions of amateurism, the exporting of the

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<sup>36</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 41.

<sup>37</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. Championship Code: Sections 2 & 11, pp 57-58.

commercial baseball package was the result of widespread Canadian solicitation as witnessed by the constitution and format of the CBBA- a league which simultaneously confirmed the game's direction and provided a stage on which burgeoning inter-urban rivalries could be both harnessed and exploited.

The most significant and lucrative of those rivalries was between the two most developed teams: the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs. Their first meeting of the 1876 season came on May 24th Civic Holiday in London. The Great Western Railway was prepared to accommodate those who wished to travel to London, scheduling a special train to pick travelling supporters up after the game, and charging them a discount rate of \$2 for the round trip.<sup>38</sup> Deals such as this were advertised in the Guelph press throughout the season, demonstrating the link baseball had forged with other urban institutions. According to the *Mercury*, 9000 attended the game.<sup>39</sup> Given what we know about the amount charged for entry and also the visiting team's entitlement to 40% of the net receipts, one can safely conclude that this was a massive overestimate. The Maple Leaf account book records that the club received \$313.35 as their share. That would make the total net receipts \$783.37. If one divides that total by .25 (cents) one arrives at the approximate number of spectators at the game: 3133. It is an approximate total because the Tecumsehs would have been entitled to use some of the gross receipts to cover match expenses. However, if the game had been attended by 9000, the amount grossed by the

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<sup>38</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. May 23 1876.

<sup>39</sup>*Ibid.* May 25 1876.

club would have been \$2250. That would mean that London's match overheads totalled a vast \$1466.63; a highly implausible amount. When the Tecumsehs visited Guelph later on in the year, they received 36% of the gross takings of \$605.55. This meant that the Maple Leafs had spent \$60 from their gross receipts on match overheads- a far more realistic sum.

The game on the 24th was a famous ten innings victory for the Tecumsehs by a score of 8-7. It was the first time that they had defeated the Maple Leafs in championship play and the London papers celebrated accordingly. The *London Free Press* claimed that

[t]here is woe, and weeping, and gnashing of teeth upon the Speed. The citizens move about in a funeral array, and the sound of sobbing comes out from every man's doorway...What has broken the heart of every Guelph man able to sit on the fence and watch a game of ball, is the defeat of the 'boys' by the Tecumseh club of London.<sup>40</sup>

This triumphant tone was compounded by a satisfaction of finally being able to compete with the Maple Leafs on equal terms. The *Free Press* commented that

for years the [Maple Leaf] club has recruited American players...the result being defeat after defeat for the Canadian amateurs. This season, however, the Tecumseh club resolved upon taking a leaf out of their opponents' book, and procured the services of several good ball players. These, with several local amateurs, have been practising assiduously of late to

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<sup>40</sup>*London Free Press*, May 27 1876. Quoted from Morrow, *A Concise History of Sport in Canada*, p 119.

accomplish the aim of their admirers—the defeat of the Guelph players at their own game— and notwithstanding the sneering remarks of the journals of that hamlet, and the boasting of the backers of the champions, it has been demonstrated that there are ball tossers in Canada outside of Guelph.<sup>41</sup>

The report was clearly the product of an environment that recognizes baseball as central to the zero-sum agenda of urban boosterism. This not only accounts for its exultant manner but also for its disdainful reference to the "hamlet" of Guelph.

The London press were obviously prepared to accept that the Tecumsehs were no longer a strictly amateur team, believing the hiring of professionals to be a necessary step the club had to take in order to become competitive. The Guelph press, however, appeared to take umbrage at the desire of their London counterparts to place the Maple Leafs in the same bracket as the Tecumsehs. They responded by doing all that they could to distinguish between the two clubs by providing a rather tenuous definition of professionalism. According to the *Mercury*, the difference between the two clubs lay in the fact that

not one member of the Maple Leaf club is a salaried player, and that their regular practising is altogether done in the evening after working hours. The Tecumseh club, we understand, has not a player that is not salaried and consequently there is no limit to the number of hours they

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<sup>41</sup>*London Free Press*. 25 May 1876.

are able to practise.<sup>42</sup>

This statement would have been hotly refuted in London, whose team was not comprised totally of full-time professionals. By the time the two clubs met for a second time in mid July, the *Mercury* appeared to be trying to get their retaliation in first, setting their readership up for the impending defeat of the Maple Leafs. Although the stoic, amateur boys of Guelph had "made professional clubs take a back position on the diamond field" before, if they should be defeated, the result would count for little since "it will only go to prove that nine players who having nothing else to do but practise, and consequently are professionals, of a necessity must be able to work better together than a nine who only get practice in the evening after performing a hard day's work."<sup>43</sup> This moral high ground taken by the Guelph press was not justified given the "dividends" paid to the entire Maple Leaf squad, but it appears that the paper chose to overlook those payments, believing semi-professionalism and amateurism to be synonymous in the case of the Maple Leafs. It was an oversight they were not prepared to make for the improving Tecumsehs.

Guelph did indeed lose the game 10-7, the defeat being accredited to a more professional performance of a London side who committed under half the errors of the Maple Leafs. Rather than accepting defeat gracefully however, the *Mercury* loaded its match report with

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<sup>42</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. July 12 1876.

<sup>43</sup>*Ibid.* July 19 1876.

supposed behavioural differences between the two sides, obviously seeking to capitalize on and perpetuate the contemporary stereotype that surrounded professional sportsmen. For example, the umpire, a Mr. Mountain of Toronto "acted in an impartial manner, and his decisions were always accepted with as good a grace as possible by our boys. It would be well if the same could be said in favour of some of the London team." They even went as far as to transpose this coarse, aggressive image onto the travelling supporters describing "the few swells...with their flash jewelry and heavy swagger"<sup>44</sup> who accompanied the team to Guelph. The result rankled with the *Mercury* for a long time, since it was wholly unwilling to accept that the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs were competing on equal terms. They rejected the daily utterances in the London press which attested to the legitimacy of the result, claiming that "[a] woman proclaiming her virtue on a housetop does not always lead the passerby to believe that there is purity within."<sup>45</sup>

Despite the *Mercury's* proclamations as to the impurity of the Tecumsehs, there is evidence to suggest that they did not manage to convince everyone as to the amateur status of their home town club. In a letter dated 11th August 1876, Sleeman was asked by a Mr. George Shaw of Hamilton to

say...if the Maple Leaf base ball club, of which I understand you are the President, is called a professional one. I have always understood this year that you have played with the other

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<sup>44</sup>Ibid. July 21 1876.

<sup>45</sup>Ibid. August 1 1876.

clubs for the amateur championship and have backed my opinion.<sup>46</sup>

Whilst this shows that some people were repulsed by this American usurpation of the sport, it also reveals that the CBBA was unsound from a competitive standpoint. By no means all the teams within the league had the wherewithal to pay players, but those that did were not discouraged from so doing by the Association's constitution. This created a massive imbalance, as teams with specialist help competed against teams without, since in its inaugural year, there was not a separate forum for amateur teams. However, the *Mercury's* claim that the Maple Leafs were on the wrong side of this divide rings rather hollow, since they had no trouble defeating all the other teams in the league apart from the Tecumsehs.

Whilst much of what was anathema to adherents of amateurism was found in professional sport, all too often the blame for the changing structure and attraction of modern sport was laid at the door of professionalism rather than understood to be the result of changes within society itself. This misperception however, was compounded by isolated, yet widely reported instances of cheating and ungentlemanly conduct. One of the most famous instances of such conduct in the Canadian game took place during the third match of the series between London and Guelph. There was a degree of tension surrounding the game's organization which undoubtedly accentuated the problems created by the incident. An arrangement existed between the two teams whereby they agreed that each should play

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<sup>46</sup>Letter from Mr. G. Shaw to G. Sleeman, 11 August 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

the other on their respective civic holidays, thereby maximizing the potential crowd for each game. However, the Guelph Council declared a civic holiday for the same day as London (9th August), a decision that was met with dismay by the Tecumseh management.<sup>47</sup> An edge was also given to the match by allegations in the Guelph press that London had been attempting to recruit some of the Maple Leaf players.<sup>48</sup> This accusation was met with only half a denial by the Tecumseh General Manager, Harry Gorman. In a letter to Sleeman dated August 3rd, he denied "endeavouring to entice your best players away," but then went on to admit that he had spoken to Walsh, the Maple Leaf third baseman after the match on the 20th July. Gorman concluded his letter however, with a polite but somewhat sarcastic rebuttal, informing Sleeman that "[w]e have been able to get all the players we require without going to Guelph for them. They may not be quite so good but they do very well for London."<sup>49</sup> Previous correspondence between the two men had also revealed their displeasure with the umpiring of the previous games. The rivalry between the two towns had obviously reached such an intensity that it was felt that it was impossible to "select a Canadian [umpire] who would give satisfaction." Gorman then went on to convey his hope that "our next game [would be] carried out without [our] being compelled to cavil at the umpire's conduct on either side."<sup>50</sup> This proved to be wishful thinking.

