

# *Baseball, Class and Community in the Maritime Provinces, 1870-1910*

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*The study of baseball permits detailed analysis of class relations, gender roles and community identity during the industrial transformation of the late nineteenth century. Drawing upon Raymond Williams concept of "the social relations of cultural production", this article explores how the development of baseball was linked to Victorian notions of respectability, and to the growing discourse associated with the public organization of play and leisure. In particular, the interpretation focusses on the Maritimes where reformers, entrepreneurs, gamblers, working people, athletes and spectators used unpredictable ways to shape the game to meet their own needs.*

*L'étude du baseball favorise l'analyse détaillée des rapports sociaux, des rôles sexuels et de l'identité communautaire au moment de la révolution industrielle du XIX<sup>e</sup> siècle. S'inspirant de la théorie de Raymond Williams sur « les relations sociales issues de la production culturelle », l'auteur examine ici les liens entre le développement du baseball et les notions victoriennes de respectabilité et le discours de plus en plus répandu sur l'organisation publique des jeux et des loisirs. Il s'intéresse plus particulièrement aux provinces maritimes où les réformateurs, les entrepreneurs, les travailleurs, les athlètes et les spectateurs ont recouru à des moyens inattendus pour donner à ce jeu une forme susceptible de satisfaire leurs besoins propres.*

In the past few years, historical writing on the history of sport has concentrated upon the relationship of sport to society, rather than merely chronicling the accomplishments of great athletes or celebrating sport as a form of character building. Serious academic work, such as Tony Mason's history of Association Football, Wray Vamplew's analysis of professional sport in Victorian Britain, or Alan Metcalfe's study of the emergence of a disciplined and organized sporting culture in Canada, has drawn widely upon the insights of the "new" social history to understand how sport shaped community identities and, yet, was shaped itself by class, ethnic and gender rivalries.<sup>1</sup> This analysis of the early history of baseball in the Maritime

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1. Tony Mason, *Association Football and English Society, 1863-1915*, Brighton, 1980; Alan Metcalfe, *Canada Learns to Play. The Emergence of Organized Sport, 1807-1914*, Toronto, 1987; Wray Vamplew, *Pay Up and Play the Game. Professional Sport in Britain, 1875-1914*, Cambridge, England, 1988. See also James Walvin, *The People's Game: A Social History of British Football*, Bristol, 1975.

Provinces and New England looks at how the development of the game was linked to Victorian notions of respectability and to the growing discourse that emerged with respect to the public organization of play and leisure.<sup>2</sup> In so doing, it investigates the subtle and often unpredictable ways in which reformers, entrepreneurs, gamblers, working people, athletes and spectators shaped the game to meet their own needs. Seen in this light, the history of baseball involves what Raymond Williams refers to as the "social relations of cultural production", social processes actively shaped by human agents, neither fully determined by nor independent of the capitalist mode of production.<sup>3</sup>

The study of baseball provides a useful window into the continuing redefinition of class relations, gender roles and community identity that accompanied the industrial transformation of the Maritimes in the last third of the nineteenth century.<sup>4</sup> Baseball's early development was closely linked to the expansion of urban centers in the region in the industrial age. Some historians have suggested that the game's appeal lay in its ability to evoke images of rural simplicity in an age of industrial dislocation;<sup>5</sup> others argue that the game replicated the attitudes of the industrial workplace in its emphasis on organization, precision and discipline.<sup>6</sup> Whatever its appeal, baseball originated and flourished in urban centers and small towns. Promoted by a group of middle and upper-class reformers who regarded sport as a powerful antidote to crime, rowdiness and class hatred, the game was played primarily by adolescents and young men who had only recently entered the world of work. But the interests of reformers and players did not always coincide. If reformers prized baseball for its blending of teamwork and individual initiative, its cultivation of the "manly virtues" and its uplifting character, they also remained suspicious of the way in which players, spectators and speculators approached the sport.

Baseball first came to the Maritimes during the 1860's and, over the next two decades, grew rapidly in popularity, spreading from the larger metropolitan centers such as Saint John, Halifax and Moncton to smaller communities

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2. On the centrality of the idea of respectability in Victorian thought, see F.M.L. Thompson, *The Rise of Respectable Society. A Social History of Victorian Britain, 1830-1900*, Cambridge, Mass., 1988. For an appreciation of the relationship of respectability to the reform of leisure and recreation, see Peter Bailey, *Leisure and Class in Victorian England. Rational Recreation and the Contest for Control*, London, 1978; Eileen Yeo and Stephen Yeo, *Popular Culture and Class Conflict: Explorations in the History of Labour and Leisure*, Sussex, 1981.

3. Raymond Williams, *Culture*, Glasgow, 1981, p. 67.

4. The literature on the industrialization of the Maritimes is extensive. See in particular T.W. Acheson, "The National Policy and the Industrialization of the Maritimes, 1880-1910", *Acadiensis*, vol. 1, n° 2, Spring 1972, pp. 3-28; L.D. McCann, "The Mercantile-Industrial Transition in the Metal Towns of Pictou County, 1857-1931", *Acadiensis*, vol. 10, n° 2, Spring 1981, pp. 29-64.

5. Allan Guttman, *From Ritual to Record: The Nature of Modern Sports*, New York, 1978, pp. 100-108.

6. Steven M. Gelber, "Working at Playing: The Culture of the Workplace and the Rise of Baseball", *Journal of Social History*, vol. 16, n° 4, Summer 1983, pp. 3-22.

like Woodstock, St. Stephen, Fredericton, New Glasgow, Westville and Kentville. Although a number of Saint John residents had earlier played pick-up games of "rounders" — a precursor of the modern game of baseball — it was not until 1869 that Mr. P.A. Melville, a prominent newspaperman, introduced baseball to Saint John. Within five years, a number of local club teams, including the Invincibles, the Mutuals, the St. Johns, the Shamrocks, the Athletes and the Royals, were playing each other and occasionally challenging teams from St. Croix, Fredericton and Bangor, Maine. Organized largely along occupational, ethnic and religious lines, the teams were still exclusively amateur. As of yet, the promoters of the game thought more of its civilizing influence than its profit potential. There was little gate money, and given the limited provision for field security, spectators often crawled over and under fences to escape admission.<sup>7</sup>

Baseball came to Halifax at about the same time it originated in Saint John. In May 1868, the *Halifax Reporter* announced a meeting of the Halifax Baseball Club at Doran's Hotel, followed a few days later by an announcement of an organizational meeting at the Masonic Hall of another independent club and the election of the team's officers.<sup>8</sup> The Halifax club's first president was Dr. A.C. Cogswell, a long-time proponent of organized recreation in Halifax. Like many of his contemporaries, Cogswell saw sport as a remedy to youthful idleness and indolence, and a force contributing to mental well-being and physical health. A few years earlier, Cogswell had led a campaign for a public gymnasium, which, the *Acadian Recorder* predicted, would rescue Halifax youth from "gawking lazily at street corners to stare at passers-by, lounging about drinking saloons, smoking and guzzling" and partaking of "other irrational modes of getting over life."<sup>9</sup> Another of Cogswell's contemporaries, Superintendent John Grierson of the Halifax Protestant Boy's Industrial School, shared this faith in the uplifting character of organized recreation. "The necessity of providing recreation for lads of this class", wrote Grierson about the boys in his charge, "is now universally admitted."<sup>10</sup> The Industrial School sported a gymnasium and playing ground for cricket and baseball, and the boys played challenge matches against the Young Atlantas and Young Oxfords of Halifax.<sup>11</sup>

Baseball was particularly attractive to reformers because it brought into play the so-called "manly virtues": courage, strength, agility, teamwork, decision-making and foresight. It was inexpensive and took little time to play or witness, so that a busy man can gain in two hours on the ball field rest and

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7. Saint John, *The Globe*, 14 December 1901, section 4, p. 7.