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<sup>47</sup>Letter H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. July 28 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>48</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 2 1876.

<sup>49</sup>Letter from H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. Aug 3 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>50</sup>*Ibid.* July 28 1876.

In what appears to have been a legacy of amateurism, the courtesy of choosing the umpire was a privilege afforded to the visiting team. The rules of the CBBA stated that

the visiting club shall submit the names of five persons competent to act who are not members of the visiting club. From this list the local club shall select two or more names. Should the visiting club be unable to secure the services of either of the two persons selected, then two more names shall be submitted to the local club to complete the list for them to select from.<sup>51</sup>

This rather cumbersome process obviously required a good deal of correspondence, and even after the uncertainties created by that exchange were overcome, the best laid plans were still subject to disruption since the Association did not have a set pool of umpires contracted to do the job. Future communication between the two clubs would suggest that Mr. Ed Moore stepped into the breach at the last minute for the game on August 9th.<sup>52</sup> However, this selfless act did not prevent his becoming a vilified figure in Guelph and the centre of the biggest scandal in the brief history of the CBBA.

The Maple Leafs proceeded to lose the match 5-0. The *Mercury* report was more scathing than usual in its assessment of the umpiring. In an incident in the sixth inning, Tommy Smith, the left fielder "got first [base] and then scored on an overthrow, but the umpire

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<sup>51</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 53.

<sup>52</sup>Letter H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. September 2 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence. "[We] would suggest that you do not on this occasion leave the choice of an umpire unsettled to the last minute."

gave him out because he did not see him touch second base, which Tommy says he did."<sup>53</sup> This caused the game to be halted whilst the Maple Leaf players disputed the decision, but eventually the decision went unchanged. Whilst this contradicted the paper's previous descriptions of the stoic way in which the Guelph players unquestioningly accepted the umpire's decisions, it does nonetheless reveal their intense dissatisfaction with the officiating on this occasion. The *Mercury* went so far as to state categorically that Moore cheated them out of three runs at least. It concluded its report with a particularly personal and barbed attack on the umpire, saying that "[t]he stigma of unfairness as an umpire will stick to Mr. Moore of London as long as the game will be played in this Province, and we warn against all clubs in allowing him to act in such a position."

Such was the furor created by the substandard umpiring, that on August 12th the *Mercury* reported that Sleeman had handed to the Judiciary Committee of the CBBA, a protest against the "erroneous and partial decisions by the umpire". This enabled the paper to add to its already well documented position on the issue. It wholeheartedly supported Sleeman's actions, stating that "no club on the continent could have defeated the Tecumsehs with the unjust decisions of such an umpire as this man Moore." Indeed, the *Mercury* came dangerously close to finding him guilty before his hearing. In an article updating its readers on the state of the appeal, it read a lot into the fact that Moore, a member of the Tecumseh board, and ironically the chairman of the CBBA Judiciary

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<sup>53</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 10 1876.

Committee, had arranged for the hearing to take place in London. "Does Mr. Moore suppose that he cannot get justice in any place but under his own roof? If he is satisfied that his decisions at the late match were just, what has he to fear from an investigation at a more central point?"<sup>54</sup> Rather than a sinister plot to manipulate the outcome of the hearing however, this appears to have been a genuine misunderstanding. In a letter to Sleeman, Moore claimed that he had "no idea that the calling of the committee together in London was going to make so much ill feeling [otherwise] I should have certainly named some other place." According to Moore, Sleeman left the arrangement of the time and venue in his hands, because of his position as chairman of the committee. Moore asked that "if you [Sleeman] were not satisfied with the place or the manner in which it was done, why didn't you write me (sic) and any suggestions you might have made would have been cheerfully carried out."<sup>55</sup> As it was, the hearing was re-arranged to take place on September 1st, at the Royal Hotel, Hamilton.

At the hearing, Sleeman charged that Moore had expressly infringed Rule Three, Section Three of the CBBA Playing Rules which stated that "No person engaged in a match, either as umpire, scorer or player, shall be either directly or indirectly interested in any bet upon the game."<sup>56</sup> Moore had violated this rule by entering into a bet with a Mr. G.H. Brandon of Montreal, the prize being a box of cigars valued at \$15. This would

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<sup>54</sup>Ibid. August 16 1876.

<sup>55</sup>Letter from E. Moore to G. Sleeman. August 17 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>56</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 42.

hardly have come as a surprise to the *Mercury* since in its match report of the game in London on August 10th, it had disdainfully detailed "little else but pools and bets" being talked about prior to the game. It was also consistent with their later and more shocking claim, that the entire Tecumseh management was purely a respectable front for "the gambling fraternity of the forest city [who also appear to control] the newspapers in baseball matters."<sup>57</sup> Moore, however, admitted his guilt and thus left himself and his club open to the stipulated forfeitures and penalties. Under these terms, "[a]ll games in which any of the rules of the Canadian Association are infringed by the club or member thereof shall be considered forfeited games, and shall be recorded as games won by a score of nine runs to none, and against the club infringing the rules." On a personal level, Moore himself could legitimately have been suspended from the CBBA for a year.<sup>58</sup> As it was, Sleeman asked only that the game be replayed.<sup>59</sup>

Sleeman's magnanimous gesture, calculated, one presumes to reduce the worrying growth in tension that existed between the two clubs, and indeed the two towns, did not have its desired effect. Quite clearly, Moore and the Tecumsehs could have been punished far more than they were, but still the former felt it necessary to respond in a very aggressive manner to the ruling through the press. In an article originally printed in the *London Advertiser*, Moore prepared the Maple Leafs "for a further dip in the Tecumseh whitewash

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<sup>57</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 4 1876.

<sup>58</sup>*Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 42.

<sup>59</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 2 1876.

tub" should they play again. Indeed, this was by no means a given since he alluded to a "feeling in the city that henceforth, the Maple Leafs be 'tabooed' and never more permitted to play on the London grounds." Were it not for "the determination of the Tecumsehs to carry out honourably and honestly their engagements with the Canadian Association...this course would undoubtedly be adopted."<sup>60</sup> The appearance of articles such as this shows that the use of the press, as a vehicle for sporting controversy is clearly not a phenomenon that arose in the twentieth century. More importantly, Moore's outburst does not appear to have been a rogue response. The united position of the Tecumseh management was confirmed in a letter to Sleeman from Gorman late in the season, in which he said that the "Tecumsehs have no present intention of departing from their previously expressed determination to have nothing to do with the Maple Leafs while under your management."<sup>61</sup>

The Tecumsehs appeared to be isolated on this issue. In a letter to the editor of the *Mercury*, the *pro tempore* Chairman of the CABBP, Edward Collins, strongly condemned the article's inaccuracy and vitriolic slander of the prosecuting party. He believed that

it must have been written by some person who was totally ignorant of the proceedings of the committee, or in a spirit of vindictiveness towards Mr. Sleeman which is the very reverse of the course pursued by that gentleman in his dealing with the case in ...[since should] Mr.

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<sup>60</sup>*London Advertiser*. Quoted from *ibid.* September 4 1876.

<sup>61</sup>Letter from H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. September 20 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

Sleeman [have] insisted that the rules of the Association be rigorously enforced, instead of interceding on behalf of the London club for as lenient a decision as the committee could give. the sentence might have been more severe.

The letter is, in effect, a vindication of Sleeman's actions and character, and also those of the Judiciary Committee. This steadfast defence of Sleeman by the chairman of the CABBP was juxtaposed to a resolute editorial by the *Mercury*. For a newspaper at this time to comment on a sporting issue in its editorial section was most rare, and the fact that the *Mercury* did, not only recognizes that Sleeman had right on his side, but also that local support for the Maple Leaf President was widespread. More than that, it demonstrated an affrontery that anyone could call into question the character of one of Guelph's favourite sons. The paper commented that "he [had] lived long enough in Guelph to be known as honourable in all his dealings, and [had] been connected long enough with the Maple Leafs to acquire the reputation...as a 'square' man." Also, in the light of his unwillingness to "enter into a newspaper controversy with his traducers,"<sup>62</sup> the slights against his character and actions were revealed to be even more hollow than was originally thought.

This incident, supposedly typical of the professional age, did not fail to leave a sour taste in the mouth. The *Toronto Globe* went so far as to forecast the impending doom of baseball. It stated that

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<sup>62</sup>Ibid.