8. *Halifax Reporter*, 9, 12 May 1868.

9. *Acadian Recorder*, 18 July 1857.

10. *First Annual Report*, Halifax Industrial Boy's School, 1864. See in particular the section entitled "Amusements".

11. See, for example, *Acadian Recorder*, 15 October 1877.

relaxation that elsewhere he would seek in vain."<sup>12</sup> Another virtue, from the reformer's perspective, was that it appealed in particular to working-class youth. A sample of players whose names appeared in newspaper box-scores in Halifax, between 1874 and 1888, makes this clear. Of the 133 players whose occupation can be traced through census records and city directories, the vast majority came from working-class backgrounds. Clerks, labourers and unskilled workers made up 45.8 percent of the sample; tradesmen such as cabinet-makers, carpenters, tailors, blacksmiths, machinists, brass-finishers, gasfitters, printers, bakers, plumbers, coopers and bricklayers comprised another 31.5 percent; and merchants, students and professionals made up the remaining 22.7 percent. (See table 1).

**Table 1** Occupation of Halifax Baseball Players, 1874-1888

	Number	%
Clerks (including bookkeepers and accountants)	29	21.8
Labourers (including teamsters, janitors, messengers, seamen, porters and stable boys)	32	24.0
Tradesmen	42	31.5
Students, merchants and professionals	30	22.7

If baseball was basically a working man's sport, it was also a young man's game. The ages of those who appeared in box-scores for the first time ranged from a 12 year old student to a 46 year old physician, Chandler Crane. Most players, however, began their careers in their late teens or early twenties and few continued to play into their thirties. The average age of those appearing in box-scores for the first time was 22.6 years. Given that some continued to play after that, it is reasonable to assume that the average age of those who played the sport was somewhat higher, but did not exceed twenty-five years.

Data available with respect to the ethnic origin and religious preference of 153 players also reveals a heavy concentration of Irish Catholics on Halifax's ball diamonds. Irish and black players made up 59.4 percent of the sample; those of English origin 20.9 percent; Scots and Germans 7.8 percent each. With respect to religious denominations, Catholics comprised 60.7 percent of players (compared to slightly more than 40 percent of the total population), Anglicans 15.7 percent, Baptists (including African Baptists) 11.1 percent and Presbyterians 7.8 percent.

Working men also made up a substantial portion of the audience for baseball games. At the end of the 1877 season in Halifax, for example, Thomas Lambert, a well-known labour leader and employee at Taylor's Boot and Shoe

12. *Acadian Recorder*, 11 August 1888.

Factory, presented a silver ball and bat to the city champion, Atlantas, on behalf of the mechanics of Halifax. (The *Acadian Recorder* reported that the prize was offered by the mechanics of the city alone, in recognition of their dedication to the game.)<sup>13</sup> Lambert's involvement in baseball is intriguing. A major figure in the working-class movement, he had come to Halifax in 1865 with the 2nd Battalion of the Leicestershire regiment.<sup>14</sup> Soon after, he took up employment at Taylor's factory and became one of the first trade unionists in Halifax to attain international prominence. In 1869, he was elected an international officer of the Knights of St. Crispin and he became First Grand Trustee of the International Lodge in 1872.<sup>15</sup> Although there is no evidence that Lambert ever played baseball, he was instrumental in organizing a team at Taylor's after the company defeated the shoemakers in a bitter strike at the factory. Subsequently, in September 1877, Lambert appears as scorekeeper in a game between the Crispin Club of Taylor & Company and a team representing W.C. Brennan & Co. Later in the same month, two teams from Taylor's — "Lambert's Nine" and "Baldwin's Nine" — squared off, with the Lambert's playing to a 28-18 victory.<sup>16</sup>

Workers, then, were involved in the game as organizers, players and spectators. As spectators, they seemed more than willing to pay the standard 25 cents admission fee for competitive club or inter-city matches. Although not much is yet known about the impact of industrialization on the real wages of working men and women in the urban centers of the Maritimes, or upon the family wage, it is likely that factory workers such as Lambert were enjoying an increasing real income, similar to workers elsewhere in Britain and North America at this time.<sup>17</sup> The gradual tightening of workplace discipline, the growing separation of work and leisure and the concomitant shortening of the workday, moreover, nurtured an increased demand for organized leisure by working people and bourgeois proponents of rational recreation alike.<sup>18</sup> The movement of women into industrial and clerical work also led them to seek

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13. *Acadian Recorder*, 11 September 1877.

14. *Ibid.*, 7 March 1891.

15. Knights of St. Crispin, "Proceedings of the 5th Annual Meeting of Grand Lodge, April 1872", New York: Journeymen Printer's Cooperative Association, 1872.

16. *Acadian Recorder*, 6, 18 September 1877.

17. For Great Britain, see E. Hopkins, "Working Hours and Conditions During the Industrial Revolution: A Reappraisal", *Economic History Review*, vol. XXXV, 1982. For the United States, see John Modell, "Patterns of Consumption, Acculturation and Family Income Strategy in Late Nineteenth Century America" in Tamara K. Hareven and Maris Vinovskis, eds., *Family and Population in Nineteenth Century America*, Princeton, 1978; Clarence Long, *Wages and Earnings in the United States, 1860-1890*, Princeton, 1960.

18. Ray Rosenzweig, *Eight Hours for What We Will. Workers and Leisure in an Industrial City*, London, 1983. The development of organized sport, amateur athletic associations and the YMCA also provided alternatives to the tavern as the focus of leisure activity. See, for example, Peter Delottinville, "Joe Beef of Montreal: Working Class Culture and the Tavern, 1869-1889", *Labour/Le Travailleur*, vol. 8, 1981, pp. 34-35.

out ways to fill their leisure time, one of which was attendance at sporting events.<sup>19</sup> In the last quarter of the 19th century, therefore, the changes wrought by industrialization had engineered the basic prerequisite for the commercialization of baseball — the creation of an audience.