[t]here seems to be a good deal of feeling manifested on both sides, each accusing the other of having professional players engaged, and neither of them giving the charge a direct denial. That there should be any foundation for such charges is having a disastrous effect upon the popularity of Base Ball: for when it begins to lose the character of a genuine amateur amusement...and partakes of the nature of a speculation in the engagement of mercenaries, and as a game for gamblers, its sordid side is sure to extinguish whatever favour it may have possessed, at least in the eyes of the Canadian public.<sup>63</sup>

This bracketing together of the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs would have been resented by the Guelph press, but it clearly shows how an uninvolved third party could give a more realistic and accurate appraisal of their similar status.

The final game against London was something of an anti-climactic affair, despite the Maple Leafs' acquisition of a new pitcher and catcher from Detroit.<sup>64</sup> That it took place in the fallout of the Judiciary Committee's decision, and also on the same day as the inaugural Caledonian exhibition organized by the Grand Caledonian Society of Guelph, ensured that few people bothered to travel to London and see London defeat Guelph once more by a score of 8-5. This was confirmed by the \$93.33 received by the Maple Leafs as their share of the takings, a sum that ridicules the *Mercury's* attendance estimate of

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<sup>63</sup>*Toronto Globe*. 12 September 1876. Quoted from Morrow, *A Concise History of Canadian Sport*. p 119.

<sup>64</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 5 1876. Pitcher Sullivan and catcher Brown had been acquired from Detroit.

4000.<sup>65</sup>

The low-key nature of this game was the only anomaly in the otherwise highly charged series between the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs. In the context of their other Association matches however, it was distinctly close and well attended. After the comfortable way in which the Hamilton Standards were dispatched in the Maple Leafs' first two games of the season (12-2 and 25-2 respectively), the match reports maintained their patronizing tone of the previous few seasons. The *Mercury* pointed out to the citizens of Hamilton that "they have the material out of which a strong nine can be made" and assured them that the Maple Leafs "are proud of their...rivals."<sup>66</sup> Even the St. Lawrence club of Kingston, a team that had beaten both the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs the previous season<sup>67</sup> were unable to provide any meaningful opposition, with the Maple Leafs scoring 53 runs and conceding only 12 on their way to four victories.<sup>68</sup> The uncompetitive nature of the league was reflected in a lack of interest by Guelph spectators for Association games other than the London series. On the previously lucrative July 1st public holiday, only \$159.50 was grossed by the club for their match against Toronto, a figure that corresponds with an attendance of 638. Three weeks later the club was to take \$605.50 at the game against the Tecumsehs. Indeed two years earlier, the Dominion Day game had

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<sup>65</sup>Ibid. September 13 1876.

<sup>66</sup>Ibid. June 17 and 26 respectively.

<sup>67</sup>Bernard. "The Guelph Maple Leafs." *Ontario History*, 84:3 (September 1992) p 215. Bernard mistakenly believes the St. Lawrence club not to have joined the CABBP.

<sup>68</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*, October 2 1876.

yielded \$562 with the visit of the Boston Red Stockings. There was clearly a market out there. However, the paltry sum taken on historically, this most fruitful of occasions, appears to be a king's ransom in the light of Toronto's visit later on in the season. On August 17th, only \$17.15 was taken at the gate of a match which the Maple Leafs won 10-0.<sup>69</sup> Indeed when Guelph visited the city on September 17th the \$20.60 they took home after their 33-0<sup>70</sup> win (this despite amendments in the rules designed to eradicate such slaughter)<sup>71</sup> did not even cover the \$24.25 generated by rail fares and accommodation for the team.<sup>72</sup>

In an attempt to maintain their financial soundness, the Maple Leafs continued their policy of playing potentially lucrative matches with professional American sides in addition to their CABBP commitments. These games, however, were by no means as fruitful as in previous seasons, probably because the very best clubs had joined the new National League which forbade their members from playing exhibition matches with outside clubs. In an early season tour to Michigan via London, the club recouped only \$66.54 of their \$264 travel costs from their games against Jackson and Detroit. The tour

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<sup>69</sup>Ibid. August 18 1876.

<sup>70</sup>Ibid. September 18 1876.

<sup>71</sup>In a circular letter sent out by Gorman, in his capacity as Secretary of the CBBA, on August 1 1876, he suggests that if "a batter fails to strike at a ball sent in by the pitcher over the home base and within specified reach of the bat, the umpire shall call 'one strike' and when two such strikes have been called, the umpire, on the delivery of the next fair ball shall warn the striker that he will call the strike on the next fair ball delivered."

<sup>72</sup>Maple Leaf Cashbook. \$16.50 in train fares and \$7.75 in hotel expenses.

only remained viable because of the substantial share of the receipts Guelph received from their game in London. Even an international match against the Brown Stockings of St. Louis (later the St. Louis Browns of the National League) failed to attract a crowd that could begin to compare with those that witnessed the London series. Only \$89.15 was taken at the gate, two thirds of which went to the visitors. This percentage seems rather excessive in view of the fact that neither Bradley nor Clapp, their first choice pitcher and catcher respectively, played. This would go a long way towards explaining the Maple Leafs' victory, by a score of 9-8.<sup>73</sup> David Bernard's use of this game to demonstrate both Guelph's progression and high gate receipts is patently incorrect.<sup>74</sup> However, an indication that the Maple Leaf reputation had followed the game across the continent, came with a letter dated June 16th from the San Francisco Baseball Club, who asked for a match with the Maple Leafs on their upcoming Eastern tour. Despite an August 1st game being confirmed in the *Mercury* on July 12th, arrangements seem to have fallen through, quite possibly due to the high costs demanded by the visitors.<sup>75</sup> With the quantity of baseball being played in the town, Sleeman could well have gauged that his market was nearing the point of saturation and thus, he would have been forced to subsidize the fixture from his own pocket, a trend that was increasingly necessary because of the poor attendance at most of the matches.

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<sup>73</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 30 1876.

<sup>74</sup>Bernard. "The Maple Leafs of Guelph." p 215.

<sup>75</sup>Letter from San Francisco Baseball Club to Sleeman. July 4 1876. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

1876 was the first year in which the Maple Leafs lost money. The fact that it was in their first season of league competition was a worrying precedent to take with them into the International Association the following season.<sup>76</sup> This change in leagues was necessary for both the Maple Leafs and the Tecumsehs because of the demise of the CABBP at the end of the 1876 season. At a meeting of the Judiciary Committee, convened in order to appraise the validity of the records submitted by the competing teams, it was ruled that only those of the Maple Leafs and the Tecumsehs should be taken into consideration. Toronto sent neither a delegate nor a record of their games for the committee's consideration. Consequently, all their matches were not taken into account. The records of the Standards of Hamilton, and the St. Lawrence club of Kingston were also dismissed because they had failed to comply with Section Three of the Championship Code which stated that "[n]o games of clubs who have not played at least two games with each of the contending clubs shall count in the championship." The Maple Leaf delegation even did their best to get the Tecumseh record scratched on the basis that they had violated Section Two which stated that "each club shall play four games with every other contesting club at such a time and place as they may mutually agree upon."<sup>77</sup> Guelph resented the fact that they had completed all but one of their games at great expense, whilst London had not even completed their quota against the Maple Leafs, the third game being declared null and void after the Moore betting scandal. However, "the majority of the Committee...held

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<sup>76</sup>Maple Leaf Cashbook. End of 1876. Income: \$2694.19. Expenses: \$2744.45. Operating loss of \$50.26.

<sup>77</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. October 28 1876. *Bryce's Base Ball Guide*. p 57.

that according to Section Three, that if two games were played between the clubs competing, the other two were not necessary to make their record valid."<sup>78</sup> Thus, the Tecumsehs were declared Canadian Champions with a record of three wins and no losses, with the Maple Leafs the runners-up with no wins and three losses.

The CABBP reconvened in April of 1877, and a circular letter released after the meeting assured clubs that the unequal nature of the previous year's competition would not be repeated, since it had been decided "to have two distinct championships for the Dominion, one for Professional Nines and one for Amateur Nines (sic)...The Tecumsehs of London and the Maple Leafs of Guelph having become professional nines, amateurs need not fear of having to play them."<sup>79</sup> London however, did not send a delegate to this second annual meeting, thereby revealing their disinterest in the Canadian Association which was supposed to run parallel with the International Association commitments of the two teams. The taunting that went on as a result of their failure to enter the Canadian championship showed that the off-season had not quelled the ill-feeling of the previous year. The *London Free Press* made fun of the Maple Leafs for being the only entrants musing that "if they can't do anything else they can turn around and beat themselves." This met with a vigorous response in the *Mercury* who claimed that "the Tecumseh management were..cowards afraid of defeat."<sup>80</sup> This, in turn was rebutted by General Manager

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<sup>78</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. October 28 1876.

<sup>79</sup>Circular Letter of the CABBP. April 1877. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>80</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. April 11 1877.

Gorman who patronizingly (but perhaps truthfully) decided to rise above such provocation. "Frankly the calibre of the Guelph team makes games between them and us uninteresting. When London needs advice it will seek it; until then Guelph can continue to abuse us, if that's the only thing that raises their spirits."<sup>81</sup> Although the professional section of the Canadian Association was stillborn, its formation does at least reveal an openness regarding professionalism. No longer could the Guelph press or Maple Leaf management use an argument over the semantics of professionalism as a veil with which to shroud defeat. The playing field was now, undeniably level.

The openly professional nature of the International Association made it wholly unnecessary to conceal the status of players. In many ways this new Association was a replica of its late brother, the National Association of Professional Baseball Players. As its title indicated, the National Association was primarily a player-dominated league financed by men who were essentially sportsmen and not concerned with profit. In his book on baseball in the Progressive era, Steven Riess discusses the shaky five year history of the NAPBBP, citing numerous reasons for its eventual dissolution. He believes that the

cheap \$10 franchise fee let in too many weak teams. Certain member cities like Rockford and Fort Wayne were too small to support a professional club. Schedules were arranged haphazardly between various teams and some did not complete their season if they were

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<sup>81</sup>Gorman quoted from Humber, *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 42.

playing poorly.

Much of this sounds eerily reminiscent of the CABBP, and indeed the same mistakes would be replicated in the International Association. Although Riess believes that the owners of this time were not concerned with profit, making money became far more of a concern because of the dominant position in which the players found themselves.

The eleven man rosters [of the NAPBBP] were unstable because players 'revolved' or jumped from one club to another that promised [more] money. Wages were high with most players getting \$1300 to \$1600 and stars up to \$2500. The average player earned twice what an artisan made and about four times as much as all non-farm employees.<sup>82</sup>

Many of the failures of this transient league were both recognized and avoided by its illustrious successor, the National League which is still in existence to this day. Due to its business rather than player orientation, the National League resolved, upon its formation in 1876, to put baseball on a sound financial and competitive footing. The cost of a franchise was increased to \$100, and they were only awarded to cities with at least 75000 inhabitants. A schedule for the entire season was drawn up by the league office. Most significantly however, the National League made the players subordinate to management by creating the reserve clause in 1879 which was a contract stipulation requiring the contractee to play exclusively for the team that owned his contract. However, there was no mutuality in this obligation since whilst the player was forbidden

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<sup>82</sup>Steven Riess. *Touching Base*. p 153.

from jumping to another club, his team was free to sell, trade or release him whenever it chose. Owners hoped that the reserve clause would prevent the unending spiral of wages which had come to comprise about half the teams' expenses, since it prevented the better players from entering into an open market situation and selling the services to the highest bidder. It would follow therefore, that competition would exist amongst an array of clubs rather than a select few that could afford to procure the services of such players.<sup>83</sup> Member teams were also forbidden from playing against clubs outside the league, a ruling that had drastically reduced the number of money-spinning matches played by the Maple Leafs against top-class American opposition.

The restrictive practices of the National League were rejected by the founding fathers of the International Association, although the latter did adopt the playing rules of the former. In a letter to Sleeman in February 1877, Harry Gorman of the Tecumsehs outlined the lax criteria the Maple Leafs had to satisfy in order to qualify for membership. He informed Sleeman that the Association was open "to all ball clubs of good standing...with an entrance fee of \$10 to the secretary; a Mr. J.A. Williams of Columbus, Ohio." Should a club wish to compete for the championship, an extra \$25 had to be paid. The championship series was to comprise a series of four matches with every other club, with fixtures to be arranged by the competing clubs before the beginning of the season. Each

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<sup>83</sup>Ibid. p 154

club was obliged to carry out their full quota of games on penalty of expulsion. Entrance fees for championship games were again fixed at 25 cents with the visiting clubs to receive the substantial share of half of the gross gate receipts or \$75, whichever was more.<sup>84</sup> Sleeman was also informed that he had been elected to a place on the Judiciary Committee. The fact that the Tecumsehs were the prime movers behind securing their own and Guelph's involvement in the new league is significant, since it mirrors the shift in power in the Canadian branch of the game away from the Maple Leafs.

Whilst one does not usually equate restriction with free market commercial success, the National League's profitable longevity is testament to both the prudence and necessity of such controls. The apparent freedom allowed by the International Association, namely the negligible franchise cost, lack of population stipulation for competing towns, and the absence of a reserve clause in players' contracts, was a millstone around the necks of its members. It created an environment where players could demand salaries that could not possibly be met over a long period of time by the small markets in which they were operating, especially if those markets was saturated by too much baseball. Add to that the high travel costs that were bound to be incurred from visiting New York, Ohio, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and Ontario, as well as the substantial fees that a home side was obliged to pay its visitors, and one has a league that was always going to struggle to survive. However, all this did not prevent the Maple Leafs, Tecumsehs, Alleghany of

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<sup>84</sup>Letter from H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. February 26 1877. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

Pittsburgh. Athletics of Philadelphia, Live Oaks of Boston, Ohio Buckeyes of Columbus, Stars of Syracuse, Auburn, Manchester and Rochester from joining.

Although not as prestigious as the National Association or the National League, there is a good deal of correspondence prior to the 1877 season to confirm Riess's theory of spiralling wage demands from players. Thomas Dolan, for example wrote to Sleeman from St. Louis demanding a salary of \$800 for a six month season.<sup>85</sup> Shrewd businessman that he was, however, Sleeman was never afraid to haggle with the players with whom he was in contact. Bennett, a catcher offering his services originally asked for \$150 a month plus expenses, but was only offered \$70 by Sleeman. This caused him to reduce his demand to \$125 per month, but later correspondence shows that he was not satisfied with Sleeman's subsequent offer and therefore did not come to Guelph.<sup>86</sup> The players themselves were in many cases wise to the tricks of salary negotiation, claiming to have been offered equivalent or better terms elsewhere, but strangely, still willing to come and play for the Maple Leafs. Whilst their main intention was to secure the best deal they could for themselves, many offered their services as part of a package deal, or at least recommended their friends, in a primitive form of unionism or agency.<sup>87</sup>

The most expensive player engaged by the Maple Leafs was their new catcher and

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<sup>85</sup>Letter from Thos. Dolan to Sleeman. November 16 1876. Ibid.

<sup>86</sup>Letters from Bennett to Sleeman. October 25, November 7, 16, 24 and December 3 1876. Ibid.

<sup>87</sup>Ibid. October 25 and November 7 1876.

captain, Scott Hastings. His letter to Sleeman in January 1877 contained the demand for a salary of \$700, and since he did not mention his salary in subsequent letters to Sleeman, one can only assume that he was successful in securing that amount of money for himself.<sup>88</sup> Hastings' knowledge of the game was impressive and his advice was clearly sought by Sleeman. He recommended a slugger by the name of Fulmer on numerous occasions, "despite his loud ways on the ball field,"<sup>89</sup> but his terms of \$900 plus board were clearly too much. Hastings also championed the cause of Craver who himself wrote to Sleeman offering to play for \$100 per month for six months.<sup>90</sup> However, Hastings informed Sleeman later that he had encouraged Craver to accept a deal from the Louisville club of Kentucky worth \$800.<sup>91</sup> The only player engaged on Hastings' recommendation appears to have been Quinton. Sleeman was obviously concerned not only with Quinton's prowess as a player, but also his character. He was assured by Hastings that "he can be no worse than the majority of ballplayers."<sup>92</sup> This was hardly a ringing endorsement, and it is diluted even further when one learns that Hastings himself was hardly a model of frugality, asking Sleeman for a \$67 advance on his wages prior to the beginning of the season.<sup>93</sup> Quinton also wrote to Sleeman before his arrival

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<sup>88</sup>Letter from Scott Hastings to G. Sleeman. Baltimore Jan 17 1877. Ibid.

<sup>89</sup>Ibid. February 8, 9, 16, 26, 1877.

<sup>90</sup>Letter from Craver to G. Sleeman. February 13 1877. Ibid.

<sup>91</sup>Scott Hastings to G. Sleeman. February 26 1877. Ibid.

<sup>92</sup>Ibid. March 8.

<sup>93</sup>Ibid. March 20.

in Guelph from Philadelphia hoping that "you [Sleeman] could oblige me [Quinton] by sending the sum of \$25 in order to pay for a suit of clothes I had made. You could take it out of my salary, and by doing so oblige me very much."<sup>94</sup>

Requests such as these from players in the International Association would suggest that what money they had, supported a rather indulgent hand to mouth existence. Hastings' claim that Quinton was "no worse than the majority of ballplayers" was significant in that it reveals an awareness by the journeymen players themselves that they had a bad reputation- a reputation nonetheless that appears to have had its basis in fact. Their ability to conduct their own salary negotiations via mail is a positive endorsement of their intellect, and would seem to confirm Riess' belief that players were pooled from the upper lower class residents of the city. Further confirmation is provided by the *Guelph Directory*, which shows that all six home grown members of the 1877 Maple Leaf professional squad were skilled artisans or clerks. Emery was a machinist, Fenwick made furniture for the family business, Hewer was a machine hand, Lapham, a book keeper at the Wellington hotel, William Smith, a jeweller, Sullivan, a labourer and Walsh, a stonemason.<sup>95</sup> The limited extent of the players' education is not only verified by the (implied) behaviour of some, but also the grammatical errors and poor syntax of their letters. Futhermore, a report of a Maple Leaf defeat in Rochester by first baseman Lapham, published by the *Mercury* in the midst of a long Maple Leaf road trip, displayed

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<sup>94</sup>Letter from Quinton to G. Sleeman. Philadelphia, March 29. Ibid.