For spectators and players alike, class, ethnic and community identities, and rivalries provided an important impetus to the game. In Halifax, for example, challenge matches between the “Mechanics” and the “Laborers”, the “Barkers” and the “Growlers”, the “Southends” and the “Northends”, the “Young Atlantas” and the “Young Oxfords”, the “True Blues” and the “Greenstockings” involved rivalries based upon occupation, location, ethnicity and age. In addition, teams representing various employers such as the “Heralds”, the “Recorders”, the “Chronicles”, the “Dolphins” (for Dolphin’s Factory) and Taylor’s Factory, sometimes served to secure an identity to the firm and, in other cases, encouraged worker solidarity. While the Taylor Factory teams seem to have been made up exclusively of working men, the Dolphins had a lineup which in addition to factory hands included manager K.J. Dolphin.<sup>20</sup> Now and then, novelty games attracted sizeable crowds, as was true of the match in July 1878 between the Fat-Men — Dolphin was suited up here as well — and the Atlantas, a competitive team who agreed to pitch, bat and throw left-handed in order to give their obese opponents a chance at victory. “The match...was a complete success”, reported the *Acadian Recorder*, “and the crowd assembled, numbering nearly 500 persons, was kept in continual roars of laughter by the blunders and exertions of the Fat Men.”<sup>21</sup>

The rivalries that attracted the greatest spectator interest were those between teams representing various towns and cities throughout the Maritimes and New England. Particularly significant here was the impetus to the game provided by the completion of the Intercolonial Railway to Halifax in 1876. The Intercolonial linked the major urban centers of the region and allowed for dependability in the scheduling of challenge matches. Railway service made it possible for barnstorming New England club and college teams to tour the region during the summer, while telegraph communication allowed promoters to schedule games with touring teams in return for expenses and a guaranteed portion of the gate. By the last half of the 1870’s, regional championships were being held annually. In 1875, for example, the Halifax Atlantas travelled to Saint John and defeated the Mutualls and Sham-rocks of that city and, in the following year, the Moncton Invincibles travelled

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19. Kathy Peiss, *Cheap Amusements: Working Women and Leisure in Turn-of-the-Century New York*, Philadelphia, 1986.

20. *Acadian Recorder*, 8 July 1881.

21. *Ibid.*, 11 July 1878.

to Halifax to play the Atlantas and Resolutes to determine the Maritime champion. The Atlantas prepared for the match by enclosing their grounds and charging an admission fee, and before a large crowd, defeated Moncton 15 to 12.

By the 1880s, inter-urban contests had become regular fare. Indeed, when pioneer baseball player James Pender announced his retirement in 1888, after fourteen years on the most competitive Halifax teams, he could count among his appearances victories over the Saint John Mutuals and Shamrocks, the Moncton Redstockings and various other teams from Londonderry, Fredericton, Houlton, St. Stephen, Bangor and Boston.<sup>22</sup> By this time, too, the baseball culture of the Maritimes was becoming more intimately linked with that of New England, a hardly surprising development considering the significant exodus of young Maritimers during the seventies and eighties to the "Boston States".<sup>23</sup>

The gradual integration of Maritime and New England baseball during the 1880's brought a number of changes in the nature of the sport in this region. During the 1885 season, baseball promoters in Saint John contracted with the Queen City team of Bangor, Maine, to play a challenge match in Saint John. Although this was an error-filled match (17 errors on one side and 28 on the other), the lopsided 17-5 victory for Bangor provided an impetus for Maritime teams to import coaches and players from the United States. During the 1888 season, the Saint John Nationals imported two college ball players, Wagg and Larabee, from Colby College, and in so doing, ushered in an era of professional baseball. The following year, three more imports, Small, Rogerse and Parsons were added to the team and the Shamrocks secured the services of Edward Kelly of Portland, Maine, and William Donovan of Bangor. In 1890, Fredericton and Moncton established professional teams, and a four-team New Brunswick professional league was established relying heavily upon imported players. The Nationals (now called the Saint John Athletic Association) discarded Rogers and signed Jack Priest, Billy Pushor, Billy Merritt and pitcher "Harvard" Howe. The Shamrocks cut Kelly and added Jim and Joe Sullivan, Abel Lezotte, Jack Griffin and John "Chewing Gum" O'Brien.<sup>24</sup>

The development of professional baseball during the late 1880's contributed to the sharpening of metropolitan rivalries that accompanied the coming of industrial capitalism to the region. This was particularly true of the region's two largest urban centers, Saint John and Halifax, neither of which could establish a commercial or industrial hegemony over the entire region. Whenever it could, the Saint John press contrasted the bustling exuberance of the New Brunswick centre to that of somnolent Halifax. A dispatch from the Saint

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22. *Ibid.*, 27 September 1888.

23. Alan A. Brookes, "Outmigration from the Maritime Provinces, 1860-1900: Some Preliminary Considerations", *Acadiensis*, vol. 5, no 2, Spring 1976, pp. 26-55.

24. *Saint John Globe*, 14 December 1901.

John *Telegraph*, carried in Halifax newspapers on 31 July 1888, described games between the Nationals of Saint John and the Atlantas of Halifax as a “very easy contract” and suggested that if Halifax remained uncompetitive, the Nats would have to go south of the border to find better competition. “The Atlantas play good ball in the quiet town of Halifax”, the *Telegraph* concluded, “but when they come to a great city like Saint John, the noise and bustle and excitement seem to unnerve them.”<sup>25</sup> In the following year, when the Socials travelled to Saint John to play a challenge match during the Saint John city carnival, they were treated to a city parade which routinely burlesqued Halifax. One float was a replica of the mail steamer *Atlas* detained in fog eighty hours outside Halifax Harbour. Another was adorned with a banner “Little Sister Halifax. Haligonian Specialties. Fog in summer, harbour skating in Winter.” When the Socials were subsequently defeated by the Saint John Club, one newspaper wrote that “bright, active, energetic Saint John scored one against her old and unprogressive rival yesterday, and she did not require the assistance of...(the umpire) to make that score either.”<sup>26</sup>

Halifax held its own summer carnival in early August 1889. The roster of activities included a match between a New York cricket team and the Garrison team, single scull races, a Labrador whaler boat challenge, fencing and gymnastic displays, wrestling and even a mock military battle at Point Pleasant Park. The highlight of the carnival, however, was a series of baseball games between the Halifax Socials and the John P. Lovell Arms Company and Woven Hose teams of Boston. These teams were made up of players signed and paid to advertise the companies' wares, and were probably the strongest teams in the United States outside of organized baseball. The Socials fared well against high calibre competition such as this. During the 1889 season, the Socials played twenty-one matches against teams from other cities, winning eleven. In addition to the two teams from Boston, their opponents, in 1889, included Portland, Bath, Gardner and Bangor, Maine; Bates College — as “gentlemanly a set of fellows as ever graced a diamond” — and the Boston St. Stephens. In the following season, the Holy Cross Collegians, the Worcester professionals and a regular assortment of teams from Maritime centres provided Halifax with stiff competition.<sup>27</sup>

Although the establishment of professional baseball enhanced the calibre of competition in the Maritimes, it also raised questions about the essential purpose of sport itself. Initially, sport advocates hoped that baseball would

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25. Quoted in *Acadian Recorder*, 27 July 1889. See also *ibid.*, 3 October 1889.

26. *Ibid.*, 27 July 1889.

27. *Ibid.*, 5 August 1889. On the Bates College nine, see *ibid.*, 8 June 1889.



serve, as cricket and rugby had done, to enhance "gentlemanly" values.<sup>28</sup> Bedecked in uniforms that occasionally included high sneakers and bow-ties, players were often admonished against uttering derogatory remarks about their opponents and the umpire. Newspaper accounts of games regularly criticized the practice of "kicking", or disputing an umpire's decision, and derided those players who would not accede to the arbiter's authority. Protests of calls were seen to be the responsibility of the team captain, and individual players were urged to defer to the captain's authority. The extent to which "kicking" was criticized, however, reveals that the players themselves did not conform easily to the "gentlemanly code" that others wished to bring to the game.