<sup>95</sup>*Guelph City Directory, 1886-88.*

a reassuring recourse to the sportsman's friend: the cliché. Apparently, "the boys played very poor and did not bat worth a cent."<sup>96</sup>

The formation of the International Association was met with a blaze of publicity in the Guelph press, and that interest was carried through to the Maple Leafs' opening game against the Alleghany of Pittsburgh. It was the first opportunity that the town had had to see the new acquisitions in competitive action, and according to the *Mercury*, all acquitted themselves admirably, particularly Dixon "who is one of the best short stops that has ever played in this town."<sup>97</sup> Sterling performances from the new boys helped the Maple Leafs to a 3-2 victory in the first game, but in the second match of the series, played the following day, their visitors won by the comfortable margin of 5-0. Having grudgingly accepted professionalism as a necessary evil in order to compete successfully in the Association, the *Mercury* began to demand professional standards from the players. In a shift from the previous season, when players' mistakes were excused or the opposition condemned, the report from the second game reveals a new tendency to criticize, and indeed suggest a course of action, concluding that "practice is what is wanted by the home team and that daily."<sup>98</sup> They even went as far as to concur with a strong worded piece that appeared in the *London Free Press* on precisely this issue. The London paper (whose opinions had been lambasted in the *Mercury* the previous season)

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<sup>96</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. May 31 1877.

<sup>97</sup>*Ibid.* May 11 1877.

<sup>98</sup>*Ibid.* May 12 1877.

commented that

baseball players seem to forget that they appear before the public on precisely the same footing as members of a dramatic or other company the managers of which look to the public to support. That being the case the individual play of the team is open to legitimate criticism by the public and neither threats, innuendoes or anything else will stop the Free Press from 'speaking its piece' in regard thereto, whenever, in its opinion, circumstances warrant it.<sup>99</sup>

A sterner test, and indeed, a better gauge of the strength and skill of the Maple Leafs' off-season acquisitions, came with the first encounter between the arch rivals of the previous season. Potential disharmony was pre-empted by Moore in a letter to Sleeman in which he suggested "that it would be better for both clubs if our umpire was not a resident of either place [thereby avoiding] any troubles in the future such as happened last season."<sup>100</sup> This conciliatory tone, especially when aligned with competent umpiring of Mr. A.P. Crooks, appeared to take some of the spark out of the encounter, the game meandering its way to another victory for the Tecumsehs, albeit by the slim margin of 2-1.<sup>101</sup> The bland report of that uneventful game should not be seen as wholly typical either of the reporting, or indeed the games played in the Association. When the Maple Leafs defeated the the Athletics of Philadelphia on May 21st, there was a shift away from

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<sup>99</sup>*London Free Press* quoted from Ibid. May 17 1877.

<sup>100</sup>Letter from E. Moore to G. Sleeman. London, May 10 1877. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>101</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. May 18 1877.

the sanctimonious coverage of player disagreement with the officials, which was symptomatic of previous seasons. The *Mercury* commented that Fulmer, the opposition captain was "decidedly the best growler that has ever crossed the diamond in Guelph. He and Dineen [a member of the Tecumsehs whom the press and the Guelph crowd loved to hate] would make a good team."<sup>102</sup> This failure to take umbrage at one of the perceived traits of professionalism, shows an empathy with an agenda that spectators had already had for a long time. Baseball, in the main, was an entertainment medium, and the ball park an oasis of escapism where people could come to purge their emotions by hollering at both players and officials. Although there is no way that one can judge the collective feelings of a crowd that did not record their thoughts, it would be unreasonable to presume that all in attendance were universally offended by players openly displaying their feelings. If they were, surely they would not have come. The *London Free Press*' earlier comparison of ballplayers to actors was most apt. Spectator team sport is, and always has been a low brow form of popular entertainment, an interactive vaudeville whose spirit is entered into, and indeed created by spectator as well as player participation.

Although the Guelph press and Maple Leaf management were prepared to overlook or even laugh off "modern" aspects of the game that could well have enhanced its popularity amongst its paying customers (if not the moral minority), they were not prepared to dismiss the darker facets of the game which could only contribute to widespread

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<sup>102</sup>Ibid. May 22 1877.

scepticism. On 31st May Sleeman withdrew his men from the field in the middle of their game against Auburn because he felt that the umpire was partial towards the Auburn pitcher in calling balls and strikes. In the eyes of the *Mercury*, it was only a matter of time before something like this happened. The paper had been vociferous in its calling for umpires to be appointed by a league commission, believing that otherwise the game would be more likely to "degenerate into a mere gambling speculation, for the benefit of blacklegs and sharpers, and thus lose the countenance of respectable men."<sup>103</sup>

The club's battle against public cynicism caused by possible corruption, and waning interest in the wake of poor form was both drawn out and ultimately fruitless. By early June the *Mercury* was openly questioning the reason for the club's existence if they were not a winning outfit.<sup>104</sup> By mid-June their continued pessimism about the team's prospects was evident in their claim that "no person in town looks for anything else but Leaf defeats."<sup>105</sup> Having been defeated once again by London in early August, the paper was so conditioned to defeat, they simply headlined their report the "Old Old Story."<sup>106</sup> Suggesting reasons for the lack of Maple Leaf success, the paper queried Sleeman's appetite for the game, believing his "lenient"<sup>107</sup> handling of the players to be in some

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<sup>103</sup>Ibid. June 5 1877.

<sup>104</sup>Ibid. June 4 1877.

<sup>105</sup>Ibid. June 14 1877.

<sup>106</sup>Ibid. August 11 1877.

<sup>107</sup>Ibid. June 4 1877.

way responsible for the worrying dip in form. The *Guelph Herald* even went as far as to insinuate that the players were overpaid underachievers, a radical statement for the times, and one which was condemned by the *Mercury*.<sup>108</sup> Rumours were afoot that the club was set to be relocated to Buffalo. These were scotched at a meeting of the club's shareholders at which Sleeman flatly refused to entertain such a thought.<sup>109</sup> This would confirm William Humber's belief that Sleeman was not interested in making the Maple Leafs themselves a profitable organization, and that he wanted them to be central to his agenda of the promotion of Guelph. However, he was not prepared to pour money away and by the end of August it was reported that Quinton, the catcher, Sullivan (pitcher) and Dixon (short stop) had been released by the club.<sup>110</sup> Sleeman, it seems, was not sad to see the last of them. Upon replacing his fallen stars with local amateurs, Sleeman vowed that "you won't see our club travelling all over the place throwing games", a strong hint that he believed some of his former players had not always acted honestly.<sup>111</sup>

The reports of a move to Buffalo coupled with the releasing of high profile players led to fears that the Maple Leafs were on the point of folding, a fear that perversely appeared to cause more worry in London than Guelph. On the 27th August, Sleeman received a

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<sup>108</sup>Reporting on a match between the players and the stockholders of the Maple Leafs, the *Guelph Herald* said that "If the Maple Leafs win, it will not be in order for anyone to insinuate that it is not for the first time they have beat (sic) the stokholders this year."

<sup>109</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. July 19 1877.

<sup>110</sup>*Ibid.* August 27 1877.

<sup>111</sup>G. Sleeman quoted from Humber, *Diamonds of the North*. p 38.

letter from Harry Gorman, pleading for him to maintain the team until the end of the season, since the "disbandment of the Maple Leafs would seriously impair the Tecumseh's chances for winning the championship, by striking at least two games won from the Maple Leafs off our record." Compounding his attempt to induce Sleeman to sustain the club, Gorman suggested an itinerary for the rest of the season which he believed would enable the Maple Leafs to break even at least. He also appealed to a notion of Canadian solidarity, stating that

though there has been a strong feeling of rivalry between the two clubs, as Canadians either would rejoice to see the other bring the International pennant to Canada, and if the result depended on a sacrifice of time and labour on their part, either one would be willing to extend a helping hand to the other in such an emergency.<sup>112</sup>

The question of the club's disbandment also appears to have caused a degree of confusion at the headquarters of the International Association in Columbus, Ohio. A letter from Association secretary Williams to Sleeman demanded to know if the Maple Leafs were a defunct organization, but he wrote again later that week clearly delighted to learn that the club still existed, having been assured so by the Guelph President.<sup>113</sup>

The fears caused within the Tecumseh organization by Sleeman's unwillingness to incur

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<sup>112</sup>Letter from H. Gorman to G. Sleeman. August 27 1877. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>113</sup>Letters from J.A. Williams (Secretary of the International Association) to G. Sleeman. Columbus, Ohio, September 21 & 24 1877. Ibid.

any more debts proved unfounded. The Maple Leafs did not play another match in the championship after their fourth defeat at the hands of London on August 11th. However, the league tables released by the International Association throughout September did not show any evidence of the Tecumsehs having had games deducted from their wins column.<sup>114</sup> Both clubs got what they wanted. London was not obstructed by the Maple Leafs in its successful quest for the championship,<sup>115</sup> and Sleeman did not incur any more costs by having to fund further expensive road trips. Indeed he was able to recoup some of his losses by playing exhibition matches with the Standards in Hamilton, and the Tecumsehs in Toronto and Guelph on the August Civic Holidays of the respective cities.<sup>116</sup>

Whilst one could argue that the demise of a small-town club with big-league pretensions was bound to happen, the unavoidable could perhaps have been postponed if the club had reached its potential audience on a more regular basis. Of the fifteen matches the Maple Leafs played against International Association opposition in Guelph during the 1877 season, two took place on Civic Holidays and only one was played on a Saturday afternoon.<sup>117</sup> No games were ever scheduled for Sundays. In an article entitled

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<sup>114</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. 12 & 20 September 1877.

<sup>115</sup>Humber, *Diamonds of the North*. p 38. The Tecumsehs defeated the Alleganians of Pittsburgh 5-2 in the final game of the season to clinch the championship.

<sup>116</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. August 13 & 30 1877.

<sup>117</sup>24 May (Queen's Birthday) versus Syracuse Stars. July 1 long week end versus Rochester. (Game was played on a Monday because July 1 fell on a Sunday). 26 May versus Live Oaks of Boston.

*Sabbatarianism and Sport in Canadian Society*. Barbara Schrodt points out that prior to Confederation in 1867, each colony observed the Sabbath according to the established customs of its colonizers. This meant a relaxed Continental style Sabbath in Quebec, but a day more focused on worship and contemplation in Upper Canada. The predominantly Protestant<sup>118</sup> composition of Guelph made it unlikely that Sunday sport, especially when it involved spectator payment, would be tolerated in the town. Indeed the Canadian Federal government allowed for such feeling when they declared Sunday sport illegal, unless a specific Provincial law stated contrary.<sup>119</sup> The Ontario legislature did not pass a law legalizing sport on the Sabbath until 1960.<sup>120</sup>

All of this should not detract from the profits that could be gleaned from playing a match on the only day of the week when people did not have to go to work at all. A letter from the Secretary of the Memphis Reds Base Ball Association to the Maple Leafs in June 1877, contained a breakdown of costs in order to try and convince teams that might be playing in St. Louis or Louisville that it would be worth their while to extend their trip to Tennessee, and play three games in Memphis. The club estimated that the gate receipts for each of the two week day games would be \$75. A share of this would be added to the one Sunday game which would bring in \$250 on its own. What is significant here is not

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<sup>118</sup>According to the 1881 Canadian Census, of the 9890 population of Guelph, 80.8% belonged to Protestant churches with 30% of those Protestants belonging to the Presbyterian church.

<sup>119</sup>*Revised Statutes of Canada 1906*. Volume 3, Chapter 153 Section 16.

<sup>120</sup>*Statutes of Ontario 1960*. Chapter 50, Section 1.

the actual amounts per se, but the fact that Sunday ball was being played in the US in 1877, and that receipt estimates (based on experience one assumes) were more than three times that of a week day game.<sup>121</sup> It is even possible that the Maple Leafs had the chance to reap the benefits of Sunday play a little closer to home. Steven Riess reveals that although not played in the three largest cities in New York State (Buffalo, New York and Rochester) "professional Sunday baseball was permitted in smaller cities [in the state]"<sup>122</sup> During 1877 the Maple Leafs played in Auburn and Binghamton, but never did their game take place on a Sunday. The fact that the practice was not legitimized in this baseball hotbed until the turn of the century, would suggest that the playing of Sunday baseball at this time was dependent on more variables than merely a willing market. The conservative opposition that greeted any attempt at legal reform meant that Sunday play required a circumvention of the law- a procedure that was only possible if the authorities were willing to turn a blind eye.

The issue of Sunday play is merely an aside if one accepts that a non-profit small town club, with big league overheads was bound to fail, however successful on the field. Such a viewpoint could well be argued given the 1878 fortunes of the Tecumsehs. Even during their 1877 championship season, the club incurred a debt of \$3000.<sup>123</sup> The expansion of the International Association to eighteen teams the following year only served to

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<sup>121</sup>Letter from I.F. Peters (Secretary and Treasurer of the Memphis Reds Baseball Association) to G. Sleeman, June 1877. Maple Leaf Correspondence.

<sup>122</sup>Steven Riess. *Touching Base*. p 127.

<sup>123</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 5 1877.

saturate a small market with a mediocre standard of baseball, which in turn led to public indifference and dwindling attendance. The situation became so bad that the Tecumseh management tried to arrange games in other towns. One had a situation, unthinkable only the previous season, of the Tecumsehs playing a "home" match against the Springfields of Massachusetts on the Maple Leaf grounds. With Guelph no longer involved in the International Association, it was felt that a reasonable crowd could be attracted, but this plan was scuppered by the game's postponement due to bad weather.<sup>124</sup>

In a state of affairs similar to that witnessed by the Maple Leafs the previous year, local indifference in London turned to cynicism when it was alleged that the team had "thrown" a game against the Syracuse Stars on the 9th July. Goldsmith, the pitcher, pulled himself from the game with his team leading 4-0 with two out in the 8th inning, complaining of pains in the heart. Poor play in the 9th allowed Syracuse to win. A defeat in such suspicious circumstances led some to believe that this was the "deathblow" for baseball in London and that it would be "futile to attempt to resuscitate the game...for years."<sup>125</sup> By the middle of August, some of the executive, including Jacob Englehart, were of the same opinion, withdrawing their money from the club. This move led to the release of the professional players, and caused the remaining directors to be saddled with a debt of over \$2000.<sup>126</sup> The club limped to the end of the season using local amateurs, but was

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<sup>124</sup>Ibid. July 23 & 31 1878.

<sup>125</sup>Ibid. July 12 1878.

<sup>126</sup>Ibid. August 20 1878.

then disbanded.

The similar fates of the Maple Leafs and Tecumsehs revealed the fickle nature of early baseball, and the destructive traits of unadulterated free-market professionalism. Professionalism within the International Association caused two exclusive and competing agendas to clash, with disastrous results. On the one hand the players were out to secure the best deal possible for themselves. This mentality, however, sat uneasily with the traditional underpinnings of clubs such as the Maple Leafs, whose success was founded on a degree of selflessness from their owners, as well as gate receipts from loyal spectators within the town. Small town clubs began to outgrow the notions of urban promotion on which they were founded, since professionalism created a whole new set of values and expectations for the press and spectators. Performance became a consumer commodity and perceived quality of the entertainment product conditioned their loyalty. If the players' performance on the park did not meet expectations, this only served to hasten their indifference, since they felt no compunction about displaying the same lack of loyalty commonly exhibited by this breed of transient professional. This indifference turned to cynicism in the wake of possible player corruption, since it only seemed to confirm the warnings that defenders of the amateur faith had so feverishly pedalled. In a small, enclosed market, this creation of an ill-conceived commercial monster, with a momentum of its own, was fatal. Yet Guelph and London were by no means alone in their experiences. By 1880, the International Association itself had folded: destroyed by the weight of player demands, match overheads and shifting expectations in a small

market. The National League's authority and style became the model for all future baseball organization.

Sleeman rallied against this "professional tramp baseball system," declaring that the 1880 Canadian Championship was to be a strictly amateur affair. However, before the season was over he, along with the owners of most other clubs, particularly Woodstock and Harriston, were accused of strengthening their sides with professionals.<sup>127</sup> Once released, professionalism generated an unstoppable momentum. Sleeman, amongst others, failed to resist temptation finding it particularly attractive when the hiring of specialists produced an uneven playing field thereby rendering its benefits (victory and prestige) all the more likely.