Nor were umpires always the neutral officials that they were supposed to be. Poorly trained and often not completely cognizant of the rules, umpires were frequently biased in favour of their home teams during inter-urban matches. After a game between the Saint John Nationals and the Halifax Socials in 1888, for example, the Saint John press charged umpire William Pickering, who regularly played second base with the Socials, with "bare-faced cheating", and also alleged that a Mr. F. Robinson of Halifax had bribed the umpire. Robinson admitted boasting to friends in a local hotel that he had bought Pickering, but denied actually having done so.<sup>29</sup> In the following year, Pickering was again the subject of criticism for his partisanship during a double-header between the Socials and a team from South Portland, Maine. Both games, said the Halifax *Acadian Recorder*, featured obviously partisan umpiring and, in the second, Pickering was calling strikes against Portland batters that were nowhere near the plate.<sup>30</sup>

Despite these instances of favouritism, it was generally conceded that the authority of the umpire was an essential component of the game. This was a common theme in the columns of F.J. Power, sporting editor for both the *Acadian Recorder* and the Halifax *Daily Echo*, and a well-respected umpire

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28. On the relationship between team sport and Victorian notions of manliness and the inculcation of ideals of teamwork, patriotism, courage and respectability, see Morris Mott, "The British Protestant Pioneers and the Establishment of Manly Sports in Manitoba", *Journal of Sport History*, vol. 7, n° 3, Winter 1980, pp. 25-26; "One Solution to the Urban Crisis: Manly Sports and Winnipeggers, 1890-1914", *Urban History Review*, vol. XXII, n° 2, October 1983, pp. 57-70; Norman Vance, *The Sinews of the Spirit: The Ideal of Manliness in Victorian Literature and Religious Thought*, Cambridge, 1985; Brian Dobbs, *Edwardians at Play*, London, 1973; S.F. Wise, "Sport and Class Values in Old Ontario and Quebec", in W. Heick and R. Graham, eds., *His Own Man. Essays in Honour of A.R.M. Lower*, Montreal, 1974. For a contemporary view, see J. Castell Hopkins, "Youthful Canada and the Boys' Brigade", *Canadian Magazine*, vol. IV, n° 6, pp. 551-566. On working-class opposition to bourgeois reformism, see Joe Maguire, "Images of Manliness and Competing Ways of Living in Late Edwardian Britain", *British Journal of Sports History*, vol. 3, December 1986, pp. 256-287.

29. *Acadian Recorder*, 20, 21 September 1888.

30. *Ibid.*, 30 May 1889.

whose career behind the plate spanned four decades. Power's career began during the 1870's as a player for the Atlantas, but he soon turned to umpiring on a regular basis. As an umpire, Power was an authoritarian figure, respected for his integrity and decisiveness in dealing both with players and unruly fans. Even spectators came to recognize his authority. At one point, for example, Power demanded the ejection of a spectator for joking that the umpire had a glass eye. "He simply raised his arm", said the *Acadian Recorder*, "and a big policeman escorted...[the fan] out."<sup>31</sup>

Incidents such as these reveal the hope of many sports reformers that baseball would encourage cultivated behaviour and respect for authority. Players were expected to approach the game in a mannerly and respectable fashion, playing for the love of the sport and avoiding disparaging remarks about their opponents. But the importation of professional players from the United States during the late 1880's raised doubts that these goals could be achieved. In July 1888, a crowd of 1,200 Haligonians, including a "large gathering of the fair sex,"<sup>32</sup> turned out to see the Saint John Nationals and their star import player named Wagg. A pitcher from Colby College, playing under an assumed name in order to maintain his eligibility for college baseball, Wagg struck one newspaperman as resembling "the lecturer outside a side-show at the circus". In the sixth inning, a number of "hoodlums" tried to stop Wagg's "continual prattle by endeavouring to irritate him..., but it was useless." The same reporter criticized William Pickering, the second baseman and notorious umpire, for loud and uncontrolled language and chided Fitzgerald of the Atlantas for talking too much while guarding his base.<sup>33</sup>

Now and then, games degenerated into actual violence. During one game involving two Saint John teams in September 1901, pitcher Webber of the Alerts was "grossly insulted" by first baseman Friars of the Roses, caught hold of him by the neck and shook him. There was immediate confusion, the bleacherites swarmed on the field, and fisticuffs broke out between Protestant and Catholic spectators. The second baseman, Bill O'Neil called for the cops. "It was not nice for the people present, especially the ladies, and players should restrain themselves no matter how great the insult", said the *Saint John Globe*. "... If a player makes a habit of using nasty, insulting epithets to opposing players, he should certainly be suppressed. There is some excuse for a man who in the heat of passion shows a disposition to administer bodily

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31. *Acadian Recorder*, 24 July 1900. During the 1870's Power had played and umpired games for money, but this was "when the distinction between amateur and professional athletics was unknown in this city." Despite subsequent protests that his earlier actions violated his amateur standing, Power was reinstated as an amateur by the Maritime Provinces Amateur Athletic Association's Executive Committee in 1888. *Ibid.*, 23 May 1888.

32. *Ibid.*, 3 July 1888.

33. *Ibid.*

punishment, but nothing but contemptuous loathing for one who prefers to waggle an unguarded and insulting tongue."<sup>34</sup>

The concern of most sports reformers was that undisciplined behaviour by the players would encourage similar rowdiness amongst the audience. Promoters of the game especially feared the effect of unruly behaviour and "bad manners" upon women spectators. Women, of course, were important to the future of the game, not only as patrons, but also as symbols of respectability; their attendance provided the game with the hallmark of gentility that reformers wished to establish. Boorish behaviour by male spectators, of course, undermined the quest for respectability. Aware of this, the *Saint John Progress* of 11 August 1888 apologized for the behaviour of a few boors who crowded in the press box and smoked persistently, even though ladies were present. The columnist took further pains to assure female spectators that the perpetrators of this "crudeness" were not pressmen.<sup>35</sup> The *Acadian Recorder* was equally concerned about "hoodlums", "toughs" and "persons of a similar character", many of whom snuck into the grandstands and took the seats of paying patrons.<sup>36</sup> Soldiers from the Garrison at Halifax were another source of displeasure. During a game between Saint Mary's and the Garrison, before a crowd of 1,200 spectators, about a hundred men of the ranks "shouted, jeered, hooted and made all sorts of remarks about the opposing players". Noting a similar occurrence in a recent match in the United States, the columnist judged the incident in Halifax to be particularly unsavoury. In the American game, "the language was of a more humorous nature, and there were no remarks unfit for ladies to hear as in this instance. It is said that such actions take place in Montreal, the reporter concluded, but he found no reason for them to occur in Halifax."<sup>37</sup>

Unruly crowd behaviour obviously contradicted the conception of baseball as a "gentleman's game" played before a respectable audience. Bourgeois sport reformers, many of them medical doctors, educators, ministers, or journalists, hoped that the extension of organized sport to working people would help create a common culture that transcended class interest, and dreamt of a world of play where class distinctions would be eradicated. The editor of the *Sydney Record*, for example, believed that sport and physical exercise would help empty prisons, asylums, workhouses and relieve unemployment. With more recreation, he concluded "a good half of our social problems might disappear."<sup>38</sup> When the reality fell short of the ideal, these bourgeois sportsmen blamed the subversion of the game upon professionalism. The commercialization and professionalization of team sport, they

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34. *Saint John Globe*, 12 September 1901.