This illegitimate form of professionalism, reminiscent of the pre-CABBP era, characterized the Canadian game for the first half of the decade. However, with the formation of an openly professional Canadian League in 1885, it became apparent that the first few years of the decade were merely a period of transition with new centres of baseball excellence coming to the fore. The Maple Leafs did not take well to losing the prestige that came with their pioneering achievements, but they were dealt a harsh lesson in reality in 1885. The club had engaged former National League pitcher, G.W. Bradley, but on July 8th, the Hamilton Clippers, having received telegrams from the Toronto and London teams, refused to play against Bradley, claiming that he had been blacklisted by

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<sup>127</sup>Humber. *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 46.

the National League for breaking the reserve clause in his contract with Cincinnati.<sup>128</sup> The *Mercury* dismissed the accusation that the Maple Leafs had acted dishonestly by playing a disqualified player, countering that it was "only the certainty of defeat" that had caused the Torontos, Clippers and Londons to complain.<sup>129</sup> This would seem unlikely since the Maple Leaf team batting average for the 1885 season was a dismal .166.<sup>130</sup> They also felt that charges of duplicity were particularly rich coming from those three teams whom they felt were forming a match-rigging clique in order to fabricate maximum "excitement" and more importantly, gate receipts.<sup>131</sup> Sleeman appeared to believe that Bradley was allowed to play in Canada because he had only been deemed ineligible to play in the National League rather than blacklisted. This was confirmed in a telegram Sleeman was supposed to have received from the President of National League and which was printed in the *Mercury*. Moreover, since the Canadian League had not adopted the constitution of the National League and was in no way affiliated to it, there was nothing to bar Bradley.<sup>132</sup> This did not prevent the Judiciary Committee of the Canadian League finding against the Maple Leafs, and consequently they awarded games to the Clippers.

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<sup>128</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. July 9 1885.

<sup>129</sup>*Ibid.* July 10 1885.

<sup>130</sup>Humber. *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 46.

<sup>131</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*, July 10 1885. "The understanding goes something like this: We will play for large gate receipts, and one club says to the other, today you win, tomorrow we win, and the next day the third party in the clique will have the honour of victory. Thus the excitement is kept up and the crowds are attracted, and all the honest fighting is left to the Primroses [of Hamilton] and Maple Leafs."

<sup>132</sup>*Ibid.* July 13 1885.

Londons and Torontos, each of whom had protested what they believed to be Bradley's lack of authorization, and therefore had refused to play the Maple Leafs.<sup>133</sup>

This harsh treatment contributed to the idea that the interests of the Maple Leafs had been suppressed by an all-powerful faction. Even the *Toronto Mail* ventured that "right had been crushed by might."<sup>134</sup> This decision was nonetheless symptomatic of the wretched season that the Maple Leafs were having. By the end of July, the *Mercury* had taken to reporting Maple Leaf losses in the same resigned tone as it had in 1877, saying of their eleventh consecutive defeat in Hamilton that "it was generally expected by the Guelph people that their team would not interrupt the long line of defeats which they have all along been scoring."<sup>135</sup> Rumours of disbandment abounded once more, in the wake of reports that takings at the gate were not covering expenses, and that the directors were rapidly losing patience with having to maintain the club out of their own pockets. This time however, there was something to the rumours, and on September 3rd it was announced that Sleeman had severed his ties with the club.<sup>136</sup> His place was taken by a number of local businessmen, headed by former player, James Hewer, who did what they could to place "a nine in the field which would do credit to the city and to the proud place which the Maple Leafs have always held in the history of baseball in Canada." The

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<sup>133</sup>Ibid. July 14 1885.

<sup>134</sup>*Toronto Mail* quoted from *ibid.*, July 15 1885.

<sup>135</sup>Ibid. July 31 1885.

<sup>136</sup>*Guelph Weekly Mercury and Advertiser*. September 3 1885.

new management appeared to have a positive effect if the team's two late season victories against a Toronto side that was to finish second were anything to go by,<sup>137</sup> but this was too little too late and the Maple Leafs finished fourth out of the five teams.

Sleeman appears to have been coaxed from retirement during the off season and, swallowing his words about the "professional tramp baseball system," began to put together a young nine, of an exclusively American character, in anticipation of launching a renewed attack on the Canadian title.<sup>138</sup> However, before the start of the season, both the Hamilton Standards and the Torontos decided to join the American based International League which had been founded in 1884. Although this meant that both teams had breached their agreement to play in the Canadian League, Sleeman's and the Maple Leafs' impotence was exposed when they were unable to secure an order preventing the teams from playing in a league other than the Canadian one. The Judiciary Committee of the Canadian League ruled that Sleeman could bring no action against them until he knew exactly how much their absence would cost his club in lost gate receipts. Since there was no way of gauging that figure, Sleeman was forced to drop his complaint, but deciding that 1886 Canadian League was a non-starter, he resolved to send his team on a tour of the U.S.

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<sup>137</sup>Ibid. September 10 (Maple Leafs 10, Torontos 1) & September 17 (Maple Leafs 6, Torontos 5).

<sup>138</sup>Humber. *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 46.

Many local writers and historians have referred to this tour as the crowning glory of the Maple Leafs' and Sleeman's achievements. However, their definition of a "tour" must be clarified. One gets the impression from reading the *Centennial Edition* of the *Mercury* as well as the retrospective article published by the *Guelph Tribune* in June 1991<sup>139</sup> that on a single road trip through Michigan, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia and New York the team won 43 games and lost only seven. This is inaccurate. The Maple Leafs did make a single, extensive road trip into these States, but their four week tour did not depart until August 7, and by the time they returned to Canada, they had won 23 games and lost 1.<sup>140</sup> Did they confuse statistics for the entire season with those of the tour? This does not appear to be the case either, since the overall record for the team in 1886 was 53 won and 9 lost.<sup>141</sup> The only possible explanation for those figures is that they correspond with the number of games that the Maple Leafs played away from home. However, since they were not all accomplished on a single trip, they can not be said to correspond to a single, glorious tour.

The second myth that needs to be exposed about this season is that it was the crowning glory of a famous team who single handedly restored baseball's power as a focus for civic pride, a pride that was revealed through the public's new found enthusiasm for the sport. Firstly, the teams defeated by the Maple Leafs were not always of the highest

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<sup>139</sup>*Guelph Evening Mercury Centennial Edition*. July 20 1927. *Guelph Tribune*. June 12 1991.

<sup>140</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. September 6 1886.

<sup>141</sup>*Ibid*. October 5 1886.

calibre. The success of the National League had ensured that baseball's centres of power were no longer isolated towns, but substantial cities. This was painfully obvious in Canada with the rise of the Hamilton and Toronto teams at the expense of Guelph. Many of the sides defeated by the Maple Leafs were certainly from towns of the former rather than latter variety; South Bend, Kalamazoo and Kokomo, Indiana, and Wilmington and Washington, Ohio, to name but a few. Secondly, much of the coverage of the tour games was very patchy, often with only the results being published. Also the massive reception of five or six thousand people yelling themselves hoarse which greeted the conquering heroes on their return, and which is described by Humber in his book *Cheering for the Home Team*<sup>142</sup> would seem incompatible with the "very few" that turned out to see the Maple Leafs' final home game of the season against Toronto. Those that did were however, "treated to the most miserable exhibition of ball playing that has ever been witnessed in Guelph."<sup>143</sup> So much for baseball being restored to its former glory in the town. Indeed one has to ask why, if the people of Guelph had had their vigour for the game renewed, did Sleeman decide to take his side out of the town for 54 of their 62 games?

Rather than being the crowning glory of a glorious era, the 1886 season was the swansong of an eclipsed organization. Some of the match reports against old International

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<sup>142</sup>Humber. *Cheering for the Home Team*. p 47.

<sup>143</sup>*Guelph Daily Mercury*. October 2 1886.

Association rivals went as far as to talk about the "old time"<sup>144</sup> memories that the games stirred, a clear sign that there was a widespread acceptance within the town that the Maple Leafs had had their day. Baseball did not regain its popularity in the city until after the Great War, when the re-formed Maple Leafs were strong contenders for the Intercounty League, winning the regular season pennant in 1919, 1920 and 1921.<sup>145</sup> This team was hardly rubbing shoulders with the same calibre of opposition as its predecessors, but it does seem as if the club and the town were now the same size, relatively speaking.

Although not a profit-oriented outfit, money was at the heart of the Maple Leafs' demise. The generation of local interest and support was necessary in order to pay the overheads of player salaries and travel expenses, which were part and parcel of life in the big leagues. Although a highly successful semi-professional outfit, league competition brought with it a whole new set of values. The full-blown professionalism encouraged by the CABBP and demanded by the International Association meant wholesale changes in both player and spectator agendas. All the star players who represented the club had little affinity with the town. It was merely a place for them to ply their trade. This not only introduced a take-all player mentality, but diluted the appeal of the club within the community, since performance was now a spectator commodity. Professionalism caused Guelph to become a Maple Leaf rather than baseball town, with the residents believing that they owed no loyalty to paid mercenaries, especially if they were not capable of

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<sup>144</sup>Ibid. July 23 1886.