35. *Saint John Progress*, 11 August 1888.

36. *Acadian Recorder*, 25 May 1900.

37. *Ibid.*

38. *Sydney Record*, 19 July 1905.

argued, attracted less dignified members of the working class who put financial reward above the values of self-discipline, self-sacrifice and teamwork, and who indulged in various forms of desultory and unsavoury behaviour. These attitudes were no doubt confirmed when the off-field activities of two of the early imports to Saint John, James Guthrie and Edward Kelly, blossomed into a public scandal in September 1889. These two Irish-American ball players had arrived in Saint John from Maine, in the summer of 1889, accompanied by a number of young girls destined for employment in a bordello run by Mattie Perry, sometimes known as "French Mattie". One of the girls was a young teenager from Bangor named Annie Tuttle who had been recruited by Guthrie's companion Lizzie Duffy. When Annie Tuttle's mother travelled to Saint John in search of her daughter and reported her disappearance to the authorities, the police raided Mattie's Brittain Street house and found the young girl there. Mattie was told to leave the city at once and accompanied by Kelly, "one of her boon companions in Saint John for some weeks", left that night on the American Express for Presque Isle, Maine. Guthrie, also "well known in baseball circles" in both Bangor and Saint John, left on the same train with Lizzie Duffy.<sup>39</sup>

Of greater concern to reformers than this connection between the world's oldest and youngest profession was the increasing influence that betting men seemed to exercise upon the sport. Critics of professionalism noted the greater likelihood of corruption, gambling and match-fixing among professional players, no doubt sympathizing with the *Toronto Mail's* description of a professional as a "double cross athlete who would cut his throat to keep his reputation as crooked if he thought that anyone was betting that he would live."<sup>40</sup> Indeed, gambling was widespread and substantial sums of money changed hands, particularly in matches involving urban rivals or barnstorming clubs from the United States. Players were by no means immune from the lure of quick money and when the odds warranted, occasionally had friends place bets against them. One such incident took place in Halifax in September 1890, when a number of Saint John players threw a game against the Halifax Socials. Beginning in the third inning, a number of curious incidents raised the suspicion of many in the crowd of over 1,000. It was in that inning that a Saint John man whose money was being wagered on the Socials walked across the field to the Saint John players' bench. Shortly thereafter, the umpire, himself from Saint John, began to make calls that favoured Halifax, giving bases on balls to the Socials on obvious strikes. For Saint John, Priest the pitcher struck out by swing at balls nowhere near the plate, and third-baseman Parsons, after hitting safely, removed his hand from the base and allowed a Socials player to

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39. *Acadian Recorder*, 18 September 1889.

40. Quoted in Frank Cosentino, "Ned Hanlan — Canada's Premier Oarsman — A Case Study in 19th Century Professionalism", *Canadian Journal of the History of Sport and Physical Education*, December 1974, vol. V, n° 2, p. 7.

tag him out.<sup>41</sup> This transparently fixed match, said the *Daily Echo*, provided an indication of the depth that professional players could sink to when betting men were interested.<sup>42</sup>

A number of reasons were given to explain the fix. In the first place, the Socials were going to Saint John the following week and a victory for the Halifax team would ensure Saint John promoters a big crowd. It was also widely believed that revenge was the motive, because the better who had fixed the match had been taken advantage of by a Halifax gambler who bet \$300 on the Saint John team at two-one odds during the first game of the series. Haligonians were further outraged when a correspondent of the *Moncton Times* reported that upon returning home, a banquet was held for the Saint John players, despite their acknowledged throwing of the game. Seven of the nine men, the *Times* correspondent reported, were involved in the fix and they "openly avow and boast of it". At the dinner, an MPP from Saint John chaired the festivities which included a succession of speeches glorifying the players. "This barefaced outrage on public morals", the correspondent concluded, "will perhaps bring a gulled public to some sense of the honour involved in professional baseball."<sup>43</sup>

The thrown match at the end of the 1890 season had a devastating impact upon professional baseball in the region. Prior to that time, the elevated standard of play that accompanied the importation and payment of athletes had attracted a growing clientele. Players were performing before crowds that averaged about 1,200 in Halifax and Moncton, and about three times that number in Saint John. In the latter city, fan interest was so great that the King Street merchants installed a telephone at the baseball grounds, in August 1888, so that after each inning, the score of the game in progress could be telephoned to the DeForest and March store, at the corner of King and Germane Streets, and placed on a large blackboard which could be seen from a considerable distance.<sup>44</sup> This enthusiasm for the game attracted sports entrepreneurs, who with admission prices of 25 cents and an extra 10 cents for admission to the grandstand and prize purses that sometimes were as high as \$500, could bring in as much as \$1,500 for a single match in Saint John, or \$1,000 in Halifax or Moncton.

During the 1890s, fan interest waned. In the wake of the discrediting of the game's integrity, the Halifax Socials disbanded and, through the 1890s, baseball in Halifax was played on a decidedly amateur level. Rivalries between employees at manufacturing or commercial establishments, or between ethnic groups, or recreational clubs provided the community with interesting

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41. *Acadian Recorder*, 8 September 1890.

42. *Halifax Daily Echo*, 11 September 1890.

43. *Acadian Recorder*, 8 September 1890.

44. *Ibid.*, 4 August 1888.

but not outstanding baseball. Matches with other city clubs or touring teams were rare, and although there were sporadic attempts to revive competitive baseball in the City, there was little enthusiasm for the professional game. In Saint John, the nineties saw the emergence of a great rivalry between two city teams, the Alerts and the Roses, the former supported largely by the Irish Catholic community and the latter appealing to an Anglo-Protestant constituency.

The collapse of professional baseball in the 1890s accompanied the diffusion of the amateur game throughout the Maritimes. In Pictou County, Nova Scotia, baseball originated as a result of the efforts of newspaperman R.S. Theakston.<sup>45</sup> The nineties also saw the flourishing of the game in the coal-towns of Joggins, Westville and Springhill, where baseball was an important cultural component of worker solidarity, and in “busy Amherst”, one of the most rapidly growing industrial towns in the region. “The baseball craze has struck Springhill”, said the *Springhill News and Advertiser* of 13 August 1896, “there are about three teams at Miller’s Corner ranging from 6 years of age to 60, also two teams on Herritt Road and two or three in town.”<sup>46</sup> Springhill was by no means unique. Rivalries based both upon propinquity and shared occupational and cultural identities, invigorated matches between Joggins, Springhill and Westville. Before long, towns from Truro to Annapolis were playing each other and accepting American challenges. Similar rivalries emerged in the western counties of Nova Scotia between Windsor, Kentville and Middleton; further south in Digby and Yarmouth; across the Bay of Fundy in Macadam and Woodstock; and in a number of border towns in Maine.