<sup>145</sup>Johnson. *History of Guelph 1827-1927*. p 331.

winning. Consequently, they voted with their feet. Although a purely tenable position, it was one that Sleeman was unprepared for. Ultimately, he was left both disillusioned and out of pocket.

Indifference to baseball occurred because of the ever-increasing spiral whipped up by its professional/commercial nature. Ultimately, this spiral became too big for Guelph and imploded under the weight of the differential between income and expenses. Sleeman, the Maple Leafs, and the people of Guelph had had their chance, but after their 1877 demise, it was painfully obvious that there was never any possibility of their performing on such an illustrious, competitive stage again. Sleeman reigned the club back in to conform with his own agenda of boosterism, an agenda that was only compatible with maintaining a semi-professional side to compete in a local league or take part in challenge matches. Yet the popularity of baseball on the North American continent meant that it was never going to return to its pre-commercial roots. Once it had been learned that the professionalism could be held in check by strict management control of the players, and that spectator fickleness was less likely by appealing to the broad base of support that could only be found in large cities, baseball has never looked back. The Maple Leafs and Sleeman were pioneers of the modern day game, insofar as they were part of the game's commercial learning curve. As such their role should never be overlooked. However, taking the history of the game as a whole, they constitute no more than a footnote.

## CONCLUSION.

The urban compound, which provided the structural parameter within which organized sport and recreation grew, was the result of a tried and tested process of elemental fusion. This furnished sport's development with a comforting consistency. The consistency lies in the ongoing and all-embracing progression of industrialization, and the consequent societal tendency towards organization and bureaucratization. It lies in the conflict between classes and the function each believed sport should play in their lives. It lies in the specific provision of space and the irreversible march towards commercialization and professionalism. Ultimately, it lies in the fact that sport attained the status of autonomous institution, a perception that holds good to this day.

The consistency evident in its growth should not detract from sport's malleable form, which has both centralized and strengthened its position within society to the point that it quickly became an established custom or practice in its own right. Sport gained its strength from its broad base of appeal which in turn, reflected the fact that it meant different things to different people. Any one outline seeking to define and explain its interaction with society is therefore totally insufficient since none can do sufficient justice to the varying interrelationship of class, culture and capitalism which accompanied its development in different environments.

This was more than apparent in Guelph. Although originally a forum for the social

gatherings of the cricketing elite, the attraction of sport as a purposeless form of recreation spread to all sections of society by the end of the nineteenth century. This did not prevent its concurrent development as an all-consuming entity. Such a perspective became more prevalent in the town with the growth of championship competition and reached a crescendo with the involvement of the Maple Leafs in a professional league. The freedom of choice regarding the intensity with which sport was played, is indicative of the pliable process that enabled it to grow. Sports' clubs and bodies evolved so as to conform with the type of experience people wished to glean from participating or spectating, be that light-hearted recreation, all-consuming catharsis, earning a living, or as a medium for display and/or wagering. Such bottom-up moulding also goes a long way towards exposing the inaccuracy of the Marxist argument, since sport was clearly not a bourgeois diktat.

It was however, the middle class that developed a positive creed which both resulted from and furthered sport's burgeoning popularity. These social critics decried the quality of life and absence of moral values in the cities, and advocated wholesome sport and recreation as a means of inculcating socially and spiritually desirable traits to arrest this urban pathology. The formation of the YMCA in Guelph is testament to that way of thinking. However, Guelph never became an amorphous impersonal mass. It never had to face many of the depraved problems that organized sport and recreation was designed to offset, maintaining much of the upright, God-fearing character of a small town well into the twentieth century. When one links this to the fact that sport was a well established facet

of the town prior to the YMCA's development, it becomes apparent that those who promoted sport as a vehicle for moral improvement were, to a large extent, preaching to the converted. Although it would be churlish to deny that their agenda was without impact, the popularity of the twentieth century Guelph Y was the result of its existence in a town where the popularity of sport was assured, and its use to further a spiritual agenda was already understood.

The intimacy of the town also explains the failure of Guelph to replicate the models articulated by Joyce and Yeo whose combined theses reveal the idea that voluntary organizations were eclipsed by institutions which required participants or spectators to pay at the gate. As has been detailed, semi-public facilities existed in the town well before sport was championed by volunteer groups affiliated to either churches or schools. Indeed, the foremost example of the "pay at the gate" mode, the Maple Leaf Baseball Club, was but a distant memory by the time a campaign was launched to build the YMCA. The club had long since imploded under the weight of its own operating costs, following public unwillingness to shoulder the burdens of professionalism. Passive spectating at sporting events, never usurped participatory sport, but profit was not such a taboo within sporting circles that those who sought to operate a sport's facility for that reason were condemned out of hand. The progressive attitude of the town, coupled with the broad base of support that sport enjoyed, seemed to allow people to pay their money and take their choice.

The development of organized sport in Guelph was characterized by variety, both in terms of sports played and provided for, and agendas followed. Although it would be misguided to see late nineteenth and early twentieth century Guelph as a cross sectional microcosm of North American society, the existence of such variety in a comparatively uncomplicated and communal town, condemns any hope of instant or superficial understanding of sport's origins or growth. However, it could well be that it was the lack of extreme poverty or ethnic diversity within the town that caused sport to attain the status of autonomous institution so quickly. Although sport had to negotiate the original cynicism of the clergy and educational establishment, the united advocacy by the rest of the town ensured that its detractors were easily overcome. As such, Guelph appears to have been the perfect incubator for sporting institutionalization. It provided a community that was all but unified in its acceptance of sport, but permissive enough to allow itself to shape it in its own diverse image.

It is this communal shaping of sport that I feel is the most significant finding of this thesis. All too often sport has been regarded as a tool of coercion, used by sections of the middle class to mould social inferiors in their own image, and later, as a means of diluting the melting pot with Anglo-Saxon fluid. Whilst this thesis cannot discount the "Westernizing" influences of sport on immigrants unused to such a custom, it does show that nineteenth and early twentieth century Guelph provided a significant structural parameter, within which a heterogeneous sporting culture was both manifested and determined so successfully, that it gained enough momentum and strength to become an

institutionalized element of the Guelph urban compound.

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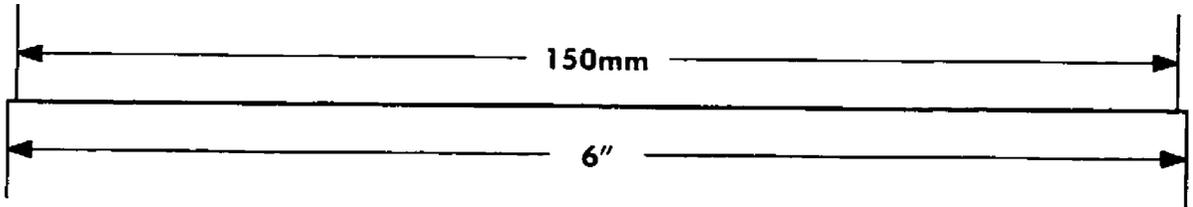
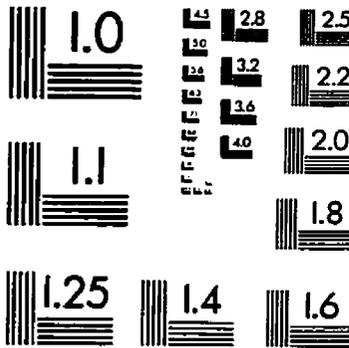
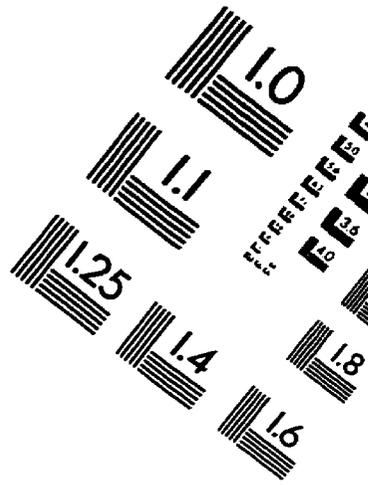
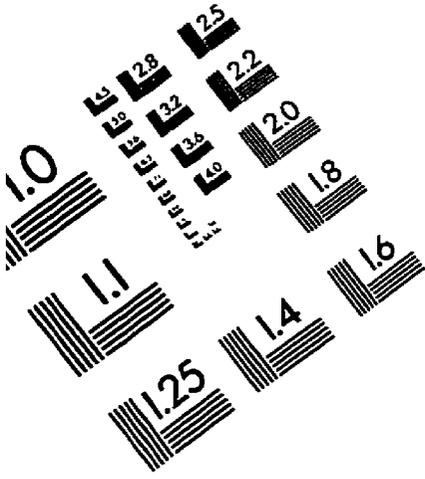
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