If the 1890s witnessed the diffusion of the sport beyond the large metropolitan centers to the smaller towns of the region, the absence of high level inter-urban competition in Halifax, Moncton and Saint John provided a boon to the development of baseball for women and racial minorities during the 1890s. In 1891, a touring ladies team from the United States caused great excitement, playing in a number of towns in the region. In Nova Scotia, the women defeated all-male clubs in Amherst, Annapolis and Middleton and before a crowd of 3,000, beat a Halifax amateur club by an 18-15 score. Tours of this sort helped secure the legitimacy of female participation in organized team sport, much to the delight of feminists such as Grace Ritchie of Halifax who regularly advocated women’s greater involvement in sporting activity. The reaction to the entrance of women into baseball’s male domain, however, was mixed. Those who feared the emergence of the “new woman” were concerned that participation in sports such as baseball contradicted the ideal feminine personality, while others regarded physical training for women an antidote to nervous exhaustion or “neurasthenia”. Prevailing notions of

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45. Halifax *Chronicle Herald*, 16 August 1951.

46. *Springhill News and Advertiser*, 13 August 1896.

biology emphasized woman's nurturing character, her physical frailty and her nervous irritability, and suggested that women were particularly susceptible to an imbalance of physical and mental faculties.<sup>47</sup> Involvement in competitive sport and physical exercise still had its critics, but by the 1890s, there was a growing acceptance of female athleticism because it compensated for nervous debilitation.<sup>48</sup>

The tour of the "Chicago Ladies", in 1891, brought the debate over women and sport to center stage. The *Truro Daily News* reported that a clergyman in New Glasgow had spoken strongly against the tour at a local prayer meeting, while in Truro, a delegation of citizens unsuccessfully lobbied the Mayor to prevent the team from playing.<sup>49</sup> On the day of the game, the *Truro* newspaper noted that "many people, doubtless, will be there to witness the antics of the girls, but if all reports be true, the propriety of attending is very questionable."<sup>50</sup> After the games in Truro and New Glasgow, the local press criticized the women as frauds who could not compete on equal terms with men although they presumed to do so. "They are nothing better than a lot of hoodlums from a crowded city", said the *New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle*, "...they are frauds of the first order."<sup>51</sup>

Despite these criticisms, a few days later, a crowd of 3,000 assembled at the Wanders Grounds, in Halifax, to watch the women. In addition to the paying patrons, boys climbed electric light poles and trees outside the grounds and a crowd "containing people of all classes of life" assembled on Citadel Hill, overlooking the field.<sup>52</sup> In Halifax, there was little of the hostility that accompanied the team's visit to New Glasgow and Truro. The women were popular as well in Amherst, where the victory of the girls over the local boys' team was "both interesting and exciting". In the opinion of the *Amherst Evening News*, there was "nothing, whatever, here which would warrant their being refused the privilege or opportunity of playing."<sup>53</sup> The *Moncton Transcript* agreed and announced the intention of local officials to invite the women to play another match in the city on their return from Nova Scotia.<sup>54</sup>

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47. Carole Smith Rosenberg and Charles Rosenberg, "The Female Animal: Medical and Biological Views of Women and Her Role in Nineteenth Century America", *Journal of American History*, vol. 60, September 1973, pp. 332-356.

48. Michael J.E. Smith, "Graceful Athleticism or Robust Womanhood: The Sporting Culture of Women in Victorian Nova Scotia, 1870-1914", *Journal of Canadian Studies*, vol. 23, n<sup>os</sup> 1-2, Spring-Summer 1988, pp. 120-137; Helen Lensky, *Out of Bounds. Women, Sport, and Sexuality*, Toronto, 1986; Kathleen E. McCrone, *Playing the Game. Sport and the Physical Emancipation of English Women, 1870-1914*, Lexington, Kentucky, 1988.

49. *Truro Daily News*, 18 August 1891.

50. *Ibid.*, 19 August 1891.

51. *New Glasgow Eastern Chronicle*, 21 August 1891.

52. *Acadian Recorder*, 24 August 1891.

53. *Amherst, The Evening News*, 20 August 1891.

54. Quoted in the *Acadian Recorder*, 20 August 1891.

The tour of the Chicago team provided an important impetus to the organization of women's baseball teams throughout the region. Women were playing baseball in most of the major urban centers before 1900 and even in smaller communities such as Bocabec, New Brunswick, and Oxford, Nova Scotia, teams of women baseballists risked the wrath of the churches as they pushed forward into a formerly male sporting domain. This activity seems to suggest that the idea of maternal feminism and the doctrine of "separate spheres" were by no means universally accepted by turn of the century Maritime women.<sup>55</sup>

Black teams also flourished in a number of Maritime communities during the 1890s. The most powerful of these was the Halifax based Eureka who during the 1890s lost only one match, that to the Amherst Royals in 1897. Other black teams active in this period were the Fredericton Celestials, the Truro Victorians, the Dartmouth Stanleys and Seaside and the Independent Stars and North Ends of Halifax. For the black minority in the region, baseball and other sports provided an avenue to respectability and relative acceptance by the white majority. Involvement in athletics created local heroes and encouraged black pride, but also offered a chance for black athletes to visit other communities in the region and demonstrate their skills. While black teams rarely played against their white counterparts, they nonetheless contributed to the more organized character of 19th-century sporting life, establishing regional championships and attracting sizeable paid gates. Although the press was inclined to emphasize the "ludicrous incidents" that took place in black baseball, it is fair to say that the coverage of black sporting activity was one of the more positive elements in the press's treatment of the black community in the 19th-century Maritimes.<sup>56</sup>

If the 1890s saw the diffusion of the sport throughout the region and the emergence of women and blacks on the baseball diamond, the opening of the new century witnessed the renewed ascendancy of professional baseball in the Maritimes. Professional teams once again graced the diamonds of Halifax, Fredericton, Saint John and Moncton, and smaller communities also began importing players. Many of these imports were college students from American universities such as "Colby Jack" Coombs, a Moncton pitcher who would later star in the major leagues and ultimately be inducted into the Hall of Fame. Others, who would play or had at one time played in the big leagues, were Bill O'Neill the Saint John native and starting leftfielder for the Chicago White Sox in the 1906 World Series, Larry McLean of the Halifax Resolutes

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55. Cf. Michael J.E. Smith, "Female Reformers in Victorian Nova Scotia: Architects of a New Womanhood", M.A. thesis, Saint Mary's University, 1984.

56. On the propensity to comment upon ludicrous incidents, see the *Acadian Recorder*, 14 August 1900, for a game between the Eureka and Seaside before an audience of 250. Black baseball originated in the 1880s and by the end of the century, there was an annual regional championship, *ibid.*, 28 August, 11 September, 18 September 1900.



and Bill Hallman, a former second-baseman for the Philadelphia Athletics turned thespian, who played on the touring Volunteer-Organist baseball and theatre company team.<sup>57</sup>

The opening decade of the 20th century also witnessed the first connections between organized baseball activity on the mainland and on Cape Breton Island. Baseball was slow to arrive in Cape Breton, but by 1905, teams in Sydney, Sydney Mines, Reserve Mines and Glace Bay were importing players. The *Sydney Record* of 21 August 1905 reported that better baseball than had ever been witnessed on the Island was now being played, "though the results are getting to depend too much on which team can import the most and best men."<sup>58</sup> The Dominion No. 1 team was the only team in this colliery district league that chose not to import men. Crowds of 800 per game were common in Cape Breton during the 1905 season, and seeing the potential for lucrative gates, sports promoters like M.J. Dryden of Sydney began to call for a strictly professional baseball operation for the 1906 season.

Although there were those who regarded the provision of recreation to the colliers of Cape Breton as a valuable antidote to class antagonism, not everyone supported the introduction of professional baseball. The editor of the *Sydney Record* regarded it warily, thinking it a scheme of unscrupulous promoters who, in preying upon the mining districts, would encourage idle habits amongst the working class. The summer months, the editor continued, were already busy with sports, picnics, excursions and holidays which took people away from the workplace. "We should be the last to deny to anybody a reasonable amount of recreation and a reasonable amount of holidays", the editor wrote, "but this taking a day or a half day off at frequent intervals disorganizes the working man. England today is suffering from an excess of the sporting and holidaying spirit and she is in consequence feeling the competition of the steadier and more industrious continental nations."<sup>59</sup> In taking this stand, the newspaper was echoing the position of the operators of the Dominion Coal Company who complained that the scheduling of games before 5 o'clock resulted in "a considerable number leaving work early in the day, three or four times a week."<sup>60</sup>

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57. Joseph Reischler, *The Encyclopedia of Baseball*, 5th edition, New York, 1983; *Sydney Record*, 8 August 1906.

58. *Sydney Record*, 30 July, 21 August 1906.

59. *Ibid.*, 2 August 1906.

60. *Acadian Recorder*, 4 August 1906. The coal operators argued that the scheduling of baseball before 5 o'clock seriously embarrassed the company and diminished output. "Picnics have also contributed their share of adverse influence", said the *Recorder*, "but baseball is the principal sinner." The company prevailed upon the league to move the starting time to 5 o'clock from 3:30 p.m., but this proved inconvenient. The company also proposed that all games be held on Sunday, but the miners refused this interference in their leisure and opposed Sunday baseball on religious grounds. See also *Sydney Record*, 23 July 1906.

Another concern was that the commercialization of baseball undermined respect for the sanctity of contract. Contract jumping was widespread in the early years of baseball, and without a rigorous governing body for the sport, there were few prohibitions against athletes selling their services to teams on a game-by-game basis. In a game between the Saint John Roses and Fredericton Tartars, in August 1890, for example, the Roses were without four of their players. Friars and Shannon abandoned the club to play a game for Eastport against Calais, Maine. Cunningham was in Houlton playing for the Alerts, while Bill O'Neil was at Black River training for a race for a money purse.<sup>61</sup>

During the same season, the Halifax Resolutes offered a sizeable sum to Fredericton's pitcher "Harvard" Howe to pitch a single challenge match against Moncton. Due to the expense, ladies, who had earlier been admitted free, now were required to pay a fee of 15 cents.<sup>62</sup> The Resolutes followed a similar course later in the 1900 season, securing a pitcher by the name of Holland from the Saint John Roses to pitch against the Alerts.<sup>63</sup> The inability or unwillingness of clubs to enforce player contracts encouraged widespread player raiding between teams. During the 1901 season, for example, trainer John J. Mack, a professional athletic coach of the Wanderer's Amateur Athletic Club in Halifax, was implicated in an attempt to induce the star battery of the Alerts (Webber and Dolan) to jump the club and sign with the Halifax Resolutes. The Saint John *Globe* noted that Mack and Mr. Nevill, who was attached to the Resolutes club, offered the players salaries higher than those presently offered in the fast New England League. "All this goes to show", said the *Globe*, "how the baseball craze is taking hold of Halifax; how the ring of sporting men, whose sole idea of sport is to gamble on it, are getting in their fine work and are turning the game into a money making speculation, robbing it of all that is genuine and lowering its standard to those of cock-fighting or pugilism."<sup>64</sup> Without an effective regulatory body that could tighten up these loopholes, there was little hope of overcoming the problems of contract jumping. If clubs tried to enforce their contracts, the players would simply play for a release. League officials also found that the lax administration of contracts left them unable to discipline players who broke league regulations.

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61. *Acadian Recorder*, 27 August 1900.

62. *Ibid.*, 18 July 1900.

63. *Ibid.*, 24 July 1900.

64. *Saint John Globe*, 25 June 1901. Born in 1870 in Chelsea, England, Mack was an accomplished coach, athletic director at Columbia College, New York, in the 1899-1900 term and trainer for the Wanderer's Amateur Athletic Club in the summer season for a number of years. Mack denied allegations of unfair practise, but admitted writing to Webber who was "under his care in the University of Maine all last winter and spring" and who contacted Mack expressing his desire to play in Halifax. *Halifax Herald*, 26 June 1901. In 1905, Mack was hired as Yale's athletic director. *Acadiensis Recorder*, 15 August 1905.

They could only shake their heads in annoyance when players like first baseman Joe Donnelly, suspended from the Maine-New Brunswick League one week, became a regular in the lineup of the Halifax Socials the next.<sup>65</sup>

By the middle of the first decade of this century, then, the contradictions professional baseball presented to the dream of recreational respectability were abundantly clear. Rather than encouraging a oneness of sentiment that transcended class lines, the development of baseball seemed to reveal the worst influences of commercialism, a flagrant disrespect for the sanctity of contract, an encouragement of reckless gambling and unruly crowd activity. Competitive baseball also undermined the participatory character of amateur athletics. Rather than playing themselves, spectators preferred "to watch a few experts whose business it is to play for the public amusement", and, in turn, while neighbouring provinces were scoured for ball players in return for "a good salary, a lazy time and the small boys idol", local amateur sport withered.<sup>66</sup>

There were other problems. On the field of play, the working men who played alongside college students seemed not to be uplifted to respectability, but in the eyes of sports reformers, posed a threat to the respectable character of young college men. This concern was by no means confined to critics of professionalism in the Maritimes. Dr. E.H. Nichols of Harvard University opposed college students playing alongside professionals in summer leagues and voiced the increasingly widespread belief that the longer a person stays in pro-ball "the worse he becomes".<sup>67</sup> Between the turn of the century and World War One, therefore, reformers made a concerted effort to separate amateur and professional sport and to define new standards of play that would distinguish professional baseball from the "gentlemanly amateurism" of the college game. In the United States, the NCAA took steps towards this end, striking a Committee, in 1913, to rid college baseball of objectionable practises. Reporting in the following year, the Committee made a number of suggestions for changes in the game. The Committee recommended:

- 1) strict adherence to base-coaching rules, especially those prohibiting coaches from inciting or gesticulating to the crowd or using defamatory language;
- 2) enforcement of rules against blocking the runner, prying runners off base or other forms of trickery, in order to bring a decorum to the game;
- 3) prohibition of verbal coaching from the bench;

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65. Saint John *Globe*, 11 August 1911.

66. Sydney *Record*, 23 July 1906.

67. Dr. E.H. Nichols, "Discussion of Summer Baseball", *American Physical Education Review*, vol. XIX, n<sup>o</sup> 4, April 1914, pp. 292-300.

- 4) prohibition of encouragement of the pitcher from outfielders. "Remarks of endless iteration" were deemed disagreeable to spectators, thus, encouragement should only come from the infield;
- 5) prohibition of catchers talking to batters;
- 6) restriction of indecorous or unseemly behaviour.

The report concluded that "a college baseball game is a splendid contest of skill between two opposing nines before an academic throng of spectators. It is not a contest between a visiting team and a local team assisted by a disorderly rabble."<sup>68</sup>

The debate over amateurism was equally energetic in the Maritimes by 1910. In that year, the *Halifax Herald* ran a series of fifty columns on amateurism and professionalism in regional sporting life. Much of the debate centered upon the rapid growth of professionalism in hockey, but baseball was also a matter of lively concern. The *Herald's* position was clear. The main evil was not payment, but the system of amateurs and professionals playing alongside each other. What justification was there for promoters paying one athlete while exploiting another? This inequality of treatment encouraged amateurs to turn professional, many of whom would still be playing for the love of the game, except that someone was "getting the green on the side".<sup>69</sup> At the same time, the *Herald* admitted that working-class athletes needed compensation for lost wages and the sacrifice of time, noting the argument of a well-known Maritime catcher who pointed out that he could not afford to play ball on a Saturday afternoon without compensation for docked wages. But the same player's suggestion that the Maritime Provinces Amateur Athletic Association (MPAAA) give up its jurisdiction over baseball and let amateurs and pros play side by side was given a hasty rejection. "Amateurs and Pros Mix", said a headline of 25 February, "No! No! Say All in chorus!"<sup>70</sup>

The growing support for a clearer demarcation of amateur and professional sport led the Maritime Provinces Amateur Athletic Association to tighten its regulations with respect to amateur standing. Critical here was the resignation of James G. Lithgow as President of the MPAAA and his replacement, in 1909, by a new president Dr. H.D. Johnson of Charlottetown. Lithgow, actively involved in sporting organizations in the region and at one time president of the Nova Scotia Amateur Hockey league, had often turned a blind eye to violations of amateur standing. He must have been naive, the *Halifax Herald* concluded, not to know that professionalism was widespread, particularly after a lawsuit involving a Fredericton hockey club revealed that

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68. "Committee on Ridding College Baseball of Its Objectionable Features", *American Physical Education Review*, vol. XIX, n° 4, April 1904, pp. 313-314.

69. *Halifax Herald*, 11, 14 January 1910.

70. *Ibid.*, 25 February 1910.

all its players, in the 1908 season, were under salary and that many of them were playing in Nova Scotia during the 1909-1910 season.<sup>71</sup> As incoming president of the MPAAA, Johnson took immediate steps to separate amateur and professional play and instituted a tighter transfer rule to discourage player raiding in both hockey and baseball. Johnson's position on amateurism was to let bygones be bygones; subsequent violations of amateur standing, however would be severely dealt with. In the future, Johnson declared, there would be no reprieve. "Once a professional, always a professional" now served as the ruling maxim of the MPAAA.<sup>72</sup>

Ironically, these new regulations tended not to encourage the development of competitive amateur baseball in the region, but led to a more thorough-going system of importing professionals, some of whom were on option from major league teams, others who continued to play ball in the summer, while attending American universities in the off-season. In 1911, a professional New Brunswick-Maine baseball league was formed which, though not formally part of organized baseball, relied heavily on players from major league organizations. A four-team professional league followed in Nova Scotia, in 1912, with teams in Stellarton, Westville and Halifax. Other independent professional teams operated in Cape Breton, Yarmouth and in the coal mining town of Springhill. The success of these leagues — in August 1912, over 8,000 spectators attended a game between the Saint John Marathons and Houlton, Maine — quickly attracted American promoters such as Frank J. Leonard of the Lynn Baseball Club of the New England league who envisaged a prosperous new league in Maine and the Maritimes.<sup>73</sup>

Although Leonard's initial attempt to create a regional professional league ended in failure, it was taken up once again in the spring of 1914. The new organizer was Montrealer Joe Page, sports agent for the Canadian Pacific Railway. Operating on behalf of officials of the Saint John baseball teams, Page hoped to spearhead a new professional league in the Maritimes. This league, slated to operate as a Class "D" circuit within organized baseball, was to include teams in Halifax, Saint John, Moncton, Stellarton and New Glasgow. Page, who also envisaged his trains transporting players and fans to and from matches, helped secure a number of name players for the new circuit, including former Boston, Detroit and Cleveland player Cy Ferry. Unfortunately for Page, when Moncton and New Glasgow demanded guarantees of \$2,745 for thirty-eight appearances in Halifax and an equal amount from Saint John, yet offered none in return to the other clubs, the scheme was scuttled.<sup>74</sup> With the coming of the war in Europe, the prospects of reviving the experiment were permanently dashed. In future years, the distinctions between

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71. *Ibid.*, 11, 22 January 1910.

72. *Ibid.*, 6, 7 January 1910.

73. *Acadian Recorder*, 14, 30 August 1912.

74. *Ibid.*, 18 April, 6, 15 May.

amateur and professional were strictly maintained. The Depression of the twenties and thirties ensured that professional play would no longer be the widespread phenomenon that it had been before 1914.

Between the origins of Maritime baseball in the late 1860s and the outbreak of World War One, then, life on the region's sandlots changed drastically. Emerging out of the transformation of the region that accompanied the development of industrial capitalism in the 1870s and 1880s, baseball appealed initially to bourgeois reformers intent upon establishing appropriate standards of respectability and gentlemanly play. But the gamblers, promoters, players, spectators, ethnic groups and women athletes who also played a role in shaping the game brought their own needs to the sport. By the turn of the century, therefore, most reformers recognized their inability to use baseball as a means of social control, and were beginning to demand the separation of amateur and professional play.

The results of the drive to separate amateurism and professionalism were somewhat ironic. Although successful in encouraging a clearer demarcation between amateur and professional sport, reformers such as Dr. Johnson and F.J. Power were faced with the growing public acceptance of professional athletics. Yet, in the longer run, the triumph of professionalism over amateurism served the interests of the bourgeoisie just as well.<sup>75</sup> The period between 1870 and 1914 was one in which baseball was transformed from a cultural struggle involving reformers and "rowdies" to a more manageable form of organized mass leisure. And, if the transformation of baseball from an instrument of socialization to that of a marketable spectacle failed to eradicate class conflict as reformers had hoped, baseball gradually became one of the unifying enthusiasms that bridged class divisions and encouraged community solidarity.<sup>76</sup> The roots that baseball sank in the towns and cities of the region prior to World War One, in fact, were so deep that they would nurture the sport for another half century. Only in recent years, with the coming of television and the increasing sophistication of the consumer marketplace, has baseball become essentially commodified and detached from its community roots. The result has been the withering of community baseball in the Maritimes and the incorporation of the region into a modern baseball culture of mass-produced Toronto Blue Jay caps and Montreal Expos sweatshirts. That, however, is another story altogether.

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75. The separation of amateurism and professionalism in athletics may be seen as part of a broader sorting out of high-brow and low-brow culture at the end of the 19th century. In this regard, see Lawrence W. Levine, *Highbrow/Lowbrow: The Emergence of Cultural Hierarchy in America*, Cambridge, Mass., 1988.

76. Ian Gordon McKay, "Industry, Work, and Community in the Cumberland Coalfields, 1848-1927", pt. 1, Ph.D. thesis, Dalhousie University, 1983, pp. 370-373. McKay makes a similar argument with respect to baseball in the town of Springhill.